8.7 Accelerator Lab
1. Context

Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) holds ambitious time-bound aims for the eradication of forced labour by 2030 and the elimination of child labour by 2025. Both ambitions demand rapid and sustained progress.

Circumstances, however, require significant action if this target is to be realized. This is evidenced by the International Labour Organization’s latest estimates for forced labour and child labour,\(^1\) the detrimental impact of COVID-19 and an uneven recovery from the pandemic,\(^2\) along with other SDG priorities, including the need to combat climate change and mitigate its impacts.

The 8.7 Accelerator Lab therefore serves to concentrate and prioritize the ILO contribution to the overall achievement of the SDG 8.7 target, working to deliver as One ILO within the framework of the Integrated Strategy on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2017–2023 and the underlying IPEC+ strategy.

2. Acceleration of SDG 8.7 progress

What is the 8.7 Accelerator Lab?

The Accelerator Lab is an initiative of the ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch. It was created to accelerate progress on the eradication of forced labour and the elimination of child labour by optimizing the effectiveness of development cooperation interventions. Acceleration will be achieved by embracing six acceleration factors that form the core of the Accelerator Lab programming. The Accelerator Lab supports collaborative initiatives undertaken by the Alliance 8.7, particularly in accelerating political commitment as well as the identification and replication of good practices.

The Accelerator Lab targets interventions at the national, regional and global levels, leveraging the use of strategic entry points. These are interventions that demonstrate successful results, prevent or address forced labour and child labour at scale and increase support among and for ILO constituents to achieve the eradication of forced labour and the elimination of child labour.

---


To accelerate action on forced labour and child labour, strategic programming is needed. This can be achieved by leveraging opportunities at the national, regional and global levels with a strategic focus on where and how development cooperation interventions can make the greatest contribution.

To frame the how, the Accelerator Lab has singled out six acceleration factors as the pillars of its programming. At the national level, Accelerator Lab interventions aim to include all acceleration factors. At the regional and global levels, the acceleration factors are applied on a case-by-case basis, leaning towards opportunities that add value to the broader ILO acceleration efforts and partnerships.

The acceleration factors derive from an in-depth assessment of what can positively effect change in policy and practice at scale. The emphasis is on benefiting the most vulnerable persons and helping to address gaps in programming while combining forward-looking innovations and scaling up effective practices.

The acceleration factors are not expected to be applied in any particular sequence.

1. Foster and develop political commitment
   Political commitment is central for eradicating forced labour and child labour, for creating buy-in to develop an evidence base to inform policy and legal reforms, for resourcing these activities and policies, for perpetuating ongoing monitoring and for supporting change.

2. Address root causes
   Effective action on forced labour and child labour requires understanding and addressing the root causes. The sustainability of interventions is needed for lasting impact on root causes. This is ensured through social dialogue, the lack of which is a root cause in itself.

3. Focus on vulnerable populations
   Impact can be accelerated by harnessing attention and resources towards people most vulnerable to forced labour or child labour.

4. Create and share knowledge
   Evidence and robust data are required to identify and target the greatest needs, establish a baseline and measure progress. Sharing this information is necessary to determine where and how the resources can be most effectively used.

5. Support sustainable financing
   Sustainable resources to ensure the sustainability of impact beyond project timelines – from Member State and private sector financing will allow for continued action on the root causes.

6. Leverage innovation
   Acceleration on SDG 8.7 progress needs and feeds on new ideas and expanding the use of effective approaches in new contexts. It specifically requires the ILO and its social partners to leverage the use of new technologies to add extra value to existing approaches.

3 In practice, the global interventions focus on acceleration factor 1 (fostering and developing commitment), acceleration factor 4 (knowledge creation and sharing) and acceleration factor 6 (innovation).
Intervention levels

The Accelerator Lab promotes the implementation of the six acceleration factors as part of an integrated approach across national, regional and global interventions.

National
A balanced portfolio of national interventions is assembled to accelerate action on forced labour and child labour. The portfolio includes interventions that demonstrate feasibility for achieving the SDG 8.7 target, accelerate the eradication of forced labour and elimination of child labour at scale and initiate action where there is currently limited progress.

Regional
The regional emphasis supports the coordination of key stakeholders and partners and their sharing of common challenges and opportunities. It looks to enhance South–South cooperation and triangular cooperation and promote peer-to-peer learning while encouraging solutions across transnational sectors.

Global
The global direction harnesses technical expertise and fosters coordination, including through Alliance 8.7 and other critical ILO-led initiatives, (e.g. ILO Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection, and Fair Recruitment Initiative) to share good practices, generate knowledge and reduce duplication.
A balanced portfolio of interventions

The Accelerator Lab promotes a balanced portfolio of interventions at the national level that reflects the diverse SDG 8.7 trajectories. It presumes working with a range of actors to deliver sustainable actions. The interventions should include some that can become good practice examples of on-time SDG target 8.7 achievement, while others either concentrate on accelerating results to scale impact or initiate action on forced labour and child labour where there is currently little progress, including in fragile and conflict-affected States. This balanced portfolio is important to ensure that interventions engage a broad spectrum of national contexts and forms of forced labour and child labour, including the worst forms of child labour.

Determining the appropriate interventions relies on data and information available to the Accelerator Lab, examining both:

1. Occurrence of forced labour and/or child labour, reflecting the need for targeted interventions.
2. Evidence of political commitment, which informs the feasibility and likelihood of successful interventions and sustained results.

On the basis of an appropriate evaluation, a mix of intervention types is determined to ensure a balanced portfolio, as the following illustrates.

---

4 Risk is evaluated through available data on forced labour and child labour, including from the Observations of the Committee of Experts, among others.
5 Political commitment is evaluated through a variety of criteria, including Member States’ requests for technical assistance to the ILO supervisory mechanisms and the inclusion of forced labour and child labour in national priorities.
Demonstrate the feasibility of achieving the eradication of forced labour and the elimination of child labour against the SDG 8.7 target. These interventions can also demonstrate prevention of post-COVID-19 backsliding and to pilot innovative approaches, including big data and digital applications.

Accelerate progress at scale towards SDG 8.7 by replicating good practices relevant to specific forms of forced labour and/or child labour. This is achievable through maximizing South–South partnerships and dialogues, building out interventions into a multisector “landscape” approach, add planning for and prioritizing the financing of policies and institutions.

Initiate action on forced labour and/or child labour in challenging contexts, including fragile and conflict-affected States, by deploying entry point strategies that enable the ILO and its partners, over time, to support vulnerable populations who are subject to severe decent work deficits, including forced labour and (the worst forms of) child labour.

### Typology of 8.7 Accelerator Lab interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention type</th>
<th>Occurrence of forced labour and child labour</th>
<th>Level of political commitment</th>
<th>Acceleration logic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catalyst</td>
<td>Some ongoing risks of and challenges in combating forced labour and/or child labour</td>
<td>High political commitment</td>
<td>Demonstrate the feasibility of achieving the eradication of forced labour and the elimination of child labour against the SDG 8.7 target. These interventions can also demonstrate prevention of post-COVID-19 backsliding and to pilot innovative approaches, including big data and digital applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momentum</td>
<td>Significant risks of and challenges in combating forced labour and/or child labour</td>
<td>Medium political commitment</td>
<td>Accelerate progress at scale towards SDG 8.7 by replicating good practices relevant to specific forms of forced labour and/or child labour. This is achievable through maximizing South–South partnerships and dialogues, building out interventions into a multisector “landscape” approach, add planning for and prioritizing the financing of policies and institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inception</td>
<td>Highly significant risk of and challenges in combating forced labour and/or child labour</td>
<td>Low political commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategic entry points

Strategic entry points for the national, regional and global interventions can help accelerate results. They reflect the opportunities for partnership with stakeholders, including the social partners, align ILO efforts with other forms of leverage and target significant deficits not currently addressed by ILO programming.

Strategic entry points for the Accelerator Lab can include:

- Opportunities to address or prevent all forms of forced labour (including debt bondage, state-imposed forced labour and forced sexual exploitation) and child labour (affecting younger children, the worst forms of child labour and family-based work).

- Countries and migration corridors where the ILO can build on current efforts in promoting fair recruitment to prevent decent work abuses, including forced labour.

- Sectors and supply chains with challenges to eradicating forced labour and eliminating child labour and where there are opportunities for scaling up sector-based interventions for a national- and/or area-based approach.6

- The emerging range of initiatives to establish and support human rights due diligence for businesses.

- Countries and sectors with opportunities for leveraging trade agreements (including trade agreements that reference ILO fundamental principles and rights at work) and, when possible, in collaboration with international financial institutions.

---

6 The 2020 Global Estimates of Child Labour indicate prevalence rates in agriculture, at 71 per cent; in services (including domestic work and work in commerce, transport and motor vehicle repair), at 19.7 per cent; and in industry (including construction, mining and manufacturing), at 10.3 per cent. For forced labour, 2017 global estimates indicate: in domestic work, at 24 per cent; in construction, at 18 per cent; in manufacturing, at 15 per cent; and in agriculture and fishing, at 11 per cent. In view of the high prevalence at the global and regional levels, the initial focus sectors for the Accelerator Lab are fisheries and mining.
8.7 Accelerator Lab

Foster and develop commitment
Address root causes
Focus on vulnerable populations
Create and share knowledge
Sustainable financing
Leverage innovation

Global
Regional
National

Political commitment
Inception
Momentum
Catalyst
Greatest needs

Balanced portfolio of interventions

Contribution to Target 8.7

Summary

- Interventions correspond to six factors to accelerate action on forced labour and child labour.
- Acceleration factors apply across a balanced portfolio of interventions.
- National interventions are determined on the basis of need (occurrence of all forms of forced labour and child labour) and the political commitment to address forced labour and child labour.
- The Accelerator Lab also focuses on global and regional interventions that link to results at the national level.
- The Accelerator Lab activities are subject to ongoing monitoring, adaptation and improvement.
3. Strategic focus of the 8.7 Accelerator Lab

The six acceleration factors that underpin the Accelerator Lab are distinct but interlinked in national, regional and global contexts. All national interventions within the Accelerator Lab’s scope will, when possible, include each of the six factors. For regional and global interventions, the factors apply on a case-by-case basis and the appropriate parameters depend on the context and needs for each intervention.
Foster and develop political commitment

- **Increase political commitment to eradicate forced labour and eliminate child labour in contexts where it is most needed**

**National**

- Support bipartite and tripartite social dialogue on issues related to the elimination of child labour and forced labour.
- Create buy-in for developing an evidence base to inform policy and legal reform, to resource these activities and policies, to consistently monitor and to support ongoing changes in societal norms.
- Mobilize all national constituents around labour ministry leadership to develop a vision for action on forced labour and child labour.
- Ensure links between interventions and the comments of the ILO supervisory system.
- Explore opportunities created by relevant international agreements.
- Ensure sufficient resourcing is available to support political commitment at all levels of government and with social partners through constant and ongoing capacity-building.
- Integrate all fundamental principles and rights at work within the United Nations Common Country Assessment (UNCCA) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), and national development planning.
- Continue efforts to engage more countries as Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder countries.

**Regional**

- Harness the role and leverage of regional trade, sector and development organizations to build support for inclusion of the eradication of forced labour and elimination of child labour in national agendas and regional initiatives.

**Global**

- Drive political commitment through global partnerships, with the ILO taking a central role as the secretariat of Alliance 8.7.
- Support the coordination of and foster partnerships between “multipliers”. This includes global social partners, multilateral development banks, international financial institutions, private investors, regional trade blocs and multistakeholder initiatives.
- Harness the emerging range of legal initiatives, regional initiatives on migration and the ILO business networks (Global Business Network on Forced Labour and the Child Labour Platform) to establish and support human rights due diligence.
Acceleration factor 2
Address root causes

Identify and address the root causes of forced labour and child labour and ensure the sustainability of interventions to effect change

National
Empower governments, workers, employers and their representatives to address, through social dialogue, decent work deficits linked to fundamental principles and rights at work to ensure the sustainability of interventions.

Take a multisector landscape approach to policy and institutional issues and encourage other actors to take on multisector solutions, such as involving a range of ministries (agriculture, rural development, education, social protection, finance, justice, trade, women’s affairs and migration), the private sector, trade unions and civil society.

Provide technical advice on laws and policies that directly address forced labour and child labour and on those that tackle the root causes, such as discriminatory employment practices, limited freedom of association and collective bargaining, lack of social protection, informal employment, unsafe migration and unfair recruitment.

Work with business networks and with business schools to mainstream labour rights into their curricula to raise awareness of forced labour and child labour.

Regional
Engage societal and cultural drivers (media, social media and popular culture) to expand awareness and understanding of the issues and to build on the knowledge of what works in specific contexts, including with cross-border labour migration, to reach and communicate with targeted audiences.

Support social dialogue at the regional level and exchanges between social partners of different countries on promising practices.

Global
Integrate within a One ILO approach and harness expertise on a range of root causes, including social protection deficits, youth employment, gender inequalities, labour migration and recruitment risks and gaps in social finance.

Mobilize sustainable financing (see acceleration factor 5) to allow for continued action on root causes beyond project timelines.

Collect evidence on interventions that address the root causes at the national, sector and supply chain levels. Seek opportunities for lessons learned and evidence gathered at one level to be shared with actors at another level.

Support social dialogue at the global level and raise social partners’ voices to international bodies, organizations and fora.
Acceleration factor 3
Focus on vulnerable populations

▶ Accelerate results by harnessing attention and resources towards vulnerable groups who experience the greatest decent work deficits

**National**
Promote interventions in ILO programming – and actions pursued by ILO constituents within and outside those programmes – that address the vulnerabilities of populations susceptible to forced labour and child labour.

▶ For child labour, this means targeting interventions towards the most vulnerable children, including young children (aged 5–11), and children vulnerable to or engaged in the worst forms of child labour, children affected by conflict and crisis (including child soldiers), children at risk of commercial sexual exploitation and those involved in illicit activities.

▶ For forced labour, this means targeting the most disadvantaged, underserved and excluded populations, including migrants, refugees, displaced people and seasonal workers. Special attention must be directed to women and girls within these populations.

**Regional**
Share expertise and lessons learned on how to work with different vulnerable population groups and how to reduce vulnerability to forms of exploitation.

**Global**
Improve data and knowledge on populations vulnerable to forced labour and child labour.

Improve the ability to anticipate economic, climatic and demographic changes as well as their impact on the vulnerability of people at risk of forced labour and child labour.
Acceleration factor 4
Create and share knowledge

Generate and share evidence needed to target interventions towards the greatest needs, and to understand where resources are most required and how they can most effectively be used.

National
Help develop an evidence base to inform policy and legal reforms.
Support knowledge expansion among policymakers, employers and workers and the expansion of governments' capacity to collect survey-derived data and then create the evidence base to inform future policymaking.
Build awareness on the links between forced labour and child labour and decent work deficits associated with non-discrimination, freedom of association and collective bargaining.
Introduce integrated approaches that have worked in similar countries but that are untested in the national context.
Monitor, evaluate and share the learning.

Regional
Take an innovative approach to Member State partnerships and involve Member States that share similar challenges related to forced labour and/or child labour.
Support platforms that promote South-South dialogue on challenges to and lessons for overcoming the root causes of forced labour and child labour, involving all ILO constituents in the process.
Work with regional organizations (including trade, sector and development organizations) on the inclusion of the eradication of forced labour and the elimination of child labour into their agendas, including monitoring.

Global
Support research in areas where knowledge gaps exist, including generating and expanding data on the root causes and the prevalence and forms of forced labour and child labour, to further target efficient resource mobilization.
Use data on specific forms of forced labour and child labour to inform better targeting of ILO interventions.
Promote the development of global research methodologies and tools to increase the visibility of interventions that work and on good practices.
Coordinate closely with the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Research Department to ensure that relevant research is accessible online, continues to be developed and is used in the development of cooperation projects (in the designing of interventions, in linking between data and development cooperation design and implementation).
Generate knowledge on how to achieve fair recruitment and effectively disseminate through the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative Knowledge Hub.
Promote sustainable resources, including Member State financing, for continued action on the root causes beyond project timelines

**National**
Promote sustainable resourcing and financing, including financing from Member States, recognizing that sustainable financing ultimately requires domestic resource mobilization strategies. This should include supporting ILO constituents to ensure that adequate financial resources are channelled towards decent work outcomes and supporting Member States to plan for the financing of their national action plan.

Sustain resourcing beyond individual project timelines to ensure that impact and knowledge are not lost after a project ends.

Advocate for innovative financing approaches towards SDG 8.7 progress that maximize the impact of public and private investments.

Coordinate with other catalytic investors, specifically multilateral development banks and international financial institutions, to generate public and private sector commitments and to enable change by addressing root causes.

**Regional**
Promote sustainable resourcing and financing from regional development banks and donors with specific regional focus.

**Global**
Foster interagency partnerships to avoid parallel efforts and duplication and to promote the effective use of resources and expertise.

Promote predictable and flexible funding, such as pooled donor funding and non-earmarked funding, that is commensurate to ongoing efforts to address the root causes over time. Target where impact can be optimized, and harness and coordinate multiple resource streams, from global to local resource mobilization.

Reduce the duplication of reporting, and promote smarter, integrated monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems.

Coordinating with other catalytic investors, specifically Multilateral Development Banks and International Financial Institutions, to generate public and private sector commitment and to enable change by addressing root causes.
National

Deploy and replicate existing good practices in other sectors, supply chains and regions.

Support the establishment of financing and institutional arrangements so that innovation and knowledge are not lost upon the completion of each project.

Harness big data and digital technology in projects to target and provide support to populations subject to forced labour and child labour and to monitor results in real time.

Identify and prevent forced labour and child labour by triggering alerts for areas at high risk, thus facilitating monitoring, decision-making and the prioritizing of resources. Build on existing ILO and other stakeholder approaches to predictive risk modelling.

Learn from doing – deploy real-time feedback loops based on the ongoing monitoring of forced labour and child labour.

Reduce the delay between the identification of cases and referral to protection systems.

Promote coordination and information-sharing between national and subnational stakeholders.

Regional

Promote the deployment and replication of existing good practices in other Member States.

Harness big data and digital technology in regional projects to target and provide support to populations subject to forced labour and child labour. Monitor results in real time, specifically focusing on cross-border information-sharing to tackle trafficking in persons, prevent recruitment abuses, facilitate access to justice and remedies, facilitate regionally relevant knowledge-sharing on what works and leveraging the role of artificial intelligence (for monitoring and measurement).

Global

Actively seek and test new and innovative ideas, and harness digital innovation, including possibilities offered by artificial intelligence to build up or gather knowledge on already successful practices.

Foster an innovation community around forced labour and child labour and share transferable lessons from one sector, supply chain or Member State to another, including how to accelerate implementation by Member States of new technologies developed in the global space.

Develop information systems and frameworks that allow for the involvement of multiple actors and provide the means to make different information systems complementary and compatible.
4. Approach and methods

A new way to prioritize, coordinate and implement development cooperation

The innovative approach which underpins the Accelerator Lab is reflected by its role in advocating for a ‘system-level’ change across all ILO interventions aimed at ending child labour and forced labour. At the system-level, the Accelerator Lab focuses on three pillars to improve: ‘targeting’, ‘exchanging’, and ‘accelerating’. This is by:

- Mapping interventions and identifying gaps and opportunities not only for the Accelerator Lab to address, but other projects, programmes and initiatives;
- Nurturing a Network of Innovators in which good practices from all relevant projects are captured and shared within the ILO and the Alliance 8.7 network;
- Ensuring that methods for scaling up interventions are included in project proposals and strategies from the beginning to maximise the impact of development cooperation.

Monitoring and Learning

The Accelerator Lab Actionable M&E Vision goes beyond the traditional project-cycle M&E: its objective is to ensure high-quality monitoring and reporting of results while making room for continuous adaptation & innovation (‘adaptive management approach’). The system promotes an evidence-based approach to target the most needed interventions; to learn from lessons and good practices; and to accelerate the interventions where possible for greater impact. The adaptive approach adopted allows ILO constituents and funding partners to participate in annual reviews and learning fora.

Responsive Funding and Programmatic Mechanism

A Multi-Partner Fund has been set up to ensure a coherent programmatic approach and to facilitate the funding of the Accelerator Lab. The programme comprehends a multi-donor funding mechanism to ensure effective management and oversight of resources, while promoting collaboration and partnerships. Resources are mobilized by the ILO in collaboration with tripartite partners towards meeting a funding target of US$50 million by 2030. In addition, the ILO contributes to the Accelerator Lab through its own resources, including technical expertise at the global, regional and country levels and cost-sharing operational expenditures.

This document shall be the basis for planning and activities for the next three years. It will be revisited on the basis of evaluations to change or adapt as needed.