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Drivers of decent work results and ILO effectiveness: A review of results for 2019-2020, and trends in the effectiveness of ILO development cooperation interventions since 2013

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List of acronyms

CPO	Country Programme Outcome
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standard
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
P&B	Programme and Budget
RBM	Results-based management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
TC	Technical Cooperation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

1 Introduction

Since 2011, the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) has conducted biennial meta-analyses of the effectiveness of ILO's work in advancing decent work, based on independent project evaluations covering the periods 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2013-2016, 2017-2018, and 2019-2020.

Comparable approaches and methodologies have been used since the meta-study on decent work results for the period 2013-2016. **This think piece aims at providing a comparative overview and trends by effectiveness criteria, contrasting results from the different decent work meta-studies from 2013 to 2020¹, and focusing on learnings and recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of ILO development cooperation interventions.** After a brief overview of the effectiveness review methodology, the paper provides a summary discussion of results based on three key effectiveness performance areas used in the meta-analyses: Strategic relevance and alignment; Effectiveness, sustainability and impact; and Implementation performance and efficiency of management arrangements. Together, these performance areas allow the ILO to answer two key questions: "Are we doing the right things?" and "Are we doing things right?" This is followed by an examination of drivers of strong performance, based on evidence related to the most successful interventions as presented in the three meta-analyses. Trends on effectiveness by P&B outcomes are also examined, based on median scores. The Think Piece concludes with some reflections on areas for further consideration to improve the effectiveness of ILO interventions, based on recommendations from the meta-analyses under review.

1.1 Overview of the decent work effectiveness review methodology

The Decent Work Effectiveness Review meta-analyses examined trends in effectiveness of ILO development cooperation interventions towards the delivery of Decent Work results, based on sets of independent project evaluations across all regions for the 2013-2020 timeframe². Technical cooperation performance of ILO interventions was assessed through an ex-post rating of 26 criteria associated with three key performance areas, as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Meta-analysis framework

Performance area	Criteria	
1. Strategic relevance and alignment	1.1 Link between project purpose and/or objectives with P&B outcome	1.4 Validity of design/approach
	1.2 Causal link between project objectives and DWCP outcome(s)	1.5 Pro-poor focus
	1.3 Constituent support	1.6 Gender-responsive

¹ ILO (2017) Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO development cooperation: A meta-analysis of project evaluations 2013-2016 / Evaluation Office – Geneva: ILO.; ILO (2019) Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2017-2018/ Evaluation Office – Geneva: ILO; [ILO \(2020\) Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations 2019-2020/](#) Evaluation Office – Geneva: ILO.

² For a list of projects reviewed, please see the annexes of the respective meta-analyses.

2. Effectiveness, sustainability and impact	2.1 Quality and completeness of outputs	2.7 Strategic importance of results achieved
	2.2 Achievement of immediate objectives	2.8 Strategic relationships
	2.3 Knowledge development	2.9 Tripartite processes being embedded in approach
	2.4 Capacity building	2.10 Sustainability of policies, knowledge & capacities
	2.5 Normative work / standards promotion	2.11 Acknowledgement and Use of ILO expertise and involvement
	2.6 Policy influence	2.12 Resource leveraging
3. Implementation performance and efficiency of management and resource use	3.1 Goal orientation	3.5 Monitoring and reporting,
	3.2 Project management	3.6 Visibility and accessibility to knowledge and information
	3.3 ILO support to project	3.7 Cost efficiency
	3.4 Internal ILO coordination	3.8 Adequacy of resources

A four-point scoring system (see Table 2) was applied to the findings, using a performance criteria matrix³ provided by EVAL. Criteria with insufficient evidence were given a rating of '0', and were excluded in the quantitative analysis of performance.

Table 2. Four-point scoring system

Unsuccessful	Partly successful	Successful	Highly successful
1	2	3	4
Highly deficient performance	Basic level of performance but stated need for improvement	Adequate level of performance and results	Very good level of performance and results

Quantitative ratings were attributed to each criterion, and qualitative information was obtained from evaluation reports to present evidence and justification for each performance criterion rating and to allow for more in-depth analysis based on key themes. For methodological robustness and quality assurance purposes, reports were assessed independently by a team of reviewers.

In 2020, the methodological approach was reviewed to pilot new performance criteria, to assess the link and contribution of ILO interventions to Sustainable Development Goals, and Disability inclusion. The idea of taking a **rolling approach to review Decent Work Effectiveness** was also explored in 2020 with a small selection of evaluations completed in early 2020. The rolling appraisal process aims to assess evaluation reports using the Decent Work Effectiveness review framework within a month of their publication date. The key benefits of taking a rolling appraisal approach are summarized below:

³ The full scoring matrix with ratings and their description can be found in Annex 2 of [ILO Evaluation Office \(2020\) Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations 2019-2020](#).

KEY BENEFITS OF A ROLLING APPROACH

- ✓ Improved frequency of reporting on and disseminating Decent Work and effectiveness results at the level of a project or group of projects.
- ✓ Facilitated access to evaluative information to guide decision-making and improve learning opportunities, and for accountability.
- ✓ Systematic coverage of reports can facilitate ongoing analysis and identification of decent work trends at thematic or regional levels.
- ✓ Increased stakeholder engagement and credibility of evaluations.
- ✓ Possibility of piloting effectiveness reviews of other types of evaluation reports.
- ✓ Possibility of adjusting and adding criteria based on strategic requirements.

1.2 Limitations in applying the method

The main limitation in the meta-analyses was related to the extent and depth of information provided in the evaluation reports, thus affecting the extent of coverage, and possibly influencing the interpretation of performance as well, especially in a comparative context. It is thus important to be careful when comparing criteria with similar performance levels, but with a different extent of coverage. Moreover, there was sometimes insufficient detail regarding certain criteria to be able to attribute a positive score, even though the reality on the ground may have been different.

Scoring of thematic, cluster or regional evaluations proved to be problematic in cases where results differed from one country/area to the next. While it was possible to highlight variations qualitatively, it was difficult to represent these differences quantitatively, leading to possible misrepresentations of effectiveness in the scores.

2 Summary of results, 2013 - 2020⁴

This section takes a comparative approach to discuss performance results across all meta-analyses and to highlight common areas of strengths and weaknesses, revealing recurring patterns in the effectiveness of ILO interventions over time. The first part focuses on whether or not the ILO is “doing the right things,” looking at how key stakeholders perceived interventions to respond to their needs, as well as strategic relevance and alignment. It also includes areas that are core mandates of the ILO, such as gender, norms and social dialogue. The second part examines whether the ILO is “doing things right,” by assessing if interventions achieved satisfactory results in relation to their objectives, and if resources were used in an optimal way.

⁴ A table by key performance area as used in the meta-analysis methodology is available in Annex 1.

2.1 Are we doing the “rights things”? Relevance of the ILO’s work



Strongest performance: • Responsiveness to constituent needs • Alignment of the intervention objectives with DWCP outcomes/CPOs	Weakest performance: • Gender responsiveness • Pro-poor focus
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A majority of interventions were responsive to national needs and successful in involving constituents in planning, design and implementation, aside from those in 2017-2018, of which only half were successful, thus revealing mixed results for constituent support. A common area of strength was alignment of project objectives with Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) outcomes or Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs), where nearly all interventions across all years obtained successful ratings. While performance was also strong overall, evidence of alignment of project objectives with P&B outcomes was lower in 2019 compared to other years; this criterion also had the lowest coverage for 2019 and 2020. This disparity in ratings was also found for the validity of design and technical approach, with overall success for interventions evaluated in 2013-2016, and 2019, and strong performance for 2020, yet unsatisfactory ratings for interventions evaluated in 2017-2018.

Gender responsiveness had variable ratings over time, faring better in 2017-2018 and 2020 compared to other years, often because there were interventions that had strong gender components, with good to very good coverage in all cases. Overall though, there was little evidence of gender considerations in the design and implementation of interventions, revealing an area where more work was needed, especially since gender is a cross-cutting ILO policy driver.

Pro-poor focus was an area of general weakness, with only interventions in the 2013-2016 sample performing successfully, and performance decreasing over the years, with wide disparities in coverage⁵.

⁵ For meta-analyses covering evaluations from 2017 to 2020, and in line with the matrix provided by EVAL, any project that had “no poverty effect explicitly stated but some effect likely based on nature of interventions and localities chosen” was included in the sample and given a score of 2 (partly successful), thus coverage was over 90%. This was interpreted differently in the 2013-2016 meta-analysis, as the latter states: “many of the projects that could not be scored due to a lack of analysis in the evaluation reports had probably aimed to improve the living conditions of the poorest”, thus leading to very low coverage.

2.2 Are we doing “things right”? Effectiveness and efficiency of ILO’s work



Strongest performance: •Capacity-building •Knowledge generation and dissemination •Strategic partnerships •Complete, good quality outputs •Appreciation of technical expertise and comparative advantage in area of Decent Work •Cost efficiency	Weakest performance: •Goal orientation •Integration of tripartism/social dialogue •Monitoring and reporting •Achievement of immediate objectives •Sustainability •Adequacy of financial and human resources
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Areas of strongest performance across all years⁶ were related to the ILO’s ability to **develop capacities** at the institutional and individual levels and to generate relevant, good quality **knowledge** to inform decision-making. **Dissemination of knowledge and accessibility of information produced by ILO interventions was another area of success**, even if performance decreased over the years. A further area of high performance was the extent to which ILO built and leveraged solid, **strategic relationships** with a range of partners to ensure the effectiveness of its interventions and foster sustainability of results. **Recognition and appreciation of ILO’s expertise was generally strong**, and the Office’s comparative advantage and leadership in the area of decent work was noted in a majority of projects over the years.

Although performance was successful regarding **normative work and the promotion of international labour standards; policy influence** and the **strategic importance of results achieved**, there was a decrease over time, with ratings for 2019 and 2020 generally lower than in past meta-analyses. **Integration of tripartism** into intervention design and implementation was another area with oscillating results, with more than half of interventions in 2017-2018 and 2019 missing opportunities to promote tripartism and social dialogue, in contrast to results for 2013-2016 and 2020, where performance was stronger due to the effective promotion of bipartite and tripartite social dialogue, leading to improved ownership of results.

There was **good performance regarding the completeness, quality and use of planned outputs**, with 75 per cent of projects in the 2013-2016, 2017-18 and 2020 samples rated as successful and highly successful, while results for 2019 were slightly lower. **Cost efficiency of ILO interventions was an area of success in all cases**, with 80 per cent of interventions in 2013-2016, 2017-2018 and 2020 having good value for money, although performance was slightly lower in 2019, and the level of detail regarding this criterion varied substantially between reports. **Resource leveraging**, was found to have variable success depending on the time-frame, with over two-thirds of interventions from 2013-2016, 2017-2018 and 2020 able to obtain significant financial and in-kind contributions to boost intervention results, and evidence of co-financing and cost-sharing arrangements with stakeholders and development partners. Only half of projects from 2019 were able to do so.

⁶ Successful scores were attributed to 75 per cent of projects or more.

Performance was heterogeneous, but successful overall for implementation management, with over two-thirds of interventions rated as successful in 2019, although results for 2020 were similar to those of past meta-analyses, with under 60 per cent of interventions having sound management processes in place. There was similar variability in the **quality of ILO technical, programmatic, administrative and financial support to projects** and **internal ILO coordination**, with more successful scores in 2013-2016 and 2020 than in other years, with evidence of interventions building on synergies with existing ILO projects and drawing on the expertise of different units and departments at headquarters and in the field to optimize intervention results. An **area requiring improvement overall was related to the availability and timely access to human and financial resources**, leading to challenges in delivering intended outputs and outcomes, with lowest performance in 2019, while results from the 2020 were strongest overall.

In terms of effectiveness, results related to progress towards immediate objectives were mixed. Only half of interventions obtained successful scores in 2017-2018 and 2019, with reports often noting that the quality of results was variable or that it was difficult to assess progress due to the lack of evidence of monitoring mechanisms, indicators and targets at the outcome level. In contrast, over 75 per cent of interventions from the 2013-2016 and 2020 samples performed successfully, and were found to likely lead to lasting impact. **Prospects for sustainability of interventions fluctuated over time**, with better performance in 2013-2016 and 2017-2018, in contrast to results for 2019, which were inadequate, revealing an important shortcoming, as only one-third of projects received successful ratings, and results were mixed for 2020, with only half of projects having positive scores, in contrast to 2013-2016 and 2017-2018, where prospects for sustainability were higher.

The major weaknesses across all years were related to goal orientation and monitoring and reporting, with only eight per cent of interventions having a logical fit between indicators and outcomes, and performance targets aligned with their strategy in 2019, and 18 per cent for 2013-2016 and 2017-2018. Successful ratings for monitoring and reporting were achieved by less than thirty per cent of projects in 2017-2018 and 2019. While scores were slightly higher in 2013-2016 and 2020, the majority of projects performed poorly, with many evaluations noting an absence of monitoring plans or frameworks, inadequate indicators, and limited reporting mechanisms. This underlines a significant shortcoming in ILO interventions, and highlights the importance of developing robust theories of change and logical frameworks upstream in the project cycle, as well as the key role of evaluability to better capture project progress and achievements.

3 Drivers of success: key factors contributing to the effectiveness of the most successful interventions

The most successful interventions were examined to see if there were any distinctive contributing factors in achieving development outcomes effectively. This group of interventions⁷ consists of the top overall median scores for each set of reports used in the meta-analyses⁸, further refined to have achieved “Highly successful” and/or “Successful” scores on each of the following performance criteria 2.2 (achievement of immediate objectives), 2.3 (knowledge development), 2.4 (capacity building), 2.5 (Normative work/standards promotion), and 2.6 (policy influence). Specific factors that consistently

⁷ All projects had had one or two areas of weakness, and coverage of certain performance criteria was uneven

⁸ This resulted in 16 projects selected for 2013-2016, 8 for 2017-2018, 12 for 2019 and 3 for 2020.

contributed to the success of the selected interventions are presented in Figure 1 and discussed below:

Figure 1. Factors contributing to the most effective interventions



- Successful interventions **responded to national decent work priorities**, and their objectives were clearly linked to DWCP outcomes, CPOs, and P&B outcomes. Almost all highly effective interventions in the 2013-2016 sample had created **strong synergies with ongoing ILO initiatives**, and had built on previous ILO programmes in the country or region, which helped to lay the groundwork for success.
- Interventions which had strongest performance were **responsive to constituent demands and involved them in project design and implementation**, thus allowing to fine-tune interventions and provide a tailored response to needs and priorities. Overall, these interventions had their **design and technical approach endorsed by stakeholders**, especially as strategies and outputs were defined in a participatory manner, to ensure alignment with intervention objectives.
- **All but one of the most successful interventions in the 2019 and 2020 sample had objectives clearly linked to SDG targets** and there was evidence of contribution to these targets at the strategic and operational levels, with three of the most successful interventions having specific objectives/goals related to attaining SDGs. These interventions were consistent with

national UNDAF/UNSDCF priorities, as well as the priorities identified in the 2030 Agenda. Examples were provided of intervention objectives and outputs which had contributed to progress towards SDG targets. For the 2020 sample, successful interventions incorporated **gender considerations** into their strategies, and gender-sensitive indicators were used, with clear progress made towards gender equity.

- **A majority of the most effective interventions in the 2017-2018 sample demonstrated a strong commitment to the ILO's tripartite approach.** The involvement of tripartite constituents in project implementation was found to be a key positive aspect of project design, and project results led to improved social dialogue among constituents. Certain projects were seen as a bridge between government, employers and worker representatives, giving them opportunities and tools to work together effectively towards common goals.
- **Virtually all of the most successful interventions fully achieved their planned outputs,** which were found to be of good quality and were used by stakeholders. Results were often considered to be of **strategic importance**, and there was ample evidence of strategic use of results.
- **Implementation management processes were well designed for a majority of interventions in the 2017-2020 high-performance sample, with involved parties understanding their roles and responsibilities, leading to effective functioning of project teams.** Successful project managers were found to have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, context-specific knowledge, as well as good technical expertise. They developed links with national authorities, enabled collaboration between stakeholders, coordinated with technical backstopping units, supported donor reporting, managed budgets, and supervised the work of administrative staff. Project teams were praised for their dedication, creativity and flexibility, as well as their work in developing partnerships. When faced with setbacks, including changing political contexts, project teams were able to make proposals to adapt the project design to continue progress towards project goals. These teams often engaged in regular reporting, reflecting good communication and communication. The organisational structure of projects was said to be relatively streamlined, with good coordination between different actors, including implementing partners. Some reports commented on the value of project governance, which brought together different constituent groups and NGOs to achieve project objectives.
- **Strategic relationship-building was an important component of intervention success.** Most interventions in this group built and leveraged strong relationships with different partners and organisations, including government institutions, trade unions, organisations representing informal sector workers, employers' representatives, NGOs, civil society organisations, universities and research centres, United Nations agencies, donors, as well as the media, national judicial systems, apparel brands and buyers, recruitment agencies, and embassies, among others. The ILO's expertise was appreciated by stakeholders and other intervention partners. These partnerships took on different formats, including collaboration on programmes, closely involving partners and beneficiaries in design, implementation, and decision-making processes; the establishment of task-forces and working groups; joint advocacy; cost-sharing of activities; dissemination of information; and widening of networks. Strategic partnerships at all levels were important in achieving intervention objectives, encouraging tripartite stakeholder engagement and ownership, and helping to build synergies with other interventions.

- **Interventions that performed strongly had good visibility and tailored approaches in place to document and disseminate knowledge** – sharing of information and knowledge was done both internally and externally through various means, such as the use of workshops to present reports, comparative studies and good practices; in-person and in virtual meetings; high-level conferences; through South-South cooperation strategies, and through dialogues among stakeholders to discuss knowledge products and to create ownership of the outputs. There were examples of documentation and dissemination of experiences and lessons learned; the production of communication materials; milestone project events; and awareness campaigns that used different channels. User-friendly websites, web platforms, social media, information systems and hotlines were developed, and publications were produced, translated and shared. Certain teams had a dedicated communications manager, reflecting the importance of knowledge visibility in their approach.
- **The most successful interventions were generally efficient financially, with a majority providing good value for money**– despite important variations in resources, project teams were able to identify and use different strategic opportunities to attain the majority of their outcomes, leading to cost-effective results. This included leveraging funds, collaborating with other interventions, and getting inputs from ILO technical specialists. Interventions capitalised on existing initiatives and methodologies, with activities delivered through other financial mechanisms, including cost-sharing and in-kind contributions in collaboration with ILO projects and other development partners. Several interventions used a training of trainers approach, which also allowed to increase outreach and impact at minimal cost.

4 Analysis of key performance areas by Programme and Budget Outcomes, 2013 - 2019

Using median results of ratings for all criteria allowed to compare effectiveness performance of interventions associated with particular P&B Outcomes over the years for the 2013-2019 timeframe. **There was consistently strong performance across all P&B Outcomes for quality and completeness of outputs, capacity-building and the development and use of strategic relationships, while weakest performance was associated with goal orientation, and monitoring and reporting.** The following sections present this information according to the three main performance areas used in the meta-analyses. Summary tables in each section present trends by P&B outcomes, highlighting the strongest and weakest results for the different meta-analysis criteria.

4.1 Strategic relevance and alignment

The majority of P&B Outcomes had high median scores in relation to the **causal link between project objectives and DWCP outcomes and CPOs** (Criterion 1.2), and lower scores were due to low coverage, rather than poor performance. There were variable median results by Outcome for the **link between project objectives and ILO P&B outcomes** (Criterion 1.1), and **validity of project design** (Criterion 1.4), with half of P&B Outcomes performing well.

ILO interventions generally responded well to **national decent work needs and involved constituents** (Criterion 1.3) across most Outcomes. Yet, **poverty targeting, pro-poor focus** (Criterion 1.5) and

Gender sensitivity (Criterion 1.6) were inadequate in a majority of P&B Outcomes, reflecting two areas where further efforts need to be targeted. For instance, pro-poor focus was an area of low performance for Outcome 6, which was surprising in the context of work on the informal economy.

Table 3. Median scores by P&B Outcome - Strategic relevance and alignment⁹

P&B Outcome	No reports	% total	Performance criteria					
			1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6
1: More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects	20	18%	0.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	2.0
2: Ratification and application of ILS	4	4%	1.5	1.5	2.5	1.5	0.5	2.0
3: Creating and extending social protection floors	9	8%	0.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
4: Promoting sustainable enterprises	11	10%	0.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
5: Decent work in the rural economy	6	5%	1.0	1.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
6: Formalization of the informal economy	3	3%	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
7: Promoting safe work and workplace compliance including in global supply chains	14	13%	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
8: Protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work	22	20%	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
9: Fair and effective international labour migration and mobility	3	3%	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
10: Strong and representative employers' and workers' organizations	6	5%	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.0	0.0	2.0
A: Effective knowledge management for the promotion of decent work	6	5%	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Multiple Outcomes	8	7%	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.5

4.2 Effectiveness, Sustainability and Impact

One area of strength regarding the effectiveness of interventions under the P&B outcomes across all years was the **quality and completeness of outputs** (Criterion 2.1), reflecting successful performance in all of the ILO's strategic priorities. Although still positive overall, results were more variable regarding **progress towards immediate objectives and outcomes** (Criterion 2.2).

Table 4. Median scores by P&B Outcome - Effectiveness, Sustainability and Impact¹⁰

P&B Outcome	No reports	% total	Performance criteria											
			2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10	2.11	2.12
1: More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects	20	18%	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	0.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	2.0
2: Ratification and application of ILS	4	4%	3.0	2.5	1.5	3.5	3.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	0.0
3: Creating and extending social protection floors	9	8%	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
4: Promoting sustainable enterprises	11	10%	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
5: Decent work in the rural economy	6	5%	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	1.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0
6: Formalization of the informal economy	3	3%	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	1.0
7: Promoting safe work and workplace	14	13%	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0

⁹ Numbers correspond to the performance criteria listed in Table 1.

¹⁰ Numbers correspond to the performance criteria listed in Table 1.

compliance including in global supply chains															
8: Protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work	22	20%	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	2.0
9: Fair and effective international labour migration and mobility	3	3%	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
10: Strong and representative employers' and workers' organizations	6	5%	2.5	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.5	3.0	1.5	2.5	0.0	1.0	
A: Effective knowledge management for the promotion of decent work	6	5%	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Multiple Outcomes	8	7%	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	3.0	3.0	

More specifically, areas of consistent successful performance for all outcomes since 2013 were **capacity building** (Criterion 2.4) and **strategic partnerships** (Criterion 2.8). There was also good overall performance and coverage regarding **knowledge development** (Criterion 2.3) and **policy influence** (Criterion 2.6).

The **promotion of ILS** (Criterion 2.5) was successful across most P&B outcomes, aside from Outcomes 1, 4 and 5, revealing areas of missed opportunities. For instance, only one intervention associated with Outcome 4 had a successful rating for this criteria. Interestingly, while the P&B Outcome related to the Ratification and application of ILS (Outcome 2) had a median score of 3, reflecting good performance, results were mixed when individual ratings were examined, with half of interventions rated as Very Successful, while the other half rated as Partly Successful.

Half of P&B Outcomes had good performance related to the **strategic importance of results** (Criterion 2.7), while very low median results were due to poor coverage and/or mixed results. **Inclusion of social dialogue and tripartism** (Criterion 2.9), was another area where a majority of Outcomes obtained good median scores, while low scores were due to limited coverage and poor to mixed performance.

The **ILO's expertise** (Criterion 2.11) **was recognized** in a majority of Outcomes. Median scores for the remaining outcomes were low due to mixed performance results, or strong performance but low coverage of the criterion.

Resource leveraging (Criterion 2.12) scored successfully in half of the Outcomes, while particularly low median scores were obtained due to limited coverage and/or poor to mixed performance.

Mixed median results were also found for **sustainability** of interventions (Criterion 2.10), with half of Outcomes having good results, while the rest had disparities in performance.

4.3 Implementation performance and efficiency of management and resource use

Strong performance for the majority of Outcomes was noted in relation to **cost-efficiency** (Criterion 3.7). **Dissemination of knowledge and information** (Criterion 3.6) was another area of success for many Outcomes.

Table 5. Median scores by P&B Outcome - Implementation performance and efficiency of management and resource use

P&B Outcome	No reports	% total	Performance criteria							
			3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8
1: More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects	20	18%	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.0
2: Ratification and application of ILS	4	4%	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.0	3.0	0.0	2.5
3: Creating and extending social protection floors	9	8%	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
4: Promoting sustainable enterprises	11	10%	2.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0
5: Decent work in the rural economy	6	5%	1.5	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	2.0
6: Formalization of the informal economy	3	3%	1.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	1.0
7: Promoting safe work and workplace compliance including in global supply chains	14	13%	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	2.5
8: Protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work	22	20%	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0
9: Fair and effective international labour migration and mobility	3	3%	0.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0
10: Strong and representative employers' and workers' organizations	6	5%	1.0	1.5	2.5	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
A: Effective knowledge management for the promotion of decent work	6	5%	1.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.5
Multiple Outcomes	8	7%	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	2.0

ILO support to projects (Criterion 3.3) was satisfactory across most Outcomes, while there were variations in results across outcomes for **implementation management** (Criterion 3.2) and **internal ILO coordination** (Criterion 3.4), with positive results for half of Outcomes.

In contrast, median results related to **adequacy of resources** were lower for a majority of Outcomes, sometimes due to incomplete coverage of the criterion, but mainly due to poor or variable performance. One key area of weakness across all Outcomes was **Goal Orientation** (Criterion 3.1), with no Outcome performing adequately. Another weak area was **Monitoring and Reporting** (Criterion 3.5), with only one P&B Outcome obtaining positive results, while the rest had partially successful or heterogeneous performance.

4.4 Trends by P&B Outcome (2013-2019)

This section presents results for individual P&B outcomes, highlighting key areas of strong performance and weaknesses based on median results for the assessment criteria. The P&B outcomes with the highest overall performance are highlighted in *italics*. In several cases, limited coverage of certain criteria in reports led to low median scores, which did not reflect the actual strong performance of interventions when these criteria were addressed; these are noted in the last column.

P&B Outcome	No reports	% total	Strong results	Weak results	
				Overall	Good performance but low coverage
1: More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects	20	18%	Strongest results: causal link between project objectives and DWCP outcomes and CPOs, quality and completeness of outputs, capacity building and the development of strategic partnerships. Good results: progress towards strategic objectives, knowledge development, the strategic importance of results achieved, knowledge dissemination, and cost efficiency.	Pro-poor focus, promotion of ILS and inclusion of social dialogue and tripartism.	
2: Ratification and application of ILS	4	4%	Strongest results: capacity building, Good results: policy influence, development of strategic partnerships, appreciation for the ILO's expertise, knowledge dissemination, and quality and completeness of project outputs.	Goal orientation, monitoring and reporting, validity of design and approach, gender responsive and pro-poor focus	Link to ILO P&B outcomes, link to DWCP outcomes, knowledge development, resource leveraging, cost efficiency.
3: Creating and extending social protection floors	9	8%	Strongest results: link between project objectives and DWCP outcomes, to capacity-building, implementation management and cost efficiency. Good results: adequacy of resources, ILO support to projects, strategic partnerships, policy influence, knowledge development, promotion of ILS, quality and completeness of outputs, and pro-poor focus.	Gender responsive, goal orientation, monitoring and reporting.	Link with P&B outcomes
4: <i>Promoting sustainable enterprises</i>	11	10%	Strongest results: capacity building, development of strategic partnerships, appreciation of ILO's expertise and knowledge dissemination. Good results: link between project objectives and DWCP outcomes, constituent support, validity of project design, quality and completeness of outputs, progress towards strategic objectives, knowledge development, resource leveraging, implementation management, ILO support to projects, and cost efficiency.	Goal orientation, monitoring and reporting and the promotion of ILS.	Link with P&B outcomes and internal ILO coordination.
5: Decent work in the rural economy	6	5%	Strongest results: capacity-building and establishment of strategic partnerships. Good results: constituent support, validity of design, pro-poor focus, gender responsive, quality and completeness of outputs, progress towards strategic objectives, appreciation for the ILO's expertise, the ability to leverage resources, implementation management, and cost efficiency	Link between objectives and P&B outcomes, promotion of ILS, goal orientation, monitoring and reporting, and knowledge dissemination	Link of objectives to DWCPs and CPOs

6: Formalization of the informal economy Projects associated with this outcome performed well overall	3	3%	Strongest results: validity of design, quality and completeness of outputs, progress towards strategic objectives, knowledge development, capacity building, promotion of ILS, policy influence, social dialogue and tripartism, implementation management, and ILO support to projects; link between project objectives and P&B outcomes, the link to DWCP outcomes/CPOs, constituent support, gender responsive, the development of strategic partnerships, acknowledgement of ILO's expertise, and knowledge dissemination.	Pro-poor focus Resource leveraging, monitoring and reporting, adequacy of resources, and goal orientation	Cost efficiency.
7: Promoting safe work and workplace compliance including in global supply chains	14	13%	Strongest results: capacity-building, knowledge development, promotion of ILS, policy influence, strategic importance of results, development of strategic partnerships, quality and completeness of outputs, acknowledgement of ILO expertise, resource leveraging, ILO support to projects, and cost efficiency. Good results: link between project objectives and P&B outcomes	Goal orientation	
8: Protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work	22	20%	The promotion of ILS consistently obtained successful and highly successful ratings, and high performance was also noted for quality and completeness of outputs, progress towards immediate objectives, knowledge management, capacity-building, policy influence, strategic importance of results, development of strategic partnerships, and inclusion of social dialogue and tripartism. Good results: Sustainability, link between project objectives and P&B Outcomes, link to DWCP outcomes/CPOs, constituent support, validity of design	Goal orientation and monitoring and reporting.	Acknowledgement and use of ILO's expertise.
9: Fair and effective international labour migration and mobility	3	3%	Strongest results: link between project objectives and DWCP outcomes, completeness and quality of outputs and progress towards strategic objectives, knowledge development, capacity building, promotion of ILS, policy influence, development of strategic relationships, sustainability, implementation management, and ILO support to projects. Good results: pro-poor focus, gender responsive, inclusion of social dialogue and tripartism, and cost efficiency.	Goal orientation and adequacy of resources	ILO internal coordination
10: Strong and representative employers' and workers' organizations	6	5%	Strongest results: link between project objectives and P&B outcomes. Good results: knowledge development, capacity building, promotion of ILS, policy influence, the development of strategic partnerships, internal ILO coordination, cost efficiency and adequacy of resources.	Goal orientation and monitoring and reporting, Pro-poor focus, inclusion of social dialogue and tripartism, resource leveraging and implementation management	Strategic importance of results achieved and appreciation for ILO's expertise
A: Effective knowledge management for the promotion of decent work	6	5%	Strongest results: knowledge development, promotion of ILS, and strategic importance of results achieved Good results: adequacy of resources	Goal orientation and monitoring and reporting	

Multiple Outcomes	8	7%	Strongest results: link between their objectives and P&B outcomes and links between objectives and DWCP Outcomes and CPOs. Good results: completeness and quality of project outputs, knowledge development, capacity building, promotion of ILS, policy influence, strategic importance of results, development of strategic partnerships, acknowledgement of ILO expertise, resource leveraging, and cost efficiency	Goal orientation, pro-poor focus, progress towards immediate objectives, sustainability, internal ILO coordination, monitoring and reporting and adequacy of resources.	
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5 Areas for further consideration

The decent work effectiveness meta-analyses provided a range of areas for further consideration to promote effectiveness of ILO interventions. This final section highlights recurrent themes.

- ✓ **Involve constituent groups in intervention design and implementation from the onset through participatory social dialogue**, so that ILO projects are responsive to constituents' needs and are designed in a context-appropriate manner. This will promote ownership and foster sustainability.
- ✓ **Introduce or reinforce the use of Theories of Change and RBM frameworks**, including SMART indicators at all levels, the identification of baselines, targets, assumptions and risks, and methods to collect, monitor and analyse data to assess progress. During implementation, evaluability reviews should be conducted. This would improve the validity of design, goal orientation, and monitoring and reporting processes, to better enable the ILO to capture progress made towards project objectives, and identify good practices and recurring challenges.
- ✓ **Evaluation TOR questions and evaluability reviews should address the different criteria used in Effectiveness Reviews**, to increase their coverage in evaluation reports, and thus allow for a deeper understanding of good practices and challenges of ILO interventions. This is especially important to better address and understand progress related to the integration of ILO cross-cutting policy drivers in development cooperation interventions.
- ✓ **More attention should be given to gender equity, disability inclusion, pro-poor focus, social dialogue / tripartism and normative considerations** in both intervention design and implementation.
- ✓ **Ensure that all projects be in line with ILO strategic objectives**, even in the context of joint projects, and that projects build on, or progress towards ratification or implementation of ILS. This will ensure that ILO efforts are consistently targeted towards the promotion of Decent Work, and that its comparative advantage be consolidated.
- ✓ **A strong focus on sustainability aspects and strategic relationship-building should be incorporated at all stages of the project cycle**, to ensure that stakeholders can maintain and build on ILO intervention results.
- ✓ When planning interventions, **a realistic approach should be taken, so that human and financial resources are adequately identified and sourced, and timelines allow for contingency plans and flexibility without compromising results**. This is especially important for projects responding to post-conflict situations, to humanitarian disasters, or those operating in complex situations, where flexibility is often required to address emerging issues during project implementation.
- ✓ When assessing the effectiveness of interventions in cluster or multi-country evaluations, results should be differentiated in the qualitative sections, to indicate the extent of disparities in performance.

- ✓ **In alignment with updated strategic requirements at the ILO and UN levels, include new criteria focusing on coherence, the contribution of ILO's contributions to SDGs, disability inclusion, and the integration of a just transition to environmental sustainability.**
- ✓ **Continue implementing a rolling approach to effectiveness reviews to facilitate access to evaluative information and more agile reporting of results to guide decision-making, improve learning opportunities and for accountability. This, in turn, should lead to increased stakeholder engagement and credibility of evaluations.**

Annex 1: Comparative scores by key performance area

Percentage of Successful and Highly Successful scores by performance criteria and by Effectiveness Review



