



► Guidance Note 2.6: Conducting decent work country programme internal reviews

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This guidance note is part of Pillar 2 ► *Types of evaluation*

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This Guidance Note clarifies the parameters within which internally conducted reviews of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) should take place. Specific guidance is presented to guide the conduct of DWCP internal reviews (CPRs) which aim to strengthen the role of management in their evaluation and optimal management. Guidance is also provided on integrating evaluability assessment components¹ to inform ILO's DWCPs, UNSDCF's and the SDGs.

There are two options for CPRs. They may be organized as independent evaluations. In that case, the Guidance Note on that topic would be applicable. The other option is for them to be organized as a less formal, meaningful management tool to gauge progress, correct implementation issues and improve performance and inform future strategies. In this case, this Guidance Note would apply.

1. These derive from ILO EVAL Diagnostic instrument to assess the evaluability of DWCPs in the context of the SDGs

► 1. CONTEXT OF DWCPs

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) have been established as the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries. DWCPs have two basic objectives: i) to promote decent work as a key component of national development strategies; and ii) to organize ILO knowledge, instruments, advocacy and cooperation at the service of tripartite constituents in a results-based framework.

The ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) does a regional cluster evaluation of three to four DWCPs per year. In 2007, EVAL created a new modality to complement  [high-level, DWCP evaluations](#) called Country Programme Reviews (CPRs). CPRs are a special case of internal evaluation used to review the design and implementation of a country programme and to examine how these contribute to stated outcomes.

The guidance should be seen as complementary to the  [guidance note on internal evaluation](#) and to the overall guidance and [protocols provided by EVAL for DWCP evaluations](#). It should also be read in conjunction with other evaluative products (e.g, synthesis reviews, meta-analyses and evaluability assessments) that yield evidence on country decent work results in a timely manner. All of them can be used by ILO to engage proactively in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of DWCPs and UNSDCF. In addition, care was taken to harmonize this Guidance Note with the ILO Program Department's DWCP Guidebook (version 4).

► 2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF COUNTRY PROGRAMME REVIEWS

According to the ILO Evaluation Policy Guidelines, evaluations in the organization are conducted for three reasons: accountability, improvement and learning. The purpose of CPRs should primarily be improvement and organizational learning. The CPR is part of the on-going monitoring processes aimed at improving the DWCP, facilitating learning by constituents, ILO and other key stakeholders, and informing the UNSDCF. The CPR includes, but is not limited to, assessing the design and implementation performance of the DWCP against stated outcomes, UNSDCF, and SDG targets, and the extent these are driven by M&E and reporting frameworks and capacities. CPRs can be mid-term or final. This has implications for the elements of design discussed below.

► 3. COUNTRY PROGRAMME REVIEW DESIGN

The ILO Evaluation Office considers the design of a CPR to consist of the following elements: the criteria and questions, the approach, data collection/analysis and the deliverables. Below are comments and observations on each element of CPR design.

3.1 CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The ILO evaluations usually focus on the relevance of the programme to beneficiary needs, the validity and coherence of the programme design, the programme's efficiency and effectiveness, the orientation towards the impact of the results and the potential for sustainability. With regard to these criteria, the CPR should answer the following questions:

- Are we doing the right thing? CPRs examine the rationales for the intervention and looks at the relevance of the intervention.
- Are we doing things in the right way? CPRs also assess the effectiveness of achieving expected results. It examines efficiency in the use of inputs to yield results. It also assesses the satisfaction of intended beneficiaries.
- Are there better ways of achieving the results? Finally, CPRs look at alternative ways of achieving the better results.

In addition to the above, it is highly recommended for CPRs (notably those conducted at mid-term stage) to include evaluability assessment components² that:

- Review DWCP alignment with the relevant SDG targets and realistic theories of change (ToCs) that capture the change pathway.
- Analyze ILO's internal structure, processes and capacities to support the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the contribution to the SDGs through the DWCP. Assess the role played by the ILO constituents insofar as SDG implementation, monitoring and evaluation are concerned, identify needs and capacity gaps, and synergies with other international partners/other UN agencies.

CPRs might use include some complementary criteria such as: the coherence of the DWCP design, the focus of the strategies, tripartite participation, strategic partnerships, etc. CPRs should also address cross-cutting policy drivers – international labour standards, social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination, and a just transition to environmental sustainability.

2. This assessment uses the relevant Diagnostic checklist for the evaluability of DWCPs in the context of the SDGs developed by EVAL: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_626865.pdf

Further guidance:

- [Guidance note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring & evaluation of projects](#)
- [Guidance note 3.2: Integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#)

3.2 APPROACH AND METHODS

EVAL recommends using a mixed methods approach to addressing the criteria and questions that might include: document analysis, interviews, direct observation and surveys — or some combination thereof. The advantage of this approach is that it permits findings derived from one method to be verified using a different method. This helps to ensure the validity of the findings.

CPRs generally follow the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluations for analyzing and organizing their findings.

Deliverables

Deliverables can include verbal and written reports, executive summaries, presentations press releases, photographic compilations, and audio or video documentation. The choice of outputs depends on many factors including target audience and budget. CPRs should follow the guidance in EVALs checklists related to report writing and preparation.

Further guidance:

- [Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report](#)
- [Checklist 4.9: Rating the quality of evaluation reports](#)
- [Checklist 4.4: Writing the evaluation report summary](#)

3.3 FOLLOW-UP

CPRs should include a management response from the Country Office. The recommendations contained in the review should be followed-up by the CPR Task Force (to be discussed in the next section).

► 4. IMPLEMENTATION

In this section of the Guidance Note, implementation will be addressed by examining: who does what, when and who pays.

4.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The CPR Task Force

The CPR Task Force is an informal group composed of representatives from the Regional Office (including the Regional Evaluation Officer) and from the Country Office. The roles and responsibilities of the team include:

- naming a Task Force Point Person
- approving ToRs and consultants
- approving reports
- submitting final reports to EVAL for inclusion in i-eval Discovery
- following up on recommendations contained in the review

Task Force Point Person

The Country Programme Review is managed by a focal point who is named by the CPR Task Force. Working with the support of the REO, the Task Force Point Person can conduct an informal evaluability assessment to ensure that the DWCP can actually be reviewed. The ILO’s evaluation policy guidelines contain information on evaluability assessments.

Once the DWCP’s evaluability has been established, the Task Force focal point seeks inputs from constituents/stakeholders and collects documents from the Country Office. These inputs are used to draft the Terms of Reference. The ToR are shared with the constituents and stakeholders with whom the focal point originally consulted.

Once the ToR have been approved by the CPR Task Force, they are used by the focal point to recruit and select an appropriate ILO official or external consultant to conduct the CPR. The ILO Evaluation Office considers CPRs to be a form of internal evaluation. Therefore, Internal Evaluation Certification Programme trainees could be considered for the assignment.

The Task Force focal point receives the draft CPR report and does an initial quality review. If the draft is found to be of acceptable quality, the Task Force Point Person circulates it to constituents/stakeholders and consolidates their comments. The comments are used by the consultant to make revisions.

The Consultant

The consultant, whether and ILO official or an external consultant, typically undertakes desk reviews of relevant documentation, conducts interviews and facilitates the stakeholder workshop. The consultant analyzes the data collected from the methods listed above and analyzes the data using qualitative data analysis techniques and writes a report.

DWCP/Country Office

The Country Office should provide all of the programme documentation, the list of stakeholders to be interviewed, and organize the stakeholders' workshop. It should also provide any other logistical support required by the consultant. For an effective and efficient review process, the Country Office, through the focal point, should support the process by:

- Arranging for an extensive briefing of the work done under the DW programme. The initial briefing should include information about the projects, resources, personnel etc. If required, also provide an overview of programming, for instance number of CPOs per DW Outcome area, the OBW system of the ILO, the Implementation reporting system of the ILO etc.
- Helping in identifying stakeholders the reviewer should seek feedback from through interviews or group discussions. In doing so, concentrate on stakeholders who have a sound understanding of ILO's work.
- Organizing documents (for instance by creating a dropbox or google doc folder) that the reviewer must use for desk review. In doing so, concentrate on documents that are substantive and informative. Ideally, important project proposals, the latest or final progress reports, evaluation reports, important knowledge products and records of important decisions (MoUs, policy decision meetings etc.) should be shared.
- Introducing the reviewer(s) to stakeholders through formal letter or email and facilitate appointments.
- Supporting the mission scheduling and management.

Technical Specialists

ILO experts from the country offices, EVAL, ILO's Bureau of Programme and Management (PROGRAM), and the in-country Decent Work Technical Support Teams (DWTs) may all provide inputs. EVAL provides general guidance and support, and receives final CPR reports.

Regional Evaluation Officer

The Regional Evaluation Officer forms part of the CPR Task Force and, as such, will provide any special evaluation technical advice required.

4.2 TIMELINE

The timing of the CPR should be coordinated to occur after the evaluability (see paragraph two of the Roles and Responsibilities of the CPR Task Force) of the DWCP has been established and at some midterm point to facilitate a review of progress, as well as to provide input for programme correction.

Country Programme Reviews should also be coordinated with EVAL's rolling plan for the independent evaluation of DWCPs, during the midterm or at the final stages of a DWCP, before a new phase of a DWCP is drafted.

The duration of the review should be sufficient to engage with key stakeholders, whether tripartite partners, funding partners or beneficiaries to meet the Review's objectives.

4.3 FUNDING

The CPR Task Force must first determine the budget available for the review before any further planning take place. Once this is determined, it will provide the realistic context by which the team can state the purpose and scope of the review. Funding for such internal reviews may be coordinated between the regional and country office. When funding is constrained, the scope of the review may be tailored to the priority areas needing to be addressed.