



Governing Body

358th Session, Geneva, 9–19 November 2026

Programme, Financial and Administrative Section

PFA

Audit and Oversight Segment

Date: 7 October 2026

Original: English

Sixth item on the agenda

High-level evaluations of strategies and Decent Work Country Programmes

Purpose of the document

This document presents a summary of the findings and recommendations of three independent high-level evaluations conducted during 2026 by the ILO Evaluation Office. Part I: The ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning, 2022–26; Part II: The ILO's strategies and actions on social protection, 2021–26; and Part III: The ILO's Decent Work Country Programme strategies and activities in the Asia-Pacific region, with emphasis on Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, 2022–25. The Governing Body is invited to endorse the recommendations and request the Director-General to ensure that they are implemented (see the draft decision in paragraph 98).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

Main relevant outcome: Enabling outcome B: Effective and efficient governance of the Organization.

Policy implications: The final section of each evaluation summary contains a set of recommendations, the implementation of which will have policy implications.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: Largely within existing budget allocations.

Follow-up action required: Follow-up to the recommendations will be reviewed by the Evaluation Office (EVAL) and the Evaluation Advisory Committee and reported to the Governing Body through the annual evaluation report.

Author unit: Evaluation Office (EVAL).

Related documents: [GB.355/PFA/5](#); [GB. 352/PFA/8\(Rev.1\)](#); [GB.332/PFA/8](#); [GB.331/PFA/8](#).

► Introduction

1. This document provides a concise summary of three high-level evaluations conducted by the ILO Evaluation Office in 2026: The ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning, 2022–26; the ILO’s strategies and actions on social protection, 2021–26; and the ILO’s Decent Work Country Programme strategies and activities in the Asia-Pacific region, with emphasis on Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, 2022–25. These evaluations adhere to international standards and detailed evaluation protocols to ensure accountability and guide strategic decision-making.
2. The evaluation methodology employs a mixed approach. Data collection is thorough and multifaceted, including desk and expert reviews, evaluation syntheses, interviews, surveys and case studies, with targeted field visits in selected countries. This ensures that findings are well grounded and reflect diverse sources, allowing for triangulation.
3. Ratings are assigned on a six-point scale, ranging from “Highly unsatisfactory” to “Highly satisfactory”.¹ Scores by evaluation criteria are informed by multiple inputs: survey results from constituents and staff, insights from the synthesis review of evaluation reports and, critically, the expertise and judgement of the independent evaluation team. The team’s independent perspective helps ensure objectivity, consistency and depth of analysis, making their input essential to the credibility of the process.

► Part I. Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO strategies and actions under the ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning, 2022–26

Purpose and scope

4. This high-level evaluation provides an independent assessment of the ILO’s implementation of the [ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning 2030](#) and its associated [plan of action](#) over the 2022–26 period. It assesses the ILO’s contribution to strengthening national skills and lifelong learning systems and presents recommendations to inform the implementation of the strategy until the end of 2030. The evaluation covers the broader portfolio of ILO skills-related interventions, including the Global Skills Programme (GSP).
5. The high-level evaluation presents expert-level analysis grounded in data derived from: a review of ILO documentation; six country case studies; interviews and surveys with ILO staff, constituents, donors, United Nations (UN) and other partners;² and a synthesis review of 95 relevant evaluation reports.

¹ 6 = Highly satisfactory; 5 = Satisfactory; 4 = Somewhat satisfactory; 3 = Somewhat unsatisfactory; 2 = Unsatisfactory; 1 = Highly unsatisfactory.

² Case studies included: Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Panama and Republic of Moldova. A total of 237 informants were interviewed (60 per cent men; 40 per cent women), while 15 per cent of staff, 15 per cent of constituents and 35 per cent of partners completed the survey.

Overall assessment

6. The ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning 2030 remains highly relevant and provides a credible framework to position skills and lifelong learning as drivers of decent work, productive employment, social inclusion and just transitions. The evaluation finds that the principal challenge lies not in the strategy's relevance, but in translating its strategic ambition into sustainable implementation, institutionalization and scale.
7. Consistent with its comparative advantage in policy reform and system-level support, the ILO's strongest contributions have been in strengthening governance, evidence-informed skills policies, institutional capacity, qualifications systems, recognition of prior learning, quality apprenticeships and social dialogue. The ILO has also strengthened labour-market and skills-needs intelligence to inform technical and vocational education and training (TVET) reform, occupational standards and sectoral planning, reflecting its normative mandate, technical expertise and convening role. Progress has been more limited in supporting operational implementation and the institutionalization of reforms in national systems. Maintaining this comparative advantage will require strategic partnerships and stronger evidence of the ILO's contribution.
8. Performance remained uneven across the strategy's five pillars, with comparatively less progress in the institutionalization and routine use of labour-market and skills-needs intelligence, sustainable financing and capacity to implement and scale reforms. In an increasingly constrained financing environment, implementation of the strategy should complement support for policy and governance reform with greater attention to operational implementation, institutional capacity of skills system actors and sustainable financing. Prioritization of resource allocation may be needed towards interventions with the greatest potential to strengthen national systems, while further reinforcing the ILO's enabling and partnership role. The sustainability of results will ultimately depend on sustained national ownership, domestic financing and implementation capacity.



Key findings by evaluation criteria

A. Relevance

Key finding 1: The ILO's work on skills and lifelong learning is well aligned with national priorities and positioned to support nationally owned reforms. Its greatest relevance lies in system-level support – particularly governance, institutional development and policy reform – reflecting its comparative advantage in policy dialogue, institutional strengthening and support to national training providers. International labour standards, including the Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208), are well reflected in policy frameworks, although their implementation and institutionalization have progressed at different rates.

Key finding 2: Tripartite engagement differs across constituent groups. While TVET and lifelong learning remain largely government-led, employers' organizations contribute to identifying skills priorities, whereas workers' organizations, despite formal governance roles, have exercised more limited influence. Constituent participation has been predominantly consultative rather than strategic and operational, reflecting capacity, resource and enabling-environment constraints. These findings point to opportunities for more targeted support to engage in skills governance, particularly for workers' organizations.



Key finding 3: The ILO has generated valuable work on skills anticipation, skills for green jobs, greening of TVET systems, digitalization and emerging artificial intelligence (AI)-related skills issues, including labour market diagnostics, sector-based methodologies and global tools. However, the institutionalization, scaling and systematic application of these approaches across the wider portfolio remain uneven.

9. The ILO's work on skills and lifelong learning remains closely aligned with country-owned agendas, with its greatest relevance being in supporting governance, and developing skills and lifelong learning systems. Its demand-driven approach enables the Office to respond to constituents' evolving needs while reinforcing its comparative advantage in system-level support.
10. While responsive to priorities, there is scope to more systematically apply ILO expertise on skills anticipation, green and just transitions, digitalization and emerging AI-related issues into forward-looking country support. Stakeholders identified growing demand for support on lifelong learning systems, workforce transitions and evolving labour market needs. The evaluation also found that implementation remained concentrated on initial skills development and TVET reform, with comparatively less emphasis on upskilling and reskilling throughout working life.

B. Coherence

Key finding 4: The strategy provides a common framework for action on skills and lifelong learning, but its potential to drive coherent implementation across the ILO's policy portfolios and regions is not yet fully realized. Coordination is strongest where supported by headquarters guidance, common methodologies, regional technical expertise and structured programme mechanisms, such as the GSP. Outside these arrangements, collaboration across headquarters portfolios and systematic cross-country learning are less consistent, limiting synergies and knowledge-sharing.

Key finding 5: The GSP has strengthened internal coherence by operationalizing the strategy through pooled funding, country coordination and peer learning. While retaining a global dimension through innovation initiatives and implementation across regions, its recent operational focus has been concentrated mainly in Africa, reducing its visibility and influence across the wider portfolio.

Key finding 6: The ILO's work is externally recognized for its distinctive and comparative technical advantage alongside other development partners, reflecting its unique tripartite mandate, social dialogue and normative leadership. However, the crowded and fragmented skills landscape, with no clear lead agency and some overlap across initiatives, highlights the need for the ILO to strengthen the evidence and communication of its distinct contribution to leverage strategic partnerships and mobilize resources.



11. The strategy is widely recognized across the Organization as the principal framework for designing and implementing skills and lifelong learning reforms. The GSP has reinforced this role by structuring country-level action and promoting knowledge exchange and common operational approaches among participating countries.
12. Overall, coordination has been strong within projects and country programmes but relies heavily on informal relationships, with limited institutional mechanisms for systematic cross-country learning and stronger integration with related employment and enterprise portfolios.

13. Externally, while the ILO's normative leadership and technical expertise are recognized, monitoring and knowledge-management arrangements are not yet sufficiently advanced to consistently capture and aggregate portfolio-level results. Tools such as the Service Tracker remain under development and are not yet able to demonstrate the outcomes of technical support. This limits the availability of consolidated evidence on the portfolio's contribution to national skills and lifelong learning systems.

C. Effectiveness

Key finding 7: Effectiveness across the strategy's five pillars remained uneven. The ILO's strongest contribution was in upstream policy reform, institutional capacity development, qualifications systems, quality apprenticeships and recognition of prior learning, strengthening the foundations for longer-term reform. Progress was less consolidated in areas critical to sustaining and scaling reforms, particularly the institutionalization and routine use of skills anticipation systems, sustainable financing and implementation capacity. Advancing these areas requires longer time frames, domestic investment and sustained national commitment.



Key finding 8: The GSP strengthened the effectiveness of the ILO's skills and lifelong learning portfolio by promoting policy coherence, institutional innovation and cross-country learning, notably in Africa. Its contribution demonstrates the value of a programmatic approach to implementing the strategy. Sustaining these initial gains, however, will depend on continued national ownership, resources and institutional capacity.

14. The absence of a dedicated results framework limited the measurement of the strategy's overall performance against predefined targets. Nevertheless, the ILO's programme and budget reporting during the 2022–25 period indicates substantial implementation, with 176 reported results under the relevant outcomes and outputs (24 per cent above the target) and 367 country programme outcome biennium entries related to skills and lifelong learning.
15. Across diverse country contexts, the ILO contributed to strengthening the institutional foundations of skills and lifelong learning systems and, where possible, connecting reforms with employment, productivity, inclusion and just transition agendas. This included support for innovative approaches such as competency-based training, recognition of prior learning, micro-credentials and digital or blended delivery. Interventions also strengthened inclusion by targeting women, young people, refugees, migrants, persons with disabilities and workers in the informal economy.
16. The pace of reform varied across contexts, reflecting differences in institutional capacity and implementation readiness. Many initiatives remained at pilot or early implementation stages, highlighting the importance of sustained national investment and long-term institutional commitment beyond project support. Furthermore, broader labour market transformation continues to depend on factors beyond the ILO's direct influence, including labour demand and wider economic conditions.
17. The GSP demonstrated the added value of a programmatic approach by connecting country interventions with global expertise and common methodologies, facilitating knowledge exchange and more consistent implementation across participating countries.

D. Efficiency

Key finding 9: Funding remained below the level envisaged to implement the strategy and was unevenly distributed across strategy pillars and regions. Nevertheless, the portfolio used available resources efficiently through catalytic approaches, including training of trainers, South–South collaboration, cost-sharing and scalable delivery models that extended the reach of limited funding.

Key finding 10: Although extrabudgetary development cooperation (XBDC) funds accounted for 97.5 per cent of total funding in the period 2022–25, regular budget resources (Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) and Regular Budget Technical Cooperation (RBTC)) financed more than half of all reported deliverables by number. This underscores the strategic role of regular budget resources in sustaining broad-based strategy implementation, particularly in areas receiving limited XBDC.

Key finding 11: The ILO’s technical support model, combining expertise from headquarters, regional offices and decent work teams, enabled an efficient delivery of high-quality technical support. However, scarce technical capacity has become a structural constraint to implementing the strategy, reducing the Office’s ability to deploy expertise strategically, provide sustained technical support and scale successful approaches across countries. The GSP demonstrates that dedicated coordination and specialist capacity strengthen efficiency gains, although these functions have yet to be institutionalized across the wider skills and lifelong learning portfolio.



18. Between 2022 and 2025, US\$197 million was allocated to skills and lifelong learning,³ with an expenditure rate of 87.5 per cent. The overall funding envelope remained below the level envisaged in the plan of action and was unevenly distributed across pillars and regions, with the largest share allocated to Africa, followed by Asia and the Pacific. The ILO maximized available resources through catalytic interventions, cost-sharing, pooled funding, and disseminating tools and methodologies for replication across countries.
19. The quality of the ILO’s technical support is widely recognized, but staffing levels remain insufficient relative to the ambitions of the strategy and constituents’ demands. Skills specialists are central to maintaining technical quality and coherence but are often stretched across multiple countries and workstreams. The GSP brought efficiency within its target countries by strengthening coordination, technical backstopping and peer learning, although these approaches remained limited to its geographical scope, with more limited influence on coordination and knowledge-sharing across the wider skills portfolio.
20. While the portfolio maintained efficient delivery, performance increasingly relies on overstretched technical capacity, creating risks to the timeliness and continuity of implementation. As resources become more constrained, proactive risk management and effective implementation planning remain essential to sustain performance and maximize resource efficiency.

³ Resources allocated exclusively to outcome 5 (2022–23) and output 3.2 (2024–25).

E. Sustainability and emerging impact

Key finding 12: The ILO's strongest contribution to long-term impact lies in embedding skills and lifelong learning reforms in national policy processes, institutions and broader development agendas. Interventions that strengthened governance, qualifications frameworks, recognition of prior learning, labour market intelligence and quality apprenticeships, while aligning with wider employment priorities, showed greater prospects for supporting institutionalization and scale. The GSP demonstrated the value of a programmatic approach in advancing system-level reform.

Key finding 13: The ILO has contributed to establishing conditions for sustainable reform; however, sustaining results depends on embedding these changes in national policy frameworks, institutions, sustainable domestic financing and strengthened institutional capacity.



21. The evaluation found that the ILO has made a significant contribution to strengthening the institutional foundations of national skills and lifelong learning systems, creating credible pathways towards long-term impact. The strongest evidence relates to reforms that strengthened governance, institutional capacities, qualifications systems, labour market relevance and tripartite engagement, influencing how skills and lifelong learning systems function over time. The GSP further demonstrated the value of a programmatic, system-oriented approach that strengthens institutional ownership, policy coherence and coordinated implementation.
22. Evidence of large-scale labour market impacts remains limited, as employment, productivity and inclusion outcomes depend not only on effective skills and lifelong learning reforms, but also on broader economic conditions, labour demand, domestic financing, institutional capacity and sustained political commitment. While the ILO has successfully supported the establishment of policies, frameworks and institutional mechanisms, the long-term impact of these reforms ultimately depends on factors that extend beyond its direct influence.
23. Prospects for sustaining reforms are greatest where they are embedded in broader national systems, institutional mandates and development priorities rather than remaining as standalone project activities. Across the evidence base, domestic financing emerged as the principal determinant of sustainability, with reforms remaining vulnerable where national ownership, institutional capacity and investment were insufficient to sustain implementation beyond externally funded projects.

Recommendations

24. **Recommendation 1: Update the implementation, results and monitoring framework of the ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning for 2026–30.**

The ILO should update the skills and lifelong learning plan of action as the implementation framework for the strategy for 2026–30. The revised plan of action should establish a road map with milestones, measurable results and monitoring and reporting arrangements aligned with corporate planning and reporting systems, while strengthening the tracking of beneficiaries and results achieved through ILO support. It should incorporate evaluation findings and recommendations from the first implementation cycle, prioritizing resource allocation to interventions with greatest potential for systemic change, institutionalization and national ownership. The framework should strengthen outcome-level monitoring and knowledge management, relying primarily on existing programme and budget, country programme

outcome and development cooperation reporting mechanisms. Complementary tools, such as the Service Tracker, should be upgraded to support cross-portfolio analysis and reporting, organizational learning and adaptive management without increasing reporting burdens.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• Employment, Skills and Sustainable Enterprises • Strategic Programming and Management	High	Short-term	Low

25. Recommendation 2: Focus implementation on areas of highest systemic leverage and comparative advantage.

In an increasingly constrained funding environment, the Office should focus its technical and financial resources where they add the greatest value, while remaining responsive to constituent priorities. Implementation should continue to build on the ILO's comparative advantage in policy reform, institutional development, governance and social dialogue, while strengthening institutional capacity, labour market intelligence and sustainable financing through evidence-based approaches. The Office should continue enhancing the capacities of governments and employers' and workers' organizations to contribute to skills and lifelong learning policy and implementation, promoting strategic tripartite engagement. Skills should remain integrated in broader employment, productivity, enterprise transformation, social protection and just transition agendas, including workforce transitions linked to technological and environmental change.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Employment, Skills and Sustainable Enterprises	High	Short- to mid-term	Medium

26. Recommendation 3: Strengthen sustainability, institutional change management and scale-up.

The ILO should place greater emphasis on sustainability, institutional change management, financing and scale-up from the outset of programme design. The evaluation found that reforms often progressed faster at policy than operational levels, with long-term success dependent on domestic financing, institutional capacity, implementation incentives and political continuity. Future interventions should continue to define realistic pathways for financing, institutionalization and sustained implementation by aligning with nationally owned reform processes and using pilot initiatives to generate evidence that informs domestic financing and scale-up. Particular attention should be paid to institutional capacity-building, recognition of prior learning, quality apprenticeships, sector skills councils, labour market intelligence, lifelong learning systems and skills for green jobs.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Employment, Skills and Sustainable Enterprises	High	Short- to Mid-term	Low

27. Recommendation 4: Institutionalize the Global Skills Programme's core functions in the implementation of the ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning.

The ILO should define how the core functions demonstrated by the GSP – including strategic portfolio coordination, dedicated capacity-building, technical backstopping, cross-country learning, common methodologies and support to system-oriented reforms – can be sustained and adapted across regions, regardless of future financing arrangements. These functions enhance coherence, technical continuity and implementation and will become increasingly important if external resources remain constrained during the strategy period. Building on GSP evidence, the ILO should articulate a clear financing proposal demonstrating to funding partners the added value of pooled, flexible funding as a means to advance the objectives of the strategy.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Employment, Skills and Sustainable Enterprises	High	Short-term	High

28. Recommendation 5: Strengthen the ILO's strategic positioning and partnerships to mobilize resources and scale impact.

The ILO should strengthen its position as the partner of choice for national skills and lifelong learning systems by leveraging its comparative advantages in normative guidance, technical expertise, tripartite engagement and convening capacity. This requires continuing the shift from project-centred delivery towards a stronger enabling and partnership role, grounded in long-term engagement with national TVET actors and training institutions, and country-tested proof of concepts that support adaptation, national ownership and scale-up.

The Office should strengthen long-term partnerships with national training entities, international financing institutions and UN and regional organizations, seeking collaboration where the ILO has a clearly defined strategic role and contributes recognized technical expertise. Such partnerships should reinforce the ILO's comparative advantage while enhancing visibility and resource mobilization. The Office should also embed core GSP functions – including technical backstopping, common methodologies, coordination and peer learning – in broader financing and partnership arrangements, to sustain them if dedicated GSP funding declines. Continued attention should be given to embedding skills and lifelong learning and social dialogue into employment, productivity and just transition initiatives, including through multi-partner financing mechanisms such as the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
- Employment, Skills and Sustainable Enterprises - Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation - Regional and country offices	High	Short- to Mid-term	Medium

► Office response

29. **Recommendation 1:** The Office will update the skills and lifelong learning plan of action, which will serve as the implementation framework for the period 2026–30 and incorporate the evaluation findings and recommendations. The revised plan of action will prioritize resources for interventions with the greatest potential to bring about systemic change, define measurable results and establish monitoring and reporting arrangements aligned with the programme and budget and with country programme outcome and development cooperation reporting requirements. The Office will strengthen monitoring and knowledge management mechanisms while ensuring that reporting requirements remain manageable.
30. **Recommendation 2:** During the remainder of the strategy period, the Office will strategically deploy its technical and financial resources in areas where it can add the greatest value, building on the ILO's comparative advantages in policy reform, institutional development, governance and social dialogue. The Office will continue enhancing the capacities of governments and employers' and workers' organizations to contribute to skills and lifelong learning policy and implementation, promoting strategic tripartite engagement.
31. The Office will place greater emphasis on operational approaches that strengthen institutional capacity, skills intelligence and sustainable financing. It will also continue to integrate skills into broader agendas on employment, productivity, sustainable enterprises and a just transition, including transitions driven by technological and environmental change, while maintaining the distinct role of skills as a policy area.
32. **Recommendation 3:** The Office will embed sustainability, institutional change management, scale-up and domestic financing in programme design from the outset. It will develop realistic pathways for domestic financing, institutionalization and sustained implementation beyond the duration of individual projects. The Office will continue to provide demand-driven services to constituents, giving greater attention to priority areas where demand is strongest.
33. **Recommendation 4:** The Office will draw on lessons learned from the GSP and other projects and initiatives, identify its core functions, good practices and effective approaches, and determine how these can be sustained and adapted across regions in implementing the next phase of the ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning.
34. In collaboration with the Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation Department, the Employment, Skills and Sustainable Enterprises Department will build on the results achieved through the GSP and make an evidence-based case to potential funding partners for pooled, flexible funding to support implementation of the strategy across regions.
35. **Recommendation 5:** The Office will further consolidate its position as a leading development partner in strengthening national skills and lifelong learning systems by drawing fully on the ILO's normative leadership, technical credibility, tripartite mandate and convening capacity.
36. The Office will strengthen communication of the results achieved during the first phase of implementation of the strategy, including good practices emerging from the GSP and other projects. It will also refine its value proposition to deepen partnerships with international financial institutions, UN agencies and regional organizations.
37. The Office will intensify efforts to mainstream skills in broader initiatives on employment, productivity and a just transition, including through multi-partner financing mechanisms such as the Global Accelerator.

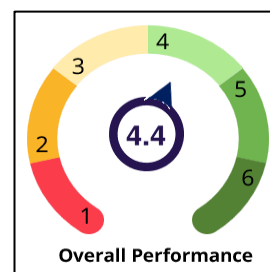
► Part II. High-level evaluation of the ILO's strategies and actions on social protection, 2021–26

Purpose and scope

38. The high-level evaluation evaluated the Office's strategies and actions on social protection during the period 2021–26, giving particular attention to programme and budget outcome 8, "Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all" (2021–23), and outcome 7, "Universal social protection" (2024–26). It evaluated the ILO's strategic positioning and contribution to universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection; implementation of the 2021 conclusions concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) and plan of action, which set key policy and strategic directions for the period; the role of international labour standards, social dialogue and tripartism; institutional arrangements and delivery across headquarters, regions and countries; and the relevance and added value of the Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All (GFP), including its second phase and associated projects.⁴ The evaluation drew on a synthesis of 40 evaluations; reviews of strategic, programme, monitoring and financial documentation; portfolio and results analysis; 195 interviews (46 per cent women; 54 per cent men) with ILO staff, constituents and partners; 7 case studies;⁵ and surveys of ILO staff (63 respondents; 21 per cent), constituents (34 respondents; 22 per cent) and partners (10 respondents; 27 per cent).⁶

Overall assessment⁷

39. The ILO successfully helped countries build the foundations of stronger, rights-based social protection systems. Its distinctive comparative advantage lies in combining international social security standards with technical expertise, knowledge, advocacy and tripartite dialogue. A particular strength was its support for extending social security to workers in the informal economy. These strengths positioned the ILO to provide normative and technical leadership, while governments and partners more often financed or administered social assistance at scale. The Phase II strategy articulated the ILO's operational role more explicitly in established areas of social security system-building than in non-contributory provision.
- (a) The ILO's greatest achievements were in national strategies and laws, scheme design and financing arrangements, and institutional and administrative reform. These reforms were necessary steps towards effective coverage and adequate protection, but further



⁴ These included: (a) the multi-donor project "Building Social Protection Floors for All – Phase II" (GLO/21/34/MUL); (b) the "Accès universel à la protection sociale, à la santé et à la sécurité au travail" project (GLO/20/59/FRA); and (c) "Accelerating the Achievement of Universal Social Protection to Leave No One Behind" project (GLO/22/31/IRL).

⁵ Case studies covered Côte d'Ivoire, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Paraguay, Senegal and Zambia, in depth; Oman as a light case; and ILO contributions to social protection financing thematically.

⁶ Given the response rates and respondent numbers, survey results were interpreted as the perceptions of respondents rather than as representative estimates of the wider stakeholder groups.

⁷ 6 = Highly satisfactory; 5 = Satisfactory; 4 = Somewhat satisfactory; 3 = Somewhat unsatisfactory; 2 = Unsatisfactory; 1 = Highly unsatisfactory.

progress required time and depended on domestic financing, operating rules, national administrative capacity and political decisions.

- (b) The GFP was effective in providing a common architecture for organizing country support, mobilizing resources and consolidating reported results, but delivery remained heavily dependent on development cooperation funds.
- (c) Going forward, the ILO should enhance support for implementing sustainable reforms with costed action plans, recurrent financing, clear institutional roles and procedures, and monitoring of whether reforms improve protection in practice.

Key findings by evaluation criteria

A. Relevance

Key finding 1: The ILO's work was most relevant where national reform priorities aligned with its standards-based mandate and strengths in law, policy, financing, scheme design, coverage and administration.

Key finding 2: Constituent engagement was uneven: governments and social security institutions were principal operational counterparts, while social partners participated mainly through consultation, review, validation and tripartite structures, with less sustained influence over financing, steering, monitoring and governance.

Key finding 3: The ILO identified populations facing social protection gaps, but interventions did not consistently address their specific barriers. Adaptation was most developed for informal economy workers and in selected interventions concerning migrants, refugees and women.

Key finding 4: Global guidance covered a range of evolving challenges, but country-level application was uneven. COVID-19 response, digital administration and demographic change were more developed than platform employment, climate and just transition, and care and long-term care.



40. At country level, Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) aligned support with national priorities, country context, system maturity and identified coverage and institutional gaps. The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), and other social security standards guided legal and policy review, scheme design, actuarial and financing analysis and coverage extension. Regional and global work met demand for technical guidance, capacity development and comparable coverage data through the ILO's custodianship of indicator 1.3.1 of the 2030 Agenda and the *World Social Protection Report*.
41. Social partners participated in training, consultation, review, validation and tripartite structures, but their participation in formulation, monitoring and governance was less sustained. Workers' organizations were more often involved in outreach, awareness-raising and member support. Employers' organizations were less consistently engaged beyond consultation and formal tripartite structures.
42. Adaptations to contribution, registration and delivery were clearest for informal economy workers. Migrant and refugee work addressed legal, institutional and cross-border barriers. Gender-responsive design was substantive in selected interventions but not consistently integrated across the portfolio. Disability inclusion also informed selected reforms.
43. Among evolving challenges reviewed, country support was more extensive for COVID-19 response, digital administration and demographic change through pensions, health and

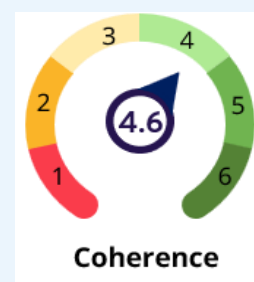
actuarial work. Guidance and selected country work addressed climate and just transition, platform employment and social protection for care and long-term care, but application in schemes and administration was less developed.

B. Coherence

Key finding 5: The ILO provided distinctive normative and technical leadership through international labour standards, social security law, actuarial and financing analysis, informal economy coverage and tripartism. The Phase II strategy articulated its operational role more explicitly in established system-building than in non-contributory provision.

Key finding 6: The GFP provided a common portfolio and reporting framework and linked country, regional and headquarters expertise. Coordination often worked in practice, but tripartite steering, cross-departmental coordination, management of overlaps and delineation of contributions remained less systematic.

Key finding 7: The 2021 International Labour Conference conclusions, social protection plan of action, programme and budget and the GFP carried a consistent strategic and normative direction from constituent mandate into programme priorities.



44. The 2021 Conference conclusions and social protection plan of action set the strategic and normative direction for programme and budget outcomes on social protection (8 and then 7), within the wider Decent Work Agenda, ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and 2030 Agenda. The portfolio also linked social protection with employment, formalization, migration, gender equality, social dialogue and just transition.
45. Coherence with global social protection agendas was strong, as evidenced by engagement in USP2030, the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B), the P4H Network and the Global Accelerator. The ILO generally complemented partners through its standards-based, legal, actuarial and tripartite expertise and its work on extending social security to workers in the informal economy, while other actors more often financed or administered benefits at scale. Its portfolio-level role was less clearly defined in social assistance and in linking contributory and non-contributory provision. ILO advocacy also contributed to the inclusion of social protection commitments in the Sevilla Commitment and to the adoption of two social protection indicators at COP30. The Flagship and Accelerator had complementary scopes: the Flagship focused on laws, institutions, financing and administration, while the Accelerator linked social protection with jobs, financing and just transitions. At country level, overlapping Flagship, Global Accelerator and wider ILO engagement made their respective contributions difficult to distinguish.
46. Internal coherence was supported by the GFP, which provided a common strategic and reporting umbrella for a diverse portfolio and enabled the pooling of funding from different sources. The Global Technical Team, the Technical Support Facility and headquarters-field backstopping arrangements supported technical consistency and access to specialist expertise. At country level, coherence was strongest where projects and technical workstreams converged around a common reform pathway through sequencing, shared counterparts and joint problem-solving.
47. Development partner meetings and donor reporting maintained visibility but were not routinely used for joint problem-solving or follow-up. The Global Technical Advisory Committee met infrequently, participation was uneven and weak links with country arrangements limited

constituent input into programme guidance. Cross-departmental collaboration occurred across several themes but remained unevenly institutionalized.

C. Effectiveness

Key finding 8: The ILO strengthened legal, institutional, financing and administrative foundations, but effective coverage remained below target. Reported adequacy or comprehensiveness results exceeded the target, but monitoring did not consistently establish adequate protection in practice.

Key finding 9: Policy advice and actuarial and financing analysis had the clearest influence on reforms and scheme design. Institutionally embedded capacity development was applied more consistently. Partnerships enabled implementation at scale where financing and administrative capacity were available.

Key finding 10: International social security standards consistently informed ratification, legal reform, actuarial analysis and scheme design. Tripartite participation shaped selected reform choices but was less consistently sustained during reform implementation.

Key finding 11: Results across populations facing protection gaps and emerging challenges were uneven. Weak disaggregation limited assessment of who benefited.



48. Reported performance against programme and budget targets was strongest for governance, financing and system-strengthening (output 8.2/7.2), averaging 143 per cent across the three reporting periods, compared with 93 per cent for policy and legal frameworks (output 8.1/7.1) and 87 per cent for integrated policy responses related to life and work transitions (output 8.3/7.3).
49. Substantial results were reported under the GFP, including 180 institutional changes against a target of 80 (225 per cent) and improvements in legal coverage, effective coverage, adequacy or comprehensiveness for 84.2 million people against a target of 60 million (140 per cent). However, the aggregate overachievement was driven by legal coverage and reported adequacy or comprehensiveness gains: effective coverage reached 23.8 million people (79 per cent of target). These self-reported management results did not consistently demonstrate benefit receipt, service use, financial protection or beneficiary experience.
50. ILO support was most effective where technical inputs, national ownership and partner resources converged around a reform pathway and support continued into implementation. The ILO's standards-based legal, actuarial and financing expertise remained a distinctive comparative advantage of the ILO and informed reform parameters and national decisions, including through support commissioned directly by national social security institutions. Capacity development produced clearer institutional results where training was linked to institutional systems, curricula or defined technical functions. Collaboration with the International Monetary Fund increased the visibility and policy relevance of social protection in macroeconomic assessments and helped bring social partners into Article IV discussions. Uptake nevertheless depended on political commitment for recurrent financing, clear operating rules, institutional continuity and national capacity to implement reforms.
51. Convention No. 102, Recommendation No. 202 and the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), anchored legal assessments, ratification support, scheme design and coverage for workers in the informal economy. The global Convention No. 102 ratification campaign responded to the 2021 International Labour Conference call, resulting in nine ratifications during the period. Tripartite engagement

strengthened reform design where social partners influenced substantive choices, but their influence was less sustained over financing decisions and the steering and governance of reform implementation.

52. Results concerning populations facing protection gaps and emerging challenges were uneven. Support concerning workers in the informal economy advanced furthest from policy and legal reform into registration, contribution collection and delivery. However, in several voluntary schemes reviewed, a major gap remained between legal eligibility and take-up, particularly where low or irregular incomes constrained enrolment and sustained contributions. Gender equality and disability inclusion produced selected changes in eligibility, benefits and administration. Migrant worker support often focused on policy and scheme design, with selected legislative changes. Refugee support ranged from assessment and intended coverage to enrolment and benefit delivery in selected interventions. Digital support strengthened administration, but interoperability remained incomplete. Crisis measures reached large populations but were time-bound. Climate-responsive social protection advanced further in global advocacy and measurement than in operational country systems, while platform work and long-term care remained concentrated in guidance, policy products, pilots or early legislation.

D. Efficiency

Key finding 12: The GFP helped mobilize substantial development cooperation funding, supporting a larger portfolio and financing much of its workforce. Earmarking and project durations that were short relative to reform timelines complicated continuity. Regional expenditure patterns were sensitive to the timing and scale of individual large programmes.

Key finding 13: The ILO maintained a sizeable social protection workforce and substantial specialist expertise across headquarters and the regions, but continuity and deployment varied. Project-funded posts and short-term contracts, stretched regional specialists, country staffing gaps and heavy reporting demands made prolonged support more difficult where in-country capacity was thin.

Key finding 14: Social protection benefited from a comparatively well-structured results architecture. Dedicated programme and budget outcomes, the Results Monitoring Tool and Flagship reporting strengthened the consolidation and visibility of results. However, uneven updating, limited disaggregation and weak links between monitoring and management decisions reduced its value for learning and adaptive management.



53. Between 2020 and 2025, outcome-based work plan (OBW)-recorded expenditure against country programme outcomes linked to outcomes 8 and 7 totalled US\$172.83 million.⁸ Budget utilization was 73.5 per cent overall, improving from 57 per cent in 2020–21 to 86 per cent in 2022–23 and remaining at 80 per cent in 2024–25.
54. XBDC financed 93 per cent of this expenditure, RBDC 4 per cent and RBSA 3 per cent. The ILO mobilized almost its full estimated Phase II resource requirement, which enabled delivery beyond what regular budget resources could sustain. At the same time, this did not ensure predictable or balanced financing across countries and thematic areas.

⁸ Source: High-level evaluation analysis of OBW Dashboard expenditure for country programme outcomes linked to outcomes 8 and 7, covering XBDC, RBDC and RBSA.

55. The staffing model extended reach but created continuity risks. Of the 215 members of the broader Global Technical Team with funding source data, 66 per cent were financed through development cooperation.⁹ Core technical expertise was maintained, but project-funded posts, short-term contracts, stretched regional coverage and reporting demands constrained sustained country support. Headquarters specialists provided technical backstopping as well as direct technical assistance delivery alongside field teams.
56. The Results Monitoring Tool consolidated institutional and people-level results across countries and linked GFP reporting with corporate systems. It improved visibility and institutional memory, although updating was uneven across the period and disaggregation remained limited.

E. Sustainability and emerging impact

Key finding 15: The ILO's work was oriented towards longer-term change through laws, institutions, administration and coverage extension. Portfolio monitoring captured system-level results more consistently than sustained benefit receipt, adequacy, service quality or financial protection.

Key finding 16: Laws, policies and mandates had the strongest prospects of enduring. Administrative systems and capacity were more secure when nationally funded and maintained than when dependent on project-funded staff or external support.

Key finding 17: National financing constraints were the principal risk to sustaining and scaling results.



57. The strongest prospects for continuity arose where ILO-supported reforms were incorporated into national laws and policies, institutional mandates and routine administrative processes. However, legal adoption alone was insufficient: lasting results required recurrent budget or contribution arrangements, clear operational responsibilities, maintained information systems and permanent national expertise.
58. Capacity in national institutions was more likely to endure when ILO-supported training was tied to permanent roles, recurring technical functions such as actuarial valuation and statistics, or national education or training systems. It was less secure where knowledge remained attached to individual officials or short courses lacked follow-up or links to institutional functions.
59. Sustained implementation depended on recurrent national budget allocations or viable contribution arrangements. Affordability and contribution collection constrained efforts to extend contributory coverage to workers with low, irregular or seasonal incomes. Leadership turnover, unresolved institutional responsibilities and uncertain capacity to respond to future pressures created additional risks.

⁹ The Global Technical Team includes staff working mainly on social protection, cross-departmental focal points and colleagues with wider portfolios. The 2026–27 programme and budget provided 46 technical and 7 General Service regular budget social protection posts.

Recommendations¹⁰

60. Recommendation 1: Strengthen the strategic governance of Phase III of the GFP.

- Strengthen the strategic governance role of the Global Technical Advisory Committee by convening it regularly and focusing on deliberations on a limited number of strategic issues, including geographic and thematic priorities, implementation risks, emerging issues, partnerships and resource mobilization.
- Inform Global Technical Advisory Committee deliberations with country evidence and active constituent participation, drawing on wider participation from country representatives, development partners and other stakeholders invited where appropriate.
- Ensure Global Technical Advisory Committee guidance is documented, communicated through regional and country mechanisms, translated into programme actions with assigned responsibilities, and followed up through systematic reporting.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• Labour and Social Protection • Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation • Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) • Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) • Regional, country and decent work teams	High	Short- to medium-term	Low to moderate

61. Recommendation 2: Clarify the strategic scope of Phase III of the GFP and strengthen implementation follow-through.

- Clarify and consistently apply the GFP's scope and its relationship with the Global Accelerator and wider ILO social protection work for programme governance, strategic oversight, accountability and reporting. Coordinate planning across areas of overlap and complementarity so that country-level initiatives reinforce shared reform pathways while their respective contributions remain clear.
- Drawing on the ILO's normative mandate and its longstanding in-house social security expertise and knowledge, clarify how Phase III will support social assistance within integrated national systems for universal social protection, including links with contributory schemes, employment and formalization. This role should complement government- and partner-led programme financing, targeting, registration, benefit administration and payments.
- Strengthen implementation readiness and follow-through for supported reforms through costed implementation plans, recurrent financing pathways, clear operational rules and institutional responsibilities, national staffing and capacity plans, realistic sequencing and sustained participation of workers' and employers' organizations.

¹⁰ Further detail and supporting analysis for these recommendations are provided in section 6 of the main evaluation report.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• Labour and Social Protection • Employment, Skills and Sustainable Enterprises • Labour Governance and Sectoral Policies • Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation • ACTRAV • ACT/EMP • Regional, country and decent work teams	High	Short- to medium-term	Low to moderate

62. Recommendation 3: Strengthen outcome-oriented monitoring across the social protection portfolio by improving routine monitoring through the Results Monitoring Tool and existing reporting systems, and by selectively assessing the longer-term results of major reforms.

- Build on the Results Monitoring Tool's existing links with corporate reporting systems to strengthen the consistency, timeliness, validation and disaggregation of routine results data.
- For selected major reforms, supplement aggregate people-level figures with more specific measures of changes in effective coverage, adequacy or comprehensiveness, referenced to appropriate baselines or benchmarks. Depending on the reform, measures may include benefit receipt or service use, non-take-up, continuity, benefit levels, service quality, financial protection, access to grievance mechanisms and beneficiary experience, drawing on available national data or, where agreed and feasible, targeted follow-up, with stronger disaggregation by sex, age, disability and other relevant characteristics.
- Provide support, where requested, to responsible national institutions to strengthen national monitoring systems. Strengthen social partners' capacity to participate effectively in national monitoring processes.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• Labour and Social Protection • Strategic Programming and Management • International Training Centre of the ILO • Regional offices • Country offices	High	Short- to medium-term	Moderate

63. Recommendation 4: Broaden resource mobilization channels and increase funding flexibility across the social protection portfolio, focusing on areas of comparative advantage, demonstrated results and sustained country demand.

- Diversify the funding base through continued engagement with bilateral and multilateral donors and more systematic outreach to social security institutions, international financial institutions, UN pooled funds and other relevant partners. Resource mobilization should continue to reflect programme and budget priorities and, at country level, DWCPs and constituent-agreed priorities. Engagement with partners should remain grounded in international labour standards and tripartite social dialogue while preserving the

independence of ILO policy advice. Promote government co-financing where national commitment and fiscal capacity permit.

- Prioritize pooled, multi-year and lightly earmarked contributions to improve the predictability and continuity of support.
- Explore transparent cost-sharing and co-financing arrangements for specialized technical services and tailored capacity development without restricting access for lower-income countries or resource-constrained constituents.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• Labour and Social Protection • Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation • Strategic Programming and Management • Regional offices • Country offices	High	Medium-term	Moderate

64. Recommendation 5: Sustain actuarial services as a core technical strength and strengthen capacity in digital social protection administration and interoperability.

- Sustain actuarial assessments as a core service informing transparent tripartite dialogue on reform options and their financing, adequacy and distributional implications.
- Strengthen specialist support, field staff capacity, partnerships, practical guidance and national capacity-building on accessible digital social protection administration, including interoperable information systems, data governance, registries, digital payments, grievance mechanisms and the use of administrative data.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• Labour and Social Protection • Human Resources Development • International Training Centre of the ILO • Regional offices • Country offices	High	Medium-term	Moderate to high

► Office response

- 65.** The Office welcomes the high-level evaluation, takes note of its findings and recommendations, and remains committed to strengthening its support to constituents in building universal social protection systems. The following observations address not only the specific recommendations, but also the broader findings and conclusions of the evaluation.
- 66. Recommendation 1:** The Office will strengthen the strategic governance of the GFP, including by enhancing the effectiveness of the Global Technical Advisory Committee through revised operating arrangements, broader representation and stronger links to knowledge-sharing,

drawing on the recommendations of this evaluation and lessons learned from the Global Accelerator's Steering Group.

67. **Recommendation 2:** Building on the findings of the high-level evaluation, the Office will implement the third phase of the GFP with a focus on strengthening implementation capacities for universal, adequate and sustainable social protection systems, harnessing complementarities with the Global Accelerator. In doing so, the Office will support countries in enhancing their social assistance schemes in line with a rights-based approach that enhances coverage and adequacy and facilitates linkages with contributory schemes and broader employment and formalization objectives, as part of its support to building national social protection systems. It will also place greater emphasis on supporting Member States in enhancing their capacities for the implementation of policy, legal and institutional reforms in line with international social security standards, including on sustainable and equitable financing mechanisms, governance and institutional structures, realistic sequencing, as well as harnessing the potential of integrated approaches that ensure effective protection and access to benefits.
68. **Recommendation 3:** The Office will strengthen monitoring and reporting through more systematic use of the Results Monitoring Tool and AI, and improve interoperability between ILO and external reporting platforms. It will explore ways to better assess the results and impact of its technical and policy support, strengthen learning among constituents and inform future technical assistance. The Office will also support Member States in strengthening national monitoring systems, in reporting on indicator SDG 1.3.1 of the 2030 Agenda, and in assessing social protection coverage, adequacy, financing and expenditure, as well as the impact of social protection on people's lives.
69. **Recommendation 4:** The Office will strengthen resource mobilization in line with the ILO's Development Cooperation Strategy 2026–29, prioritizing pooled, multi-year and lightly earmarked contributions. It will deepen engagement with existing partners to build trust and identify new funding opportunities, while diversifying its partner base by positioning social protection as a key enabler of partners' development objectives and engaging with international financial institutions, the private sector, climate funds, domestic resources and innovative funding sources.
70. **Recommendation 5:** In delivering the ILO's mandate on social security, the Office will strengthen its capacity to support constituents in designing, reforming and strengthening their social protection systems across social security branches. Its specialized technical support covers policy and legal frameworks, actuarial and financing issues, governance, administration, digital solutions, interoperability, monitoring and statistics. To meet the growing demand of governments and social partners for tailored support, the Office will further develop its knowledge base, methodologies and tools, and expand partnerships to support the delivery and financing of these services.

► Part III. Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme strategies and activities in the Asia-Pacific region, with emphasis on Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, 2022–25

Purpose and scope

71. This independent high-level evaluation covers the ILO's strategies and activities in support of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) in Asia and the Pacific. In consultation with the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and using programmatic and financial criteria, the Evaluation Office focused the evaluation on Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, as well as the ILO's engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), covering the period 2022–25.
72. The high-level evaluation drew on a document review, a synthesis of project evaluations, stakeholder consultations involving 224 participants (107 women, 117 men) via interviews and focus groups, and two surveys – one of ILO national constituents in the three focus countries and one of ILO staff (30 and 48 respondents, respectively). The evaluation team conducted fieldwork in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, with additional remote interviews with ASEAN officials and ILO regional and headquarters-based staff.

Overall assessment ¹¹

73. The ILO contributed to advancing decent work in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand during a challenging period marked by post-pandemic recovery, inflationary pressures, supply chain shifts and growing trade fragmentation. The ILO helped advance policy reform, institutional capacity and social dialogue at the sectoral level, and strengthen protections for specific groups of workers, while also leveraging ASEAN engagement to influence regional labour policy frameworks. However, results were uneven across countries and themes, constrained by fragmented funding, short project time frames, weak monitoring and insufficient strategies for sustainability and scale. Progress was more limited in areas requiring broad political commitment or longer-term system-level changes, such as some labour law and social dialogue reforms.
74. The evaluation highlights the enabling role of DWCPs in guiding ILO action, while also identifying emerging challenges related to their funding, ownership and implementation. In this context, updating and adapting the DWCP modality is warranted to ensure greater focus and operational utility.
75. Looking forward, declining funding is reshaping the context for ILO support, underscoring the need for a more selective approach and more diversified funding, including greater domestic financing. This transition is particularly important as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, as



¹¹ 6 = Highly satisfactory; 5 = Satisfactory; 4 = Somewhat satisfactory; 3 = Somewhat unsatisfactory; 2 = Unsatisfactory; 1 = Highly unsatisfactory.

fast-growing upper-middle-income economies moving toward high-income status, are expected to finance an increasing share of their labour and social policy priorities.

Key findings by evaluation criteria

A. Relevance

Key finding 1: The ILO's programming was broadly responsive to constituent needs, as evidenced by overall high levels of satisfaction with ILO support, even though perceptions varied. In addition to addressing longstanding challenges related to decent work in supply chains, migrant worker protection, skills development and social protection, the portfolio adapted to emerging needs generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including strengthening social safety nets, addressing vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers and promoting supply chain resilience through attention to labour-related competitiveness issues.

However, enterprise development received comparatively less programmatic attention, except in Indonesia. The evaluation also identified several emerging areas that received more limited attention, notably the labour market implications of climate change and the platform economy, although engagement on the latter increased towards the end of the evaluation period. Several ILO programmes focused on issues affecting women workers, such as workplace harassment and violence, and maternity protection; while comparatively less attention was given to persons with disabilities, despite noteworthy work in Indonesia, and to older persons.

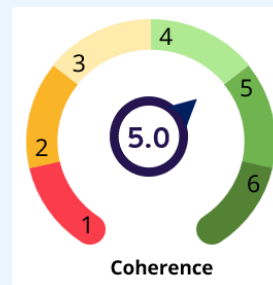
Key finding 2: ILO staff and national constituents value DWCPs as a mechanism for identifying decent work challenges and fostering tripartite dialogue on priority labour reforms. More inclusive consultation in recent cycles has strengthened the extent to which DWCPs reflect constituents' needs and priorities, enhancing their use as diagnostic, communication and advocacy tools. However, the broad scope of DWCPs, the dependence of the ILO's programming on development cooperation funding, and limited awareness of DWCPs beyond core ILO constituents have constrained their operationalization and limited their use as planning and management instruments.



76. The ILO's technical expertise, convening power and normative framework are particularly valued. The trust the ILO has built over several years has strengthened its ability to influence national decent work agendas. However, in certain areas, such as ensuring enterprise development focused on productivity and emerging issues such as the platform economy and climate change, the ILO's actions do not yet sufficiently reflect the magnitude of the challenges.
77. ILO support to the development and implementation of DWCPs in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand over the past five years provided an aspirational framework for action, convening constituents and identifying decent work gaps through tripartite social dialogue. While the DWCP mechanism contributed to communication between the ILO and constituents, resource mobilization and advocacy, it fell short as an operational tool, including for holding the ILO and constituents accountable for plans and commitments.

B. Coherence

Key finding 3: Programming demonstrated strong strategic alignment with both ILO and national priorities, although programming breadth varied across countries. The country programmes reported results against most programme and budget indicators, demonstrating strong alignment with biennial priorities and effective translation of corporate objectives into country-level programming. Country offices effectively leveraged a combination of development cooperation and regular budget-funded management, and technical advisory resources to maximize contributions to programme and budget outcomes. The country programmes also showed strong alignment with regional priorities, such as those outlined in the Singapore Statement.



Key finding 4: Coherence with observations by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) was generally achieved in practice, but not systematized within programme design, monitoring or reporting processes. While ILO interventions addressed many of the labour governance deficiencies observed by the CEACR, there is limited evidence of a structured feedback loop between the ILO's supervisory system and country-level programming.

Key finding 5: The ILO worked effectively with other UN agencies. The ILO's normative mandate and labour expertise complemented the comparative advantages of partner organizations, strengthening collective efforts on key topics such as labour migration, social protection and responsible business conduct. However, joint programming was constrained by enduring UN system-wide coordination challenges and competition for funding. While collaboration with international financial institutions was evident within Better Work and joint ILO-Asian Development Bank reports, opportunities to further promote decent work objectives within broader development financing and investment programmes were not fully realized.

Key finding 6: The ILO's partnership with ASEAN provided significant added value by creating opportunities to influence regional labour policy and advance the Decent Work Agenda beyond country programmes. The partnership also expanded space for tripartite dialogue at the regional level, despite still limited ASEAN mechanisms for social partner engagement. ASEAN collaboration strengthened the ILO's country-level position, exemplified by Malaysia's designation of the ILO as its sole technical partner for the ASEAN Year of Skills 2025, although the social partners expressed some concerns about the lack of follow-up at the national level from such engagements.

78. The ILO achieved a high degree of coherence at the corporate, regional and country level in the evaluation focus countries. Country programmes were well aligned with ILO corporate priorities and biennial objectives. Variations in the breadth of programming across programme and budget outcomes across countries mostly reflected differences in portfolio scale and resources rather than divergence from strategic priorities. There is scope to strengthen coherence between the ILO's normative and operational functions through stronger integration of CEACR observations into country programming.
79. The ILO's successful leveraging of its comparative advantages in its partnerships with ASEAN and other UN agencies enhanced regional coherence, contributed to influencing policy frameworks and enabled more integrated responses to complex decent work challenges. In contrast, engagement with international financial institutions yielded more modest results, with limited evidence of deeper strategic engagement on the decent work dimensions of international financial institution investments.

C. Effectiveness

Key finding 7: The ILO contributed to meaningful progress towards DWCP objectives across all three countries. Labour migration governance and social protection produced the most comprehensive contributions, strengthening policy frameworks, institutional capacity, worker and enterprise services and system design. Sector-based approaches also generated many tangible results in industries with significant decent work deficits, such as palm oil and fisheries, by supporting practical cooperation between employers and workers, although tensions sometimes arose between the ILO's focus on sectors with greater decent work challenges and government interest in developing higher-value industries. Skills and enterprise development produced useful innovations for participating institutions and beneficiaries but showed more limited evidence of scale-up or broader systemic change, with labour market information systems and enterprise productivity support remaining notable gaps.



Key finding 8: Results were strongest where support aligned with national priorities and constituent demand, enabling the ILO to leverage its technical expertise, long-term relationships and convening power to influence reform. Success was greatest where project designs adopted an integrated approach to addressing decent work deficits, tackling multiple interconnected labour challenges within a common strategic framework. Results were also strengthened when programming drew on technical expertise from multiple ILO departments, leveraging regular budget resources and synergies across programmes, to enable more comprehensive and coordinated support. Effectiveness was constrained where political ownership was limited, constituent capacity was uneven or short and donor-driven project designs emphasized outputs over institutional change.

Key finding 9: The ILO faced challenges demonstrating its effectiveness and learning from results due to weak monitoring systems and limited outcome-level reporting. While DWCPs and projects generally tracked outputs effectively, evidence of longer-term outcomes and institutional change was often incomplete.

80. Across the three countries, the ILO produced many key achievements in important thematic work areas. Differences in the depth and consistency of results suggest that effectiveness is strongest where interventions are sustained, targeted and backed by committed partners. Results were more limited where the ILO worked in silos and implemented short-term, largely donor-driven projects to tackle complex decent work deficits. Given emerging resource constraints, this points to the importance of clearer prioritization and more focused efforts to mobilize resources around a defined set of issues where there is strong national buy-in and opportunities for collaboration over the longer term.

D. Efficiency

Key finding 10: The ILO managed its available resources efficiently and generally delivered planned outputs despite operating with limited financial and human resources. Efficiency gains were achieved through strategically building on past achievements, targeted use of regular budget resources, cross-project collaboration, cost-sharing arrangements and strong internal coordination. However, efficiency and strategic coherence were constrained by fragmented donor-driven funding, short project time frames and delays caused by the ILO's enduring recruitment and administrative system inefficiencies.



Key finding 11: The ILO's portfolio remains dependent on relatively few bilateral and multilateral development partners. While the ILO had some limited success in leveraging domestic and private sector

funding during the evaluation period, it still relies heavily on Global North development partner funding. In contrast, the ILO has been broadly successful in mobilizing in-kind resources for its activities, mainly partner- and constituent-owned facilities and expertise.

81. Overall, the ILO has delivered cost-effective responses while operating under limited budgets through technical expertise, directing regular budget resources towards underfunded priorities, responsive support to constituents and longstanding relationships that enhance trust and collaboration. Streamlining ILO systems to support more efficient project start-ups and advocating with donors on project time frames would strengthen efficiency.
82. Looking ahead, the ILO's continued reliance on Global North development partners underscores the importance of diversifying funding sources and deepening national ownership. Encouraging examples of domestic financing and in-kind contributions show that alternative models are possible, but these remain uneven across countries and thematic areas.

E. Sustainability and emerging impact

Key finding 12: The ILO contributed to emerging institutional and policy-level impacts by leveraging its comparative advantages – its normative mandate, technical expertise and tripartism. The ILO's interventions generated tangible benefits for employers and workers in the immediate scope of its programmes, particularly migrant workers, domestic workers and those in specific sectors. However, broader population-level impacts remain limited because legal and policy reforms have not been consistently translated into changes in practice. Gaps in enforcement, institutional capacity, public awareness and behavioural change continue to constrain the realization of impacts at scale.



Key finding 13: Capacity-building efforts contributed to emerging impacts and were most successful when the ILO offered training that aligned with constituent needs and developed skills that were readily applicable in ILO constituents' daily work. This supports growing institutional capacity to sustain reforms beyond individual ILO interventions. A visible success is the strengthened expertise within Malaysia's and Thailand's social security institutions, which has led to clear change in the capacity of officers to undertake actuarial valuations. At the same time, there remains a need to go further and provide stronger contextually specific technical advice.

Key finding 14: The evaluation identified several noteworthy examples of positive outcomes that have been or seem likely to be sustained. Nevertheless, the ILO frequently struggled to ensure sustainable results. Sustainability was strongest where ILO-supported reforms, capacities and dialogue mechanisms became embedded in national institutions and systems; however, the absence of systematic exit strategies, limited pathways for scaling pilot initiatives and the short duration of many projects reduced the likelihood that results would be sustained beyond project completion.

83. The ILO's principal impact has been to strengthen the enabling environment for decent work through policy reform, institutional capacity development and strategic planning. Achieving broader benefits for workers and employers will depend on effective implementation and enforcement of these advances by ILO constituents.
84. Despite some promising examples, findings on sustainability are mixed. Evidence of sustainable outcomes includes the adoption of national policies, development of guidelines and strategies and the institutionalization of dialogue platforms. The sustainability of outcomes is enhanced by predictable funding and sustained technical support, which promote national ownership and the gradual integration of interventions into government systems. On

the other hand, sustainability is reduced by an absence of exit strategies to hand over ownership of interventions to national partners.

Recommendations

85. Recommendation 1: The ILO should sharpen its strategic focus by concentrating resources in areas where it has a clear comparative advantage, where there is strong national demand and where it can help constituents respond to emerging labour market challenges.

- Focus country programmes on fewer objectives, concentrating on areas of work with direct linkages to the ILO's normative framework and areas of strongest technical expertise, while ensuring that priorities remain grounded in tripartite and national needs.
- Use adaptive management planning and integrated programmes and projects to maximize use of the ILO's technical expertise and ensure that key decent work challenges in areas with less funding can still be addressed.
- To the extent that there is alignment with national needs and priorities and the ILO's comparative advantage, increase focus on productivity, competitiveness and emerging future-of-work issues, including the platform economy, green jobs and climate-related occupational risks. Strengthen disability inclusion mainstreaming efforts, building on good practices from Indonesia and regional programmes. Consider how technical resources can be best clustered together, either geographically or in a thematic grouping, to maximize the efficiency of response during the reform process.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• CO-Jakarta and Decent Work Team/Country Office (DWT/CO)-Bangkok • ILO Liaison or Project Office for Malaysia • ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	High	Mid-term	Medium

86. Recommendation 2: To meet the challenges of reduced traditional funding opportunities and recognizing the transition of all three countries towards upper-income status, the ILO and its constituents should strengthen the sustainability of programming by expanding domestic financing and cost-sharing arrangements.

- Ensure DWCPs have more detailed resourcing plans that include identifying priority areas where domestic financing and cost-share opportunities exist, while safeguarding that the ILO's independence is not compromised. Incorporate these plans into new DWCPs (Indonesia and, if feasible before finalization, Malaysia) and develop accompanying documents for existing DWCPs (Thailand and potentially Malaysia). Strengthen the ILO's value proposition in upper-income contexts by focusing on areas where it has a clear comparative advantage aligned with national priorities.
- Support constituents in their resource mobilization activities, including efforts to integrate decent work dimensions into assistance from international financial institutions, national budgets, domestic financing and private-sector funding sources.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• CO-Jakarta and DWT/CO-Bangkok • ILO Liaison or Project Office for Malaysia • ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific • Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation	High	Long-term	Low

87. Recommendation 3: Strengthen the strategic and operational value of DWCPs by making the scope more focused, realistic and better integrated with implementation and monitoring. The content and process should:

- Focus on a narrower set of DWCP priorities, supported by realistic assumptions about expected funding and implementation capacity. Where funding remains uncertain at the time of formulation, priority could be given to the ILO's core normative agenda while retaining flexibility to scale up other priorities as resources become available.
- Focus diagnostics of the decent work challenges on this smaller set of actions.
- Include more detail on the responsibilities of constituents for cost-sharing, implementation and monitoring.
- Support constituents in taking more ownership of monitoring of DWCP outcomes through participatory approaches, such as outcome harvesting, most significant change or other monitoring techniques.
- Integrate relevant CEACR observations more systematically into DWCP diagnostics, priority setting, monitoring and reporting.
- Simplify DWCP results frameworks to focus on measurable outcome indicators so that the ILO can plausibly influence and institutionalize a policy of required periodic outcome-level reviews and learning exercises.
- Align project monitoring with DWCP priorities by requiring projects to contribute to a common set of DWCP outcome indicators, drawing where appropriate on national data.
- Embed exit plans linked to national ownership and resourcing into DWCPs and project planning documents.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
• CO-Jakarta and DWT/CO-Bangkok • ILO Liaison or Project Office for Malaysia • Strategic Programming and Management	High	Long-term	Low

88. Recommendation 4: Deepen the ILO's strategic engagement with ASEAN by jointly pursuing cooperation with ASEAN counterparts and alignment with their mandates and coordination mechanisms. Most notably, pursue this joint approach to collaboration beyond the sociocultural pillar to other regional priorities, such as the economic pillar.

- Strengthen the existing support to regional social partner collaboration mechanisms and continue to advocate for expanded access for social partners to ASEAN forums.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	Medium	Long-term	Low

89. Recommendation 5: The ILO should focus on more in-depth capacity-building of tripartite constituents, including on-the-job support – as has been used in the capacity-building of social protection offices – rather than predominantly workshop-based training.

- In line with the ILO's useful support to workers' organizations in Indonesia on the Omnibus Law, continue and expand ILO capacity-building that enables workers and employers to formulate evidence-based positions in such areas as legal reform and wage policy, grounded in the ILO normative framework.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
- CO-Jakarta and DWT/CO-Bangkok - ILO Liaison or Project Office for Malaysia	Medium	Mid-term	High

► Office response

- 90. Recommendation 1: ROAP, DWT/CO-Bangkok and CO-Jakarta support this recommendation** to be selective in identifying priorities and outcomes. Prioritization should remain grounded in tripartite processes, national needs, constituent demand and the ILO's comparative advantage and unique mandate. While funding availability is an important consideration in determining what can realistically be achieved, it should not drive priorities. Resources should, as far as possible, be mobilized or leveraged around priorities collectively identified and agreed by the tripartite constituents.
- 91.** The ILO should focus on areas where its normative mandate, technical expertise and tripartite structure provide distinctive added value, while retaining sufficient DWCP flexibility to respond to emerging needs and encourage integrated approaches across technical areas. It should also strengthen expertise in emerging future-of-work issues, particularly AI and technological change. Given the substantial expertise and visibility of other UN agencies, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in AI and digital transformation, the ILO should concentrate on the labour and employment dimensions, where its mandate and expertise are distinctive, while strengthening its technical capacity and pursuing complementarity and collaboration with other agencies. ROAP and DWT/CO-Bangkok should also strengthen disability inclusion mainstreaming efforts through project design and by awareness-raising among development partners and constituents. More efficient geographic and thematic deployment of technical expertise should also be explored, in consultation with relevant DWT specialists.
- 92. Recommendation 2: ROAP and DWT/CO-Bangkok support this recommendation** and agree that the ILO and its constituents should more systematically identify and leverage domestic financing and cost-sharing opportunities, particularly as traditional development cooperation funding becomes more constrained. This will require the ILO to demonstrate its comparative advantage, technical quality and cost-effectiveness, identify opportunities in

DWCP resourcing plans, adopt appropriate delivery modalities and remain a credible and competitive partner. Strategic allocation of RBSA in piloting and in attracting larger potential resources should also be explored alongside domestic funding.

93. **CO-Jakarta and the ILO Project Office for Malaysia also support greater attention to domestic financing** to strengthen national ownership and sustainability. However, this should form part of a diversified financing and partnership strategy, rather than substitute other funding sources or primarily finance ILO-led interventions. This is particularly relevant in an upper-middle-income country such as Indonesia, with significant regional and global influence through ASEAN and Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS countries). The ILO can serve as a trusted technical partner while constituents allocate their own resources and help leverage domestic, bilateral and multilateral financing. Its role should extend beyond financing its programmes to helping constituents leverage broader financing and partnerships for decent work outcomes.
94. **Recommendation 3: ROAP, DWT/CO-Bangkok and CO-Jakarta support a more focused, operational and results-oriented DWCP**, with prioritization grounded in tripartite dialogue, national priorities, the ILO's comparative advantage and realistic implementation capacity. DWCP priorities should guide programming and resource allocation at the country, regional and global levels. Development cooperation projects should also be coordinated with country offices from the design stage to align with DWCP priorities and results frameworks, reduce fragmentation and contribute to common outcomes and indicators. Greater focus should be balanced with country and constituent ownership, with prioritization undertaken through dialogue with constituents rather than unduly constraining their ambitions.
95. Stronger monitoring, evaluation and learning, with active constituent participation, should strengthen accountability, ownership and adaptive learning. Indonesia's experience with outcome harvesting illustrates the value of participatory approaches in assessing results, renewing constituent engagement and informing programming. As Indonesia and Malaysia enter their 2026–30 DWCP cycle, recommendation 3 could already inform clearer outcomes and indicators, realistic resource and financing assessments, clearer ILO and constituent roles, and stronger links between DWCP and project-level results frameworks, with implementation informing wider application.
96. **Recommendation 4: ROAP, DWT/CO-Bangkok and CO-Jakarta support deeper and more coordinated engagement with ASEAN**, including beyond the sociocultural community pillar and in areas relevant to the ASEAN Economic Community. More systematic information-sharing with the ASEAN Secretariat would enable the joint review of agreed plans and country-level implementation, while identifying emerging challenges and opportunities. This would support more responsive regional cooperation and strengthen alignment with ASEAN-level engagement and country-level implementation.
97. **Recommendation 5: ROAP, DWT/CO-Bangkok and CO-Jakarta fully support more sustained, practical and results-oriented capacity development**, moving beyond standalone workshops, including through on-the-job support. The ILO should continue to strengthen the capacity of workers' and employers' organizations to develop evidence-based positions grounded in international labour standards and the ILO's normative framework. Better coordination across projects should reduce duplication and fragmentation, diversify learning formats, improve access to ILO expertise and reduce the burden of overlapping events on constituents.

► Draft decision

- 98. The Governing Body requested the Director-General to take into consideration the recommendations of the three independent high-level evaluations presented in document GB.358/PFA/6 (paragraphs 24–28, 60–64 and 85–89) and to ensure their appropriate implementation aligned with the Office response.**