



International  
Labour  
Organization

Evaluation  
Office

► Annual evaluation report (2022)

# ► Annual evaluation report 2021-22

OCTOBER 2022



Copyright © International Labour Organization 2022  
First published 2022

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Licensing), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: [rights@ilo.org](mailto:rights@ilo.org). The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered with a reproduction rights organization may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit [www.ifrro.org](http://www.ifrro.org) to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

*Annual Evaluation Report 2021-2022 / International Labour Office, Evaluation Office – Geneva: ILO, 2022*  
**ISBN:** 9789220375341 (Web PDF)

#### *ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data*

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

Information on ILO publications and digital products can be found at: [www.ilo.org/publns](http://www.ilo.org/publns).

Printed in Switzerland

# CONTENTS



Click on  
the titles to  
navigate







# 2022 INTRODUCTION

Against the global backdrop of the lingering and disruptive impact of the coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic, the ILO's evaluation function continued with its mission. The theory of change underpinning the Organization's Evaluation Policy and Strategy is that the right evaluation procedures, instruments and support skills will produce quality evaluations that in turn inform a more relevant, efficient and effective ILO, with greater impact on the lives of the people that it serves. Good progress has been made in rolling out the Evaluation Policy and Strategy. However, there remain persistent obstacles to the achievement of a self-reinforcing cycle where demand for evaluative evidence on performance and lessons learned is propelled by a strong evaluation culture of learning, rather than by procedural compliance.

The annual evaluation report (AER) 2021–22, the last under the 2018–21 Evaluation Strategy,<sup>1</sup> provides a final status report on the implementation of what can be called an ambitious and transformative strategy. A range of activities that have been completed since last year's AER have helped the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) to provide a reliable assessment of the progress made. Foremost among these activities was the completion of the third independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function (2022 IEE), covering the period 2018–21. This exercise was preceded by the 2020 [Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network \(MOPAN\) assessment of the ILO](#), which included a review of the evaluation function in the context of the ILO's results-based management system. As confirmed in these reviews, the evaluation function has achieved or partially achieved 95 per cent of the sub outcomes set out in the 2018–21 Evaluation Strategy.

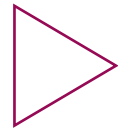
**Part I** of this report provides a final account of progress made in the achievement of the three outcomes identified in the 2018–21 Evaluation Strategy: coverage, quality and use of evaluation reports. It examines the performance of the evaluation function by assessing the established performance indicators to measure progress towards the three outcomes. Part I is informed by the 2020 MOPAN assessment, EVAL's 2021 self-assessment and the findings of the 2022 IEE.

**Part II** reports on the overall effectiveness of the Office, drawing on a recent meta analysis of decent work results based on evaluations undertaken during the previous year. The systematic approach was introduced almost a decade ago to assess the ILO's performance on the basis of key performance indicators, using independent evaluation reports as proxies to analyse trends over the years and compare performance across regions and departments. For the first time since the series started in 2011, it also included a comparative thematic and geographic assessment for performance. Part II was also informed by preliminary findings from the global evaluation undertaken by EVAL in 2022 of the ILO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Part III** presents an outline for an updated Evaluation Strategy for 2023–25 to continue the sequenced roll-out of the 2017 Evaluation Policy. The outline is based on the reviews mentioned above and consultations with the ILO's evaluation network. It presents the key outcomes of the Evaluation Strategy as well as the key strategic initiatives pertaining to the evaluation function and the enabling environment. A participatory process will be used to develop a detailed results framework with specific sub-outcomes, indicators and targets to guide the evaluation function and other concerned actors.

Guy Thijs | Director, ILO Evaluation Office

1. The 2018–21 Evaluation Strategy was granted a one-year extension by the Governing Body to consolidate progress and ensure that the 2022 Independent Evaluation of the Evaluation Function (IEE) could inform the new Evaluation Strategy 2023–25.



# PART **1** Implementation of the ILO's Evaluation Strategy



## OUTCOME 1. Enhanced capacities and systems of evaluation for better practice and use

### SUB-OUTCOME 1.1.

#### Evaluation activities conducted in a timely fashion and in accordance with Evaluation Policy requirements

##### INDICATOR 1.1

All mandatory evaluations are completed in a timely manner for use by management, constituents and donors.

##### BASELINE

90% coverage for independent evaluations and 33% coverage for internal evaluations.

##### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Capacity to ensure independence of evaluations within regions through strengthened capacity and independence of Regional Evaluation Officers (REOs).
- Creation of regional evaluation advisory committees (REACs).
- Quality control and assessment of evaluations.

##### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Overall, the evaluation function achieved the targets for completing independent evaluations in a timely manner. Completion rates for internal evaluations need improvement.

##### STATUS

Achieved.

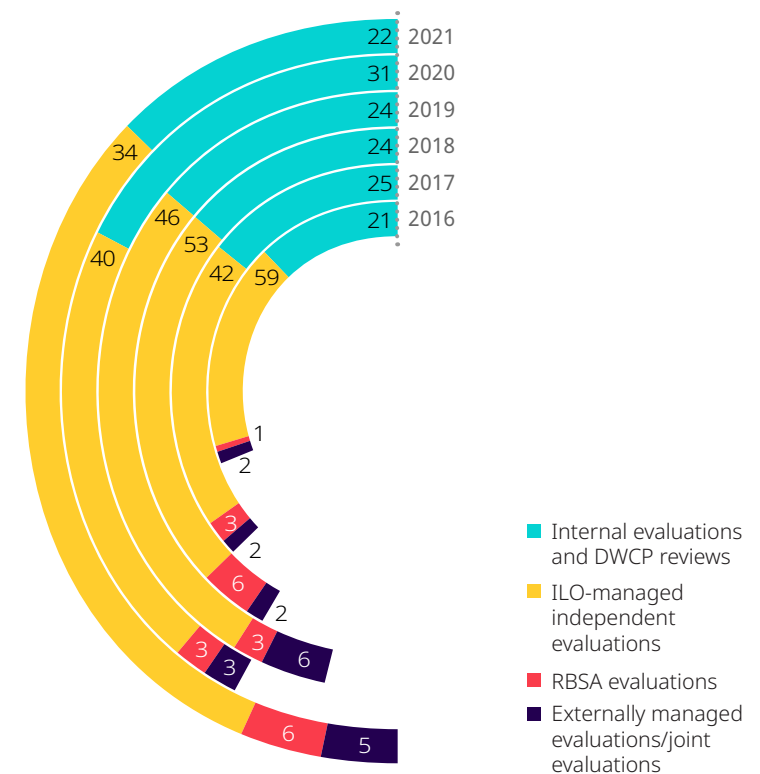
ILO project evaluations show how interventions inform decent work, organizational learning and results-based management. To support this work, EVAL manages an evaluation planning schedule that is publicly displayed on a dashboard called [i-eval Discovery](#). The dashboard also provides data on completed evaluations and the related recommendations, lessons learned, good practices and management responses (see sub-outcome 3.1).

A total of 59 independent evaluation reports were completed in the current reporting period.<sup>2</sup> This represents an increase of 17 independent evaluations from the previous reporting period. More ILO-managed independent evaluations were completed in 2021 than the annual average for the entire strategy period (figure 1). Two independent evaluations scheduled to be completed in 2021 were delayed and should be completed in 2022.<sup>3</sup> This represents a completion rate of 97 per cent for the current reporting period. A review of completion rates for the entire strategy period reveals that, on average, 96 per cent of independent evaluations were completed in a timely manner,<sup>4</sup> exceeding the end target of 95 per cent.

Regarding internal evaluations, while submission rates have improved over the strategy period, challenges remain. Of the 27 internal evaluations due in 2021, 22 were submitted, representing a completion rate of 81 per cent, which is slightly below the end target of 85 per cent. Low completion rates for internal evaluations are in large part a result of lower compliance with self-reporting. Put in perspective, the 2022 IEE confirms that “the evaluation function has consistently achieved its targets for independent evaluations which are overseen by EVAL. Internal evaluations, which require oversight from regional and departmental directors rather than EVAL, have not met submission targets for the strategic period.” Given the crushing workload involved in independent evaluations, the 2022 IEE

calls for an overall reduction by clustering evaluations and raising project budget thresholds triggering independent evaluations. It also recommends a flexible and negotiated approach on whether a planned evaluation should go ahead or not.

► **FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF COMPLETED EVALUATIONS BY TYPE, 2016–21**



2. This includes seven clustered evaluations, six Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) evaluations, three joint evaluations and two external evaluations. Three evaluability assessments were also completed in 2021, but are not included in these figures.

3. Delayed independent evaluations: one in the Africa region and one in the Conditions of Work and Equality Department (WORKQUALITY). Delayed internal evaluations: two in the Africa region, one in the Enterprises Department (ENTERPRISES) and two in the Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE).

4. The completion rate for independent evaluations was 99 per cent for the 2018–19 biennium and 89 per cent for the 2020–21 biennium.



## SELECTING HIGH-LEVEL EVALUATION TOPICS FOR STRATEGIC USE

Topics for high-level evaluations (HLEs) are selected through a consultative process with constituents and the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC), which culminates in a rolling work plan (table 1). In early 2021, the EAC asked EVAL to also include “contribution to recurrent discussions” as a selection criterion. The work plan can be adjusted annually.

► **TABLE 1. ROLLING WORK PLAN, 2022–25**

Year	Institutional or outcome level	Outcome level	Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP)	Remarks
2025	Skills <sup>1</sup>	Social protection <sup>2</sup>	Latin America and the Caribbean	The selection of topics for 2025 was considered premature by some constituents. Feedback was received on the scope of the skills evaluation and its timing.
2024	Development and use of labour statistics	Application of international labour standards <sup>3</sup> or social dialogue	Africa	The selection of topics for 2024 was considered premature by some constituents. More than one expressed preference for an evaluation of international labour standards. One constituent expressed preference for social dialogue.
2023	Rural employment <sup>4</sup>	Fundamental principles and rights at work <sup>5</sup>	Arab States	No objections received, but one constituent requested an institutional evaluation of flagship programmes to be undertaken instead of rural employment. Feedback was also received on the scope of the evaluation of fundamental principles and rights at work.
2022	The ILO's response to the implications of COVID-19	Independent evaluation of evaluation function	Europe and Central Asia	Completed

- 1 Constituents suggested that the evaluation should be aligned with the mid-term evaluation called for in the skills strategy (in development).
- 2 Outcome: Linked to recurrent discussions planned for 2026.
- 3 Outcome: This evaluation was initially scheduled for 2022 but was moved to a later date to allow for other pressing topics to be evaluated.

- 4 Not previously evaluated and scheduled for evaluation in 2023 in two consecutive rolling work plans.
- 5 Linked to recurrent discussions planned for 2024.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

Endorse the topics for high-level evaluations for 2023 identified in the rolling work plan and provide guidance on topics for future years.

**SUB-OUTCOME 1.2.****Strengthened evaluation capacity of staff in regions and departments****INDICATOR 1.2.1**

ILO staff evaluation capacities are upgraded.

**BASELINE**

By the end of 2017, 77 staff members had been certified as evaluation managers, and 2 were certified as part of the Internal Evaluation Certification Programme (IECP).

**LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

Interest, use and availability of the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP) and the IECP.

**END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT:**

Overall, this sub-outcome was achieved. In meeting the goal, EVAL showed its ability to adapt to challenging circumstances that were largely outside its control.

**STATUS**

Achieved.

From 2018 to 2021, the biennial milestones contained in the Evaluation Strategy called for progressively higher numbers of ILO staff to be trained as evaluation managers or internal evaluators (target raised from 77 to 120). These staff members are important human resources in EVAL's hybrid, decentralized evaluation system.

EVAL successfully met this challenge by working with the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO) and the Human Resources Department (HRD) to introduce a suite of training programmes. In addition, regional offices occasionally conducted general training on monitoring and evaluation for their staff.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, EVAL suspended its face-to-face training programmes, but continued with online versions. This motivated EVAL to rethink its entire approach to training. Over two years (2020–21), EVAL retooled and completely reconceptualized its flagship training programme, the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP), to take the programme entirely online. EVAL discontinued the IECP because of low demand and incorporated its curriculum into a new, complementary programme: the EMCP+.

Thanks to the increased emphasis on EMCP training, the number of ILO staff trained has increased. A total of 180 staff members received training, which exceeds the 2020–21 target of 120 staff members by one third. The regions of Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia trained the highest numbers of staff (88 and 45, respectively). The number of trained staff members in the region of the Arab States was 27, almost triple the number achieved in the previous reporting period.

The 2022 IEE noted that the ILO's evaluation function is achieving or exceeding training targets through the EMCP. This training is in high demand internally, and stakeholders from peer UN organizations pointed to the ILO EMCP as a strength of the evaluation function. The 2020 MOPAN assessment also confirmed that comments in the partner survey were positive as regards ILO staff evaluation capabilities.





**INDICATOR 1.2.2**

The ILO evaluation network is functioning based on clearly established roles and job descriptions.

**BASELINE**

Currently, evaluation network functions (departmental level and evaluation managers) are performed on a voluntary basis, resulting in limited availability of evaluation capacity.

**LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

The independence of REOs and departmental focal points for evaluation is strengthened, and capacity-building for evaluation activities is established in regions and departments.

**END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT**

The strategy for achieving this sub-outcome was multidimensional. Some interventions were very successful. Others were stymied, largely because of the enabling environment.

**STATUS**

Partially achieved.

Since 2016, EVAL has been working to strengthen the incentive structure for ILO colleagues who volunteer to be members of the evaluation network. In 2019, EVAL reached an early milestone in the Evaluation Strategy on including standardized assessments in the performance appraisals of ILO staff who participated in evaluation network activities.

Since the previous reporting period, marginal progress has been made towards the establishment of a dedicated job family and tailored job descriptions in the ILO for full-time evaluation staff as part of the target of a fully functioning evaluation network. Job descriptions are now agreed upon by a working group set up by the Human Resources Department and are then subject to final validation and roll-out.

A more challenging obstacle is improving incentives for certified evaluation managers and their supervisors who manage multiple evaluations. Incentives put in place so far include: a well-respected certificate signed by the Director-General; cross learning through exposure to other ILO activities; and formal recognition of the task in the performance appraisal.

The 2022 IEE calls for the enabling environment to be enhanced through investment in more sustainable capabilities and skills needed to undertake, manage and use evaluations. However, it does not explicitly provide recommendations on how to improve incentives. EVAL has developed scenarios for a cost-recovery mechanism to recoup time devoted by staff members to evaluation tasks, which it intends to review and discuss with management in the context of follow-up to 2022 IEE recommendations.



**SUB-OUTCOME 1.3.****Constituents engaged in monitoring and evaluation of DWCPs and development cooperation activities in an SDG-responsive manner****INDICATOR 1.3**

Relevant monitoring and evaluation training is mainstreamed into training and capacity-building programmes for constituents in order to enhance their participation in evaluations.

**BASELINE**

During 2010–17, 1,052 constituents were trained, 124 of them in 2016.

**LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

Collaboration within the ILO and with external institutions with a view to including evaluation training modules in other training and capacity-building programmes.

**END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT**

EVAL has made progress in developing and pilot testing training materials for constituents, but the process of mainstreaming this training into regular capacity-building programmes for constituents has been slow and uneven.

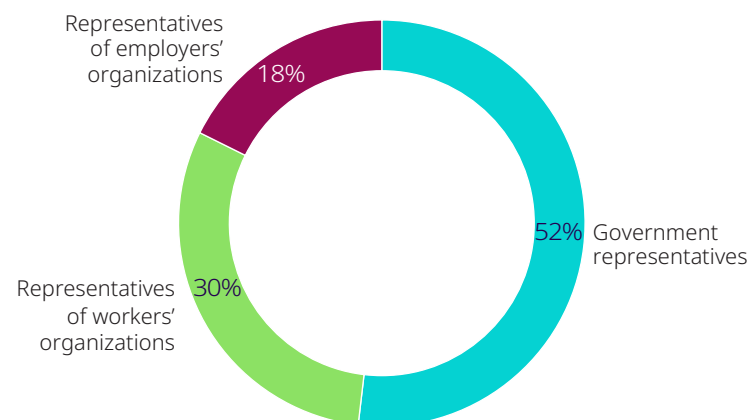
**STATUS**

Partially achieved.

EVAL provided strong support to ILO constituents in the form of [evaluation training and technical tools tailored to their needs](#) during the reporting period, in response to the 2016 IEE recommendation to support national constituents in building their expertise in evaluating decent work. The target set in the Evaluation Strategy for 150 constituents trained has been exceeded, with a total of 538 representatives of governments and employers' and workers' organizations trained on evaluation-related topics.

As requested by constituents, since 2018, training services have been adjusted to be more responsive to the needs and absorption capacities of social partners. EVAL has explored collaboration with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP), the ITC-ILO, the Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM), the Multilateral Cooperation Department (MULTILATERALS) and the regional offices to implement training activities for constituents on the evaluation of decent work against the backdrop of new generations of DWCPs and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. An example of this was the collaboration with ACTRAV and ACTEMP to ensure the participation of social partners in the National Evaluation Capacities Conference organized by the UN Development Programme and hosted by ITC-ILO in October 2022.

► **FIGURE 2. ILO CONSTITUENTS TRAINED IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION, 2018–22**



As part of its role as co-leader in the development of the [Guidelines for the Evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework](#) and the partnerships developed, EVAL connected social partners with UN training opportunities on national planning, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development. The 2022 IEE recognizes that progress in this area hinges on efforts to continue to mainstreaming evaluation in standard training and capacity-building programmes. It further emphasizes the need to increase evaluation knowledge among tripartite constituents on the basis of demand and absorption capacity.



#### SUB-OUTCOME 1.4.

#### Evaluations integrated in DWCPs and development cooperation activities, including a focus on SDGs

##### INDICATOR 1.4

Number of DWCPs and development cooperation projects that have well-established evaluation processes and mechanisms in place, and that regularly engage with constituents in meeting monitoring and evaluation requirements.

##### BASELINE

No baseline yet established.

##### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Collaboration within the ILO enhances the evaluability, SDG-responsiveness and level of participation of constituents in monitoring and evaluation of DWCPs.

##### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Evaluability of DWCPs and development cooperation interventions has been strengthened in the ILO, with institutionalized targeted tools piloted across regions. Goals that were not achieved were largely unmet owing to external factors, as recognized in the 2020 MOPAN assessment and the 2022 IEE.

##### STATUS

Achieved.

Over the strategy period, EVAL bolstered the evaluability of DWCPs and development cooperation interventions by developing specific tools aimed at strengthening evaluation processes and mechanisms of the ILO's operations.<sup>5</sup> Of strategic importance was the institutionalization of EVAL's evaluability diagnostic instrument into the ILO's DWCP guidance.

In 2022, EVAL has continued to provide support to the regions to conduct targeted evaluability assessments of DWCPs using the diagnostic instrument developed by EVAL. While data on the 2022 target<sup>6</sup> are not yet available, EVAL's active role in the quality assurance mechanism process of DWCPs is aimed at guiding management on the set-up of monitoring and evaluation processes and mechanisms for DWCPs. In 2021-22 alone, EVAL provided input to 12 newly developed DWCPs<sup>7</sup> as part of the quality assurance mechanism process. Notwithstanding, follow-up actions remained minimal and uneven.

The 2020 MOPAN assessment recognized the contribution of evaluability tools to ILO operations. However, it acknowledged the low uptake from the Office on strengthening monitoring and evaluation of DWCPs, despite established institutional mechanisms. The 2022 IEE identified the need to continue fostering the evaluability of DWCPs.



5. The 2022 IEE found the guidelines for evaluability assessment to be clear and user-friendly.

6. For 45 per cent of DWCPs, the institutionalized evaluability mechanisms that engage constituents in meeting monitoring and evaluation requirements are applied.

7. 2021: Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan. 2022: Bangladesh, Eswatini, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Somalia and Viet Nam.



## SUB-OUTCOME 1.5.

### Established capacity of regions and departments to mainstream and use evaluation

#### INDICATOR 1.5

Evaluation-related initiatives taken by regions and departments other than mandatory requirements are systematized.

#### BASELINE

Examples of such initiatives and their use have not been systematically documented since the AER 2015.

#### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Development of guidelines within ILO Evaluation Policy guidelines;
- EVAL provides minimal facilitation and support;
- Advocacy role of evaluation network;
- Decentralized monitoring and evaluation of capacity in regions and departments.

#### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Evaluation-related initiatives have been documented, showing a consistent level and evolving focus. However, coordination, sharing and mutual use of evaluation initiatives across regions and departments still need to be strengthened.

#### STATUS

Partially achieved.

The continued evolution of evaluation initiatives taken on by departments and regions above mandatory evaluations has been observed over the strategy period. While the numbers and focus have varied, noteworthy examples include: tailored monitoring and evaluation systems; capacity-building among staff and constituents (for example, in relation to DWCP reviews); synthesis reviews; follow-ups to high-level evaluations (HLEs) and key strategic project evaluations; and impact assessment initiatives.

Most initiatives took place at the regional level and were linked to regional strategic knowledge requirements. A growing number of evaluation initiatives were also undertaken in the UN system at the regional level. Investments in programme- or project-specific monitoring and evaluation capacity have been maintained, and there are now 48 dedicated project monitoring and evaluation officers. The 2022 IEE highlighted the potential role of these officers in strengthening evaluation capacity and culture.

EVAL tools and technical support are available for these evaluative initiatives, but should be used more consistently to ensure the required quality and credibility. Consistent reporting and the use of available knowledge-sharing mechanisms remain weaknesses and need to be strengthened to ensure coordination, sharing and mutual use of findings from evaluation initiatives. This will become part of a more systematic, criteria-based approach towards evaluation planning at all levels, as also recommended in the 2022 IEE.



## OUTCOME 2. Enhanced value of evaluation through the use of more credible and higher-quality evaluations (independence, credibility, usefulness)

### SUB-OUTCOME 2.1.

#### Use of strategic cluster evaluations to gather evaluative information more effectively

##### INDICATOR 2.1

Strategic clustered evaluations established as a modality in a substantial proportion of programmes and projects.

##### BASELINE

Currently, no documented processes or procedures are in place to conduct strategic clustered evaluations for development cooperation projects.

##### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Defined mechanism for pooling of resources, including establishment of trust fund for pooling resources.

##### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Clustered evaluations are an established modality, now covering close to 20% of development cooperation and close to 50% of donors. Further work on expanding the modality as the preferential form of evaluation and as part of a transformative approach will require changes in the enabling environment and integration into planning and implementation of programmes and projects.

##### STATUS

Achieved.

As part of the end-of-strategy assessment, a more detailed review of the approach to clustered evaluations and their strategic value confirms that the use of cluster evaluations has increased since the Evaluation Policy was adopted in 2017. Between 2017 and 2021, 28 clustered evaluations were conducted, or 10 per cent of all decentralized evaluations. Over 101 projects requiring evaluations were covered by the 28 clustered evaluations. These cluster evaluations covered 20 per cent of the ILO's total development cooperation budget for the period.

Clustered evaluations are spread across all regions and have involved 45 countries in total, with 15 of the 28 evaluations covering only one country. Each clustered evaluation covered an average of three to four projects. The majority of clustered evaluations were multi-donor (funded by up to eight different agencies), and only 25 per cent covered projects funded by a single donor. Some 48 per cent of all donors were involved, including the 10 major donors. This figure far exceeds the strategy target of 25 per cent of the ILO's main donors involved in a cluster evaluation.

The review determined that the average quality of these evaluations was rated 5 on a scale of 1 to 6, which compares favourably with the average for all decentralized evaluations. Both the 2022 IEE and the 2020 MOPAN assessment found the clustered evaluation modality to be key to the transformative approach for evaluations within the ILO to ensure more strategic information in support of organizational learning.

In confirming the increase in and high demand for clustered evaluations, the 2022 IEE observed that further optimized use was constrained by barriers in the enabling environment, such as pooled funding and more optimal upfront identification and planning of clustered evaluation. Importantly, the 2022 IEE concluded that development partners welcome opportunities for streamlining and clustering evaluations.



## SUB-OUTCOME 2.2.

### Improved quality of internal, decentralized and centralized evaluations

#### INDICATOR 2.2.1

All evaluations of development cooperation projects comply with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNEG norms and standards, and are tailored to the ILO's specific mandate and learning needs.

#### BASELINE

The ex post quality assessment for 2015–17 shows that about 90% of development cooperation project evaluations meet the required quality standards.

#### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Highest level of independence and impartiality of evaluations, further improving the use of findings at the regional level; use of a rigorous quality control system; compliance with requirements for evaluability reviews.

#### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Quality improvement is a long-term goal that transcends reporting periods. During this reporting period, the proportion of reports receiving a "satisfactory" rating (5 out of 6) increased from 28% in 2015 to 91% in 2021.

#### STATUS

Achieved.

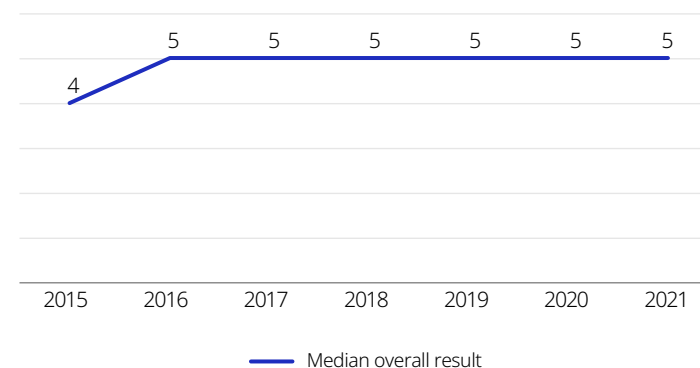
The 2018–19 milestone, which called for guidelines to be updated to reflect the ILO's specific normative and social dialogue mandate as part of efforts to improve quality, was met (see sub-outcome 2.4). The 2020–21 biennial milestone called for the level of quality to be raised to 95 per cent – an increase of 5 per cent.

Analysis by the external assessor shows that, despite the pandemic, 98 per cent of reports completed in 2020 (and assessed in 2021) received a rating equal to or above "somewhat satisfactory". For reports completed in 2021 (and assessed in 2022), the number of reports that received the same rating was 100 per cent. Together, the average quality assessment rating is 99 per cent – exceeding the target by 4 per cent.

Surpassing pre-pandemic levels of quality suggests that the various special measures taken by EVAL – including updating and creating tools and checklists and extending the timelines of evaluations in response to the pandemic – may have had positive effects on the overall quality of evaluation reports.

Figure 3 shows that the median rating of evaluation quality was 5 and the proportion of reports receiving a "satisfactory" rating (5 out of 6) increased during the strategy period from 28 per cent in 2015 to 91 per cent in 2021.

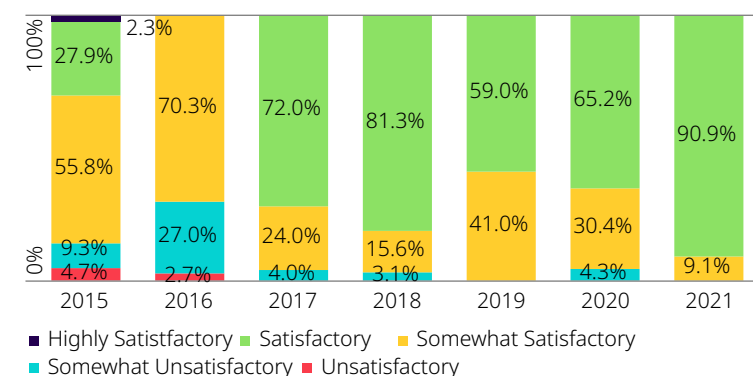
► FIGURE 3: OVERALL RATINGS AND EVOLUTION PER YEAR



The assessment of the 55 evaluation reports showed that they contained an average of 95 per cent of the components deemed essential for an evaluation report. This improvement is especially significant as ratings decreased for several components in 2020, presumably owing to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gender-related analysis (UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP)) showed that 26 per cent of reports (14 out of 55), appraised in 2021 "met the UN-SWAP requirements" and 58 per cent of reports (32 out of 55) "approached requirements". The remaining 16 per cent (9 out of 55) did not meet UN-SWAP requirements. While still unsatisfactory, this nevertheless represents a substantial improvement compared with 2020 ratings. During that year, only 9 per cent of reports met UN-SWAP requirements and over 40 per cent did not meet SWAP requirements.

Yearly comparisons of the average UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator meta-scores from 2015 to 2021 demonstrate consistent improvement over time. The 2020 MOPAN assessment stated that the ILO's quality-focused evaluation function had solidified the evidence-based character of its policies and interventions. The 2022 IEE also validated this assertion.





#### INDICATOR 2.2.2

Additional capacity released in EVAL at headquarters to focus on new evaluation models, by reducing oversight of regional evaluations of development cooperation projects.

##### BASELINE

The 2016 IEE identified the issue of independence at the regional level as a priority, and recommended the integration of regional evaluation officers as full staff members of EVAL.

##### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

ILO-specific evaluation models and approaches that reflect the ILO's specific mandate and context.

##### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

The quality assessment shows that evaluations in the region are conducted to high standards. However, the goal of changing reporting lines was not met.

##### STATUS

Partially achieved.

In response to the recommendation of the 2016 IEE to change the reporting lines of REOs to enhance the independence of decentralized evaluations, EVAL reached the first biennial milestone (to prepare a detailed report with alternative scenarios regarding reporting lines). This report was presented to senior management. However, the recommendation of the 2016 IEE to reconfigure the reporting lines of REOs remained unresolved.

Quality assessments have shown that evaluations in the regions continued to be conducted to the highest standards, but at the cost of a high workload in EVAL, as it continued to provide an extra layer of oversight. The 2022 IEE reviewed reporting models for REOs, but stopped short of recommending changes to reporting lines. It suggested that independence and impartiality could be upheld and protected by using alternative mechanisms and processes.

#### INDICATOR 2.2.3

Corporate governance-level HLEs incorporate UNEG norms and standards and are tailored to the ILO's specific mandate and learning needs.

##### BASELINE

Independent review in 2013 confirmed quality met required standards, as reconfirmed by the 2016 IEE.

##### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Use of evaluation models and approaches that reflect the ILO's specific mandate and context.

##### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

External quality assessments and reviews, including the 2022 IEE, confirmed the required quality and encouraged future efforts to ensure continued quality and utility through more effective participatory processes.

##### STATUS

Achieved.

As part of the continued quality assurance of corporate evaluations, EVAL conducts a structured ex post reflection process. Surveys are sent to stakeholders involved in the specific evaluations, leading to updated standard operating procedures and experience notes shared with future evaluation teams.

The protocol for HLEs continues to guide the implementation of HLEs. EVAL commissioned an external ex post quality assessment of all high-level corporate evaluations for 2020–21, following the approach taken in the previous assessment, which covered samples of HLEs in the period 2015–19. This shows an overall improvement, with ratings for all components increasing or remaining the same.

The MOPAN 2020 assessment, concluded in 2021, rated the process to ensure the quality of all evaluations "highly satisfactory". On the basis of stakeholder perspectives, the 2022 IEE highlighted that the quality and utility of the HLEs, while satisfactory, required continued (preferably external) real-time quality control and more extensive participatory approaches.

**SUB-OUTCOME 2.3.****Credible impact evaluations conducted to build knowledge for effective policy interventions****INDICATOR 2.3.**

Impact evaluations are considered credible and used for documenting effective policy interventions.

**BASELINE**

Quality of impact evaluations not optimal or uniform, as indicated in EVAL stocktaking report of 2014. A new ex post quality analysis of a sample of impact evaluations, to be carried out in 2018, will establish a new baseline.

**LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

Impact evaluations are within the responsibility of regions and departments, with EVAL providing technical support through guidance and a methodological review facility.

**END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT**

The overdue ex post quality review of impact evaluations has been completed and will inform a new framework for assessment to support credible impact evaluations based on the agenda for impact evaluations in the ILO.

**STATUS**

Partially achieved.

Impact evaluations at the ILO are the responsibility of regions and departments, with EVAL providing technical support upon demand. Progress on embedding impact evaluation within the learning agenda of technical departments has been slow and commensurate with a low demand for services from EVAL's Impact Evaluation Review Facility. An ex post review by an external assessor was undertaken in 2022 to analyse the quality and credibility of impact evaluations since 2013. A total of 75 studies were identified and a sample of 15 were assessed.

► **TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF IMPACT EVALUATIONS BY THEME, DESIGN AND REGION**

Thematic areas	Design/approaches	Regional
Impact insurance (27%); microfinance (24%); employment (14%); small and medium-sized enterprises (12%); youth employment (13%); child labour (6%); and others (3% – includes working conditions, cooperatives and social finance).	Randomized controlled trials (48%); quasi-experimental designs (32%); alternative designs, such as process tracing, contribution analysis and tracer studies (9%); synthesis review and meta-analyses (4%); unknown/unclear (7%).	Africa (40%); Asia and the Pacific (33%); Latin America and the Caribbean (12%); other regions (3%); multi-country (12%).

The assessed sample shows that the quality of impact evaluations differed considerably, with an average score midway between “fair” and “satisfactory”. The overall quality was reasonable, given the diversity of approaches and types of reports, and the level of relevance was deemed to be good in terms of how ILO concerns and areas of interest were addressed. However, the utility of impact evaluations in providing recommendations and policy advice was considered inadequate. The assessment also highlighted various recurring issues with impact evaluations, such as a lack of a theory of change, an insufficiently developed evaluation framework and insufficient details on the applied methodology, to name a few. Most of the reports had credible findings, but few addressed the validity beyond the specific case and wider policy implications.

Moving forward, the process for identifying and reporting on impact evaluations will be strengthened using a clearer definition of what constitutes impact evaluation. The application of the developed quality assessment tool will be complemented by a community of practice, revised guidance on impact evaluation and further implementation of ex post evaluations.

**SUB-OUTCOME 2.4.**

**Evaluation framework further aligned with ILO mandate and context, including SDGs**

**INDICATOR 2.4**

ILO-specific evaluation approaches, models and methods used for evaluations at various levels.

**BASELINE**

Currently, minimal ILO-specific approaches and models are used in ILO evaluations.

**LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

Linked to risks and assumptions under sub outcomes 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5.

**END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT**

EVAL achieved progressively higher levels of performance, as reflected in the milestones for this sub-outcome.

**STATUS**

Achieved.

The 2018–19 biennial milestone called for the piloting of an evaluation framework more tailored to the ILO's specific mandate. In response, EVAL developed a [guidance note on adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate](#).

Key evaluation protocols, templates and checklists for high-level and decentralized evaluations were revisited to further mainstream the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate (including the SDGs) in the evaluative framework and to ensure its application.

The ex post quality assessments of evaluation reports from 2020 concluded that 50 per cent of project evaluations satisfactorily included questions relevant to international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, and 67 per cent satisfactorily included SDG considerations. The latest exercise assessing evaluation reports from 2021 showed that these figures were, respectively, 60 and 65 per cent, leading to an aggregate result surpassing the 2020–21 milestone. These figures are expected to increase to 60 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively, as part of the 2022 target.

Both the 2020 MOPAN assessment and the 2022 IEE recognized EVAL's updates and revisions as helping to ensure that evaluations are more responsive to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, as well as helping to better integrate other cross-cutting policy drivers into evaluations.





## OUTCOME 3. Stronger knowledge base of evaluation findings and recommendations

### SUB-OUTCOME 3.1.

#### Strengthened accessibility and visibility of evaluation information through *i-eval* Discovery

#### INDICATOR 3.1

*i-eval* Discovery contains all planned and completed evaluations, including recommendations, lessons learned and good practices; it is consistently accessed by internal and external users, and is considered the gateway to ILO evaluation information.

#### BASELINE

Based on data provided by the Information and Technology Management Department, the average use was in the range of 2,000 during 2018–19.

#### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Required coverage and availability of evaluation information and outcomes
- Awareness and support activities of a communications campaign

#### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

EVAL has improved the visibility and accessibility of evaluative information through the public *i-eval* Discovery dashboard, leading to increased use of evaluation.

#### STATUS

Achieved.

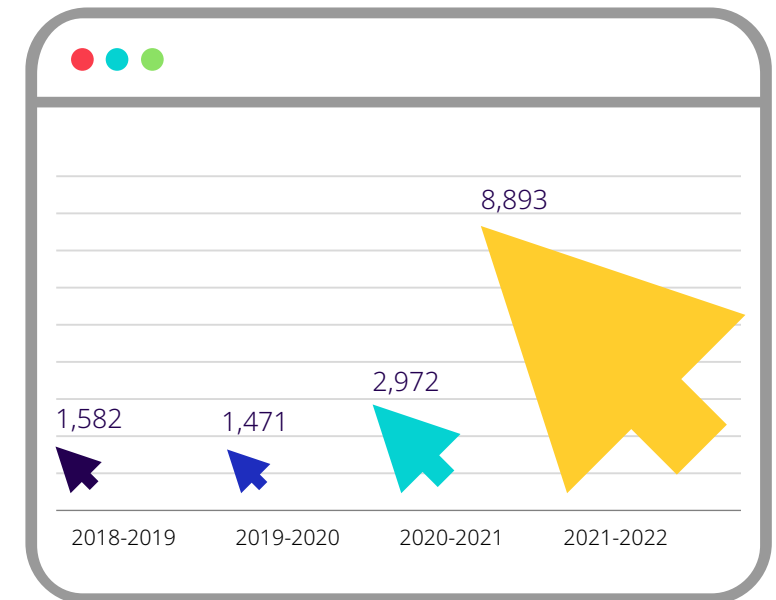
Launched in 2016, the *i-eval* Discovery dashboard continues to publicly display all planned evaluations and completed evaluations, along with their related summaries, recommendations, lessons learned, good practices and management responses to evaluation recommendations. The dashboard is primarily intended for constituents, donors and ILO staff. It was also recognized by the 2022 IEE as enabling “EVAL to enhance the accessibility and visibility of evaluation products”. As at early July 2022, *i-eval* Discovery contained over 1,400 evaluation reports, over 2,200 lessons learned, more than 1,000 good practices and nearly 2,000 recommendations.

A total of 8,893 users accessed *i-eval* Discovery during the reporting period, 80.5 per cent of whom were new visitors. This represents a very large increase of total users since 2017 and a jump of 2,972 users from the previous year (figure 4).

A total of 14,918 users accessed *i-eval* Discovery during the strategy period, which represents an increase of more than 700 per cent over the baseline level and signifies that the end target has been achieved.

EVAL has been working closely with INFOTEC to modernize the database (*i-track*) that underpins *i-eval* Discovery. Considering the magnitude of the project, it is expected that the new database will not be completed before the end of 2023.

► **FIGURE 4. NUMBER OF VISITORS ACCESSING *I-EVAL* DISCOVERY, 2018–22**



### SUB-OUTCOME 3.2.

#### More targeted communication of evaluation findings

##### INDICATOR 3.2

A revised communications strategy leads to better targeting of evaluation findings to management, constituents and other users.

##### BASELINE

The 2016 IEE recognized progress made (newsletters, think pieces, i-eval Discovery), but called for better presentation of evaluation findings to improve use.

##### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Communication products linked to critical points of possible use of evaluations in the results-based management cycle;
- Rebranding and use of innovative methods and support activities.

##### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Communications products have increased in scope, quantity and diversity and are targeted to management, constituents and other user groups.

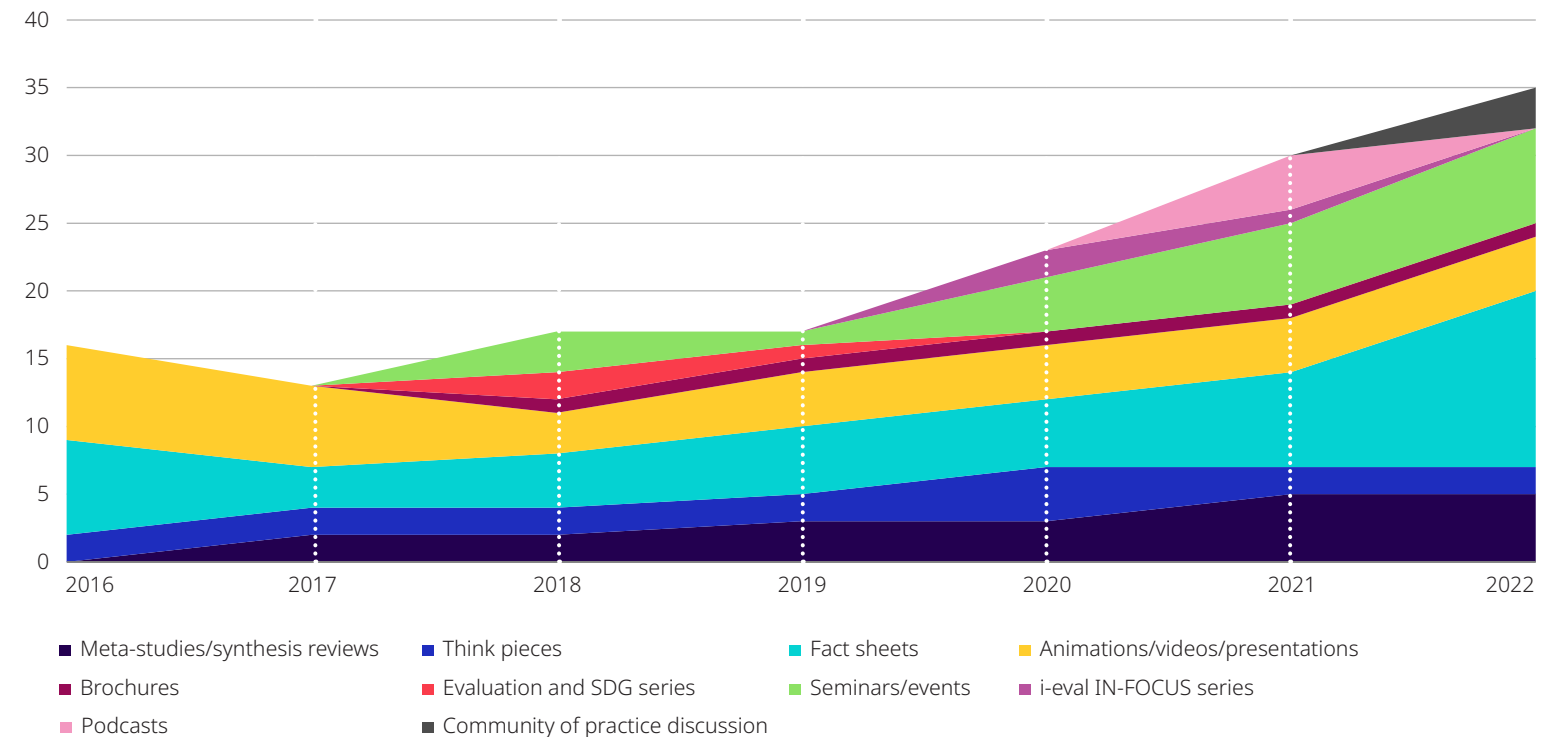
##### STATUS

Achieved.

EVAL has been continuously committed to providing targeted, informative and useful communications products that effectively convey evaluation-related results to constituents, management and other stakeholders. EVAL's communications plan for 2018–21 (extended to 2022) has shown consistent progress in the achievement of targets. For example, of the plan's 16 targets for 2021, 10 were achieved, 4 were not achieved and 2 are pending more information. The number of communications products has steadily increased (17 per cent since the previous year, as shown in figure 5).

A Community of Practice has been created on the ILO's platform to engage the Organization's evaluation network on a variety of topics. Numerous communications events have been held, both internally and externally to the Organization, to disseminate evaluation results on evaluation reports to a broad audience. EVAL's communications efforts are recognized by the 2022 IEE as being diverse, but there is still a call for more products to be targeted to specific user groups

► FIGURE 5. NUMBER OF EVALUATION PRODUCTS, 2016-22



### SUB-OUTCOME 3.3.

#### Improved use of evaluation findings and recommendations by constituents and management for governance and decision-making

##### INDICATOR 3.3.1

EAC advice on timing and use of evaluation prompts more robust uptake of evaluation findings for policy and strategic decisions at the global and regional levels.

##### BASELINE

The EAC met on average four times per year, and qualitative analysis showed that it held strategic debates on about 40% of the corporate governance-level evaluations. Although the regions participate in the EAC, there are no regional evaluation advisory committees.

##### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- a. High-level evaluations of a credible quality are produced.
- b. Appropriate composition of the EAC.

##### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

The 2022 IEE reconfirmed that the EAC represents good practice. The milestones with respect to the EAC have been reached. Progressively more ambitious goals were set, which were not achieved, largely owing to the enabling environment.

##### STATUS

Achieved.

Eval's 2018–19 milestone was that the EAC would meet on a consistent basis (four times per year); that 50 per cent of its corporate governance-level evaluation discussions would be strategic; and that, subject to the outcome of a review, two regions would pilot regional evaluation advisory committees (REACs). The milestone was partially reached: 89 per cent of the EAC's discussions were deemed to have been strategic, and Eval prepared terms of reference for REACs pilots as required.

The 2020–21 biennial milestone required 75 per cent of the EAC's corporate discussions to be strategic, and set a target on expanding REACs. The average number of strategic discussions over the biennium was 81 per cent, and the Latin America and the Caribbean region established a regional monitoring and evaluation advisory committee. The 2022 IEE found that the REAC, with its senior level participation, had the right people "at the table" with the influence and knowledge to bring about necessary changes. However, the volume of reports and time limitations were constraints to more strategic discussions. It recommended that the time of REAC members should be used more strategically, with carefully set agendas, fewer evaluation reports to read and the use of additional appropriate attendees to encourage sharper discussion of evaluation insights and implications.





### INDICATOR 3.3.2

Enhanced follow-up to evaluation recommendations through systematic monitoring.

#### BASELINE

Follow-up to management response stood at 83% in 2016 (partially addressed and completed).

#### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The use of an automated follow-up management system will provide analytical data on the ongoing use of recommendations.

#### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

The Automated Management Response System has improved compliance and quality of management responses to evaluation recommendations. Submission rates need to be improved for some regions.

#### STATUS

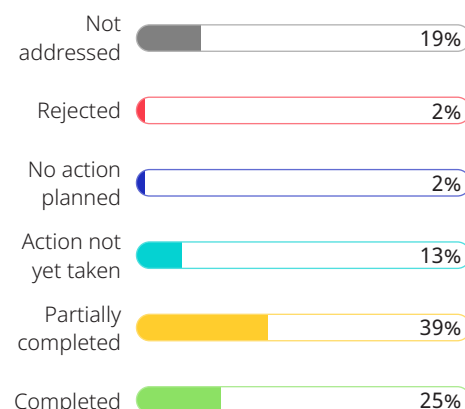
Partially achieved.

Line managers are required to submit management responses to recommendations from independent evaluations, noting whether: (a) action taken in response to a recommendation has been completed or partially completed; (b) no action is planned; (c) action has not yet been taken; (d) the recommendation has been rejected; or (e) the recommendation is not applicable. Since the launch of the Automated Management Response System in 2018, the quality and timeliness of management responses to evaluation recommendations have generally improved.

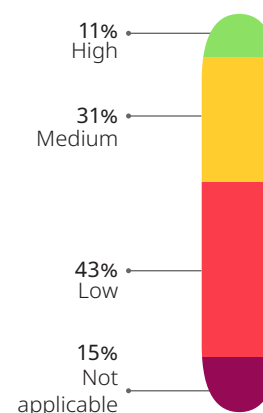
For the period under review, 50 of the required 57 management responses to recommendations from independent evaluations (88 per cent) were received, accounting for a total of 431 recommendations.<sup>8</sup> Of the 347 recommendations that have been addressed by line managers, action has been “completed” or “partially completed” for 63 per cent of recommendations, down from 78 per cent in the previous year (figure 6). The high number of recommendations considered “not addressed” in Asia and the Pacific (76) negatively impacted the overall completion rates. Since the beginning of the Evaluation Strategy period,<sup>9</sup> 76 per cent of recommendations have been recorded as “completed” or “partially completed”, falling below the end target of 90 per cent.

As in previous reporting years during the strategy period, most recommendations do not involve high resource implications (figure 7). This indicates that cost is not an obstacle to action being taken. Furthermore, 94 per cent of recommendations were considered to be of medium or high priority (figure 8), and 82 per cent of recommendations required a short- to medium-term time frame to implement (figure 9).

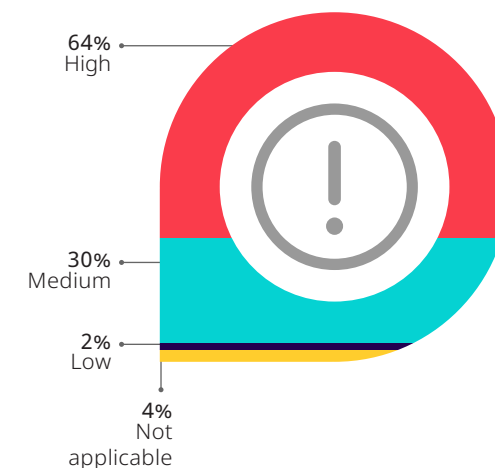
► **FIGURE 6. STATUS OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSES TO EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS, 2021<sup>10</sup>**



► **FIGURE 7. RECOMMENDATIONS BY RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, 2021**



► **FIGURE 8. RECOMMENDATIONS BY LEVEL OF PRIORITY, 2021**

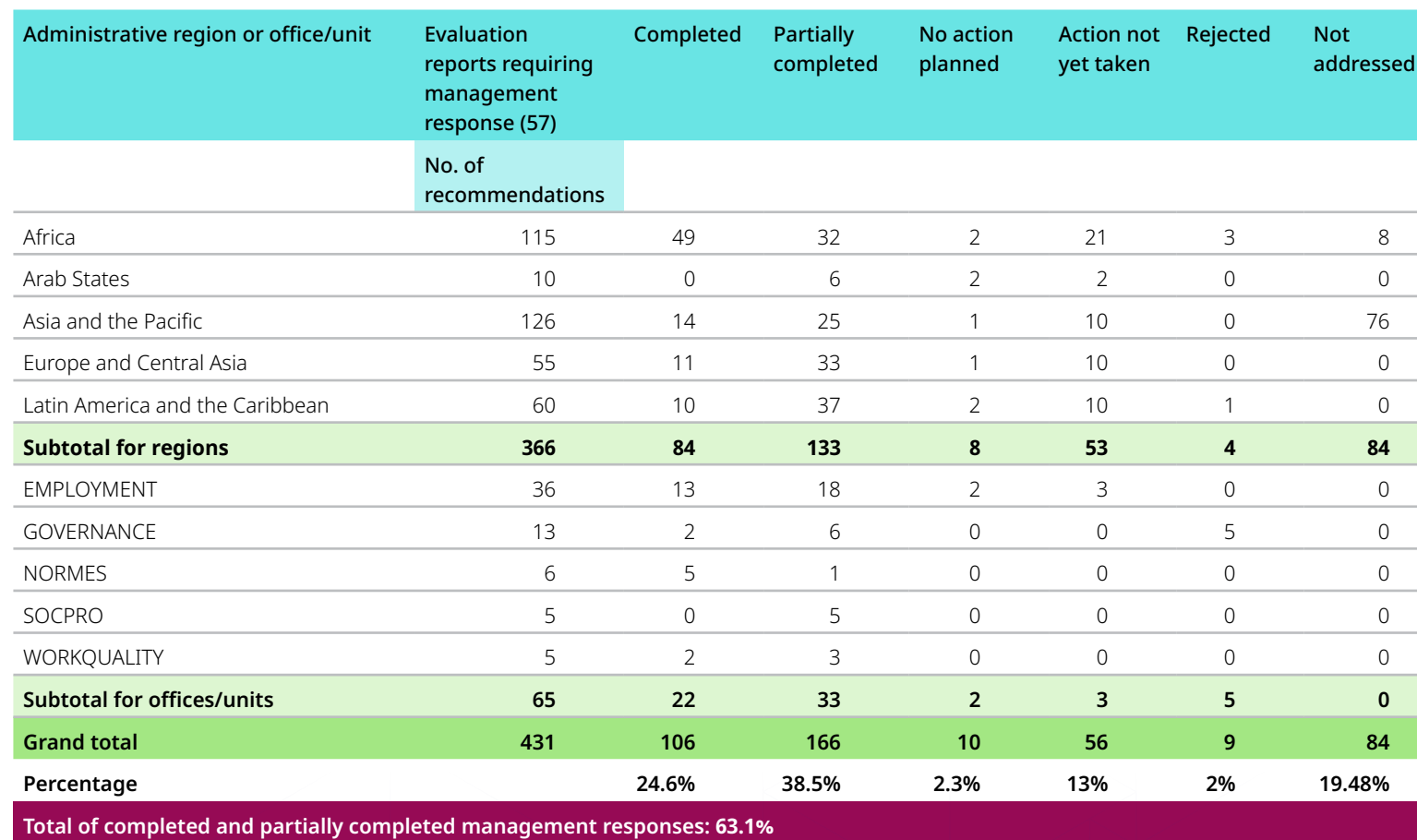


8. Non-compliance with mandatory management responses include: three from the ILO Country Office for Indonesia and Timor-Leste, three from the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and one from the ILO Country Office for Ethiopia.

9. The percentage of “completed” and “partially completed” recommendations from 2018–20 are as follows: 74 per cent in 2018; 90 per cent in 2019; and 78 per cent in 2020.

10. “Not applicable” refers to the number of recommendations that have not been addressed by line managers, since they result from management responses that have not been submitted.

▶ **TABLE 3. STATUS OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSES BY REGIONS AND DEPARTMENTS, 2021**



**INDICATOR 3.3.3**

Enhanced use of evaluations in strategic guidance, reviews and reporting for strategic plans, programme and budget records, and other high-level plans and strategies.

**BASELINE**

The AER documents the use of recommendations and lessons learned from evaluations (40–50% for the period 2010–15, based on stocktaking exercises).

**LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS**

Linked to sub-outcome 3.2.

**END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT**

Findings and recommendations from high-level evaluations are regularly reflected in key strategic documents. Future work should focus on systemically documenting the use of evaluations for specifically enhancing organizational effectiveness.

**STATUS**

Achieved.

During the strategy period, there has been a continuous increase in the use of evaluations to inform strategic guidance and reporting. Strategic plans and many associated thematic strategies and action plans use key findings from evaluations as a basis to call for certain strategic direction.

The Programme Implementation Report 2020–21 reflects six HLEs that were done in that period. The analysis of the lessons from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the report makes extensive use of the document [“ILO’s response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work: Evaluative lessons on how to build a better future of work after the pandemic: A synthesis review of evaluative](#)

[evidence”](#). The report identifies the need for the ILO to place more importance on sustainability on the basis of findings from evaluations on how limited capacity of partners on the ground can sometimes prevent programmes from being scaled up after projects end.

The 2020 MOPAN assessment considered that ILO evaluations supported decision-making at various levels of the Organization. As also highlighted by the 2022 IEE, table 4 provides some examples of how evaluations were used to enhance organizational effectiveness over the strategy period.

► **TABLE 4. EXAMPLES OF EVALUATION USE**

Evaluations	Example(s) of use
<b>Fair and effective labour migration policies (2021) (HLE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequently cited as providing evidence not just on what worked, but why and how it worked.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity development (2019) (HLE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to inform the ILO capacity development strategy with references to recommendations and levels of capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable enterprises (2020) (HLE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed the programme and budget proposals for 2022–23.</li> <li>Provided input into a new strategy on sustainable enterprises.</li> <li>Informed the work plan of the Green Jobs Programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Research and knowledge management (2020) (HLE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shaped programme and budget proposals and used in the ILO’s Strategic Plan for 2022–25.</li> <li>Provided important guidance on how to strengthen knowledge management.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender equality and mainstreaming (HLE) (2021)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basis for the new ILO Action Plan on Gender Equality</li> </ul>
<b>Independent evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Programme between Qatar and the ILO (2022)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed the revision of Office Circular No. 2/163 of 1987 to reflect the joint normative and technical cooperation model.</li> </ul>



### SUB-OUTCOME 3.4.

Evaluations used to meet strategic knowledge requirements through further analysis of findings and results of evaluations

#### INDICATOR 3.4.1

Evaluation findings analysed, synthesized and documented in knowledge products in support of planning and knowledge-building.

#### BASELINE

In the previous strategy period, 22 think pieces, meta-studies and synthesis reviews were carried out.

#### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- a. Adequate EVAL capacity;
- b. Existence of appropriate topics.

#### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

EVAL has produced 40 knowledge products. Evaluative information is analysed and incorporated into various types of knowledge products that help inform the ILO's strategic knowledge requirements.

#### STATUS

Achieved.

EVAL has regularly consulted with regions and departments throughout the strategy period to determine which topics of evaluative knowledge product should be developed to further advance the ILO's work. In the current reporting period, EVAL completed ten new knowledge products: four synthesis reviews, three joint evaluations, two think pieces and one meta-study. Combined with the 30 knowledge products produced in 2018–21, 40 knowledge products have been produced over the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period. The number of knowledge products developed in the current reporting period has increased by 15 per cent in comparison to the previous reporting period. While the biennial end target for 2022 has not been achieved, the 2022 IEE has confirmed that "EVAL is delivering knowledge products, meeting its strategy targets".

#### INDICATOR 3.4.2

The AER provides an annual overview of overall effectiveness of the ILO.

#### BASELINE

Analysis of decent work results and effectiveness of ILO development cooperation completed, covering 2009–16, with ongoing revision of methodology.

#### LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Linked to sub-outcomes 3.1 and 3.2 above.

#### END-OF-STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Annual overviews of ILO effectiveness have been produced and results have been communicated broadly, evidencing recurrent performance weaknesses in need of strengthening.

#### STATUS

Achieved.

EVAL conducts annual performance assessments of [ILO decent work results and effectiveness](#), using ILO development projects as proxies. Based on a robust methodology that applies 29 performance indicators, these reports provide detailed accounts of the performance of development cooperation interventions over US\$1 million on a rolling basis.

Aggregated performance results of the ILO's strategic relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency are communicated to relevant areas of the Office and are annually presented in Part II of this report. The end target for 2022 set in the Evaluation Strategy was met, and a comparative assessment of effectiveness by technical area and geographical distribution was conducted for the first time at the ILO. Part II of this report provides a summary of this exercise.



## PART 2 Assessing the ILO's effectiveness and results

### Analysing independent evaluation reports of development cooperation projects as proxies for the ILO's effectiveness and results

For almost a decade, EVAL has provided annual assessments on the ILO's effectiveness in its AER by analysing independent evaluation reports of development cooperation projects as proxies for performance and lessons learned.

Data on organizational performance during the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the need to use evaluative evidence for continued course correction and improvement. This section presents the findings from the latest meta-analysis, focusing on all independent project evaluations conducted in 2021 and those completed so far in 2022. Section 2.3 provides a comparative review by technical intervention (departments) and geographical distribution (regions), drawing on findings from previous meta-analyses. A total of 139 assessments of final independent evaluation reports completed from 2017 to 2021 were used.

#### THE ILO'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATINGS, 2021-22

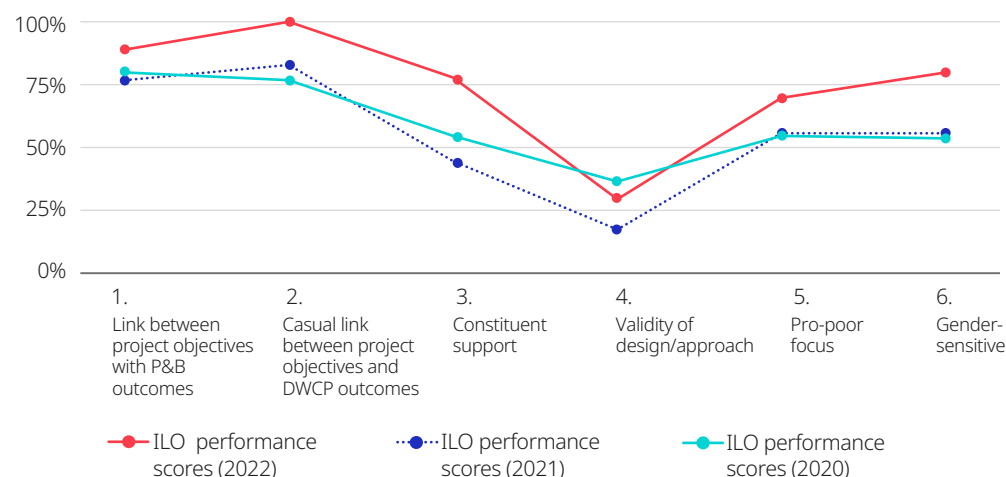
Effectiveness of operations was assessed using 29 predefined performance criteria and rated on a four-point scale: unsuccessful (1); partly successful (2); successful (3); and highly successful (4).<sup>11</sup>

Performance results for 2021 and 2022 showed steady trends in effectiveness and impact (rated "successful"), with projects facing recurrent challenges to comply with monitoring and reporting standards. While the results for 2021 showed some decline in the strategic relevance and cost efficiency of ILO's development cooperation initiatives, preliminary results for 2022 show an improvement in these areas and in the area of sustainability, with performance returning to pre-pandemic levels.

11. The ILO's development cooperation performance is assessed through an ex post performance rating based on the findings of evaluation reports. The performance data concerning development cooperation related to a list of 29 predefined criteria that were categorized under (1) strategic relevance and alignment; (2) effectiveness, sustainability, and impact; (3) and implementation performance and efficiency of management and resources used. These criteria were then rated according to a four-point scoring system. This assessment does not include services delivered to constituents through mechanisms other than development cooperation projects, e.g. policy advice by specialists; sharing of guidance, etc.

## STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND ALIGNMENT

► **FIGURE 10. PERCENTAGE OF PROJECTS WITH “HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL” OR “SUCCESSFUL” SCORES FOR STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND ALIGNMENT**<sup>12</sup>

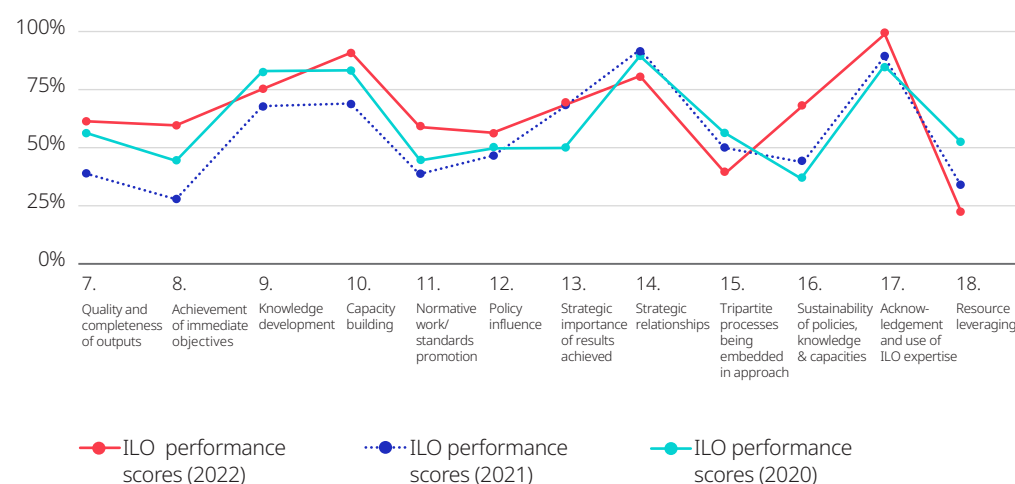


Results from 2021 generally aligned with preceding years, although some key areas saw a further decline in performance. Overall, the objectives of the projects evaluated linked well to programme and budget and DWCP outcomes. However, mixed results were found regarding the extent to which projects connected with people, as shown in the low performance in the areas of pro-poor focus, gender sensitivity and involvement of constituents in design and implementation. Preliminary results from 2022 saw an overall uptick in performance, with improved scores against the above criteria.

An area of ongoing weakness in 2021 and 2022 was validity of design/approach. This was often due to an overambitious scope and limited contextual analysis.

## EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

► **FIGURE 11. PERCENTAGE OF PROJECTS WITH “HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL” OR “SUCCESSFUL” SCORES FOR EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT**



Despite variability in the scores, a clear pattern can be observed regarding performance in this category, with slightly increased performance results in 2022.

The high scores in figure 11 suggest that the ILO was effective at developing knowledge, using its expertise, building capacities and developing strategic relationships. This correlates with the achievement of strategic results and the contribution to an increased recognition of ILO's expertise.

Most concerning were the low scores for the achievement of the outputs and immediate objectives of ILO projects in 2021, which correlated with low policy influence and sustainability. It is also cause for concern that promotion of the ILO's normative mandate in project design and implementation – as reflected in international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue – scored low. Preliminary results for 2022, however, identified a noticeable increase in the performance ratings for these categories, except for the ILO's ability to leverage resources, the area that received the lowest scores over this period.

12. The percentage for each performance criterion corresponds to the ratio of projects that received scores of 3 and 4. This applies to figures 10–13.



## Box 1. Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the effectiveness of ILO operations, 2020-21

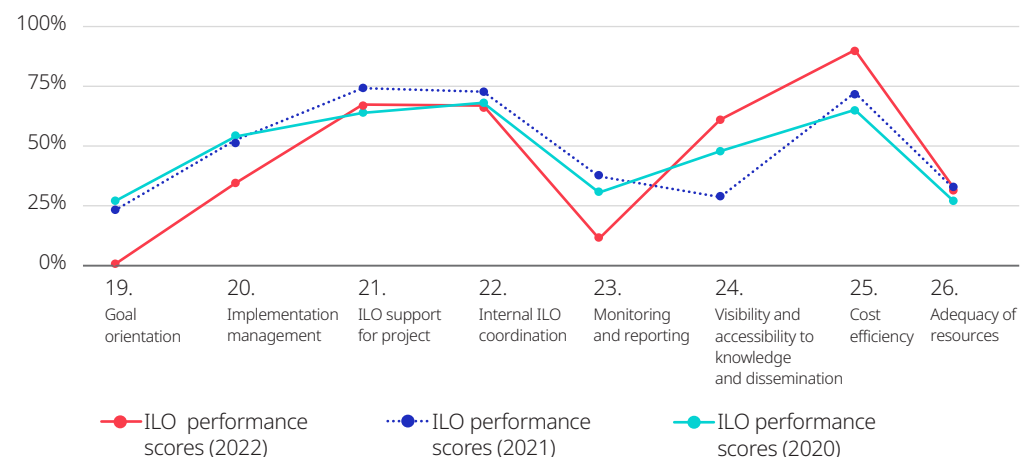
Findings from both the 2022 HLE on the ILO's response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work and the meta-analysis on the decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations, 2021-22 confirmed both the agility of the ILO to adapt its interventions during the pandemic and the relatively strong performance achieved in all policy areas identified in the Global call to action for a human-centred recovery, despite sporadic delays and setbacks.

The HLE highlighted effectiveness across policy actions at the global and country levels. ILO assessments of the effects of the pandemic on national labour markets led to targeted support at the policy and legislative levels. The ILO's efficiency in adapting to changes brought about by the pandemic was also positively assessed. This efficiency was made possible because the Office made agile adjustments to its service delivery model, defined a coherent policy framework and asserted the ILO's position as a global technical authority on the pandemic's effects on the world of work.



## IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFICIENCY OF MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES

► **FIGURE 12. PERCENTAGE OF PROJECTS WITH “HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL” OR “SUCCESSFUL” SCORES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFICIENCY OF MANAGEMENT AND USE OF RESOURCES**



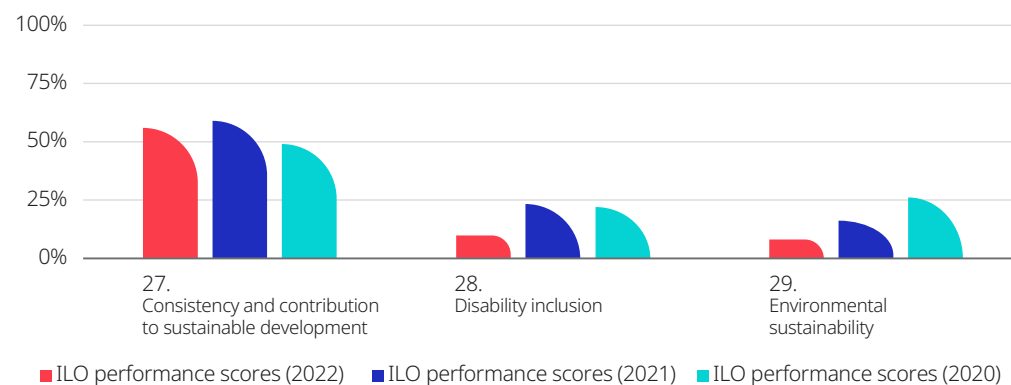
ILO support to projects and internal coordination both scored high in 2021-22. However, this did not translate into better implementation management or knowledge dissemination, internally or externally.

Cost efficiency and adequacy of resources appear to be negatively correlated, suggesting that, because of resource constraints, ILO projects were able to stretch their funding to achieve cost savings.

Results-based management approaches, including monitoring and reporting, continued to score low and scored even lower in 2022, with interventions often presenting weak logical frameworks with unrealistic targets, inadequate indicators and missing baselines. If design and monitoring and reporting are weak or non-existent, then real-time organizational learning that could inform and improve project design will not occur.

## SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION CONCERNS: SDGS, DISABILITY INCLUSION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

► **FIGURE 13. PERCENTAGE OF PROJECTS WITH “HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL” OR “SUCCESSFUL” SCORES FOR CONSISTENCY AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE SDGS, DISABILITY INCLUSION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**



Development cooperation projects implemented in 2021–22 continued to face challenges in addressing formerly cross-cutting policy drivers.

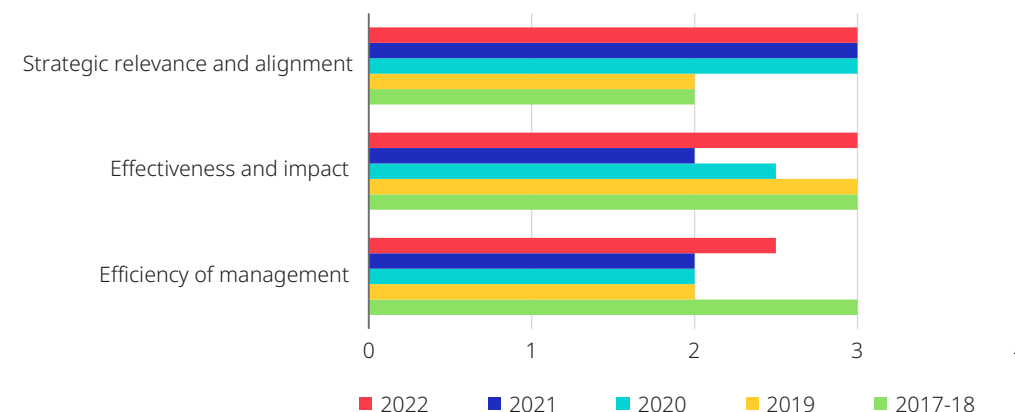
Many projects had objectives linked to specific SDG targets, and joint implementation under a common UN system was limited. Strong performance was associated with ILO interventions linked to national development strategies and SDGs involving close coordination with other UN agencies to achieve progress towards sustainable development targets.

Significant weaknesses were reported in the area of disability inclusion. Less than one quarter of projects in 2021, and only 10 per cent of projects in the 2022 sample, incorporated elements of a disability inclusion perspective in their design and implementation.

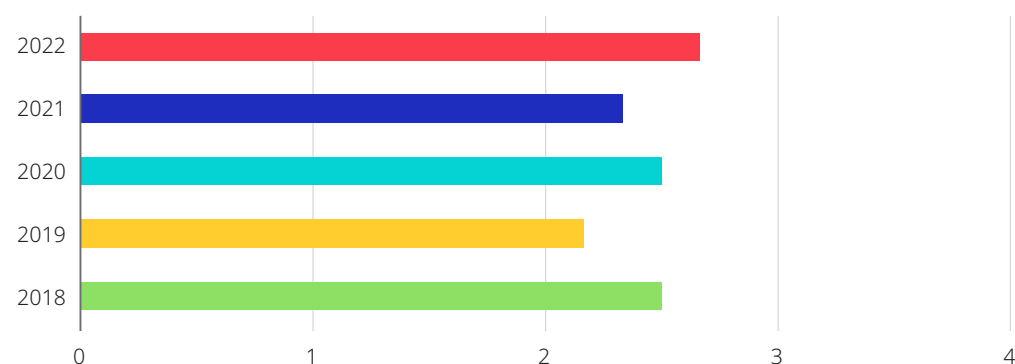
Another area demonstrating persistent poor performance was environmental sustainability, with the weakest performance reported in 2021. While there were some elements promoting environmental sustainability in certain projects, it was not taken into account in the design and implementation of most interventions.

## Long-term trends

► **FIGURE 14. MEDIAN SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CATEGORY, 2017–22**



► **FIGURE 15. ILO’S OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATINGS, 2017–22**



Comparison of results for the three main performance areas of the effectiveness review show variations over time (figure 14). However, the index scores<sup>13</sup> show that overall performance ratings fluctuated between 2.17 and 2.67 over the reporting period. The data for 2022 show that overall performance exceeded 2.50 for the first time (figure 15), although it is worth highlighting that these data are based on a small sample.

13. Average of the median scores of all three categories for the past six years.

## Performance trends by technical intervention area and region, 2017-21

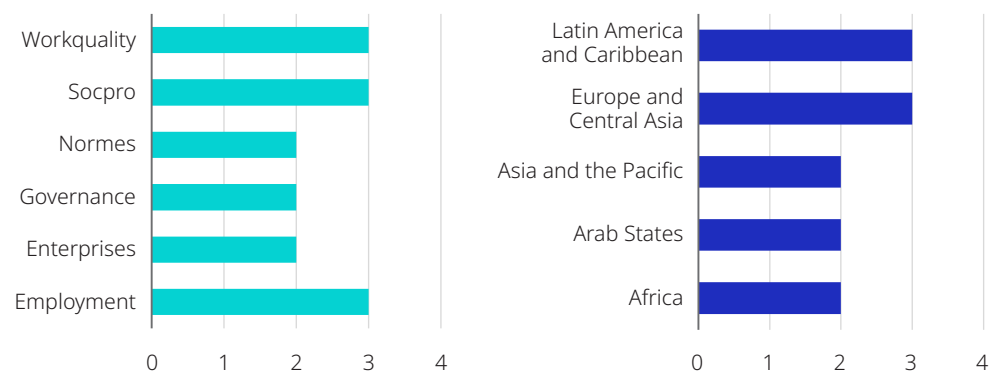
This section presents, for the first time, the results of a comparative assessment of performance ratings of development cooperation projects, disaggregated by region and technical intervention areas.<sup>14</sup> While based on an overall robust sample, the results need to be interpreted with caution.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, several interesting trends emerge that should be analysed further.

### PERFORMANCE TRENDS FOR STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND ALIGNMENT, 2017-21

Development cooperation interventions technically backstopped or implemented directly by the Employment Policy Department (EMPLOYMENT), the Conditions of Work and Equality Department (WORKQUALITY) and the Social Protection Department (SOCPRO) scored high on strategic relevance and alignment with programmatic objectives and country needs.

High average performance ratings in this category were also recorded for decentralized operations in the regions of Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean (figure 16).

► **FIGURE 16. PERFORMANCE TRENDS BY TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT AND REGION FOR STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND ALIGNMENT, 2017-21**



High performance ratings for the category on strategic relevance and alignment were associated with intervention designs that were well aligned with DWCP outcomes and country programme outcomes, took a strong pro-poor focus and had well-developed gender equality strategies. This was strongly present in interventions under EMPLOYMENT projects.

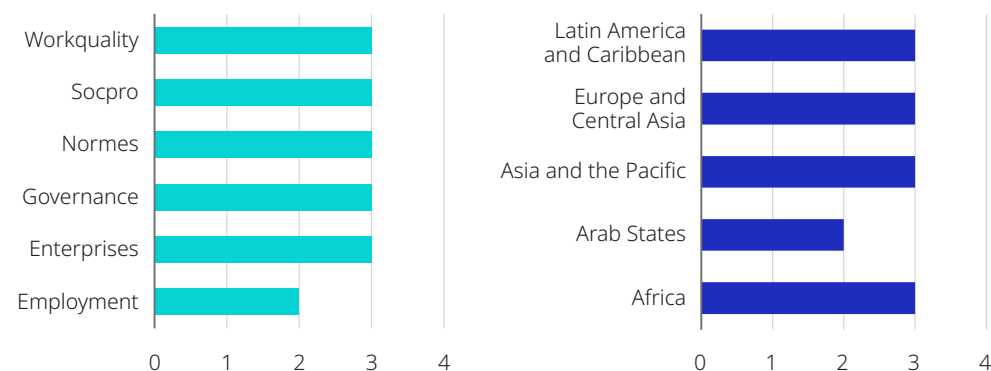
Work implemented by SOCPRO, the Enterprises Department (ENTERPRISES) and the International Labour Standards Department (NORMES) was rated as “successful” in responding to national needs, mainly through the active and regular involvement of constituents. Decentralized interventions in Europe and Central Asia presented similar performance results.

A performance weakness across all technical areas was observed in relation to the design of interventions, a category that received “partly successful” ratings over this period.

### PERFORMANCE TRENDS FOR THE CATEGORY OF EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

Performance in all technical areas was rated “successful” in the category of effectiveness, sustainability and impact in 2017-21, except for operations implemented by EMPLOYMENT. Results by geographic distribution showed that the region of the Arab States also performed weakly in this regard.

► **FIGURE 17. PERFORMANCE TRENDS BY TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT AND REGION FOR THE CATEGORY EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT, 2017-21**



14. The comparative assessment was included as a target for 2022 under indicator 3.4.2 of the extended Evaluation Strategy.

15. A total of 139 assessments of final independent evaluation reports completed from 2017 to 2021 were used for this comparative review. The assessment covers technical interventions at centralized and decentralized levels as linked to relevant departments. The proportion of interventions by technical department were: EMPLOYMENT, 37 per cent; ENTERPRISES, 15 per cent; GOVERNANCE, 22 per cent; NORMES, 3 per cent; SOCPRO, 5 per cent; and WORKQUALITY, 18 per cent. Given the small size of the sample, the results for NORMES, and to a lesser extent SOCPRO, have a lower level of validity.



Strong performance was associated with interventions that delivered planned outputs and built institutional and individual capacities effectively, generated new knowledge and leveraged strategic relationships. Interventions from all technical areas presented strong performance with respect to these categories. SOCPRO obtained outstanding performance ratings in relation to its capacity to build strategic relationships over this period, mostly for centralized projects and projects in the Africa region.

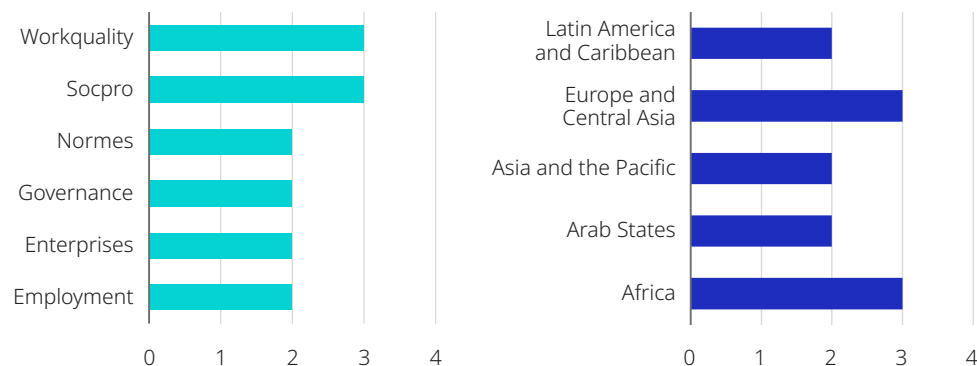
Overall results achieved by the ILO over this period at the global and regional levels were found to be of strategic importance. ILO operations obtained “successful” performance ratings for the recognition of its expertise and in influencing policies. The strongest performance ratings across all technical areas, except EMPLOYMENT and ENTERPRISES, related to the promotion of relevant international labour standards, normative work, social dialogue and tripartism.

All technical intervention areas presented recurrent performance weaknesses in terms of resource leveraging and sustainability of results, with centralized operations performing slightly stronger. The lowest average performance score was attributable to NORMES and related to the category of resource leveraging.

### PERFORMANCE TRENDS FOR THE CATEGORY OF IMPLEMENTATION PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY OF MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE USE

Marked weaknesses were observed across technical interventions regarding the ILO’s performance in the implementation of operations and efficient management and resource use. Only WORKQUALITY and SOCPRO obtained “successful” average performance ratings. Results from the geographical analysis of ILO decentralized operations evidenced successful performance on average for this category in the regions of Africa and Europe and Central Asia only (figure 18).

► **FIGURE 18. PERFORMANCE TRENDS BY TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT AND REGION FOR IMPLEMENTATION PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY OF MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE USE, 2017-21**



When present, strong performance was associated with the ILO’s capacity to undertake operations in a cost-efficient manner and to disseminate knowledge both internally and externally. Technical interventions implemented by EMPLOYMENT and WORKQUALITY received “successful” ratings for internal coordination with other programmes and units, notably in their decentralized operations.

Elsewhere, recurrent weaknesses were observed against other performance criteria. For instance, centralized operations across all technical fields faced resource inadequacies that hindered the timely delivery of project outputs and objectives. The ILO’s efficiency at the level of management arrangements and support to project implementation was weak overall, especially at EMPLOYMENT and NORMES.

Consistently poor performance was observed in relation to the set-up and use of monitoring and reporting systems in centralized operations across all technical areas. Slightly better performance was observed only in decentralized operations implemented in the regions of Africa and Europe and Central Asia that were technical backstopped by the Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE), WORKQUALITY and EMPLOYMENT. Another area with consistently poor average performance results for all technical areas was results-based management approaches.





# CONCLUSION

The historical perspective taken in this year's assessment reconfirms that systemic issues persist in projects. Addressing them becomes even more crucial against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, since evidence shows that challenges to decent work have intensified. Comparing performance between regions and across departments over time will hopefully ensure that these systemic issues are better understood and tackled.

## ► SOME RECURRENT SYSTEMIC ISSUES FOR IMPROVEMENT, 2017-22

### Must-address issues:

- Results-based management, adequacy of project design, monitoring and reporting.
- Achievement and sustainability of results.
- Constituents' engagement in project formulation and implementation.
- Comprehensive poverty targeting and gender equality mainstreaming.
- Integration of international labour standards and tripartism in project formulation and implementation.
- Awareness-raising for policy-influencing.
- Resource-leveraging and adequacy of resources.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

The Office should continue to address the recurring and therefore systemic issues identified in this and previous annual assessments in order to optimize overall effectiveness and results.





## PART 3 Outline for an updated ILO results-based Evaluation Strategy 2023–25

### Introduction – Purpose and scope of strategy

The purpose of the results-based Evaluation Strategy is to roll out, in sequential stages, the ILO Evaluation Policy of 2017 and set the guiding framework for future EVAL work. It identifies specific outcomes and sub-outcomes required from an effective evaluation function to inform evidence-based decision-making. The Evaluation Strategy 2018–21 (extended to 2022) responded to the 2016 IEE and took a comprehensive approach to bolstering the evaluation function through three main strategic outcomes underpinned by a theory of change.

The 2022 IEE endorsed the continued relevance and structure of the Evaluation Strategy 2018–21 and its outcomes, identifying areas where adjustments should be considered or where strengthening was needed. It emphasized that, while accountability was a strong and essential element of the evaluation architecture at the ILO, learning could be improved through enhanced incentives and methods across the Office. With workload considered to be unsustainable, the number of evaluations needs to be reduced without compromising accountability standards, while also boosting learning and utility. The document on the independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function submitted to the current session of the Governing Body<sup>16</sup> provides a detailed overview of these findings, the Office response and EVAL observations on which this outline is based. Part III presents an outline of an updated strategy and the steps that will be taken to develop a fully-fledged results-based matrix version.

The outline has considered developments in the ILO's strategic policy and results framework, as well as the analysis and findings from the 2020 MOPAN assessment, EVAL's 2021 self-assessment (covering the period 2018–21) and the 2022 IEE. It is important that evaluations in the UN system fully consider the ILO's mandate and areas of policy expertise in joint and system-wide evaluations. Sharing ILO's evaluation expertise with the UN evaluation network and other UN organizations is therefore important.

Further consultations will be needed to develop this outline into a results-based matrix format, with detailed sub-outcomes, milestones and targets. The strategy covers 2023–25, in line with the ILO's strategic programming cycle (2022 will be accounted for as a transition period).

16. GB.346/PFA/8.



## Key strategic initiatives for the enabling environment

The enabling environment for evaluation within the Office relates to institutional policies, strategies and processes that, when in place, facilitate the work of the evaluation function as an institutional process. Many entities within the ILO have a role and responsibility related to the evaluation function.

The theory of change will be updated with a particular focus on the enabling environment, based on a mapping of ILO learning and evidence-generating processes. Outcomes and their custodians in the enabling environment will be made more explicit to support the Evaluation Strategy in aid of the transformative approach.

These outcomes will require support throughout the ILO, including in relevant strategic and organizational processes, with the involvement of the concerned custodians.

### Enabling environment key strategic initiatives to be reflected in outcomes of the Evaluation Strategy:

- **Bolstered monitoring and reporting frameworks** and practice by management as accountability, as well as course correction mechanisms that can complement the accountability role of independent evaluation and allow the latter to invest more time and resources in the learning function component, as part of a results- and evidence-based culture of planning and adaptive management.
- **A flexible process of resourcing evaluation through a pooled funding mechanism** using both Regular Budget and project funds, allowing for a more strategic and selective evaluation process, applying clustering when feasible and ex post and impact evaluation methods as necessary. Such a process is expected to lead to improved cost-effectiveness and a reduction in workload of a strained evaluation network.
- Promotion and enhancement of evaluative thinking and practices throughout the Office based on **a strong evaluative culture as part of other learning and knowledge sharing processes**. This will strengthen the contribution of evaluation to learning, and enhance ILO effectiveness through identified organizational links to other strategies, such as the ILO's Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25; the ILO Strategy on knowledge and innovation across the Organization; and the ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development.
- A continued push to **explore innovative ways to professionalize, incentivize and recognize evaluation skills** and related duties within the ILO, including on the uptake and use of evaluation findings for programming and policy development.



## Key strategic initiatives for the evaluation function outcomes

The evaluation function consists of specific policy, strategy, processes, governance and management roles with responsibilities related to the planning, implementation and use of evaluative evidence. The key strategy outcomes for the evaluation, in line with UNEG norms and standards, will be maintained in the structure of the strategy, but updated to reflect developments and findings from reviews.

### Evaluation function key strategic initiatives to be related to outcomes in the Evaluation Strategy:

Outcome 1 (capacity/coverage)	Enhanced capacities at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels for planning, undertaking and using evaluations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of <b>financial thresholds</b> triggering independent evaluation.</li> <li>• Annual <b>regional and departmental planning processes</b> using criteria-based mechanisms to decide on required evaluations, with a focus on strategic learning needs (linked to planning/programming cycles; covering all forms of evaluation, including impact evaluation; and using clustered evaluation, when possible), thus responding to priorities while ensuring adequate and timely coverage of ILO evaluations.</li> <li>• Review and <b>fine-tune the ILO's hybrid decentralized evaluation mechanism</b>, while preserving independence, maximizing efficient work distribution and adding the value of evaluative evidence.</li> <li>• Review the composition and role of the EAC to raise its profile and foster culture, with a particular <b>focus on the planning and use of evaluation</b>.</li> </ul>
Outcome 2 (independence, quality and credibility)	Enhanced evaluation systems and processes leading to more credible, strategic and higher-quality evaluations, using the methods and approaches best suited to the ILO's mandate and set-up.
Capacity development (2019) (HLE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review methods for a <b>more participatory approach to evaluation involving constituents and other beneficiaries</b>, with due regard to transaction cost.</li> <li>• Target <b>evaluation models that reflect the ILO's mandate with more focused evaluation questions</b> and that are focused on learning and providing credibility of evidence through structured independence.</li> <li>• Continue <b>systematic quality assessment of all types of evaluations</b>, both real-time and on an ex post basis, <b>covering overall quality and ability</b> to capture the ILO's mandate and cross-cutting issues.</li> <li>• Enhance the <b>support to impact and ex post evaluations</b> in integrated planning.</li> <li>• Undertake selected ex post and <b>impact evaluations, demand-driven and learning-focused</b>, in consultation with the EAC and subject to dedicated resources.</li> <li>• Continue <b>involvement in relevant evaluation initiatives in the UN system</b>, particularly at the country level and where it supports the work of ILO constituents.</li> </ul>
Outcome 3 (utility/use)	Expanded knowledge base of evaluation findings and recommendations that effectively contributes to organizational learning and enhances organizational effectiveness.
Sustainable enterprises (2020) (HLE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen <b>identification of strategic knowledge requirements through mapping and EAC discussions on evidence gaps</b> and needs for evaluative evidence by policy areas (organizational learning geared to constituents and Office needs).</li> <li>• Stay ahead of <b>innovative advancements in improving knowledge systems related to evaluation</b> and knowledge management (i-eval Discovery upgrades, data on evaluation expenditure, tagging evaluations by ILO strategic objective, and a fully interactive online process for completing evaluations).</li> <li>• A more diversified product range catering for multiple audiences.</li> <li>• Management response and follow-up with <b>longer-term monitoring and reporting</b> to demonstrate the contribution of evaluation to organizational effectiveness.</li> <li>• <b>Continue synthesizing evaluation information</b> for target audiences, including systematic assessment development effectiveness.</li> </ul>

## Results framework for the Evaluation Strategy

The core of the Evaluation Strategy 2022–25 will be a results framework using the model of the previous Evaluation Strategy, but with additional emphasis on the enabling environment and utility. Detailed sub-outcomes, results and measurement criteria based on updates and revisions to the framework matrix for 2018–21 will be developed. Given the importance of the enabling environment, the results matrix will identify outcomes, indicators and responsibilities for entities within the Office beyond the evaluation function to ensure that evaluations can deliver on the 2017 Evaluation Policy. The results framework will be reflected in updated policy guidelines and guidance and other evaluation products, including more innovative forms of presenting evaluative knowledge.

## Reporting and assessment of the Evaluation Strategy

The AER will continue to provide annual updates on the implementation of the full Evaluation Strategy results framework. Required reporting inputs by custodians for enabling environment initiatives will be obtained from the responsible entities. The five-yearly evaluation of the evaluation function will be undertaken in 2027 on the basis of best practices in the UN system.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

The Office is requested to finalize the ILO results-based Evaluation Strategy 2022–25 on the basis of the outline provided and through further consultations and considering the guidance provided during the deliberations relating to documents GB.346/PFA/6 and GB.346/PFA/8.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE (ILO)  
EVALUATION OFFICE (EVAL)  
4, ROUTE DES MORILLONS  
CH-1211 GENEVA 22  
SWITZERLAND

TEL: (+41 22) 799 6440  
FAX: (+41 22) 799 6219

[EVAL@ILO.ORG](mailto:EVAL@ILO.ORG)

| [WWW.ILO.ORG/EVAL](http://WWW.ILO.ORG/EVAL)



| [ILO\\_EVAL](https://twitter.com/ILO_EVAL)



| [ILO\\_EVALUATION](https://www.linkedin.com/company/i-lo-evaluation)



| [ILO\\_EVAL](https://www.facebook.com/ILO_EVAL)