WHAT IS EVALUATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Evaluation in the ILO is used as an accountability and organizational learning tool to help ILO constituents and staff members support decent work and social justice. Evaluation is a critical means to improve decision-making, generate knowledge in the organization and provide verifiable evidence of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation provides a performance assessment of a particular intervention, focusing on what works, what does not work, and why this is the case.
ILO EVALUATION OFFICE: ROLE & FUNCTION

The Evaluation Office (EVAL) is governed by the ILO evaluation policy 2017 and the ILO evaluation strategy 2018-21. These are the two key governance-level documents that define the ILO’s organizational approach and results-based framework for evaluation. EVAL is mandated to manage the evaluation function and ensure proper implementation of the evaluation policy. EVAL’s structure and modalities of operation are designed to protect its independence.

EVALUATION POLICY

In October 2017, the ILO Governing Body adopted a new ILO evaluation policy 2017. The policy formulated in response to an Independent Evaluation of the Evaluation Function (IEE 2016) establishes evaluation as a function for promoting accountability and learning. It reiterates that evaluation is integral to the ILO’s results-based management system. The evaluation policy aims to:

• Reinforce knowledge-generation sharing of the ILO’s substantive work, and the processes, approaches and institutional arrangements for implementing such work;

• Strengthen the complementarity between evaluation and other oversight and monitoring functions within the Office;

• Clarify standards for engaging constituents in evaluation; and

• Clarify the division of responsibilities in the ILO for carrying out an evaluation.
The evaluation strategy 2018-21 operationalizes the evaluation policy (2017), as endorsed by the ILO Governing Body in 2018. The strategy presents a theory of change which outlines the change pathway for enhancing the contribution of evaluation to an effective ILO. It also describes the elements that will create an enabling environment for this to happen. Outcome 1 of the new strategy is: Enhanced capacities and systems of evaluation for better practice and use; Outcome 2—Enhanced value of evaluation through the use of more credible and higher quality evaluations (independence, credibility, usefulness); and, Outcome 3—Stronger knowledge base of evaluation findings and recommendations. The importance of the enabling environment for evaluation to contribute to an effective ILO and to an effective evaluation function are key elements of the strategy.
HOW TO ACCESS EVALUATION REPORTS

An estimated 60 independent and internal evaluations are completed each year. All evaluations are publicly accessible through *i-eval Discovery*: an interactive application that visually displays all planned and completed evaluation reports and their related lessons learned, good practices, recommendations and summaries. *i-eval Discovery* can be used to inform project design, implementation, and organizational learning.

Access over:
- 1,100 evaluation reports
- 400 planned evaluations
- 5,000 recommendations
- 1,700 lessons learned
- 650 good practices

[www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery](http://www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery)

ANNUAL REPORTING OF THE ILO’S EVALUATION FUNCTION

Each year, EVAL presents the findings and recommendations of independent high-level evaluations of ILO strategies and Decent Work Country Programmes to the Governing Body. EVAL also presents an *Annual Evaluation Report* (AER) that reflects on progress made towards the implementation of the ILO’s evaluation strategy and assesses the ILO’s overall effectiveness.
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Staff training
To meet the demands associated with undertaking the large number of internal and independent project evaluations every year, EVAL developed training programmes to improve organizational capacity. For independent evaluations, it developed the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP) in 2013 to upgrade the quality of evaluation management and to expand the pool of qualified candidates. To date, nine rounds of the EMCP have been held resulting in 81 certified ILO staff. Furthermore, in 2017 EVAL launched the Internal Evaluation Certification Programme (IECP) to improve the quality, frequency and utility of internal evaluations.

Constituents
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development demands countries to establish participatory national review frameworks. The involvement of ILO’s tripartite constituents is critical to reflect the aspiration of ILO constituents to achieve social justice through decent work, and position them as effective vehicles for implementing the 2030 Agenda. To meet these demands, EVAL has developed a training programme for constituents on evaluating the Decent Work Agenda in the SDG era. With the aim to
increase capacities for assessing progress towards decent work and the SDGs, the nine-module curriculum covers the core principles of progress review and the requirements for national evaluation systems in reviewing progress made to the Decent Work Agenda and the SDGs through the national voluntary reviews and other national accountability and learning processes, including the monitoring and evaluation of SDG-related indicators. Over a hundred ILO Constituents have been trained thus far, with the help of the regional and country offices concerned.

Evaluation consultants
EVAL has developed a self-induction programme to support evaluation consultants become more familiar with the unique aspects of the ILO and its evaluation policy and practice. The self-induction programme for evaluation consultants provides an overview of ILO’s mandate and mission, the nature and characteristics of ILO’s work and the role of the Organization in the 2030 Agenda. It also presents EVAL’s mandate and policy, the types of evaluations and nature of decentralized evaluation processes in the ILO.

IMPACT EVALUATION REVIEW FACILITY
Impact evaluation is a key topic in development evaluation. There is potential in the ILO to expand the use of impact evaluations to learn about intervention effects through proper, credible and efficient use of impact evaluations in the right contexts as part of identifying and advocating effective policy solutions. To support this work, EVAL developed the impact evaluation review facility (IERF) to facilitate and improve the use and quality of impact evaluations in the ILO. It offers support, including access to external review consultants, to those considering, beginning or implementing impact evaluations by providing overall feedback, ideas and suggestions for proposed and ongoing work on impact evaluation, such as on design, analysis and report preparation. The IERF is reachable via email EVAL_IMPACT@ilo.org
FOLLOWING UP ON EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS: AUTOMATED MANAGEMENT RESPONSE SYSTEM

In an effort to strengthen the decentralized evaluation management response mechanism, EVAL launched an automated management response system (AMRS) in February 2018 to facilitate follow up to recommendations from independent evaluations. The AMRS effectively incorporates data visualization tools, clarifies reporting lines and provides real time status updates in order to support results-based management and organizational learning through a wider and timelier use of evaluations.

EVALUATION AND THE SDGS

EVAL has launched an Evaluation and SDG series to support ILO’s contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The implications of the SDGs on ILO’s results framework – remarks from an evaluative perspective

Diagnostic instrument to assess the evaluability of DWCPs in the context of the SDGs
COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

Increasing the visibility and understanding of evaluation through communication activities are essential components of the evaluation function, particularly for advocating evaluation use. Since 2011, EVAL has produced various communication products that have increased in number and scope over time. The following presents a brief overview of some communication and knowledge products, including the i-eval resource series:

**i-eval Flash News** is a triannual newsletter that covers regional and departmental evaluation highlights, posting noteworthy insights and lessons learned to the wide network of ILO evaluation practitioners, users and clients.

**i-eval Discovery** publicly illustrates planned and completed evaluation reports, in addition to their related lessons learned, good practices, recommendations and evaluation summaries. They are all made searchable by thematic criteria, region/country, year, and by evaluation type, timing and nature. i-eval Discovery was launched in December 2016.

**i-eval Connect** is a knowledge sharing platform that provides a forum where all ILO officials in the field and at headquarters can share ideas and information through a large number of interactive modules. Launched in June 2019, the platform contains an evaluation consultant roster, a mission report facility, a resource centre featuring EVAL products and services, an “ask a question” facility, a calendar of evaluation related events, a community of practice and many more features.
i-eval Policy guidelines for evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations (3rd ed.) are intended to provide a complete package of guidance for ILO staff, who are tasked with planning, managing, overseeing and/or following up on evaluation recommendations. This revised edition incorporates updates to the two previous editions (2012 and 2013) by accommodating changes resulting from organizational reform, streamlining and improving all guidance notes, and providing evaluation related guidance to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
**i-eval Think Pieces** provide critical analyses of modern evaluation questions. Published since 2012, recent reports have focused on the challenges and potential strategies for improving the quality of evaluation reports, effective contribution to the SDGs and the uptake of evaluation results.

**Quick Facts (Fact sheets)** are short two-page documents that visually present summaries of the findings and recommendations from high-level evaluations, Annual Evaluation Reports and other topics of interest to the ILO, such as the impact evaluation review facility. Content is tailored for professional and general audiences. Quick Facts have been published since 2016.

**Presentations** are created for high-level evaluations to visually illustrate more detailed evaluation results in comparison to the Quick Facts. Content is tailored for professional and general audiences.

**Meta-studies and synthesis reviews** provide analyses on a variety of strategic topics that can feed into larger discussions, such as at the International Labour Conference, and into future strategies of the ILO and to inform future evaluations, for example. Since their inception in 2011, EVAL has launched nine meta-studies and synthesis reviews.