



► China ILO cooperation

April 2025

The People's Republic of China is a founding Member State of the ILO. The country has ratified 28 Conventions and is one of the leading countries promoting South-South and triangular cooperation in the ILO.

► China and the ILO

The ILO and China have a long-standing partnership that has intensified in recent years thanks to South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) and voluntary contributions by China to the ILO's Development Cooperation Programme, totalling US\$ 7.38 million between 2020 and 2024.

The ILO office in Beijing was established in 1985 and oversees ILO's activities in China (including the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions) and Mongolia.

Since the beginning of China's transition to a market economy, the ILO has been providing technical assistance to the Chinese government and social partners in areas such as labour legislation, employment promotion and social security reform, the promotion of social dialogue and sound labour relations. The first MoU signed in 2001 between the ILO and Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) deepened the cooperation in developing the labour market policies and institutions in line with international labour standards, which promoted productivity and safeguarding workers' rights.

In 2016, the third Decent Work Country Programme was agreed between the ILO and its Chinese constituents, laying the foundation for a MoU for strategic partnership focusing on the four dimensions of the decent work agenda, which was signed in the same year.

Over time, the nature of the cooperation between ILO and China has evolved. The ILO began integrating Chinese experience and approaches on employment services and other areas in its development cooperation programmes around the world.

In April and June 2019, the ILO signed three MoUs with the Government of China and one with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), providing solid basis for an expanded programme of development cooperation.

In December 2022 the ILO and the MOHRSS signed a partnership agreement promoting the Global Development Initiative (GDI) with a focus on South-South Cooperation in employment. In December 2023 another agreement was signed against the same background focusing on Social Protection.

► The Global Development Initiative (GDI)

Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative (GDI) at the UN General Assembly on September 21st, 2021. The initiative calls for greater international synergy to speed up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by revitalizing global development partnership as well as promoting stronger, greener, and healthier global development.

In particular, one of the GDI's priorities is promoting full employment and eradicating poverty for youth and women. This objective is aligned with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, in which the significance of seizing opportunities to promote full employment and decent work for all is emphasized.

► China's South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) at a glance

In 2012, the first SSTC agreement between the ILO and China was signed, with China committing US\$ 1 million in support to South-South cooperation and the Decent Work agenda. In 2013, China and ILO launched their first South-South cooperation project on strengthening public employment services and labour market information in Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). Since 2015, China has been committed to advancing social protection through SSTC.

Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), in 2019 China has further intensified its partnership with the ILO around shared priorities such as social protection, skills development, labour governance, safety at work. Agreements were signed between the ILO and three Ministries:

- The first MoU envisages a cooperation with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS). This cooperation is based on a shared vision aimed at promoting decent work, social justice, and a human-centered future of work.
- The second MoU signed by the Ministry of Emergency Management focuses on occupational safety and health (OSH), with the aim of putting people at the centre of development.
- The third MoU was signed by the Ministry of Transport, for the promotion of the effective implementation of the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative.

In recent years new SSTC partnership agreements were signed between the ILO and MOHRSS on skills development, employment and social protection with contributions total of US\$ 4 million, 3 million and 2 million respectively, bringing benefits to tripartite constituents in Asia and the Pacific as well as Africa.

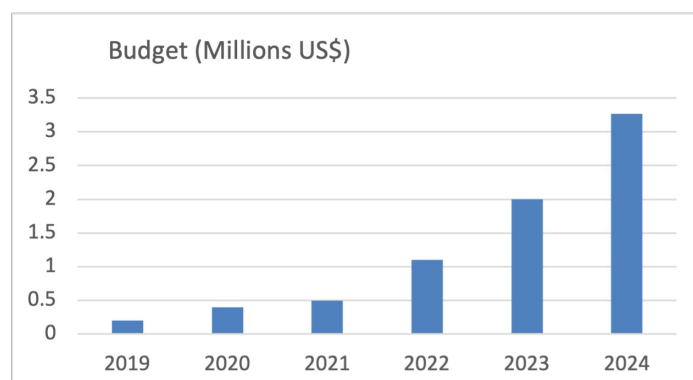
► China, BRICS and the ILO

In 2017 and 2022, MOHRSS held the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM) and working group meetings (BEWG) when China held the BRICS Presidency. The ILO has played an active role in providing technical support and connecting with the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes.

Activities like the [BRICS Knowledge series](#) (2021) and the Structured Funding Dialogue on-Skills (2022) have increased mutual exchanges between the ILO and BRICS countries. The 2022 BRICS LEMM Declaration focused on green jobs, skills development, and workers' rights protection, and proposes BRICS solutions to achieving the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and a human-centred inclusive recovery.



► China's voluntary contributions to the ILO 2020-2024



Between 2020 and 2024 China's voluntary contributions totalled US\$7.38 million for development cooperation programmes

In addition, MOHRSS contributed over US\$1.94 million to the ILO through the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programme as well as US\$1.53 million through secondment program between 2020 and 2024. Through the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund established by China, the ILO also receives more than US\$ 1.17 million for two projects.

► Current and recent ILO projects funded by China

► The project “Extending Social Protection Coverage to Workers in the Informal Economy in Lao PDR and Kenya and Leveraging Digital Transformation: through South-South Cooperation” (2023-2026)

Based on the Partnership Agreement signed in December 2023, the MOHRSS and the ILO pledge to jointly promote South-South Cooperation on Social Protection with the countries in Asia-Pacific and Africa regions – a critical theme of the ILO’s Global Social Justice Coalition and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.

The objective of the project is to improve the social protection situation for workers in the informal economy while contributing to the achievement of related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the vision of social justice and decent work for all. On 24th October 2024, [the launch event was held in Nairobi](#), with delegates from China, Kenya, Lao PDR, and the ILO. The project facilitates South-South cooperation, enabling the sharing of knowledge, resources, and expertise among ASEAN and African countries. The project, with contribution of US\$ 2 million, shows great support of the Chinese Government to ILO’s Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All.

► The project “Promoting the Global Development Initiative with a Focus on South-South Cooperation in Employment in ASEAN” (2022-2026)

This project aims to provide long-term employment support to ASEAN countries focusing on the development and implementation of national employment policies. Activities implemented under the project include policy formulation and implementation, capacity building, technical assistance for employment diagnostics and monitoring and evaluation. In its second year of implementation, the project has empowered and provided assistance to over 114,000 beneficiaries. The partnership supports the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda with a focus on high-quality employment, public employment services and entrepreneurship development which are critical themes for the ILO’s Global Social Justice Coalition and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. The MOHRSS provided US\$ 3 million to the project.



The regional policy dialogue held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 25-26 September 2024, gathered policymakers and representatives from workers’ and employers’ organizations from China and South-East Asia to discuss challenges of the growing digital economy and innovative strategies that countries are implementing to address these issues. With support from the MOHRSS China, the ILO ProSSCE-ASEAN project has empowered more than 148,000 beneficiaries across the region since 2023.

► ILO-China Partnership Project on Strengthening Skills Development in ASEAN Member Countries (2018-2025)

Working to improve the employability of workers and increase the productivity of enterprises through skills development and institutional capacity development, this project is leveraging SSTC to “build back better”. Thanks to a US\$ 4 million financial contribution from MOHRSS, the project supports its development partners in ASEAN countries to formulate skills laws and regulations for mutual skills recognition in the ASEAN region. The project promotes knowledge sharing on skills development between skills centres and TVET institutions through SSTC. Under the project, a Skills Development Network was launched through SSTC on 10 November 2021. Supported by the ILO and MOHRSS, the Network currently brings together 21 TVET institutes from China, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar. The South-South Skills Development Network has included the signature of nine MOUs signed between 18 member TVETs of the Network/Alliance, facilitating the formation of peer-to-peer relationships. These bilateral partners organized more than ten workshops on topics including TVET management, quality assurance of TVET institutions, digitalization of TVETs, digital skills training and poverty alleviation through TVETs. Five exchange visits were coordinated for a delegation from the TVET schools to foster collaboration and exchange best practices in vocational training in China.

► With support from the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund established by China

► Achieving SDGs and ending poverty through Universal Social Protection in Cambodia and Pakistan (2018-2021)

With a contribution of \$ 746,014, the project helped develop a comprehensive overview of the best practices, tools and communication mechanisms for good governance in the social protection systems and floors; and assisting the countries to achieve the SDGs and contributing to efforts to eradicate poverty. The project was jointly implemented by UN DESA and the ILO in the framework of ILO's Global Flagship Programme for Social Protection Floors. The project strengthened the capacity of the national entities responsible for social protection in Cambodia to formulate and implement social security schemes; enhanced the capacity of the national entities responsible for social protection in Pakistan to coordinate existing social security schemes and to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness; increased regional and global awareness on the important role of governance in extending the coverage of social protection.

► SSTC supported by the UNDESA China Fund: Accelerating universal social protection for achieving the SDGs and ending poverty through strengthened governance and digital transformation (2023-2025)

Thanks to US\$ 1,042,079 from UNDESA China Fund, the project aims to accelerate and extend universal social protection through the strengthening of the policy design, administrative governance, and the digital transformation of social protection systems in Lao PDR and Tajikistan, and promote good practice learned to benefit other countries in the Global South. The establishment of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and its Secretariat in Lao PDR— who will be responsible for the oversight, implementation and monitoring of the project work plan—marks another important achievement. The project will develop a knowledge base of good practices as well as hands-on training modules including on digital transformation of social protection planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation.

► Current and recent ILO projects funded by China in collaboration with other development partners in China

► South-South Cooperation to Enhance the Institutional Capacities of Trade Unions in Asia and the Pacific (2024-2027)

Thanks to US\$ 2.2 million in support from All-China unions and workers' organizations in the Asia and Pacific region to effectively participate and take action on issues of common interest to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, define and influence policy agendas on social, economic and environmental issues. This initiative has now entered in its second phase.

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