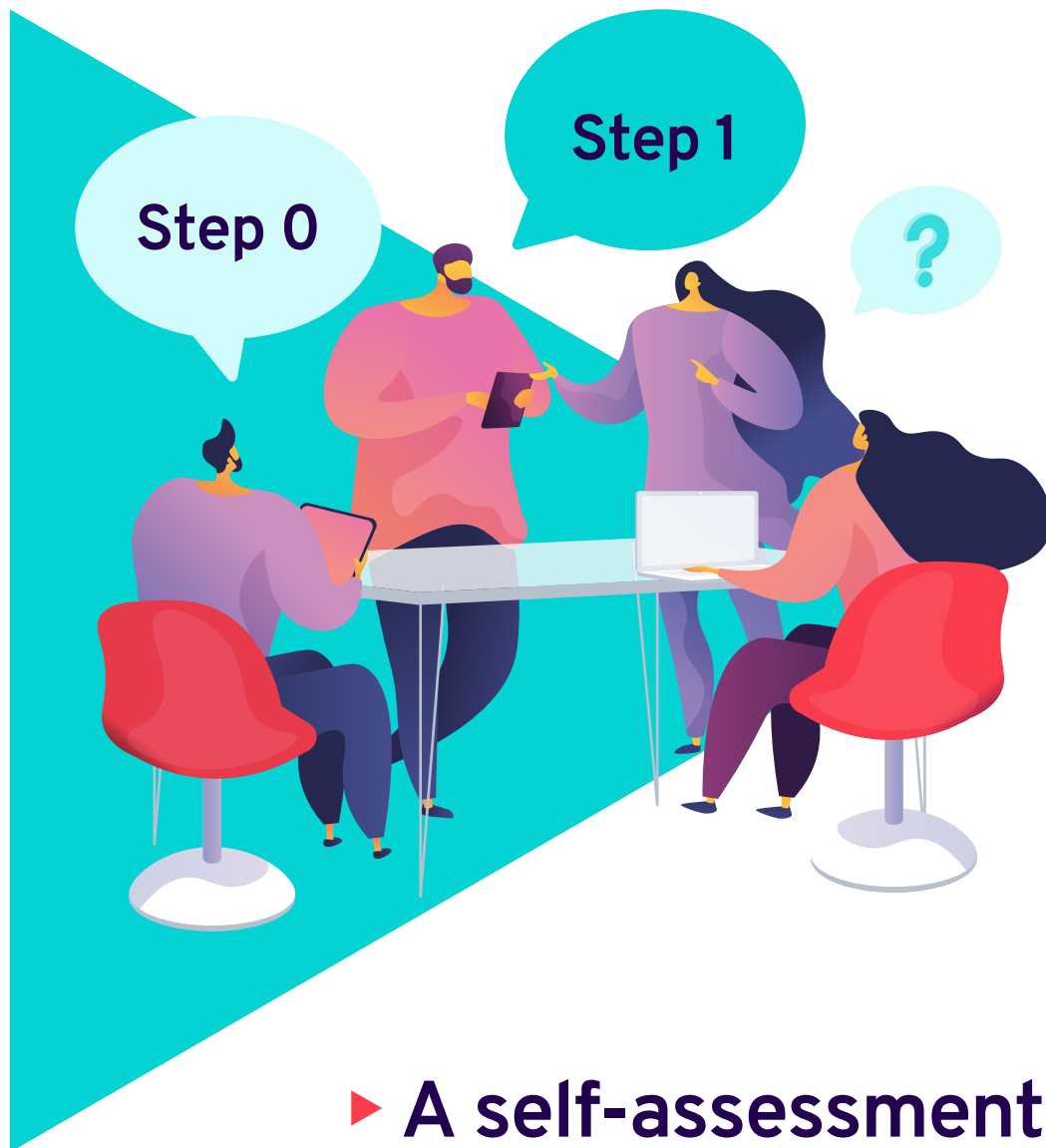




International
Labour
Organization



► A self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions

SAM-SDI

Booklet no. 2: Step 0 and Step 1

**A self-assessment method for
social dialogue institutions
SAM-SDI**

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First published 2021

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A self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions. SAM-SDI
International Labour Office - Geneva: ILO, 2021

ISBN: 978-92-2-034266-4 (print)
ISBN: 978-92-2-034267-1 (web PDF)

social dialogue / tripartism / governance

Also available in French: *Méthode d'autoévaluation pour les institutions de dialogue social. MA-IDS*, ISBN 978-92-2-034330-2 (print), 978-92-2-034329-6 (web PDF); in Spanish: *Método de autoevaluación para las instituciones de diálogo social. MA-IDS*, ISBN 978-92-2-034331-9 (print), 978-92-2-034332-6 (web PDF).

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Acronyms

ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities, ILO
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities, ILO
AICESIS	International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CFA	Committee on Freedom of Association
CSO	civil society organization
DIALOGUE	Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit, ILO
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization/International Labour Office
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
LDR	labour dispute prevention and resolution
M & E	monitoring and evaluation
MGA	Mutual Gains Approach
NATLEX	ILO database of national labour, social security and related human rights legislation
NGO	non-governmental organization
NORMLEX	ILO information system on international labour standards
SAM-SDI	self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDI	social dialogue institution
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations

► Icons used in the SAM-SDI

To help users navigate the SAM-SDI, icons are used as explanatory devices throughout the method.

	Guiding questions	To facilitate group discussions*
	Definitions	Definitions or explanations of concepts
	Activities	To facilitate participatory and productive work*
	Examples	To illustrate different aspects of the SAM-SDI
	Templates	To organize and record the results of the work*

* Booklet no. 7 comprises a package of interactive templates as presented in the SAM-SDI booklets. The templates allow the results of the self-assessment to be recorded electronically on a continuous basis. The templates included in the first six booklets are not interactive and cannot be used in this way.



► Figure 6: The SAM-SDI journey

► **Step 0: Taking the decision to carry out a self-assessment and getting ready**

1. Decide, through consensus, whether to apply the SAM-SDI
2. Select the assessment team
3. Devise a work plan and budget

► **Step 1: Building an understanding of the history and context of the SDI**

1. Review the SDI's objectives
2. Construct a timeline
3. Map the institutional environment

► **Step 2: Assessing the inclusiveness of the SDI**

1. Assess the five dimensions of inclusiveness using benchmarks
2. Identify objectives and action to enhance inclusiveness

► **Step 3: Assessing the effectiveness of the SDI**

1. Discuss the dimensions of effectiveness and adjust, if necessary, to the SDI
2. Identify examples of achievements and disappointments
3. Assess the five dimensions of effectiveness using guiding questions
4. Identify objectives and action to enhance effectiveness

► **Step 4: Formulating the action plan**

1. Develop the action plan
2. Hold a consultation to gather feedback
3. Finalize and disseminate the self-assessment report and action plan

► **Step 5: Implementing the action plan**

1. Monitor progress
2. Adjust implementation in light of progress





Step 0: Taking the decision to carry out a self-assessment and getting ready

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► Step 0: Taking the decision to carry out a self-assessment and getting ready

The very first step is to take the decision on whether to proceed with a self-assessment and, if the decision is positive, to make the necessary preparations.

While the leaders of the SDI are responsible for taking this decision, it is also important for its broader membership and secretariat staff to be fully on board.³⁷ Reaching consensus, building commitment and managing expectations from the outset are key to the success of the process. The self-assessment process involves asking searching questions about the institution's strengths and weaknesses, and being ready to talk openly and honestly about them. This is not necessarily easy, but should ultimately be rewarding and productive.

► Objective

Step 0 has two objectives:³⁸

1. A decision is taken on whether to conduct a self-assessment, based on consultations between the leaders and members of the SDI, with the support of the secretariat.
2. The SDI is ready to start the self-assessment, with an assessment team and a work plan in place, and resources allocated to support the process.

► Outcome

- Commitment to and ownership of the process by the SDI leaders and members.
- A shared understanding of the assessment process and its desired outcomes.
- An assessment team, work plan and the allocation of resources.

³⁷ The SAM-SDI acknowledges the diversity of the structures of SDIs. Small institutions may only have a plenary body, responsible for all aspects of the SDI's management and operations. Others may have an executive board, committee or bureau comprising the leaders/representatives of the respective constituencies, which is responsible for making decisions on operational matters. Some SDIs have a secretariat with a significant number of staff, while others have a very small secretariat or none at all.

³⁸ The "objectives" capture the specific results to be achieved by the end of each step of the SAM-SDI, while "outcomes" refer to broader results.

► Process

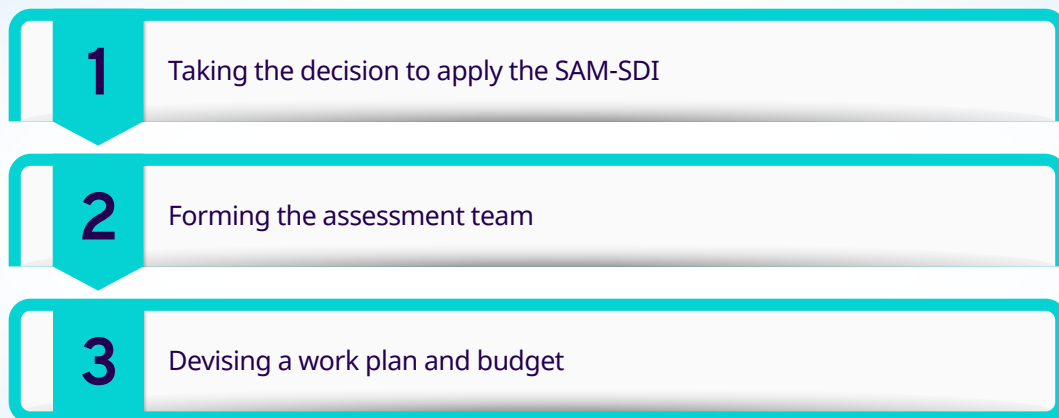
The proposal to undertake a self-assessment may be tabled as an agenda item³⁹ for discussion during a plenary meeting of the institution, or may be discussed in any other manner in line with national practice. It is important not to hurry the decision process and to allow sufficient time for meaningful discussion of the potential benefits and costs of undertaking the self-assessment. Give space for each constituent group to express its views with the aim of reaching a decision by consensus. An inclusive decision-making process involving, as a minimum, representatives of the different constituencies in the SDI, will pave the way for a productive self-assessment process and outcome.



► Decision-making by consensus

A decision reached by consensus is the expression of the collective will of all the parties involved. Discussions continue until a decision that is acceptable to all is achieved. Decision-making by consensus helps ensure that the members of the group take responsibility for the decision and will cooperate willingly to see it through. Demonstrating respect, honesty and active listening skills will help the decision-making process reach a successful conclusion.

► Figure 7: Sub-steps of Step 0



³⁹ Guidance on conducting regular meetings and consultations can be found in Lécuyer, N. (2013). *Guide for secretariats of national tripartite consultation bodies in English-speaking African countries*. ILO, Geneva and African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC), Harare.

► 1. Taking the decision to apply the SAM-SDI

1.1 Is the SDI in a position to conduct a self-assessment?

The self-assessment requires an investment of resources by the SDI, primarily the time of the members of the assessment team and of any other people involved in the exercise. It also needs certain preconditions to be in place, in particular a willingness among all the concerned parties to commit to the self-assessment and act on its findings. In this first sub-step, the SDI's leaders will consider whether the SDI *could* (in principle) undertake a self-assessment. In the next, they will decide whether the SDI *should* (in practice) apply the SAM-SDI.

Consider together the following *guiding questions*, in whatever forum(s) have been chosen to discuss the self-assessment. Record the key elements of the response.



► Using the guiding questions and recording discussions

Guiding questions are included throughout this method relating to the various steps and sub-steps of the SAM-SDI. These questions are proposed to help guide the discussions. The aim of these questions is not to elicit simple “yes/no” answers, but rather to stimulate discussion among the members of the decision-making team and the self-assessment team. Not all the questions need necessarily be discussed, and there is no prescribed order to follow. The team members may choose to spend longer on certain questions that are of particular interest or significance to the SDI and skip others completely, if these are of little or no relevance. The process is entirely in the hands of team members to shape in the most useful way.

It is important to record, in summary form, the main points or conclusions arising out of the discussions held at each step of the process. This can be done in a variety of ways – for example, by hand in a notebook, on flip charts or post-its, or in electronic form using a laptop or PC. The team can then refer back during the self-assessment process to this record of the outcomes of earlier conversations, and use the notes to compile the report on the self-assessment. Team members should be nominated, in due course, to be responsible for taking notes during each session of the work as well as for writing up the report.



Assessing whether the SDI is in a position to undertake a self-assessment

- a. Has the SDI been operational/active during the past two to three years or longer?
 - ▶ The SAM-SDI requires the SDI to have built up a certain amount of experience as a basis for the self-assessment. It is not designed for a newly-established SDI, or one which has been dormant or non-functional for many years. However, even in such cases, reading through the SAM-SDI may stimulate internal reflection about how to build the SDI's inclusiveness and effectiveness.
- b. Does the SDI and its secretariat (where applicable) have leaders/members able and willing to invest time and energy in implementing the self-assessment? Would they receive the support and acknowledgment of their respective managers for taking on this additional responsibility?
- c. Would the leaders and members of the SDI be committed to act on the outcomes of the self-assessment and implement the resulting action plan?
- d. Are the SDI's members ready to confront the reality of the institution openly and honestly, including its weaknesses and limitations? Are they ready to examine the SDI objectively, putting to one side any prior preconceptions or assumptions they may have about the institution?
 - ▶ An existing basis of trust between the SDI's members will make it easier for the team to work constructively on the self-assessment. However, the process can help build trust if it is weak at the outset. It is important to be aware that the different constituencies within the SDI may have divergent perceptions of it.
- e. Is there a relatively stable political climate in which the self-assessment can be undertaken without any major risk of external disruption or interference?

If the answers to all or most of the questions above are positive, the SDI should, in principle, be in a position to undertake a self-assessment. If there are many negative responses or doubts, then perhaps now is not the right time to initiate a self-assessment, although this may be possible in the future.

1.2 Taking the decision, creating ownership and building commitment

It is now time to take the decision on whether or not to go ahead with the self-assessment, either straightaway or in the future.

Snapshot quiz on the current status of the SDI

In order to help decide whether the SDI should undertake a self-assessment, a snapshot quiz, comprising twenty questions, is proposed below. This quiz should be undertaken by a small and representative group comprising the SDI's leaders and/or other members along with some secretariat staff if so desired. The quiz can be completed electronically in the document, or manually using stickers, post-its or any other means.

The aim of the quiz is to inform the decision on whether to undertake a self-assessment, by:

- ▶ assessing certain key aspects of the SDI's current situation (part A), and
- ▶ making a preliminary subjective assessment of its inclusiveness and effectiveness (part B).

The process is as follows:

1. For each question in the quiz, discuss the issue together and record your agreed factual response (for part A) or subjective assessment (for part B).
2. Determine together whether the group members are broadly “satisfied” 😊, “dissatisfied” 😞 or “neutral”⁴⁰ 😐 about that aspect of the SDI.
3. Record as well the key points arising from your conversation (you may use template 1 provided below to record the most important perceived strengths and weaknesses of the SDI). If the group members do not agree, the different views can be noted.
4. Address each question in this way. At the end of each part, add up the total number of the different emojis, record the totals and broadly “interpret” the results with the help of the guidance provided below template 1.

The quiz should produce a quick overview of how the group currently perceives the strengths and weaknesses of the SDI. While reaching a consensus is desirable, “agreeing to disagree” is also possible; the group should not spend too much time at this early stage trying to reach an agreed position on every single point. If the decision is taken to apply the SAM-SDI, the process will allow all these issues to be explored in much greater depth.



Snapshot quiz on the SDI’s current status

Part A. Assessing key aspects of the SDI’s current situation

😊 😞 😐
Choose an emoji

a. Is the legal basis of the SDI statutory or non-statutory?

Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction (satisfied, dissatisfied or neutral) by selecting the corresponding emoji

b. Is the competence of the SDI advisory/consultative, decision-making or a mix of both?

Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction

c. Does the SDI operate under the auspices of a government entity (such as the Ministry of Labour or the Office of the Prime Minister) or is it independent?

Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction

d. What are the chairing arrangements of the SDI?

Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction

e. Does the SDI have an internal governance or decision-making structure(s) e.g. a governing body, executive board or bureau?

Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction

⁴⁰ The “neutral” emoji may be used for “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”, “no opinion” or “unsure”.

f.	How many times, on average, has the SDI met each year in the recent past?	
	<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>	
g.	Does the SDI have sub-committees or working groups (either permanent or ad hoc)? On what topics?	
	<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>	
h.	Does the SDI have a secretariat? If so, how many staff? Do they have the skills and experience to support the SDI efficiently?	
	<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>	
i.	What is the SDI's annual budget? What is/are the source(s) of funding? Are the funds provided in a reliable and timely manner?	
	<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>	
j.	Has the country ratified ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 (on freedom of association and collective bargaining) and No. 144 (on tripartite consultation)? Are the Conventions fully implemented and respected in practice?	
	<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>	
k.	Does the SDI have responsibility for undertaking tripartite consultations on labour standards-related matters as required under Convention No. 144?	
	<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>	
l.	Are the objectives and functions of the SDI, as stated in its founding document, still relevant and appropriate today?	
	<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>	
Total for part A.		 =  =  =

Part B. Subjective assessment of the SDI's inclusiveness and effectiveness		 Choose an emoji
m. Does the SDI include representatives of the government and of employers' and workers' organizations on an equal footing?		
<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>		
n. Are the SDI's member organizations broadly representative of their respective constituencies? ⁴¹		
<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>		
o. Does the SDI have an equitable balance of women and men in its membership, and reflect other aspects of diversity in society?		
<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>		
p. Does the SDI discuss significant labour, social and economic policy issues?		
<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>		
q. Does the SDI generally succeed in building consensus among its members on policy issues, based on sound analysis?		
<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>		
r. Does the SDI influence legislative and policy-making processes and outcomes?		
<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>		
s. Does the SDI contribute to the maintenance of social peace in the country?		
<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>		
t. Does the SDI have efficient internal operations and communicate effectively about its work to its target audiences?		
<i>Record your answer and evaluate your level of satisfaction</i>		
Total for part B.		 =  =  =
Total for A. + B.		 =  =  =

⁴¹ "Broadly representative" means that the employers' and workers' organizations in the SDI represent the voices and interests of a wide spectrum of employers and workers in today's world of work.



Template 1: Main outcomes of discussion in the snapshot quiz

	Key strengths of the SDI	Key weaknesses of the SDI
1. Current status of the SDI		
2. Inclusiveness and effectiveness of the SDI		

Interpreting the quiz results is not a scientific exercise! Review together the overall scores and check with the guidance provided below.

Interpreting the quiz results

Evaluation	Meaning
Mostly 😊	The “decision team” members appear to be satisfied with the overall situation of the SDI. There is almost certainly no need to apply the SAM-SDI in full. However, if there are 😊 some or 😞 in part B relating to the SDI’s inclusiveness or effectiveness, Steps 2 and 3 of the SAM-SDI can be used to further explore them. If the 😊 or 😞 concern the questions in part A (which are not directly addressed by the SAM-SDI), Steps 4 and 5 may be most relevant, for the planning and implementation of action to address these issues. However, given these shortcomings or doubts related to the current status of the SDI, the institution may not be fully inclusive and effective.
Mostly 😞	The quiz has revealed many weaknesses or limitations relating to aspects of the current status, inclusiveness and effectiveness of the SDI. It may be wise to consider implementing the SAM-SDI in full or, alternatively, to select certain areas considered to be the most important challenges to focus on in the first instance. Once some experience in applying the SAM-SDI has been acquired, other aspects may be addressed at a later stage.
Mostly 😐	This outcome reveals a high degree of neutrality or uncertainty among the members of the decision-making team regarding the situation of the SDI. Perhaps other SDI leaders/members or external stakeholders could be invited to undertake the quiz, as they may have longer institutional memories or could bring additional perspectives to bear. Depending on the outcome, it may be desirable to implement the SAM-SDI in full, or focus on certain areas perceived as being of the highest priority.
Mix of results	This result implies that the SDI is stronger in certain areas than others. Applying the SAM-SDI will help build an understanding of the factors influencing the SDI’s effectiveness and inclusiveness, and of its strengths and weaknesses in this regard. It is suggested to consider applying the SAM-SDI in full or using a phased approach.

Taking and communicating the decision

At this point, it would be a good idea for some or all of the members of the decision team to quickly review the whole of the SAM-SDI so as to have a better idea of what the entire process involves. Equipped with this knowledge, a decision should now be taken by the team about whether or not to apply the method. Any outcome is valid, provided it is reached through an inclusive conversation and by consensus.

What decision was taken?

► Yes!

Congratulations on taking the decision to apply the SAM-SDI and securing the buy-in of the parties involved. Be sure to communicate the decision in an appropriate way to the members of the SDI and any other concerned stakeholders, so they are aware that the exercise is going ahead. It is important also to let them know that their collaboration and participation will be sought at certain points during the self-assessment process.

► No, not now.

Even if the decision is not to go ahead with the self-assessment, the decision process may have prompted an initial internal reflection on the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the SDI. What were the main reasons for the decision? It will be important to monitor how the situation evolves over time. The decision may be revisited in say six months or one year from now, to see whether the right conditions are in place then.

► 2. Forming the assessment team

Constituting a balanced assessment team that includes individuals with the required profiles and skills is crucial to the success of the exercise.

The selection process should be transparent and adapted to national circumstances. It should allow for the full involvement of the social partners and any other constituencies in the SDI, with all the parties concerned being given the opportunity to express their views and endorse the final selection of the team members. Some guidance on the composition of the assessment team is given below.



► Who should be in the assessment team?

- The team should be small but inclusive.
- It should include at least one representative of each constituent group who has a thorough knowledge of and work experience within the institution, and a member/s of the secretariat (if there is one).
- If the government is not included in the SDI, consider the potential benefits of inviting the government to nominate a representative to the team.
- Seek a gender-balanced team, and also consider other dimensions of diversity, such as age, ethnicity, professional background and regional distribution.
- Team members should enjoy a sufficient level of seniority to be able to act with authority.
- Look for persons who enjoy the trust of the SDI membership, its leaders and partners.
- Prepare a list of alternates in the event that any of the team members is unavailable.

The guiding questions set out below may be useful for the decision team when considering who to include in the self-assessment team.⁴²



Selecting the assessment team

a. How many people in total should be in the assessment team, and how many from each constituency?

b. Who should nominate the team members and what should the process be for their endorsement? Are any special measures needed to ensure a balanced number of women and men in the assessment team?

c. What knowledge, skills and experience are needed among self-assessment team members?

Create a list of the desired attributes, which could include, for example:

- ▶ In-depth knowledge and experience of the operations of the SDI and/or of the social partner organizations in recent years
- ▶ An understanding of the broader national political, social and economic context (historical and current)
- ▶ Professional qualifications, for example in law, economics, development studies, political science or industrial relations
- ▶ Research and analytical capacity
- ▶ Writing skills
- ▶ Facilitation skills

d. What personal attributes are important?

For example:

- ▶ Integrity and impartiality
- ▶ Results- and problem-solving orientation
- ▶ Leadership and coordination ability
- ▶ Communication skills
- ▶ Ability to work well in a team

e. Should there be a team coordinator? If so, how should she/he be selected? Or should this be a shared responsibility?

f. Should specific responsibilities be assigned to individual team members? Should terms of reference be drawn up for the self-assessment spelling out what is expected, and be endorsed by the managers of the team members?

⁴² It is possible that, particularly in a very small SDI, the decision-makers and the assessment team members are the same people, or that certain individuals will be involved in both decision-making and the implementation of the SAM-SDI. In other cases, the assessment team may be an entirely different group of people to those taking the decision to carry out the SAM-SDI.

-
- g.** Should team members be released from some of their existing professional responsibilities for the duration of the self-assessment?
- ▶ This will depend on how much time is envisaged for the exercise and how the work is scheduled. It is important for the managers of the team members to recognize the work involved in the SAM-SDI, and to ensure that it is not merely an addition to their existing workload.
-

Once the membership of the assessment team has been established and endorsed by the SDI leadership (along with alternates, where appropriate), its composition should be communicated to all the members of the SDI and other concerned stakeholders.

2.1 Is the support of a third-party facilitator needed?

Any process of change is likely to encounter conscious or unconscious resistance among those affected. Change gives rise to tensions and discomfort, which may be difficult for those directly involved to manage on their own. The SDI may therefore wish to consider employing a facilitator to assist in undertaking the self-assessment.

The role of a facilitator, as an impartial third party having specific facilitation skills and experience, is to create and maintain momentum, facilitate discussions, ease possible discomfort and tensions within the group, channel emotions and manage the power dynamics. A facilitator will help to bring out the knowledge and insights of the team members through the use of various activities, skills and tools, and will ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to express themselves and contribute to the work of the team. Particularly where there may be pre-existing tensions or mistrust between team members (although not only in such situations), a skilled facilitator can increase overall efficiency, ensure that the work stays on schedule, and help to build consensus and ownership of the results of the self-assessment.

Furthermore, using the SAM-SDI may be quite challenging without the support of a facilitator who is familiar with the method and has received training on how to apply it. While every effort has been made to make the tool self-explanatory and user-friendly, it does require rather intensive and demanding work. For this reason, some SDIs may wish to approach the ILO for technical support and facilitation services for implementing the SAM-SDI.

The SAM-SDI provides, in [Annex 7](#), a selection of activities to help create a collaborative atmosphere and generate productive discussions between the assessment team members. Links to some online tools that may be used to help plan and organize the work and for online collaboration are also included.⁴³

The guiding questions set out below may be useful when considering the possibility of appointing an external facilitator for the self-assessment.

⁴³ Many of these activities are available through [the Compass](#), which is an ITCILO portal for learning, training and knowledge-sharing activities. This may provide a source of inspiration in the search for appropriate participatory methodologies, regardless of whether or not a facilitator is used.



Using a facilitator to assist in the self-assessment process

- a. What are the potential pros and cons of the team undertaking the self-assessment alone, on the one hand, or using the services of a third-party facilitator, on the other?
- b. Where might a suitable and impartial facilitator be found – for example, the ILO field office or headquarters, a government agency, academic institution, or a national or international consultant?
- c. How should the facilitator be selected?
- d. Over what period will the facilitator's services be needed and for how many days/weeks of work in total (this is linked to the work plan for the self-assessment, addressed in subsection 3 below)?
- e. How much will these services cost (including fees, travel and subsistence, as necessary) and how can these resources be secured?
- f. What should the facilitator's terms of reference include? Who will issue the contract? How will the facilitator's performance be monitored and constructive feedback be provided during the process?

2.2 Promoting gender equality through the SAM-SDI

The promotion of gender equality is a key aspect of social dialogue and of decent work as a whole. The implementation of the SAM-SDI offers an important opportunity for the SDI to promote gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the assessment team, throughout the self-assessment process and in the resulting action plan.



Gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the SAM-SDI

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. By explicitly addressing the concerns and experiences of women, as well as men, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, the aim is to ensure that women and men benefit equally from them and that, ultimately, gender equality is achieved.⁴⁴

There are a number of possible ways to mainstream gender and promote gender equality through the SAM-SDI. These include:

- ▶ Ensuring a gender-balanced assessment team.
- ▶ Including a specific section on gender issues in social dialogue in the assessment report.
- ▶ Noting and seeking to understand any differences between the perspectives of women and men throughout the self-assessment process.
- ▶ Incorporating additional guiding questions to address gender issues.

⁴⁴ See ILO (n.d.). "Gender Equality Tool".

- ▶ Securing the involvement of specialists on gender equality at key moments or events during the self-assessment process.
- ▶ Using gender-neutral terminology when drafting the assessment report and action plan.
- ▶ Ensuring the action plan is gender-responsive and seeks to promote gender equality in all aspects of the SDI's work.
- ▶ Including a specific objective on gender equality in the SDI in the action plan.
- ▶ Devising gender-disaggregated indicators for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the action plan.

Likewise, there are many possible measures that may be applied by the SDI and its members to promote gender equality in their respective organizations. These include:

- ▶ Seeking a gender balance in the membership and leadership of the social partner organizations and of the SDI, through quotas, preferential recruitment policies or other means.
- ▶ Establishing women's sections or adopting other policies to mainstream gender equality in the social partner organizations.
- ▶ Implementing policies to increase the number of women employed in Ministries of Labour and other government departments, including in senior management positions.
- ▶ Undertaking specific capacity-building programmes for women in the social partner organizations and in the government.
- ▶ Setting up a working group or ad hoc committee on gender equality in the SDI, tasked with addressing specific gender equality issues in the world of work.
- ▶ Appointing one or more gender focal points in the SDI, who should ideally be both women and men.
- ▶ Establishing procedures with a view to ensuring that all SDI discussions, reports and policy recommendations are gender-responsive.
- ▶ Adopting family-friendly measures to encourage the participation of both women and men in SDI meetings e.g. providing childcare facilities, holding all meetings during normal working hours and using venues for multiple-day events that allow participants with family responsibilities to return home overnight.
- ▶ Adopting a zero-tolerance policy to gender-based violence and harassment in the SDI and in the social partner organizations.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The [Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 \(No. 190\)](#) sets out detailed policy guidance for member states for the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, including but not limited to gender-based violence and harassment.

► 3. Devising a work plan and budget⁴⁶

Now that the team is in place, it is time to start planning for the self-assessment. Do the team members already know each other and are they used to working together? It may be useful to organize a team-building activity at the outset to foster good relations and a team spirit, or for the people involved to meet in an informal out-of-work setting.

The first step is for the assessment team members to review the self-assessment method and develop a work plan accordingly.

The SAM-SDI does not prescribe any specific duration for the self-assessment, which will vary depending on national circumstances. The work plan for conducting the SAM-SDI will depend on several factors, including:

- the *resources* that are available or can be secured for the self-assessment
- the *scope* of the self-assessment
- whether the self-assessment needs to be completed within a particular *timeframe*, for example, in view of the workload of the SDI, an upcoming plenary session or internal or external budget processes.

► *Resources*

It is important to start by assessing the time and other resources available over the coming months, and which can realistically be allocated to the SAM-SDI. The work plan should be feasible in light of resource availability; there is no point in developing a highly ambitious work plan that cannot be implemented in practice. In the team, agree on how much time can be devoted to the SAM-SDI over what period, and whether other resources are needed to support the self-assessment through to its end. Aim to set a pace for the work that is compatible with the other responsibilities of the team members, both professional and personal.

► *Scope*

Is it proposed to apply the SAM-SDI in full or only to focus on certain aspects? The results of the snapshot quiz above should be helpful in this respect. An initial decision on the scope needs to be taken now, although it may later be decided to expand or reduce it in light of the experience of applying the SAM-SDI. Having reviewed the method, it is necessary to decide whether to apply the SAM-SDI in full or only to implement certain parts of it. The scope of the self-assessment will need to be discussed with and endorsed by the leaders of the SDI (if they are not part of the self-assessment team).

► *Timeframe*

Consider whether the SAM-SDI exercise needs to be completed within a particular timeframe in view of a deadline or any other constraint, which would lend a sense of urgency to it. Or is there relative freedom to pace the work more gradually over a longer period?

In light of the above considerations, a preliminary work plan should be prepared to guide the work over the coming days, weeks or months. The plan should be updated as implementation of the assessment progresses. It is important as well to estimate the resource requirements of implementing the SAM-SDI, and to secure these resources in advance.

⁴⁶ Additional guidance on establishing a work plan and budget is provided in [Step 4](#) of the SAM-SDI.

The following guiding questions may be useful when planning the work.



Devising a work plan

Resource availability

- a. What material resources are currently available for the self-assessment (including meeting rooms, computers/laptops, projector, consumables like paper, pens, post-its, flip charts etc.)?
- b. What costs are likely to be incurred for each step of the method e.g. fees for a facilitator, travel costs to attend meetings, hire of venue for final workshop, etc?
- c. How will additional funds or other resources, if needed, be secured?
- d. Are background materials and secondary sources of information accessible?
See [Annex 4](#) for a list of potentially useful information sources.

Scope of the self-assessment and planning the work

- e. Is it intended to apply the SAM-SDI in full, or to focus only on certain aspects?
- f. How will the work be scheduled - should it be a concentrated effort over a limited number of days/weeks, or be carried out in short "bursts" over a longer period?
- g. What are the target start and end dates for each step, and for key milestones or events during the process?
- h. How will the work be organized within the team? For example, should the whole team be involved throughout or should it be split into smaller groups to undertake different tasks?
- i. How and by whom will the outcomes of each step of the work be recorded?
- j. How, when and to whom will progress be communicated?
- k. How will the process and outcomes of each step of the work be recorded?
- l. How, when and to whom will progress be communicated?

► Further reading and resources

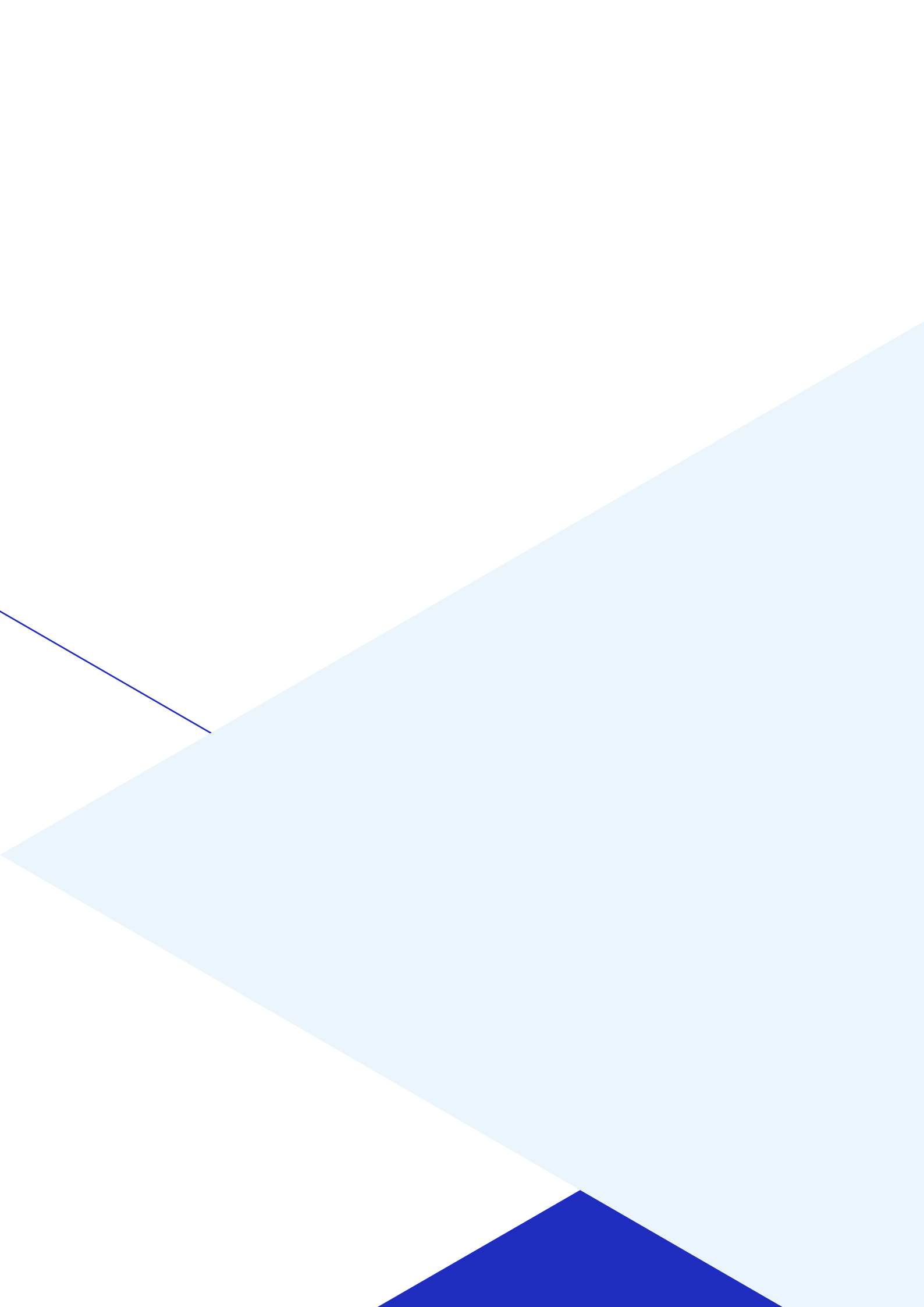
ILO (2009). “[Social dialogue at work: Voices and choices for women and men](#)”, Geneva. As social dialogue echoes the needs and aspirations of its participants, women and men should be represented in an equal way to have their voices heard without fear of reprisal.

Briskin, L. and A. Muller (2011). *Promoting gender equality through social dialogue: Global trends and persistent obstacles*, Working Paper No. 34, Industrial and Employment Relations Department, Geneva, ILO.

This paper is part of a comparative research project with the objective of demonstrating that gender equality and social dialogue are mutually beneficial, and their promotion should go hand-in-hand. The study highlights the potential of tripartite social dialogue and collective bargaining as tools for promoting gender equality.

Seeds for Change (n.d.). “[Our Resources](#)”.

A set of resources developed by Seeds for Change (a workers’ cooperative) to assist collaborative working and making change, including through consensus decision-making.





► Figure 6: The SAM-SDI journey

► **Step 0: Taking the decision to carry out a self-assessment and getting ready**

1. Decide, through consensus, whether to apply the SAM-SDI
2. Select the assessment team
3. Devise a work plan and budget

► **Step 1: Building an understanding of the history and context of the SDI**

1. Review the SDI's objectives
2. Construct a timeline
3. Map the institutional environment

► **Step 2: Assessing the inclusiveness of the SDI**

1. Assess the five dimensions of inclusiveness using benchmarks
2. Identify objectives and action to enhance inclusiveness

► **Step 3: Assessing the effectiveness of the SDI**

1. Discuss the dimensions of effectiveness and adjust, if necessary, to the SDI
2. Identify examples of achievements and disappointments
3. Assess the five dimensions of effectiveness using guiding questions
4. Identify objectives and action to enhance effectiveness

► **Step 4: Formulating the action plan**

1. Develop the action plan
2. Hold a consultation to gather feedback
3. Finalize and disseminate the self-assessment report and action plan

► **Step 5: Implementing the action plan**

1. Monitor progress
2. Adjust implementation in light of progress





Step 1: Building an understanding of the history and context of the SDI

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Step 1: Building an understanding of the history and context of the SDI

This step enables the self-assessment team to develop a broader understanding of key aspects of the SDI's historical and current context. It is likely that the various team members will have different levels of knowledge and experience of the SDI. By undertaking the suggested activities, everyone should start the self-assessment process on the same page. Building a shared understanding of the past and present of the SDI will help the team project better into the future.

Objective

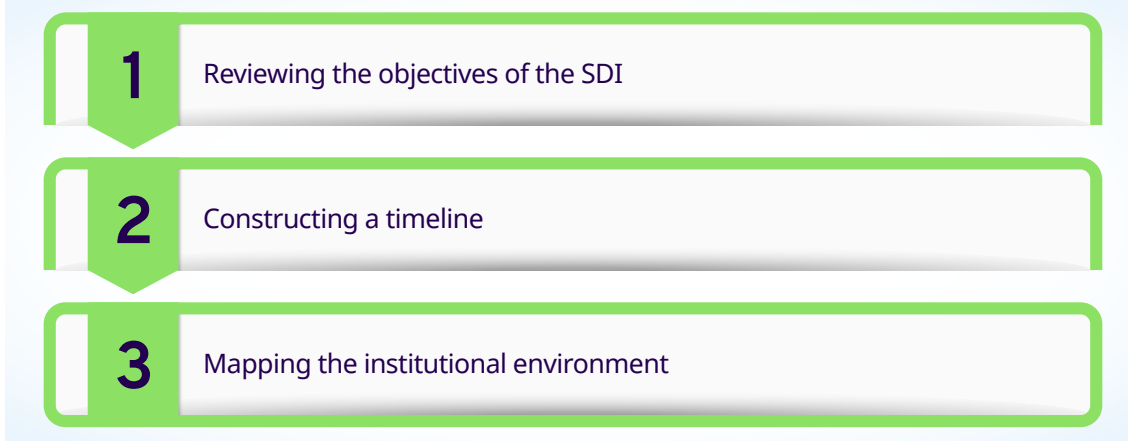
The objective of Step 1 is that the assessment team members have established a shared understanding of the SDI's objectives, key milestones in its history and its institutional environment.

Outcome

The team members have a common understanding of key aspects of the SDI, that constitutes a shared starting point for the remainder of the self-assessment process.

► Process

► Figure 8: Sub-steps of Step 1



► 1. Reviewing the objectives of the SDI

Starting out with a shared understanding in the team of the objectives of the SDI is important, as these will provide the backdrop for the entire self-assessment process.⁴⁷ A very basic approach to assessing effectiveness might involve simply taking each stated objective of the SDI in turn, and evaluating subjectively how well the SDI is achieving it in practice; however, that is *not* the approach followed in the SAM-SDI, which involves a more in-depth analysis.

Write down a list of the objectives of the SDI, which are normally set out in its founding statute, constitution or terms of reference. It may be helpful to keep the list visible or accessible to the team throughout the assessment.

Consider together the adequacy of the SDI's stated objectives, using the guiding questions below. You should avoid discussing whether the SDI is actually achieving the objectives.



Reviewing the SDI's objectives

- a. Is there any hierarchy, with certain objectives perceived to be of greater importance than others?
- b. Do the objectives match the current reality of the world of work in your country?
- c. Are there any missing objectives – that is, objectives that you believe the SDI ought to be pursuing, but for which it does not currently have a mandate?
- d. Are there any objectives that are no longer necessary or relevant in the current context, and should be dropped?

⁴⁷ From this point onwards (for Steps 1, 2, 3 and 4), the text is addressed to the members of the self-assessment team who will often be referred to as "you".

Should there be any differences of opinion in the team regarding these questions, try to reach consensus through discussion. If opinions still diverge, make a note of where the differences lie. There will be other opportunities to review the objectives of the SDI, during the assessment of inclusiveness in [Step 2](#) and effectiveness in [Step 3](#). In [Step 4](#), you may reflect again on the adequacy of the SDI's objectives when developing your action plan.

► 2. Constructing a timeline

A timeline is a visual representation of key milestones in the history and development of the SDI. The purpose of this short activity is for the team to reflect together on what have been the key milestones or events in the SDI's history that have helped to shape what it is today. This is a "warm-up" exercise which can serve as well for team-building purposes.

Determine the date on which the timeline starts. This could be the moment when the SDI was established, or may pre-date its foundation and include the events leading up to its creation. The timeline should continue at least to the present day, although you may wish to project it into the future, adding any significant events that you expect to occur over the next year or so. Plot the most significant milestones of the SDI along a straight line, indicating the date. These milestones may include significant national or international events that influenced the institution or its environment, or to which it contributed (see the box for suggestions of the types of events to plot). The [timeline of the ILO](#) is a good example of how to construct one with a considerable amount of detail.

This exercise may also be used as an opportunity to discuss any important implications to be drawn from the timeline, for example, regarding periods when the SDI has been most productive and those when it has been less so. However, as this is not a core component of the self-assessment, it is perhaps better to avoid spending too much time on it. Once developed, keep the timeline visible or accessible for future reference.



► Possible events or milestones to plot on the SDI timeline

- Adoption of legislation establishing the SDI
- Inaugural meeting of the SDI
- Labour law reforms
- Significant national political developments, such as change in government
- Significant economic or social milestones at the national, regional or international levels, such as an economic crisis or social unrest
- Key achievements of the SDI, such as the conclusion of a social pact or other agreement, publication of a major report or opinion or a major event organized by the SDI
- Periods during which the SDI did not meet or was not operational
- Reform of the mandate or composition of the SDI

► 3. Mapping the institutional environment of the SDI

An institutional map is a visual representation of the various institutions that have some bearing on, or relationship with the SDI. The SDI does not exist in a vacuum, but is located within an institutional environment at the national level, and also regional and global levels. The SDI is influenced by its relationships with these various institutions, whether through positive synergies and collaboration, negative competition or conflict or perhaps benign co-existence. It is important, as part of the self-assessment process, to seek to understand the broader institutional environment and inter-relationships between the institutions, as strengthening these may represent a key means to enhance the SDI's effectiveness.

The steps described below should be followed to draw an institutional map.

1. Identify the key institutions, organizations or mechanisms which play a role in labour, employment and social policy-making. The box provides some examples of the types of institutions that you may wish to include.
 - Start by listing the relevant key institutions that exist within the country (at the national, sectoral, or local levels).
 - Next, list the key institutions outside the country (for example, at the regional, inter-regional or global level).
2. Create a visual representation or "map" of the institutional environment, placing the SDI in an appropriate place within the chart or diagram (it may be at the centre, but not necessarily). The map should include the most important institutions or mechanisms with which the SDI co-exists or interacts, and not necessarily each and every institution listed. The map could take a variety of forms - for example, a hierarchical organigram, or a Venn diagram with overlapping and free-standing circles. It does not have to be perfect. An illustrative, fictional example is presented in figure 9 overleaf. When compiling the map or chart, discuss the relationships between the SDI and the other institutions. You can draw lines between the institutions to indicate the nature and strength of these relationships or links (for example, using solid lines to show strong or direct links, and dotted lines for weak or indirect links) and you may use a different colour for each category of institution.
3. Discuss the map in the team. Are the SDI's relationships with the other institutions complementary, competitive/conflictual or non-existent? Are there any missing links which could be established in the future, or weak links which could be strengthened to improve the SDI's effectiveness or inclusiveness? Make a note of these observations which will be useful in Steps 2 and 3 of the SAM-SDI.
4. If you wish to dig deeper, you may go on to analyse the respective interests, impact, influence and power of the various institutions, and the nature of their linkages.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ To analyse the power dynamics within the institutional environment, the Power Cube method proposed by John Gaventa may be useful: see Gaventa, J. (2006). "Finding the spaces for change: A power analysis", *IDS Bulletin*, 37(6), pp. 23-33.



► Possible institutions to include in an institutional map

- The SDI
- Other social dialogue institutions of general competence, or with a specialized mandate
- The Ministry of Labour and other government ministries or agencies
- Parliament
- The Office of the Prime Minister or President
- Labour courts and labour dispute resolution bodies
- Inter-ministerial policy-making bodies or mechanisms
- Employers' and workers' organizations at various levels and in different sectors
- Chambers of Commerce, business organizations or major multinational enterprises
- Academic institutions and think tanks
- Non-governmental, civil society and advocacy organizations, including those representing specific interest groups, such as youth, women, migrant workers or persons with a disability
- Civil or community dialogue institutions or processes
- Media organizations
- Regional organizations, multi-country groupings or policy forums, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the European Union (EU), Group of Seven (G7) and Group of Twenty (G20).
- International organizations, including the ILO, the World Bank, regional development banks, etc.
- The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
- Regional social partner organizations
- Other partner organizations outside the national territory, such as the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS).

► Figure 9: An institutional map



Advancing social justice, promoting decent work

The International Labour Organization is the United Nations agency for the world of work. We bring together governments, employers and workers to drive a human-centred approach to the future of work through employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

The self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions

The self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions (SAM-SDI) has been developed by the International Labour Organization to help constituents analyse and strengthen the inclusiveness and effectiveness of their social dialogue institutions.

Booklet number 2 covers Step 0 and Step 1 of the SAM-SDI. In Step 0, the social dialogue institution (SDI) is guided through a process to decide whether to implement the SAM-SDI and to make the necessary preparations for it, including possible adaptation of the method to the national context.

Step 1 involves activities to build a shared understanding among the assessment team members of the history and context of the SDI.

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