

► ILO Helpdesk for Business: Report on the expert advice and website

Report for January 2024 – December 2024

Multinational Enterprises and Responsible Business Conduct Unit

February 2025

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► Introduction

The ILO Helpdesk for Business provides expert advice and guidance on the application of the principles contained in international labour standards to company operations and the provisions of the [Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy](#) (MNE Declaration). It was established by the Governing Body in 2009.

The Helpdesk is composed of two services:

- a free and confidential service that responds to individual requests;
- and a website which is a one-stop-shop for information, practical tools and upcoming training opportunities that are relevant to companies.

Individual requests which may be of interest to other users¹ are anonymized and posted on the website Q&A, along with ILO tools, resources and information on upcoming training opportunities. The Office updates the web site regularly. The Helpdesk website is available in English, French and Spanish; mirror sites exist in [Japanese](#) and [Chinese](#) and key pages are available in Vietnamese.

The Helpdesk is promoted on the [homepage of the ILO website](#) and several thematic and department pages. The Helpdesk is one of the operational tools of the MNE Declaration and the Office encourages constituents to use the Helpdesk as part of the promotional activities of the MNE Declaration. The ILO International Training Centre also promotes the Helpdesk and uses relevant Q&A in trainings as a basis for stimulating discussion on real-world situations. The promotional leaflet of the ILO Helpdesk exists in English, French and Spanish and Portuguese and is widely distributed. Various development cooperation projects also promote the Helpdesk and translated the Helpdesk promotional materials in different languages, including in Bahasa Malay, in Bengali, in Lao and Portuguese languages, making it highly visible in many countries. The Office also promotes the Helpdesk at all relevant events in which ILO participates, including the Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights and related regional forums and the World Investment Conference.

¹ Posted questions may be modified to preserve confidentiality.

► I. Individual assistance service

A. Number of queries and users

The Helpdesk answered 2077 individual queries since its establishment in 2009 through December 2024. During the reporting period January – December 2024, the Helpdesk answered 195 receivable requests.² This is slightly down from the 207 requests in 2023 but continues to exceed the yearly average of 136 requests across all years of operation.

The dominant group of users remain overwhelmingly MNEs (142 out of 195 questions or 62%). Other significant groups of users included non-governmental CSR/RBC initiatives (14); and various government entities (11). The number of self-identified suppliers seeking clarification of a request from a buyer held steady at 7 requests.

The largest groups of users of the individual assistance service are companies, workers and their representatives and CSR/RBC initiatives (industry and multi-stakeholder). However, the Helpdesk has also assisted other groups, in particular inter-governmental organizations (mainly those concerned with trade, development and human rights), government agencies (concerning public policies, e.g., development aid, procurement, export promotion, import requirements, CSR/RBC policies and national action plans on business and human rights) and employers' organizations. Other users include NGOs, journalists, consultants, and academic researchers. Table 1 provides a breakdown of users.

► **Table 1: Breakdown of users by type³**

	January-December 2024	Cumulative total as of December 2024
Workers or Trade Unions	14	184
Employers' organizations	0	3
Governments	11	130
Inter-governmental	7	44
CSR/RBC Initiatives	13	86
MNEs	141	1561
SMEs	0	27
Suppliers	7	38

² Due to the change in reporting period from March-February to January-December a comparison with previous years' figures is not possible. This will resume with next year's report. This also affects the totals provided in the Tables.

³ NB: the users do not sum to the total users, due to some falling into more than one category, e.g., "SMEs" and "suppliers".

Researchers/journalists	2	108
NGOs	0	28
Unknown	0	80
Total	195	2077

B. Regional origin of the users

Of the questions that contained information that allows for identification of the region of the user, the most continued came from Western Europe, followed by Eastern Europe, the Middle East, East Asia, and Africa. Table 2 provides a breakdown of users by region.

► **Table 2: Breakdown of users by region**

	January-December 2024	Cumulative total as of December 2024
Africa	3	99
Pacific	0	18
Caribbean	0	21
Central Asia	0	83
East Asia	6	160
Eastern Europe	8	46
Latin America	0	131
Middle East	6	84
North America	0	55
Western Europe	25	634
International	69	628

C. Regional focus of questions received

During this period, the large majority of questions pertained to global operations, continuing the trend of the past years. Among the regions of interest, East Asia and Eastern Europe were the most common. Table 3 provides a breakdown of regions identified in the queries.

► Table 3: Regional focus of queries

	January-December 2024	Cumulative total as of December 2024
Africa	4	149
Caribbean	0	28
Central Asia	7	159
East Asia	13	220
Eastern Europe	13	84
Latin America	3	149
Middle East	5	142
North America	6	28
Western Europe	3	116
Global/unspecified	141	1057

D. Sectors covered in the queries

Table 4 indicates which sectors were specified in queries. Agriculture and extractives were once again the two sectors most frequently specified in the questions. However, the majority of the questions was not sector-specific.

► Table 4: Sectors concerned

	January-December 2024	Cumulative total as of December 2024
Agriculture	13	130
Artisanal	0	4
Biofuels	0	13
Chemicals	5	36
Construction	5	76
Electronics	7	88
Extractives	14	65
Finance	8	87
Food	0	39
Forestry	1	6

Garments and textiles	7	59
Health services	0	37
Heavy manufacturing	2	51
ITC	0	37
Light manufacturing	5	89
Pharmaceuticals	0	14
Printing/Publishing	0	4
Public services	1	83
Retail	0	34
Services	7	83
Shipping	1	45
Utilities	0	6
Not specified	91	728

E. Issues raised in the queries

Table 5 provides a breakdown of the issues raised in the queries during this reporting period. The top three issues raised included hours of work, occupational safety and health non-discrimination. There were 8 issues which arose from social audits.

► **Table 5: Breakdown of questions by area of MNE Declaration**

Area of MNE Declaration	Topic	January - December 2024	Total as of December 2024
General	Compliance with national law	2	65
	Compliance with principles of ILS	0	81
	Definitions	7	54
	FPRW	0	43
	ILO approach to CSR/RBC	0	27
Employment	Child labour	8	149
	Forced labour	13	158
	Employment promotion	9	22

	Formality	2	9
	Non-discrimination	17	108
	Termination of employment	6	96
	Employment Relationship	1	10
	Other	3	45
Training	Skills and training	4	19
Conditions of work and life	General	1	16
	HIV/AIDS	2	5
	Hours of work	22	132
	Housing/Food	2	23
	OSH	21	130
	Paid leave	1	23
	Privacy	0	11
	Social security	2	44
	Wages	12	135
Industrial relations	Collective bargaining	4	46
	Freedom of association	2	46
	Social dialogue	0	12
Other	Migrant workers	9	140
	Special categories of workers	3	70
	ILS and productivity	3	7
	ILO approach to sustainable enterprises	0	6
	Interpretation procedure	0	3
	Helpdesk operations	0	18
	Requests for collaboration	0	33
	Company Union Dialogue	1	4
	Statistical information	10	95
	Miscellaneous	16	140
	MNE Declaration as an instrument	0	20

► II. ILO Helpdesk for Business Website

The website has been regularly updated with new information, including new ILO publications and training tools that are relevant for enterprises of all sizes, sectors and geographical regions. A new thematic section on [Business and Just Transition](#) with [Tools and resources for business on a just transition](#) has been created to meet the increased demand from enterprises for information on this topic.

The ILO Helpdesk for Business web site now covers a total of 16 different thematic areas.

A. General data on website visitors

Table 6 provides a summary of activity for calendar years 2023 and 2024 and cumulative data since the creation of the website in 2010.

The data is gathered through Google Analytics and include all web sites of the Helpdesk in English, French, Spanish and the mirror sites in Chinese.

The current report covers data collected during the 2024 calendar year (1 January to 31 December 2024).

In 2024, the number of annual users reached 472,804. While this is slightly lower than the 517,800 recorded in 2023, this decrease may be attributed to the full migration of the ILO website in April, which temporarily affected content accessibility during part of the year due to broken links and missing pages. The ILO Helpdesk team worked swiftly to restore full functionality, ensuring that users could regain seamless access to critical resources.

The cumulative number of pages viewed is nearing 5 million, highlighting the platform's enduring relevance and the trust it has built globally. This milestone reinforces the Helpdesk's position as a key resource for businesses seeking guidance on responsible labour practices.

► **Table 6: Helpdesk Website Activity – Comparison for Calendar Years 2023 and 2024, and Cumulative Total since 2010 as of December 2024**

	January – December 2023	January – December 2024	Cumulative since 2010
Visits (sessions) and (average/month)	579,704 (48,308)	543,120 (45,260)	3,568,642
Users	517,800	472,804	3,174,422
% of new users	88%	92%	-

Countries or territories visitors are located in	223	220	-
Pages viewed	757,772	635,480	4,939,934

B. Geographical Distribution of users

The website received visitors from all five regions. More than 60% of users came from the Americas, followed by Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania.

► **Table 7: Geographical distribution of users**

Country	January-December 2024
Americas	311,568
Asia	89,315
Europe	48,312
Africa	21,598
Oceania	1,687
Unknown	324

► The top 25 countries overall were:

1. Colombia	13. South Africa
2. Spain	14. Canada
3. Ecuador	15. Dominican Republic
4. Japan	16. Costa Rica
5. India	17. Malaysia
6. Peru	18. El Salvador
7. Argentina	19. Bolivia
8. France	20. Morocco
9. United States	21. Venezuela
10. Guatemala	22. United Kingdom
11. Philippines	23. Honduras
12. Mexico	24. Panama

C. Most visited webpages

The most visited webpages were the Spanish-language Q&As on freedom of association, occupational safety and health, wages and benefits, and non-discrimination and equality. The English-language Q&A on collective bargaining ranked second in overall visits.

Users continue to show strong interest in these topics, highlighting the relevance of issues such as freedom of association, collective bargaining, wages, occupational safety and health, and non-discrimination and equality.

► Table 8: The top 5 consulted Helpdesk Webpages were:

Web page	Page views
1. Preguntas y respuestas sobre las empresas y la libertad sindical y de asociación	82,172
2. Q&As on business and collective bargaining	46,084
3. Preguntas y respuestas sobre las empresas y la SST	44,251
4. Preguntas y respuestas sobre las empresas y los salarios	36,522
5. Preguntas y respuestas sobre las empresas, discriminación e igualdad	32,600