



## Governing Body

309th Session, Geneva, November 2010

GB.309/TC/1

Committee on Technical Cooperation

TC

**FOR DECISION**

FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Capacity development for ILO tripartite constituents

### Overview

#### Issues covered

A core element of the ILO's Technical Cooperation Strategy is to build the capacity of constituents to deliver their own and the Organization's mandate, and to play a significant role in national social and economic planning. The ILO's technical cooperation programme already includes numerous institutional capacity-building efforts, yet further shaping of such initiatives is needed to ensure maximum impact and value for resources spent. The paper examines capacity-development initiatives of the ILO and lessons learned, and proposes a number of measures to improve the ILO's capacity-development approach.

#### Policy implications

Mainstreaming of capacity development into technical cooperation, with a focus on institutional capacity development.

#### Financial implications

None if future actions are taken in line with outcome-based work planning.

#### Decision required

Paragraph 18.

#### References to other Governing Body documents and ILO instruments

GB.306/PV, GB.306/TC/1, GB.307/PV, GB.295/PFA/13, GB.301/PFA/2, GB.307/PFA/2, GB.307/14(Rev.), GB.306/14(Rev.).

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



---

*Contents*

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction .....	1
The concept of capacity development .....	1
Capacity development in the context of the ILO.....	1
Capacity development for governments.....	2
Capacity development for employers' organizations.....	3
Capacity building for workers' organizations.....	4
Lessons learned and further steps.....	5



## Introduction

1. At its 306th Session in November 2009, the Governing Body adopted an enhanced Technical Cooperation Strategy for the ILO.<sup>1</sup> One of the three main elements of this Strategy was enhanced capacity building for constituents through technical cooperation, with the aim of strengthening their role in economic and social policy-making.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, the Governing Body requested the Office to prepare a paper on capacity building as a means of technical cooperation for the present session of the Committee.

## The concept of capacity development

2. Capacity development<sup>3</sup> is at the heart of contemporary technical cooperation. It is commonly understood as “a process through which individuals, organisations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time”. Capacity development is conceived as a long-term investment whose benefits and impact might only become apparent in the medium and long run. Capacity development places a key emphasis on ownership. Important questions about whom to capacitate, which capabilities to develop and for which purpose should be determined by the key stakeholders and recipients of the capacity development interventions. Capacity development can involve technical capacities (in such fields as employment, social security, health) and functional capacities (such as leadership, financial management, partnership and relationship building).<sup>4</sup> It can also be implemented in several manners. While training is a common approach, capacity building is best achieved through learning by doing, fostering relationships and partnerships, supporting research and knowledge sharing, participation in communities of practice, South–South learning initiatives, on-the-job training, and other learning techniques that empower individuals and institutions to take charge of development challenges.

## Capacity development in the context of the ILO

3. The ILO has taken up this notion of capacity development within its particular tripartite context. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization specifically calls for technical cooperation 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”.<sup>5</sup> Capacity-building efforts should also equip constituents to participate more effectively in the UN “Delivering as One” framework. The Declaration in this respect underlines that capacity development should both enable constituents to carry out their own mandates and also deliver on the organizational objectives.

<sup>1</sup> GB.306/PV, para. 227.

<sup>2</sup> GB.306/TC/1.

<sup>3</sup> The terms “capacity building” and “capacity development” overlap: capacity building is defined as the means to achieve capacity development. Both terms are used in this paper as appropriate.

<sup>4</sup> UNDP: *Enhancing the UN’s contribution to national capacity development: A UNDG position statement* (New York, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008, Part II(A)(ii).

4. At its 307th Session in March 2010, the Governing Body requested the Office to, inter alia, “promote the programming of specific Decent Work Country Programme outputs to ensure institutional capacity building for constituents to strengthen their participation in the Decent Work Country Programme process and in development planning as a whole and, where necessary, to strengthen the coordination of inputs of employers’ and workers’ organizations”.<sup>6</sup>
5. The ILO’s current technical cooperation portfolio is already largely composed of capacity-development components. The vast majority of such interventions involve the development of technical capacities of individuals in constituents’ organizations in the thematic areas within the ILO’s mandate. To realize the capacity-development goals set out above and maximize the impact of capacity development, more emphasis needs to be placed on targeted institutional capacity-development measures, both for individual constituent groups and within a tripartite setting. The International Training Centre of ILO, Turin (Turin Centre), already plays a significant role in providing training for capacity development, and its role in strengthening institutional capacity development could be developed further.

### Capacity development for governments

6. The capacity development needs of national government administrations responsible for achieving decent work objectives vary from one country to the next and cover a wide range of institutions and technical themes. The ILO engages in focused needs-assessment exercises either independently or based on specific government requests.<sup>7</sup> These assessments point to the following general areas where capacity development could be expanded:
  - (a) Strengthening the legal environment through participatory law making and an institutional framework for labour administration.
  - (b) Enforcing labour legislation, most prominently through national systems of labour inspection, both with respect to working conditions and occupational safety and health.
  - (c) Developing, implementing and evaluating national employment and labour policies.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> GB.307/PV, para. 238(b). This decision was followed up through relevant guidance which is included in the revised version of the Decent Work Country Programmes Guidebook.

<sup>7</sup> For example, the ILO carries out in-country labour administration and inspection needs assessments based on government requests that include consultations with the social partners (e.g. Angola, China, Haiti, Kenya, Philippines, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania). Also, a participatory gender audit (PGA) tool and methodology has been developed based on a self-assessment approach that directly involves constituents (e.g. ministry of labour or labour inspectorate officials) in developing a set of concrete and actionable recommendations. PGAs have taken place in Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and Yemen.

<sup>8</sup> The ILO has helped a number of West African countries in the development of national labour policies. The Office works to improve the ability of governments to develop, for example, coherent trade and labour policies (pilot countries include Bangladesh, Benin, Guatemala and Indonesia), youth employment policies (e.g. Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan), or policies on occupational safety and health and HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

- (d) Improving the policy and legislative framework for gender equality in the world of work and the enforcement of laws dealing with such areas as non-discrimination and equal pay for work of equal value.<sup>9</sup>
  - (e) Developing national skills and training schemes, employment services, labour market information and statistical services, and social security systems.
7. Overall, member States are working to “modernize” government institutions and improve systems to deliver higher quality and more cost-effective services that are increasingly accessible and responsive to the needs of end users. Importantly, this includes improving human resource capacity and institutional development.

### Capacity development for employers’ organizations

8. Building strong, independent and representative organizations of employers has been the centrepiece of the ILO’s employers’ programme managed by the Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP). The needs analysis conducted for ACT/EMP’s technical cooperation programme shows that ILO constituent employer organizations’ needs can be grouped into three major categories:
- (a) strengthening management, representativeness and governance;
  - (b) strengthening policy influence; and
  - (c) strengthening direct membership services.
9. ACT/EMP’s capacity-development programme for employers’ organizations is focused on institutional capacity and addresses such issues as strengthening governance; membership management, retention and expansion; revenue building; design, development and delivery of membership services, including training services; staff development; research and information; advocacy, communication and lobbying. In addition, capacity building is provided across other areas of the ILO mandate through technical units and regional structures. In this context, the contribution of the ILO International Training Centre in Turin is instrumental. Many tools and products are developed, tested and used to develop capacity in close collaboration with the Turin Centre’s ACT/EMP desk. The Turin Centre’s employer programme complements the ACT/EMP technical cooperation programme through a training strategy based on shared needs analysis and planning.
10. Decent Work Country Programmes are also an important vehicle for the identification and prioritization of capacity-building needs, especially in those areas where interests of the constituents at the country level interface. Given the role of Decent Work Country Programmes as the main programming mechanism of the ILO, there is also a need to build employer organizations’ capacity to participate in their design and implementation. Decent Work Country Programmes, through their potential link to the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) at the country level, represent an additional opportunity for employers’ organizations to contribute to the national development agenda. For this to be successful, their capacity to be credible development partners is essential.

<sup>9</sup> ILO legislative research and capacity building for labour ministry officials, dispute settlement bodies and judges have built-in gender components. The Office is also developing training materials for labour inspectors on gender equality. Generally, see ILO: *Gender equality at the heart of decent work*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 98th Session, Geneva, 2009.

- 11.** Over the years ACT/EMP's technical cooperation programme has made a significant contribution to building strong, independent and representative organizations of employers.<sup>10</sup> As a result of various interventions and projects, employers' organizations in many countries have been able to influence governments to improve the business environment for sustainable enterprise. In transition economies they have emerged and developed to represent and serve the growing private sector and have become credible partners in national policy and social dialogue. Many of them have strengthened institutional structures and processes, developed and delivered services and tools for members that have helped generate income and attract new and/or retain existing members. In addition, ACT/EMP has developed and shared a pool of knowledge, tools and resources on various aspects of employer organizations' operations that are available for constituents' use.<sup>11</sup>

### **Capacity building for workers' organizations**

- 12.** Free and independent labour organizations are key partners in ensuring the participation of workers in the development of social and economic policy. Workers' organizations define priorities and future challenges through a democratic process involving their members, usually setting up programmes of work and action plans at their congresses, with a follow-up at sectoral and workplace level as required. The following general capacity needs have been identified by workers' organizations:
- (a) building strong, independent, democratic and representative trade unions;
  - (b) strengthening global workers' solidarity;
  - (c) mainstreaming participation of women, minority groups and youth in trade unions; and
  - (d) organizing new members.
- 13.** Most capacity development for trade unions consists of very basic actions aimed at organizing workers in the formal and informal economy, or creating union structures at the workplace. Other programmes are quite complex and extensive and are based on the development of projects organized mainly by the labour education or organizing departments of unions. Capacity-building networks are under construction in national labour centres and in global and regional structures. A solid component of this policy is labour education, through which unions provide their members with tools aimed at increasing capacity for effective participation in collective bargaining processes as well as in reference to national and international issues linked to economic and social policies. Labour colleges, labour universities and union training centres support research and labour education and service both horizontal (territorial structures) and vertical (sectoral) unions.
- 14.** The largest union educational programme is provided by the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) at the Turin Centre (ACTRAV/Turin),<sup>12</sup> which delivers advanced training courses, publishes training materials, organizes educational projects and provides advisory services, focusing in particular on international labour standards, freedom of

<sup>10</sup> See ILO programme implementation 2004–05 (GB.295/PFA/13), 2006–07 (GB.301/PFA/2) and 2008–09 (GB.307/PFA/2).

<sup>11</sup> See <http://ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actemp/>.

<sup>12</sup> [http://actrav.itcilo.org/index\\_en.php](http://actrav.itcilo.org/index_en.php).



association and the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, mainly for unions in developing countries. Important new global initiatives also include the Global Union Research Network (GURN)<sup>13</sup> and the Global Labour University (GLU),<sup>14</sup> both actively supported by ACTRAV.

## Lessons learned and further steps

15. The Organization, in consultation with constituents, has already defined through technical cooperation programmes an approach for developing both the technical and institutional capacities of the constituents. While the majority of capacity-development interventions are aimed at building technical capacity in a specific subject area, a number of technical programmes and the Bureaux for Workers' and Employers' Activities have developed approaches to address the core institutional needs of the constituents. These efforts have resulted in stronger labour institutions in a number of cases, yet there is still a need for further capacity development for constituents to carry out their core mandates and to contribute to organizational and wider development goals.<sup>15</sup> In a recent Office analysis of 102 UNDAFs, it was noted that 28 reflected all four strategic objectives of the ILO, and 39 reflected three objectives, meaning that more than half of UNDAFs reflected most or all of the ILO's wider priorities. Nonetheless, the same analysis showed that the social partners only participated directly in 25 UNDAFs and their participation was minimal in another 14. While this deficit has to do with numerous factors, lack of capacity to fully engage in the process is cited as a key reason why constituents have not penetrated the UNDAF process further.<sup>16</sup>
16. A recent survey of capacity-development initiatives by ILO field offices and technical units points to a number of key strengths which could be built upon to better deliver institutional capacity development. These include:
  - (a) *ILO training approaches are a good primary method of delivering capacity building.* There is a consensus that the interactive learning methods developed by the Turin Centre are highly appreciated by constituents and constitute a real added value to the ILO's approach to training. The Turin Centre's approach is also lauded because it allows practitioners from different regions to learn from one another. At the same time, there is a need to deliver more Turin-supported training in the field.
  - (b) *Capacity development is available for nearly every topic covered by the ILO.* All sectors report the development of training courses, manuals, guides and e-learning content aimed at constituents for their respective topics. Technical training in the field is supported by a good mix of courses offered by the Turin Centre.
  - (c) *With regard to sustainability, a number of programmes are developing innovative approaches to ensure that capacity developed continues to grow after the end of a technical cooperation intervention.* Partnering with academic institutions who take over the capacity-building activities, the establishment of virtual learning centres and

<sup>13</sup> <http://gurn.info/en/>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://global-labour-university.org/>.

<sup>15</sup> See discussion of the role of Decent Work Country Programmes in the enhanced Technical Cooperation Strategy in March 2010 (GB.307/14(Rev.), paras 3–48).

<sup>16</sup> See discussion of the ILO's technical cooperation programme strategy and tripartism in the context of the United Nations reform process in November 2009 (GB.306/14(Rev.), paras 4–33).

communities of practice via the Internet training-of-trainer schemes, and schemes to renew certification on a regular basis such as those carried out under the Start Your Own Business (SIYB) interventions, have proved to be successful models to ensure sustainability and to foster national ownership of capacity development. The training of judges and parliamentarians has proved to be a successful strategy for promoting international labour standards through sustainable national institutions.

17. The survey nonetheless pointed to a number of challenges which the ILO's capacity-building efforts need to address if they are to have an impact on constituent institutions' capacity to carry out their core mandates and contribute to development. These include:
- (a) *While needs assessments are carried out in some cases in the context of Decent Work Country Programmes and large capacity-development initiatives, they are often only based on simple inquiry as to what constituents feel they need, and not on an objective analysis of capacity assets and deficits.* As a result, capacity development is sometimes not in line with real institutional needs. In this respect it is important to distinguish between the core institutional needs of the constituents and the need to deliver the Organizational mandate. Much of the ILO's capacity-building approach focuses on technical matters and key programmatic deliverables such as Decent Work Country Programmes. While these are important, only constituents equipped with key core institutional capacities can deliver on organizational and wider development mandates in the long term.
  - (b) *Capacity development remains fragmented along thematic lines.* Technical cooperation programmes and projects usually involve capacity building, but these are sometimes uncoordinated, resulting in the same individuals being trained on a wide range of subjects. Capacity-development efforts need to be better coordinated to ensure that recipients receive capacity building in a synergistic manner.
  - (c) *Technical capacity needs to be supported through institutional capacity.* Technical capacity needs to be matched with the capacity to mobilize resources, design and manage interventions, and muster political will to ensure the sustainability and proliferation of capacities.
  - (d) *The choice of capacity-development recipients is not always strategic.* In a number of institutions, a culture of seniority results in the same senior-level persons being trained or receiving capacity-development interventions. This can result in overload for some senior staff. In other cases too few recipients of capacity development means that turnover in staff can lead to a rapid loss of any capacity gained. Some interventions, especially training and study tours, are occasionally perceived as a "perk" which is awarded as a favour, and not in line with the strategic needs of the relevant institutions. Capacity-development interventions need to improve selection criteria, and stakeholders need to engage more with assessment and design processes to ensure that recipients of capacity development can further capacity and use it.
  - (e) *Monitoring and evaluation of capacity building still needs to be strengthened.* Most trainings are followed up with client satisfaction surveys, which are indicative of the immediate impression of training participants but say little about whether capacity was enhanced or used to achieve development outcomes. More efforts are needed to move beyond outputs ("training delivered") to capacity outcomes ("increased performance of constituent") through follow-up surveys, tracer studies, and impact analysis. ACT/EMP and ACTRAV should support such initiatives in the case of the social partners.
  - (f) *Funding remains a challenge.* Capacity development should be embedded in the strategies of technical cooperation, and should therefore be an integral part of any

programme or project. It is up to the quality control procedures in place to ensure that capacity development is integrated into technical cooperation strategies and that it takes into account some of the lessons learned above. Nonetheless, there are a number of programmes specifically dedicated to capacity development, notably institutional capacity development for employers and workers' organizations, that remain greatly underfunded. These programmes have been formulated as global outcomes in the outcome-based workplan, where they are eligible for extra-budgetary funding either through Regular Budget Supplementary and Account or extra-budgetary resources. The ILO needs to further strengthen the evidence base on the importance and impact of the constituents in promoting national development, draw on lessons learned from successful capacity development interventions, and further develop results-based capacity-development programmes and projects aligned with ILO outcomes.

**18. *In view of the above, the Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body to:***

- (a) request the Office to take concrete steps to ensure that capacity-development measures are mainstreamed into technical cooperation programmes;***
- (b) encourage ILO constituents to engage fully in a results-based approach to capacity development to ensure ownership, impact and sustainability. In the case of the social partners, such programmes should be developed with the support of the ACT/EMP and ACTRAV;***
- (c) encourage donors to support the strategic role of the constituents and to provide funding for capacity-development measures, including for core institutional capacity, aligned with the ILO's outcome-based work-planning process.***

Geneva, 4 November 2010

*Point for decision:* Paragraph 18