



Quick Facts

► Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's strategies and actions for promoting decent work in the rural economy (with a focus on rural employment) (2016-23)



► October 2023

► Description and purpose of the evaluation

This [independent high-level evaluation](#) (HLE) provides insights into the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions promoting decent work in the rural economy (DWRE) from 2016-23. The HLE involves a comprehensive assessment of the efforts made by ILO and includes forward looking considerations and provide findings, lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next ILO Strategic Framework.

The evaluation includes both summative and formative approaches and paid particular attention to the promotion of rural employment, while assessing the role of social dialogue, social protection, and International Labour Standards. In addition, the evaluation took into account ILO's work on cross-cutting issues pertaining to gender equality, empowerment of youth and environmental sustainability. Finally, in line with international good practices, the evaluation examined the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of ILO actions for promoting DWRE.

The HLE aims to provide the ILO's constituents with:

- An **opportunity to learn** what works well and what works less well in the implementation of ILO's strategy for promoting decent work in the rural economy, with a focus on rural employment.
- Exploring the **efficiency gains** with respect to external and internal coherence, including synergies with strategic partners and between different ministries at the country level.
- Exploring the **implications of the changes in the results framework** during the period under review.

► Methodology



The evaluation followed [Eval's high-level evaluation protocol for strategy and policy evaluation](#). Results were derived from various methods:

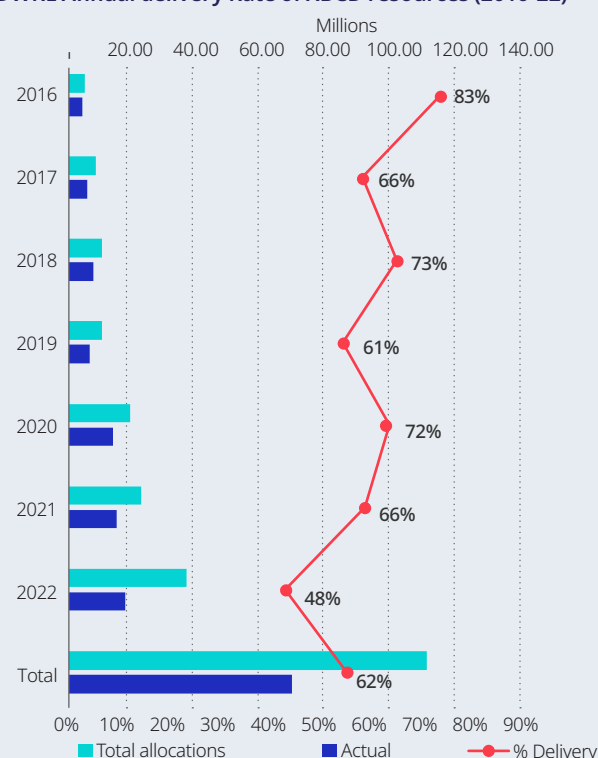
- Comprehensive document review
- 3 Online surveys administered to ILO staff (17% response rate), constituents (39% response rate), and partners (40% response rate)
- Synthesis review of 32 evaluation reports

- 239 interviews were conducted (168 men and 71 women) from various stakeholders
- 5 country case studies (Morocco, Madagascar, Colombia, Lao PDR, and Indonesia)
- 2 light case studies (Jordan and Uzbekistan)
- 2 thematic case studies on national employment policies and partnerships

KEY FINDINGS

- The [ILO's Strategy on DWRE](#) from 2011 has not been fully implemented, monitored or evaluated since its formulation. Moreover, the absence of an organization-wide theory of change and collaboration mechanisms across ILO departments has impacted systemic integration, replication, and upscaling.
- ILO programming focused on employment promotion and social dialogue, not comprehensively addressing other priorities such as social protection and promoting international labour standards.

DWRE Annual delivery Rate of XBCD resources (2016-22)





KEY FINDINGS (CONT'D.)

- The ILO's actions positively impacted the capacities of governments and workers' organizations at the local level. Advocacy support was provided to employers' organizations to promote DWRE.
- Whereas the financial resources available for DWRE has gradually increased, the average annual delivery rate demonstrates that the ILO is not well equipped to fully utilize these resources. The absence of a cohesive resource mobilization strategy resulted in fragmented planning.
- While acknowledging challenges posed by internal and external constraints, ILO was successful in building capacities, policy improvements, and leveraging partnerships. Country-level collaboration resulted in 53 joint interventions, resulting in US\$41 million during 2016-23.
- Gender equality was effectively mainstreamed, but interventions did not always succeed to promote it. While marginalized groups such as refugees, migrants and indigenous communities benefited from programming, disability inclusion was mostly overlooked. There was limited representation of certain groups, such as rural workers and small enterprises.



KEY LESSONS LEARNED



Sustained programming using multifaceted and well-integrated approaches can result in the most positive impact towards promoting DWRE.



The assignment of transversal topics, such as the rural economy, to a particular outcome or output does not adequately present the Organization-wide contribution made towards achievements in such areas of work.



In the context of limited resources and capacities, partnerships with other international agencies can facilitate in the filling of crucial gaps.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The ILO should:

- Review and update the 2011 strategy document in view of the emerging global trends and existing ILO strategies and be augmented by a well-articulated theory of change to promote systemic integration of DWRE across the ILO.
- Strengthen coordination and stewardship of DWRE programming. A review is needed to identify a leading entity within the ILO with the mandate and technical capacity suitably aligned with promoting DWRE.
- Strengthen support for policy development as a transformative means of action for promoting DWRE, and advocate for the implementation of policies and strategies through capacity-building, social dialogue, advocacy and market systems development. Strategies to include rural workers in programme planning must be proactively adopted, such as focus on cooperative development. Continue to extend and strengthen the scope of partnerships to promote DWRE.
- Revamp monitoring and reporting processes of its actions on promoting DWRE. In addition to the P&B results framework, progress on the updated DWRE strategy must be monitored and reviewed regularly.
- Focus programming of DWRE-related actions for sustained impact. Project designs should rely on integrated approaches and focused efforts to be implemented over prolonged periods to address systemic issues of DWRE, while also integrating international labour standards and social protection.

QUOTES

► Voices from constituents

"ILO should continue with more work on promoting decent work in investment projects in rural areas. ILO and partners may need to work closely with sectors that are responsible for promoting domestic and foreign investment."

"The ILO should strive to improve the relevance of promoting Decent Work in the rural economy in areas of new and emerging trends (digitalization, demographic changes, climate change and promoting environmental sustainability, such as green jobs)."

► Voices from ILO staff

"Local farmer's cooperatives are now able to access markets through improved communication with the supply chains."

"Improve the visibility of rural work by making it a higher priority for the organization (including in the P&B) and strengthen the integrated approach to implement of rural work."

