

Understanding the Nitty Gritty of ILO Evaluation:

Frequently asked Questions and Answers

1. Does ILO conduct unbiased, independent assessment of its work?

The Evaluation Office (EVAL), established in 2007, drives ILO's evaluation culture by overseeing the independent performance evaluations of ILO's [strategies](#), [Decent Work Country Programme](#) and [project](#) implementation. It is a uniquely independent office which reports annually to ILO constituents and directly to the [Governing Body](#).

2. If the Evaluation Office is independent, then who guides the standards of EVAL?

EVAL adheres to internationally recognized evaluation guidelines ([United Nations Evaluation Group](#) & [OECD](#)) to ensure the highest standard of independence, quality and accountability to promote evidence-based organizational learning.

3. What are the Departments and Regions doing?

EVAL provides planning, technical support and oversight to Departmental and Regional evaluation activities. All independent evaluation is overseen by EVAL. EVAL has a dynamically updated, online Evaluation [Policy Guideline document](#) which provides ILO Officials with more than 50 links to helpful checklists, templates, quick fact pages and models to provide all the guidance necessary to build capacity and ownership in ILO's evaluation culture.

4. Does an ILO official have to read all evaluation reports on a subject to find the lessons learned and good practices?

No! EVAL offers research support, using compilations and data sets of lessons learned and emerging good practices obtained from its database and Knowledge Sharing Platform. All project designers can access these data sets to benefit from the institutional knowledge gained through independent evaluation.

5. Who does all this work?

The EVAL team consists of a Director, three Senior Evaluation Officers, a Knowledge Officer and the Secretariat Admin Official. They are all responsible for oversight and support to project evaluations (between 40-60 per year) and the Senior EVAL officials actually manage the DWCP and strategy evaluations. There are also five Regional Evaluation Officers who provide support to the regions, and Departmental Focal Points to coordinate work in HQ. In order to help with the high volume of work for project evaluations, EVAL has built up a sizable pool of trained and certified Evaluation Managers to assist departments. These are ILO Officials who voluntarily offer their expertise and time to manage project evaluations with budgets US\$ one million and over.

6. Is evaluation part of the ILO's Office of Internal Audit and Oversight?

No. EVAL is its own unique "bureau", reporting directly to the Governing Body. The Evaluation Office and the [Office of Internal Audit and Oversight \(IAO\)](#) are certainly different but can be complementary and are necessary tools to ensure that results-based Management in the ILO functions effectively. They both make up part of ILO's accountability architecture and each generates important elements of organizational learning. IAO provides an objective and independent assessment of whether ILO's risk management, governance and internal control processes provide assurance of accomplishing objectives in compliance with ILO's rules, regulations and policies. EVAL on the other hand conducts objective and independent assessment of ILO's activities, operations, policies and strategies. Independent evaluation provides unbiased analysis to determine whether results were achieved and to explain why. Findings can provide insights and recommendations for future programmes and projects, with lessons learned and emerging good practices that could be applied in other operational contexts.

7. How can a staff member find out what's going on in evaluation? Who is their departmental or regional focal point? How can an official become an evaluation manager? What evaluation work is in the pipeline?

EVAL routinely communicates through its website, Knowledge Sharing Platform and i-EVAL Flash Newsletter on emerging issues in development evaluation, including training events, new publications and articles and inter-agency cooperation. If you are interested in becoming an evaluation manager, contact EVAL, we would be happy to discuss and hear from you!

8. In what other ways do ILO Officials and Departments collaborate on evaluation and solve emerging challenges?

Aside from the planning and technical support provided to mandated project evaluations, EVAL establishes networks and initiates round table discussions and workshops to stimulate collaboration on impact evaluation, evaluability assessment and other topical issues. EVAL also offers guidance to appraisal of new projects to ensure that they are in line with the ILO Evaluation Policy.

9. Who decides what gets evaluated and what doesn't?

EVAL policy guidelines explain the requirements for project evaluation. Every year the rolling workplan for strategy and DWCP evaluation is decided at the Oct/Nov Governing Body. Additionally, EVAL responds to Governing Body

recommendations for specific evaluation needs and supports the work of the Social Justice Declaration and the Recurrent Discussions with synthesis reviews.

10. After an evaluation is over, is that it? Does it just sit in a dusty archive?

EVAL ensures that project, DWCP and strategy evaluations have appropriate dissemination and management response. All recommendations in an independent evaluation must be followed up by management through a formal response exercise which records the action taken – including analysis of how constituents are involved. How well management responds is reported to the Governing Body in the EVAL Annual Report.

11. What does EVAL do on impact evaluations?

EVAL has created an in-house Impact Evaluation Network which brings together ILO colleagues who have been involved in, who are interested in learning more or who plan to do impact evaluations. The network is open to any staff in the ILO who is interested to receive technical advice, learn from peers or who just want to learn more about impact evaluations. Starting in January 2016 EVAL will create an impact evaluation helpdesk for those colleagues who would like technical assistance and advice on impact evaluation. To be in touch, or if you would like to join the network, please email the helpdesk at EVAL_Impact@ilo.org.

12. What is the difference between monitoring and evaluation (M&E)?

Monitoring and evaluation is often referred to as a unified concept – M&E – but they are not the same thing. Monitoring is a day-to-day management tool aimed to record and keep track of targeted outputs, and to ensure that projects are following their outcome-based work plans. For good monitoring to take place it is essential to have a comprehensive monitoring plan that includes solid indicators and targets. When it is time for an evaluation to take place, evaluators rely on this sound monitoring data and information to assess whether the outcome-level results are on track to be achieved (mid-term evaluation) or have been achieved (final evaluation). Evaluations need and use monitoring data and activities to draw conclusions and lessons learned regarding performance - not just for the intervention being evaluated but to provide insights for programming in general.

For more questions, [Ask EVAL](#). And see our next [i-Eval Flash Newsletter](#) for *Evaluation Myth Busters*