



International
Labour
Organization

► Evaluation Office

► ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation

Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations

4th edition



► **ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation:**

Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations

4TH EDITION

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First published 2020

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ILO policy guidelines for evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 4th edition

ISBN 9789220324165 (print), 9789220324172 (web PDF)

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Abbreviations

AER	Annual Evaluation Report
DD	Department Director
DDG	Deputy Director-General
DEFP	Departmental Evaluation Focal Point
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EAC	Evaluation Advisory Committee
EMCP	Evaluation Manager Certification Programme
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
GB	Governing Body
HLE	High-level evaluation
HQ	Headquarters
IE	Impact evaluation
IGDS	ILO Internal Governance Documents System
ILO	International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PARDEV	Partnerships and Field Support Department
P&B	Programme and Budget
PRODOC	Project document

QCPR	Quadrennial comprehensive policy review
RBM	Results-based management
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
RD	Regional Director
REAC	Regional Evaluation Advisory Committee
REO	Regional Evaluation Officer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEO	Senior Evaluation Officer
SG	Secretary-General
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Introduction

What is evaluation and why is it important?

Evaluation in the International Labour Organization (ILO) is primarily used as a management 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. In other words, an evaluation provides an assessment of a particular intervention, focusing on what works, what does not work, and why this is the case. Evaluations also examine whether or not the best approach was taken and if it was optimally executed. Evaluations focus on the achievement of development results within their respective contexts, taking into account design, implementation and management processes. The [ILO evaluation policy](#) (ILO 2017a) bases its definition on the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD/DAC) definition of evaluation, presented in **box 1**.

The ILO evaluation policy

The Evaluation Office (EVAL) is governed by the [ILO evaluation policy](#) and the [ILO results-based evaluation strategy](#) (ILO 2018), the latter of which is updated on a cyclical basis. These two key governance-level documents define the ILO's organizational approach and results-based framework for evaluation.¹ The evaluation strategy is operationalized in the context of the ILO's strategic planning document and the biennial **programme and budgets** (P&Bs). The [evaluation function is evaluated every five years](#) at the request of the Governing Body (GB) to review progress and the effectiveness of the function.

Additional high-level parameters for evaluation are elaborated in internal documents, The ILO Evaluation Office (ILO 2009b; 2011e; 2014).² In addition, the ILO adheres to the latest designated good practices in evaluation within international development, such as the [Norms and Standards for Evaluation of the United Nations Evaluation Group](#) (UNEG 2016). Evaluations are also an integral part of the *ILO accountability framework* (ILO 2010).

Navigating the policy guidelines

The ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation are intended to provide a complete package of guidance for ILO staff, who are tasked with planning, managing, overseeing, and/or following up on an evaluation's recommendations. The most recent version of these [guidelines](#) can also be accessed on [EVAL's public website](#).³

Stored on EVAL's public website, the guidelines are the backbone of the “i-eval resource kit” and provide ILO managers and practitioners with a gateway into ILO's expertise and knowledge on evaluation. For those who require more information, the policy guidelines provides hyperlinks to evaluation-related guidance notes, tools, checklists, templates, protocols and workflows that are organized into five thematic pillars:

- ▶ [Pillar 1. Enabling conditions for good evaluations;](#)
- ▶ [Pillar 2. Types of evaluation;](#)
- ▶ [Pillar 3. Planning and designing evaluations;](#)
- ▶ [Pillar 4. Managing and conducting evaluations;](#) and
- ▶ [Pillar 5. Use and dissemination of evaluation findings.](#)

Where applicable, suggestions for supplementary reading are also included. The policy guidelines are also organized into five chapters. For ease of navigation, each chapter tab is “clickable” which will bring the user directly to the relevant section. The online web version is updated regularly to reflect latest developments in evaluation and is accessible primarily on [EVAL's public website](#) and on its [Knowledge Sharing Platform](#).⁴

BOX 1: DEFINITION OF EVALUATION

An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.

Source: [OECD/DAC, 2016](#).

Note: The revised [OECD/DAC guidance \(2019\)](#) did not alter the definition of evaluation but adjusted the definitions of the evaluation criteria and added coherence as a new criterion (OECD, 2020).

- 1 For a glossary of evaluation terms used officially by the ILO, see [OECD/DAC \(2002\)](#).
- 2 Links to the Internal Governance Documents System (IGDS) are accessible to ILO staff only.
- 3 The ILO evaluation guidelines are an integral part of the mandate of the Evaluation Office (ILO 2011d; 2014).
- 4 Accessible only to ILO officials.

The policy guidelines are organized in the following chapters:

- ▶ **Chapter 1** provides an overview of the principles and rationale guiding evaluations in the ILO and aims to clarify basic concepts. It serves as an introduction to explain the added value of evaluation to the Organization in the context of results-based management (RBM);

- ▶ **Chapter 2** focuses on the ILO's operational approach to evaluations, both centralized and decentralized;

- ▶ **Chapter 3** guides the reader through the processes of planning and managing evaluations;

- ▶ **Chapter 4** lays out the framework for conducting an evaluation; and







- ▶ **Chapter 5** identifies the means for communicating evaluation results and knowledge dissemination.

EVALUATION TOPICAL UPDATES

While the evaluation guidelines are updated regularly, the rapid pace at which conditions may change on the ground require flexibility and agility. During periods of crises, such as pandemics, natural disasters and serious economic hardships, evaluation remains even more relevant but may require adjustments in procedures. For this reason, EVAL created an online workspace for "[evaluation topical updates](#)" for real-time updates on adapted guidance and resources for evaluation managers, project officers and donors.

Key to the icons and instructions on accessing documents

The Policy guidelines are complemented by a [suite of interactive guidance material](#) that provide detailed information on selected topics. This material is available in the form of guidance notes, checklists, templates, tools and protocols.

-  Links to a document or a website that offers further information
-  Websites that point to the ILO
-  Links to an EVAL guidance note
-  Links to an EVAL checklist and tools
-  Links to an EVAL protocols
-  Links to an EVAL template

When a document is cited as "internal" or "intranet", it can only be accessed by ILO officials. Non-ILO officials may request a copy of such documents by sending an email to eval@ilo.org



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► Principles and rationale for evaluation in the ILO

► 1. Principles and rationale for evaluation in the ILO

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the general principles and rationale for evaluation within the ILO. It also places evaluation in the broader context of the ILO, outlining the various frameworks and policy initiatives, which should be taken into account as part of evaluations.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- Evaluation in the context of the ILO's RBM framework;
- Guiding principles of evaluation in the ILO;
- Evaluation in a changing development environment;
- The ILO's evaluation function; and
- The role of the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC).

1.1 Evaluation in the ILO's results-based management framework

The aim of evaluation in the ILO is to support improvements in programmes and policies, and to promote **accountability** and learning. This is consistent with the UNEG Norms for the UN System, which states:

- The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning. Evaluation aims to understand why — and to what extent — intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking, development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness (UNEG 2016).

ILO evaluation and the organization's **RBM** are interlinked: according to *Results-based management in the International Labour Organization*, the evaluation process provides "a distinct, essential and complementary function to performance measurement and RBM."⁵ RBM entails monitoring as a means to measure progress towards intended outcomes on a recurrent basis. Evaluations, on the other hand, examines the extent to which outcomes were achieved, the determining factors for this, as well as whether or not any unintended outcomes emerged.

Evaluations utilize information from **monitoring** systems to conduct in-depth assessments of contribution, relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. Evaluation also brings elements of independent judgement to the performance system and provides recommendations for appropriate action from management. Evaluation also makes essential contributions to RBM by informing its planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and

reporting cycle. For these reasons, evaluation is an essential component of RBM.

Independent, objective and impartial evaluations are considered a precondition for accountability.⁶ The **ILO accountability framework** comprises a full range of instruments which, taken as a whole, establish the accountability of staff members at all levels for their decisions and actions. To foster accountability, evaluation in the ILO aims to inform managerial decisions involving line management and constituents on future planning in a particular technical area or country context, and to inform policy in the ILO or among partner country governments in line with the **Paris Declaration** on Aid Effectiveness, the **Accra Agenda for Action**⁷ and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (UN 2015).

5 RBM is defined by the ILO as "a management approach that directs organizational processes, resources, products and services towards the achievement of measurable outcomes" (ILO 2011a).

6 According to OECD/DAC (2002), accountability is the "obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans. This may require a careful, even legally defensible, demonstration that the work is consistent with the contract terms."

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1.2 Guiding principles of evaluation in the ILO

All aspects of evaluation in the ILO are guided by the ILO evaluation policy and the ILO evaluation strategy which adhere to the [OECD/DAC Principles](#) (OECD/DAC 2019) and [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (UNEG 2016). The evaluation function is designed to be objective and independent, with the aim of enhancing external credibility, fostering a culture of learning and providing support to the governance and oversight roles of the GB.

The evaluation strategy incorporates the key guiding principles of the Strategic Policy Framework, which call upon evaluation to strengthen knowledge development and accountability in the areas of Decent Work, international labour rights and standards and the [ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](#) as well as to enhance the relevance and utility of evaluation to constituents. The advent of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) places new demands on ILO initiatives to be complimentary with relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This means that evaluations must consider how ILO initiatives fit within this new development framework.

Evaluation should contribute to decision-making through evidence-based assessment of strategies, policies, programmes and projects. The evaluation function in the ILO is designed to ensure transparency and independence of evaluations; this in turn, reinforces the credibility and utility of evaluations. Line managers are called upon by the ILO Director-General to safeguard the integrity of the evaluation process by ensuring adherence to the ILO evaluation policies and guidelines and use of the evaluation system. **Box 2** outlines the principles of ILO evaluation, which are drawn from internationally accepted norms and standards of independent evaluations in the United Nations (UN) system. **Box 3** describes specific ILO principles for evaluation.

1.3 Evaluation in a changing development environment

Evaluations with partners in the United Nations Development System (UNDS) are growing in importance in the context of [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation](#)

BOX 2: ILO PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATION

- **Usefulness:** The selection, design and follow-up of evaluations aim to be useful, particularly to support decision-making.
- **Impartiality:** Evaluation processes are established to minimize bias and protect impartiality at all stages of the evaluation, thereby supporting the credibility of the evaluation function and evaluation results. Reports must present the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations in a complete and balanced way.
- **Independence:** Evaluators are selected with due regard to avoiding potential conflicts of interest.
- **Quality:** Each evaluation should employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented, covering appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation.
- **Competence:** Those engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities shall have all the necessary skills to conduct high-quality and ethical work as defined in the UN Evaluation Group's professional standards.
- **Transparency and consultation:** Transparency and consultation with stakeholders are present in all stages of the evaluation process. This strengthens the credibility of the evaluation and facilitates ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Source: ILO, 2009b.

7 The Paris Declaration sets the agenda for far-reaching and monitorable actions to reform the ways of delivering and managing aid. The signatory thereby commits to fostering "ownership, harmonization, alignment, results and mutual accountability," among other things; strengthening partner countries' national development strategies and operational frameworks; increasing their capacities; and addressing weaknesses in partner countries' institutional capacities to develop and implement results-driven development strategies (OECD 2005).

BOX 3. SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATION ACCORDING TO THE ILO EVALUATION POLICY

- Promoting and facilitating the use of results for decision-making processes and organizational learning to better fulfil the ILO's mandate.
- Limit the management influence over TOR, scope of the evaluation and selection of evaluators;
- Involvement of constituents and others as appropriate, in the planning, implementation and reporting process;
- Uphold the ILO mandate and mission by selecting evaluation approaches and methods that reflect the tripartite organization, its focus on social justice, and its normative and technical mandate.
- Adequacy of treatment of core ILO cross-cutting priorities, such as gender equality and non-discrimination promotion of standards, tripartite processes and constituent capacity development.

Source: ILO, 2017a.

[Frameworks \(UNSDCF\)](#)⁸ or equivalent planning frameworks, including the [United Nations Country Team \(UNCT\)](#), the government of the programme country and donors who support the programme(s). Establishing that link is a prerequisite for the evaluation of [Decent Work Country Programmes \(DWCP\)](#) and similar country-level programme frameworks as well as for individual agencies' projects, such as the ILO. This is particularly true in the context of the challenge and opportunities presented by the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the national sustainable development strategies, which countries and development partners will have to consider.

The introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has meant that the ILO has to look both inward and outward as it works to optimize its contribution to the [SDGs through the Decent Work Agenda](#). As the ILO has acknowledged, it will not be 'business as usual' in going forward. The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) identifies data, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as playing key roles in informing the follow-up and review processes of the work of UNSDCF in all relevant countries. To ensure evaluations can provide a compelling and credible evidence-based information, front-end analysis of SDG/DW connections will be required to gain an understanding and agreement on interventions, their logic and why they are expected to work. In addition, at country level, it is critical that ILO continues to focus on the 'new paradigm' associated with National Evaluation Capacity Development – that is,

supporting countries in collecting the necessary country data and building national M&E capacity for the primary purpose of country-led development.

Evaluation is considered essential for demonstrating the achievements of the UN system. The ILO Director-General, in a video statement to the 2016 UNEG Evaluation Week High-level Event noted that "evaluation in the UN system is intended to guide transparency, effectiveness and organizational learning but this is only possible when evaluations across the development partners are cohesive, strategic, accessible and constituent oriented. In order to gauge our success in respect to this goal and others, we must ensure that our evaluations at every level provide relevant data that shows the achievements made towards the SDGs and the respective agencies' contributions to them."

In his report on the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), the SG announced his decision to address gaps in system-wide evaluation by establishing a dedicated coordination capacity in 2020.⁹ This [dedicated evaluation function](#) will help conduct system-wide evaluations designed to complement—not replace—the evaluative work of UN entities. These targeted activities will focus on three levels: at country level, they will be on the evaluation of the cooperation framework and related joint activities; at regional level, they will collectively support the SDGs and knowledge management activities coordinated within the respective regional collaborative platforms (RCPs); and at global level, they will focus on planning, conducting, reporting and resourcing system-wide evaluations, and sharing knowledge across them.

⁸ Previously called UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

⁹ UN, 2020.

Further reading:

- ▶ [i-eval THINK Piece, No. 11 – Applying evaluative thinking towards an effective ILO contribution to the implementation of the SDGs.](#)
- ▶ [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks \(UNSDCF\).](#)
- ▶ [United Nations Development Group. Support to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams: MAPS - Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support \(Elements in support of a future common approach for effective and coherent UN support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda\).](#)
- ▶ [ILO EVAL Training for Constituents \(2020\): The 2030 Agenda, Decent Work and the implementation of the SDGs.](#)

1.4 The evaluation function in the ILO

According to an internal document on evaluation in the ILO, “The evaluation function is designed to be objective and independent, with the aim of enhancing external credibility and the culture of learning and providing better support to the governance and oversight roles of the Governing Body.” (ILO 2011d, p. 1.) High-level evaluations (HLEs) and the [Annual Evaluation Reports \(AER\)](#) are submitted to the GB and discussed in the Programme, Financial and Administrative Section (PFA). The annual programme of evaluation is approved by the GB, which may initiate additional external evaluations. The GB is also kept informed on progress made in the implementation of evaluation recommendations.

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](#) through dual reporting lines. The Director of EVAL reports directly to the Director-General and provides an AER and the findings of the HLEs directly to the GB. Conducted by EVAL, the HLEs may cover strategic or institutional issues, policy outcomes and DWCPs. The follow-up to their recommendations is monitored by the GB and the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC). The AER comprises two parts; Part I includes a discussion on the implementation of the ILO’s evaluation strategy and Part II assesses the ILO’s effectiveness and results based on an annual meta-analysis of evaluation reports using a set of detailed performance criteria. EVAL is also responsible for elaborating policies, setting operational guidelines and conducting quality control of decentralized evaluations of projects and programmes. It systematically monitors follow-up to project-level evaluation recommendations and, since 2014, has taken on increasing responsibility for providing support on impact evaluation (IE) through advisory services and quality appraisals of IEs conducted in the ILO.

1.5 The role of the Evaluation Advisory Committee

The [EAC](#) (ILO 2008a) was established by an internal circular providing a mechanism for overseeing the use, implementation and follow-up to lessons learned and recommendations resulting from ILO evaluation activities. Its objective is to promote institutional follow-up on independent evaluation findings and recommendations.

Over time, the workload of the EAC has grown in size and importance. As a result, a decision was made to re-constitute the Committee to include representation

from all regions. The 2018 evaluation strategy proposes to build on this successful expansion by creating regional evaluation advisory committees (REACs). The first step in the process was to carry out a study to explore the added value of the proposed REACs. Representation on the EAC was also revised to include directors from the ILO’s Policy Portfolio. The EAC’s agenda includes first and foremost follow-up to recommendations of HLEs and related strategic discussions, in addition to presentations on other pertinent issues.

The Committee may also consider feedback on follow-up plans and actions to evaluation recommendations taken for large, development cooperation projects and systemic issues identified in decentralized evaluation reports. The EAC provides additional assurance to the senior management team and ILO constituents by ensuring that the follow-up to evaluation recommendations is transparent and regularly conducted.

In addition, the EAC functions as a forum for internal dialogue on the implementation of the ILO evaluation policy and strategy to ensure that evaluations are credible, impartial and independent. It may also discuss draft plans for carrying out independent evaluations and provide its recommendations to the Director-General or EVAL, as appropriate. Among other functions, the EAC informs the Strategic Planning and Management Department (PROGRAM) on the findings and recommendations of evaluation reports that could be used in developing new

[P&B proposals](#). The Committee also provides advice on any evaluation issue that may be of interest to the Director-General and verifies that all independent evaluations adhere to the [ILO Policy on public information disclosure](#) (ILO 2008b).

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► Operational approach to evaluation in the ILO

► 2. Operational approach to evaluation in the ILO

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the operational structure of evaluation in the ILO by detailing the various types of evaluation that are conducted according to the evaluation policy and how these evaluations are undertaken.

The chapter will provide an overview of the following topics:

- Types of evaluation: strategy and policy evaluations; DWCP evaluations; thematic evaluations; impact evaluations; project evaluations; Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) evaluations; joint evaluations and external evaluations;
- Roles and responsibilities of regional and departmental evaluation networks and;
- Evaluation schedules and work plans.

2.1 Types of evaluation: centralized and decentralized evaluations

Since 2005, the ILO evaluation function has incorporated a combination of centralized (governance-level) and decentralized evaluation responsibilities. Independent strategy and Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) evaluations are governance-level¹⁰ evaluations, which are conducted or managed directly by EVAL. In some instances, EVAL also undertakes thematic evaluations whenever there is a substantive request.

All other types of evaluation are decentralized since their resourcing is primarily the responsibility of departments and regions with evaluation management provided by [certified evaluation managers](#), with 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-evaluations.

High-level evaluations undertaken for the GB aim to generate insights related to organizational performance in the context of the RBM system. These contribute to high-level decision-making on policies, strategies and accountability. ILO senior management and the GB participate in the process of identifying priorities for evaluation as well as determining the timing and intended use(s) for each evaluation. To this end, an annual process of informal consultations on the selection of topics for high-level strategic evaluations and their terms of reference (TORs) is organized. A rolling three-year evaluation programme of work with proposed HLE topics is then presented to the GB for its approval.

Decentralized evaluations focus on programmatic areas that are more directly under the control of managers. These include development cooperation projects, country programmes and reviews of technical interventions from all sources of funding, including from RBSA and Regular Budget Technical Cooperation (RBTC).

The [ILO evaluation policy](#) provides an operational framework that serves different needs and aims to generate knowledge and inform decisions at different levels of programming within the Office, as presented in **figure 1**.

¹⁰ Also referred to as “high-level” in these policy guidelines.

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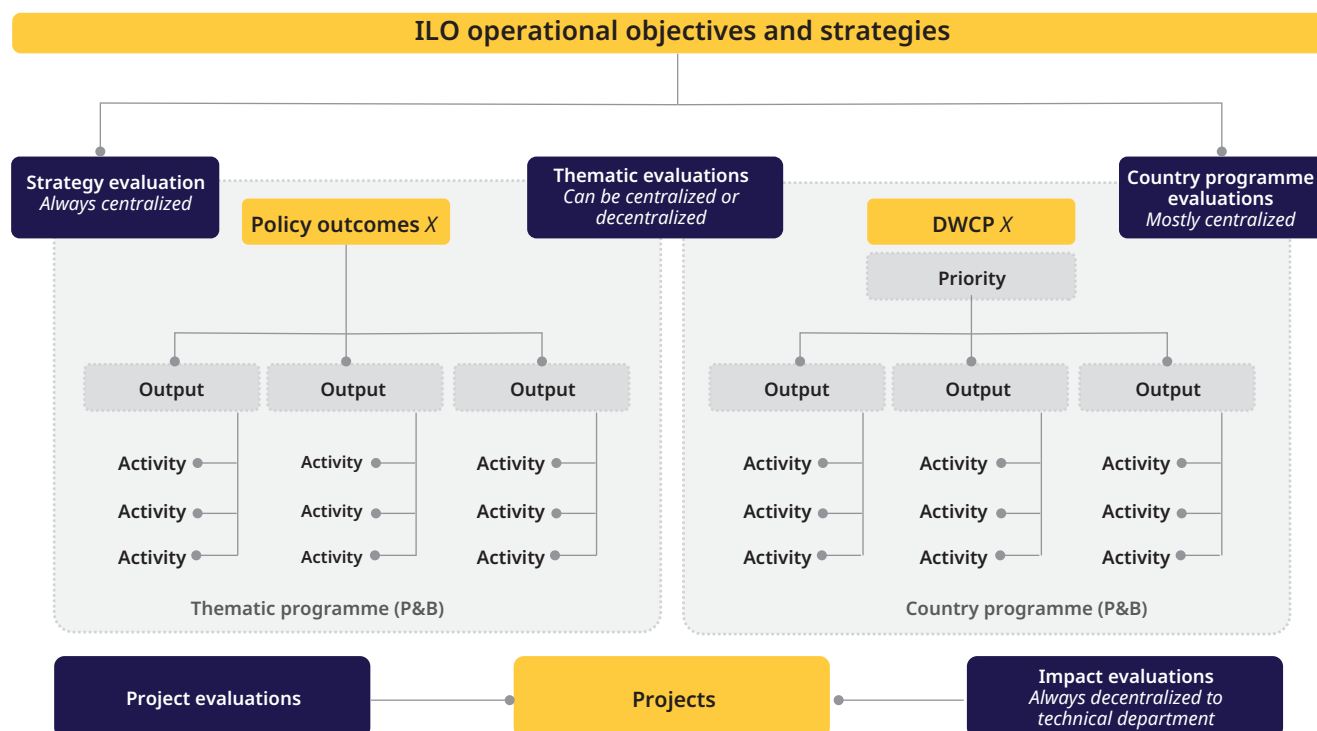
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Figure 1. Evaluations and the ILO's results-based framework



The department directors (DDs) and regional directors (RDs) of staff members who manage projects and programmes take responsibility for ensuring that evaluation work falling under their administrative authority is initiated. The Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP) take on that responsibility for evaluations of workers' and employers' development cooperation. For quality control purposes, these decentralized evaluations are supported by **departmental evaluation focal points** (DEFPs) or **regional evaluation officers** (REOs) with certified evaluation managers. A senior evaluation officer in EVAL has the responsibility for approving the final evaluation report. Evaluation managers' responsibilities are separate from those of project managers. Their respective duties, along with other key players in the evaluation process, are illustrated in **table 1**.

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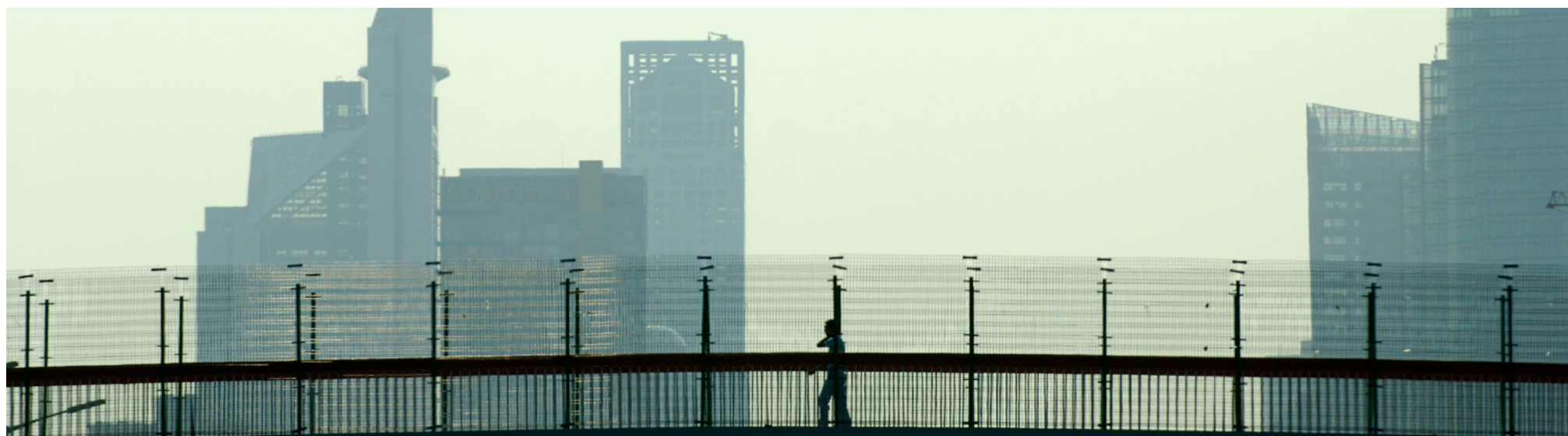


TABLE 1. KEY ROLES AND GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

Actor	Roles and responsibilities
RD and DD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures principles supporting the evaluation function apply to all evaluations falling within their domain Ensures compliance with Office policies, including required self-evaluation, internal evaluation and independent evaluation of programmes and projects Promotes a culture of evaluation across regions and departments to inform organizational learning, transparency and accountability
ILO responsible official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that sufficient funds are secured for evaluations at the intervention design stage Provides administrative and technical support throughout the evaluation process Provides comments on the draft report Provides a management response to evaluation recommendations from independent evaluations according to ILO evaluation policy Sends the report to the donor unless otherwise agreed with PARDEV. Includes PARDEV and EVAL in copy in such communications Follows up on the evaluation and disseminates lessons learned
EVAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides standards and guidance on evaluation procedures and methodologies Assures quality of reports meet international standards Monitors compliance with ILO evaluation policy Approves independent evaluation reports Stores and makes publicly available all evaluation reports, including their summaries, lessons learned, recommendations and management responses in <i>i-eval</i> Discovery Initiates the management response to evaluation recommendations exercise for independent evaluations Reports to the GB on an annual basis the health of the evaluation function as reported against the evaluation strategy

REO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides support in the planning of evaluation for the region. This includes the submission of annual RBSA plans to EVAL for approval and implementation of the regional evaluation work plan Provides support in the case of evaluability studies or scoping missions Identifies and briefs the evaluation manager on roles and responsibilities Works with evaluation manager to select an evaluation consultant Approves the selection of evaluator (REOs should consult the evaluation consultant database) Approves the final version of the TOR Consults with EVAL, as required Reviews the final evaluation report and completes the relevant submission documents before sending it to EVAL
DEFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides support in the planning of decentralized evaluations for the department Provides support in the case of evaluability studies or scoping missions Works with evaluation manager to select an evaluation consultant Approves the selection of evaluation consultant; DEFP should consult the evaluation consultant database. Approves the final version of the TOR and consults with EVAL as required Reviews the final evaluation report and completes the relevant submission documents prior to submission to EVAL
Evaluation manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts the TOR in consultation with stakeholders (including donors) Submits draft the TOR to stakeholders for additional comments, revises the TOR then submits it to the respective REO or DEFP for approval Selects an evaluator and submits selection to the respective REO or DEFP for approval. EVAL should be consulted as necessary. Once the evaluator is approved, negotiates terms and finalizes evaluator arrangements, including the briefing Works with project staff to ensure evaluator is provided with adequate documentation, access to data and other support when necessary Reviews first draft of the inception and evaluation reports Circulates the draft report to stakeholders for comments Consolidates comments received from stakeholders and sends them to the evaluator

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews final evaluation report to ensure quality Submits final report package (including the submission form and evaluator review form) to the respective REO or DEFP for initial approval and then sends to EVAL HQ for formal approval Once approved by EVAL, the evaluation manager endorses payment to the evaluator
Project/ Programme Manager and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides input to the TOR Ensures evaluator has adequate documentation, assists in data gathering and logistical support Arranges meetings and coordinates exchanges between the evaluation team and partners Participates in the evaluation workshop and provides input to evaluation manager on the draft report
Evaluation consultant (evaluator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertakes the evaluation according to the agreed TOR Prepares and submits inception report, draft and final evaluation reports to evaluation manager Is always an external individual for all independent evaluations, but may be aided by an internal ILO evaluator independent of the project Must be independent and has sole responsibility for the substantive content of the final evaluation report which must adhere to EVAL quality requirements and formats
PARDEV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures adequate resources for monitoring (minimum of 3% of the total project budget) and evaluation (minimum of 2% of the total project resources) are foreseen in the project proposal and budget document Receives final evaluation report after approval from EVAL Is copied on messages by the ILO Responsible Official when (s)he sends the evaluation report to the donor Submits evaluation report to the donor when specified in the project Approval Minute

EVAL designed and implements an Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP) and maintains a list of certified evaluation managers in the ILO. DEFPs and REOs are responsible for assisting in the identification of an evaluation manager, separate from project management, who is responsible for the actual management of the evaluation process. The role of EVAL is to focus on quality control and technical support to departments and regions, profile evaluation results, encourage their use and share experiences in order to promote organizational learning. The responsibility for financing decentralized evaluations is with those managing the projects or programmes. EVAL maintains oversight control for decentralized evaluations and is accountable for their independence (unless the evaluations are self or internal) and overall quality. The aims, designated responsibilities and timing of the various types of evaluation in the ILO are described in sections 2.1.1–2.1.8 and further summarized in **table 2**.



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TABLE 2. TYPES, DESIGNATED RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMING OF HIGH-LEVEL AND DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS¹¹

Type of evaluation	Main purpose	Responsibility	Timing
GOVERNANCE-LEVEL (INDEPENDENT)			
Strategy, policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review major policies or institutional issues Assess impact, effectiveness and benefits of ILO core strategies as described in P&B Improve strategies, policies and the functioning of the Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EVAL to plan and manage GB and senior management confirming topics EAC reviewing follow-up 	Two each year; additional as mandated and resourced
GOVERNANCE-LEVEL (INDEPENDENT/INTERNAL)			
DWCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the extent to which significant impact is being made towards DW and related DWCP outcomes set out in the P&B Feed into country tripartite dialogue on impact, effectiveness and relevance of ILO action at the country level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EVAL to plan and manage Regional offices responsible for financing internal country programme reviews 	EVAL conducts at least one a year; and supports regions to internally evaluate a number of DWCPs and country programme reviews
DECENTRALIZED (INDEPENDENT / INTERNAL)			
Thematic evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop cross-cutting lessons, including good practices to innovate and feed into departmental/regional learning on specific technical interventions and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical departments, other technical groups and regions to plan and manage Technical programmes and regions to provide resources EVAL to oversee and on ad hoc basis to initiate and undertake thematic evaluations on specific topics of interest 	Based on work plans of thematic evaluations
Impact evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess effects and impact of specific policy and programme interventions on beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical departments, other technical groups and regions to plan and manage EVAL to support and oversee quality Technical programmes and regions to resource 	Based on work plans of IEs
DECENTRALIZED (EXTERNAL /JOINT)			
Joint evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess jointly with partner organizations, programmes where ILO is one of several managing and implementing joint programmes in order to ensure ILO's contribution is being sufficiently addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of ILO's input to evaluation supervised by REOs or DEFPs. EVAL provides oversight quality and compliance Cost to be covered by joint programme 	Subject to planning and reporting schedule according to project document of agreement
DECENTRALIZED			
External evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted by entity outside ILO for accountability or learning purposes The evaluation is undertaken, funded and managed by the external entity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departments must contact EVAL in the case of external evaluations to ensure the process is appropriately negotiated in accordance with the ILO evaluation policy 	Mid-term or final evaluation May also be done as cluster evaluations to assess a funding package across programmes

¹¹ Adapted from ILO Evaluation Policy, 2017.

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DECENTRALIZED INDEPENDENT (INTERNAL OR SELF)

Project evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess projects for relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and contribution to broader impact Determine appropriateness of design to ILO's strategic and national DW programme frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDGs and RDs responsible for ensuring application of ILO evaluation policy Management of evaluation supervised by REOs or DEFPs EVAL provides oversight and real-time quality control and ex-post quality control Cost of evaluation to be included in project budget 	Mid-term or final or as stipulated in the project evaluation plan
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2.1.1 STRATEGY AND POLICY EVALUATIONS

► [Evaluations of ILO strategies and policies](#) are conducted in order to provide an account of their results to the GB. The focus of these evaluations is largely on specific policy outcomes within the frameworks provided by the strategic policy and P&B. These HLEs aim to assess relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, and identify the potential for impact and sustainability of the associated policy outcomes and their implementation strategies. Since 2015, EVAL has also embarked on Institutional HLEs that analyze the effectiveness and efficiency of institutional mechanisms to deliver services to constituents (e.g. development cooperation modalities, Field Structure, Capacity Building, Research, Knowledge Management, etc.)

Each year, EVAL manages at least two policy/institutional evaluations and one sub regional DWCP evaluation (discussed below). In accordance with ILO guidelines, EVAL manages these HLEs. The evaluation team is composed of one or more external consultant(s) and an ILO senior evaluation officer without prior association to the strategy or policy. These evaluations are financed by EVAL through its regular budget and may benefit from cost-sharing with the regions or departments.

[Strategy and policy evaluations](#) are generally conducted over a six to nine-month period. They usually begin following the approval of EVAL's rolling work plan by the ILO GB Session in November and are finalized prior to the

subsequent November GB Session. The evaluation summary reports and the Office response to the evaluations' recommendations are presented to the GB. Follow-up to recommendations in the HLEs is reviewed by the EAC.

Further reading:

- [EVAL's high-level strategy and policy evaluations](#)
- [Governing Body discussions of high-level evaluations \(strategy and Decent Work Country Programme evaluations\)](#)
- [Protocol 2.1 High-level protocol for policy outcome/strategy evaluations](#)

2.1.2 DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS

[DWCPs](#) are the main vehicle for the delivery of ILO support to countries and represent distinct ILO contributions to UN country programmes. The ILO supports independent evaluations of DWCPs to provide its national and international partners with an impartial and transparent assessment of the ILO's work in specific countries. They are a means of identifying challenges, achievements and the Organization's contribution towards national development objectives, DW and related DWCP outcomes that are established in the P&B.

Furthermore, [DWCP evaluations](#) focus on the coherence and coordination of the ILO's work with other UN agencies in UNSDCF. They also generate information that can feed into tripartite dialogue on the effectiveness, relevance and impact of ILO interventions at country level. In consultation with the regions, EVAL manages at least one DWCP evaluation each year at the governance level. Since 2013, DWCP evaluations have been conducted using a cluster approach. This means that the evaluation examines a subregional cluster of DWCPs instead of one in a single country. This offers more coverage, value for money and an opportunity to look at regional contextual factors as they pertain to the implementation of DWCPs.

Further reading:

- [ILO Decent Work Country Programme: A Practical Guidebook, Version 4 \(ILO 2016d\)](#)
- [EVAL's high-level Decent Work Country Programme \(DWCP\) evaluations](#)
- [Governing Body discussions of high-level evaluations \(strategy and Decent Work Country Programme evaluations\)](#)
- [Protocols 2.2. High-level evaluation protocol for DWCP evaluation](#)

2.1.3 PROJECT EVALUATIONS

[ILO project evaluations](#) consider the relevance of project design as it relates to the ILO's strategic and national policy frameworks as well as the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of outcomes. They are used to improve project performance and contribute towards organizational learning. These evaluations help those responsible for managing the resources and activities of a project enhance development results along a continuum from short- to long-term, along a linked chain of results (log frame).

Independent project evaluations also serve accountability purposes by reporting to donors and national partners on the extent to which the intended outcomes were achieved. They also offer evidence of whether or not the activities and outputs described in the project document were actually undertaken and/or produced. This is important for demonstrating that ILO is a responsible steward of funding.

Project evaluations are the building blocks of ILO's strategic policy framework. They do not stand alone, but rather are intended to feed into and align with ILO's key policy outcomes. Project evaluations provide crucial information, which when aggregated, offer insights into strategic-level progress made towards these key policy outcomes. Project evaluation is one means of further empowering local actors and moving the decision-making processes closer to the national partners. In the context of project implementation, this evaluation process provides space for reflection about how the ILO and its national partners can better support each other to achieve the desired development results.

Project evaluations can take the form of **self-evaluations**¹², **internal evaluations**, **independent evaluations** or **external evaluations**, depending on their degree of independence. These types of decentralized evaluation are associated with different levels of oversight, actors and varying degrees of impartiality and costs, as

shown in **table 3**. Evaluations can also be categorized by their timing in the implementation process, as presented in more detail in **box 4**. Budget-based and evaluation scheduling requirements for project evaluation as described in **table 4**.

Further reading:

- [EVAL's project evaluation summaries](#)
- [List of all guidance, checklists, protocols, templates and tools](#)


TABLE 3. ILO DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION APPROACHES

	Evaluation type	Evaluation management	Evaluation implementation (evaluators)	Degree of independence	Financial costs to the ILO	Organizational Learning	Level of oversight provided by EVAL
1	Self-evaluation (as part of final progress report)	ILO (including project management)	ILO (including project management)				
2	Internal evaluation	ILO (including project management)	ILO (project management works with external consultant)				
3	Independent evaluation	ILO (excluding project management) with evaluation process overseen by EVAL and its network	External				
4	External evaluation	External	External				

Low Medium High

¹² Final progress reports that include evaluation components be can be submitted in lieu of a separate self-evaluation.

TABLE 4. ILO POLICY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT EVALUATIONS¹³

Project budget (US\$)	Under 18 months	18–30 months	Over 30 months
Over 5 million	Initial M&E appraisal by  EVAL see Evaluation Tool: M&E plan appraisal tool, Independent Mid-term and Final independent. Mandatory: evaluability assessment*	Initial M&E appraisal by EVAL, Independent Mid-term and Final independent. Mandatory: evaluability assessment*	Initial M&E appraisal by EVAL, Mid-term independent, Final independent, Mandatory: evaluability assessment*
1–5 million	Final independent evaluation	Mid-term (self or internal evaluation) & final independent evaluation	Mid-term (self or internal evaluation) and final independent evaluation
500 000–1 million	Final internal evaluation	Final internal evaluation	Mid-term internal evaluation and final internal evaluation
Under 500 000	Final self-evaluation (part of a final project progress report)	Final self-evaluation (part of a final project progress report)	Mid-term self-evaluation (part of a project progress report) and final self-evaluation (part of a final project progress report)

BOX 4: CATEGORIZING EVALUATIONS BY TIMING

- **Mid-term evaluations** should take place during the implementation of projects, programmes, strategies or policies. The exact timing will vary and should be flexible if justified. They are most useful when a number of planned activities have been delivered, and a considerable percentage of funds have been spent. Mid-term evaluations aim to assess the continued relevance of an intervention and progress made towards achieving its planned objectives, offering an opportunity to make modifications to ensure they are achieved (see [Guidance Note 2.1: Independent midterm and final evaluations](#)). EVAL has oversight responsibility for all independent mid-term evaluations.
- **Final evaluations** focus on the outcomes of projects, programmes, strategies or policies and the likelihood that they will achieve impact. These evaluations provide an opportunity for in-depth reflection on the strategy and assumptions guiding the intervention. They assess the extent to which an intervention achieved its objectives and may recommend adjustments to its strategy. They are also a means to assess how well intervention-level actions support higher level ILO strategies and objectives, as articulated in DWCPs and the ILO's P&B. EVAL has oversight responsibility for all independent final evaluations. Regional and department-level evaluation officers have responsibility for hands-on supervision. See [Guidance Note 2.1: Independent midterm and final evaluations](#).
- **Ex-post evaluations** take place after completion of the project with the aim of assessing longer term effects of specific interventions. They can be part of strategy/policy, thematic or country programme evaluations that also consider the linkages between different interventions and longwer term development outcomes. The primary purpose of these evaluations is to examine the sustained impact of a particular intervention.

In addition to the above, the following are also required:

- All evaluation reports must be submitted to EVAL for archiving and dissemination purposes. These include CPRs, self-evaluations, internal evaluations and independent evaluations.
- A single evaluation may be conducted to cover several projects, which are clustered by theme or geographical focus, provided the evaluation: (a) applies a scope, purpose and methodologies comparable to what would be used for an individual evaluation; (b) has donor consent to undertake a cluster evaluation; and (c) is approved by EVAL or REOs for projects with a budget of over \$1 million.
- In addition to these mandatory requirements, evaluations should also be considered, irrespective of size of funding and timing, if the project is of a pilot or innovative nature; or if the country, theme, implementing partners or source of funding is new to ILO.

Further reading:

 [ILO Development Cooperation Manual](#)

¹³ These are the minimum requirements of the ILO; one can go beyond these subject to circumstance.

* Evaluability assessments are mandatory as per ILO's Governing Body decision stated in [GB.331/PFA/8](#).

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2.1.4 THEMATIC EVALUATIONS

Thematic evaluations assess specific aspects, themes and processes of ILO's technical work, and may also focus on particular departments, issues or approaches. Thematic evaluations provide the means for ILO technical programmes to explore the effectiveness and impact of particular approaches and to foster learning. They can be used to examine ILO work across contexts, identifying key lessons learned that may be more generally applicable than those that emerge from single project evaluations. Given the focus of thematic evaluations on effectiveness and impact, these evaluations are typically conducted towards the end of interventions.

Technical departments are generally responsible for initiating, planning, managing and funding these evaluations. EVAL provides oversight and may assist in designing thematic evaluations in collaboration with technical departments. EVAL may also undertake thematic evaluations on an ad hoc basis.

Further reading:

- 📄 [Guidance Note 2.4: Thematic evaluations](#)
- ▶ [EVAL's thematic evaluations](#)

2.1.5 IMPACT EVALUATIONS

IEs aim to assess the “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended” (OECD/DAC 2002). A key feature of IEs is that they aim to assess the contribution or **attribution** of a specific intervention or set of interventions (policy or other form of implemented intervention) to an identified outcome or effect on the ultimate beneficiaries or target groups. IEs are part of the knowledge base of effective policy solutions by providing empirical documentation for an intervention. The planning, management and funding of IEs are the responsibility of technical departments. EVAL's role is to facilitate the use and application of IEs in a credible manner through appropriate guidance, and to provide quality assurance.

EVAL has developed a variety of resources to support IE:

- ▶ An **impact evaluation framework**: EVAL developed a guidance note on how, when and why IEs should be considered and implemented, based on input from ILO staff. This focuses on the specific use and purpose of IE, the match between evaluation research questions and appropriate methodology, the use of the range of complementary methodologies available, the feasibility and value of IEs, and the need to identify impact (what) and facilitate the how and why.
- ▶ An **impact evaluation review facility**: EVAL established a review mechanism, which allows ILO staff to ask questions and request reviews of concept papers, full proposals, plans and reports to assist with planning, designing or implementing IEs (EVAL_impact@ilo.org). A Briefing Note on the operation of this facility is available.

- ▶ An **inventory of impact evaluations conducted at the ILO**: The inventory allows easier access to institutional knowledge in a variety of intervention areas.
- ▶ A **quality appraisal of ILO impact evaluations**: In order to monitor and report on the progress ILO is making in its use and quality of IE, EVAL will as off 2020 periodically commission a quality appraisal of IEs across the Organization.
- ▶ An **Informal Impact Evaluation Network as Community of Practice**: This informal group of colleagues involved and interested in IEs meets on a regular basis to share experiences and to peer review IEs, as required.

These resources are intended to support the ILO as it begins to develop its capacity in using IE to assess its work, and to develop knowledge of what works, where and for whom.

Further reading:

- 📄 [Guidance Note 2.5: Impact evaluations](#)

2.1.6 JOINT EVALUATION

Joint evaluations are evaluations where ILO partners with another entity jointly manage and implement an evaluation. These are often of a joint project/programme as foreseen in the relevant programming documents or donor agreements, to which different partners contribute through funding, specific components and/or joint activities. There can also be joint evaluations of a project/programme implemented by ILO only. However, this is where some other entity, often the donor (this can also be a national or an international partner), is jointly managing the evaluation with ILO to meet institutional-specific

requirements. Joint evaluations can be a way of meeting different institutional requirements for evaluations – for instance, the ILO and donor – in an effective and efficient manner. Any evaluation can be conducted as a joint evaluation and there may be varying degrees of collaboration among partners, depending on the extent to which they cooperate in the evaluation process, merge their evaluation resources and combine their evaluation reporting. According to the OECD/DAC, joint evaluations can help overcome challenges relating to attribution by assessing the effectiveness of programmes and strategies, exploring complementarities of efforts supported by different partners, and analysing the quality of aid coordination.

► Definition of joint evaluation

Joint evaluations are development evaluations conducted collaboratively by more than one agency

Joint evaluations address the expanding portfolio of evaluation work being planned, managed and financed jointly by the ILO, and national and international development partners, the most prevalent of which have been linked to UNSDCF and Joint Programmes of the UN at country level. The SDGs, with their requirements for country-led evaluations and integrated support from the UN system and other partners, may enhance the call and opportunities for joint evaluations. These can be as **cluster evaluations**, individual programmes/projects not designed as **joint programmes**, but linked through national strategies in the context of SDGs. REOs or DEFPs are responsible for ILO's input to joint evaluations, while EVAL provides oversight on quality and compliance. Joint evaluations should be financed from joint programme resources. The focus should be on ensuring that relevant

programming documents, work plans or M&E plans identify as soon as possible, and in as much detail as possible, the key parameters of the joint evaluation. These can range from evaluation management or evaluation coordination arrangements, timing, link to any partner-specific mandatory and complementary evaluations to funding and reporting on the evaluation. Specific guidance has been developed by EVAL for joint evaluations. In cases of donors requesting joint evaluations, please refer to [Guidance Note 2.3](#) and/or seek EVAL guidance as quickly as possible. For additional guidance on financing for joint evaluations, see section 4.5 on “evaluation budget”.

Further reading:

- 🔗 [Guidance Note 2.3: Joint evaluation](#)
- 🔗 [Quality Standards for Development Evaluation \(OECD/DAC 2010b\)](#)
- 🔗 [Managing Joint Evaluations \(OECD/DAC 2010c\)](#)
- 🔗 [Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations \(UNEG 2014a\)](#)

2.1.7 EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS

External evaluations are evaluations carried out by entities outside ILO following other institutional requirements and procedures. This normally occurs whenever donors want to conduct evaluations of programmes or projects that they have funded; traditionally, these are for the institutional purposes of accountability and organizational learning across programmes and projects, such as all projects in a given country or region and/or within a specific theme or area of work or funding, normally irrespective of the implementing partners. External evaluations can also be carried out for individual

programmes and projects for which ILO has taken the lead during implementation. The [ILO evaluation policy](#) allows for such external evaluations of ILO activities by donors funding those activities as long as they are not at the expense of evaluations managed and organized according to ILO evaluation policy. Findings from these evaluations can be useful for the ILO but they cannot replace ILO organizational learning and accountability needs.

The role of ILO in an external evaluation being undertaken by a donor where ILO is one of the implementing partners of activities funded by that donor, is as a key stakeholder and source of information, participating in the interests of contributing to organizational learning. Recommendations from such evaluations are useful inputs to the overall work of ILO in the particular area and should to be considered appropriate. However, they are not normally covered by the ILO evaluation management response system. EVAL recommends that any programme or project staff member get in touch with EVAL at ILO headquarters (HQ) or the appropriate regional office if an external evaluation is being proposed; this is particularly recommended if the donor is requesting an external evaluation as part of the project design and programme agreements.

Funding included for evaluations in ILO projects is not normally extended to external evaluations unless specifically indicated and agreed to and, in this case, only for complementary activities, such as the key stakeholder workshop and local costs, but not for the evaluation team. In the case of an entity carrying out an external evaluation that is intended to include ILO activities not funded by that entity, ILO has to assess in each case whether or not participation would be within the scope of ILO involvement in building the overall knowledge base on work in the particular area.

2.2 Regional and departmental evaluation networks

Regional evaluation networks support the planning and implementation of evaluation activities, especially for decentralized development cooperation projects. A regional network comprises a designated evaluation officer from a regional office and evaluation coordinators in Decent Work teams and country offices. **REOs** oversee the country-programme reviews and development cooperation project evaluations (internal and independent). They also oversee and advise on the process of planning, managing and following up of DWCP reviews and project evaluations, including the approval of the final TOR and the selection of consultants. These REOs also oversee reporting on follow-up to recommendations from evaluations, which fall within their responsibility.

Each ILO department has a **DEFP** who is responsible for coordinating evaluation activities. EVAL provides technical guidance and assistance to these focal points and has oversight for the quality control of decentralized evaluations. DEFPs and focal points oversee and advise on the planning, management and follow-up processes for thematic reviews and evaluations of centralized projects.

REOs or DEFPs work in conjunction with project management and EVAL to identify an evaluation manager. The pool of qualified evaluation managers has expanded given the implementation of EVAL's EMCP. Given their qualifications, these individuals should be sought out for evaluation management. EVAL supports REOs and DEFPs with matching evaluation managers to prospective evaluations via an [internal database](#). For RBSA evaluations, a percentage of resources is set aside for M&E. Evaluation managers are selected by the REO in collaboration with relevant technical departments as appropriate, with EVAL providing oversight on the use of RBSA M&E resources.

2.3 Evaluation schedules and work plans for regions and departments

Twice each year, EVAL takes a comprehensive approach to planning decentralized evaluations that involve DEFPs and REOs. Based on lists produced by retrieving data from *i-eval* Discovery, evaluation focal points in each department and region develop rolling work plans to implement their respective evaluation plans. Updates are entered into *i-eval* Discovery to ensure that it accurately displays plans in real-time to all stakeholders (see chapter 5 for more detail). Evaluation plans should be discussed across the Office to identify opportunities for collaboration and consolidation. These work plans should provide a detailed schedule of all decentralized independent evaluations scheduled for the upcoming year, as well as plans to conduct training and other capacity-building activities. As far as possible, the timing, scope and orientation of evaluations (while often determined by contractual obligations) should be synchronized with higher management and constituents' information needs in order to improve their relevance and adequately address performance. Annual reporting takes place on the progress made towards regional and departmental evaluation work plans in the [AER](#).

2.4 Evaluation of projects funded by the Regular Budget Supplementary Account

The ILO's funding base consists of assessed and voluntary contributions. Voluntary contributions include the RBSA, which allows development partners to provide un-earmarked core funding to the ILO, thereby increasing the Office's capacity to deliver and achieve results at country level. ILO Office Procedure No. 63 identifies EVAL (ILO 2009e) as being responsible for the oversight of RBSA evaluation. It establishes the procedural steps

and accountability for the use of a RBSA reserve set aside for oversight and M&E. It covers the allocation of these funds and their release, and the respective roles and accountability of HQ and the regions for implementing and reporting on the use of RBSA funds these purposes.

This reserve can only be used to finance the following activities:

- ▶ The establishment and maintenance of results-focused monitoring and reporting practices in the regions and at HQ;
- ▶ The development of monitoring systems and the establishment of baselines against which to assess and report on results; and
- ▶ The conduct of independent evaluations and internal evaluations of activities directly, but not exclusively, linked to RBSA allocations.

RBSA evaluations are included in the sample of evaluation reports that are part of regular (biannual) quality appraisals commissioned by EVAL to external consultants. A review of these studies showed that the average quality rating of the RBSA evaluations is slightly higher than that of non-RBSA evaluations, though the difference is statistically insignificant.

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► Planning and
managing evaluations

▶ 3. Planning and managing evaluations

This chapter describes key aspects on planning and managing decentralized evaluations.

This section describes EVAL's policy for conducting these activities by describing the following topics:

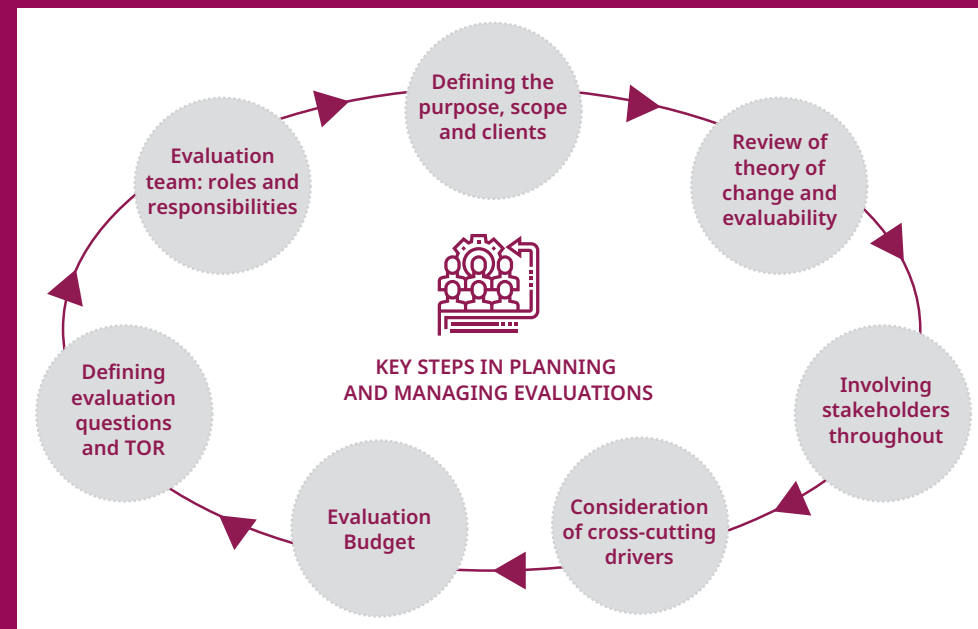
- ▶ Defining the purpose, scope and stakeholders of an evaluation;
- ▶ Theory of change and evaluability;
- ▶ Stakeholder involvement;
- ▶ Consideration of gender issues;
- ▶ Defining evaluation questions and criteria;
- ▶ Drafting and circulating the Terms of Reference (ToR);
- ▶ Establishing the evaluation budget; and
- ▶ Evaluation teams for independent evaluations: roles and skills.

3.1 Defining the purpose, scope and evaluation stakeholders

Before conducting an evaluation, a number of key steps must be taken, as summarized in **figure 2**. This process ensures that the evaluation design process is participatory, transparent and independent of any one stakeholder's specific interests. Since these steps also

establish the credibility and utility of the evaluation exercise, they should be adhered to as closely as possible. Whenever a new project is approved and an evaluation is required, EVAL enters a planning record into a database and are made publicly accessible via [i-eval Discovery](#). These planning records serve as a work plan for administrative and technical backstopping offices to prepare for upcoming evaluations.

Figure 2. Key steps in planning and managing an evaluation



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Representatives from project management should be involved in the initial determination of an evaluation's objectives, coverage and key stakeholders. It is also important to engage ILO's primary stakeholder groups (i.e. constituents) to help determine the scope of the evaluation and identify key questions to be addressed by the evaluation.

An evaluation's scope can be defined in terms of time and space (e.g. project start/end date, or by project phase and geographical areas of an intervention's implementation) or elements of a project. The consultation process helps project management and the evaluation manager to accommodate the priorities of key stakeholders when drafting the TOR and avoid making major revisions after circulation. When determining the purpose and scope of the evaluation, those drafting the TOR should keep in mind that the evaluation itself should be designed to effectively address its purpose and use resources efficiently (i.e. time and money).

3.2 Theory of change and evaluability

The reference point for evaluation should be the relevant strategy, programme or project document (PRODOC). These documents should provide the background and rationale of the programme/project, including its planned activities, outputs, objectives, outcomes, corresponding outcome indicators and assumptions. An appropriate programme/project design and a well-written programming document are important for setting a strong foundation for an evaluation. Programming documents should specify links between different levels of results frameworks such as DWCPs, P&B outcomes, SDGs and projects. These should also be considered integral to the rationale and design of an evaluation.

Programmes and strategies are based on an intervention logic, or a **theory of change** often expressed in a **log frame** and at times in a **logic model**. For technical areas, regions and the organization as a whole, the P&B and SP together serve as an overarching theory of change.

Projects and policies that are implemented should be considered within the wider context of the P&B and SP to which they connect and should highlight the relevant aspects. Prior to the evaluation, the project/programme manager should provide all relevant documents, which outline the theory of change, and any revisions made to it during the intervention's implementation to the evaluation manager for the preparation of the TOR. At times, the reconstruction of some form of theory of change based on the relevant documents may be necessary, including the details of the logical framework. This is to provide a results framework against which the achievements of the programme/project can be assessed.

Theories of change are valuable because they help to clarify the linkages between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. This offers an opportunity to identify what needs to be examined in order to test a particular theoretical proposition. This is increasingly important as ILO will be called upon to show its contribution to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks](#) (UNSDCF) and SDGs. A compelling performance story starts with an understanding of the underlying theory of change associated with the programme or project.

BOX 5: EVALUABILITY IS ASSESSED AT THREE KEY STAGES

1. During the proposal design of a project proposal: this is carried out through the M&E appraisal tool for projects over US\$5 million by EVAL (see [Tool 1.2 M&E plan appraisal tool \(over \\$5 million\)](#)).
2. At project start-up: within the first year of the intervention, there should be an evaluability assessment that can be used to validate the M&E system in place. This is mandatory for projects over US\$5 million following EVAL's template (see [Template 1.1](#)).
3. Before the evaluation of an intervention: this is carried out through an examination of the project document. This includes the project log frame, an assessment of the intended outcomes, and an investigation into data that exist in relation to the questions that need to be addressed through the evaluation.

Reviewing the theory of change also helps to determine whether it is possible to evaluate the intervention when conducting an **evaluability** assessment (**box 5**). This process should be conducted during the planning stage and may require an additional scoping mission or scoping of activities, in particular for projects with budgets over \$5 million for which evaluability reviews are mandatory.

Any evaluability assessment would normally be undertaken in coordination with the REO and support of an evaluation expert, who is capable of conducting a technical assessment of the basic parameters for a comprehensive evaluation.

If an evaluability assessment finds that existing information is lacking, or aspects of a programme are not evaluable, the results of this exercise can be used to help narrow down the set of key evaluation questions, develop the methodology, identify appropriate timing, or indicate remedial steps to be carried out prior to an evaluation.

Further reading:

[Guidance Note 1.3: Evaluability](#)

[Guidance Note 1.1: Design from an evaluation perspective](#)

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3.3 Stakeholder involvement

The ILO's primary stakeholders are the tripartite **constituents**, who comprise its organizational membership. Other key stakeholders may be relevant to HQ and field staff as well as national partners, such as United Nations officials from partner agencies, government officials in collaborating ministries, implementing agencies and representatives of other donors, as listed in **box 6**. Another important group of stakeholders are the beneficiaries of ILO's work. Participation by these stakeholder groups can help to ensure the evaluation is relevant and useful.

BOX 6: STAKEHOLDERS OF ILO EVALUATIONS

► PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

- Representatives of governments (e.g. ministries of labour)
- Representatives of employers' organizations
- Representatives of workers' organizations

► OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS (FOR PROJECTS, STRATEGY AND DWCP EVALUATIONS)

- ILO HQ staff of cooperating departments
- ILO field staff
- United Nations agencies in country
- Non-governmental organizations
- Other partners in country (e.g. donor agencies)

Participation and sensitivity to diversity is one of the guiding principles of ILO's tripartite approach and one of its comparative strengths. The core stakeholders should participate as early as possible in the planning stage to create a common understanding about the purpose and use of the evaluation and the approach to be taken. The relevant stakeholders should be involved in defining the main focus and the key questions that the evaluation should address.

Stakeholders may also participate as key informants, being interviewed individually, in groups at workshops or consulted through questionnaires. Maximizing participation in the planning phase helps to ensure that the evaluation's focus and methodology are appropriate and offers an opportunity for key stakeholders to take ownership of the evaluation. This can encourage uptake/ use of the evaluation's results.

Engaging stakeholders in evaluation also helps to build their evaluative capacity and national evaluation capacity development is more important in the era of the 2030 SDGs in supporting countries to monitor and evaluate their progress towards the SDGs. Developing the evaluation capacity of constituents is also one of the priorities of EVAL and the [ILO's evaluation strategy](#). Training materials have been developed for this purpose, see Evaluation training for tripartite constituents: Presentations, learning activities and reference materials (ILO 2012).

Further reading:

[Guidance Note 4.5: Stakeholder engagement](#)

3.4 Consideration of cross-cutting drivers for ILO work

Gender, non-discrimination, disability and environmental sustainability are considered cross-cutting drivers for ILO's work. This means that all projects and programmes should take these as appropriate into account during project design and implementation. Because of this, all evaluations should ensure that there is appropriate consideration of gender, non-discrimination, disability and environmental issues in their design and reporting. This includes assessing the extent to which projects are sufficiently addressing these issues in their projects.

EVAL is addressing this by requiring that any TOR developed for an evaluation, must integrate, as appropriate, questions that review these cross-cutting issues throughout the evaluation methodology and all deliverables, including the final report.

Certainly, this is the first step towards ensuring that gender, disability, and non-discrimination and environmental issues are well represented in evaluations.

3.4.1 GENDER

The ILO has an obligation to report on several indicators related to the inclusion of gender issues in evaluation reports in the [UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#) (UN SWAP on gender). Evaluation managers, clients and stakeholders should ensure environmental sustainability, gender issues and other issues related to non-discrimination are properly reflected in TORs. Furthermore, these same groups should examine inception reports, data collection plans, evaluation reports and any other deliverables which an evaluator may produce to ensure gender and non-discrimination are or will be appropriately addressed. While disaggregation of data by gender is an important first step in understanding how programmes and policies affect men and women differently, it is not always sufficient. A more comprehensive approach should

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involve an investigation of how an intervention affects women, men, gender relations and gender equality. Such an analysis should address not only the policy and normative frameworks of the programme or project, but also carefully discern power relationships, and identify the structural causes of gender discrimination and inequalities in employment and occupation.

3.4.2 DISABILITY

The ILO Gender, Equality and Diversity branch (GED) has additionally made disability a priority area of its work and has published a [strategy document](#) (ILO 2015) related to this topic. Given the guiding principles outlined in the above-mentioned document, ILO evaluation should consider the extent to which:

- projects incorporate disability inclusion into their designs and subsequent implementation;
- the implementation adheres to the above-mentioned principles; and
- projects contribute to increased inclusion of people with disabilities.

The [ILO's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2014–17](#) highlights the intent to which the ILO should have disability inclusion explicitly referenced in its programming and outcome areas, cross-cutting themes, and governance outcomes. If project documents specifically refer to the incorporation of such issues, it is imperative that the evaluation take this into account during the design and implementation stages.

3.4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The [ILO Environmental Sustainability Policy](#) (2016) mandates the Office to progressively mainstream environmental sustainability in its results-based management frameworks, policies and programmes, Decent Work Country Programmes and projects.

The policy directs the Office to pursue its mandate in an environmentally sustainable manner in an effort to achieve its goal of achieving climate neutrality. It is therefore necessary to address environmental sustainability considerations in evaluations specifically in the Terms of Reference and its related evaluation questions, understanding that results would be best captured when such considerations are captured in an intervention's design and implementation.

Further reading:

- 🔗 [Guidance Note 3.1 Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring & Evaluation of Projects](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.6 Writing the terms of reference](#)
- 🔗 [UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women \(UN 2016\)](#)
- 🔗 [Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation \(UNEG 2014b\)](#)
- 🔗 [ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality \(ILO 2016a\)](#)

3.5 Transformative approach to evaluation: Sensitive to ILO's specific mandate and strategic framework through clustering of evaluations

Following the [Independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function \(2016\)](#) (and in response to the evolving work of ILO and the UN development system, EVAL proposed a more transformative approach to evaluation to better inform the ILO's understanding of its effectiveness in delivering on its policy outcomes within the context of its specific mandate; move to more comprehensive coverage and analysis; and reduce "evaluation fatigue" among Office officials and constituents.

3.5.1 ADAPTING EVALUATION METHODS TO THE ILO'S NORMATIVE AND TRIPARTITE MANDATE

Following the [Independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function \(2016\)](#), EVAL has over the years stepped up its efforts to systematically integrate social dialogue and normative context in ILO monitoring and evaluation. Guidance on the subject was needed because there was clear evidence that these contexts have not been adequately considered in the past and that the mandate to do so is clear, emphatic and has never been more so.

In principle, evaluability for normative and social dialogue contexts should be addressed in the design stage to ensure that an activity or programme can be evaluated for these matters in a reliable and credible fashion. Exceptionally, evaluators can reconstruct the normative and social dialogue contexts of projects if resources and time permit.

A [Guidance Note](#) on the topic stresses the need and provide concrete tips on how to realize the policy imperative to improve ILO monitoring and evaluation in respect of the social dialogue and normative mandates that are and have been at the heart of ILO's mandate since its foundation in 1919.

3.5.2 ENHANCING STRATEGIC FOCUS OF EVALUATIONS THROUGH THEMATIC OR GEOGRAPHIC CLUSTERING

The notion of clustering evaluations was included in the latest [evaluation policy](#) and [results-based strategy](#) and has gradually been institutionalized as the preferred modality of evaluations whenever possible, including for projects. Clustered evaluations are an envelope of projects combined into a single evaluation based on their results or strategic, thematic or geographical scope. The projects are selected using a combination of criteria such as type

of evaluation, timeline and stage in implementation of activities provided these meet the required mandatory evaluation provisions.

The advantage of clustering project evaluations into a single thematic evaluation (programme and budget policy outcomes) or geographical area (DWCP countries) is that it focuses on the interconnectedness of the achievements and the achievements of the Organization, and on the impact, which includes contributions to the Decent Work Agenda and the SDGs. The clustering of the evaluations facilitates the provision of evaluative information on the work of ILO to the UN system globally, regionally, and at country-level. It also provides information for thematic-level system-wide evaluations such as the evaluations of United Nations Cooperation Framework. Clustered evaluations are likely to be able to increase the focus on systematic changes and comparative analyses of ILO's range of interventions and policy approaches.

Eval has worked out the possible typologies of such clustered evaluations, based on a review of current experiences and pilot clustered evaluations. Clustered evaluations should be seen as part of the planning of evaluations for proposed programmes (global, thematic, and country-level) and projects whenever possible, emphasizing the strategic advantage to constituents, development partners and donors. A [Guidance Note](#) with sample TORs and tools is available on the planning, implementation and follow-up for clustered evaluations. The clustered approach to evaluations requires closer collaboration with management to elicit donor consent to integrated evaluation processes. EVAL should always be consulted as early as possible when strategic clustered evaluations are considered.

Further reading:

- [i-eval Cloud: Clustered evaluations](#)
- [Guidance Note 3.3: Strategic cluster evaluation to gather evaluative information more effectively](#)

3.6 The evaluation budget

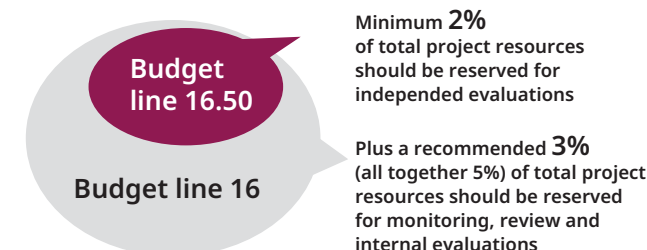
Most ILO evaluations are financed from programme or project budgets. As per the ILO evaluation policy, a minimum of 2 per cent of total project funds should be reserved for all mandatory evaluations. This is not compulsory for smaller projects below \$500,000 that only require a final progress report with self-evaluation components. Use of the resources under the dedicated evaluation budget line requires approval of the assigned evaluation manager and an ILO evaluation officer. Before funds allocated for evaluations or balances thereof can be moved to other budget lines, approval from EVAL is required.

In addition, ILO policies also recommend that resources be set aside for **monitoring**, collecting baseline data and reporting, and conducting evaluability assessments. In input-based budgets, these resources can be entered under the appropriate budget line, depending on the activity (mission credits, subcontracting to hire a research firm to collect baseline data, budget line for a workshop/seminar for consulting stakeholders on project results, etc.). A minimum of 3 per cent of the total project budget is recommended. **Figure 3** provides a financing overview for M&E activities in ILO project budgets.

On a case-by-case basis, EVAL may exceptionally allow a lower percentage for evaluations depending on certain variables, such as the size and nature of the project, the expectations in terms of evaluation deliverables, and a proper cost estimate that allows for an assessment. HQ and REOs are available for consultation to help determine an appropriate cost estimate for evaluation activities in case the 2 per cent provision is considered excessive or not adequate.

Figure 3. Financing for project evaluation

A reasonable amount of funds should be reserved for evaluation



Joint evaluations should ideally be financed from joint programme resources. When ILO is the lead agency, it is EVAL's policy that funding is secured within the joint programme document and allocated in full to ILO's budget component. When ILO is not the lead agency and the joint evaluation provisions are not in line with ILO requirements, sufficient funds (at least 2 per cent of the ILO-component budget) need to be set aside for independent or internal evaluations as complementary assessments of ILO's contribution to the joint programme to reflect ILO's contribution to the joint programme in full.

Further reading:

- [Guidance Note 2.3: Joint evaluations](#)
- [UNEG Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations](#)

3.7 Defining evaluation questions and criteria

Evaluation questions should be formulated to seek appropriate answers on a project's [relevance](#), [coherence](#), [effectiveness](#), [efficiency](#), [impact](#) and [sustainability](#). In line with United Nations good practices for evaluations, the ILO expects that each evaluation will assess these key criteria, which are outlined in **table 5**. The inception report should address the extent to which

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certain criteria may or may not be evaluable in a given context. In instances where there are insufficient data to address certain criteria, the evaluator should determine which criteria can best be addressed in order to use evaluation resources most efficiently. Results from evaluability assessments can yield relevant results to determine the scope of the evaluation.

TABLE 5. DEFINITION OF KEY EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation criterion	Definition
Relevance	The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.
Coherence	The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.
Efficiency	The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.
Impact	The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.
Sustainability	The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

The key evaluation criteria can be used to formulate appropriate evaluation questions. While the evaluation criteria are fairly standard, evaluation questions must be tailored to the specifics of the project, the answers to which should lead to recommendations for guiding key decisions. In developing evaluation questions, the evaluation manager should consider the priorities of the main stakeholders. This is done as part of the TOR, which should be circulated for comment to all key stakeholders of the evaluation.

3.8 Drafting and circulating the terms of reference

The TOR document forms a substantive part of the contractual basis for undertaking an evaluation. Writing the TOR with sufficient clarity and detail will improve the basis for joint understanding with the evaluator about what is expected to be delivered. Well-considered and well-written TOR are the foundation of a good evaluation. The TOR specify the reasons for the evaluation and summarize different stakeholders' expectations for the evaluation. It also describes the project or programme to be evaluated and its context.

Delays in the evaluation process can add to overall evaluation costs. Therefore, a realistic timeline for the evaluation should be developed. This should take into account national contexts, such as national holidays, if site visits will be taking place. The evaluation manager should take into account the time needed to complete the tasks specified in the TOR.

The TOR should be reviewed by the relevant REO or DEFP and revised accordingly. It should then be circulated to key evaluation stakeholders for their input on the draft, including the donor. Once inputs are received the evaluation manager should incorporate comments and produce a final version, which is again circulated for approval by key stakeholders. Finally, it will be circulated to the REO or a senior evaluation officer for approval.

Further reading:

- ✓ [Checklist 4.6: Writing terms of reference](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.7: Rating the quality of terms of reference](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report](#)

3.9 Evaluation teams for independent evaluations: roles and skills

Experienced external technical experts and professional evaluators are engaged to undertake independent evaluations and must be deemed independent of the project or programme being evaluated, and free of any conflict of interest. For an evaluator to be considered independent, they must fulfil the following requirements:

- Have no previous or current involvement – or offers of prospective employment – in the ILO project or programme being evaluated; and
- Have no personal links to the people involved in managing the project/programme.

Both external and internal evaluators should adhere to the highest level of technical and ethical standards. They should fulfil the criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility, and should abide by the [ILO's Code of Conduct for Evaluators](#), which is in line with the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System (UNEG 2020).

Consultants should undergo an orientation on the ILO's guidelines and quality standards for evaluation. 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. Consultants need to include confirmed completion of the programme in any expression of interest for ILO evaluation assignments.

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When an evaluation team is being developed, it is recommended to include a national evaluation consultant as a local expert. If possible, the evaluation team should combine solid evaluation expertise, sufficient technical knowledge on the area of work and strong regional and local knowledge of the area. In addition, there should be a gender balance among team members, with at least one person possessing gender-based knowledge. The evaluator may subsequently adapt the methodology proposed in the TOR, but any changes should be agreed upon between the evaluation manager and the evaluator. This agreement very often takes the form of an inception report, which is contractually specified and approved by the ILO, and described in more detail in section 4.1 (See [🔗 Guidance Note 4.4](#)).

The consultant should also be supplied with the necessary EVAL guidance on preparing the evaluation report ([✔ Checklist 4.2](#)), writing the inception report ([✔ Checklist 4.8](#)), as well as the ILO [🔗 Guidance Note 3.1 Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring & Evaluation of Projects](#).

Further reading:

- [🔗 Guidance Note 4.2: Using the Consultant Roster and the self-induction programme for evaluation consultants Checklist 4.8: Writing the inception report](#)
- [✔ Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report](#)





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► 4. Conducting the evaluation

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the main phases for conducting an evaluation.

By the end of this chapter, the reader will have a general understanding of the following key elements and products, as shown in **figure 4**:

- The Terms of reference and Inception report;
- Data collection and analysis: tools and methods;
- Conclusions and recommendations;
- Generating lessons learned and emerging good practices; and
- Reporting and dissemination of results.

4.1 The Terms of reference and Inception report

ILO evaluations are typically conducted in five phases. In the first phase, the evaluation manager prepares the TOR and evaluation plan and budget. The evaluator prepares an operational evaluation plan, known as the inception report, which should be aligned with the TOR. In the second phase, the evaluator undertakes data collection and analysis to inform the evaluation. The third and fourth phases focus on formulating conclusions and recommendations, in addition to generating lessons learned, good practices and the preparation of the draft report. The fifth phase focuses on the finalization and dissemination of the report. In the case of independent evaluations, this leads to the initiation of the management response to evaluation recommendations.

The inception report can be developed upon approval of the TOR. The purpose of the inception report is to ensure a common understanding of the TOR and to agree on the way forward. The timing and approval of the inception report should be listed as an output in the TOR. In addition, stating the methods of data collection, data analysis and reporting is required in the inception report. The choice of any site visits by the evaluator should also be specified.

Figure 4. Key elements and products in conducting the evaluation



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ILO evaluation managers play a critical role in ensuring that evaluations are carried out credibly, particularly with regard to employing sound methods. Approval of the inception report by the evaluation manager constitutes an acceptance by the ILO of the results generated through the proposed methodology. Therefore, it is important for the evaluation manager to review the interview lists and guides, questionnaires and sampling, among methodological aspects of the inception report, for any aspect that could bias and distort results. Finally, inception reports should be shared with key stakeholders for their information and comments.

Further reading:

✓ [Checklist 4.6: Writing the terms of reference](#)

✓ [Checklist 4.8: Writing the inception report](#)

4.2 Data collection and analysis: tools and methods

To strengthen the credibility and usefulness of evaluation results, most ILO evaluations use a mix of data collected from diverse sources using multiple methods. The data to be collected during an evaluation and the selection of data collection methods depend on several factors, including: the evidence needed to best answer the evaluation questions; data availability, including disaggregation by sex; the methods and analyses that are most appropriate to produce useful findings and address the evaluation criteria; the degree of equitable participation by women

and men as key stakeholders in the evaluation; and the feasibility of data collection based on time and resource availability, in addition to consideration of the local context.

4.2.1 TYPES OF DATA

Primary data consist of information evaluators observe or collect directly from stakeholders about their first-hand experience with the intervention. These data are collected through the use of surveys, meetings, focus group discussions, interviews or other methods, which involve direct contact with the respondents. These data can facilitate deep understanding of observed changes and the factors which contributed to change.

Secondary data are collected by the ILO, or other individuals or agencies for purposes other than those of the evaluation. They can take many forms, but usually consist of documentary evidence that has direct relevance for the purposes of the evaluation: nationally and internationally published reports; economic indicators; project or programme plans; monitoring reports; previous reviews, evaluations and other records; country strategic plans; and research reports. Exploring the availability of relevant data should be carried out by project staff when designing the M&E plan for a project in order to ensure that the data are available and usable for evaluation purposes. Making use of data that are already available can be cost-effective and save time, but this should not replace the collection of primary data.

4.2.2 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE TECHNIQUES

A range of methods and tools can be used to collect and generate data for evaluations. Each tool or method has advantages and disadvantages in terms of time, usefulness and resource requirements. **Table 6** presents a detailed list of qualitative and quantitative data collection tools and methods, including a short description and analysis of their advantages and challenges.

The Director-General's announcement on Evaluation in the ILO (ILO 2011d), ensures that evaluators are able to interview staff members, and have access to all relevant Office documents. Staff members at all levels are expected to fully cooperate with evaluators and take all necessary steps to ensure timely access to requested information. In most cases, collection of data through interviews and focus groups should be carried out in a confidential manner without the involvement of those whose work is being evaluated. Evaluators requiring assistance should be provided with the help they need (e.g. non-ILO translators). Evaluators should report to EVAL any problems in obtaining cooperation or documents requested.

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TABLE 6. EVALUATION METHODS

Method	Description	Advantage(s)	Challenge(s)
QUALITATIVE			
Desk review	Systematic analysis of existing documentation, including quantitative and descriptive information about the initiative, its outputs and outcomes, such as documentation from capacity development activities, donor reports and other evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-efficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be difficult to code and analyse documentary evidence. It can be difficult to verify reliability and validity of data.
Interview (face-to-face, telephone or computer-assisted)	Solicit responses to questions designed to obtain in-depth information about a person's impressions or experiences. Can be fully structured, semi-structured, or unstructured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates fuller coverage, range and depth of information on a topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be time-consuming. • Can be difficult to analyse. • Can be costly. Potential for interviewer to bias interviewee's responses.
Direct on-site observation	Entails use of a detailed observation form to record accurate information on-site about how a programme operates (ongoing activities, processes, discussions, social interactions and observable results as directly observed during the course of an initiative).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can see operations of a programme as they are occurring. • Can adapt to events as they occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be difficult to categorize or interpret observed behaviours. • Can be expensive. Is subject to (site) selection bias.
Focus group interview	A small (6–8 people) homogenous (e.g. all same sex, all same race, etc.) group is interviewed together to explore in-depth stakeholder opinions, similar or divergent points of view, or judgements about a development initiative or policy, as well as gather information about their behaviours, understanding and perceptions of an initiative, or to collect information around tangible and intangible changes resulting from an initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient way to obtain a high degree of in-depth information. • Homogeneous groups (e.g. with women only) often provide information and qualitative insights that are not articulated otherwise. This can also apply to other groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be necessary to conduct multiple field group interviews in order for all stakeholder groups to be represented. • It may be hard to analyse responses. • Requires trained facilitator. May be difficult to schedule.
Key informant interview	Qualitative in-depth interviews, often one-on-one, with a wide range of stakeholders who have first-hand knowledge of the initiative's operations and context. These experts can provide particular knowledge and understanding of problems and recommend solutions. The majority of questions are open-ended and meant to stimulate discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide insight on the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions. • Can provide different perspectives on a single issue or on several issues. and give recommendations for solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is subject to sampling bias. • There has to be some means of verifying or corroborating information.
Expert panel	A peer review, or reference group composed of external experts to provide input on technical or other substance topics covered by the evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds credibility. • Can serve as additional (expert) source of information that can provide greater depth. • Can validate or substantiate information and results in topic area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of consultancy and related expenses, if any. • Must ensure impartiality and be free from conflicts of interest.
Case study	Involve comprehensive examination to obtain in-depth information with the goal to fully understand the operational dynamics, activities, outputs, outcomes and interactions of a development project or programme. Cross-comparison of cases can provide additional insights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful to fully understand issues that contribute to outputs and outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require considerable time and resources not usually available for commissioned evaluations. • Can be difficult to analyse.

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QUANTITATIVE

Survey (samples of respondents, including project/ programme and control observations)

A questionnaire is administered to a sample of the project/programme population. Questionnaires are usually administered face-to-face by enumerators on the basis of a pre-written and pre-coded questionnaire. Responses to questions are analysed by cross-tabulation using factors such as sex, race, age, etc.

- The sampling procedure should aim to select a statistically representative subset of the population.
- Large sample sizes allow for more refined analysis and are representative of more subcategories of the population (subregion, province, etc.).
- Trained specialists are required for survey design planning and data analysis.
- It can be costly and time-consuming to implement wider surveys.

4.2.3 DATA QUALITY

In some cases, the evaluation may be limited by the absence of baseline data. In other cases, there may be a lack of comparison group data which could be used to make causal inference. Where baseline surveys and studies have not been undertaken or are not of the required quality, the evaluator should identify how data should be collected in order to secure a reasonable proxy for the assessment of initial conditions. For instance, evaluators may conduct in-depth interviews (e.g. structured interviews and/or focus groups discussions) with project beneficiaries and have them reconstruct the logical chain of behavioural, productive or organizational changes generated or supported by the intervention.

Further reading:

✓ [Checklist 4.1: Validating methodologies](#)

🔗 [IFAD Evaluation Manual, 2nd edition, 2015](#)

🔗 [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, 2009](#)

4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

Once data have been collected and analysed, and the findings presented and discussed, accurate conclusions should be drawn from the findings. Conclusions provide summary judgements about the strengths and

weaknesses of the evaluated intervention, which should be fair, impartial and supported by evidence.

Recommendations are “proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a development intervention; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources” (OECD/DAC 2002) and should meet the requirements in preparing the evaluation report (✓ [Checklist 4.2](#)). Recommendations should also: be aligned with the conclusions; be clear, concise, actionable, and time-bound; they should specify who is called upon to act and distinguish the priority or importance; and acknowledge whether or not there are resource implications.

4.4 Generating lessons learned and emerging good practices

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.

Lessons learned can highlight the strengths and weaknesses of interventions to improve the quality of delivery; contribute to sharing innovative responses to potential challenges; and/or allow practitioners to reuse lessons from previous experience in the design of future

projects. They also contribute to learning and knowledge sharing among stakeholders by helping them to better understand the design, monitoring and evaluation of a given intervention, and identify where collaboration and coordination need to be strengthened.

These lessons have to be captured, validated, stored, disseminated and reused if they are to fulfil their purpose. Capturing lessons learned involves gathering, documenting and analysing evaluation findings. This may occur at the end of the intervention, or at the end of an intervention’s phase. Lessons learned can address both the internal and external logic of interventions. The intervention’s theory of change, design, development objective and strategy are subject to critical scrutiny. Reviewing the internal logic can help project or programme managers to determine whether or not they are doing the correct things, by examining how to improve the current way of working or managing activities. Focusing on the external logic helps managers to know whether the right thing is being done, by questioning assumptions about how the project, programme or policy works, including the manner in which it fits into the broader context and environment.

A lesson learned may become an **“emerging good practice”** when it additionally shows proven marked results or benefits and is determined by the evaluator to be considered for replication or up-scaling to other ILO projects. An emerging good practice should demonstrate

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clear potential for substantiating a cause-effect relationship and may also show potential for replicability and broader application. It can derive from comparison and analysis of activities across multiple settings and policy sources or emerge from a simple, technically specific intervention.

Further reading:

🔗 [Guidance Note 5.5: Dissemination of lessons learned & good practices](#)

🔗 [Template 4.1: Lessons learned](#)

🔗 [Template 4.2: Good practices](#)

4.5 Reporting

For each evaluation report, a draft and a final version must be prepared. The draft version provides stakeholders with an opportunity to provide feedback prior to the preparation of the final evaluation report. As stated in the Director-General's announcement on Evaluation in the ILO (ILO 2011d), officials are expected to fully respect the confidential nature of draft evaluation reports and to strictly follow the guidelines established for handling such documents. Preparing the evaluation report ([Checklist 4.2](#)) presents a sample structure of an evaluation report and identifies the standard elements that should be addressed in each evaluation, in addition to including the standard evaluation title page.

The evaluation report should stimulate readers' interest and economize their time. It should be well-structured, clear and concisely written, using plain, factual language and a constructive writing style. This enhances the overall value of the evaluation. Evaluators should not express their own personal opinions/bias. Their conclusions should be based on available evidence and data.

The precise structure of an evaluation report depends on the specific focus, needs and circumstances of the project or programme and its evaluation. However, certain elements should be addressed in every evaluation report. These should meet ILO evaluation quality standards, which are consistent with the [🔗 Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (UNEG 2016).

The evaluation team should always be open to input from stakeholders and consider making changes when clear evidence is provided. It is important that the team should hold their ground where no clear evidence can be found for changing their findings. Robust discussion of findings can be expected, but unethical behaviour from third parties in an attempt to influence the independent evaluators should be reported to the evaluation manager and EVAL. The ILO's anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy is described in **box 7**.

BOX 7: ADDRESSING FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND WHISTLE BLOWING AT THE ILO

The [🔗 ILO anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy](#) (ILO 2017b) is concerned with acts of fraud and dishonesty committed against the ILO by its officials, external collaborators, contractors, and suppliers of goods and services. Issues arising from the private and personal activities of officials are covered by the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, the Staff Regulations and the associated Office directives and Office procedures.

The term "fraud" is used in this policy to describe such acts as deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, theft, embezzlement, misappropriation, false representation, concealment of material facts and collusion.

An official of the ILO, or a person bringing an alleged case of fraud to the attention of the ILO, who acts in compliance with this policy and in good faith, shall not, based on any extent upon the fact that the person has reported an incident or participated in an investigation:

- Be dismissed or threatened with dismissal;
- Be disciplined, suspended or threatened with disciplinary action or suspension;
- Be penalized or have any other form of retribution imposed; or
- Be intimidated or coerced.

Source: ILO, 2017b.

Further reading:

✓ [Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report](#)

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4.5.1 COMMENTING ON THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

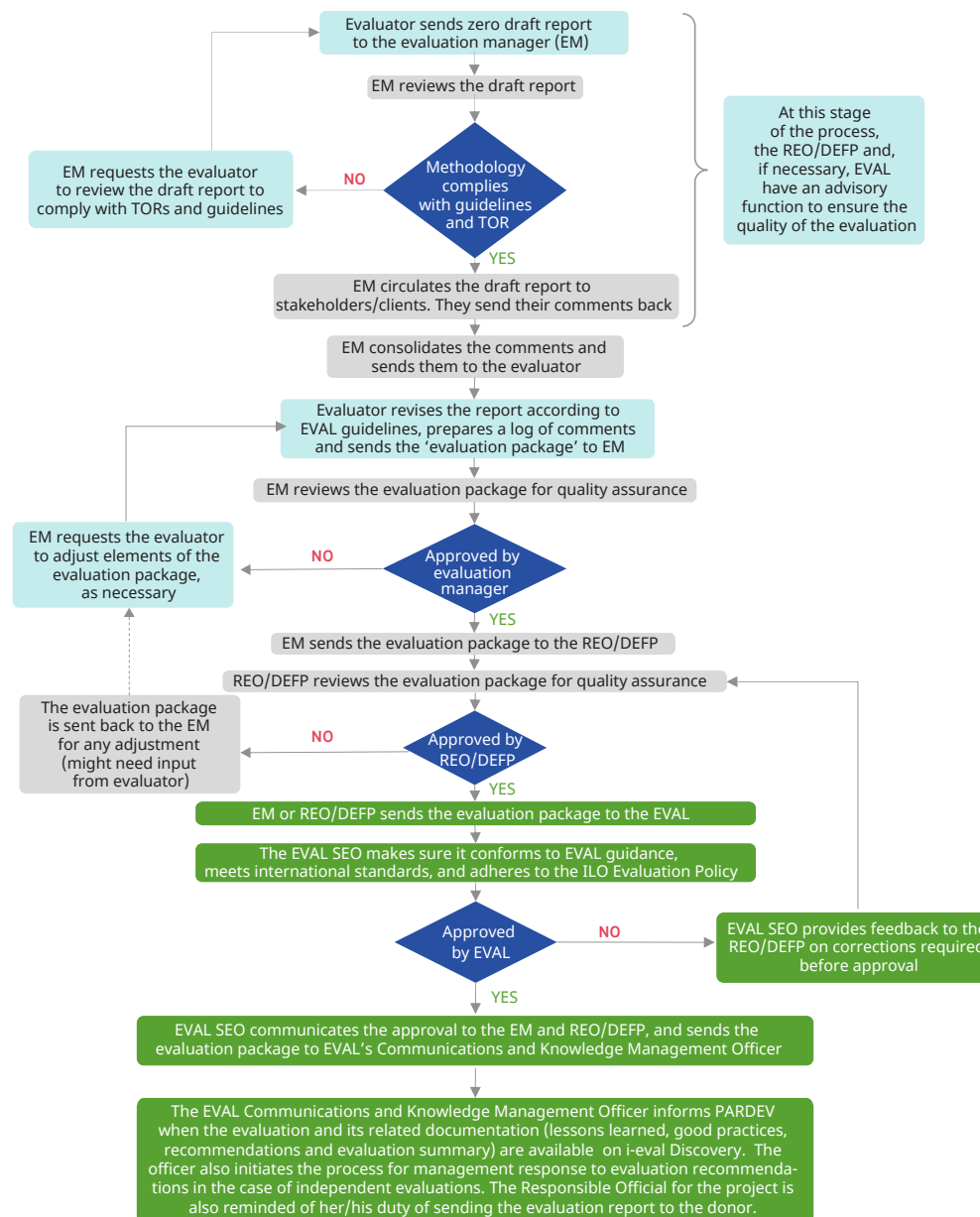
Evaluators are expected to submit a complete and readable draft report. Officials are expected to fully respect the confidential nature of these draft evaluation reports and to strictly follow the guidelines set for handling such documents, as described in the [ILO policy on public information disclosure](#) (ILO 2008b). Evaluators send the draft report to the evaluation manager who, after reviewing the draft for adequacy and readability, circulates it to concerned stakeholders simultaneously. This prevents any single stakeholder group from editing the draft prior to wider circulation.

Stakeholders are encouraged to make written comments, but not to edit the document directly. The source of the comments is not attributed to any stakeholder. Comments are sent individually to the evaluation manager on a confidential basis, and/or collectively. The evaluation manager consolidates comments and requests the evaluator to maintain a log of these comments and how they have been handled while honouring the confidentiality of those whom have commented.

4.5.2 PROCESS FOR APPROVING THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

The workflow associated with the preparation and approval of final evaluation reports is presented in **figure 5**. The “evaluation package” mentioned in the workflow comprises the evaluation report, the evaluation summary, evaluation submission form, the evaluator review form and evaluator’s CV. The checklist for rating the quality of evaluation reports is a useful support tool in the process of approving the final evaluation report. Specific attention should be paid to five key outputs of the report, namely, the evaluation’s findings, conclusions, lessons learned, emerging good practices and recommendations.

Figure 5. General workflow for approving the evaluation report



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4.5.3 APPRAISAL, DISCLOSURE AND DISSEMINATION OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

All independent¹⁴ evaluation reports approved by EVAL are in addition to real-time quality control subject to an ex-post quality appraisal by an outside third party. The results of the quality control are used to make real-time improvements in the evaluation reports while the ex-post appraisals allow for an ex-post assessment of global, departmental and regional trends in quality and systemic issues that may need to be addressed.

Evaluation reports are disseminated in accordance with the ILO policy on public information disclosure (ILO 2008b). For independent project evaluations, all key project stakeholders (i.e. the donor, the national constituents and key national partners as well as concerned ILO officials) receive a copy of the evaluation report from the ILO Responsible Official who is administratively responsible for the evaluated intervention or it is sent by PARDEV, as required, once it is approved by EVAL.

Evaluation summaries for all independent project evaluations are available on [i-eval Discovery](#). The summaries provide the main findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from evaluation reports. Interested parties can receive an electronic copy of the full report by accessing *i-eval Discovery*. EVAL reserves the right to withhold certain evaluation reports if they are considered to be below standard or if they contain confidential information which could harm certain individuals if it were more widely disseminated. EVAL will provide an explanation in cases where the release of a report is denied.

Further reading:

- ✓ [Checklist 4.3: Filling in the title page](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.4: Writing the evaluation report summary](#)
- ✗ [Template 4.3: Evaluation summary](#)
- ✗ [Template 4.4: Evaluation title page](#)



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¹⁴ Internal evaluations are ex-post quality controlled on a sample basis.



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► Communicating
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► 5. Communicating evaluation results and knowledge dissemination

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it describes some processes and applications available for communicating evaluation results.

This includes communication strategies, lessons learned and emerging good practices, knowledge dissemination strategies, the application of knowledge systems, such as *i-eval* Discovery and the AER. The second purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the management response follow-up exercise to evaluation recommendations and explain its importance to evaluation use.

5.1 Communicating evaluation

5.1.1 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

An appropriate communication strategy is pivotal to support the use of the evaluation. Evaluation users will be interested in various parts of the report. Some may be interested in recommendations that affect their work, while others may be interested in broader lessons or emerging good practices.

It is important to plan a communication strategy for the evaluation report to decide who may need information from the evaluation, and the manner in which it should be communicated. It is more likely that users will find evaluations useful if they meet to discuss the main points

face-to-face with the evaluators, instead of just receiving a report for comment. It is thus necessary to draft a communication strategy for the evaluation at the onset of the evaluation process. The evaluation manager is central to the effort. While it is good practice to create a communication strategy for all evaluations, it is required for projects of \$5 million and above.

Further reading:

🔗 [Guidance Note 5.1: Enhancing the use and dissemination of evaluations](#)

🔗 [Guidance Note 5.2: Harmonizing communication products](#)

5.1.2 KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

The project manager, the responsible ILO official, the evaluation manager, the REO and the DEFP are encouraged to disseminate evaluation report and related products (i.e. summaries, fact sheets, etc.) to interested stakeholders, who may be internal or external to the ILO. The relevant technical specialists in HQ and the field

should also disseminate relevant lessons learned and good practices. The responsible ILO official is required to send the evaluation report to the donor for decentralized projects. PARDEV is required to send the evaluation report to the donor for centralized projects.

Knowledge dissemination may also take the form of conferences, workshops, training sessions, seminars, etc., and may be hosted by EVAL, the evaluation manager, the evaluator, project staff members or other stakeholders. Large projects may have a dissemination strategy as part of their M&E plan that targets a specific range of clients. For higher-level strategy evaluations, the report and specific follow-up on recommendations and lessons learned are presented to the EAC and the GB.

Further reading:

🔗 [Guidance Note 5.1 – Enhancing the use and dissemination of evaluation findings](#)

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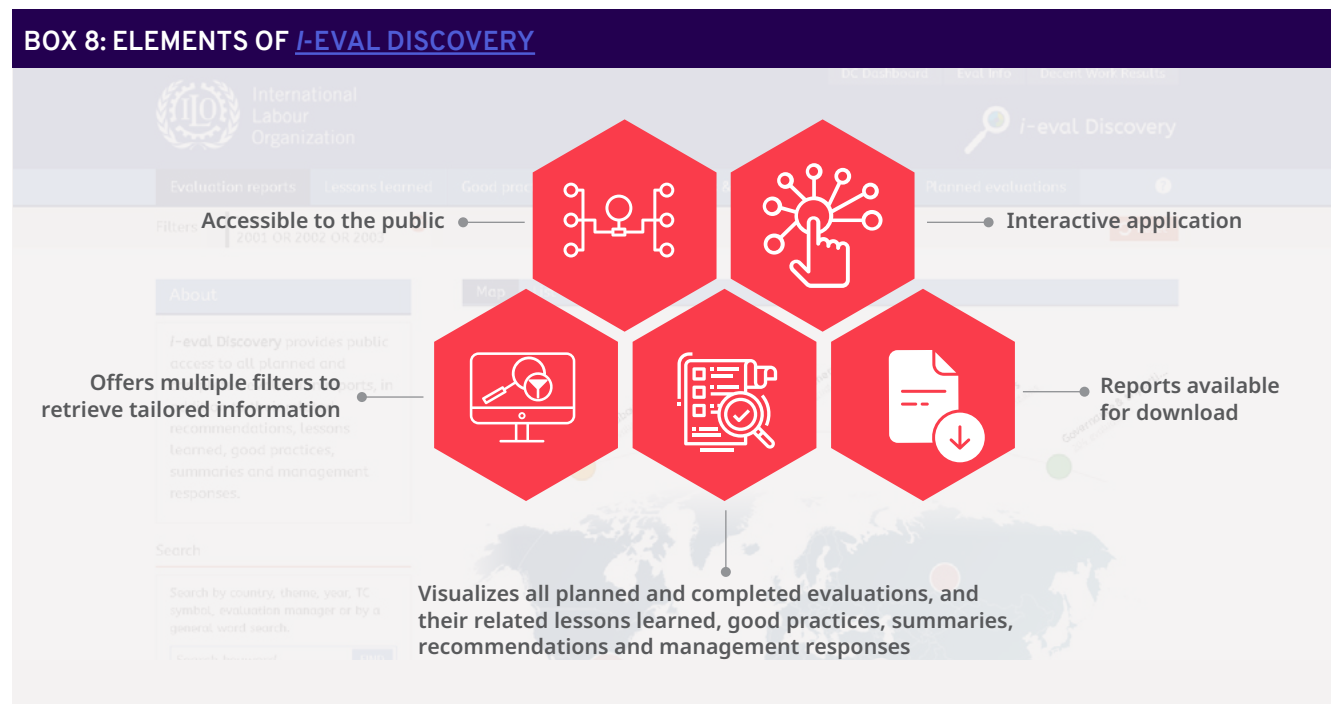
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5.2 i-eval Discovery

► [i-eval Discovery](#) is an interactive application that encourages the use of evaluations. The application visually displays all planned and completed evaluations, in addition to their related lessons learned, good practices, summaries, recommendations and management responses. Information can be tailored to meet specific criteria by applying various filters, such as by year, country/region, theme, evaluation type, timing, nature and funding source. Such information is helpful, particularly when informing project design, implementation and organizational learning.

All mandated independent or internal evaluations, as well as joint and external evaluations covering the ILO's work are systematically scheduled and recorded in *i-eval Discovery*. This information is meant to support accountability, transparency and organizational learning. The knowledge generated from these evaluations in terms of lessons learned, good practices and recommendations and can be used to inform the design and implementation of ILO programmes and projects. *i-eval Discovery* therefore serves as a knowledge management and as an organizational learning tool.

Box 8 describes the main elements of *i-eval Discovery*.



Further reading:

► [Guidance Note 5.3: How to use *i-eval Discovery*](#)

5.3 Learning from evaluations

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Evaluations are expected to highlight useful **lessons learned** and **emerging good practices**, which can be replicated to other interventions in the same technical field and/or geographical area in an effort to improve programming and contribute to organizational learning. ILO officials should consult previous evaluation reports, including the lessons learned and emerging good practices, whenever developing technical tools and whenever designing new projects.

Further reading:

► [Guidance Note 5.5: Dissemination of lessons learned & good practices](#)

► [ILO Development Cooperation Manual](#), Chapter 4 Project Design

► [i-eval Discovery](#)

5.4 The Annual Evaluation Report

Eval produces an **AER** that is presented to the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee of the GB during the final Session of each year. The AER summarizes the evaluation activities of the Office, as measured against the ILO's evaluation strategy. The AER also contains Eval's assessment of ILO's effectiveness and results. Based on the AER's findings, it presents recommendations for the GB to consider and adopt. Progress made on implementing the recommendations is also reported in the AER.

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Further reading:

► [Annual Evaluation Reports](#)

5.5 Management response to evaluation recommendations

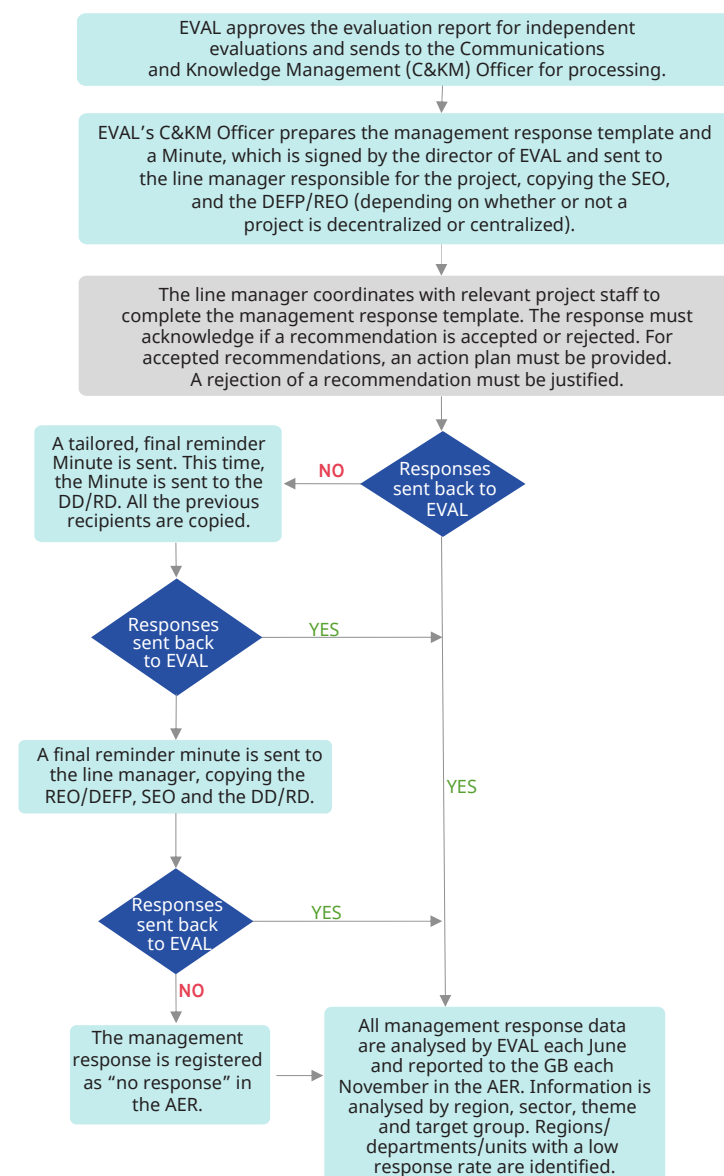
The final action on an evaluation report is the initiation of the management response follow-up exercise to recommendations. The purpose of this exercise is to strengthen the use of evaluation findings and promote organizational learning and accountability from evaluation results. Management's response to evaluation recommendations contributes to improved programme and project design and delivery. It also aims to increase stakeholder and management buy-in to the findings, in addition to facilitating in-depth dialogue about evaluation results and ensuring follow-up of recommendations through formal processes. Evaluations lead to organizational learning only when the resulting recommendations are systematically followed-up by line management.

Independent high-level strategy, policy and country programme evaluations are presented to the GB in November and serve as decision-making papers. An official management response from the Office forms part of the report. A summary of the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations is reported in the AER and presented to the GB in the following year. The Office is accountable to the GB for implementing the recommendations of these evaluations. For that reason, the Director-General created the EAC to monitor and ensure adequate management follow-up to HLEs.

For decentralized evaluations, active and routine follow-up of recommendations is initiated by EVAL and carried out by management. Management response to evaluation recommendation are completed via the [Automated Management Response System \(AMRS\)](#). An overview of the current workflow is shown in **figure 6**.

EVAL collects management response data and reports to the GB during its final Session of the year on project recommendation follow-up in its AER. In order to systematize the management response and follow-up reporting, the Office has established certain procedures and templates.

Figure 6. Management response workflow to recommendations from independent project evaluations



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Line management can present an overall response to the evaluation but must also address each recommendation in the template individually, acknowledging whether it is accepted or rejected. If rejected, an explanation must be provided and, if accepted, management must provide an action plan in addition to a specific timeframe at the end of which the action is expected to be completed. This finalized management response template with the action plan is then sent to EVAL within a month.

Updates on the progress of implementing the action plan are sent to EVAL and recorded in *i-Track*. Once a year, EVAL conducts an annual review of management response and a summary of the findings are reported in the AER submitted to the GB each November. The roles and responsibilities of specific actors for the management response to HLEs are highlighted in **table 7**.

TABLE 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO HIGH-LEVEL EVALUATIONS

Actor	Role and responsibility
EVAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports EAC in monitoring the management response by requesting and ensuring timely reporting from line management • Final responsibility for AER, including section featuring report on follow-up to HLEs • Conducts independent HLEs and ensures that evaluation recommendations comply with the quality criteria
Responsible line manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DD (Policy and strategy evaluations) or RD (country programme evaluations) submits management response via EVAL to EAC • Follows up on evaluation recommendations • Coordinates implementation with other entities of the ILO, as applicable
EAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EAC was established by internal circular (245) to provide a mechanism to oversee the use, implementation and follow-up to lessons learned and recommendations resulting from ILO evaluation activities
The GB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipient of the status report on the implementation of recommendations as part of the AER as well as of the Office management response to HLEs in GB paper

Further reading:

 [Guidance Note 5.4: Management follow-up to recommendations from independent evaluations](#)

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Conclusion

Evaluation informs the ILO on how to best maximize results. It supports decision-making processes by providing evidence on the performance of interventions, essentially what works and why this is the case. In particular, evaluation identifies which dimensions of an intervention should be replicated and which areas could produce better results by incorporating certain adjustments. This is achieved by making recommendations and signalling lessons learned and good practices. It is this principle that makes evaluation an essential component of organizational learning and RBM.

The ILO's institutional mechanisms, namely the ILO evaluation policy and the ILO results-based evaluation strategy, guide all aspects of evaluation in the Organization. EVAL is mandated to manage the ILO's evaluation function, which is designed to be objective and independent. It is responsible for managing HLEs and monitoring follow-up to evaluation recommendations, the results of which are reported on a yearly basis to the GB. EVAL is also responsible for establishing evaluation guidelines, setting quality control of evaluation components for ILO interventions, elaborating policies and producing synthesis reviews and meta-studies on specific evaluation-related topics.

To undertake the large number of centralized and decentralized independent evaluations that are required each year, EVAL relies on its extensive network of REOs, DEFPs and evaluation managers. In this effort, EVAL developed the i eval resource kit, a fundamental tool designed to help guide practitioners through the evaluation process. The resource kit is composed of this current edition of the ILO policy guidelines, in addition to the more than 40 evaluation guidance notes, templates, tools and protocols, which are updated on a regular basis. With the growing demand for development evaluation in the ILO and in the UN system as a whole, particularly with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, these components are essential building blocks for nurturing, supporting and strengthening evaluation culture in the ILO.

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* Non-ILO officials can request “Intranet only” documents from EVAL@ilo.org

Evaluation guidance

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