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▶ Synthesis reviews & meta-studies (2024)

ILO's strategies and actions in Western Africa, 2018-2023

Synthesis review on lessons learned, what works and why

May 2024

The review is part of preparatory work for the high-level independent evaluation of the ILO's strategies and actions in Western Africa, 2018-2023.
This report was prepared by Dr. Magali Bonne-Moreau.
The synthesis review has not been professionally edited but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office.

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Preface

This report was prepared as an input into the High-level evaluation of ILO's strategies and actions in Western Africa, 2018-2023. The study was prepared by Magali Bonne-Moreau, independent international evaluation consultant and managed by Ricardo Furman, Senior Evaluation Officer at EVAL.
Guy Thijs, Director of EVAL, provided oversight to ensure the quality and independence of the study.

CONTENTS

List of Acronyms

ACTEMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
ASGM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining
AUC	African Union Commission
CMU	"Couverture Médicale Universelle" (Universal Health Coverage)
CO	ILO Country Office
CPO	Country Programme Outcome
CPR	Country Programme Review
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWP	Decent Work Programme
ECOWAS	Regional Economic Community of West African States
EIIP	Employment Intensive Investment Programme
EVAL	ILO Office of Evaluation
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
GB	Governing Body
HLE	High-level evaluation
HQ	Headquarters
ILS	International Labour Standards
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprises
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OBF	Outcome-based funding
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	Programme and Budget
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
REC	Regional Economic Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TC/DC	Technical Cooperation / Development Cooperation
ToC	Theory of Change
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This synthesis review was conducted to support and complement the independent High-level Evaluation (HLE) of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme Strategies and Activities in Western Africa, with emphasis on Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and the Regional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (2018-2023). It draws from evidence from 20 project evaluations of ILO interventions and reviews of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) conducted between 2018 and 2023, in countries of the Western Africa sub-region and ECOWAS, with a particular focus on the HLE countries of focus.

It aims to highlight key trends, recurring themes, recommendations, lessons learned and good practices from evaluation reports of ILO's interventions in the Western Africa subregion and ECOWAS and reviews of DWCPs, guided by questions linked to the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

A purposive sampling approach using specific inclusion and exclusion criteria was used to identify 20 reports used for this qualitative thematic synthesis. The appraisal of the reports was done in a systematic manner to identify evaluative evidence related to the areas of interest.

The evaluated projects were implemented in most countries of the sub-region, and covered a range of topics, including labour migration, child and forced labour, and livelihoods for refugees and host communities. They also addressed youth employment, skills development, environmental sustainability, the green economy, social protection, the informal economy, and employment creation in post-conflict settings. There were also two DWCP reviews for Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

Most ILO interventions were found to be relevant, as they addressed the priorities and needs of both constituent groups and final beneficiaries, though variations were observed across countries and projects. A common challenge was inadequate engagement with constituents, often due to limited social dialogue, disinterest, or poor planning in project countries.

While the Côte d'Ivoire DWCP responded to national priorities, and was designed using a participatory and inclusive approach, it was not formally adopted by the Government, and was not validated through a tripartite workshop, leading to challenges in implementation. In Nigeria, the results framework for DWCP implementation was developed and validated in a tripartite manner. Both DWCPs were formulated to follow on previous phases, based on lessons learned and a participatory approach to their design, and were found to be evaluable, but the Review of the Nigeria DWCP found that none of these elements were used, and that the lack of a functional Steering Committee was an important challenge.

Interventions were generally aligned with ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) Outcomes, DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs), and the ECOWAS sub-regional Decent Work Programme (DWP), though the depth and coverage of evidence varied. References to various ILO, regional, and international development frameworks were also included in the reports. The DWCPs in Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire were fully aligned with the Decent Work Agenda for Africa, the Addis Ababa Declaration of 2013, the respective UNDAF Frameworks, the ILO Programme and Budget (P&B), and other national and regional development frameworks. There was evidence of alignment and contributions to SDG targets and support to national priorities under UN frameworks.

Although project objectives were often found to be coherent, many had overambitious designs considering their short timeframes and limited resources, combined with poor national capacities and/or complex socio-political contexts in which they were expected to operate. The adequacy of results frameworks and monitoring and reporting systems were recurrent areas of weakness. In the case of the DWCPs in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, while monitoring frameworks existed, they were not used or operationalised.

The need to adopt a programmatic approach based on longer time perspectives and continuity of engagement, with solid Theories of Change, results chains and roadmaps, supported by robust monitoring and evaluation systems to support adaptation was a recurrent recommendation. This was related to the need for increased quality assurance measures for data collection, monitoring and reporting at all levels, to ensure accuracy and reliability in assessing the effectiveness of interventions, as well as resources set aside for such activities.

Other recommendations related to relevance and coherence included ensuring the active involvement of constituent groups, including employers' and workers' organisations, starting from the design stage, taking into account country contexts to determine what is realistically achievable given the available resources and national capacities. With regards to the DWCPs, a key recommendation was that they should be formally adopted by the Government and social partners, and that the involvement of these constituent groups should begin at the planning/design phase for improved ownership.

EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness of ILO interventions had heterogeneous results, including those related to ILO's cross cutting policy areas. Important areas of work included social protection, youth employment, and the transition from informality to formality. Key results included the production of studies and publications to inform policies, raise awareness, and disseminate knowledge; the development of mechanisms to collect data and the identification of relevant indicators to support evidence-based decisions; the formulation and implementation of strategies, policies and roadmaps, including through social dialogue; capacity building, awareness-raising and advocacy work, leading to changed behaviours and practices. The use and adaptation of existing ILO tools to provide tailored solutions were found to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.

Social protection is one of the key components of the Decent Work Agenda in Africa, and the synthesis review found that ILO efforts supported the implementation of the General Convention on Social Security through capacity building and awareness initiatives, including a toolkit and workshops. In Nigeria, the ILO contributed to the creation of a National Social Protection Policy, while in Côte d'Ivoire, social protection was extended to rural and informal workers, supported by projects like GOUVERNANCE and ACCEL-1 Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the urgent need for progress in social protection for migrant workers. Initiatives aimed to raise awareness, improve health coverage, and contribute to the National health insurance fund. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, such as difficulties in enrolling informal workers and limited impact on gender equity in some projects. The RBSA project also successfully influenced international development banks to adopt social protection approaches in infrastructure projects.

Several interventions addressed youth employment, including through specific programmes to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship for youth, technical and vocational training, and policy development and reform. ILO projects in the sub-region also aimed to improve skills mismatches and skills gaps, and school-to-work transitions of youth. Such initiatives were particularly important in countries with political instability such as Mali and Niger, and in post-conflict contexts such as in Côte d'Ivoire, as they were also linked to a security dimension, in relation of the risks of unskilled, uneducated youth getting involved in crime. There was also evidence of work done at the global-level, including the Employment Policy Action Facility and the ILO Employment Policy Gateway, further supported these goals through capacity-building and knowledge-sharing.

Informality was another important area of work in the sub-region, both at regional and country levels. Important results were achieved in Côte d'Ivoire, where the implementation of a national integrated strategy on the transition from the informal to the formal economy improved working conditions for rural and informal economy workers and led to improved capacities of labour inspectors to work in the informal economy. In contrast, the review of the Nigeria DWCP found that programmatic action on the extension of OSH and social security schemes, particularly to expand decent working conditions in the informal economy and in youth employment were insufficiently addressed, and required further action from tripartite constituents, possibly as strategic priorities for the DWCP III.

Results related to ILO's cross-cutting policy issues were mixed. While there were efforts to promote and apply ILS across various countries, notably through the ratification of several conventions and updated legislation, as well as work on labour inspection and OSH, progress was mixed. Several ILO interventions had specific outputs related to the promotion of social dialogue, and the ILO's unique ability to bring employers, trade unions and governments together was recognised, yet engagement with social partners was noted to be weak in several instances.

There were wide disparities in the depth and quality of information provided related to gender responsiveness, although this policy area was addressed in most evaluations. In contrast, evidence of strategies and actions to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in ILO interventions was very limited overall. Certain interventions had a specific focus on environmental sustainability and the green economy, with work conducted at different levels, from local-level livelihood activities to national strategies and the creation of framework documents for the mainstreaming of just transition principles and approaches into ILO work programmes, with evidence that these were used in DWCPs.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many interventions, leading to delays in implementation. Technical support related to COVID-19 was provided in several countries and the ILO's ability to adapt to the global pandemic, with staff redesigning project activities and adapting them to remote and virtual activities, was underlined in several reports. However, efforts were sometimes hindered by inadequate infrastructure in project countries, limiting the possibilities of conducting virtual activities.

EFFICIENCY

There were variations in the adequacy of financial and human resources and the efficiency of their use. Projects used cost-effective strategies, such as building on synergies and sharing of financial and other resources, in-kind contributions, and recruiting local workers, as well as collaborating with different ILO units and departments to increase human resource efficiencies. Savings were also made through reallocation of funds in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and currency exchange rate fluctuations. There was also evidence of no-cost extensions to improve project delivery.

However, slow recruitment processes, limited staffing, as well as the absence of key project staff delayed the achievement of results in many instances, and created important strains, leading to an overload of responsibilities and reduced efficiencies. This was compounded by the slow speed of financial disbursements, and cumbersome procurement procedures which hindered project implementation and impact and was a recurrent weakness.

In terms of internal coordination, there were many examples of collaboration with other projects, which helped maximize results and overlaps and promoted cost-efficiencies, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. ILO projects built on the achievements and lessons from other ILO initiatives and projects, especially interventions related to labour migration and social protection. Sub-regional interventions partnered with relevant departments in ILO HQ, ILO-ITC, as well as with ACTRAV and ACTEMP specialists in Abuja and Dakar, and technical specialists from DWT in the different country offices, although the implication of the different staff members and specialists varied between projects.

There was evidence of external coordination and partnerships at all levels of implementation, although there were some missed opportunities to reinforce this. The ILO was able to leverage existing partnerships with constituents and partners, facilitating the start-up of projects due to previously established networks and capacities. Evaluations found that the ILO's use of tripartite social dialogue promoted engagement of employers' and workers' organisations along with governments and buy-in of national partners. Including the social partners in project implementation promoted effectiveness and sustainability. The extent and effectiveness of collaboration with other UN agencies was mixed, with some projects working closely with partner agencies to achieve results and maximize resource efficiency, while evaluations also found there were missed opportunities for collaborations, even in the context of the same projects.

In some cases, evaluations noted that ILO could do more to create or enhance certain partnerships and there was a need for stronger coordination and collaboration, to avoid duplication and pool resources to increase impact. Lack of collaboration / coordination with state-level stakeholders was particularly problematic in the context of the Nigeria DWCP. Furthermore, national stakeholders in various countries found that it was challenging to create synergies and collaborations when there was no national ILO representation. Improved strategies for communication, dissemination and visibility of project results and implementation were recommended in several reports.

Efficiency was noted when there was evidence of flexible management approaches with adequate staffing, which enabled field offices to ask for assistance from colleagues in the field, at headquarters, or from specific technical experts, as and when necessary, with clear management structures and arrangements. The use of National Project Coordinators was found to be beneficial as it promoted ownership within ILO and country offices and allowed for greater flexibility to respond to individual contexts in multi-country projects. Overall, however, there were many instances of sub-optimal management set-ups and inefficiencies in processes, exacerbated by the absence of key personnel and delayed appointments of technical specialists.

Only a few projects strategically and effectively allocated their financial, technical and human resources. Slow recruitment processes, limited staffing, as well as the absence of key project staff delayed the achievement of results in many instances, and created important strains, leading to an overload of responsibilities and reduced efficiencies. Another recurrent weakness was related to the slow speed of financial disbursements, and cumbersome procurement procedures which hindered implementation and progress in planned activities. There were several examples of interventions having only spent a small portion of their budget while reaching the end of the planned timeframe, due to delays in staffing, access to funds, and delays in project implementation.

Several evaluation reports recommended that the complexity of financial management arrangements for the Africa Region should be simplified. Furthermore, procurement and financial procedures should be adapted when ILO interventions are based in countries in crisis/emergency situations and streamlined with processes of UN humanitarian agencies on the ground. Several mid-term evaluations also recommended no-cost extensions.

With regards to resource mobilization, involving national institutions in fund mobilization strategies, and developing resource mobilization initiatives within a regional strategy framework were found to be good practices, Public-private sector collaboration and cost-sharing mechanism in the CLEAR project in Côte d'Ivoire was another good practice. The outcome-based funding approach was found to be adapted to crisis situations, as it allows to adapt initiatives carried out within a programme without putting the goals at risk, both at global and country levels.

The review noted trends suggesting that countries with ILO country offices generally experienced higher effectiveness and efficiency. Several lessons emerged about ILO's country presence and working processes in the African Region, particularly in reporting and budgeting, which were often inefficient and caused important delays. Although DWTs and ILO country offices could support projects in countries where ILO is a "non-resident" agency, this had limitations, and there was emphasis on the need for project offices and key staff to be in operating environments with effective administrative and financial support This was especially the case when projects and implementing partners were faced with ILO financial and procurement procedures, leading to delays in payments. Projects in countries that did not have an ILO office with a bank account could not easily receive funds and pay contractors.

Additionally, RBSA seed funding was found to be more likely to enhance the ILO project portfolio in countries where the ILO is a resident agency actively involved in the UNCT. A related recommendation was that when allocating RBSA resources, less projects with higher funding are preferable to more projects with reduced budgets, to ensure the relevance of investments. Moreover, to effectively implement RBSA projects in the peace and resilience context, countries should be prioritized where established office structures are available.

In some countries, inadequate infrastructure, including poor road networks, insufficient transportation facilities, limited access to electricity, and unreliable internet connectivity also hindered the delivery of project activities. Connectivity limitations posed particular challenges to the effectiveness of virtual project activities as a response to Covid-19 work adaptations.

SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

Although results were mixed, there was some evidence of sustainability and ownership of results generated by ILO interventions in Western Africa, including through the appropriation of strategies and approaches by constituents, and the setting aside of resources to build on progress and achievements. This was exemplified through the participatory development of national action plans and strategies, the development and validation of specific protocols and agreements; the ratification of ILO Conventions; the institutionalization of knowledge and tools; and transfer of infrastructure to local cooperatives and unions; among others. There were a few instances of follow-up phases or new projects based on existing ILO interventions.

The inclusion and participation of constituent groups and stakeholders was crucial in ensuring sustainability and was found to be a good practice, particularly in contexts with political instability, high turnover in government officials, and/or low ownership, and was found to strengthen tripartism. Allowing national constituents to lead processes, in combination with a "penholder" approach, encouraged ownership and contributed to effective implementation.

Several recurring challenges related to sustainability and impact were identified in the reports, with the most frequent being related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, administrative and recruitment delays, and political and institutional instability. Projects combining wide thematic scopes and implementation in many countries can limit the achievement of depth of impact. Another important challenge was the lack of sustainability frameworks and exit strategies, along with associated resource mobilization plans.

There was also evidence of improvements of Decent Work conditions and impact due to ILO interventions. This was promoted through tripartite social dialogue, involvement of constituents and other stakeholders in the project cycle, and the use of strategic partnerships to build on achieved results. Changes in mindsets, behaviours and practices were highlighted several times. ILO interventions were particularly appreciated in areas facing issues of child labour, forced labour, and political insecurity. In many cases, however, evaluations found that while some progress could be associated with ILO interventions, impact was difficult to assess due to lack of sound data and monitoring mechanisms, as well as resource issues, and weak or unstable institutional contexts and on-going security concerns. Delays in implementation in many of the interventions reviewed also hindered progress and limited the achievement of results. A recurring finding was that a longer programmatic approach was required to achieve impact. Addressing these challenges is essential to enhancing the overall effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of ILO interventions in the region.

1. INTRODUCTION

The ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) is to undertake an independent High-level Evaluation (HLE) of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme Strategies and Activities in Western Africa, with emphasis on Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and the Regional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (2018-2023). The evaluation was included in the rolling work plan for high-level evaluations of EVAL reconfirmed by the Governing Body in November 2023 for implementation in 2024 for presentation and discussion at ILO Governing body in November 2024.

As part of this HLE, EVAL is commissioning a synthesis review of project evaluation reports covering interventions implemented in the evaluation period (2018-2023) in the Western Africa subregion[1]. The synthesis review findings are considered as an essential element of the HLE. They will inform the inception and data collection and analysis phases of the HLE and will be triangulated with direct observation and other data collection sources to form overall conclusions and recommendations on the ILO's work and results in Western Africa.

This review aims to contribute to EVAL's formative mandate, by focusing on the identification of trends or recurring themes associated with evaluation recommendations, significant lessons learned, and emerging good practices associated with the ILO's efforts in this area of work. Findings related to the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, sustainability and impact of relevant ILO development cooperation projects are synthesized, based on available project-level evaluations and DWCP reviews.

Following this brief introduction, the methodology used for the synthesis review is described, including the key questions addressed, the selection of reports, and the approach to synthesise information, as well as limitations to the study. The findings are then presented and structured according to OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and key areas of interest for the ILO.

1 ILO administratively organises the Africa region in 6 subregions. Western Africa subregion covers 9 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo.

2. METHODOLOGY

This synthesis review consists of a desk-based review of ILO TC/DC-funded project evaluations[2] of ILO interventions and reviews of Decent Work Country Programmes conducted between 2018 and 2023, in countries of the Western Africa sub-region and ECOWAS, with a particular focus on the HLE countries of focus: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria, and ILO activities with ECOWAS.

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

This synthesis review aims to highlight key trends, recurring themes, recommendations, lessons learned and good practices from evaluation reports of ILO's interventions in the Western Africa subregion and ECOWAS and reviews of DWCPs, guided by the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, as expressed by the evaluators. When sufficient, good quality information was available, the following questions were addressed:

Relevance and coherence

- To what extent have ILO's interventions been relevant to the needs of constituents and final beneficiaries, including vulnerable groups? To what extent, and how were ILO constituents actively involved in all stages of ILO interventions and DWCP planning, design and implementation?
- To what extent was ILO's work aligned with national, regional and international development frameworks, including the ECOWAS DWP, DWCPs, CPOs and ILO P&B Outcomes?
- To what extent is ILO's work aligned with SDGs? How is ILO's work integrated with, and complementing work under a common UN system of work?
- To what extent are ToCs and project designs coherent and realistic? Is there evidence that ILO was responsive to changes in socio-political contexts? Were there adequate monitoring and reporting systems in place to adapt to changing contexts?

Effectiveness

- How effective have ILO interventions been to promote the Decent Work Agenda, especially with regards to social protection, youth employment, informality, environmental sustainability and just transition and social dialogue?
- What are the trends regarding progress to achieve results on other cross-cutting issues: gender equality and non-discrimination, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, normative work and the promotion and application of ILS?
- What are the key result areas of ILO interventions in the sub-region?

Sustainability and Impact

- Is there evidence that ILO interventions have been designed and implemented in ways that have maximized ownership and sustainability at country level, including the development of exit strategies?
- Is there evidence that ILO results may be maintained, scaled up, or replicated by project partners once interventions are completed?

2 Final, mid-term, independent and internal

- To what extent have ILO actions had impact in addressing Decent Work needs in Western Africa? Have constituents been provided with the necessary tools and policy improvements to make significant positive changes in Decent Work conditions for different groups, including the most vulnerable populations (youth, women, PwD, migrants, etc)?
- Is there evidence of increased sustainability or impact of ILO work at country-level due to work at sub-regional (ECOWAS)-level?

Operational and resource efficiency

- To what extent have management arrangements at different levels been effective? Was there a difference in projects with/without a country office?
- Was the level of ILO technical, programmatic, administrative and financial support adequate to promote the achievement of results?
- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Were projects appropriately and adequately resourced to deliver planned results?
- How has ILO external coordination (with constituents, United Nations (UN) partners, and donors) and internal coordination (between sectors, technical departments, regions and sub regions) promoted the achievement of outcomes? To what extent have partnerships been leveraged to optimize efficiencies?

The following questions were also addressed, with varying levels of detail depending on the information available in the reports:

- What good practices and lessons are reflected in the evaluation reports? Do evaluations show certain recurring challenges that the interventions should have addressed?
- What kind of recommendations have been made by the evaluations under review? Are there areas where recommendations seem to recur?

SELECTION OF REPORTS

A three-step process was followed to identify the 20 most relevant reports.

1. Initially, evaluation reports were identified though a key-word search in i-eval Discovery, EVAL's public evaluation database, filtering by dates between 2018 and 2023. The keywords used were "Africa", "ECOWAS", "Benin", "Burkina Faso", "Cote d'Ivoire", "Ghana", "Liberia", "Niger", "Nigeria", "Sierra Leone" and "Togo". Additionally, a search for multi-country/global evaluations within the specified timeframe was conducted, with reports scanned to identify any inclusion of countries covered by this HLE. A total of 35 reports were identified.

2. In collaboration with EVAL, a matrix covering the 35 reports was prepared for this review, and providing information on type, timing and nature of the evaluation; regional coverage; countries covered; funding source; and year of evaluation completion, among others.

   A filtering criterion was applied to check for duplications. When both mid-term and final evaluation reports existed for the same project, only the final evaluation report was short-listed as they often contain a more comprehensive analysis of the project evaluated. This resulted in a short-list of 30 reports3 including cluster, joint, independent, internal, external, final and mid-term evaluations.

3 See Annex 1 for a list of-selected reports

3. Different elements were considered in the final selection of reports, based on a purposive sampling approach. Applying these criteria led to the identification of 20 reports available in Annex 1.

   Type of document: All independent and internal evaluation reports were considered.

   Time-period: Reports of evaluations which took place between 2018 and 2023[4].

   Content and quality of the evaluation reports: in order to achieve robust and reliable results, the quality of the evaluation reports was assessed on the basis of reports being comprehensive, complete, evidence-based and providing information relevant to the questions addressed in this synthesis review. Reports not providing relevant/sufficient information regarding work done in the countries covered by the HLE may be excluded, as well as reports without recommendations, lessons learned and emerging good practices (when applicable).

   In cases where evaluation reports covered global/multi-country projects that included some of the countries within the Western Africa sub-region, a content analysis approach was employed to assess the availability and adequacy of data pertaining to these countries. Reports were excluded if the evidence available was deemed insufficient to provide meaningful insights for the synthesis review. This approach ensured that only reports containing sufficient data on the Western African countries were included in the synthesis review, thereby maintaining the integrity and reliability of the analysis. Criteria related to content for the inclusion/exclusion of reports to be considered for review are summarized in Figure 1.

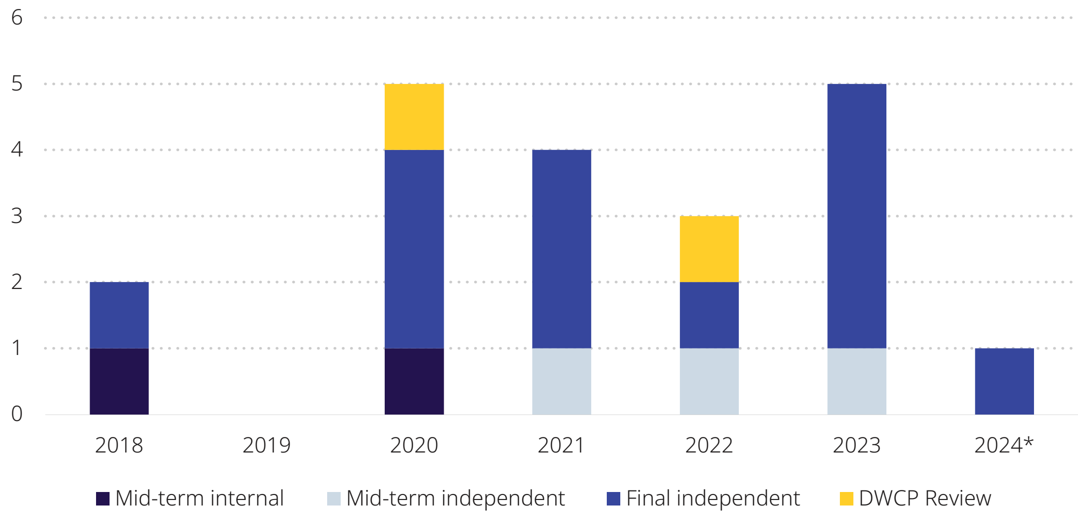
FIGURE *1*. FINAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA - CONTENT

Inclusion	Possible inclusion or exclusion	Exclusion
▶ The report evaluates interventions that have taken place in one or several countries covered by the HLE, and the countries of focus in particular. ▶ The report provides relevant and adequate information on ILO's interventions in the countries covered by this HLE. ▶ The evaluator(s) went on field visits and/or interviewed key stakeholders in the countries covered by the HLE	▶ The report provides some relevant information on ILO's interventions in the countries covered by this HLE. ▶ The report is based on a joint evaluation and there is some attribution to ILO's work. ▶ Several reports cover similar work done in the same country and on similar thematic areas	▶ Findings related to the countries covered by the HLE are limited and/or only based on a desk review ▶ The evaluation did not conduct interviews with tripartite constituents of the countries covered by the HLE. ▶ The report does not provide relevant/ sufficient findings on ILO's work in the countries covered by the HLE.

The final selection included two internal mid-term evaluation reports, three independent mid-term evaluation reports, two DWCP Reviews and 13 independent final evaluation reports, which were completed in 2018 (2), 2020 (5), 2021 (4), 2022 (3), 2023 (5), and 2024 (1) as shown in Figure 2.

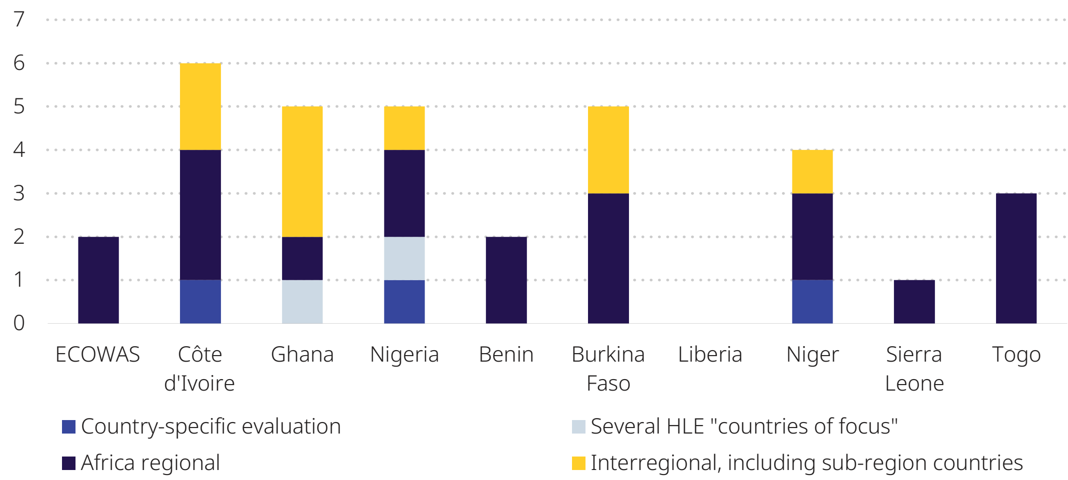
4 During the inception phase of this review, the final independent evaluation the ACCEL-I Africa project was completed. Its mid-term evaluation conducted in 2022 was initially selected as part of the sample. In agreement with EVAL, the mid-term evaluation was replaced by the final evaluation report from 2024.

FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED EVALUATION REPORTS BY YEAR, TIMING AND NATURE (N=20)



The coverage of countries by the 20 selected evaluation reports can be segmented into various categories as shown in Figure 3. Some evaluations (3) specifically focused on individual countries, while another focused on interventions across several HLE countries of focus (1). Furthermore, certain reports (8) provided coverage of interventions in several countries, sometimes extending beyond the sub-region to include other African countries. There were also evaluations (7) of inter-regional interventions that included countries within the sub-region.

FIGURE 3. COVERAGE OF COUNTRIES IN WESTERN AFRICA SUBREGION AND ECOWAS IN SELECTED EVALUATION REPORTS



COLLATION OF FINDINGS BASED ON THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

The appraisal of the reports in the final list was done in a systematic manner. Information regarding key findings of the evaluation reports, recommendations, lessons learned, and emerging good practices related to ILO's work in the Western Africa sub-region was extracted and presented in a matrix.

A qualitative thematic synthesis was conducted, based on the evaluation criteria addressed in the questions, the topic areas covered, and the countries of focus, to the extent possible. Findings are illustrated with evaluative evidence from evaluation reports.

Alongside the qualitative analysis, evaluation reports were rated along the key evaluation criteria, based on the findings and evidence they provided. EVAL's six-point scale was used to score the reports based on the key OECD/DAC criteria (see Table 1 below). The ratings were applied to the final set of reports included in the review when there was sufficient, good quality information on performance related to results in the countries covered by the HLE. These scores provided additional data for the High-level Evaluation team to inform their overall ratings, alongside their own assessment and survey results. This information is presented in Annex 2.

TABLE 1. EVAL'S SIX-POINT SCALE TO SCORE REPORTS

Highly unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Somewhat unsatisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
1	2	3	4	5	6
Expected results have not been attained, and there have been important shortcomings. Resources have not been utilized effectively and/or efficiently.	Objectives have not been attained and the level of performance shows major shortcomings and is not considered fully acceptable in the view of ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries.	Objectives have been partially attained and the level of performance shows minor shortcomings and is not considered fully acceptable in the view of ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries.	Objectives have been partially attained, and the expected performance level could be mostly considered coherent with expectations of national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself.	Objectives have been mostly attained and the expected level of performance can be considered coherent with expectations of national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself.	ILO performance has produced outcomes which go beyond the expectations of national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries, and the ILO, with expressed specific comparative advantages and added value, and emerging best practices.

DRAFTING THE SYNTHESIS REVIEW REPORT

This synthesis report used the questions provided in the Terms of Reference to describe and analyse the main trends regarding the selected countries for ILO's work in countries in the Western Africa sub-region, with a particular focus on Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and ECOWAS. The review mainly highlights evaluation results, recommendations and lessons learned, as well as emerging good practices, when relevant.

To address risk of bias and to ensure quality control, the methods used in this review have been presented in an explicit and transparent manner.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this synthesis review was that not all evaluation questions could be addressed fully due to limitations in the quality, breadth and depth of the evaluative evidence available in the evaluation reports. In such cases, findings related to specific questions that had limited coverage were included in other parts of the review, rather than in a stand-alone section. There were also instances where the analysis matrix was difficult to complete due to evaluation reports not providing sufficient information on certain areas.

In addition, since many of the evaluation reports took a cluster approach and/or focused on multiple countries, including some that were not covered by the HLE, the evidence available was not consistently related to the countries under review, limiting the depth of analysis[5]. This also limited the possibility of rating the reports using EVAL's six-point scale. Nevertheless, any information deemed to be relevant to inform the HLE was highlighted in the narrative of this synthesis review.

5 This was also the case for internal evaluation reports.

KEY FINDINGS

This section presents the main findings[6] related to relevance, coherence and validity of design; effectiveness; efficiency; sustainability and impact; good practices and lessons learned; and recommendations in more detail.

What are the main types of interventions supported by the ILO in the Western Africa sub-region?

Various topics were addressed by the projects evaluated, with some interventions focusing on a range of topics, including labour migration, child labour and forced labour, livelihoods for refugees and host communities, youth employment, skills development, environmental sustainability and the green economy, as well as social protection, the informal economy, and employment creation in post-conflict contexts.

Two of the reports included in this synthesis review were reviews of DWCPs in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. These were the only DWCPs completed and evaluated during the HLE evaluation timeframe.

3.1 RELEVANCE, COHERENCE AND VALIDITY OF DESIGN

To what extent have the ILO's interventions been relevant to the needs of constituents and final beneficiaries, including vulnerable groups? To what extent, and how were ILO constituents actively involved in all stages of ILO interventions and DWCP planning, design and implementation?

ILO interventions responded to the priorities and needs of both constituent groups and final beneficiaries in many cases, although there were variations between countries and projects. There was evidence that project and programme teams used different approaches to ensure alignment with stakeholder needs, including bipartite, tripartite and beneficiary group consultations, extensive and inclusive scoping stages, presentation and validation workshops, diagnostic studies, establishing links to DWCPs and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) programming, consideration of regional/national strategies and policies and associated documentation, and collaborations with national institutional partners, partner UN agencies and NGOs. The use of country-studies and needs assessments at the design stage were found to play a significant role in ensuring that interventions were adapted to local contexts and identifying key entry-points, challenges and relevant actors (E8, E10).

While the Côte d'Ivoire DWCP responded to national priorities, and was designed using a participatory and inclusive approach, it was not formally adopted by the Government, and was not validated through a tripartite workshop, leading to challenges in implementation. In Nigeria, the priorities, expected outcomes and suggested activities for DWCP implementation were agreed by consensus among government and social partners.

6 Specific examples are referenced using "E#" in the text, with the full list of evaluation reports used in this review available in Annex 1.

The SIDA-ILO partnership interventions were found to respond or contribute to country priorities, as country interventions were normally selected in response to specific requests from governments or based on previous work in the area (E15). The "penholder" approach[7] used by the ILO in Ghana, where expertise was provided to support national stakeholders with guidance and direction of discussions, and national consultants were recruited to support the draft of national action plans, was found to be very effective to ensure that their needs were addressed and met (E11).

Nevertheless, several reports noted challenges, with lack of appropriate constituent engagement being a recurring issue, sometimes due to limited social dialogue in project countries, disinterest, or poor planning. One evaluation noted that there was an ongoing challenge in balancing the expectations of constituents with the objectives of a skills programme, and available resources, leading to tensions, with evidence that overall, there were concerns from stakeholders about not being adequately informed and involved in the development, implementation and oversight of the interventions. In Ghana, this led to certain targets not being met due to lack of commitment from the government, and there was a lack of systematic involvement of social partners (E2).

Similarly, while there was evidence that a project aiming to extend social protection access and portability to migrant workers and their families through selected RECs was a priority of the African Union Commission (AUC), and was in line with ECOWAS objectives, the intervention expected was much larger than the final project, and various factors led to the project almost being cancelled due to unrealistic proposals, although a compromise was ultimately reached (E6). In another case, while a project in Burkina Faso on youth employment responded to the general needs of institutions and target groups, many stakeholders found that there was a mismatch in the specific focus of the project and actual needs, as the intervention did not consider the informal and rural sector, leading to important missed opportunities (E13). An EU-funded inter-regional intervention to reduce child and forced labour in the cotton sector in several countries, including Burkina Faso, was initially designed as a concept in ILO HQ, in consultation with ILO Country Offices, who were asked to agree on the final selection of countries and confirm alignment with DWCPs. Country Offices were in direct contact with EU delegations but did not engage directly with constituents and partners to develop the project approach, although there was engagement with these groups during the inception phase, to share the overall strategic intent of the project and to formulate individual national action plans, including with Employers' and Workers' Organisations and Producer Organisations, and there was also evidence of direct involvement of beneficiaries during implementation (E18).

To what extent was ILO's work aligned with national, regional and international development frameworks, including the ECOWAS DWP, DWCPs, CPOs and ILO P&B Outcomes? To what extent is ILO's work aligned with SDGs? How is ILO's work integrated with, and complementing work under a common UN system of work?

Many reports provided evidence of interventions being linked to relevant Programme and Budget Outcomes, as well as links to the priorities of Decent Work Country Programmes and Country Programme Outcomes, and the ECOWAS sub-regional Decent Work Programme, although there were disparities in the depth of evidence provided, and a few reports did not address this topic at all. References to various ILO and regional and international development frameworks were also present in reports.

The DWCPs in Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire were found to be in full alignment with the Decent Work Agenda for Africa, the priorities of the Addis Ababa Declaration of 2013, the respective UNDAF Frameworks, and the ILO P&B, as well as other national and regional development frameworks.

7 According to the evaluation, "The 'penholder' approach is where the ILO provides experts for guidance and direction of the discussions among the national stakeholders and hires national consultants to support the drafting of the action plans. The national task teams deliberate, make decisions, and "dictate" the content of the action plans." (E11)

Certain country-level interventions were found to complement the broader objectives outlined in the ILO's Decent Work Agenda for Africa, and to align with specific thematic strategies and ILS, such as the ILO's Global Skills Strategy for Lifelong Learning (GSPL3); the ILO's Human Resources Development Recommendation (No. 195); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); (iii) Forced Labour Convention (No.29); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); and Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930; the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work; the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Africa (2020-22); IPEC+; The ILO Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy; the ILO's Integrated Strategy on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2017-2023; the ILO's Jobs for Peace and Resilience Flagship Programme; the ILO Centenary Initiative on Enterprises on Labour Policies and Practices in Supply Chains; and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

There were instances of lightly earmarked thematic funding at the level of Outcomes/Cross-cutting policy drivers from the ILO P&B and Decent Work Priorities, through partnerships such as the Sida-ILO Partnership Programme 2018-2021 (E3, E15). This outcome-based funding modality effectively contributed to reinforcing the ILO's work in core areas identified in its Programme and Budget for a given period and was found to be highly pertinent and embedded within ILO's institutional activity, contributing to the overall achievement of specific P&B Outcomes, and initiatives were fully aligned with the objectives pursued in DWCPs.

Many evaluations found that project objectives and designs showed a clear orientation towards a commitment to achieving SDG targets, with some providing evidence of work towards national priorities supported by the UN, including UNDAF and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Partnership (UNSDP), sometimes providing information of contributions to specific Outcomes and Outputs.

A key priority area for many ILO interventions, as well as the Côte d'Ivoire DWCP, was SDG8, which aims to foster sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, along with some of its targets[8] (E1, E2, E4, E5, E9, E11, E13, E15, E18). In particular, several interventions aimed to make progress towards Target 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda. Interventions were also aligned with SDG 1, SDG2, SDG4, SDG 5, SDG 10, and SDG 13.

There were some missed opportunities and limitations regarding alignment and contributions to SDGs. For instance, the Niger/regional component of the French-funded Alliance 8.7 project, a global partnership committed to achieving target 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda, did not include baseline data or indicators related to the different dimensions of Target 8.7, and despite what was initially planned in the PRODOC, there were no links found with Alliance 8.7 countries, or any coordination at the regional level (E1). In one case, while the document review revealed that the PRODOC did not address the project's alignment with UNSDCF, alignment could be derived from the project's activities (E11). In certain cases, there was evidence that this alignment was reinforced through collaboration with other UN agencies; this is discussed in more detail in the Efficiency section.

To what extent are Theories of change (ToCs) and project designs coherent and realistic? Is there evidence that ILO was responsive to changes in socio-political contexts?

While project objectives were often found to be coherent, in many cases, aspects of their designs were not realistic, due to their short timeframes and limited resources, combined with poor national capacities and/or complex socio-political contexts in which they were expected to operate. On several occasions, evaluations noted that resources were spread too thinly across many countries or partners, limiting the depth of impact, and that future interventions should consider a more focused design. Lack of sustainability plans and exit strategies were also challenges found in reports.

8 SDG Targets 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8

The DWCPs were formulated to follow on previous phases, based on lessons learned and a participatory approach to their designs, where priority areas were identified in a tripartite manner, and results frameworks, implementation plans and monitoring plans were developed. Both DWCPs were found to be evaluable, but the Review of the Nigeria DWCP found that none of these elements were used, and that the lack of a functional Steering Committee was an important challenge.

There were many instances where results frameworks had logical cause-and-effect linkages between different levels, yet indicators focused on activities and outputs, with limited possibilities to assess outcomes and impact. Moreover, there was often confusion between indicators for these different levels, showing a recurring weakness, especially in the absence of ToCs, baselines and targets. In the case of a regional project, while the Logical Framework was complete and logical, the implementation approach was overambitious, as the AUC expected a much larger budget than what was allocated by the EU, yet no modifications were made to the initial design (E6). RBSA-funded projects were found to have weak intervention logic, as activities and outputs were linked to P&B outcomes, and a "missing middle" in the results chain. This was combined with limited timeframes and and modest budgets, with project assumptions that did not hold; in Sierra Leone, the project approach counted on government co-financing, which did not take place, yet the project design was not adapted, despite the flexibility of RBSA modalities to do so (E10). Similarly, the GOUVERNANCE project did not conduct a risk analysis, and did not update its design based on challenges faced, nor did it consider key findings of its mid-term evaluation conducted in 2018, negatively affecting performance (E9).

Well-designed interventions had logical frameworks and ToCs which considered recommendations from previous evaluations and lessons from earlier phases, leading to more consolidated and coherent programmes. However, there were also instances where weaknesses were found, for instance when certain activities in one phase were not taken to the next phase for various reasons, despite showing promising initial results. The design of the GOUVERNANCE project and its PRODOC was found to be an important weakness, as there was no ToC, a problematic intervention logic, inadequate indicators and unrealistic expectations. Although the mid-term evaluation recommended that an in-depth revision be done, this was not the case, leading to important implementation challenges. This was exacerbated by a rigid implementation approach, which did not adapt to the difficulties faced by the project (E9). Also, while some project designs included the development of baseline assessment activities to better understand the needs of beneficiaries and key stakeholders, these studies were not done in time to significantly influence the project design (E8). In other areas, established lessons learned and good practices were not taken into account in project designs, limiting opportunities for impact (E13)

Not all interventions had clearly formulated theories of change or logical frameworks. In the regional component of the French-funded Alliance 8.7 project, the dimensions related to Indicator 8.7 (child labour and forced labour) were not included in the ToC, and the links between the regional and global components were found to be practically absent. Furthermore, the two-year project timeframe was underestimated, especially since key activities were related to rehabilitation of land and tree planting, which usually need 3-5 years to lead to initial results (E1). Also, regarding project duration, the evaluation of the CLEAR project noted that the introduction of countries at different stages of the project life cycle was advantageous for countries included from the start, while the duration was too short for those which were enrolled later (E17).

In the case of an ILO-FAO joint project, funded by the EU, a Results Orientated Monitoring (ROM) review led to a update in specific objectives, which shifted the project from taking a broader focus at the national level to one with a more targeted approach, working through key stakeholders and directly with communities and beneficiaries. Lack of baselines and assessments led to challenges in the design, yet the evaluation found that research methodologies developed through the project would benefit project constituents (E18).

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many interventions, with restrictions to movements, international travel, public gatherings and face-to-face interactions, leading to delays in implementation, and sometimes limited results. Key activities such as capacity-building activities, south-south cooperation initiatives, technical studies, workshops and other events were often postponed or cancelled. In several reports, the ILO was commended for its ability to adapt to the global pandemic, with staff redesigning project activities and adapting them to remote and virtual activities. There were many examples of in-person workshops and trainings being organised through virtual means, through videoconferences, teleconferences, and online workshops. In some cases, the pandemic revealed that there were inadequacies in employment legislation when it came to teleworking and part-time work. The ILO also provided support directly linked to COVID-19, such as technical assistance to develop decrees against the impact of COVID-19 on work-related issues in Côte d'Ivoire and the production of protective equipment by beneficiaries in Niger, as well as training on OSH measures in the context of the pandemic. Nevertheless, there was some evidence that certain projects adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the ACCEL-I Africa project, with multiple adaptations and temporary solutions implemented to guarantee continuity of action (E8). The Clear Cotton project also pro-active measures in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, including revising its logical framework, the development of a COVID-19 contingency plan, national and global awareness-raising around the links between COVID-19 and child labour, and enhancement of training programmes across all countries to include COVID-19 responses and strategies (E18). There were some challenges noted, however, especially in countries with insufficient connectivity and appropriate technology to fully take advantage of new virtual working modalities.

In a few instances, interventions were designed as the COVID-19 pandemic was underway, such as the Alliance 8.7 component in Niger, and contingency plans were developed to limit risks. However, in spite of this, there were important delays, exacerbated by unstable political conditions (E1). Another intervention in Niger had specific recommendations linked to COVID-19 and political insecurity in its mid-term evaluation, which were addressed in the final part of the project, namely that projects should last for at least 3 years in politically unstable contexts and should have adequate resources to ensure the safety of staff members. Furthermore, the ILO was encouraged to streamline its internal processes to allow project to adapt to new situations, and to align them with security procedures of other local UN organisations (E4). In a different context, there was some evidence of adaptation in Ghana after the government imposed a ban on small-scale mining, and the ILO decided to suspend activities related to mining operations in local communities. Finally, the SIDA outcome-based funding approach was found to allow for swift adaptation, even in a context like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Were there adequate monitoring and reporting systems in place to adapt to changing contexts?

The adequacy of monitoring and reporting systems was an area of weakness overall. There were two instances where monitoring, evaluation and and reporting systems were found to be efficient and flexible, allowing interventions to quickly respond to changes in context (E11, E14). Nevertheless, there were challenges noted in the associated evaluations, with one finding that the Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) development process was particularly long and resource-intensive, with evidence of project staff and M&E officers feeling that at times, they were more focused on finishing the CMEP than on implementing project activities (E14); while the other noted that the results framework did not contain indicators to monitor progress related to project activities, with ILO only reporting whether or not they had been achieved (E11). Another evaluation found that the project CMEP effectively served accountability and donor reporting needs, but it was less useful to monitor and serve as a management tool to adjust the course of the project, due to its complexity and number of indicators (E17). The ACCEL-I Africa project set up a "Direct Beneficiary Monitoring and Reporting" (DBMR) mechanism to monitor project actions and gain an overall overview of activities and beneficiaries of the project. However, the DBMR allowed to obtain insights into overall progress and achievements, it lacked accuracy due to variability in the quality of data collection (E8).

Some interventions had dedicated M&E officers, and there were efforts to build on mid-term evaluations to improve implementation, although this was variable. The frequency, depth and quality of technical progress reports was variable, with a few acknowledging limitations in achieving expected targets and outputs. Monitoring and reporting was often influenced by ILO or donor requirements, which sometimes limited the depth of information captured. For instance, the capturing and reporting of results was often at the output level in SIDA-funded "lightly-earmarked" interventions, where results were reported in narrative form on an annual basis (E3). The Outcome-focused SIPP interventions had no systematised monitoring mechanisms, and there was no way to measure how SIDA financing contributed to the achievement of specific P&B Outputs, or how it contributed at the level of specific indicators (E15). Yearly progress reports focused on results, but did not require detailed analysis of processes, performance, problems, or unexpected issues, with the expectation that evaluation reports would address these points (E15). In terms of the RBSA-funded interventions, the project designs were described as "M&E blind" by a cluster evaluation, and the evaluator noted that this limitation was also highlighted in a review of RBSA projects in the ILO (E10).

Overall, ILO interventions had inadequate monitoring and reporting mechanisms, which limited the possibility of adaptation. Recurring challenges were related to lack of baselines, targets, and poor or missing indicators at all levels. Even when monitoring frameworks had been developed, their logical clarity was often poor. Overly complex systems due to extensive number of indicators focusing on outputs, combined with limited information to assess overall progress on outcomes and impacts did not allow project teams to adapt the implementation of interventions. In such cases, even when output indicators were precise and easy to measure, they were of little value in measuring the effects of an intervention. In some cases, these challenges were exacerbated by indicators that were poorly defined or difficult to measure. Other interventions focused on higher-level outcomes that were not possible to measure. Resource constraints also led to certain M&E mechanisms not being implemented, or limiting their quality and thus usefulness, thus limiting the possibility of adapting interventions based on the available evidence.

In the case of the DWCPs in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, while monitoring frameworks existed, they were not used or operationalised. In Côte d'Ivoire, in the context of the DWCP 2017-2020, although a DWCP implementation workplan and monitoring plans were developed and linked to work plans of certain partners, none of these plans were implemented since the Government did not sign the DWCP, and the Steering Committee was not functional. There were no field monitoring missions or monitoring reports produced. In Nigeria, although the DWCP also had a detailed results framework, implementation plan, and monitoring plan, these were not used to monitor/assess the implementation and outcomes of the DWCP, due to a lack of governance mechanism in place, compounded by limited financial resources available. As a result, there was no systematic collection of evidence on DWCP results for the 2015-2018 period.

EFFECTIVENESS

How effective have ILO interventions been to promote the Decent Work Agenda, especially with regards to social protection, youth employment, and informality?

Social protection

Social protection is one of the key components of the Decent Work Agenda in Africa, and ECOWAS has a binding social security multilateral agreement, the General Convention on Social Security, adopted by its member states in 2013. The ILO promoted capacity building and awareness raising on the General Convention through a Training of Trainers and a toolkit, as well as a High-Level capacity building workshop on extending social protection to migrant workers and their families and included a portability component in ILO's Social Security Inquiry questionnaire (E6).

The implementation of the DWCP in Nigeria contributed to the elaboration of a National Social Protection Policy, which includes several components related to the world of work. Social protection was also a core element of the DWCP in Côte d'Ivoire, as it was extended to rural workers and workers in the informal economy, in the context of the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Diagnostic studies of social security for the implementation of a National Social Security Strategy highlighted deficits related to the capacities and coordination of key actors in this area of work. Progress was made on the "Universal Health Coverage" (CMU) to protect workers in Côte d'Ivoire, through the GOUVERNANCE project, with support to unions to promote and raise awareness on the extension of social protection to informal workers in Abidjan's markets. In addition, the ACCEL-1 Africa project focused on extending social protection to cocoa-producing farmers, by contributing to the National health insurance fund, having the private sector assist cooperatives by financing the payment of CMU cards, and through raising awareness of the importance of social protection schemes (E9). In the case of the ACCEL-I Africa efforts, it was noted that this initiative was restricted to "heads of families", thus limiting the scope of influence, and having an impact on gender equity. Awareness-raising campaigns also targeted domestic workers. Despite these initiatives, the DWCP review found that the implementation of the CMU was still problematic, because it was difficult to enrol informal workers, and because it required further legal and normative grounding.

There were several interventions that aimed to extend social protection to migrant workers, and evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic made stakeholders realise the importance and urgency of making progress in this area (E6, E12) There were mixed results related to the provision of social protection services to target communities involved in gold mining in Ghana, including health insurance registration, cash assistance, and access to school feeding programmes (E14). Finally, there was evidence that an RBSA project successfully advocated for the World Bank and German Development Bank to take social protection approach to infrastructure development (E10).

Youth employment

Several interventions had components or a specific focus on youth employment. Both the Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria DWCP reviews highlighted initiatives which promoted youth employment and employability of young women and men. This took various forms, including specific programmes to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship for youth; enhanced capacities of technical and vocational and training institutions focusing on youth; support to youth in terms of skilled employability; and policy development and reform through social dialogue, such as a National Youth Policy in Nigeria and Draft Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan, as well as Strategic Development Plans of specific youth-employment institutions in Côte d'Ivoire. ILO projects in the sub-region also aimed to improve skills mismatches and skills gaps, and school-to-work transitions of youth. Evaluators found that such initiatives were particularly important in countries with political instability such as Mali and Niger, and in post-conflict contexts such as in Côte d'Ivoire, as they were also linked to a security dimension, in relation of the risks of unskilled, uneducated youth getting involved in crime (E7). The Alliance 8.7 project in Niger found that providing work to young adults contributed to reduce youth unemployment and avoided their enrolment in criminal activities (E1). The ILO also supported academia and industry players in Ghana to address the issue of skills mismatches, an important cause of graduate employment (E11). Quality apprenticeships in Burkina Faso was also a key area of work in the context of the Global Initiative for Youth Employment in the Sahel; however, one limitation found was that pilot trainings implemented through the project did not take into account the informal sector, or the rural sector, and that more could have been done to ensure the sustainability of measures related to youth transitions to the labour market (E13).

Support was provided through capacity-building, studies, technical meetings, and recruitment of consultants, as well as participation of tripartite delegations in youth entrepreneurship and youth employment conferences, forums and webinars, and the establishment of national employment agencies and programmes, with a specific youth component. There was also evidence of work done at the global level, such as the setting up of an Employment Policy Action Facility through the ILO/

Sida Partnership based on knowledge generated through ILO interventions, which interfaced with the Action Plan for Youth Employment 2020-2030 endorsed by the ILO GB, and the ILO Employment Policy Gateway, a global repository on national employment policies and youth employment strategies (E15).

Informality

An important area of work in the sub-region was related to informality, both at regional and country levels. For instance, the regional component of the ILO-Norway-funded skills programme was found to play a crucial role in addressing informal, low-skilled labour migration in the African region, by focusing on mutual skills recognition and competency harmonization between countries of origin and destination, including in Nigeria, Ghana and Togo (E2). Important results were achieved in Côte d'Ivoire, where the implementation of a national integrated strategy on the transition from the informal to the formal economy improved working conditions for rural and informal economy workers and led to improved capacities of labour inspectors to work in the informal economy. A gender-sensitive monitoring system to assess progress forwards formality was implemented, and statistics on informality were regularly published by the Institut National de la Statistique. More specific examples from the APERP III, GOUVERNANCE, and ACCEL-I Africa projects are provided below.

A regional project aiming to extend social protection access to migrant workers aimed to also include the interests of migrants working in the informal economy, with some stakeholders and partners finding that this was overly ambitious to deliver on this component. Ultimately, activities were only undertaken in the ECOWAS region, including a study related to the legal backgrounds of voluntary schemes for all informal economy workers, and including migrant workers, in Ghana (E6). The APERP III programme had specific components related to the transition from informality to formality, with target outputs related to the inclusion of Recommendation 204 in national employment policies; pilot initiatives on formalization in specific sectors; and enhanced capacities of institutions responsible for promoting formalization. This led to the organisation of an international forum in Turin on the topic of formalization, with the active presence of representatives from all project countries, and a particular focus on the place of women in informal economies, and on sharing of lessons learned and good practices from other countries and regions. Other results included the development of a roadmap for the transition for the formal economy, based on a diagnostic study of informality in Côte d'Ivoire, and a similar roadmap was planned in Togo; an assessment of the commercial sector in several countries was carried out, including in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, and findings contributed to the formulation of operational recommendations for the development of a policy to support formalization; various advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns and seminars for institutions responsible for promoting formalization in Togo, as well as in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso (E7). The informal economy sector was also considered in the GOUVERNANCE project, where the scope of labour inspection and their assistance to MSMEs with regards to improved working conditions, reducing risks, and applying FPRW included the informal economy (E9)

Other achievements noted by evaluators included several studies on the impact of COVID-19 on informal sector workers and enterprises; the development of policy-oriented knowledge products to understand the links between informality and environmental challenges, and efforts to assist the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM) sector in Ghana move towards formalization, using the CRAFT tool.

There were also instances where more could have been done to promote formalisation, such as in Burkina Faso, where although a decent work for youth project initially aimed to focus on skills recognition in informal and rural sectors, the intervention was oriented towards the formal sector during its implementation, missing opportunities to make progress towards meeting the needs of young people working in informal sectors (E13).

The review of the Nigeria DWCP found that programmatic action on the extension of OSH and social security schemes, particularly to expand decent working conditions in the informal economy and in youth employment were insufficiently addressed, and required further action from tripartite constituents, possibly as strategic priorities for the DWCP III.

What are the trends regarding progress to achieve results on normative work and the promotion and application of ILS?

Various projects implemented capacity-building activities aimed to enhance the understanding and application of ILS, including to monitor compliance through labour inspections as well as advocacy efforts with evidence of efforts to draft, validate and implement policies, laws and regulations aligned with ILS, although results were often mixed.

There were some examples of progress related to ILS, notably through the ratification of several conventions in Côte d'Ivoire, and updated legislation related to these conventions, as well as capacity-building efforts for tripartite constituents. The ACCEL-I project included the ratification of ILO conventions as both an objective and a means to support its implementation, and results were noted in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, with workshops to raise awareness and build capacities of specific Conventions, although policy compliance remained weak, and there were challenges in garnering political support from some authorities (E8). There were also advocacy efforts in Nigeria and Ghana to promote the ratification of relevant ILO conventions on migrant workers, but progress was limited (E5). Also in Ghana, while key outputs such as action plans and policies aimed at promoting ILS were developed through highly participatory processes, funding uncertainties seemed to hinder their full implementation (E14). In Togo, although awareness-raising activities had been conducted on OHS, it was noted that both employers and labour inspectors were now fully knowledgeable about labour laws, and there was limited evidence on the effectiveness of these actions on workers, making it challenging to assess their impact, but nevertheless reflecting a need for further capacity-building (E9). In Burkina Faso, labour inspectors and controllers were trained on child labour and forced labour, and ILO supported the review and harmonization of inspection tools (E18). In Niger, efforts were made to promote different labour rights and safety standards, contributing to improved working conditions, in alignment with ILS principles (E1, E4). In one instance, an output from a project was expected to contribute to the development of a new international labour standard on apprenticeships (E13)

While there were efforts to promote and apply ILS across various countries, evaluations noted challenges such as delays in ratification, capacity gaps and limited awareness, and uncertainty around funding, thus affecting progress towards achieving results in these areas.

What are the trends related to social dialogue and tripartism?

Several ILO interventions had specific outputs related to the promotion of social dialogue, and the ILO's unique ability to bring employers, trade unions and governments together was recognised in various instances. The ACCEL-I Africa project included social dialogue as a direct objective as well as a means to achieve a specific outcome, and the inclusion of tripartite partners was an important element in the achievement of results. This took different forms, including Implementation Agreements with employers' organisations to improve compliance on the elimination of child labour in different sectors, as well as the development of joint action plans on child labour between cooperatives and employers, as well as unions, and evidence of increased dialogue between different groups (E8). The GOUVERNANCE project also had different components aiming to promote social dialogue among social partners, especially in the contest of the informal economy, and there was evidence of support and collaboration with ACTRAV and ACTEMP (E9). There was evidence of social dialogue in regional partnership activities related to quality apprenticeships in Ghana, Nigeria and Togo, and evidence of multistakeholder engagement and tripartite governance, with involvement of ACTRAV and ACTEMP at the global level (E2). Similarly, the tripartism approach was also noted to be a core cross-cutting principle of the SIFA-Skills anticipation project, including in Ghana, and all relevant social partners were involved in national task teams and relevant capacity-building activities (E11). The Clear Cotton project contributed to social dialogue at national and local levels, including to better understand the issues of child labour and forced labour and to identify entry points to shape broader dialogue on child labour and forced labour on value chains (E18). in Work done by the FAIRWAY project also promoted dialogue with employers' organisations and trade unions in Nigeria to protect the rights of migrant workers (E12).

Despite these positive results, engagement with social partners was noted to be weak in several instances, with evaluators recommending a structured engagements with constituents, including through the establishment of tripartite steering committees, and through the involvement of regional employers' and workers' organisations (E5, E6). In the case of the Clear Cotton project, the EU requirement for have 50% of the budget allocated to work implemented through Civil Society Organisations (CSO) led to key ILO constituents not being included initially, leading to potential challenges for implementation through tripartite mechanisms; however, flexibility to incorporate these partners led to increased effectiveness and efficiency (E18). Stagnant social dialogue due to distrust between tripartite constituents or weak social partners was found to be a negative factor in a cluster evaluation including Sierra Leone, with missed opportunities to involve constituent groups other than the government (E10), while lack of experience and interest led to low involvement of constituent groups in Ghana (E14). In Niger, social dialogue and tripartism was limited to specific activities related to project validation workshops at the national level, with limited opportunities provided to social partners for a stronger role in ILO interventions. This was exacerbated by the fact that there were no workers' or employers' organisations in the rural areas where interventions were implemented, in such situations, there was cooperation with local governments, NGOs, the private sector and members of cooperatives, although there missed opportunities to further promote social dialogue (E1, E4).

How effective have ILO interventions been to promote gender equality and non-discrimination, and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in ILO interventions?

Gender equality was a topic addressed by the majority of reports, although there were wide disparities in the depth and quality of information provided. In contrast, evidence of strategies and actions to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in ILO interventions was very limited overall. In some cases, evaluators noted that evidence related to gender, non-discrimination and inclusivity concerns were not available in project documentation or as specific intervention targets (E9, E16).

Gender equality and non-discrimination

The level of consideration for gender equality and non-discrimination was mixed. In certain cases, interventions actively included gender concerns at all steps of the project cycle, allowing both women and men to have a say in project design and implementation. Some projects had specific Outcomes, activities and targets focusing on the participation of women, and on addressing differentiated gender needs. This was particularly true in the case of several labour migration interventions, which had Outcomes aiming to address the needs of female migrants and were aligned to SDG 5 and SDG10 (E12, E16). The ACCEL-I Africa project had outputs focusing on gender-specific aspects, and indicators to measure to what extent outputs included gender-sensitive approaches or terminology (E8). There was also evidence of projects aiming to identify approaches to document traditional gender roles and inequalities of task distribution within households, and how this impacted child labour and forced labour considerations.

There was evidence of collaborations with women's cooperatives and technical services promoting the rights of women; trainings on FPRW covering gender-related themes; gender-sensitive social inclusion strategies; the inclusion of gender issues in the development and review of legal and regulatory frameworks (including coverage of domestic care work and women migrants), guidelines, and capacity-building materials; the development and implementation of gender-sensitive monitoring systems; the collection and use of gender statistics; diagnostic studies with specific recommendations on how to better include women in national policies; and the incorporation of gender markers in interventions.

Evaluations noted that while project designs included gender mainstreaming, this was not apparent during implementation, with no gender-sensitive or gender-responsive outputs, or lack of gender analysis. This was also the case for the Nigeria DWCP. There were examples of interventions aiming to collect gender-disaggregated data, although this was sometimes not put into practice, leading to challenges for evaluators to assess the extent of gendered participation. Several reports recommended that gender considerations should play a more prominent role in the design and implementation of interventions and found that more could be done at the regional and programme/headquarters level to engage with ILO gender specialists (E3, E6, E10).

Inclusion of persons with disabilities

Only a few projects considered the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their designs and implementation, in line with the Leave No One Behind agenda, and the principle of Doing No Harm. Several reports noted that interventions had missed opportunities to include strategies on the inclusion of persons with disabilities and non-discrimination and found that the topic was not sufficiently mainstreamed in the ILO, with evidence of limited staff awareness (E10, E13) and poor inclusion of PWD in capacity-building events (E16). There was no reference to PWD in the Nigeria DWCP programme review. In contrast, the Côte d'Ivoire DWCP review noted that some work was done on legislation with respect to the rights of workers with disabilities, as well as work on people living with HIV/AIDS. In some cases, although disability inclusion was found to be a part of interventions, lack of data did not enable evaluators to assess effectiveness in depth.

> Lesson learned 4: Disability in RBSA projects: Disability issues seem insufficiently mainstreamed among ILO staff with responsibility for project design. RBSA projects would benefit from a systematic inclusion of the disability dimension in needs assessments, stakeholder analysis and during project implementation." (E10)eriencing a steady decrease in income. For instance, the export of bananas lost 17 per cent of its value in 2016 and 2017.

Nevertheless, there were a few instances where inclusion and equity were promoted. One project in Niger (E1) bringing together host populations and refugees to work on environmental rehabilitation projects recruited persons with disabilities, ensured that activities were accessible to them, and built the awareness and capacities of local NGOs to do the same. The evaluation found evidence of increased respect and changed mindsets with regards to working with refugees and disabled workers. Skills development projects funded by Norway, aimed to enhance inclusivity in the skills development system, integrating inclusivity indicators into their frameworks and developed strategies and action plans based on assessments of inclusivity policies, with a particular focus on persons with disabilities in the case of Ghana. In this context, several partnerships with national disability and business development service organisations led to two pilot projects targeting PWD and vulnerable women entrepreneurs particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (E2).

What are the trends regarding progress to achieve results on environmental sustainability and the just transition?

Performance and coverage of this cross-cutting policy area was variable, with nearly half of reports not mentioning environmental issues or the just transition. Certain interventions had a specific focus on environmental sustainability, while operating at different levels, and impacted work within the ILO. In several instances, evaluators found that the just transition to environmental sustainability was not integrated in interventions.

The Sida-ILO partnership programme had a specific component on Just Transition to a Green Economy, aiming to support countries in creating green employment, ensuring social well-being, and protecting natural resources; and, to build an intervention model and best practice examples for other countries wishing to follow the just transition guidelines and adopt green jobs strategies that enhance economic and social inclusion while addressing climate change and implementing low-emission development strategies. In Ghana, this resulted in the development of a country study "Skills for Green Jobs" that put forward recommendations that assisted the development of a Green Jobs strategy, in addition to capacity building and multistakeholder consultations (E3). One of the outcomes of the ILO-NORWAY programme on skills development, was for Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes to adopt greener practices; while planned activities associated with this were postponed, there was interest from stakeholders in Ghana to contribute to the finalisation and validation of the Strategy for Greening VET and its Action Plan (E2). A National Strategy for the Promotion of Green Jobs was also developed in Côte d'Ivoire in 2021, using ILO support. In both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, resource mobilization initiatives were carried out to facilitate the implementation of the Green Jobs strategies.

There were other examples provided in reports: Local-level actions were linked to interventions in Niger, where refugees and host communities were involved in the green economy through environmental conservation and rehabilitation activities, including tree planting, land reclamation, recycling, pisciculture, onion farming, and the use of renewable energies, as well as promotion of a circular economy, with evidence of partnerships with local NGOs and environmental technical services (E1, E4). The just transition principle was also embedded into training workshops on Anticipating Skills for Future Green Jobs, leading to increased awareness of stakeholders (E11); green jobs was a transversal theme in a project for youth employment in fragile situations (E13); the Green Jobs Assessment Model developed by the ILO was applied in Nigeria (E15). The implementation of the Côte d'Ivoire DWCP also led to the revision of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), and other countries such as Ghana and Niger also defined their commitments for the NDC with ILO technical support.

Support through the Sida-ILO partnership programme was found to contribute significantly to the issues of just transition and the green economy across other ILO initiatives, leading to the creation of several framework documents for the mainstreaming of just transition principles and approaches into ILO work programmes, with evidence that these were used in DWCPs (E3).

EFFICIENCY

To what extent have management arrangements at different levels been effective? Was the level of ILO technical, programmatic, administrative and financial support adequate to promote the achievement of results? Was there a difference in projects with/without a country office?

There were various management set-ups across the different projects. Efficiency was noted when there was evidence of flexible management approaches with adequate staffing, which enabled field offices to ask for assistance from colleagues in the field, at HQ, or from specific technical experts, as and when necessary, with clear management structures and arrangements. However, even in such situations, there were instances where the absence of key personnel and delayed appointments of technical specialists led to strained resources. In one case, a project was decentralized to improve proximity to field operations, but this resulted in significant workload for staff that had to take on multiple responsibilities (E2). In some cases, there was a need for clarity on the roles and responsibility of project personnel and management, as certain staff members took on the role of project implementation and management, instead of the CO Director (e.g. E5).

Several initiatives had split management systems, with team members and management in different locations. In the context of the Sida-ILO Partnership Programme, initiatives were managed by Outcome leads of different units and departments at ILO HQ, especially the global components, while the decentralised country-level initiatives were under the responsibility of country offices (E15). In multi-country projects, efficiency was sometimes negatively affected by decisions to place the project office in one country, instead of another. For instance, one project focusing on Ghana and the Philippines had the project office in Ghana, which meant there was reliance on ILO-CO Abuja for supervisory, administrative and financial support and approvals, with the project manager reporting to the ILO CO-Abuja director; the lack of infrastructure in the project office in Ghana led to inefficiencies which could have been avoided by placing the project office in the Philippines, which is a country office with strong programme support and reliable communication infrastructure (E14). Another project had its project manager based in HQ, while the project team was in Burkina Faso, with financial management based out of Geneva and Abidjan, as the team in Burkina Faso did not have access to IRIS (E13). This led to delays in administrative and financial operations, due to lack of human resources in Abidjan. The FAIRWAY project had two regional CTAS for Africa and the Arab States, with management coordination and donor liaison functions in Geneva. The CTA for Africa was based in ILO's Kenya office and reported to the Regional Director based in Abidjan, with financial transactions and oversight for Western Africa was done from CO-Abuja, while financial transactions for East Africa were managed via the Tanzania country office, also leading to complications and inefficiencies as it had no direct linkage to the programme and the Africa CTA (E12). In a regional project based in Niger, which constituted the regional component of a global intervention, there was no evidence of support or collaboration from the team at HQ or FUNDAMENTALS, aside from joint reporting to the donor (E1). The management set-up and technical backstopping for the GOUVERNANCE project were found to be inadequate: administrative and financial management of the project was conducted in Abidjan, Algiers, Antananarivo, and Geneva, while technical support was mainly provided by the GOVERNANCE Department, with ad-hoc inputs from FUNDAMENTALS and DWT/Dakar. This led to challenges in coordination and implementation because support was too fragmented and very time-consuming. (E9).

The Clear Cotton project was initially centrally managed, with National Project Officers in project countries, and the implementation of outputs / country outcomes was devolved with corresponding budgets, with decision-making on spending within the country components being the responsibility of Country Offices, based on inputs from central project management, while the technical and financial reporting was centralised; this management structure was found to be efficient in nature. The project design called for the use of CSO sub-granting mechanisms, which were found to be beneficial to establishing linkages with target communities, but the process of CSO selection and contracting was very slow, leading to an extended inception phase (E18).

There was a difference in projects in countries without a country office, especially when local capacities were low, and there were issues in connectivity and transportation. This was especially a challenge when projects and implementing partners were faced with ILO financial and procurement procedures, leading to delays in payments (E1, E10, E17). Another challenge was linked to the lack of ILO representation in multi-partner meetings: in one instance, an Abidjan-based programme officer was tasked to attend programme management teams of UNCT (E7), but in another instance, a project team in Gabon found it challenging to coordinate and create synergies with other interventions without an official ILO representation and office; this concern was also raised by national stakeholders (E11).

Certain projects in countries without ILO Country Offices, such as Niger, had relatively small teams, including a national programme coordinator and a financial/administrative assistant, with technical and administrative support from the Country Office in Abidjan (E1), while the PAERCA project in Niger had full team made up of an international project coordinator, a national technical officer, an operations officer, an M&E officer, a communications officer, a national administrative assistant, and two drivers, with technical support from the DWT in Senegal, and technical experts in HQ (E4). While the PAERCA management team was based in Niamey, to facilitate exchanges with the government and national constituents, the national expert was in the field, to be closer to beneficiaries, and the project had a part-time operations officer in the Abidjan Country Office, which facilitated implementation. The use of NPCs was found to be beneficial as it promoted ownership within ILO and country offices and allowed for greater flexibility to respond to individual contexts in multi-country projects.

There were important shortcomings linked to lack of management, governance and coordination mechanisms in both DWCPs reviewed, despite adequate support from ILO.

To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Were ILO interventions appropriately and adequately resourced?

The adequacy of resources and the efficiency of their use was mixed. There was evidence of cost-effective strategies, such as building on synergies and cost-sharing, in-kind contributions, as well as employing local NGOs and local workers allowed for reduced expenses (E1, E4), or sharing vehicles and drivers, as well as collaborating with different ILO units and departments to increase human resource efficiencies. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, certain funds were re-allocated and repurposed to new activities, and certain interventions were also able to generate savings due to currency exchange rate fluctuations and lower-then-expected overhead expenditures. There was also evidence of no-cost extensions to improve project delivery. While the Côte d'Ivoire DWCP was found to be cost-effective, with evidence of effective resource mobilization, this was not the case fo the Nigeria DWCP, with limited amount of funding from donors and constituents, and modest results achieved.

A recurrent weakness was related to the slow speed of financial disbursements, and cumbersome procurement procedures which hindered implementation and progress in planned activities (E2, E4, E5, E7). There was evidence that new staff had to make important efforts to understand and meet the requirements of the ILO financial processes, and that support to implementing partners was not always sufficient to enable smooth implementation and disbursements, leading to activities being stopped. There were several examples of interventions having only spent a small portion of their budget while reaching the end of the planned timeframe, due to delays in staffing, access to funds, and delays in project implementation. The Clear Cotton evaluation noted that impact was undermined to a degree by the administrative procedures of the ILO, with delays to agreements, financial disbursements and implementation agreements influencing quality, and in some cases, CSOs had to pre-finance activities so as not to delay implementation (E18).

In the context of the PAERCA project in Niger, it took a year to award a fish farming station contract, 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% 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 (E4). The JLMP project also experienced delays in funds transfer, with the project starting in July 2018 and the ILO receiving the first tranche of funds in February 2019, leading to delays in hiring of staff and implementation of activities (E16), while a project in Ghana experienced a four-month delay in release of funding (E2). Specific challenges were exacerbated in countries that did not have an ILO office with a bank account, so projects could not easily receive funds and pay contractors, leading to important delays in implementation (E10).

> "Resolving the cumbersome African financial management approval process.
>
> Currently the ILO has a CO system, whereby all contract arrangements for local implementing partners are reviewed by the designated office that covers a series of countries. For East Africa (ie covering Uganda and Kenya) this is Tanzania. This, however, has led to the anomalous situation where the Africa CTA for FAIRWAY is based in Nairobi, which makes sense given FAIRWAY's East Africa focus, and reports to the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), located in Abidjan, from where the project's budget is managed. But then the local oversight committee for approving contracts within the sub-region is in Tanzania, a third country that is uninvolved in FAIRWAY. From all reports this system does not work well, it is slow and the CTA has limited influence over it. The simplicity of the Arab States arrangements – the CTA being based in the regional office, from where the budget is managed – stands in stark contrast. For West Africa it should be noted that Nigeria forms another designated CO with an oversight committee, but since it is approving contract arrangements for the same country it is more efficient" (E12)

> "As one interviewee noted, "one needs a PhD in administration and finance to be able to follow and easily implement all of the requirements to access the needed funding." In several countries there were complaints that all of the required administration and finance processing took their time from "the more important technical project component." Procurement processes and requirements even for small items frustrated staff, who are primarily technical specialists and not used to administration and finance processes." (E17)

Other challenges included the planning and disbursement modality in instalments based on outcomes, such as for the ILO-Norway Programme Cooperation Agreements on Skills development, as they led to delays in activity planning, discussions with government and partners, and consequently, the implementation of project activities. This was particularly problematic for countries with standalone projects, such as Ghana, where delays of funds led to a complete standstill of activities and resulted in certain targets not being met (E2).

While a few evaluations found that projects had strategically and effectively allocated their financial, technical and human resources, such as for the ACCEL-1 Africa project, and the Clear Cotton project, with sufficient country-level staff supported by international staff and regional administrative staff, this was the exception, rather than the norm:

> "At the national level, there was a total of four ILO staff in each country and they were also supported by six international staff and three regional administrative staff. Combined with only mid-career and senior staff working on the Project, it meant that ACCEL was not only one of the best staffed ILO development cooperation projects, but also one featuring a significant degree of expertise among its staff. The well distributed allocation of human resources contributed to the Project's flexibility, the successful implementation of day-to-day tasks and the capacity to meet envisioned objectives." (E8)

Slow recruitment processes, limited staffing, as well as the absence of key project staff also delayed the achievement of results in many instances, and created important strains, leading to an overload of responsibilities and reduced efficiencies (E1, E2). The reliance of ILO staffing on project-level funding in the context of green jobs and the just transition to environmental sustainability was noted to be an area in need of improvement. (E3). Half a year was lost due to challenges in recruiting staff for a regional project (E6), while in Sierra Leone, delays in contracting project staff reduced the project implementation time, with one-third of project implementation time (8 months) without a CTA, and half of the project implementation passed (12 months) before a national expert joined; these were significant delays considering the 24-month time-frame (E10). Similarly, it took the ILO nearly 14 months to replace a project manager who had resigned, and many key decisions were suspended until the new recruitment, creating important inefficiencies (E14).

In certain projects, including those with "lightly-earmarked" funds, resources were found to be spread too thinly across different countries or initiatives, sometimes limiting the overall quality and sustainability of the interventions, and putting important demands on the staff available (E2, E17), although some evaluations found that there was still evidence of good value-for-money (E3).

Poor efficiency was noted in a few cases, such as the GOUVERNANCE project, where the evaluation noted that financial resources were not allocated strategically, and the quality and quantity of outputs achieved were not appropriate in relation to the resources spent: with a 90 per cent expenditure rate, only 38.5 per cent of products were delivered, with nine key activities cancelled, and nearly 70 per cent of the budget linked to personnel and management costs (E9).

How has ILO external coordination and internal coordination (between sectors, technical departments, regions and sub regions) promoted the achievement of outcomes? To what extent have partnerships been leveraged to optimize efficiencies?

There was evidence of external coordination and partnerships at all levels of implementation, although certain interventions could have done more to foster opportunities for collaborations and build on synergies. The ILO was able to leverage existing partnerships with constituents and partners, facilitating the start-up of projects due to previously established networks and capacities. Evaluations found that the ILO's use of tripartite social dialogue promoted engagement of employers' and workers' organisations along with governments and buy-in of national partners. Including the social partners in project implementation promoted effectiveness and sustainability.

The extent and effectiveness of collaboration with other UN agencies was mixed, with some projects working closely with certain agencies to achieve results and maximize resource efficiency, while evaluations also found there were missed opportunities for collaborations, even in the context of the same projects. For instance, ILO interventions built effective working relationships with other UN agencies, such as UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, UNDP, UN-OCHA and FAO. One example is the ACCEL-I Africa project, which supported the coordination of efforts to promote Alliance 8.7, and engaged with other UN agencies such as FAO, UNICEF and IOM through the Alliance (E8). In Sierra Leone, an RBSA project was housed in FAO Offices, and inter-agency collaboration was found to be the most useful way forward, especially since there was no ILO country office (E10). The Clear Cotton project was jointly implemented with FAO, with evidence of close collaboration, coordination and complementarities, at management and country levels, and shared resources and learning across the project (E18). The implementation of the Nigeria DWCP was done in close collaboration with the UN system in the country, which led to the leveraging of financial contributions from other UN agencies. In contrast, there were also occasions where such partnerships did not materialize, although they would have reinforced ILO results, as was the case in Niger, where although there was a strategic partnership with UNHCR which greatly facilitated access to refugee populations and ownership of project results, no collaborations were established with UNICEF or FAO in the context of the Alliance 8.7 project, despite the intervention having objectives linked to the core work of these two agencies (E1). Nevertheless, the evaluation noted that the partnership model with UNHCR should be promoted in other contexts and replicated in other areas of the country. The PAERCA project in Niger also had a strategic partnership with UNHCR, both at the national level and in the field (E4). The ILO also participated in the United Nations Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), along with UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO and UNITAR, although the evaluation found that a key issue was for ILO interventions to build synergies with those of other agencies, as this would ensure impact at scale and optimize the small amount of resources committed to ILO interventions under PAGE and the Sida-ILO partnership; however the ability to create such synergies with other Green Jobs/just transition programmes and promote cross-learning was somewhat limited (E3).

There were also examples of collaborations and partnership-building with specialised organisations, NGOs and other initiatives funded by donors. In Côte d'Ivoire, the project supported dialogue between the government and the cocoa private sector, leading to a common framework to implement child labour monitoring system at the national level; this was found to be a good practice which could be applied in other settings (E17). The ACCEL-I Africa project engaged with supply chain actors such as employers, business organisations, private sector companies and NGOs, and mobilised them against child labour (E8). Other collaborations took the form of joint implementation and financing of activities, participation in working groups, working on common databases, the development of trainings, co-organisation of conferences, collaborations on monitoring, impact evaluations and research projects, development of concept notes for new projects, virtual communities of practice on child labour in specific sectors, as well as informal exchanges. The review of the Nigeria DWCP found that collaboration with the private sector and other institutional stakeholders besides ILO constituents enriched the implementation of the DWCP and helped advance its objectives. Working with CSOs as key implementing partners of the Clear Cotton project presented useful opportunities for cohesion, but was also a challenging process, and was done at the expense of proportionate engagement with governments. The introduction of new partnerships also promoted new ways of working and added value to a broader partnership of constituents seeking to work on child labour and forced labour (E18).

There was also evidence that the ILO could do more to create or enhance certain partnerships and there was a need for stronger coordination and collaboration, to avoid duplication and pool resources to increase impact (E5, E9). Lack of collaboration / coordination with state-level stakeholders was particularly problematic in the context of the Nigeria DWCP. There was also evidence of power imbalances and competition between partners for resource mobilization (E2, E8). This was sometimes offset by the ILO's long-standing partnerships and the tripartite nature of its work, which offered a comparative advantage in certain countries, such as Ghana. "Turf battles" were also mentioned in the evaluation of RBSA projects, although in the case of Sierra Leone, the strong partnership with other UN agencies led to positive synergies and set the stage for future inter-agency collaborations (E10). One evaluation underlined that stronger engagement between the AUC and the ILO could be beneficial for knowledge transfer, especially at the country level (E11).

In terms of internal coordination, there were many examples of collaboration with other projects, which helped maximize results and promoted cost-efficiencies, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were instances of cost-sharing, joint trainings, workshops and discussions, awareness-raising campaigns, use of ILO tools, and sharing of lessons and good practices, as well as the development of global knowledge products, among others. In Niger, the Alliance 8.7 project was implemented in close coordination with the PAERCA project, with common beneficiary groups, and a common monitoring committee. In the ONE-ILO approach, the project also obtained support from the BRIDGE and MAP16 projects. In contrast, there were no collaborations found between the Alliance 8.7 regional component and other Alliance 8.7 countries, despite the fact that the PRODOC aimed to create such links (E1). This shortcoming was also found in the case of the Clear Cotton project, although the project's experience has been showcased in Alliance 8.7 meetings and included in its newsletters (E18). The Clear Cotton project linked to the ILO Better Work Programme, and a joint strategy paper fed into the new Better Work strategy. In Ghana, there was collaboration with the NORAD-funded Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises Programme (SCORE) project (E2), while the SIDA-funded JLMP was linked to the regional "EC through ICMPD" initiative, as well as several other ILO projects in Africa working on migration, and several courses and workshops were jointly organised (E6, E16). There was evidence that projects built on the achievements and lessons from other ILO initiatives and projects, especially interventions related to labour migration and social protection (E6).

There were links between the DWCP in Côte d'Ivoire and the implementation of different projects, such as ACCEL-1 Africa, the GOUVERNANCE project, and the APERP project. In Nigeria, while there was little evidence provided in the review of the DWCP, other reports provided evidence of close collaboration between the "ILO initiative for Labour Migration, Employment and Reintegration in Nigeria and Ghana" and the regional EC-funded "Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (2013-2020)" which was also managed within CO-Abuja (E5).

Sub-regional interventions partnered with relevant departments in ILO HQ, ILO-ITC, as well as with ACTRAV and ACTEMP specialists in Abuja and Dakar, and technical specialists from DWT in the different country offices, although the implication of the different staff members and specialists varied between projects. In some cases, such as in the CLEAR project, evaluations found that the project could have drawn more extensively on technical expertise in the areas of social protection and vocational and skills training, but this was not done, due to management decisions (E17). There were also inefficiencies noted, such as in Ghana, where the ILO supported the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR) to develop its new Green Jobs Strategy through funding from the Sida-ILO Partnership programme, yet the relevant MELR focal points were not included in the activities of the PAGE programme, reflecting a siloed approach to ILO's work in the country (E3). The evaluation of RBSA-funded projects found that although ACTEMP and ACTRAV were involved in the design phase, staff revealed that their involvement was mainly procedural, and there were no in-depth consultations (E10). In some cases, it was found that national coordinators needed more connections with regional and global specialists, to promote potential synergies and cross-learning opportunities.

SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

What are the trends related to the sustainability of ILO interventions at country and sub-regional levels?

Have interventions been designed and implemented in ways that have maximized ownership and sustainability at country and sub-regional levels, including through the development of exit strategies?

Is there evidence that ILO results may be maintained, scaled up, or replicated by project partners once interventions are completed?

Although results were mixed, there was evidence of sustainability and ownership of results generated by ILO interventions in Western Africa, including through the appropriation of strategies and approaches by constituents, and the setting aside of resources to build on progress and achievements. This was exemplified through the participatory development of national action plans and strategies, the development and validation of specific protocols and agreements; the ratification of ILO Conventions; the institutionalization of knowledge and tools; and transfer of infrastructure to local cooperatives and unions; among others. Overall, however, there was little evidence that ILO results could be scaled up or replicated by project partners after interventions were completed.

Active participation of key stakeholder groups throughout the project lifecycle and the use of tripartite social dialogue mechanisms, and the creation of horizontal and vertical linkages among key actors, were important factors in fostering ownership, as different stakeholder groups were aware of how to work and collaborate with each other to reinforce project results. Commitment from tripartite partners also stemmed from strong advocacy and communication efforts of ILO interventions, as in the ACCEL-1 Africa project, with an emphasis on empowering communities to monitor and address child labour, and evidence of resource mobilization at the community level, as well as the identification of effective models and lessons that could be replicated, although there was no strategy to do so (E8). The ILO's "penholder" approach was also an important factor in promoting ownership of national action plans, such as in Ghana (E11). Partnerships created with different national and regional stakeholder groups, UN agencies, other ILO projects and NGOs also contributed to sustainability.

A strong indicator of ownership and sustainability at the national level was the commitment of funds by the government and the private sector, as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire for the CLEAR project, where a strong public private partnership was established; this funding mechanism represents an innovation for Côte d'Ivoire and could be applicable to public-private sector cost-sharing elsewhere (E17). In the ACCEL-I Africa project, national stakeholders had an earmarked budget to sustain project results (E8), while the government of Togo budgeted funds to promote labour inspection services in the informal economy, although there was still uncertainty regarding adequate economic, social, and institutional capacities with regards to the sustainability of the GOVERNANCE project (E9). A regional Green Jobs technical specialist was hired in the context of the SIDA-ILO support to the Just Transition; this role was found to be a valuable addition to the global capacity of the ILO in terms of mainstreaming elements on just transition and green jobs, with evidence that this regional technical specialist used ILO global-level tools to create an entry point for ILO engagement on just transition/green jobs in other countries, and contributed to mobilize US$ 2.5 million for a sustainable livelihoods project in Niger, and engaged with key constituents in Côte d'Ivoire for the development of a new national Green Jobs strategy, thus increasing the potential for scaling up of ILO results (E3). Moreover, embedding project outputs in national frameworks and building institutional and individual capacities were also factors of sustainability; reports sometimes noted that these capacity-building efforts needed to be continued and upscaled, and that good practices and lessons from different projects were not sufficiently shared and disseminated.

There was evidence of follow-up phases or new projects based on existing ILO interventions. In Burkina Faso, although there was no exit strategy and no analysis of replicability of pilot projects in terms of resources and local capacities, a follow-up project was developed, thus increasing the possibilities of maintaining, or scaling up results (E13). In Ghana, a project had achieved several key sustainability success factors, including ownership among stakeholders, building their capacity to implement interventions, and promoting collaboration and access to resources through partnerships. In this context, upcoming support from the World Bank was believed to promote the scaling up of results (E14). An RBSA project in Sierra Leone leveraged US$ 10.15 million to scale up the results started by the intervention through EIIP pilots in certain districts (E11).

Despite issues related to the lack of Steering Committee for the DWCP in Côte d'Ivoire, there was evidence that some of the results were sustainable, as the priorities were aligned with national plans and policies and the implementation of the DWCP led to changes at the structural level, especially for improved decent working conditions and social protection, including in the rural and informal sectors. There were numerous examples of work towards the ratification and implementation of ILS, gender mainstreaming, and social protection policies and initiatives. However, there remained uncertainty about overall sustainability of results due to a lack of an exit strategy, resource mobilization plan, and activities to promote ownership of results at national and local levels, as well as the absence of a Steering Committee. The lack of an operational tripartite Steering Committee and Technical Working group during the lifetime of the Nigeria DWCP and insufficient allocation of financial resources by the Government of Nigeria and other stakeholders, hampered the implementation of its DWCP and limited prospects for the viability and sustainability of results achieved.

In contrast, at a regional (ECOWAS) level, lack of specific policies and funds, and low contributions to networking and mobilizing partners and beneficiaries, compounded by a lack of exit strategy, were found to limit the sustainability of ILO achievements in the field of labour migration (E16). The other project linked to ECOWAS also noted that the secretariat did not have the means or capacity to support activities related to social protection of migrant workers after the project ended, thus limiting prospects for sustainability (E6).

In some cases, lack of commitment or interest related to certain projects or outputs from key constituent groups, especially due to their limited involvement in the planning, design and implementation stages, led to lack of ownership of results achieved (E2, E5, E18). However, when project objectives were aligned with stakeholder needs and/or national priorities, evaluators believed there was an opportunity to promote ownership by engaging these actors during the implementation phase when interventions were still ongoing (E5). In several other cases, despite evidence of ownership of project results, lack of local capacities, political insecurity and lack of funds or lack of commitment of a specific budget indicated that sustainability of results was compromised. The FAIRWAY mid-term evaluation noted that the holistic approach used by the project was not sustainable yet, due to lack of capacities and the need for further strengthening relations among stakeholders (E12). In a project in Niger, measures to promote sustainability of results had been discussed upstream, but these measures were under-estimated and did not take into account delays in implementation. Challenges related to slow disbursements led to certain tree-planting activities being implemented at the end of the project, without any planned measures for their maintenance or care, leading to an important risk of wasted resources. Furthermore, the implementation of potential sustainability measures remained uncertain, due to the absence of a management committee and funds, and ongoing political insecurity (E1).

Limited prospects for sustainability were often associated with the lack of exit and sustainability strategies at the project design stage, and several reports made recommendations to improve this (e.g. E3, E16, E18). There was no evidence of exit strategies in any of the evaluation reports reviewed, including for the DWCPs in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, with the review of the former noting that an exit strategy needs to be elaborated, along with a resource mobilization plan to continue activities after implementation of the DWCP. Finally, national stakeholders in various countries found that it was challenging to create synergies and collaborations when there was no national ILO representation.

To what extent have ILO actions had impact in addressing Decent Work needs in Western Africa? Have constituents been provided with the necessary tools and policy improvements to make significant positive changes in Decent Work conditions for different groups, including the most vulnerable populations?

There was evidence of improvements of Decent Work conditions and impact due to ILO interventions. This was promoted through tripartite social dialogue, involvement of constituents and other stakeholders in the project cycle, and the use of strategic partnerships to build on achieved results. Changes in mindsets, behaviours and practices were highlighted several times, and were particularly appreciated in areas facing issues of child labour, forced labour, and political insecurity. For instance, ILO interventions led to improved employment opportunities and improved living conditions for refugees and host communities in Niger, leading to a reduction in the use of child and forced labour, and reduced motivation for youth to engage in criminal activities.

Considerable work was done in Côte d'Ivoire with regards to child labour. There was work done at the policy level, leading to the development of policies and action plans, and the use of mechanisms such as monitoring systems, the WIND approach and tools, but also investment in equipment for schools. This, combined with increased communication and cooperation among stakeholders, and awareness-raising campaigns at the national and community levels, contributed to a common understanding of child labour issues, legal frameworks, and underlying causes, which challenged norms and successfully discouraged child labour. The public-private sector collaboration developed with ILO support strengthened the collaboration of cocoa enterprises and led to a coordination framework for sustainable funding of the child labour monitoring system. Evaluations noted improvements in the protection of girls and boys against the worst forms of work, and risks related to dangerous work in Côte d'Ivoire, due to improved knowledge and capacities of stakeholders to implement legislation. Positive results related to child labour were also noted in Nigeria. In Burkina Faso, ILO supported the adoption of the 2022-2023 National Action Plan against Child Labour, and the adoption of a strategic plan against child labour by the national union of cotton producers; results at the community level were mixed, with labour inspectors and controllers trained on the issue, and children receiving accelerated schooling and vocational skills, but dropout rates were high, as parents increased their knowledge on issues related to child labour and forced labour, but did not have sufficient household income to make longer-term changes to work practices, and were reluctant to keep their children in schools (E18). There was evidence that ECOWAS had endorsed various sub-regional policy documents and guidelines addressing child labour, thus reinforcing support in this area.

ILO support in the field of skills led to enhanced national skill standards, improved skill portability for migrant workers, and fostered a deep mutual trust and understanding among different countries. There was extensive evidence of enhanced capacities of stakeholders in the field of skills governance, including training institutions to deliver training relevant to labour market needs, advocacy campaigns to increase the relevance of VET and work-based learning and skills anticipation, and increased awareness and capacity of constituents on the inclusion of vulnerable groups, in particular women and persons with disabilities, in VET programmes. Greater private sector engagement in VET governance was promoted though Sector Skills Bodies, resulting in improved collaboration between ministries, social partners, and private sector associations for skills developments. In Ghana, sensitisation, information-sharing and consultation generated significant interest amongst constituents and the SSBs to actively contribute to the finalisation and validation of the Strategy for Greening TVET and the associated Action Plan. Ghana was noted as a "success story of unexpected willingness from the government in taking leadership and ownership to develop national action plans and institutionalise skills anticipation beyond what was planned" (E11). Progress was made in Burkina Faso with regards to the development of a quality apprenticeship model adapted to the Burkinabé context.

Several countries in the sub-region, including Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, made progress in terms of building the capacity of national labour institutions to ensure compliance of MSMEs with Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work standards, including in the informal economy. Transversal work to raise awareness and build capacities around the links between decent work and environmental sustainability, led to the development of national green jobs strategies in several countries. In Ghana, project communities were linked to the National Insurance Scheme, and ILO support led to large numbers of persons registering for health insurance.

There were also strides made towards improved labour migration agreements and policies, and initial evidence of pan-Africa Trade Union cooperation in this context. At a regional level, ILO also contributed to the improvement of AUC's capacity to lead and coordinate labour migration governance and develop instruments for better implementation of labour migration frameworks.

In many cases, however, evaluations found that while some progress could be associated with ILO interventions, impact was difficult to assess due to lack of sound data and monitoring mechanisms, as well as resource issues, and weak or unstable institutional contexts and on-going security concerns. Delays in implementation in many of the interventions reviewed also hindered progress and limited the achievement of results. A recurring finding was that a longer programmatic approach was required to achieve impact.

What are the key result areas of ILO interventions?

Highlights of results achieved by the projects reviewed in the evaluation reports are presented below:

- **Studies and publications** of various forms to inform policies and disseminate knowledge, including diagnostic studies, rapid situational analysis; Market systems analysis, value chain analyses; an institutional assessment and coordination mechanism study; a national HIV Workplace Assessment study; development of career pathways and occupational standards for various fields; policy briefs; the establishment of skills standards for mutual recognition of qualifications in countries of origin and destination; knowledge tools on labour migration; a country study in Ghana on "Skills for Green Jobs"; a country study on decent work in Côte d'Ivoire; the formulation of a national OSH profile in Nigeria, Employment Mapping; a study on the informal economy in Ghana; studies on active labour market policies in Côte d'Ivoire and Benin; a comparative study based on Rapid Skills assessments, highlighting how COVID-19 affected African Labour markets; a toolbox and knowledge repository on skills anticipation. Dissemination included the use of social media, websites, newsletters and webinars, as well as regional and international conferences. Existing ILO guides and tools were translated in local languages for wider reach, and context-specific research guides were developed to be piloted in several countries.

- **Development of mechanisms to collect data and identification of relevant indicators, to allow constituents to make evidence-based decisions,** including child labour monitoring systems; community monitoring systems; working conditions tools; supply chain monitoring tools; improved labour migration statistics data collection methodologies; labour statistics indicators; decent work indicators; data on child labour and forced labour; incorporation of the ILO Labour Migration Module into national household surveys; assessment tools on public employment services; and rapid skills assessment tools, among others.

- **Formulation and implementation of national and local- level action plans strategies, policies and roadmaps through tripartite social dialogue**, including green jobs strategies, implementation programmes and advocacy plans, as well as associated resource moblilization strategies; evaluations and development of national employment policies; drafting and validation of child labour laws, policies and regulations and gender-sensitive roadmaps; adoption of a strategic plan against child labour by the Burkina Faso national union of cotton producers; a Strategy and Action Plan for Greening TVET in Ghana; commitment from Togo to review a MOU on mutual recognition of qualifications; a Capacity Building Strategy on labour migration governance in Africa; improved enforcement of laws and policies related to child labour; support to the development of a CLMS in Côte d'Ivoire and its operation in a pilot area and the development of operating procedures and a proposal for a sustainable funding mechanism; adoption of Community Action Plans against child labour; support to the Ministry of Labour in Ghana and a multi-stakeholder working group on climate change to produce a National Strategy on Green Jobs; the development of a labour migration policy in Ghana; a National Employment Policy in Côte d'Ivoire; the formulation of a National Employment Policy and National OSH Policy in Nigeria; a Draft Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan, and a National Youth Policy; contributions to the GON 2017 National Social Protection Policy; bilateral labour agreements between the Governments of Ghana and Qatar;

- **Development of capacities and adaptation/application of capacity-building tools, including training curricula and guidelines and the organisation of workshops and trainings**: these took the form of tripartite training manuals and workshops; an International Forum on the informal economy in Turin; pedagogical tools for specific employment sectors; vocational training; enrolment of children in accelerated schooling; curricula development and revisions; training on the use of the STED methodology by master trainers and stakeholders; setting up of technical working groups; development of a toolkit and training on the ECOWAS General Convention with different partners, including ITC-ILO; enhanced capacities in research and statistics, and on the management of labour migration statistics; secondment of a migration expert to ECOWAS; training of community members on child labour issues; capacity-building of a multi-stakeholder working group on climate change in Ghana, to assess the decent work implications of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) on climate change; and use of tools such as Think.COOP, Start.COOP, MyCOOP, SCREAM, SIYB, and Financial education.

- **Awareness-raising and advocacy work**, to raise awareness and build capacities around the links between decent work and environmental sustainability; application of the SCREAM methodology in school clubs; dialogue around value chains and the impact of child and forced labour, including sensitization of parents around these issues; raising interest in areas such as green skills, gender equality and social inclusion; enhanced coordination and collaboration at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels around various issues, including labour migration governance and apprenticeships. Communication campaigns and actions through social media were found to be positive, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, with evidence of impact on areas such as discouraging reliance on child labour and promoting quality apprenticeships to the public and private sectors.
- **Changing of behaviours and practices** due to increased awareness and understanding of key issues, including on FPRW, migrant rights, inclusivity, social cohesion and trust between host communities and refugee populations, and to discourage reliance on child labour and forced labour.

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

What lessons learned and good practices are reflected in the evaluation reports?

There were many lessons and good practices noted in the reports, with some evaluations not distinguishing between lessons and good practices. This section organises these lessons and good practices thematically.

INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

- The inclusion and participation of constituent groups and stakeholders was a recurring theme. Engagement with other tripartite members was crucial in ensuring sustainability, particularly in contexts with political instability, high turnover in government officials, and/or low ownership, and was found to strengthen tripartism (E2, E3). Other good practices included embedding implementation within broader programs or existing structures and strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to promote sustainability, as well as including key constituent groups who play a central role in decision-making in tripartite task-teams, as this was noted to be critical to successful implementation and institutionalization (E5, E6, E12, E14). Similarly, allowing national constituents to lead processes, in combination with a "penholder" approach, encouraged ownership and contributed to effective implementation (E11). In addition, leveraging internal and external partnerships was found to facilitate access to key stakeholders and lead to effective results. Alignment of local government plans and resources with community needs and priorities was another good practice, as was the creation of horizontal linkages between key national stakeholders, and vertical linkages between national and local stakeholders (E14).
- Taking an inclusive and partnership-based approach, targeting both refugees and host populations and establishing contracts with local institutions, was found to be a factor in strengthening social cohesion and socio-economic sustainability in two projects in Niger (E1, E4). In Nigeria, the engagement of local communities promoted support and ownership of child labour issues and mobilised local resources to address them effectively (E8). Similarly, building the capacities of stakeholders and employing them to conduct trainings and develop tools, rather than hire external consultants was found to be effective (E14). In Burkina Faso, the use of a sub-granting mechanism to CSOs led to increased engagement of communities (E18).
- With regards to resource mobilization, involving national institutions in fund mobilization strategies, and developing resource mobilization initiatives within a regional strategy framework were found to be good practices, such as the one led by the specialist in the area of Green Jobs in Abidjan, resulting in the leverage of USD4.7 million, for green jobs initiatives, namely in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria (E15). Related to this, an evaluation underlined the importance of strengthening budgetization capacities (E16)

- Public-private sector collaboration and cost-sharing mechanism in Côte d'Ivoire: In the context of the CLEAR project in Côte d'Ivoire, the SOSTECI (Système d'Observation et de Suivi du Travail des Enfants en Côte d'Ivoire) Child Labour Monitoring System was refined and piloted successfully. A good practice was that the project facilited dialogue between the government and the cocoa private sector, resulting in a coordination framework to fund the SOSTECI model nationwide. This public-private sector collaboration has strengthened cocoa enterprises' involvement in the child labour monitoring system and established a sustainable funding mechanism, representing an innovative approach in Côte d'Ivoire that could be replicated for public-private sector cost-sharing in other contexts. (E17).
- Private sector intermediaries and multinational organisations have a core role to play in promoting decent work conditions but may hinder progress: The ACCEL-I Africa project focused on working with supply chains to address the issue of child labour, and mostly worked with communities. However, there was evidence of private sector intermediaries pressuring farmers to sell products below market rates. Therefore, while legal frameworks were strengthened and communities were empowered in their occupational health and safety, and income diversity, the impact of ACCEL-I Africa on poverty was limited by the behaviour of intermediaries and multinational organisations (E8)

PROMOTING REGIONAL/CROSS-COUNTRY COLLABORATION

- The collaboration among African countries' Statistical officers to produce Reports on Labour migration statistics in Africa was recognized as a Good Practice. Their long-term partnership fostered open discussion, reciprocal assistance, and increased participation. This decentralized approach, leveraging stakeholder commitment, could be replicated in other areas like social protection, skills recognition, and labour migration policy formulation and implementation (E16). Similarly, encouraging African collaboration in Africa-Arab States inter-regional linkages was found to be ground-breaking in the context of the FAIRWAY programme, and an area which needed further strengthening in the future (E12).
- Supporting Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to extend social protection and benefits portability for migrant workers and their families was a recognized good practice. This approach focuses on coordinating national social security laws and systems within REC partner states, allowing for mutual learning. While harmonizing laws across states is a significant task, coordination enables effective collaboration while respecting individual system rules and laws. This approach, though challenging, is more feasible than harmonization and underscores the importance of REC involvement in facilitating such efforts. (E6)

UTILIZATION OF EXISTING TOOLS AND TAILORED SOLUTIONS

- Using and adapting existing ILO tools enhanced effectiveness and efficiency, such as the SCREAM method to enhance access to education, and the WIND strategy to improve health and safety of workers was effective and sustainable in different contexts (E8, E14).
- Tailored vocational training was found to be a crucial solution to address child labour in cocoa plantations and gold mines (E8).
- In Togo, supporting the development of strategic and operations plans for labour inspection was a good practice, as was the inclusion of the informal economy and SMEs in the scope of work of labour inspectors in Côte d'Ivoire (E9).

OTHER PROJECT/APPROACH-SPECIFIC INSIGHTS

- A green jobs / EIIP project can contribute to the promotion of FPRW and social cohesion, while reducing the use of child labour, in a context of high political insecurity (E1). EIIP approaches are suited for short-term employment creation when income sources are urgently needed, including in volatile settings, however, using such an approach in RBSA-funded projects with a 2-year timeframe needs to be carefully considered, and the contribution of such projects to longer-term economic recovery is uncertain (E10)
- The inclusion of the informal economy on social protection / portability of benefits can only be exploratory.
- ILO interventions led to changes in mindsets and awareness of rights. In the context of the GOUVERNANCE project, there was evidence of a transition from a culture of control to one of support for labour inspections; this proved to be effective in regulating labour relations between workers and labour inspectors, especially in the informal sector (E9)
- While projects can increase awareness of certain topics, behaviour change requires access to viable and acceptable solutions. Such solutions need to be considered upstream when planning projects, for instance in the context of ASGM operations (E14)
- Several evaluations highlighted the need for better mainstreaming of gender and disability inclusion dimensions in ILO projects, including RBSA-funded projects for the latter (E10)
- The visibility of a project involved with child labour and forced labour issues is a communication mechanism in itself and formalised strategies are required to ensure the project delivers its objectives but also has a broader role and mechanism to raise issues that also fall outside its direct scope and influence.
- Any work in child labour and forced labour requires the engagement and involvement of national government partners and stakeholders. Although the project may not seek to change legislation or influence national policy, it does seek to strengthen the national enforcement mechanisms, the implementation of policies and the institutional capacities (inspector's capacities, national and regional policies and actions plans, etc.). Such engagement is important for longer-term impact and sustainability, particularly for those implementing partners (e.g., CSOs) that remain and need to continue operating in the context (E18).

LONG-TERM PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH

- In some cases, such as in projects on labour migration, the nature of change requires a long-term programmatic approach within ILO, which goes beyond a biennium, using overarching theories of change, building upon lessons learned and spanning across projects in the same field (E12). The need for a mid-to-long-term engagement was also noted in the context of projects promoting sustainable livelihoods in forced migration contexts (E4), and in work to prevent child labour and forced labour (E18)
- In the context of NORAD's skills projects, the two-year funding approach was found to limit effectiveness in country contexts with low maturity levels of governance and skills, and limited ability for governments to absorb innovative practices. It was highlighted that longer-term commitment and stronger ILO team presence were required in situations where countries have weak governance and institutions (E2)

PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

- Using an overarching theory of change with implementation approaches and activities adaptable to local contexts, along with a common M&E framework, was found to be a good practice (E8). Having simple, yet comprehensive M&E plans for multi-country projects, with fewer indicators and common project outputs and outcomes at the global level, and relevant activities at the country level, may improve their use (E17).

- The value of cluster evaluations for RBSA-funded projects: Utilizing cluster evaluations allows the ILO to ensure evaluability and facilitate learning from smaller-sized projects, including RBSA projects, which individually fall below the mandatory evaluation threshold of US$ 800,000. (E10)

- In terms of internal coordination, setting up mechanisms among different projects covering one topic, such as labour migration, within an ILO Country Office was found to enhance oversight, coordination, and complementarities, and to avoid overlaps (E5). This was also found to be the case for projects that were managed in close collaboration with other ILO departments (E13). Moreover, global products and country-level interventions designed and implemented in collaboration and coordination with other ILO units were noted as having a more comprehensive approach and provide more tailored solutions to problems targeted (E15)

- Multi-country projects require sufficient country-level staffing to enable successful and timely project implementation, and financial delegation of the project funds to a country office is necessary to increase the speed of implementation. Furthermore, requests for human resources or support from partners should be accommodated as early as possible, to avoid serious delays (E6)

- Projects combining wide thematic scopes and implementation in many countries can limit the achievement of depth of impact (E3, E17, E18). In addition, the number of outputs and activities identified in Project Documents must be proportionate to the human and financial resources available, as well as the established project timeline to ensure effectiveness (E5).

- There were several lessons related to ILO’s country presence, as well as on working processes in the African Region, namely related to reporting and budgeting mechanisms, which were often found to be inefficient and lead to important delays. While some evaluations found that was evidence that DWTs and ILO country offices can significantly support projects in countries where the ILO is a “non-resident” agency, this has limitations, and several evaluators insisted that it is important to locate project offices and key staff in an operating environment with effective administrative and financial support. It was found that the likelihood of RBSA seed funding contributing to a growing ILO project portfolio is higher in countries where the ILO is a resident agency actively engaged in the UNCT (E10)

- The outcome-based funding approach is adapted to crisis situations, as it allows to adapt initiatives carried out within a programme without putting the goals at risk, both at global and country levels (E15)

Do evaluations show certain recurring challenges?

Several recurring challenges were identified in the reports, with the most frequent being related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, administrative and recruitment delays, and political and institutional instability. Certain reports highlighted that these issues were repeatedly mentioned in progress reports and MTEs yet remained unaddressed during the lifetime of the intervention.

- In many countries, the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated gaps in communication and cooperation. The financial absorption capacities of interventions were also affected by the pandemic, due to extensive delays in implementation, with the bulk of spending taking place in the last months of implementation, although this was often mitigated by no-cost extensions. In one case, however, project management found that the extension granted would not allow the project to use project funds effectively, and did not request the last budget instalment (E11).

- Inadequate infrastructure, including poor road networks, insufficient transportation facilities, limited access to electricity, and unreliable internet connectivity hindered the delivery of project activities. Connectivity limitations posed particular challenges to the effectiveness of virtual project activities as a response to Covid-19 work adaptations. For instance, poor access to technological devices by partners and constituents led to the use of traditional analogue channels, such as telephones, as primary tools for communication. This limited the depth of capacity-building and knowledge transfer possible, and people with a lower level of digital competence were the most affected (E15). In Ghana, an online ITC-Turin workshop registered only 30 participants (target

237) as the ILO was not able to provide the needed equipment and internet connectivity to VET institutions, so they could not attend. Lack of equipment also affected outreach of online training, reaching 1198 beneficiaries instead of the targeted 8690 (E2). In Nigeria, there were issues with the electricity supply, which negatively affected communication and reporting (E8).

- Bureaucratic hurdles regarding the distribution and access to funds and slow, complex ILO administrative, financial and procurement procedures, were often cited as challenges in reports. In Niger, for example, this means that "Cash for Work" activities had to be suspended as workers could not be paid, and it it took one year to finalise a fish farming contract (E1, E4). These challenges were exacerbated in the absence of ILO country offices with support structures and the ability to conduct swift financial transactions, as was the case in Sierra Leone, despite satisfactory internal ILO support from other country offices and DWT. Delays in key staff and consultant recruitment and staff turnover; slow setting up of project offices and limited internal support were other hurdles faced by interventions.
- Political challenges and institutional instability – Frequent leadership and personnel changes in several countries, affected planned work and project timelines and hindered progress (e.g. E11, E12, E17). In Nigeria, this also led to challenges in the implementation of the DWCP. Institutional instability was also noted as a key negative factor affecting project performance in Sierra Leone (E10). In Niger, political instability in project areas limited access to populations,
- There were also challenges due to intra-and inter-agency dynamics and rivalries, which led to ineffective coordination and negatively affected performance.
- Unrealistic project designs, inadequate resources and timeframes, weak or inexistent results frameworks and monitoring and reporting systems, lack of baseline/contextual assessments, poor social dialogue, low capacities of constituents and partners, limited engagement of stakeholders, and shifting donor and national government priorities were other challenges mentioned.
- With regards to DWCPs, the review of the Côte d'Ivoire DWCP noted that the management and implementation of the DWCP faced major difficulties, due to the fact that the Government and the social partners did not formally adopt the DWCP. Although a Steering Committee was established, it was not functional, leading to governance and monitoring challenges. The review of the Nigeria DWCP also highlighted the absence of an operational DWCP Steering Committee and Technical Working Group, thus limiting implementation. This was compounded by the absence of a labour market governance mechanism, limited funding by donors, government and social partners, with the implementation of activities being dependent on the priorities of stakeholders and donors, and high turnover of key government staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What kind of recommendations have been made by the evaluations under review? Are there areas where recommendations seem to recur?

This review examined over 150 recommendations provided in the sample evaluation reports, and filtered out those that were (a) too specific to the project context; (b) not specific to the ILO in case of joint evaluations, (c) not specific to the countries in the Western Africa subregion in case of inter-regional or cluster evaluations.

This resulted in recommendations related to different themes, including the following:

- The need to adopt a programmatic approach based on longer time perspectives and continuity of engagement, with solid Theories of Change, results chains and roadmaps, supported by robust monitoring and evaluation systems to support adaptation, was a recurring recommendation, as were the development of sustainability and exit strategies.

- Increased quality assurance measures for data collection, monitoring and reporting at all levels, to ensure accuracy and reliability in assessing the effectiveness of interventions, as well as resources set aside for such activities, including for third-party monitoring mechanisms; this was also recommended for RBSA projects. Periodical internal assessments to determine if project approaches remained appropriate and a reflection process documenting lessons learned were also recommended. The evaluation of ACCEL-I Africa was not able to obtain specific data on trends of child labour incidence, and as such, underlined that this is a requirement to determine whether the incidence of child labour in specific supply chains has been significantly reduced, despite the fact that there are methodological tools for capture this. As such, by supporting national actors to develop adequate monitoring mechanisms, like in Côte d'Ivoire, rapid assessments and baseline studies can be conducted on a regular basis, enabling to capture trends over the lifetime of a project. The need for improved reporting was also mentioned several times.
- One report recommended that mid-term evaluations of multi-country interventions be replaced by internal strategic reviews and annual backstopping missions in each country.
- Ensuring that sufficient staff are appointed at all levels, and with sufficient experience and expertise for smooth project implementation, with sufficient time for recruitment.
- Ensuring the active involvement of constituent groups, including employers' and workers' organisations, starting from the design stage, taking into account country contexts to determine what is realistically achievable given the available resources and national capacities. Support stakeholder and partner capacities and strengthening of joint programming through steering committees and working groups, to ensure collaboration in the implementation and management of projects, leading to ownership and sustainability. One evaluation suggested that steering committee meetings should be organised within the first half year of the project to promote communication and mutual learning. When relevant, involve the regional employers' and workers' organisations and beneficiaries as well.
- Improved strategies for communication, dissemination and visibility of project results and implementation. Furthermore, one report recommended that laws and regulations adopted at the national level should be complemented by clear guidance and training for implementation at the level of local administration and other actors. Adapt training and knowledge products to beneficiaries and local contexts and collaborate with the media for advocacy and awareness raising campaigns. Another evaluation found that the intervention implementation and management should be documented "model" to promote visibility, learning and possible replication.
- Strengthening synergies between ILO programmes in a country or on a thematic basis, by promoting communities of practice and thematic exchanges; and sharing of experience and good practices.
- Developing and strengthening external partnerships at different levels, for improved collaboration and resource mobilization, and to show the ILO's added value in certain sectors, such as in the context of just transition and environmental sustainability, where it was found that there was a clear entry point for ILO to intervene in this area. Continued active engagement with other UN agencies was also a recurring point, especially as this allowed ILO to focus on its core mandate, while ensuring a coordinated approach to topics such as child labour, or refugee-host livelihoods.
- With regards to the DWCPs, a key recommendation was that they should be formally adopted by the Government and social partners, and that the involvement of these constituent groups should begin at the planning/design phase for improved ownership. Similarly, Steering Committees should be operational and backed by a ministerial decree, which would give them more legitimacy when implementing the DWCP. Specific resources should also be allocated from national and donor sources, and a resource mobilization plan should be developed. The development of a sound monitoring and reporting system was also recommended, with one review suggesting that MTEs of DWCPs should systematically be conducted, to allow to address challenges in a more flexible manner.

- The complexity of financial management arrangements for the Africa Region should be simplified. Furthermore, procurement and financial procedures should be adapted when ILO interventions are based in countries in crisis/emergency situations and streamlined with processes of UN humanitarian agencies on the ground. Several mid-term evaluations recommended no-cost extensions.

- When allocating RBSA resources, less projects with higher funding are preferable to more projects with reduced budgets, to ensure the relevance of investments. Moreover, to effectively implement RBSA projects in the peace and resilience context, countries should be prioritized where established office structures are available, complemented by active ILO engagement in the UNCT in the conflict-affected countries. To promote impact of RBSA projects, using a cluster approach under the peace and resilience programming, or a common P&B outcome can offset the high risks of limited, short-term results.

There were also several recommendations related to **gender, and one related to disability inclusion**:

- Gender considerations should play a more prominent role in interventions (and DWCPs), and engagement with gender specialists should be enhanced. Comprehensive gender equality strategies needed to be developed to ensure that all stakeholders pay specific attention to the inclusion of women, and gender-specific assessments, case studies and research should be undertaken to understand gender-specific challenges and opportunities.

- Establishment of consistent gender-specific guidance in different languages, studies focusing on gender differences, and gender-specific support should be planned in certain contexts, such as in labour migration projects.

- Mainstream gender in results frameworks and monitoring systems and include gender-disaggregated data at different levels.

- There should be formal strategies to include disability inclusion considerations in project design and implementation, with specific qualitative and quantitative indicators to monitor progress.

While most recommendations were addressed to the ILO, some reports had recommendations for constituents. These focused on the need to improve communication and dissemination of project information and ensuring that there were sufficient human resources available to operationalize and capitalize on results.

CONCLUSIONS

This synthesis review of evaluation reports on ILO interventions conducted in Western Africa between 2018 and 2023, revealed that results were relatively heterogeneous in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

In terms of relevance, ILO interventions responded to the priorities and needs of both constituent groups and final beneficiaries in many cases, although this varied across contexts and stakeholder engagement was a recurring issue. ILO projects were generally aligned with national, regional an international development frameworks, the ILO's Programme and Budget, DWCPs, the ILO's Decent Work Agenda for Africa, CPOs, and the SDGs, ensuring their relevance to the needs of constituents, including vulnerable groups. There was evidence of alignment under a common UN framework in some instances.

While project objectives were often found to be coherent, in many cases, aspects of their designs were not realistic, due to their short timeframes and limited resources, combined with poor national capacities and/or complex socio-political contexts. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many interventions, leading to delays in implementation. There was evidence that project teams were able to use virtual means to address related challenges, but efforts were sometimes hindered by inadequate infrastructure in project countries, limiting the possibilities of conducting virtual activities. Technical support related to COVID-19 was provided in several countries.

Effectiveness of ILO interventions was heterogeneous, including for ILO's cross cutting policy areas. Important areas of work included social protection, youth employment, and the transition from informality to formality. Key results included the production of studies and publications to inform policies, raise awareness, and disseminate knowledge; the development of mechanisms to collect data and the identification of relevant indicators to support evidence-based decisions; the formulation and implementation of strategies, policies and roadmaps, including through social dialogue; capacity building, awareness-raising and advocacy work, leading to changed behaviours and practices.

While there were efforts and some evidence of progress to promote and apply ILS across various countries, notably through the ratification of several conventions and updated legislation, as well as work on labour inspection and OSH, challenges such as delays in ratification, capacity gaps and limited awareness, and uncertainty around funding affected the achievement of results. Several ILO interventions had specific outputs related to the promotion of social dialogue, and the ILO's unique ability to bring employers, trade unions and governments together was recognised, yet engagement with social partners was noted to be weak in several instances.

There were wide disparities in the depth and quality of information provided in relation to gender responsiveness, although this policy area was often addressed. In contrast, evidence of strategies and actions to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in ILO interventions was very limited overall. Certain interventions had a specific focus on environmental sustainability and the green economy, with work conducted at different levels, from local-level livelihood activities to national strategies and the creation of framework documents for the mainstreaming of just transition principles and approaches into ILO work programmes, with evidence that these were used in DWCPs, although this was not a topic that was uniformly incorporated, indicating an area for improvement in the future.

There were variations in the adequacy of financial and human resources and the efficiency of their use. There was evidence of cost-effective strategies, including through internal and external collaborations and partnerships, which helped maximize results and promoted cost-efficiencies, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was evidence that projects built on the achievements and lessons from other ILO initiatives and projects, especially interventions related to labour migration and social protection. Sub-regional interventions partnered with relevant departments in ILO headquarters, ILO-ITC, as well as with ACTRAV and ACTEMP specialists in Abuja and Dakar, and technical specialists from Decent Work Teams in the different country offices, although the implication of the different staff members and specialists varied between projects.

The extent and effectiveness of collaboration with other UN agencies was mixed, with some projects working closely with partner agencies to achieve results and maximize resource efficiency, while evaluations also found there were missed opportunities for collaborations, even in the context of the same projects. There was evidence that the ILO could do more to create or enhance certain partnerships and there was a need for stronger coordination and collaboration, to avoid duplication and pool resources to increase impact. Lack of collaboration and coordination with state-level stakeholders was particularly problematic in the context of the Nigeria DWCP.

Efficiency was noted when there was evidence of flexible management approaches with adequate staffing, which enabled field offices to ask for assistance from colleagues in the field, at headquarters, or from specific technical experts, as and when necessary, with clear management structures and arrangements. The use of National Project Coordinators was found to be beneficial as it promoted ownership within ILO and country offices and allowed for greater flexibility to respond to individual contexts in multi-country projects. Overall, however, there were many instances of sub-optimal management set-ups and inefficiencies in processes, exacerbated by the absence of key personnel and delayed appointments of technical specialists.

Only a few projects strategically and effectively allocated their financial, technical and human resources. Slow recruitment processes, limited staffing, as well as the absence of key project staff delayed the achievement of results in many instances, and created important strains, leading to an overload of responsibilities and reduced efficiencies. Another recurrent weakness was related to the slow speed of financial disbursements, and cumbersome procurement procedures which hindered implementation and progress in planned activities. There were several examples of interventions having only spent a small portion of their budget while reaching the end of the planned timeframe, due to delays in staffing, access to funds, and delays in project implementation. The review noted trends suggesting that countries with ILO country offices generally experienced higher effectiveness and efficiency. Challenges were noted in countries that did not have an ILO office with a bank account, so projects could not easily receive funds and pay contractors, and in countries with poor infrastructure, connectivity and transportation. The adequacy of monitoring and reporting systems was an area of weakness overall, which limited the possibility to assess progress towards outputs and outcomes and adapt the implementation of interventions.

Although results were mixed, there was some evidence of sustainability and ownership of results generated by ILO interventions in Western Africa, including through the appropriation of strategies and approaches by constituents, and the setting aside of resources to build on progress and achievements. This was exemplified through the participatory development of national action plans and strategies, the development and validation of specific protocols and agreements; the ratification of ILO Conventions; the institutionalization of knowledge and tools; and transfer of infrastructure to local cooperatives and unions; among others. There were a few instances of follow-up phases or new projects based on existing ILO interventions. An important challenge was the lack of sustainability frameworks and exit strategies, along with associated resource mobilization plans.

There was also evidence of improvements of Decent Work conditions and impact due to ILO interventions. This was promoted through tripartite social dialogue, involvement of constituents and other stakeholders in the project cycle, and the use of strategic partnerships to build on achieved results. Changes in mindsets, behaviours and practices were highlighted several times.

ILO interventions were particularly appreciated in areas facing issues of child labour, forced labour, and political insecurity. In many cases, however, evaluations found that while some progress could be associated with ILO interventions, impact was difficult to assess due to lack of sound data and monitoring mechanisms, as well as resource issues, and weak or unstable institutional contexts and on-going security concerns. Delays in implementation in many of the interventions reviewed also hindered progress and limited the achievement of results. A recurring finding was that a longer programmatic approach was required to achieve impact. Addressing these challenges is essential to enhancing the overall effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of ILO interventions in the region.

Annex 1 – List of Evaluation reports reviewed

#	TC Symbol	Evaluation title	Timing / Nature	HLE Countries covered	Year
DWCP	n.a.	Nigeria Decent Work Country Programme Review	Country Programme Review	Nigeria	2020
DWCP	n.a.	Revue finale indépendante du programme par pays pour la promotion du travail décent (PPTD) 2017-2020 de la Côte d'Ivoire	Country Programme Review	Côte d'Ivoire	2022
E1	GLO/19/01/FRA	Contribution financière MAE pour la mise en œuvre de l'Alliance 8.7 ainsi que l'action du BIT dans la zone Sahel	Final, independent	Niger	2023
E2	GLO/20/26/NOR	The ILO-Norway Programme Cooperation Agreements on Skills Development (2016-2023) –	Final, independent	Ghana	2023
E3	GLO/18/57/SWE; TZA/18/51/SWE; GHA/18/51/SWE; GLO/17/17/UND	Clustered evaluation on the SIDA-ILO Partnership Programme (phase I) – Cross cutting policy driver environmental sustainability and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)	Final, independent	Ghana, Burkina Faso	2020
E4	NER/19/01/USA	Market based livelihood interventions for refugees and host communities in Niger	Final, independent	Niger	2023
E5	RAF/18/12/DEU	ILO initiative for Labour Migration, Employment and Reintegration in Nigeria and Ghana	Midterm, internal	Ghana, Nigeria	2020
E6	RAF/17/16/ICM	Extending social protection access and portability to migrant workers and their families through selected RECs in Africa (EC through ICMPD)	Final, independent	ECOWAS	2020
E7	RAF/15/53/FRA	Programme d'Appui à la Promotion de l'Emploi et à la Réduction de la Pauvreté (APERP III)	Midterm, internal	Côte d'Ivoire, Bénin, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger	2018
E8	RAF/18/08/NLD	Accelerating action for the elimination of child labour in supply chains in Africa – ACCEL-I Africa –	Final, independent	Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria	2024
E9	RAF/16/53/FRA	Améliorer la gouvernance du travail dans les TPE/PME et aider à la sortie de l'économie informelle en Afrique	Final, independent	Burkina Faso, Togo	2021
E10*	SLE/16/01/RBS	Employment and sustainable enterprise development for peace and resilience in Africa – cluster evaluation	Final, independent	Sierra Leone	2021
E11	RAF/19/01/DEU	Youth Employability Programme Component 2: Skills Initiative for Africa	Final, independent	Ghana, Nigeria	2023
E12	GLO/19/06/CHE	FAIRWAY Programme	Midterm, independent	Nigeria	2023
E13	GLO/17/46/LUX	Appui à l'Initiative Mondiale pour l'Emploi Décent des Jeunes dans la région du Sahel	Final, independent	Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo	2021
E14	GLO/16/52/USA	Convening stakeholders to develop and implement strategies to reduce child labor in artisanal and small-scale gold mining	Final, independent	Ghana	2020

E15*	CAF/16/01/RBS; COM/16/01/RBS; SOM/16/01/RBS; SLE/16/01/RBS	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	Final, independent	Ghana	2022
E16	RAF/18/07/IOM	Joint programme on labour migration governance for development and integration in Africa (JLMO) - SIDA (Sweden) funded - joint evaluation	Midterm, independent	ECOWAS	2021
E17	GLO/13/22/USA	Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor (CLEAR) - Final independent Evaluation	Final, independent	Côte d'Ivoire	2018
E18	GLO/17/15/EUR	Eliminating child labour and forced labour in the cotton, textile, and garment value chains: an integrated approach	Midterm, independent	Burkina Faso	2022

* Project implemented with RBSA funding.

Annex 2: Scoring of reports by OECD/DAC criteria

Evaluation Report Number and DC code	Relevance	Coherence	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability	Average
DWCP Côte d'Ivoire	5	5	4	3	4	3	4
DWCP Nigeria	4	5	2	2	3	2	3
E4: NER/19/01/USA	4	5	3	2	4	3	3.5
E5: RAF/18/12/DEU	3	5	1	3	1	1	2.3
E6: RAF/17/16/ICM	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.8
E8: RAF/18/08/NLD	5	5	5	5	4	4	4.7
E9: RAF/16/53/FRA	1	2	1	1	1	1	1.2
E10: SLE/16/01/RBS	1	3	2	2	1	2	1.8
E11: RAF/19/01/DEU	5	4	5	4	4	4	4.3
E12: GLO/19/06/CHE	4	4	4	4	3	4	3.8
E13: GLO/17/46/LUX	3	3	4	2	3	2	2.8
E14: GLO/16/52/USA	4	4	4	3	5	5	4.2
E18: GLO/17/15/EUR	4	4	4	4	N/A	3	3.8
Composite average score	3.5	4.1	3.3	3	3.1	2.9	

Note 1: Evaluation reports E1, E2, E3, E7, E15, E16 and E17 were not scored due to factors such as their focus on multi-country or inter-regional interventions, which complicated the assessment of performance of specific countries covered by the HLE Western Africa. Additionally certain internal evaluation reports did not provide sufficient detail for effective ratings, although some of the findings were relevant for the HLE.

Note 2: Overall, interventions received "Somewhat satisfactory" (3) scores for Coherence; "Somewhat unsatisfactory" (2) scores for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact; and "Unsatisfactory" (1) scores for sustainability.

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