



► Guidance Note 3.4: Evaluation of Capacity Development in ILO Programmes and Projects¹

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This guidance note is part of Pillar 3 ► *Planning and designing evaluations*

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This initial (phase I) guidance note is based on experience with evaluating capacity development throughout the ILO programmes and projects based on existing guidance material and practices on capacity development in ILO. Phase II of the guidance preparation will enhance this version based on broader new ILO guidance on capacity development currently being prepared as part of the GB approved Capacity development Strategy.

1. This guidance note is part of the suite of guidance on the evaluation provided in EVAL's Policy guidelines for results-based evaluation (pillar 3: planning & designing evaluations) and guidance on the evaluation of the ILO's specific mandate and means of action. Future work in this area may include guidance on evaluating policy advice and advocacy; and possibly, on evaluating the impact of knowledge and research.

► 1. INTRODUCTION – WHY EVALUATE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE AND SCOPE

This hands-on guidance aims to provide evaluators with guidance on reviewing the capacity development at all levels as an integral part of the evaluation process and outcome. In doing so, evaluations will provide evaluative evidence assessing the evaluated project or programmes' contribution to ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B) and the SDG Agenda 2030.

This guidance is part of the [ILO Policy guidelines for results-based evaluation](#) and will be accessible through the [interactive electronic platform](#) for evaluation guidance with guidance notes, tools, checklists, protocols and workflows, organized into five thematic pillars for ease of reference. While primarily intended for evaluators, the guidance can also be used by programme and project designers, constituents and partners of ILO involved in capacity development in the areas of work of ILO.

Capacity development is at the core of the ILO's services and support to constituents that the ILO aims to achieve through its Policy Outcomes and Country Programme Outcomes in the ILO Results Framework. [The Social Justice Declaration of 2008](#) pivoted around strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Member States' efforts to reach the ILO's objectives.

The subsequent resolution on advancing [Social Justice through Decent Work in 2016](#) called for the ILO's Strategic Plan's optimal use of ILO means of action and capacity development support to constituents at the system, institutional and individual level. The resolution also called for the measurement and monitoring of the results of such capacity development efforts systematically and coherently.

In 2018, EVAL conducted a [high-level evaluation on the capacity development efforts of the ILO](#). It contained a series of recommendations for the office to strengthen its work on capacity development, including recommendations related to the design, monitoring, and evaluation of capacity development.

In March 2019, the GB approved an [ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development](#) building on the evaluation recommendations, and the office developed an implementation plan in September 2020.

With this guidance note, EVAL responds to the recommendation No 8 calling for evaluations to more explicitly assess capacity development interventions and levels, including at the impact level². This guidance note is the first version of guidance aimed at support evaluation of capacity development within the ILO. Updated guidance will be prepared in line with further institutional development of guidance on capacity development, as called for in the ILO wide strategy for institutional capacity development.

The guidance constitutes a provision of common principles and requirements in the ILO concerning the evaluation of capacity development as part of evaluations at all levels. The guidance can also be used in evaluations with a specific focus on capacity development across programmes and themes. It is likely that the further development and application of this guidance will suggest and require revisions, updating and re-focusing of other

elements of the ILO results based approach including design, monitoring and reporting in order to fully be able to evaluate the capacity development efforts of ILO.

The guidance should be read in conjunction with [ILO Policy Guidelines on evaluation and the associated guidance notes](#).

The Guidance has been prepared in the context of guidance and work of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) on evaluation of capacity development, including its work on National Evaluation Capacity Development.³

1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDANCE

This guidance note is structured in five main sections:

- **Introduction in Section 1** explains why it is important to evaluate capacity development in ILO. It provides the purpose and scope of the guidance and an overview of when, why, who and how to evaluate capacity development in the ILO.
- **Section 2** provides a definition of capacity development (CD) through explaining the three levels and technical and functional dimensions of capacity development evaluation, including capacity development in the ILO Results Framework and in ILO Development cooperation programmes and projects.
- **Section 3** outlines what to consider in the planning and implementing phases of capacity development evaluation such as the foundations for evaluation of capacity development.

2. These would be at the levels of: (a) the medium- and long-term effects of individual training; (b) organizational assessments/diagnosis of strengthening of constituent partners; and (c) policy advocacy and development at national/regional and global levels. This will require the development and inclusion of relevant indicators and measurement frameworks for assessing capacity development in the ILO's projects and programme frameworks

3. See UNEG [Document Library \(uneval.org\)](#) for list of guidance. An UNEG Interest Group on Evaluating Capacity Development (CDIG) has prepared an advanced draft of a guidance document on a Capacity Development Evaluation Framework as of May 2021, to be finalized and published in 2022. This framework has been used in the preparation of this guidance note.

- **Section 4** provides key guidance on how to evaluate capacity development by the three levels and by the evaluation criteria, suggesting key evaluation questions and challenges.
- Finally, **Section 5** addresses the documentation and the use of evaluation of capacity development at the three levels; individual, organizational, and enabling environment.

The guidance includes a **complementary companion**⁴ volume with appendices providing more on evaluation questions for evaluation of CD by evaluation criteria, by the three levels and for the crosscutting technical and function capacities, primarily in support of Section 4 of the main guidance. Further appendixes in the complementary companion volume provide guidance on evaluation questions and issues for evaluation of capacity development in ILO's results framework and for different types of evaluations, including sample evaluation questions; and provides examples of lessons from ILO capacity development evaluations at the policy outcomes, programmes, and project level to illustrate the type of findings that can come from evaluation of capacity development. The complementary companion volume is to be seen as a living document and work in progress that will be revised in any subsequent versions of this guidance.

4. Kindly note, the complementary companion volume is currently [under development](#).

5. The department directors (DDs) and regional directors (RDs) of staff members who manage projects and programmes with a strong capacity development focus take responsibility for ensuring that decentralized evaluation work for capacity development falling under their administrative authority is initiated. Source: ILO, 2020: ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations. 4th edition, page 10.

1.3 EVALUATION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: WHY, WHEN, WHO AND HOW?

This section outlines why to assess capacity, when to do it, who should do it, and how it should be done.

Why

Based on the definition of capacity development in the ILO, the rationale for evaluating capacity development is to assess results in at the individual level for targets groups in ILO interventions, institutional strengthening, and enabling environment. The ILO needs to understand changes at those levels, why and how those changes came about, or not. ILO's strategy for capacity development emphasizes that "capacity development is one of the core means of action to achieve decent work and further social justice." As such, evaluation of capacity development is of utmost importance, contributing to organisational learning and accountability.

When

As for other evaluations in the ILO, the consideration of evaluation can take place at critical stages of an intervention: at the design stage (ex-ante), at mid-term of the implementation, at the end of the intervention as a final evaluation, or some years after the implementation is finished (ex-post). Institutionally, evaluation of capacity development is a integral and continuous process, part of the work of ILO to support capacity development of constituents.

Who

Project and programme evaluations are decentralized since their resourcing is primarily the responsibility of departments and regions, with evaluation management provided by certified evaluation managers and EVAL providing oversight and quality control.

Decentralized evaluations may include thematic evaluations, project evaluations, RBSA evaluations, impact evaluations, and joint evaluations, as well as all forms of internal evaluations, including self-evaluations⁵. Capacity development is a key special concern across all levels of intervention, from project to programme to ILO wide level and within all policy outcomes and themes.

The International Training Centre (ITC) in Turin as the training arm of the ILO has a primary focus on capacity development. ITC's function in providing learning and accountability for capacity development in the ILO is highly complementary to centralized and decentralized evaluations in the ILO. As ITC is often delivering capacity development, particularly training and learning activities, in ILO programmes and projects, evaluation of capacity development will need to consider the work of ITC. This would include a focus on how ITC is providing capacity development that is aligned and supports the ILO work with constituents and how it covers the three levels of capacity development. Further development of relevant guidance is needed in this area.

How

There are several factors that determine the extent to which an evaluation should focus on CD. These include: the weight of capacity development elements in a project; their relevance and contribution to achievement of project objectives; their inclusion in the Theory of Change and the results framework; and the availability of reporting and monitoring data. The evaluation of capacity development activities of programmes and projects should be reflected in the chosen methodology for the evaluation. Certain types of evaluation such as clustered evaluation, thematic evaluation and programme evaluations might lend itself more to evaluation of CD.

► 2. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN ILO

The  [ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development](#) adopted in 2019 includes a definition of capacity development and description of the levels and types of capacities to be developed in ILO. Further work as part of the implementation of the strategy includes ILO Guidance on Capacity development that will provide further on the ILO approach to CD, core elements for CD of constituents, good practices and results in CD, the role of ITC in delivering CD, process of CD in ILO, and how to ensure sustainability of CD in ILO.

The following is based on the ILO-wide strategy. It is expected that the planned ILO wide guidance on capacity development will provide further definitions and details that can inform this guidance.

2.1. DEFINITION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN ILO

The ILO defines capacity development as follows:⁶



A process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time.

The ILO's role in capacity development efforts is to “help, wherever necessary, the institutional capacity of member States, as well as representative organizations of employers and workers, to facilitate meaningful and coherent social policy and sustainable development.”⁷ Capacity development is hence understood as an endogenous process in which the role of the Office is that of a supporter led by its constituents' priorities and needs⁸.

Capacity development is a major means of action of ILO, focusing on capacity of constituents to fulfil their mandate and capacity required for the role of constituent in the different

policy areas. The ILO Results Framework from Strategic Policy to Programme and Budget to Decent Work Programmes and specific development cooperation programmes and projects, include capacity development components, outcomes, and outputs, both as standalone outcome and in support of other outcomes and results.

2.2. LEVELS OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN ILO

The ILO distinguishes three mutually reinforcing and interdependent levels of capacity development: **individual, organizational, and resulting from the enabling environment**⁹.

The first means increasing the skills and abilities of individuals, including both direct recipients and beneficiaries from ILO work; the second focuses on increasing the capacity of organizations to fulfil their mandates; and the third involves improvements in policies, legislation, regulations, labour market institutions, and societal systems.

Traditionally, capacity development efforts have focused on the individual and organizational levels. Recently, however, capacity development practitioners are increasingly recognizing the importance of working at the system and network levels to bring multiple competencies to work on complex challenges¹⁰, as in the case of the ILO.

2.3. TECHNICAL AND FUNCTION CAPACITIES

It is also possible to distinguish between **technical and functional capacities at all three levels**.

Technical capacities relate, for example, to fields such as employment, entrepreneurship, social security, occupational safety and health, and normative labour standards that stem from the ILO's supervisory mechanisms.

6. GB.317/POL/6. This definition is largely consistent with the broadly accepted concept defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Development Assistance Committee (DAC), 2006) and used by the UN Development System (high-level evaluation (HLE), 2018).

7. ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008.

8. GB.335/INS/9

9. Ibid, page 1

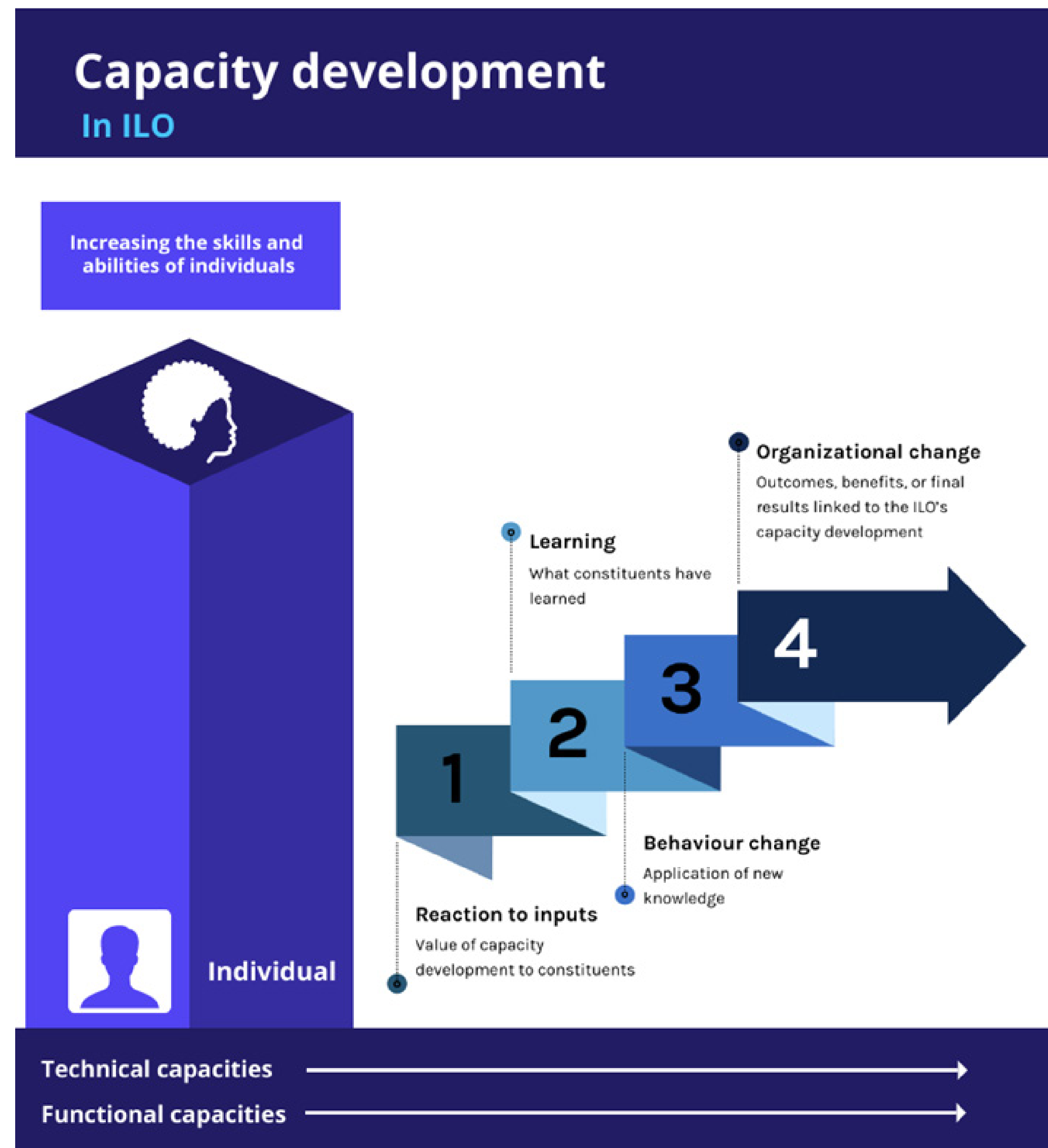
10. Better Evaluation, undated: [Evaluating Capacity Development](#).

Examples of **functional capacities** would include leadership, financial management, management of national budgets, and partnership and relationship building. Technical and functional capacity improvements are needed to ensure the realization of the decent work agenda and contribution to the attainment of the SDGs.

Therefore, the institutional capacity development strategy must focus on coordinated action at all three levels through a dynamic cycle of interventions based on constituents' evolving needs. This requires continuous and participatory analysis of the results, with information fed back into the planning of new programmes and activities¹¹.

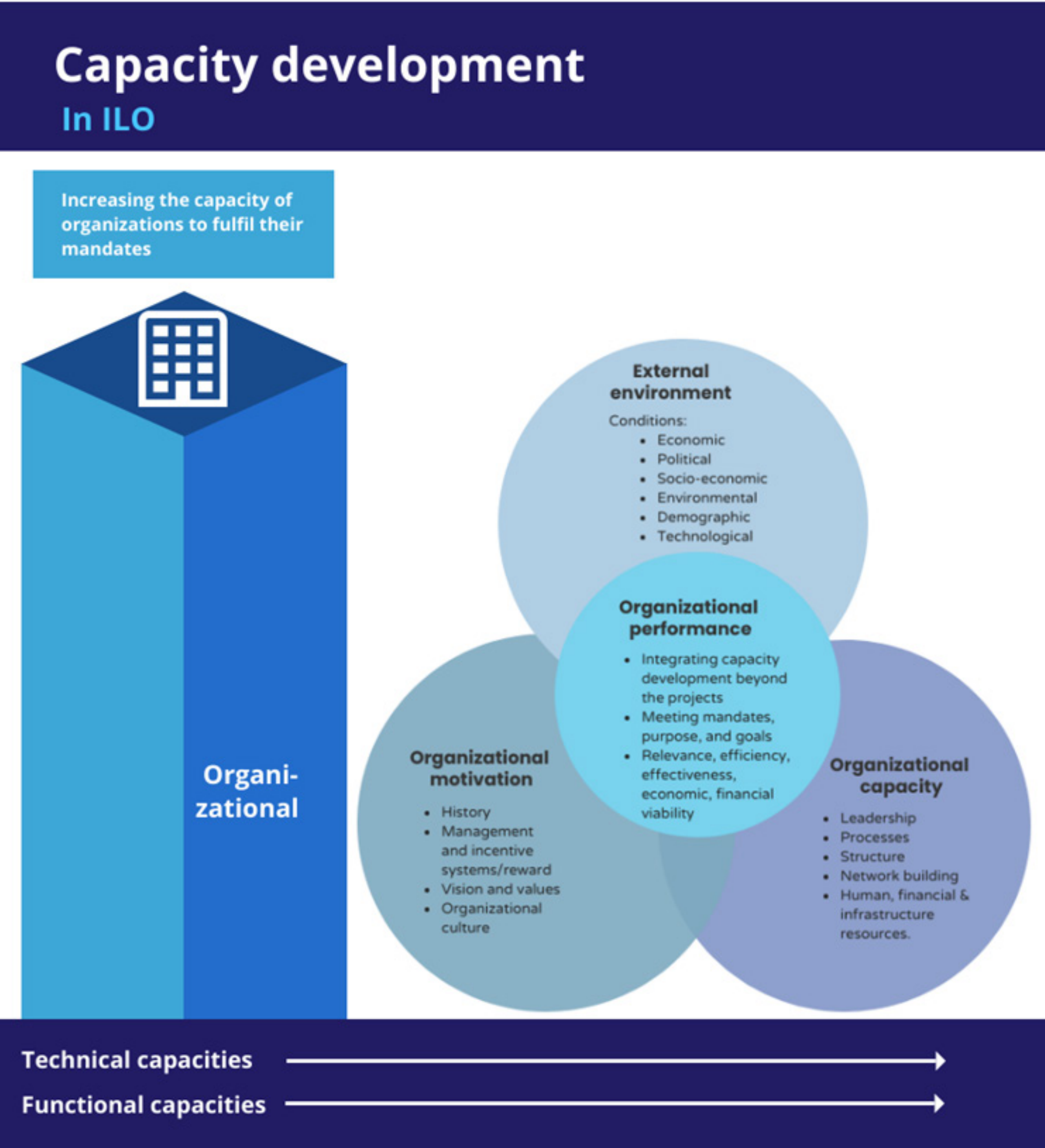
The following diagrams illustrate the levels and the technical and function capacities with further details in Appendix 2 on "Evaluating capacity development at different levels" in the complementary companion volume. It is expected that the ILO wide guidance on capacity development will expand on this, including on the links between the levels and how theories of change, strategies and interventions will work with these links.

Component for evaluating capacity development at Individual level



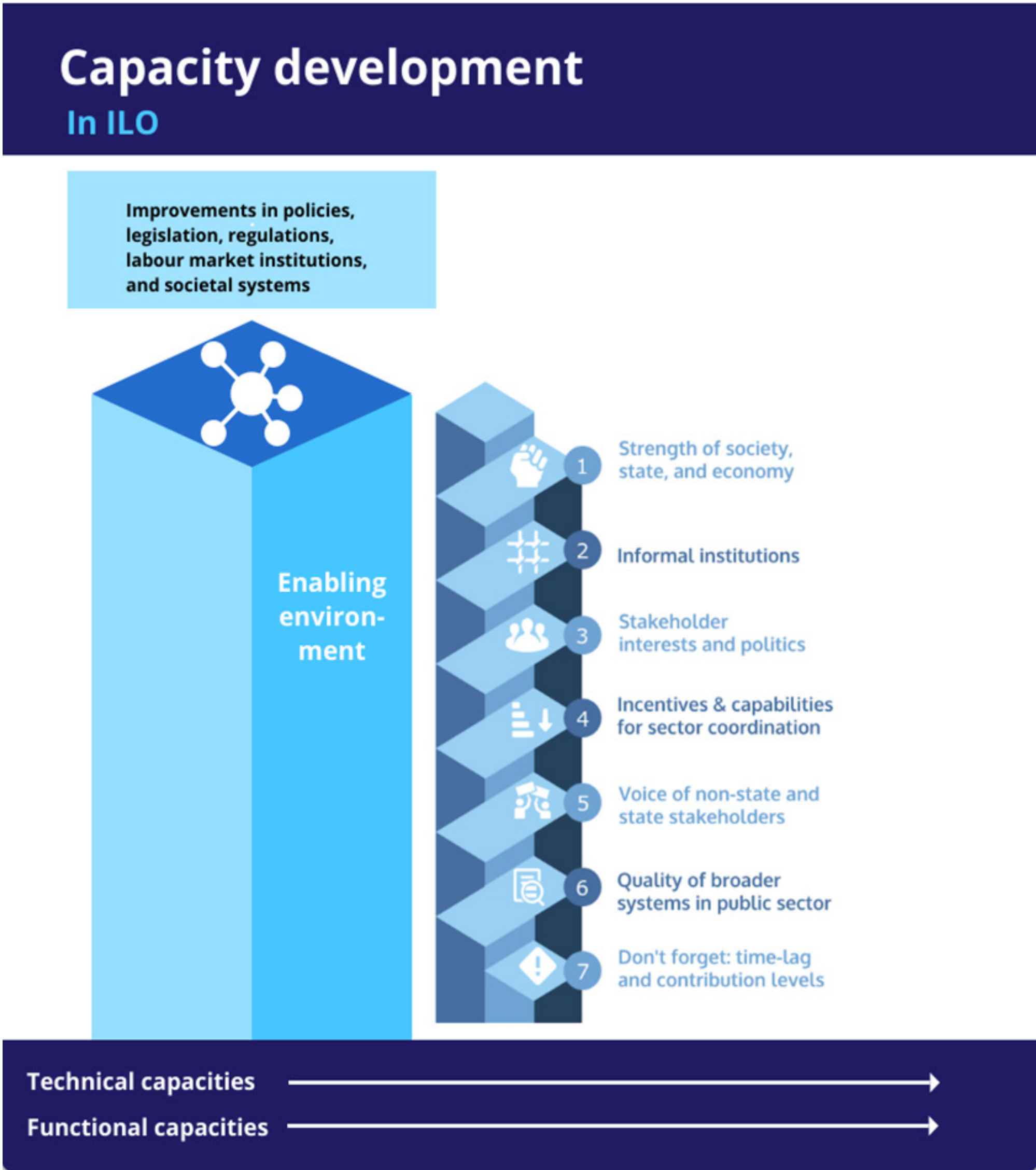
11. GB.335/INS/9, pages 1 - 2

Component for evaluating capacity development at Organisational level



Source: IDCR/IADB, 2020, adapted

Component for evaluating capacity development at Enabling Environment level



Source: IDCR/IADB, 2020, adapted

► 3. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development activities and outcomes are in most cases integral to the design and strategy of results framework at the institutional, policy, programmes and projects. Planning and implementation of capacity development is part of the normal process for planning and implementing evaluations at all levels and all types. This includes centralised evaluations at corporate institutional high-level, such as policy outcomes, institutional strategics, Decent Work Country Programmes and other strategic level frameworks and programmes, and decentralized evaluation of development cooperation programme or project at the global, inter-regional, regional and country. Policy, procedures and standards for such evaluation should therefore apply when evaluating capacity development dimensions of ILO work, with the procedures and standards adjusted as required.

3.1 BASIS FOR EVALUATION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Consideration of evaluation of capacity development starts by looking at capacity development in the design of interventions. Good practice shows that the main points of inquiry for evaluating the implementation of capacity development at the three levels involves reviewing the context analysis, intended to be carried out as part of the design (which was also intended to contribute to the baseline for assessing progress and impact) and consider questions (phased here as the questions as part of assessing the context analysis during the evaluation), such as:

- To what end did we need to develop this capacity? What was its purpose?
- Whose capacities needed to be developed ? Which groups or individuals need to be empowered? And what level of capacity development?
- What kinds of capacities needed to be developed to achieve the broader development objectives?
- Was a diagnosis of the capacities of the constituents, partners and/or counterparts included in the programme/project conception and design stage?
- Is the Theory of Change/results chain for the programme/project clearly specifying which are the capacity development results/ outputs, how they are interconnected/linked, what others results in the programmes it enables or contributes to achieve, including higher levels?

The projects' or programmes' Theory of Change¹², log frames, and results frameworks¹³ should serve to specify the capacity development outcomes expected within the scope of the programme and project, including strategic contribution, at the three mutually reinforcing and interdependent levels of capacity development and technical and functional capacities at all three levels, as outlined in section 2.

12. ILO, 2021: [ILO EVAL's Guidance note 1.1 on Project design and theory of change](#)

13. ILO, 2020: [ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation, page 29](#)

Indicators related to capacity development in line with the Theory of Change and results framework should be development with appropriate means of verification. Measuring implementation of CD can require specific data collection process, geared to the different levels of capacity development to enable evaluation to take place. At such the pre-post assessment of changes in enabling policy environment, in institutional capacity and operations and in capability and performance of individual, such as through programmes is crucial. In this context, experience shows that the search for quantifiable indicators tends to lead to a focus on easily measured indicators. In contrast, indicators relating to changes in ownership, leadership, and inclusiveness resulting from capacity developments are often not defined in the monitoring and evaluation systems. The latter includes ILO interventions where capacity development is one among several components.

When reconstructing the Theory of Change specifically for the evaluation, if this is needed, it is important to review whether and how CD at the different levels is included as appropriate. Gender, disability inclusion and other diversity concerns should be fully addressed.

Key to evaluation of capacity development with programmes/ project is to determine relevant evaluation questions for the different levels and forms of capacities, and in the context of the contribution of capacity development to the Theory of Change and results framework of the programme/project. Evaluation questions specific to capacity development complement the standard evaluation questions suggested in ILO EVAL guidance on writing the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR). Section 4 in this guidance note and the complementary companion volume provide ample guidance for evaluation questions at the levels of CD and the type of capacities. The complementary companion volume lists further related evaluation questions

that can be used for ILO programmes, projects, country offices, regional offices, DWTs, Departments, and constituents unless otherwise indicated. Most questions apply to the individual, organizational, and enabling environment level, including any differences.

Any evaluability assessment carried out should fully include capacity development in the scope of review, and if needed provide recommendations related to this (see section 3.3). The monitoring process and systems should be designed and implemented to provide information on the progress and results of capacity development.

Opportunities for detailed evaluation focus on the CD components of a programme or project should be considered if the CD component is significant or of an innovative nature. For instance, a detailed sub-study could be done within an expanded evaluation. This would involve some of the specific methodologies for evaluating CD – e.g., training surveys, tracer studies, organizational development analysis etc. This can also be used for evaluations spherically of capacity development focused interventions (programmes/projects). Specific approaches to evaluation of capacity development at the different levels of ILO’s results framework and different types of evaluation are needed (see Section 4 and appendix 2 in the complementary volume)

Box 1 provides some insights into lessons for evaluation of capacity development.

14. ILO, 2018: An independent evaluation of ILO’s capacity development efforts 2010–2017, page 1.

Box 1 Some insights into lessons on evaluation of capacity development at the individual, organizational, and enabling environment level:

Timely and planned. Evaluation works best when requirements are incorporated from the beginning of the design of a capacity-developing effort. When this is done, assessment and data collection can be linked, creating an organic connection between the intervention, evaluation, learning, and change.

Stakeholder-based. If the question is the effectiveness of a capacity-developing intervention, then those for whom the intervention is intended should be included in shaping what defines effectiveness (outcomes), how effectiveness might be shown (indicators), and methods for measuring it (tools).

Assessment-based. Capacity, by definition, is about “having something.” It is critical to perform an initial assessment of the organization to collect baseline information from which change can be measured. This assessment could be undertaken by using pre-course questionnaires serving as a baseline.

Contextualized. Many influencing factors can affect the success of a capacity-developing intervention. The evaluation must address the socio-economic and political context in which capacity development occurs and internal issues such as funding support and staff retention.

Customized. The evaluation process should be customized based on the stakeholder-defined desired changes in capacities that are to be measured (through the assessment) and the context in which capacity development occurs.

Learning-based. The ultimate purpose of evaluation should be focused on continuous learning and practices that evolve organizations toward greater effectiveness. It may be essential to distinguish the primary motivation for evaluation—for instance, programme improvement and organizational learning instead of seeking or making grants.

3.2 EVALUABILITY FOR EVALUATION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The development of constituents’ capacity is at the heart of much of the ILO’s activities¹⁴. As such, capacity development figures in most of the ILO’s evaluations. However, the question arises whether to take a specific capacity development evaluation focus. The evaluability of capacity development could be where the “enabling” or “conducive conditions” for evaluating capacity development are given. For example, capacity assessment as the basis for intervention design (baseline) and then later how to use any such capacity assessment for further analysis.

The following factors can help in determining whether to use a specific capacity development lens in the evaluation of a programme or project:

- **Weight** of capacity development elements in the development cooperation initiative.
- **Relevance:** Capacity gaps as primary factors to address development needs. For example, through needs assessment of existing capacities before the ILO intervention.
- **Planning framework:** Availability of fully-fledged results framework (indicators, baselines, milestones, targets) and Theory of Change to document how capacity development

addresses capacity gaps at individual or organizational level or in the enabling environment.

- **Data:** Availability of reporting and monitoring data, including stakeholder contact lists.

If the above preconditions are present, then an evaluation of capacity development may be necessary and feasible as part of the planned evaluation.

This will require the development and inclusion of relevant indicators and measurement frameworks for assessing capacity development in the ILO's projects and programme frameworks.

These pre-conditions are in most cases not likely to be sufficiently present; an assessment has to be made on how an evaluation can still mainstream these.

Evaluability of CD should be an integral part of evaluability assessment carried out for the project but can also be done separately.

3.3 EVALUATION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT BY TYPE OF EVALUATION

Several types of evaluations are used in ILO and this section provides some key points on the evaluation of capacity development within the specific types. The section should be read in conjunction with section 4 on Evaluation of capacity development at the three CD levels and by evaluation criteria.

Policy outcomes

The evaluation of capacity development at the level of policy outcomes entails a high-level strategic focus. Entry points for the evaluation are issues concerning the specific definition of the outcomes, their measurability, and tangibility. The evaluation also addresses the relevance of the outcomes to the overall development goals and the targeting of change processes.

DWCP and ILO programmes

In the context of medium to longer-term interventions, often under DWCPs or ILO programmes, a specific range of entry points for inquiry enables evaluators to assess capacity development.

The evaluation focus at the programme level comprises the support to national capacity development strategies, systems, and institutions. The latter includes national or local training institutes for continued training and learning support. Other entry points concern changes in management culture, for example, through leadership, coaching, or mentoring.

The evaluation also focuses on evidence of the policies, reforms, and investments that strengthened and retained national or local capacities.

Finally, the programme-level capacity development evaluation can inquire about the programme's integration into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) at the country level and its contribution to SDG tracking and coordination as related to capacity development.

Thematic evaluations

The main purpose of thematic evaluations is to develop cross-cutting lessons, including success stories to innovate and feed into departmental/regional learning on specific technical interventions and strategies. As such, the cross-cutting component of capacity development is well suited to figure in thematic evaluations, given its importance for implementing the ILO's mandate.

Scoping is the first element when designing thematic evaluations, requiring extra attention to ensure that all projects and programmes relevant to the theme are included in the study. "The scope, of course, is the boundaries around the object of evaluation. Boundaries can be delimited by time, geography, structure, or sequence. For example, an evaluation could study aspects of the project during certain years or in a specific location"¹⁵. In the context of capacity development evaluation, assessment aspects could comprise a common capacity development component across a specific time or geography focusing on the individual, organizational and enabling environment level.

Development cooperation projects

In ILO development cooperation projects, evaluations can question issues concerning institutional arrangements for project delivery, monetary and non-monetary incentive systems for the public service, and the project's support for transparent and fast-acting aid management and procurement systems.

15. [ILO, 2020: ILO EVAL's Guidance Note 2.4 on Thematic Evaluations](#)

The creation of local capacities, including strengthened public-private partnerships to improve service delivery, is another entry point for evaluation, including approaches for capacity assessment. The evaluation can also address support of inter-ministerial coordination and response mechanisms to address the national response and results concerning quick knowledge access and technical expertise.

Impact Evaluations

In ILO impact evaluations are currently done primarily for knowledge building on effective policy interventions that ILO can promote and support implementation of in particular context. The expected impact (areas of impact) at the higher and broader level is therefore focussed on world of work outcomes and fundamental changes, for ultimate beneficiaries. Assessing the impact of capacity development is therefore how capacity development outcomes at the various levels have supported and can be attributed to the broader outcomes within impact areas. It is therefore

even more important to have capacity development clearly included in the Theory of Change that is behind the policy intervention to be subject to impact evaluation. Identifying indicators and definitions of effect are therefore crucial. Impact evaluations of capacity development itself as the final outcome provides challenges of measurement and attribution similar to impact evaluations of other more contributing outcome and activities such as awareness raising and governance. While some impact evaluations have looked at capacity development as the intervention leading to effect or impact, these are rare for the reasons above. If impact evaluation with capacity development as the main area of impact under evaluation is planned, appropriate technical expertise and advice should be sought. Synthesis reviews that looks particularly at the capacity development dimension as covered in evaluations is a form of evaluative activity that can generate useful lessons learned and findings on the contribution of capacity development to world of work outcomes.

3.4 EVALUATION TOOLS AND PROCESSES FOR EVALUATION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

In practical terms, capacity development evaluation can be undertaken through key stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions, case studies, or surveys. The key stakeholder interviews allow addressing a more comprehensive range of questions while the focus group discussions are well suited to discuss a few issues in more detail, aiming to capture the diverse views of a larger group of stakeholders and how their capacities have changed. Surveys are particularly suited to capture quantitative data, for example, on stakeholder perceptions about capacity development results of constituents.

Various forms for baseline (pre-intervention) assessments should be used at the design and implementation stage to determine the specific status for the different levels and forms of capacity that the project will address. This should be followed by endline assessments (post intervention) of the same levels and forms of capacity as for the baseline. The endline assessment can either be integrated into the monitoring system of the programme or project, or incorporated into specific evaluation tools designed to assess capacity development. The most common method is pre-post assessment, especially for measuring changes in the capacity of constituents before and after training courses. This allows for the evaluation of individual capacity development outcomes, where additional testing tools may be necessary to track learning results.

The ILO's evaluation policy guidelines and, more specifically, guidance note 4.3¹⁶ specify further data collection methods. The guidance informs about the choices concerning the methodology, their strengths and weaknesses, planning issues for data collection, resource implications, and the validity and reliability of data collection methods. The guidance

16. [ILO, 2020: ILO EVAL's Guidance Note 4.3 on Data Collection Methods](#)

note contains a valuable checklist to validate evaluation methodologies and a data collection planning matrix, which are readily applicable to the evaluation of capacity development.

► 4. EVALUATION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE THREE CD LEVELS AND BY EVALUATION CRITERIA

This section presents a practical approach to evaluating capacity development at the individual, organizational, and enabling environment level, indicating the issues on which to focus within the evaluation criteria. It covers capacity development in the validity of intervention design, gender, and the evaluation criteria for relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability, and impact of capacity development. This supports the design, planning, and implementation of the evaluation of capacity development. The following sub-sections presents tables with suggested sample evaluation questions, applicable to different levels within each criteria. Annex 1 in the complementary companion lists more relevant evaluation questions grouped by evaluation criteria and will be revised as further experience is gained with evaluation of capacity development.

4.1. FOCUS ON THE ROLE OF CONSTITUENTS

When evaluating capacity development, the role of constituents is the primary evaluation focus, as in other ILO evaluations. Constituents' roles in the consultation process, any capacity needs assessments, context analysis, or capacity mappings should be addressed. The early engagement of constituents will

influence their ownership of the intervention and, ultimately, the sustainability of the capacities developed. Hence evaluating the constituents' roles in the design process of capacity development is vital, as outlined in the ILO's policy guidelines for results-based evaluation¹⁷. This should involve evaluating the extent to which the views and priorities of constituents regarding projects or programmes were considered during the design phase, in order to assess their capacity gaps that need to be addressed to achieve the project or programme objectives.

Capacity development level	Sample evaluation question
Individual/organisational / enabling environment	To what extent were constituents engaged in preliminary consultations concerning capacity development needs, with a commitment to achieve the objectives?

4.2. EVALUATING DESIGN OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The evaluation of the design of capacity development addresses issues of baseline data, the definition of success measures such as performance indicators, annual milestones or final targets. Other design aspects comprise the availability of a theory of change, a log frame or other logical model, a results framework and clarifications in the roles and responsibilities of capacity development monitoring and reporting functions. All those elements ultimately determine the evaluability of the intervention.

Beyond the standard M&E elements of the capacity development intervention, design elements include the intervention's governance structure and implementation arrangements, including staffing.

From a gender perspective, design aspects include gender analysis, gender-specific indicators, goals and objectives, and gender-disaggregated data.

The table below lists sample evaluation questions, considering their applicability for the capacity development levels.

Capacity development level	Sample evaluation question
Individual/organisational	To what extent did the implementers collect baseline data or use existing baselines to measure constituents' capacities changes?
Individual/organisational / enabling environment	To what extent did the ILO clearly define expected improvements to measure the impact of capacity development results?

4.3. EVALUATING RELEVANCE OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

When evaluating the implementation of capacity development, the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria used by EVAL apply: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact.

The evaluation should focus on analysing power equations amongst constituents, issues of constituents' fragmentation, and considerations of uneven existing capacities between constituents to evaluate the capacity development component's relevance. Those aspects influence the relevance of implementing capacity development interventions and require consideration in the intervention design. The table below contains sample relevance questions applicable to all three capacity development levels.

17. ILO, 2020: [ILO policy guidelines for evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations](#), 4th edition , page 30

Capacity development level	Sample evaluation question
Individual/organisational / enabling environment	To what extent did the implementers analyse and consider the varied capacities of individuals, employers' and workers' organizations and the enabling environment?
	To what extent did the capacity development change process, results chain and assumption or risk address the required capacity development changes?

4.4. EVALUATING COHERENCE OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

ILO capacity development should be aligned with relevant national policies and contribute to national programs, such as employment, operational health, and safety or labour standards. Stand-alone interventions should be avoided, as integration into national frameworks, including budgets, is less likely once the ILO intervention finishes. The evaluation focuses on the capacity development's alignment to the broader national frameworks, systems, and institutions. For example, capacity development in employment intense approaches such as road construction should be implemented in close cooperation with the national Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institution. Coherence should also consider the multiplicity of ILO programmes/projects that might be related to a specific intervention.

Capacity development level	Sample evaluation question
Enabling environment	To what extent was the capacity development component aligned to the national policy framework on operational health and safety?
Organisational	To what extent did the ILO orient the capacity development component to the mandate of the relevant national institution?
Individual	To what extent did the ILO consider other capacity development initiatives for the individual?

4.5. EVALUATING EFFICIENCY OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Several aspects influence the efficiency of implementing capacity development, i.e., the optimal use of resources to achieve results. Those aspects include the timeliness of project staff's recruitment, compliance with human resource planning, and continuity of staff engagement, for example, the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) or trainers.

Experience shows that changes of a CTAs are rather disruptive, particularly in shorter-term interventions which ultimately affect the efficiency of capacity development delivery. Two sample evaluation questions sample evaluation question relevant for all three capacity development levels is outlined below.

Capacity development level	Sample evaluation question
Individual/organisational / enabling environment	To what extent was continuity of personnel responsible for managing or coordinating capacity development ensured?
	Has the improvement in capability and performance justified the investment/cost of developing the capacity ?

4.6 EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The evaluation of capacity development's effectiveness enquires about changes in constituent's knowledge, skills, and practices, the applicability of new knowledge, and the interventions reach to influence institutional change.

ILO capacity development activities combined with concrete activities such as drafting codes or decrees, where the target participants could use their learnings, tend to influence the applicability of new learning. The table below highlights sample evaluation questions with pertinence for the three capacity development levels.

Capacity development level	Sample evaluation question
Individual	To what extent did the constituents display improvements in capacities (increased knowledge, skills, and practices)?
Organisational	To what extent did the ILO capacity development reach sufficient constituents to enable institutional change?
Individual/ Organisation/ Enabling environment	To what extent did the ILO deliver on its capacity development plan?
	Did the capacity developed reinforce the ability of constituents to use the results of the programme/project?

4.7 EVALUATING IMPACT OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development tends to impact constituents differently (The impact of CD is related to systemic changes in constituents' organizational design & culture, policies & processes, and budgets). Hence this section provides more detail than the previous ones with specific information on governments and employers' and workers' organizations.

Governments

When evaluating the impact of capacity development on governments, the evaluators could inquire about improving organizational capacities or procedures, changes in internal cooperation within the Government, and other tripartite constituents. Changes in the Government’s role in the tripartite dialogue include facilitating informal or institutionalised social dialogue processes, an active role in promoting consensus building, and democratic involvement among the main stakeholders in the world of work.

Evaluators need to be aware that social dialogue may consist of bipartite relations only between labour and management (or trade unions and employers’ organizations), without direct government involvement¹⁸.

Other lines of enquiry comprise legal or policy reform, the implementation of related plans or programs, and the Government’s promotion of inclusion issues.

Employers’ and workers’ organizations

The evaluation of capacity development impact on employers’ and workers’ organisations addresses, for example, changes in the awareness and knowledge on relevant technical and policy issues within ILO’s mandate.

Other impact areas comprise changed capacities and skills to provide quality and informed inputs during policy discussions or negotiations. Examples comprise negotiations around wages, collective bargaining agreements, productivity, skills

needs, formalisation, supply chains and working conditions. Those changes in capacities and skills often relate to impact at the individual level but linked to institutional level capabilities.

On the organizational side, the impact can show in the unification of chapters of employers’ and workers’ organizations, increased membership in under-reached sectors, increased resources, or better organizational practices for adequate representation. The table below highlights some sample evaluation questions by capacity development level.

Capacity development level	Sample evaluation question
Individual	To what extent has ILO capacity development of employers’ organizations (EO) and workers’ organizations (WO) resulted in participants’ increased awareness and knowledge on international labour standards?
Organisational	To what extent has ILO capacity development of employers’ organizations (EO) and workers’ organizations (WO) resulted in better organizational practices for effective representation? To what extent has capacity development lead to enhanced governance and management of the organisation?
Enabling environment	To what extent has ILO capacity development of constituents resulted in legal or policy reforms, such as through influencing the policy environment?

4.8 EVALUATING SUSTAINABILITY OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

To address the sustainability aspects of capacity development, the evaluation can assess a sustainability plan, outreach, or exit strategy. Ownership can be evaluated when enquiring about the degree of constituents’ involvement in the design, vetting, and implementation of the capacity development plan.

Specifically for the improved reach and sustainability of capacity building, employers’ organizations, workers’ organizations, or the Government might have created a pool of trainers, for example, as part of a training of trainers approach of the ILO intervention. For an evaluation, this is another dimension worth addressing. The same applies to institutionalising such structures and the alignment to existing processes. Please see the table below for a sample evaluation question.

Capacity development level	Sample evaluation question
Individual/ Organisation/ Enabling environment	To what extent did constituents’ use the developed capacity to further implement relevant individual, organisational and policy level initiatives, including further capacity development initiatives?

4.9 EVALUATING CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES OR DRIVERS IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The ILO policy guidance for results-based evaluation (2020)¹⁹ specifies ILO’s cross-cutting priorities or drivers, including gender equality and non-discrimination, promoting standards/ normative processes, and tripartite processes/social dialogue.

18. <https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm>%20%20a

19. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_571339.pdf

Gender equality

Gender equality issues concern the design of capacity development, gender imbalances within Government, employers', and workers' organisations and how those were addressed, and to what results. Gender imbalances and gender equality concerns can be evaluated within the organizations' setup, including management structures.

At the organizational level, the evaluation can also enquire about changes in women's capacities in constituents' organizations, why and how those changes came about (or not).

Normative context, including labour standards

Based on the ILO Guidance Note 3.2: [“Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO’s normative and tripartite mandate”](#) (2020)²⁰, the normative context can be embedded across evaluation criteria, including the evaluation of capacity development. The box below provides some examples.

Relevance for stakeholders: The evaluation should assess to what degree capacity development activities, outputs and objectives are consistent with instructions in relevant normative instrument where they have been formally embraced through ratification or expressions of endorsement by stakeholders

Effectiveness: Unintended effects of capacity development that are consistent – as well as those that are inconsistent – with normative context should be a measured part of the effectiveness of an intervention.

Efficiency: Following a normative framework in providing capacity development support can have efficiency effects by adding or reducing result producing tasks that might otherwise not be apparent.

Sustainability: capacity development results can be sustained by embedding them in national laws and/or policies, thereby integrating relevant international standards into national standards.

Social dialogue and tripartite approach

When evaluating the relevance of capacity development in the context of social dialogue, the evaluation assesses, for example, the degree to which intervention activities, outputs, and objectives flow directly from – or are at least consistent with – agreements reached or consensus apparent in social dialogue. In fact, social dialogue should be considered in assessing the effectiveness of a capacity development intervention in achieving results. It should also be considered where a change in social dialogue practice, for example, through enhanced bargaining capacities, is a measure of intervention effectiveness. Social dialogue can help perpetuate or defeat the changes brought about by capacity development, and the sustainability of capacity development should be evaluated accordingly.

20. ILO (2020): Guidance Note 3.2: “Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO’s normative and tripartite mandate”

► 5. DOCUMENTING AND USE OF EVALUATIONS OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The ILO's policy guidelines for results-based evaluation (2020), page 39, states that “one of the purposes of evaluation in the ILO is to promote organizational learning. Evaluations are expected to generate lessons that can be applied elsewhere to improve programme/project performance or impact. Each ILO evaluation report should contain lessons learned, which summarize knowledge or understanding gained from experience related to the intervention under evaluation”. The same applies to the evaluation of capacity development components.

The use of evaluative information on capacity development is part of the use of any evaluative information from evaluations of ILO's results framework, programmes and projects. Findings, recommendations, lessons learned, and good practices are as such documented and used for other areas of knowledge and work. Recommendations are followed up on and reported on as for the type of evaluations.

While there are challenges in identifying capacity development-specific elements in the evaluation, it is worth documenting identified elements to use in evaluation. As capacity development is an integral part of many ILO interventions, it is useful to think of the identification and documentation of capacity development related findings in line with the three

capacity development levels: individual, organizational and enabling environment; and in line with the technical and function capacity. This would enable more systematic use across ILO for synthesis review and both specific and broader organisational learning.

The clearer the definition of capacity development and the expected results at the different levels, for the different type of capacities (function and technical), for the different type of constituents and other stakeholders, and how capacity development is integrated into thematic and policy area interventions and strategies, the more evaluation question and focus can be developed and applied, leading to more systematic organizational learning on capacity development.

When analysing lessons learned, the evaluators should identify strengths and weaknesses of interventions' capacity development component to improve the quality of delivery. Besides, lessons learned should contribute to sharing innovative responses to potential challenges and allow practitioners to reuse lessons from previous experience in designing future capacity development components.

A lesson learned may become an “emerging good practice” when the evaluators consider the potential for replication or up-scaling to other ILO projects.

The literature provides rich evidence of lessons and good practices concerning the evaluation of capacity development,

which is also valuable for evaluations more generally.

As stated in section 4 of this guidance, several factors determine the utility of focusing on evaluating capacity development. Those include the i) weight of the capacity development component in the overall intervention, for example, in terms of resource allocations; ii) the relevance of the capacity development component; iii) robust results and planning framework; iv) data availability, for example, stakeholder contact lists; v) conducive organizational culture and incentive systems of constituents for evaluations at the institutional levels; and political support and momentum at the enabling environment when evaluating the latter.

Elements of evaluating capacity development at high-level ILO evaluations can complement other evaluation foci, given the significant weight of capacity development across many of the ILO's work areas.

The evaluation of technical and functional capacities at the individual, organizational, and enabling environment level, as relevant, can provide additional evidence to high-level evaluations. Ultimately, the additional evidence can inform strategic decision-making in the ILO.

A driver for evaluating capacity development is the demand for evidence about the benefit of capacity development for the organization. This driver is an interesting entry point for the ILO to create demand for evaluating capacity development.

ANNEX I. DOCUMENTATION

Capacity development concepts

[Alliance for non-profit management, 2003: Evaluating capacity building. Lessons from the field pages 8 – 9.](#)

[Better Evaluation: Evaluating capacity development](#) (includes list of frameworks for evaluating capacity development)

[CGIAR, undated: Lessons learned and ways forward on CGIAR capacity development: A discussion paper.](#)

[International Development Research Center/Inter-American Development Bank, 2002: Organizational assessment: a framework for improving performance.](#)

Kirkpatrick, D. L., 1975: Evaluating Training Program. WI: American Society for Training and Development, Inc.

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Kirkpatrick, J. D. Kayser Kirkpatrick, W, 2016: *Four Levels of Training Evaluation*.

Linnell, Deborah, Zora Radosevich, and Jonathan Spack. (2001). *Executive Directors Guide: The Guide for Successful Non-profit Management*. (Chapter 4 Evaluation pp.23-34). United Way of Massachusetts Bay.

[OECD, 2011: Perspective note. The enabling environment for capacity development.](#)

[OECD/DAC, 2010: Towards a Strategic Approach for Evaluation Capacity Development. Draft consultation paper.](#)

[Sida, 2015: Support to Capacity Development – Identifying Good Practice in Swedish Development Cooperation. Sida Evaluation Report for the Joint Scandinavian Evaluation of Support to Capacity Development.](#)

Torniainen, T.J., and Saastamoinen, O.J., 2007: Formal and informal institutions and their hierarchy in the regulation of the forest lease in Russia. In: *Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research*, Volume 80, Issue 5, December 2007.

[UNDP, 2009. Capacity development. A UNDP primer.](#)

[UNEG, 2022: United Nations contributions to national evaluation capacity development and the evaluation of national evaluation systems](#)

ILO policy documents

[ILO 2023: Programme and Budget for the biennium 2024-25](#)

[ILO, 2019: ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development GB.335/INS/9.](#)

[ILO, 2017: Integrated Strategy on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2017-2023.](#)

[ILO, 2008: Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2022.](#)

ILO EVAL guidance

[ILO, 2021: Checklist 4.6: Writing the Evaluation Terms of Reference \(ToR\).](#)

[ILO, 2020: ILO EVAL's Guidance note 1.1 on Project design and theory of change](#)

[ILO, 2020: ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation Principles, rationale, planning, and managing for evaluations. 4th edition.](#)

[ILO, 2020: Guidance Note 3.2: “Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO’s normative and tripartite mandate”](#)

[ILO, 2020: Guidance Note 2.4: Thematic evaluations](#)

ILO and other relevant capacity development guidelines

Feri, E. and Urbano, D., 2015: Handbook of Research on Global Competitive Advantage through Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Exploring How Institutions Influence Social and Commercial Entrepreneurship: An International Study.

[ILO, 2013: Technical cooperation approaches and capacity development of constituents.](#)

[ILO, 2011: ILO Technical Cooperation Intervention Model Series. COUNTRY EMPLOYMENT POLICY UNIT \(CEPOL\).](#)

Examples of evaluations including capacity development components

[ILO, 2021: ILO Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO’s programme of work in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan](#)

[ILO, 2020: Independent Evaluation of the technical assistance Project entitled Decent Jobs for Egypt’s Young People: Tackling the challenge together](#)

[ILO, 2018: An independent evaluation of ILO’s capacity development efforts 2010–2017.](#)

[ILO, 2016: Independent thematic evaluation of ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010-2015](#)

Others

ILO, undated: Social dialogue. [https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm\)%20%20a](https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm)%20%20a)