

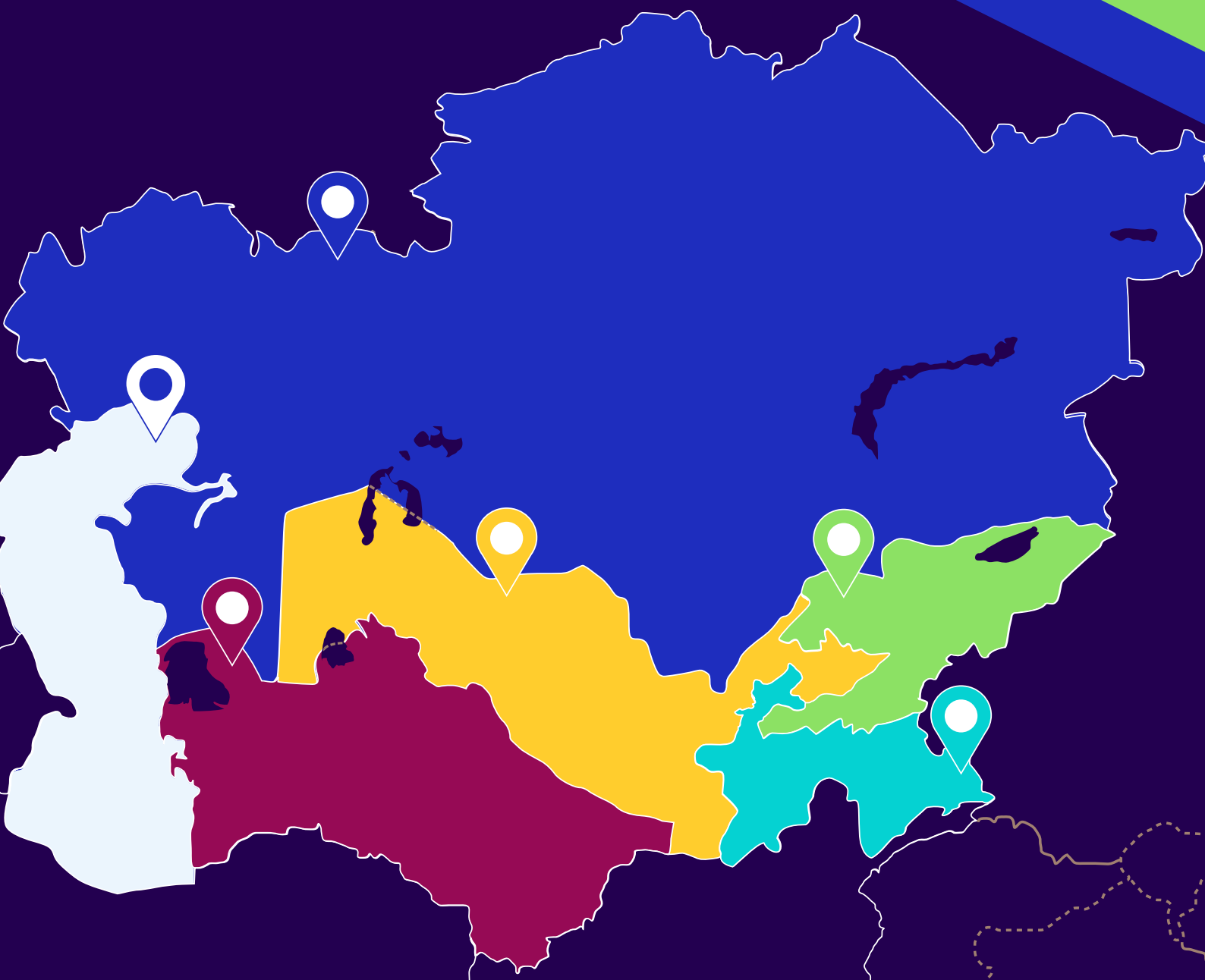


International
Labour
Organization

Evaluation
Office

► Decent Work Country Programme (2022)

► High-level independent evaluation of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme in Central Asia, 2018-22



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First published 2022

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High-level independent evaluation of ILO's programme of work in Central Asia, 2018-2022. Geneva: International Labour Office, 2022

ISBN 9789220375334 (web pdf)

ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data

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Printed in Switzerland

- ▶ **High-level independent evaluation of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme in Central Asia, 2018-22**

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACTEMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
CAS	Conference Committee on the Application of Standards
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	Country Office
CPO	Country Programme Outcome
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Technical Support Team
DWT/CO-Moscow	Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Moscow
EU	European Union
EVAL	Evaluation Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GSP+	Generalized System of Preferences Plus
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
NC	National Coordinator
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORMES	International Labour Standards Department
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	Programme & Budget
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
RO	Regional Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Country Framework



Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL), with a team of independent consultants: Ms Sandy Wark (team leader); Dr Ilhom Abdulloev and Mr Uktam Dzhumaev (national consultants in Tajikistan); and Ms Rakhilya Nurbaeva (national consultant in Uzbekistan). The task manager for the evaluation was Mr Craig Russon, Senior Evaluation Officer of EVAL. Mr Guy Thijs, Director of EVAL, provided technical guidance and quality control throughout the process. EVAL would like to thank officials in the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (DWT/CO-Moscow), and ILO national coordinators and project personnel, for their cooperation and support to this evaluation. Thanks are also due to the tripartite constituents and the stakeholders, for participating in the evaluation by sharing their experiences and perceptions with the evaluation team. EVAL takes full responsibility for any errors or omissions in the report.

Executive Summary



▶ Executive Summary

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's programme of work in Central Asia examined the extent to which the ILO's programmes in Central Asia are effectively serving as instruments to achieve the Organization's Decent Work Agenda. Given the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which began in 2020, the evaluation includes consideration of the ILO's support to countries to address emergent decent work challenges. In line with United Nations (UN) good practices for evaluations, the evaluation examined the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the programmes.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS BY EVALUATION CRITERIA

Relevance

KEY FINDING 1:

Overall, the constituents in Central Asia perceived that the ILO's assistance aligned with their priorities. In particular, they expressed strong appreciation for the speed, flexibility, and adaptiveness of the ILO's assistance to meet unanticipated needs emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.

KEY FINDING 2:

The ILO aligned its assistance effectively with decent work constraints identified by constituents during consultations and policy dialogue. There were some apparent gaps in the ILO's assistance programmes; examples included lack of progress in addressing the issue of forced labour in Turkmenistan, as well as the issues of safe labour migration and entrepreneurship, and enterprise development generally.

KEY FINDING 3:

The ILO was responsive to its national counterparts' needs for data and policy advice in all five countries in Central Asia. Notably, the DWT/CO-Moscow was quick in developing knowledge-sharing activities on COVID-19 emergency response and recovery and adapting its programme delivery modes to COVID-19-related restrictions.

KEY FINDING 4:

The ILO also responded effectively to COVID-19-related public health concerns and the pandemic's effects on employers and workers, by providing useful occupational safety and health (OSH) guidance and facilitating opportunities for tripartite dialogue on ways to deal with negative consequences of public health restrictions on livelihoods and enterprise sustainability.

To different degrees by country and by issue, the ILO was diligent in tackling identified constraints to decent work in Central Asia. Considering numerous observations by ILO supervisory bodies, the country programmes' significant focus on core labour standards demonstrated relevance and effective priority-setting. Similarly, the ILO's assistance to meet tripartite constituents' needs emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic showed speed and adaptiveness to unanticipated events, an exceptional achievement for a large organization.

Coherence

KEY FINDING 5:

Surveys, diagnostics and analytical reports produced by the ILO on many topics supported the Organization's own experts' recommendations and helped guide national priority-setting and policies. The ILO's technical assistance and use of local experts also contributed to enhancing national counterparts' research capabilities, albeit to a somewhat limited extent.

KEY FINDING 6:

In both countries with Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), the ILO capitalized on past cooperation and new programme development processes to align and embed the Decent Work Agenda in larger development plans and policies. In Uzbekistan, synergies between DWCPs and the country's ambitious reform agenda since 2018 have led to stronger policy dialogue and cooperation between the ILO and national stakeholders. In countries without DWCPs, the ILO was still able to engage in dialogue and constituent capacity-building on priority decent work issues, albeit on fewer issues and with more limited scope, especially in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

KEY FINDING 7:

The ILO's proactive efforts to raise the awareness of its social partners on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and United Nations (UN) agency mandates, as well as to educate UN resident coordinators on the ILO's tripartite structure and mandate, were successful in ensuring the integration of decent work concerns in UN Sustainable Development Country Frameworks (UNSDCFs) in the subregion. Through coordination and joint projects, the ILO actively collaborated with other UN agencies and development partners on social protection, resulting in greater coherence of assistance programmes, particularly on social protection.

The ILO effectively used DWCP formulation (in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan only), policy dialogue, research activities and partnerships to align its assistance with national development strategies and priorities, as well as the efforts of UN and other international development partners. The ILO's research effectively addressed the deficit of data and analysis on labour issues that characterized the subregion, and contributed to greater understanding of decent work constraints, particularly on the labour market effects of COVID-19. Considering the long list of policies and laws that were influenced by the ILO's research activities, the Organization's expertise in labour-related research methodologies emerges from this evaluation as one of its important comparative advantages. The ILO also contributed usefully to UN reforms towards more tightly aligned country-level cooperation through its active participation in the development of UNSDCFs and thematic coordination groups, as well as through joint projects. Its dedication to collaborative work on strengthening social protection deserves particular recognition.

Effectiveness

KEY FINDING 8:

The ILO contributed to many noteworthy results in Central Asia in the areas of combatting child labour, forced labour and trafficking; strengthening legal protections for freedom of association; developing employment and social protection policies and action plans; and adopting improved vocational training assessment, planning and curriculum development methodologies.

KEY FINDING 9:

The ILO's attention to its cross-cutting policy drivers resulted in Central Asian countries' ratification of ten ILO Conventions, strengthened social dialogue mechanisms, and the integration of measures to support gender equality and non-discrimination in national policies. However, results on environmental sustainability were few and relatively low level.

KEY FINDING 10:

The ILO and ILO constituents identified many factors that either helped or hindered country programmes' effectiveness. Key success factors included access to the ILO's technical expertise, active participation from national constituents, strong ILO management, effective use of ILO research, and well-designed interventions. Identified constraints included: varying capacity of social partner institutions, variances in political will for reforms, economic or political instability, and COVID-19-related delays. The evaluation also highlighted many specific factors that contributed to Uzbekistan's emergence as an ILO success story, including a relationship of trust with constituents, including with high-level decision-makers within the Government, programmes' alignment with an active reform agenda, and alliances with civil society activists, among others.

KEY FINDING 11:

The work of ILO specialists and national coordinators was highly appreciated by national constituents and partners. Nevertheless, the constituents and some partners, as well as ILO personnel, attributed delays in programme implementation, limitations in accessing expertise and reductions in the ILO's influence within the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to the ILO's thin in-country presence and related management arrangements.

The ILO contributed substantially and effectively to Decent Work Agenda reforms in multiple workstreams. The ILO's work in Uzbekistan – in particular, its contributions to strengthening national efforts to combat child labour and forced labour in cotton growing – stands out for its depth and overall effectiveness. The ILO effectively integrated most cross-cutting policy drivers in its programmes, except for environmental sustainability. The ILO's work on social protection was particularly rigorous in mainstreaming gender equality and non-discrimination.

On success factors, the bedrock of the ILO's contributions to decent work reforms in Central Asia was the breadth and depth of its technical knowledge, as well as the dedication of its in-country personnel. Nevertheless, the positive effects of the former were in some cases diminished by the significant workload spread over relatively limited personnel numbers and in-country representation.

Efficiency

KEY FINDING 12:

Despite the ILO's relatively limited presence in most countries and its lean management structure overall, the constituents perceived that they had received high-quality technical assistance. The move to online modes of assistance to cope with COVID-19 restrictions was a positive factor in increasing the accessibility of ILO expertise.

KEY FINDING 13:

From 2018 to 2021, the ILO's technical assistance and development cooperation activities in Central Asia produced 48 results towards Programme and Budget (P&B) and Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs). Overall, the contributions of Central Asian countries to total CPO results in the region were outsized relative to its budget. With about 15 per cent of the regional budget, Central Asia contributed to about 25 per cent of the reported results.

KEY FINDING 14:

During the evaluation period, the DWT/CO-Moscow strategically used ILO unearmarked technical cooperation funds to address supervisory body comments on fundamental issues, especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) funds and regional and global projects over which the ILO had greater discretionary powers also filled gaps in bilateral donor funding for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The ILO was successful in achieving measurable results, despite having relatively small budgets in most Central Asian countries. It did so by focusing its resources on high-priority issues and on policy and knowledge dimensions of problems that were well aligned with its available human resources and areas of ILO value added. Results-based management approaches, especially as embedded in the DWCP, were a positive factor driving the ILO's strategic planning; however, limited DWCP progress monitoring limited the use of performance data in subsequent decision-making.



Impact

KEY FINDING 15:

The ILO contributed to numerous Decent Work Agenda higher-level positive outcomes in Central Asia: reductions in the prevalence of child labour and forced labour, strengthened national responses to human trafficking, improved real and potential growth in exports, greater protection of workers' labour rights through inspection and worker representation, and improved protection for vulnerable populations during economic shocks and downturns, among others.

KEY FINDING 16:

By clearly identifying priorities and desired outcomes and outputs, DWCPs in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were largely effective as a results-based approach to decent work promotion. However, the choice of indicators and use of targets, as well as activities to monitor progress against outcomes, were relatively weak.

The ILO has noted the many high-level outcomes to which it has contributed in Central Asia in recent years. These have led to measurable, positive improvements in the lives of working people, the effectiveness of labour market institutions, and real and potential economic benefits for the most diligent reforming countries.

Results-based management approaches, especially as embedded in the DWCP, were a positive factor driving effectiveness; however, weak DWCP progress monitoring limited the identification and understanding of outcomes.



Sustainability

KEY FINDING 17:

One of the main strategies used by the ILO to promote sustainability was building constituents' awareness, capacity and ownership of the Decent Work Agenda reforms. The ILO's awareness-raising and capacity-building activities reached diverse audiences in significant numbers and resulted in its tripartite partners and others gaining greater understanding of international labour standards, more frequent and effective tripartite social dialogue, and improved capacity by social partners to represent their members' interests. The ILO used many good practices to increase the effectiveness of its training activities in changing participants' policies and practices; examples include South-South and triangular cooperation, participative approaches and "learning while doing".

KEY FINDING 18:

The ILO also contributed to the institutionalization of some of the positive outcomes of its technical cooperation programmes by mainstreaming international labour standards in policies, legal frameworks, and institutional mandates. Notable examples include labour law reforms; the development of national strategies on employment, social protection, and skills; and efforts to institutionalize third-party monitoring (Uzbekistan).

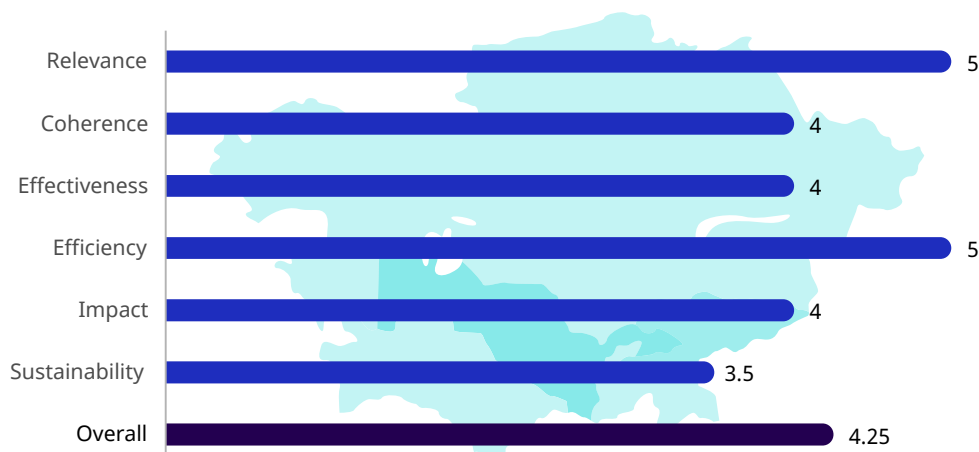
KEY FINDING 19:

Many of the ILO's interventions were primarily focused on policy formulation, with relatively limited direct support. To date, many policies have yet to be fully endorsed by the Government or have their implementation initiated. Moreover, while countries can reasonably expect continued support from ILO specialists, the outlook for improved resource mobilization is mixed.

The ILO diligently identified and implemented strategies to promote the sustainability of CPOs and impacts. It was especially successful in creating capacity and ownership for Decent Work Agenda reforms among its national-level constituents, and mainstreaming reforms in country policies and laws. These important successes notwithstanding, the significant role played by Central Asian Governments in policy implementation in a frequently changing political landscape poses an obvious risk. Moreover, the relatively short duration of ILO support – especially in newer and complex workstreams, such as minimum wage-setting, employment, social protection, and skills programmes – poses a significant threat to the sustainability of the Organization's initial successes in the absence of follow-on support. In this context, the ILO's ability to maintain and potentially expand technical assistance through regionally based specialists and technical cooperation programmes is an important asset.

Overall assessment


► **Figure 1.** Performance by evaluation criterion: 2018–22 ILO programme of work in Central Asia



Recommendations


RECOMMENDATION 1

The ILO should continue to consult supervisory bodies' findings to determine gaps in the integration or implementation of Conventions as an input for the design of technical cooperation activities. Moreover, overcoming concerns raised by these bodies should be high on the priority list of ILO country programmes in Central Asia.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO (including Workers' and Employers' Specialists), Regional Office (RO), International Labour Standards Department (NORMES)		Medium-term	Variable

RECOMMENDATION 2


The ILO should continue efforts in all Central Asian countries to strengthen freedom of association in law and practice. It should strengthen its support and cooperation on safe labour migration, entrepreneurship and enterprise development in the subregion, building on its experiences and good practices in other regions. ILO should capitalize on all opportunities to combat forced labour in Turkmenistan's cotton industry.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO (including Workers' and Employers' Specialists), RO, NORMES		Medium-term	Medium

RECOMMENDATION 3


The ILO should reinforce efforts to educate partners on the role and importance of international labour standards in Central Asia's economic development. To do so, it should:

- ▶ continue to leverage its active participation on the UNCT and in the UNSDCF development process, as well as policy dialogue with international finance institutions;
- ▶ continue to promote social partners' inclusion in UN country-level efforts towards achieving the SDGs;
- ▶ document and highlight successful outcomes and related spill over benefits achieved in Uzbekistan, to encourage reforms in other countries in Central Asia and beyond.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO (including Workers' and Employers' Specialists), RO, NORMES		Medium-term	Low

RECOMMENDATION 4


The ILO should continue to engage in research on labour topics; to increase ownership and strengthen the capabilities of national institutions and experts, it should reinforce its collaboration with national institutions and experts in Central Asia.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO, RO		Medium-term	Low

RECOMMENDATION 5

Capitalizing on results to date, the ILO should endeavour to mobilize additional resources from donors so that it can continue its support to national counterparts in Central Asia, especially in the areas where it has successfully provided policy advice but needs implementation support. While all resource allocation decisions should be based on the outcomes of stakeholder consultations, areas that appear to require follow-up support include wage-setting mechanisms, improving public employment services, social protection, and skills development. The ILO should:


- ▶ prioritize workstreams and countries where constituents demonstrate their commitment to decent work reforms by officially validating ILO-supported policy documents and action plans, allocating national budgets, and beginning implementation;
- ▶ continue its efforts to develop and diversify its partnerships in Central Asia as part of its resource mobilization strategy.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO, RO, Partnering for Development (PARDEV)		Short- and medium-term	Variable

RECOMMENDATION 6


Moving out of the pandemic period, and based on pre- and post-pandemic evaluation findings and other lessons learned related to its field structure, the ILO should:

- ▶ continue to use and invest in online technologies for capacity-building programmes as well as country-level coordination and policy dialogue, making more selective use of face-to-face missions necessitating international travel;
- ▶ re-examine earlier evaluations and decisions regarding where to post regular budget-funded specialists, including the advantages and disadvantages of basing all DWT specialists in the same country; it should consider issues such as how best to facilitate access to expertise, as well as teamwork among specialists, differences in political will for decent work reforms in the subregion, and practical logistical issues;
- ▶ assess the national coordinator (NC) management model, which seems to have been successful in Central Asia, for ways to improve it in countries where it is already used, as well as if/how to replicate it in other countries, in the subregions and elsewhere where the ILO has non-resident status.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/ CO, RO, Human Resources Development (HRD)		Short-term	Low

RECOMMENDATION 7

Based on evaluation findings and similar findings from past high-level evaluations, the ILO should strengthen DWCP monitoring activities in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, by improving the formulation and monitoring of programme indicators and indicator targets. In Uzbekistan, the ILO should support tripartite constituents to establish a more formal DWCP monitoring mechanism.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/ CO, EVAL, Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM)		Short-term	Low

Office Response

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Office agrees with this Recommendation.

The comments of ILO supervisory bodies remain a priority for the Office in terms of technical assistance and engagement in Turkmenistan (on forced labour) and Kazakhstan (on freedom of association). Support for other areas of ILO work is conditional on progress being made on addressing the comments of the supervisory bodies in these countries.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Office agrees with this Recommendation.

Freedom of association remains essential for all countries in Central Asia and consistent funding over the medium-long term is important to ensure sustained efforts in this regard.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Office agrees with this Recommendation.

Policy dialogue with IFIs will continue to take place at the country level in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to strengthen policy coherence between IFIs and ILO Conventions on labour inspection. Efforts are also being pursued through UNRCs and donor partners at the country level to elaborate consistent messaging.

Initiatives are ongoing to ensure more active and systematic participation of social partners in actions for the achievement of the SDGs, particularly in UN country planning and programming processes. This builds on a special effort of the Region to provide entry points for Social Partners informing all UNRCs in the Region on the specific ILO value added to the work of the UNCTs.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The ILO agrees with this Recommendation.

The Office will identify key research topics based on consultation with its tripartite constituents and its own analysis.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The ILO agrees with this recommendation.

The ILO will continue designing new resource mobilization strategies and modalities and establishing new partnerships. Voluntary funding partnerships for earmarked contributions are a matter of convergence of national priorities/needs, funding partners' development agenda and ILO capacity.

RECOMMENDATION 6

- ▶ This recommendation is welcome and indeed ILO is coming out of Covid with a sense of better balancing face to face missions with complementary online/virtual support. There are however types of events which are connected to high level political attendance and at which sensitive issues need to be discussed and solved.
- ▶ The possibility of out-posting, either from HQ or DWT's, one or a limited number of RB core positions in a duty-station for a period of time has been positively tested in situations of crisis (for example in the Arab States Region). The Office will obviously need to balance this with the potential risk of depleting DWTs of their technical expertise.
- ▶ The NC model has proven to be a very useful one in non-resident countries. The NC role has increasingly been linked to interaction with the UN country team in situ as well, adding to the complexity of the functions.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The ILO agrees with the recommendation.

In case of Uzbekistan, the ILO will finalize the DWCP implementation plan together with the constituents.

In Tajikistan, results of implementation of the DWCP are discussed at the annual meeting of the National Tripartite Committee for decent work. The ILO will work on strengthening the capacity of the constituents to monitor DWCP implementation.





▶ 01

Introduction



Introduction

BACKGROUND

In November 2021, the International Labour Organization's (ILO's) Governing Body approved the Evaluation Office (EVAL) rolling work plan for 2021–23, which included an independent evaluation of a cluster of ILO Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) in the Europe and Central Asia region. Following a review of resource allocation and priorities in the region, and consultation with the Regional Office (RO), EVAL initiated an independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's programme of work in Central Asia. As directed by the terms of reference and ILO/EVAL high-level evaluation protocol and other guidance, the evaluation examined the extent to which the Organization's programmes have effectively served as instruments to achieve the Decent Work Agenda in the subregion. This report presents the evaluation's key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

According to the ILO, decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; security in the workplace; social protection for families; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. The four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda are employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue.

EVALUATION SCOPE, PURPOSE, CLIENT, AND QUESTIONS

The high-level evaluation assessed the ILO's programme of work in Central Asia during the last two ILO Programme and Budget (P&B) biennia (2018–19 and 2020–21) and the first quarter of the current biennium (2022–23), which include activities initiated both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The evaluation documented and assessed the extent to which ILO programming has contributed to achieving the outcomes planned in the respective country programmes, how the results were achieved, as well as the contextual factors that affected outcomes. The evaluation also addressed the ILO's cross-cutting policy drivers – international labour standards and social dialogue, environmental sustainability, gender equality/non-discrimination – as well as new issues such as the ILO's COVID-19 response. Based on its findings and conclusions, the evaluation team produced detailed recommendations and documented good practices and lessons learned that may help guide future programming in the subregion and beyond.

The principal client for the evaluation is the ILO's Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of his Senior Management Team; the RO for Europe and Central Asia; the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Moscow (DWT/CO–Moscow); ILO national coordinators; project staff based in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; and the tripartite constituents in Central Asia.

In line with United Nations (UN) good practices for evaluations, as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation (version 4, 2020), the evaluation will examine the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the ILO programmes. ILO/EVAL provided a set of evaluation questions in the terms of reference under each of these thematic criteria. When answering these questions, the evaluation team considered stakeholder satisfaction, unintended results and lessons learned.

Table 1. Evaluation questions

Assessment criteria	Questions to be addressed
Relevance (Are the programmes doing the right things?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What is the status of the Decent Work Country Programming (DWCP) in Central Asia? ▶ Are ILO programmes and projects relevant to tripartite constituents' and other partners' needs? ▶ To what extent did ILO programmes and projects identify and address key constraints affecting the Central Asian countries' (with focus on the case study countries) progress on the Decent Work Agenda? ▶ Are the DWCPs relevant to national, regional, and international development frameworks (including the UNCFs and the SDGs)? Are they relevant to the ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B) outcomes? ▶ In what ways has the ILO adapted its programming to incorporate a human-centred recovery from the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic? To what extent have ILO programmes and projects been designed or repurposed based on results from COVID-19 diagnostics, UN socio-economic assessments and guidance, ILO decent work national diagnostics, or similar comprehensive tools?
Coherence (How well does the intervention fit?) and validity of design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How well are the development cooperation projects aligned to the DWCPs? ▶ To what extent can the DWCPs be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion? ▶ Were principles of results-based management applied to help the DWCPs to focus on performance and the achievement of results?
Effectiveness (Is the country programming achieving its objectives?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To what extent and in what ways did ILO support enable the Central Asian countries (with focus on the case study countries) to achieve DWCP and/or ILO CPOs? What were the key factors of success? What were the main internal and external constraints/challenges? ▶ To what extent has the ILO made progress in achieving results on cross-cutting issues of standards; social dialogue and tripartism; gender equality and non-discrimination; and environmental sustainability, notably in policy dialogues, policy partnerships and partners frameworks? Were there any unexpected results? ▶ To what extent have the ILO DWT/ CO–Moscow and concerned headquarters departments provided integrated and strategic technical support and fostered productive policy dialogue processes at the country level? ▶ To what extent have ILO programmes fostered social dialogue among ILO constituents to develop and implement coherent strategies to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the world of work?

<p>Efficiency</p> <p>(How well are resources being used?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To what extent and in what ways did the ILO efficiently use available resources (financial, human, and technical) in Central Asia? How did DWCP stakeholders perceive, or other data suggest, that ILO efficiency could be improved? ▶ To what extent has the ILO effectively leveraged partnerships (with tripartite partners and other national institutions, international financial institutions and UN/development agencies) to mobilize resources needed to achieve DCWP and/or country programme results?
<p>Likelihood of impact</p> <p>(What difference does the programming make?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To what extent did ILO support contribute to significant positive changes in decent work in the Central Asian countries (with a focus on the case study countries)? ▶ In what ways did ILO programmes contribute to the development of awareness, knowledge, policies, and national programmes to ensure that workers, employers and governments maintain focus on decent work, while adjusting to the socio economic consequences of the pandemic? ▶ How successful has the ILO been in influencing the policy agenda in the Central Asian countries? To what extent are ILO programmes successfully promoting the Organization's core principles?
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>(Will the benefits last?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To what extent did the ILO identify and implement strategies to promote the sustainability of CPOs and impacts? ▶ What are the main risks for sustainability of ILO programme outcomes and impacts, and what mitigation actions are needed? ▶ What might the ILO and its partners learn from the sustainability of past ILO programmes to design strategies to improve the sustainability of ongoing and future programming?

EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation team carried out the evaluation according to the ILO's standard policies and procedures and complied with UN Evaluation Group norms and standards as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development evaluation quality standards. The team applied guidance provided in the [ILO/EVAL Protocol 2.2: High-level evaluation \(HLE\) protocol for DWCP evaluation](#), as well as other applicable guidance notes.¹

As per the terms of reference, the evaluation used a mix of evaluation approaches: a goal-based approach to examine the country programmes' achievements; a case study approach to examine ILO activities in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in greater depth; mixed methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings; and a participatory approach that involved ILO key stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, ILO tripartite constituents, ILO staff and strategic partners.² The evaluation team also used a gender-responsive evaluation approach, in accordance with EVAL guidelines.³

The evaluation took place during the coronavirus pandemic. The evaluation was guided by the ILO's [Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations](#) and [Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO: Practical tips on adapting to the situation](#). Considering these guidelines, the evaluation team used a mix of remote and face-to-face data collection methods, and adapted the key evaluation questions, taking into consideration the potential effects of COVID-19 on ILO programming and results.

1. For example, [Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate](#).
2. ILO personnel in the Regional and Subregional Office were consulted by the evaluation team during the inception phase to assess their needs and expectations for the evaluation.
3. [Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation](#).

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The evaluation team used several data sources and collection methods. The Evaluation Question Matrix in Annex A presents the evaluation team's data collection methods and sources by evaluation question. The evaluation team used uniform data collection instruments and posed similar questions to all stakeholders to facilitate comparing data across countries and different stakeholder groups. The team leader developed the data collection instruments during the inception phase, taking into consideration preliminary document review and the evaluation questions. Annex B contains the team's instruments. By comparing the results obtained from (a) different data sources, (b) using different methods, and (c) highlighting areas of convergence and divergence, the team aimed to ensure the validity and reliability of the evaluation's findings.

Document review: The evaluation team drew both quantitative and qualitative data from various ILO documents (ILO research products, DWT/CO–Moscow-produced reports, project documents and project-commissioned studies, and evaluation reports), as well as country- and subregion-specific data located in various ILO databases.⁴ Annex C includes a list of documents consulted by the evaluation team.

Key informant interviews: The evaluators conducted semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) with individuals and small groups with first-hand knowledge of the ILO's programme of work in Central Asia. These included a cross-section of representatives of key stakeholder groups:

- ▶ ILO personnel (ILO headquarters, regional, DWT and country-based specialists; CO programme management teams; and ILO project management teams);
- ▶ ILO tripartite constituents in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan;
- ▶ other ILO implementing partners;
- ▶ UN and other national and international organizations in the target countries with which the ILO collaborated;
- ▶ donor representatives.

The evaluation team interviewed 68 individuals (26 women and 42 men) from various stakeholder groups. Annex D includes a list of individuals consulted by the team. Table 2 shows the distribution of interviews by country, key stakeholder group and sex. Each interview followed an interview protocol adjusted for different respondent types, and was conducted in English, Russian, Tajik or Uzbek.

4. Among others, these include: labour statistics available on [ILOSTAT](#); the breakdown of project expenditures by country, donor, programme area and SDG on the [ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard](#); and country-specific information on laws and compliance with international labour standards on [NORMLEX](#). In addition, the team will access ILO specialist mission reports from the mission reports database.

Table 2. Summary of KIIs by country and stakeholder group

Stakeholder group	Female	Male	Total
Regional and non-case study countries			
ILO personnel (country team personnel, DWT specialists, national coordinators, project managers, consultants)	10	20	30
Tajikistan			
Government counterparts	1	7	8
Workers' and employers' organizations representatives	0	4	4
Other stakeholder organization representatives (donors, other UN organizations)	2	2	4
Subtotal	3	13	16
Uzbekistan			
Government counterparts	6	4	10
Workers' and employers' organization representatives	1	3	4
Other stakeholder organization representatives (donors, other UN organizations)	6	2	8
Subtotal	13	9	22
Grand total	26	42	68

Beneficiary focus group discussions: Country-based evaluation team members in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan facilitated focus group discussions (FGDs) with 17 beneficiaries of ILO training programmes.

Table 3. Beneficiary focus group discussions

Tajikistan	Female	Male	Total
Labour Inspectors	3	2	5
Uzbekistan	Female	Male	Total
Civil society activists/third-party monitoring	4	3	7
Labour Inspectors	3	2	5
Grand total	10	7	17

Online surveys: The evaluation team developed short survey(s) to gather complementary qualitative and quantitative data from two groups of evaluation stakeholders: ILO personnel involved in programmes in Central Asia, and tripartite constituents in each country. The surveys collected respondent perceptions and level of satisfaction with ILO support, as well as perceived outcomes and challenges affecting outcomes. They used a variety of question types (most of which were the same for the two stakeholder groups to allow for comparability): multiple choice, Likert scales and open ended questions. Participation was voluntary, and answers were anonymous. The surveys were hosted online with invitations to participate sent by email. Annex B includes a list of the survey instruments.

The evaluation team collaborated with national coordinators/evaluation focal points in each country to identify potential respondent lists. Although the survey was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turkmenistan for distribution to ILO counterparts, no stakeholders in the

country participated in the survey. Both because of limitations in the survey sampling strategy as well as response rates, survey data are in no way representative of the opinions and perceptions of the entire stakeholder group. Quantitative information from surveys shows trends among respondents but should not be taken to represent the views of non-respondents. As seen in table 4, the survey was sent to 93 potential respondents, and 39 individuals filled in the questionnaire, a response rate of 42 per cent.

Table 4. Online survey recipients and respondents

	Total sent	Responses	Female	Male
Kazakhstan constituents and partners	9	2	1	1
Kyrgyzstan constituents and partners	18	6	3	3
Tajikistan constituents and partners	16	6	0	6
Turkmenistan constituents and partners	1			
Uzbekistan constituents and partners	14	4	1	3
ILO personnel	35	21	8	13
Total	93	39 (42%)	13	26

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

Potential bias: The evaluation team was aware of potential bias risks in data collection. These potential biases included recall (potential inaccuracies of key informants' recollections), selection (possibility that programme personnel involvement in the selection of evaluation key informants could be biased towards individuals with positive experiences and views) and response (potential that key informants respond in ways that they think are expected and/or will favour follow-on support). To mitigate these biases, the evaluators interviewed a wide variety of stakeholders. The team probed informant answers to help facilitate accurate recollection. Finally, the evaluators initiated all key informant interviews and the group discussion with information about the evaluation's learning objectives and key informant confidentiality protocols.

Uneven data by country: As agreed during the scoping, the evaluation team interviewed or carried out focus groups with ILO national constituents, beneficiaries, and partners in two case study countries only: Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Data sources for findings on other countries excluded these important stakeholder perspectives. To mitigate this gap, the evaluation team solicited tripartite constituents' feedback from all five countries through an online survey; while response rates were low, survey data covered four out of five countries (there were no survey responses from Turkmenistan). In addition, the evaluation team interviewed ILO personnel with experience in case study countries as well as in the other countries in the subregion (including all four national coordinators). The team also reviewed documents covering all five countries.

Covid-19 travel restrictions' effect on data collection: Because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the evaluation team leader was unable to travel to the RO and case study countries for field work. To maximize the numbers and effectiveness of interviews and FGDs with country-based stakeholders, the evaluation team included national consultants who were able to carry out interviews in local languages (Tajik, Uzbek or Russian), the majority face-to-face. They took detailed notes, which were translated into English and shared with the team leader. Nearly all interviews with ILO personnel, as well as some international partners, were carried out remotely by the team leader in English using online platforms.



▶ 02

Decent work
challenges in
Central Asia

► Decent work challenges in Central Asia

This subsection provides a brief overview of critical decent work challenges facing Central Asian countries in the decades following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is organized thematically and draws on multiple sources, including the ILO's own diagnostics, the observations of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), as well as other international development partner reports.

► **Figure 2.** Central Asian States



While each country has its own unique obstacles and opportunities, the five Central Asian countries share many common decent work challenges. They have a common Soviet past and, following their independence in 1991, faced similar challenges transitioning from centrally planned social economic and legal systems to market-oriented economies. With different pre- and post-Soviet histories, and significant differences in natural resource endowments, the countries' economies have transformed at different rates. The Central Asian countries are a mix of upper-middle-income (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan), lower-middle-income (Uzbekistan) and low income countries (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). Agricultural production and natural resources extraction are the region's core economic activities.

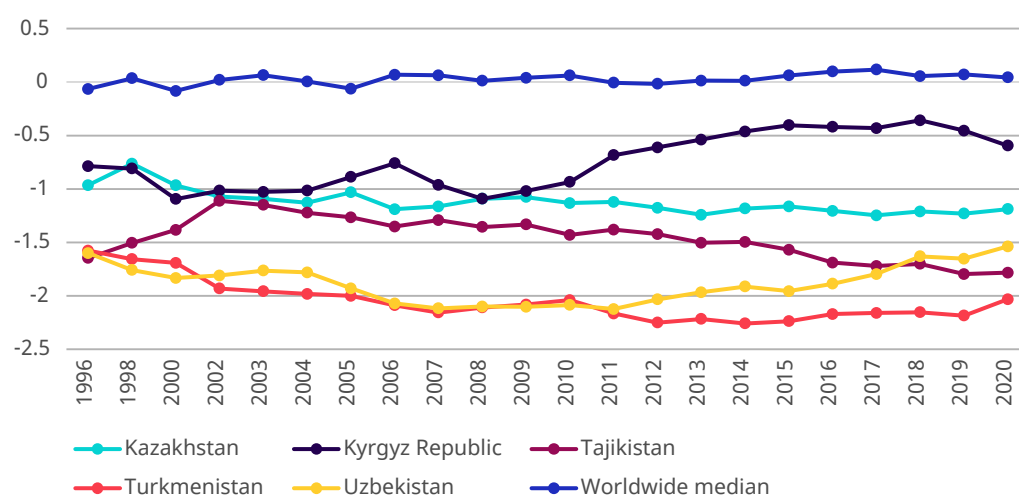
Social dialogue: Mechanisms for tripartite social dialogue on labour matters are immature in most countries. While all five Central Asian countries have national tripartite bodies to facilitate social dialogue on labour and employment issues, most are relatively young, having only been formed or reformed relatively recently.⁵ For example, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan did not ratify the ILO Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) until 2019.⁶ Although formed in 1993, the Tripartite Commission for Regulating Labour Relations in Kyrgyzstan has met relatively infrequently in recent years. Moreover, representatives of both workers' and employers'

5. These tripartite bodies are: Kazakhstan Republican (national) Tripartite Commission on Social Partnership and Regulation of Social and Labour Relations (1994, tripartite); Kyrgyzstan Republican Tripartite Commission (reconstituted in 2019, tripartite); Tajikistan Republican Tripartite Commission for Regulation of Labour Relations (2012, tripartite); Turkmenistan Tripartite Commission for the Regulation of Social and Labour Relations (2019, tripartite); and the Uzbekistan Republican Tripartite Commission on Social and Labour Issues (2019, tripartite).

organizations in Kyrgyzstan reported in 2017 that they did not consider that they were engaged in a meaningful and productive dialogue about social and labour relations or employment policy, or about labour law and enforcement practices, with the Government.⁷

Albeit to differing degrees, the space for social dialogue is limited. Citizens' rights to information, to voice dissent, and to freely elect their representatives are considered foundational for effective social dialogue. While not a perfect measure of the enabling environment for social dialogue, data from the World Bank index on citizen voice and government accountability is illustrative of trends in broader governance issues that affect social dialogue. Index scores from 1996 to 2020 show variances in the extent citizens of the Central Asian countries participate in selecting their governments and enjoy freedom of expression and association, and a free media. While the trajectory of change differs by country, in 2020, all five Central Asian countries' scores were under the world median (data from 206 countries).⁸

► **Figure 3.** Central Asian countries voice and accountability index score, 1996-2020



6. See two ILO articles on the ratifications: [Turkmenistan ratifies the Tripartite Consultation \(International Labour Standards\) Convention, 1976 \(No. 144\)](#); and [Uzbekistan ratifies the Tripartite Consultation \(International Labour Standards\) Convention, 1976 \(No. 144\)](#).

7. Based on feedback provided by social partners during research for the unpublished ILO report, "Assessing the Scope for Labour Law Reform in Kyrgyzstan: Issues Paper", July 2017.

8. These data were cited in the 2008 ILO report [Economic Growth and Decent Work: Recent Trends in Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#), and updated with more recent data for the purpose of this evaluation report.

Workers' and employers' organizations in Central Asia differ in the extent of their independence from the Government and capacity to represent the interests of their members, but generally improvements are needed. Workers' organizations in Central Asian countries survived the transition to market economies, but with significantly reduced membership. This attrition was due in large part to the growth of large sectors of informal employment, where workers are not organized, as well as the change in the role of trade unions. In Soviet times, trade unions were largely controlled by the Communist Party and their duties were limited to social security questions at the workplace, a legacy that has hindered trade union federations from establishing themselves as fully independent, representative bodies. Moreover, with the reduction in State-owned enterprises, as well as the emergence of multinational corporations, labour unions have faced increased challenges organizing workers, due to resistance from private employers and limited interest from workers.

Employers' organizations did not exist in Central Asia in Soviet times; the first ones were created during the 1990s transition period. While all countries now have one or more national employers' organizations, most are weak in terms of their influence and membership coverage. Employers' organizations face challenges in expanding their membership and membership services, developing their own agendas to defend their members' interests, and increasing their capacity to engage with the government and workers' organizations in policymaking on labour and social issues.⁹ Moreover, in more than one Central Asian country, the independence of employers' associations has been threatened by laws requiring mandatory affiliation with national employers' bodies nominated by the Government.

Core labour standards: To varying degrees, the exercise of freedom of association and collective bargaining is constrained in Central Asia. ILO supervisory bodies have identified a variety of constraints that negatively affect the ability of employers and workers in Central Asian countries to organize, exercise freedom of association and negotiate collective bargaining agreements. For workers, constraints include complicated trade union registration procedures; government interference in trade unions' internal governance; mandatory affiliation of trade unions or trade union monopolies; limitations on the right to strike; and, in some countries, violence, intimidation and harassment of trade union members.¹⁰ Moreover, workers' organization membership is concentrated in large State-owned enterprises that employ a minority of workers, while workers in small, medium and informal sector enterprises are largely unorganized. While the labour codes of Central Asian countries include provisions for collective bargaining, outside State-owned enterprises, the number of collective agreements is relatively small, due to the absence or weakness of social partners' representative organizations.¹¹

While increasingly the issues are being addressed by government policies and social programmes, there is both child labour and forced labour in the five Central Asian countries. Although economic growth, poverty reduction and improved policies and awareness have led to a reduction in child labour in the last 20 years, children in Central Asia still engage in child labour, especially in agricultural production, as well as in the urban informal sector. According to ILO reports, some children are subjected to the worst forms of child labour – including hazardous work and commercial sexual exploitation, in some cases – due to human trafficking.¹² Until 2017, there

9. ILO, *Promoting DECENT WORK in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*.

10. In Kazakhstan, the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards has highlighted violations of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) multiple times since 2015. In 2021, it noted "restrictions in practice on the right of workers to form organizations of their own choosing, in particular the unduly difficult re-registration and deregistration processes which undermine the exercise of freedom of association and numerous allegations of violations of the basic civil liberties of trade unionists, including violence, intimidation and harassment".

11. ILO, *Economic Growth and Decent Work, Trends in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*.

12. In Kyrgyzstan, a 2014 survey carried out by the national statistics office, with support from the ILO, estimated that 27.8 per cent of children were engaged in child labour. In Tajikistan, based on the 2012–13 child labour survey, 23 per cent of the children in the country were working, with the highest employment rate (45.5 per cent) among boys between 15 and 17 years of age. In Kazakhstan, the last national child labour survey was conducted in 2006; since then, a baseline study assessing child labour in agriculture in the Almaty and South Kazakhstan found that, among 3,763 surveyed households surveyed, there were 468 children at work in cotton, tobacco and vegetable cultivation, nearly 60 per cent of them 14 years of age or younger. Uzbekistan has not carried out a national child labour survey to determine the prevalence of child labour in sectors other than cotton production. No data are available on Turkmenistan.

was systemic use of forced labour in Uzbek cotton production, while according to ILO supervisory reports, the practice continues in Turkmenistan. Prior to various reforms, the Government of Uzbekistan maintained policies in the cotton sector that mandated regional harvest quotas and set crop prices at levels that created incentives for local administrators to forcibly mobilize labour, creating an ongoing risk of forced labour.¹³ Turkmenistan's compliance with international labour standards concerning forced labour is an ongoing issue and a topic taken up by the ILO Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) in 2016 and 2021.

Substantial gender gaps in employment and unemployment rates, as well as in monthly and hourly pay, are visible in Central Asia's workforce, due to many factors, including in some discriminatory practices. Female labour force participation rates vary significantly in Central Asia, from nearly 63 per cent in Kazakhstan to 29 per cent in Tajikistan in 2019.¹⁴ Rates in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are 44, 49 and 45 per cent, respectively.¹⁵ There are several reasons why women have lower employment rates. These include skills mismatches, cultural factors, family responsibilities and discrimination by employers. Moreover, in contravention of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), most Central Asian countries have maintained Soviet era laws prohibiting women from certain jobs considered to have harmful working conditions. Among countries for which data are available, the gender-based gap in labour income – composed of differences in employment rates, hours of work and hourly wages – is largest in Tajikistan and smallest in Kazakhstan.

Persons with disabilities and sexual minorities are also subject to discrimination in employment in Central Asia. In most countries, the legal framework sets a sufficiently wide range of rights for persons with disabilities. However, application of the laws is hindered by lack of appropriate social and training services, adapted physical infrastructure, inadequate awareness and support services related to job placement.¹⁶ Although increasing civic activism offers hope for change, discrimination against sexual minorities is also common in Central Asia. So far, the Governments have taken limited action to eliminate discrimination, and in some countries, lawmakers have fuelled anti-LGBTQ sentiment. For example, in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, homosexuality is still officially illegal.¹⁷

Social protection: Since the end of the Soviet Union, social protection systems in Central Asia have come under severe strain, leaving large swaths of the population without access to benefits. High unemployment, in part a product of the transition from command- to market-oriented economies, increased demand for benefits, while fiscal constraints resulted in decreasing social protection budgets. The quality and efficiency of existing systems are diminished by poor targeting, fragmentation among social protection service providers, and lack of an integrated approach to benefits and services. Moreover, with the growth of informal employment, many workers do not benefit from social protection.

Labour inspection and occupational safety and health: In the last 30 years, labour inspection in Central Asia has weakened due to declining resources and new policies that reduced the inspectorate's authority and scope. In the years following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the resources for labour inspection have decreased substantially, in part due to economic difficulties. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, the number of inspectors has more than halved in recent years and currently stands at 23. The number of labour inspectors in Tajikistan is 60, of whom only 31 are directly involved in inspection activities.¹⁸ Moreover, as part of government efforts to "improve" the business climate, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (information not available for Turkmenistan) enacted policies limiting the powers assigned to the labour inspectorate, in

13. United States Department of Labour, 2016 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour: Uzbekistan.

14. According to the World Bank's 2017 Job Diagnostic, between 2003 and 2013, the disparity between male and female employment rates has increased in Tajikistan, with female labour force participation among the lowest in the world.

15. [World Bank Gender Statistics](#).

16. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), [Promoting the rights of people with disabilities in Central Asia](#), 7 March 2014.

17. The Diplomat, [Life in the Closet: The LGBT Community in Central Asia](#), 29 January 2019.

18. Nikita Lyutov and Ilona Voitkovska, "Labour Inspections in Post-Soviet Countries: Reform or Collapse?" *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations* 37, Nos 2 and 3 (2021): 269–300.

some cases in direct contradiction with the requirements of Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129). Examples include the legal requirement for labour inspectors to give warning to employers about an inspection, or to obtain approval for the inspection from other State authorities; and the requirement for a complaint to be made by workers as a necessary precondition for carrying out an inspection.¹⁹ A law passed in 2015 in Kazakhstan reduced the number of enterprises subject to labour inspection by 60 per cent, and for those enterprises still subject to inspection, reduced the authority of labour inspection to delivering notifications and instructions.²⁰ In 2018, Tajikistan imposed a three-year moratorium on labour inspection, which was noted with concern by CEACR in 2018, 2019 and 2020.²¹ Occupational safety and health (OSH) management systems have weakened with the decline of labour inspection and the growth of the unregulated informal sector. Resources for awareness-raising and training on OSH are generally considered to be insufficient in all Central Asian countries for which data are available.

Employment and skills: Despite high rates of economic growth in Central Asia during most of the last decade, there are significant productive employment deficits, especially for the subregion's large youth population. After independence, the economies of the former Soviet republics experienced a severe and protracted recession, high inflation, and rampant unemployment. With State-owned enterprises' privatization and low rates of formal job creation, employment in the informal sector rose dramatically. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, according to research conducted by the ILO in 2015, 71.7 per cent of workers were in jobs without formal labour relations. In Tajikistan, according to a 2016 labour force survey, the share of the informal economy was 29.4 per cent in the non-agricultural sector. In most Central Asian countries, growth is being driven by a few relatively capital-intensive, mainly extractive industries. While employment in agriculture is diminishing, gains in manufacturing and service jobs have not kept up with employment demand.

Declining investments in technical and vocational education systems and public employment services, as well as underdeveloped labour market information systems, have contributed to persistent mismatches between labour market supply and demand. One of the most important problems in the development of sustainable business in Central Asia is the shortage of skilled labour due to the low quality of education and training. To varying degrees across the five Central Asian countries, technical and vocational education, and training (TVET) programmes are misaligned with the needs of the private sector. TVET systems lack a market-oriented approach, while instructors' knowledge is often outdated.

Public employment services – which are responsible for registering the unemployed; paying unemployment benefits; giving advice, guidance, and counselling to jobseekers; and delivering active labour market programmes – lack funding and human resources. In most countries, public employment services are constrained by a fragmented network of employment offices, lack access to labour market information, and do not sufficiently exploit information and communications technology, which slows down the work and leads to lower efficiency.²² Moreover, while enterprises are crucial for the creation of jobs, the private sector in the subregion faces many challenges. Private sector development is constrained by a lack of management skills and insufficient access to appropriate financial services and business development services.

19. Lyutov and Voitkovska, "Labour Inspections in Post-Soviet Countries: Reform or Collapse?"

20. Lyutov and Voitkovska, "Labour Inspections in Post-Soviet Countries: Reform or Collapse?"

21. ILO, *Observation (CEACR) - adopted 2021, published 110th ILC session (2022)*.

22. A. Kuddo, *Employment Services and Active Labor Market Programs in Eastern European and Central Asian Countries* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2009).

Because of the shortage of jobs at home, a substantial number of working age people, especially youth, from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have opted to work abroad, where some are subject to exploitative labour practices. As many as 1 million working age adults, or approximately 30 per cent of the labour force in Tajikistan, have left the country for jobs and/or better pay. About 90 per cent of migrants work in the Russian Federation.²³ Similarly, more than 1 million Kyrgyz citizens, or about 40 per cent of the working age economically active population, work abroad, the majority in the Russian Federation.²⁴ In 2019, the Agency for External Migration of Uzbekistan estimated the number of migrant workers at 2.6 million–3 million (about 1.7 million in 2020). Some 1.6 million of them worked in the Russian Federation, and another 531,000 in Kazakhstan.²⁵ While labour migration and remittances have contributed to poverty reduction, a shortage of information about the real job options and work conditions in receiving countries has created the opportunity for exploitation of migrant labour, resulting in cases of forced labour, child labour, trafficking and other forms of abuse. Women suffer disproportionately from the growth of trafficking in the region.²⁶

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the loss of jobs and livelihoods at home and abroad, and worsened inequities, vulnerabilities, and poverty throughout the Central Asia subregion. The economies of Central Asia's poorest countries, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, and to a lesser extent Uzbekistan, are heavily reliant on remittances. In both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, remittances – largely from the Russian Federation and, to a lesser extent, Kazakhstan – accounted for, respectively, approximately 31 and 27 per cent of gross domestic product in 2020.²⁷ Migrant workers and their dependent households suffered from COVID-19 shutdowns and are projected to suffer additional negative consequences from the war in Ukraine and related economic sanctions on the Russian Federation. Recent analysis by the World Bank projects remittance flows to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will likely decline sharply due to the twin effects of a decline in economic activity in the Russian Federation and (potentially) the weakening of the rouble against the US dollar.²⁸ The three countries are bracing for a new influx of returning migrant workers and increased demand for social or economic reintegration support.

23. World Bank, Jobs Diagnostic Tajikistan, 2017.

24. ILO, Assessing the Scope for Labour Law Reform In Kyrgyzstan, Issues Paper.

25. [Prague Process Secretariat](#).

26. In 2020, the CEACR requested the Government of the Russian Federation to respond to observations from the Confederation of Labour of Russia that migrant workers were at increased risk of falling into forced labour. For example, the Confederation observed that forced labour practices occurred in grocery stores in a district of Moscow, with victims from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, mostly women, who were subjected not only to labour exploitation, but also to sexual exploitation and abuse.

27. World Bank staff estimates based on International Monetary Fund balance of payments data. [Personal remittances, received \(% of GDP\) - Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic](#).

28. World Bank, [Russia-Ukraine Conflict: Implications for Remittance flows to Ukraine and Central Asia](#), 4 March 2022.



▶ 03

ILO programme
of support for decent
work in Central Asia,
2018–22

▶ ILO programme of support for decent work in Central Asia, 2018–22

OVERVIEW OF ILO PROGRAMMES

The ILO programmes in Central Asia comprised diverse technical advisory activities and a modest sized portfolio of 18 development cooperation projects. Annex E includes a list of ILO technical cooperation projects by country. While varying from country to country, the ILO's work in the subregion clustered around several large areas of work:

- ▶ **core labour standards:** raising awareness, harmonizing national legal frameworks, and enhancing compliance with international labour standards;
- ▶ **employment:** providing technical assistance for labour market research, recommending policies to support transitions from informal to formal employment, recommending ways to improve public employment services, and active labour market programmes;
- ▶ **social protection:** carrying out analysis of existing systems, identifying, and costing needed reforms, and recommending policy options;
- ▶ **skills:** carrying out skilled labour demand assessments, supporting the development of competency-based training curricula, and support for the development of TVET strategic plans.

Much of what the ILO did was aimed at influencing labour laws and policies and their application. Important intervention strategies were policy dialogue, research and labour market assessments, technical support for labour law reforms, the development of national policies and action plans, and capacity-building of tripartite constituents and other national stakeholders on international labour standards and Decent Work Agenda concepts. Only a few ILO programmes piloted “direct action” programmes targeting specific subsets of the general population and/or victims of labour exploitation.

Kazakhstan

The ILO's activities in Kazakhstan were narrowly focused on improving social dialogue and reforming laws restricting freedom of association. Because of serious violations of freedom of association cited by the CAS in 2015, 2016 and 2017, beginning in 2018, the ILO decided to limit technical cooperation activities in Kazakhstan until the Government addressed the fundamental issues that had been raised. The critical issue highlighted by the Governing Body was the legislative framework governing freedom of association for workers and employers in Kazakhstan, which established a system wherein effectively only one business organization and one workers' organization were authorized to engage in social dialogue with the Government. Within the framework of recommendations made by the CAS, the Government received a direct contact mission in September 2016, which resulted in the development of a road map for the implementation of the ILO's recommendations on freedom of association.

During the evaluation period, the efforts of the ILO were essentially delivered through one Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA)-funded project,²⁹ complemented by technical advisory services.³⁰ This project mainly focused on (a) assisting the Government, social partners and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the road map; (b) identifying and addressing any further gaps in law and practice concerning the full application of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); and (c) building capacity of independent workers' and employers' organizations to promote compliance with international labour standards and take up their respective roles in line with anticipated reforms. Kazakhstan had also been a focus country of the private sector-funded "Partnerships for Youth Employment, Phase II" project, but activities were significantly scaled back over the evaluation period due to the decision to limit collaboration. Starting in 2021, after legal reforms, the ILO began to expand its assistance into other areas, including employment, COVID-19 recovery and labour inspection.

Kyrgyzstan

Although it did not have a Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), the ILO implemented a relatively varied and, by subregional standards, well-financed programme of work. Between 2018 and early 2022, the ILO implemented eight projects in Kyrgyzstan, among which four were still active in 2022. The ILO efforts were directed towards combatting child labour, forced labour and human trafficking; strengthening TVET systems; modernizing employment and social protection services; supporting labour law reforms; building the institutional capacity of workers' and employers' organizations; and increasing access to economic development opportunities by women and girls. The ILO also implemented several activities related to informal sector employment in Kyrgyzstan; these programmes supported efforts to improve informal sector workers' representation and voice, raise awareness on the advantages of formalization, enhance access by informal sector workers to social protection (including maternity protection) and improve working conditions. For the implementation of these programmes, the ILO's main partners were the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration; the Ministry of Education and Science; the Social Fund; the National Statistics Committee; the Federation of Trade Unions; and the JIA Business Association.

Kyrgyzstan attracted the second-highest level of funding in the subregion, a mix of earmarked voluntary contributions and RBSA. The total budget for ILO projects in Kyrgyzstan amounted to approximately US\$3.75 million.³¹ Kyrgyzstan benefited from two subregional projects focused on employment and social protection funded by the Government of Finland and Lukoil, a Russian multinational energy corporation. It also took part in a Russian Federation-funded global project that aimed to strengthen TVET programmes. Together, these three projects accounted for more than half of the country budget. The ILO in Kyrgyzstan also partnered with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in a UN multipartner trust-funded project on empowering women and girls affected by migration. Kyrgyzstan received a relatively large allocation of ILO RBSA funds, which were mainly directed towards the ILO's work on labour law reforms, social partner capacity-building, and developing employment and social protection policies.

29. The title of the project is "Strengthened capacity of member states to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations".

30. RBSA funds are unearmarked voluntary contributions from ILO Member States. The ILO allocates RBSA funds flexibly when and where they are most needed. As a priority, RBSA resources are allocated to lower-income countries, and are aligned with the results-based framework of the ILO.

31. This figure does not include expenditures made in the regional projects "Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS II" and "Combating Child Labour and Human Trafficking in Central Asia: Commitment Becomes Action", for which country-disaggregated expenditures were unavailable.

Tajikistan

One of two countries in the subregion with a DWCP, the ILO supported Tajikistan in a variety of areas: employment, social protection, training, improving working conditions and strengthening social dialogue. The current DWCP for Tajikistan covers the period 2020–24. As shown in table 5, the programme sets out to (a) ensure inclusive economic growth by creating decent jobs and strengthening labour market institutions; (b) improve working conditions and enhance the coverage of social protection; and (c) build the capacities of tripartite constituents and social dialogue institutions to address priority labour issues. The last DWCP prior to the current programme covered the period 2014–17.

Table 5. Tajikistan 2020–24 DWCP priorities and outcomes

Priority 1: Ensuring inclusive economic growth through decent jobs creation and strengthening labour market institutions

Outcome 1.1: Increased capacities of public employment services to provide quality services to employers, unemployed youth, the self-employed and returning migrants.

Outcome 1.2: TVET institutions' improved capacity to decrease the mismatch between demand and supply in the labour market.

Outcome 1.3: Improved enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and formalization of employment.

Priority 2: Improving working conditions and enhancing the coverage of social protection for women and men

Outcome 2.1: Wage and working norms-setting systems improved, in consultation with social partners.

Outcome 2.2: The effectiveness of the labour inspection is increased.

Outcome 2.3: Social security schemes improved through introduction of minimum social guarantees.

Priority 3: Strengthening capacities of tripartite constituents and social dialogue institutions to address priority labour issues

Outcome 3.1: Capacity of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions strengthened to increase workers' representation and effectively participate in collective bargaining.

Outcome 3.2: Institutional capacities of the Union of Employers of the Republic of Tajikistan strengthened.

Outcome 3.3: Strengthened role and capacities of social partners to address priority labour issues, including unacceptable forms of work.

Source: Tajikistan DWCP document.

Between 2018 and early 2022, the ILO implemented six projects in Tajikistan, with a total budget of US\$2.3 million.³² As in Kyrgyzstan, these projects were a mix of global (one), subregional (two), and country-level (two) projects. Subregional and global projects were funded through voluntary donor contributions from the Governments of Finland and the Russian Federation, and one Russian multinational energy corporation (Lukoil), while country-level projects were entirely funded by RBSA. The ILO's main partners were the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Population; the Ministry of Health and Social Protection; the Agency for Labour and Employment; the Social Protection Agency; the Federation of Independent Trade Unions; and the Union of Employers.

32. This figure does not include expenditures made in the regional projects "Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS II" and "Combating Child Labour and Human Trafficking in Central Asia", for which country-disaggregated expenditures were unavailable.

Turkmenistan

ILO technical cooperation with Turkmenistan was limited. Because tripartite conditions for fuller cooperation were lacking, the ILO and constituents in Turkmenistan have not developed a DWCP and there were no country-level development cooperation projects during the evaluation period (2018 to early 2022). Representatives of tripartite constituents participated in a few regional capacity-building activities, and based on a request from the Government, received technical guidance from the ILO on tools to assess labour market conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. An ILO official participated in the development of the UN Country Development framework, which resulted in the inclusion of the ILO's concerns in this strategic document as well as in the second National Action Plan on Human Rights.

Uzbekistan

The largest country-level programme of work in Central Asia, ILO cooperation with Uzbekistan in the last decade was initially narrowly focused on the elimination of child labour and forced labour; beginning in 2017, ILO activities broadened. The ILO began its technical cooperation with Uzbekistan in 2013 with support for national efforts to eliminate child labour and forced labour in cotton production. Compulsory participation by school-aged children (some reportedly as young as 9 years old), university students and public employees in the annual cotton harvest in Uzbekistan, a practice rooted in Soviet-era production quotas, had attracted international condemnation and a boycott of Uzbek cotton.³³ The Government of Uzbekistan requested ILO assistance to address the issue, which it provided starting in 2013. Since 2017, ILO-Uzbekistan cooperation broadened to include new areas of work, such as labour law reform, developing a national employment strategy, strengthening public employment services, advancing social protection, promoting gender equality in the labour market, and supporting tripartite social dialogue.

The ILO collaborated with diverse partners to implement its programmes in Uzbekistan. For many activities, the ILO's main collaborating partners were its tripartite constituents: the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, and the Confederation of Employers of Uzbekistan. However, it regularly cooperated with representatives of a variety of other ministries and government bodies (such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, and parliamentary committees), as well civil society activists.

Two DWCPs provided a strategic framework for ILO technical cooperation with Uzbekistan during the evaluation period. The current DWCP (overview in table 6), covers the period 2021–25 and is the first “new generation” programme, meaning it is fully integrated with the United Nations Sustainable Development Country Framework (UNSDCF). The previous DWCP (overview in table 7) covered the period 2014–16 and was later extended by a memorandum of understanding to 2020. There is significant continuity between the DWCPs; both include objectives to (a) harmonize Uzbekistan's legal and regulatory framework with international labour standards and strengthen mechanisms to promote compliance with national laws and international standards; (b) improve employment and training services; (c) strengthen social protection programmes; and (d) strengthen social dialogue and the institutional capacities of the social partners. The current DWCP articulates a clear focus on gender equality in the labour market and makes women and youth employment a priority; the previous DWCP included outcomes related specifically to improving working conditions in the agriculture sector.

33. For example, see Anti-slavery, [Calls to investigate forced child labour in Uzbekistan](#), 10 June 2011.

Table 6. Uzbekistan 2021–25 DWCP priorities and outcomes**Priority 1: Improving the regulatory framework governing labour relations**

Outcome 1.1: Labour legislation harmonized with international labour standards (UZB826).

Outcome 1.2: Labour law and workplace compliance mechanisms effectively applied (UZB901).

Outcome 1.3: Improved institutional basis of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue (UZB901).

Priority 2: Inclusive human capital development leading to health, well-being and resilient prosperity

Outcome 2.1: Improved employment policy, aimed at creating quality jobs in the formal sector (UZB126).

Outcome 2.2: Increased capacity of public employment services to support lifelong learning and workers' transitions over their life course, with a particular focus on youth and women (UZB126).

Priority 3: Extending the access of the most vulnerable groups to equitable, inclusive and quality education and social protection

Outcome 3.1: Modernized vocational education, training system and career guidance to increase the employability of youth, women, and vulnerable groups.

Outcome 3.2: Improved social protection system to enhance coverage and sustainability by applying international labour standards (UZB128).

Outcome 3.3: Increased protection of women's rights and gender equality on the labour market (UZB128).

Priority 4: Strengthening social dialogue and the institutional capacities of the social partners

Outcome 4.1: Increased institutional capacity of trade unions (UZB802).

Outcome 4.2: Increased institutional capacity of employers (UZB803).

Source: ILO DWCP document.



Table 7. Uzbekistan 2014–16 DWCP priorities and outcomes (extended to 2020 by memorandum of understanding)

Priority 1: Strengthening social partnership in Uzbekistan for the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work

Outcome 1.1: A national policy to apply international and national labour standards.

Outcome 1.2: Effective implementation of the National Action Plan for the application of child labour Conventions.

Outcome 1.3: Assuring that working conditions and employment in agriculture, including in the cotton-growing industry, are in conformity with fundamental standards.

Outcome 1.4: Enhanced capacity of trade unions to contribute to the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work.

Outcome 1.5: Enhanced capacity of employers' organizations to contribute to the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work.

Outcome 1.6: Procedures and institutions for national tripartite social dialogue are reinforced and their effectiveness increased.

Priority 2: Fostering decent employment opportunities

Outcome 2.1: Active policies pursued to promote full, productive, and freely chosen employment, including youth employment.

Outcome 2.2: Effective operation of labour market institutions, including labour market information systems and employment services.

Outcome 2.3: Entrepreneurship fostered, including by promoting self-employment and development of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Priority 3: Improving working conditions and social protection

Outcome 3.1: Effective occupational safety and health (OSH) management system is developed.

Outcome 3.2: Wage levels agreed through collective bargaining and tripartite consultation.

Outcome 3.3: Social protection floors extended and progressively raised.

Source: ILO DWCP document.

Development cooperation activities: From 2018 to early 2022, the ILO had seven projects in Uzbekistan, with a total budget of approximately US\$9.58 million. Of these, five were still active in 2022. According to ILO officials, additional new projects on upholding labour standards in selected economic sectors (cotton, textiles, and construction) and social protection were in various stages of development at the time of the evaluation (March 2022). A World Bank trust fund (financed by the European Union (EU), German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), and the Governments of the United States and Switzerland), followed by the US Department of Labor, were the ILO's largest donors, representing approximately 50 and 32 per cent of the budget for the period, respectively.



▶ 04

Assessing the ILO's support for decent work in Central Asia

▶ Assessing the ILO's support for decent work in Central Asia

RELEVANCE OF ILO PROGRAMMES

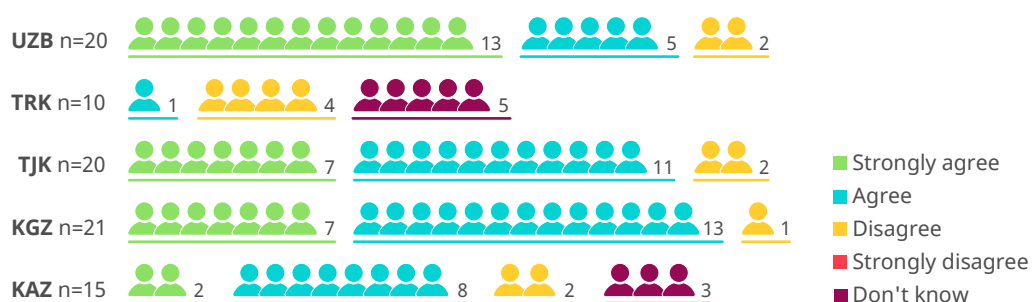
This section explores the relevance of the ILO's programmes relative to Central Asian countries' needs for promoting decent work since 2018. To do so, it focuses on three core criteria: the extent to which the programmes (a) aligned with ILO tripartite constituent priorities; (b) were adaptive to emerging needs and opportunities; and (c) tackled constraints identified in ILO analytical reports and by the ILO supervisory bodies.

ILO personnel and constituents' perceptions of relevance

ILO tripartite constituents were highly satisfied with the focus of the ILO's support. Tripartite constituents in the case study countries highlighted that the ILO was very effective overall in adapting its assistance to the situation in their countries, and to the needs of their institutions. For example, one government official from Tajikistan remarked, "The ILO bureau in Moscow always shows its knowledge and understanding about the current trends in the labour market and provides specially tailored training and seminars addressing our country's needs." In addition, independent evaluations of various projects in the subregion consistently gave the ILO high marks for relevance. For example, one project evaluation highlighted, "The ILO has strategically positioned itself as a trusted and reliable partner of the Government and national constituents, supporting the reform process in line with Uzbekistan's aspired and assumed international commitments." Finally, based on evaluation survey results, most ILO officials and ILO constituents perceived the ILO's programmes to be aligned with country priorities. An exception was Turkmenistan, where most ILO personnel indicated they did not know if/how ILO programmes aligned. ILO personnel also generally "perceived strong buy-in from country counterparts" and "active participation from tripartite constituents", results usually associated with cooperation that is relevant to counterpart priorities, as key success factors for ILO programmes since 2018.³⁴

▶ **Figure 4.** Survey respondents' perceptions on relevance of ILO technical assistance

Evaluation survey respondents' level of agreement: ILO technical assistance and projects from 2018 to the present have been well aligned with country priorities



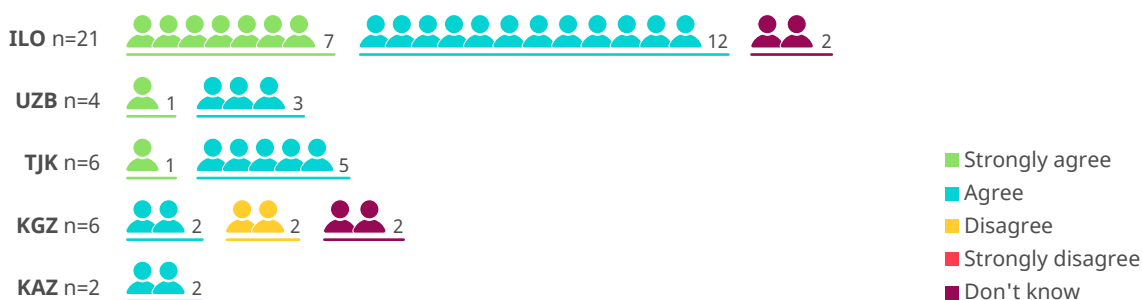
34. Out of 21 respondents to the evaluation survey of ILO personnel, 11 indicated strong buy-in from country counterparts to have been a success factor, while 4 viewed it as a constraint. Twelve out of 21 ILO personnel who responded to the survey perceived the active participation of tripartite constituents to have been a success factor.

ILO programmes' adaptation to COVID-19 needs and requirements

Overall – based on feedback from ILO constituents, other partners in the case study countries and ILO personnel – the ILO adapted its assistance effectively to emerging needs emanating from the unexpected arrival of COVID-19. For example, an Uzbek Government official remarked, “The pandemic situation brought many new issues like social subsidies, with which we had no prior experience, and the department held regular consultations with the ILO.” Similarly, a Tajik official underlined the usefulness of ILO advice: “Based on ILO webinars and technical support, the Ministry of Labour, in consultation with the social partners, developed a plan to prevent mass layoffs of workers and provide social guarantees during a pandemic.”

► **Figure 5.** Evaluation of stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness of the ILO's COVID-19 response

Extent of survey respondent agreement: ILO response to COVID-19 was effective



The ILO was adaptive to its national counterparts' needs for data and policy advice in all five countries in Central Asia. The ILO provided timely support to assess the effects of COVID-19 on the labour market, especially on vulnerable groups. One government official in Tajikistan noted, “With the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, we wanted to understand how the pandemic was affecting job retention and how the Government could help workers. We approached other organizations, including IOM, UNDP and others, but only the ILO responded.” A government official in Uzbekistan echoed, “ILO has shown flexibility to address the need [for adapted research methodologies] and quickly provided the needed technical support.” The ILO either shared COVID-19-adapted rapid labour market data collection methodologies (Turkmenistan) or provided technical assistance and funding to carry out assessments (all other countries), which resulted in an evidence base used by ILO constituents to formulate short- and medium-term responses to the pandemic. Below is a list of COVID-19-related assessment reports:

- rapid diagnostics for assessing the country-level impact of COVID-19 virus on the economy and labour market of Kazakhstan;
- assessment of the social protection response to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on workers and vulnerable groups and develop policy options to extend the coverage to the most disadvantaged in the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- rapid assessment of the employment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kyrgyzstan;
- rapid assessment of the employment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Tajikistan;
- assessment of COVID-19 impacts on the socio-economic situation in Uzbekistan (incomes, labour market and access to social protection): overview of crisis response and areas of improving public policies.

The ILO responded effectively to COVID-19-related public health concerns and their effects on employers and workers by providing useful guidance. The ILO translated and localized global products such as its COVID-19 Guide for Employers and Crisis Response and the Role of Social Dialogue to orient Central Asian country counterparts' responses to COVID-19 workplace health risks, as well as issues related to worker layoffs and business shocks. In Tajikistan, ILO support to workers' organizations was influential in the Government's recognition of medical workers' needs for protection and compensation for their sacrifices (see box 1). One tripartite constituent survey respondent from Tajikistan remarked, "The ILO has ensured a unified response in the measures taken to counter the negative impact of the spread of the disease and prevent its consequences on working conditions." Key ILO activities included:

- ▶ organized peer-to-peer exchange webinar among trade unions in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on trade union experiences of protecting workers from COVID-19 in the workplace, and promoting measures to mitigate the impact of social-economic crises on the most vulnerable workers and their families;
- ▶ support for the Tajik Healthcare Workers Trade Union's awareness-raising campaign on occupational health and safety issues, applying preventive measures, and the role of social dialogue in fighting the impact of COVID-19 on medical personnel in Tajikistan;
- ▶ policy document developed on health and safety measures and impact in response to COVID 19 and their implications for labour Inspection modernization in Kazakhstan;
- ▶ adapted COVID-19 guides on workplace management, working from home, safe return to the office, and business continuity, planning for employers' organizations throughout the subregion.

Box 1. Good practice: supporting workers' organization research activities on pandemic effects and the formulation of policy recommendations

- ▶ The ILO's support to the Trade Union of Health Workers during the COVID-19 pandemic led to increased protection for healthcare workers in Tajikistan. One Trade Union of Health Workers representative recounted, "In the early days of the pandemic, we witnessed how medical workers died in large numbers." With ILO support, the workers' organization conducted research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare workers and shared the findings with representatives of relevant ministries. With the Federation of Trade Unions of Tajikistan, the union prepared and submitted recommendations to the Government on urgent support measures related to social protection, labour protection and legal and psychological support for medical workers. These recommendations informed the Government's response measures. For example, in 2020–21, the Government allocated more than 2 million somoni (US\$160,000) for personal protective equipment, material assistance to medical workers and support for family members of deceased healthcare workers.

DWT/CO–Moscow was quick in developing knowledge-sharing activities focusing on COVID-19-related issues and adapting its programme delivery modes to COVID-19-related restrictions.

The ILO, tripartite constituents and other country partners rapidly adopted virtual modes of communication and carried out an impressive number of knowledge-sharing activities and policy dialogues entirely online. In some cases, the ILO provided needed financial support to constituents so that they could acquire high-speed Internet connections and related hardware. Webinar series (multisession online seminars) became DWT/CO–Moscow's favoured format to bring constituents together from across the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to receive policy advice from ILO experts and engage in peer-to-peer exchange on many timely topics, especially on human-centred recovery from the pandemic. Examples of webinar series included:

- ▶ public employment services' role in overcoming the COVID-19 crisis and the future of work;
- ▶ from the immediate crisis response to the COVID-19 pandemic towards economic recovery, with decent work in focus;
- ▶ thanking the labour market for a job-rich economic recovery;
- ▶ a rapid costing tool for COVID-19 response (Kyrgyzstan).

Based on document review and key informant interviews, the ILO's technical assistance on COVID-19 response through labour law reform and employment and social protection policy had tangible results in Uzbekistan. For example, a workers' organization official highlighted, "One of the pandemic outcomes has been the development of new norms in the Labour Code, such as the concept of paid partial leave, adapted regulation of the work of remote and seasonal workers, and norms governing mandatory overtime work."

The ILO's assistance to constituents on ways to address the immediate and medium-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be useful for Central Asian countries now facing negative economic fallout from the war in Ukraine. Technical assistance provided by the ILO to improve public employment services and social protection, and for the improvement of skills development programmes, are likely to be useful to address potential economic shocks arising from the conflict in Ukraine, especially the consequences of economic sanctions on migrant workers in the Russian Federation and households in Central Asia that depend on worker remittances. Below are some examples of assistance provided in response to COVID-19 with potential relevance to the current crisis:

- ▶ technical advice to the Ministry of Finance in Uzbekistan to establish a "shock" mechanism within its social protection system to face unexpected crises;
- ▶ technical assistance for costing social protection programmes;
- ▶ technical assistance for the modernization of public employment services in Uzbekistan;
- ▶ the project "Empowering women and girls affected by migration for inclusive and peaceful community development", applied ILO entrepreneurship development tools and expertise for the economic empowerment of women and girls in labour migration sending communities in Kyrgyzstan;³⁵
- ▶ labour market studies on in-demand skills, and vocational training institution improvements in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

These relevant examples of assistance notwithstanding, the poorer Central Asian States are likely to face challenges mobilizing the necessary financial resources for assistance programmes.

35. The project adapted the ILO's Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET) Ahead training programme, provided in both online and offline formats.

ILO programmes' relevance to identified constraints affecting the Decent Work Agenda

Considering numerous observations by the CEACR and issues before the CAS, the ILO's programmes maintained significant focus on supporting countries in Central Asia to improve policies and practices, especially regarding core labour standards. Based on constituent and other partner feedback, the ILO's expertise on labour matters, its reputation as a normative organization, as well as its track record helping Member States address critical issues, were key to it being allowed to intervene in sensitive reform areas. Examples include Uzbekistan's request for ILO assistance tackling child labour and forced labour, and ILO's tailored support to address issues of freedom of association in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

While all the actions undertaken by the ILO in Central Asia could be considered important for the promotion of decent work, a few key agenda items were noticeably absent from the ILO's engagement. Some gaps reflect the ILO's inability to influence the country's reform agenda within the time frame of this evaluation. For example, to date, the ILO has not been able to cooperate with constituents in Turkmenistan on concerns raised by its supervisory bodies on child labour and forced labour in cotton production, for reasons outside its control.³⁶ Still, in 2022, the DWT/CO-Moscow conducted a review of legislation pertaining to the prevention and prohibition of child and forced labour, and is preparing a response, should it receive a request for assistance. Moreover, ILO officials reported that they had kept lines of communication open on the issue and, in addition, participated in the formulation of the UN country cooperation framework with Turkmenistan, which included references to forced labour in the section on governance challenges.

Except for Kyrgyzstan, the ILO engaged relatively little on improving the enabling environment for entrepreneurship or the development of sustainable enterprises, even though DWCPs included outcomes on these topics, and the ILO possesses relevant expertise and methodologies. The evaluation did not uncover the reasons for this gap. Possibly because of limited resources and higher priority areas of work, a lack of available funding may be the cause.

Many factors in the subregion suggested the need for the ILO's considerable international expertise on safe migration, and yet this was also a limited area of engagement.³⁷ Evaluation survey results show "enabling safe migration" as an area where the ILO was perceived to have been less effective during the evaluation period – 14 out of 39 respondents highlighted it as an area of weak support. The issue was likewise raised in a few key informant interviews as a gap in ILO assistance, as well as in document review (see box 2). While the ILO did relevant work on fair recruitment in Uzbekistan in the context of the annual cotton harvest, the scope of these efforts did not extend to international migration.³⁸ All five Central Asian countries have demonstrated their interest in the issue, all having endorsed the Global Compact for Migration and been party to various regional migration dialogues.

36. Turkmenistan's compliance with international labour standards concerning forced labour was a topic taken up by the CAS in 2016 and 2021. In 2021 the Conference Committee "noted with concern the widespread use of forced labour in cotton production in relation to the annual State-sponsored cotton harvest in Turkmenistan", as well as its failure to make any meaningful progress on the matter since the Committee last discussed the case in 2016.

37. Examples of ways the ILO has addressed the issue of safe migration can be found in [The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#).

38. Work in this area was not totally absent. In Uzbekistan, a relatively recent (launched in August 2021) small project (US\$95,000) funded by the World Bank on human trafficking proposed to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, the Agency for External Migration and its branches, the call centres in Uzbekistan and abroad, the Labour Attachés and the Employment Support Centres to provide information services to potential migrants on safe migration channels, fair recruitment methods and risks of human trafficking. To date, no results have been reported from this activity.

Box 2. Uzbek Labour Minister highlights the need for better regulation of labour migration

- ▶ In 2020, the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations reported to the Senate on ongoing reforms related to labour migration. Despite many changes, he noted that, so far, labour migration regulation, including efforts to organize recruitment for work abroad, were insufficient. The Minister drew particular attention to the fact that the share of organized labour migration as a proportion of general labour migration stood at an average of only 9 per cent.

Source: Zulfiya Sibagatulina, *Monumental Shifts in Uzbek Labour Migration Policy*, February 2021.

COHERENCE OF ILO PROGRAMMES

This section provides an assessment of the extent and ways the ILO's programmes in Central Asia succeeded in embedding the Decent Work Agenda in national policies, as well as within the agenda of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), and other international development partners' cooperation programmes. Specifically, the evaluation examined (a) the extent and quality of policy dialogues with national partners, especially for the development of DWCPs; (b) the degree the ILO contributed to the evidence base for policymaking in its areas of expertise, such as employment, social protection and labour rights; and (c) the extent the ILO contributed to and/or influenced other UN agencies and development partners' strategic frameworks in Central Asia.

DWCPs as a tool to ensure policy coherence

DWCP formulation was useful for engaging in policy dialogue and aligning ILO assistance with national development strategies and priorities in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, representatives of tripartite constituents affirmed, and document review showed, that the DWCPs took on board tripartite constituents' priorities and helped to ensure that ILO standards and recommendations were reflected in national policies and development strategies:

- ▶ The issues of social protection, employment and reducing informality feature prominently in Tajikistan's National Development Strategy (NDS2030) and in the 2020–24 DWCP. NDS2030 also reflects the country's obligations on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth.
- ▶ From a relatively limited agenda on child labour in cotton harvesting, areas of policy dialogue and cooperation have expanded and deepened in the last four years as Uzbekistan has become more open to undertaking significant reforms. In the words of a high government official in Uzbekistan, "The new reform agenda considers the promotion of decent employment as a priority of State policy." While the first DWCP was initiated in 2014, the programme as a tool to integrate the Decent Work Agenda with national policies became much more robust, owing to the new national leadership's drive for change, national counterparts' growing need for support designing reforms, and greater government openness to collaboration with international organizations. "With the ongoing reforms, there is an increased need for international experience and knowledge, which explains the quick adoption of the ILO's recommendations", one Uzbek government official reported.

Insufficient tripartite foundations for full-fledged technical cooperation impeded the ILO from developing DWCPs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Despite DWCPs being the usual mechanism used by the ILO and its tripartite constituents to embed the Decent Work Agenda in national policies and programmes and guide ILO/country cooperation, only two of the five Central Asian countries had active programmes during the evaluation period:

- ▶ Because of serious concerns about the suppression of freedom of association in Kazakhstan over many years, the ILO did not develop a new DWCP since the previous one ended in 2012.³⁹ Moreover, the ILO decided to pause comprehensive cooperation until the specific concerns raised by the supervisory bodies had been adequately addressed. To promote substantive progress, the ILO allocated RBSA funding to support Kazakhstan's efforts to overcome ILO supervisory body concerns.
- ▶ Frequent changes in Government in Kyrgyzstan, and related challenges in getting adequate tripartite ownership for a new DWCP, were the main reasons no new programme was developed at the conclusion of the 2006–09 DWCP.⁴⁰ Later, the ILO had concerns regarding new laws being considered by the Government, which would severely restrict freedom of association, another factor in the decision to delay development of a new DWCP. Despite not having a DWCP, the ILO maintained a relatively high volume of activity in the country, working within the framework of shorter-term CPOs.⁴¹
- ▶ There has never been a DWCP in Turkmenistan, mainly due to the lack of recognition for independent workers' and employers' organizations. During the evaluation period, cooperation with Turkmenistan was limited to the participation of ILO constituents in training events and discussions on a few critical issues. Nevertheless, the latter contributed to the ratification of existing ILO Conventions as well as dialogue on the issue of forced labour. Despite the limited cooperation, one ILO official highlighted that the DWT/CO–Moscow used small requests for assistance as opportunities to include social partners and promote larger ILO principles.

ILO research as a basis for national policymaking

Surveys, diagnostics, and analytical reports produced by the ILO on many topics supported its own experts' recommendations and helped guide national priority-setting and policies, taking into consideration international labour standards. Lack of a clear evidence base for decision-making on labour-related matters is a common challenge shared by Central Asian countries, according to ILO officials. To help meet this need, the ILO produced data and research on a large variety of topics, which underpinned its own and other development partners' technical cooperation activities and tripartite constituent dialogue and decision-making. Among 39 evaluation survey respondents, 16 indicated that "good use of research and data" was an important success factor in ILO programmes. For example, according to ILO officials, early data collection activities on child labour and forced labour in the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan were instrumental in overcoming tripartite constituents' initial denial of the problems. Table 8 highlights many other examples of ways ILO research was used as evidence, influencing important decisions or policies by national and international counterparts.

39. ILO supervisory bodies raised concerns on a variety of issues over the last decade in Kazakhstan. For example, in 2011, unresolved strikes concerning wages and working conditions in the gas and oil sector ended in violent clashes between striking oil workers and police, leaving at least 12 dead and many more severely injured. In 2013, Kazakhstan passed legislation requiring mandatory affiliation by employers with the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, a move that diluted the independence of employers' organizations. In 2014, a new Trade Union Law was passed which required existing independent labour unions to affiliate with larger unions at the industry, sector or regional level; erected barriers to the creation of new independent unions; and restricted the right to strike. In 2015, the Confederation of the Independent Trade Unions of Kazakhstan failed to meet re-registration requirements and was removed from the national register.

40. Among other issues, starting in 2010, new administrations revoked previous Governments' commitments to immunities and privileges of the ILO and other UN specialized agencies operating in the country.

41. This decision reportedly took into consideration Kyrgyzstan's low-income status and its relatively dynamic social partners.

Table 8. ILO research activities and the decisions/policies they helped inform

ILO research activity	Decisions/policies informed by ILO research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Annual monitoring reports on child labour and forced labour in Uzbekistan's cotton harvest 2013–21 ▶ Recruitment practices and seasonal employment in agriculture in Uzbekistan 2014–15 (2017) ▶ Qualitative survey of recruitment processes and practices in temporary seasonal agriculture (2019) 	<p>Contributed to recognition of child labour and forced labour in cotton production by the Uzbek Government and subsequent efforts to address the causes and eliminate the practice. Positive trends highlighted in monitoring reports influenced decisions to remove Uzbek cotton from the list of goods made with child labour and forced labour by the US Government in 2019; the EU decision to grant Uzbekistan Generalized System of Preferences Plus status; and the Cotton Campaign's decision to lift the ban on Uzbek cotton in 2022.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An assessment of the social protection system in Uzbekistan based on the Core Diagnostic Instrument (ILO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Bank) ▶ Social protection in case of job loss: possible options to expand the coverage with unemployment protection programmes in Uzbekistan ▶ Social Protection Strategy in Uzbekistan: Costing and Fiscal Space Options 	<p>Contributed to the development of the draft National Strategy for Social Protection 2022–30, an institutional design for an integrated social protection system, and a three-year costed action plan. Was useful for unifying ILO, UNICEF, and World Bank policy messages vis-à-vis the Government.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Social Protection Assessment-Based National Dialogue: Towards a Nationally Defined Social Protection Floor in the Republic of Tajikistan ▶ Assessment Report of State Strategy for Labour Market Development – 2020 ▶ Towards a Tajikistan National Employment Strategy for Sustainable Economic and Social Development ▶ Towards an Integrated Strategy for the Transition to Formality: Road maps for Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan ▶ Assessment of the Composition and Structure of the Consumer Basket and its Compliance with the Incomes of Various Social Groups of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan ▶ Study on wage policy mapping in Tajikistan, with specific focus on the following areas: minimum wages, collective bargaining on wages, equal pay and work norms-setting. 	<p>Were inputs for the Government of Tajikistan's new National Employment Policy, which features an integrated approach between employment, social protection and reduction of informal sector policies and strategies. Contributed to the formulation of Tajikistan's draft State Programme on Social Protection Development.</p>

▶ Assessing the Scope for Labour Law Reform in Uzbekistan: Issues Paper (2018)	Contributed to the revision of the labour code, adopted in early 2022.
▶ Assessment of the existing legal and institutional frameworks on the Labour Inspection System in Uzbekistan	Contributed to Government of Uzbekistan decisions to enhance material, technical and financial incentives for the State Labour Inspectorate.
▶ Various COVID-19-related labour market assessments	Informed tripartite dialogue and government responses to COVID-19 pandemic-related job and livelihood losses.

The ILO also addressed the knowledge challenge by building national counterparts' capabilities to collect and analyse labour-related data. For example, in Uzbekistan, the ILO organized a series of online seminars for different State institutions on how to improve data collection on various labour indicators. A government official reported that the ILO provided recommendations for the 2023 census and methodological revisions to other national surveys. In 2020, the ILO supported the strengthening of the institutional and methodological capacity of the newly established Division of Analysis, Forecasting and Finance of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Population of Tajikistan, which was charged with monitoring labour market trends for the development of policies and programmes related to skills development, job creation, industrial development, and related decent work topics.

Some other examples of ILO technical assistance to develop national research capacity include:

- ▶ capacity-building on measuring the informal sector in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan;⁴²
- ▶ piloting a methodology for the analysis of the short-term demand for the skilled labour force (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan);
- ▶ support and capacity-building for transferring monitoring of the annual cotton harvest to a civil society group in Uzbekistan.

A few constituents perceived that the ILO could have employed local experts and involved national institutions more often or to a greater extent in its research activities. This was not a universally held belief; a couple key informants also praised the ILO for employing highly qualified local as well as international consultants. Document review shows many instances of the use of both international and national consultants.

Promotion of policy coherence through partnerships

The ILO capitalized on UN reforms calling for strong inter-agency coordination to promote its agenda within the UNCT in most Central Asian countries. It participated actively in UNCT activities and in the development of country strategies in all five Central Asian countries:

- ▶ In Uzbekistan, ILO officials and tripartite constituents highlighted their successful efforts to fully integrate the 2021–25 DWCP with the UNSDCF for the first time. In line with UN reforms requiring all UN agencies to harmonize their country-level strategies, the 2021–25 Uzbekistan DWCP laid out expected outcomes and outputs by UNSDCF outcomes, a reportedly challenging exercise, but one that ensured strong alignment of UN cooperation activities in the country.
- ▶ Moreover, UN officials reported the ILO had successfully gained the trust of the Government of Uzbekistan and was making outsized contributions towards country progress in meeting the UN SDGs. Significantly, a few key informants highlighted that the ILO's success in the country had opened doors for other UN agencies and development partners.
- ▶ Perceptions of UN officials in Tajikistan, in contrast, were mixed. One official perceived that the ILO had not played a sufficiently active role on the issues of jobs and enterprise development. The official suggested there was a need for greater communication and dialogue within the UNCT on the ILO's ongoing activities in these areas, as well as on how to develop them further.

42. In Tajikistan, ILO technical expertise was provided at the technical round table on the role of statistical data and indicators for conducting diagnostics of informal employment and their application as an element of regular monitoring defined by SDG 8.3.1 (September 2017). Building on the extensive work carried out in 2018, the ILO supported the development of the quantitative diagnostic report "Statistical picture of informal employment in the RT", by the Agency of Statistics, and provided technical comments for its finalization (2019).

- ▶ An ILO specialist took part in UN strategic planning activities in Turkmenistan. As a result of ILO advocacy, the UNSDCF, signed in 2020, recognizes the need for Turkmenistan to address comments of the ILO Supervisory Bodies on par with the recommendations of the UN Treaty Bodies and Universal Periodic Reviews on human rights. In addition, the second National Action Plan on Human Rights (2021–25), adopted in 2021, includes measures to prevent forced labour.

As the only UN agency to enshrine tripartism in its charter, governance structures and country cooperation programmes, and noting the growing importance of the UNSDCF as the main framework for UN-led cooperation programmes, ILO officials reported taking proactive actions to ensure the effective participation of employers' and workers' organizations in UN country programme development and implementation:

- ▶ The ILO conducted online seminars to educate both the UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) as well as social partners in the Central Asian countries about each other's roles and mandates. A Kazakh trade union representative remarked, "This training course was truly enlightening and highly relevant for us... the information provided about the SDGs will be applicable in our daily work." ILO officials reported that their efforts had been especially successful in getting constituents on board and ready to participate in the development of the recent UN cooperation framework in Uzbekistan.
- ▶ In Kyrgyzstan, the ILO's outreach to the UNRC bore significant fruit when the latter used his position to advocate for the President's rejection of legislation passed in the Parliament that would weaken freedom of association.

ILO and other UN officials reported that the ILO's areas of core expertise were in high demand from national counterparts during the evaluation period. Notably, the ILO was an active member of inter agency working groups, especially on social protection (see box 3), and participated in two inter agency-managed projects. One ILO official reported that, despite it being a non-resident agency, many UN agencies expressed interest in collaboration with the ILO.

Box 3. Good practice: ILO participation in country-level inter-agency working groups to promote inter agency cooperation and programme coherence

- ▶ While the ILO has been actively involved in inter-agency cooperation on social protection in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, to date the collaboration among partners in Uzbekistan has been the most extensive and successful. In 2018, a multi-agency team – including the ILO, UNICEF, and the World Bank – conducted a comprehensive analysis of the social protection system in Uzbekistan. The joint research created a shared evidence base on system challenges and pathways for improvement among the country's largest and most important development partners on social protection. In 2020, the research led to a joint project among three UN agencies in Uzbekistan.⁴³ According to the project's final evaluation, having three UN agencies working together reinforced the participating agencies' "convening power and strategic positioning as advocates and supporters of reforms". The World Bank had its own significantly larger (US\$50 million) social protection programme. Officials from the ILO and the main national counterpart (Uzbekistan's Ministry of Finance) reported that the UN partners and the World Bank coordinated their efforts effectively, spoke with "one voice", and provided consistent recommendations to the Government. ILO personnel and involved UN partners reported that each agency approached social protection from different angles, but – by clearly identifying roles and engaging in frequent and open dialogue – the alliance was effective. A member of the joint team highlighted the influential role played by the ILO: "Over two years, the initial vision of the strategy was changed largely due to ILO inputs and the quality of dialogue." The same partners are reportedly currently coordinating their activities on social protection in Kyrgyzstan, building on good practices from Uzbekistan.

43. The UN Joint Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Fund allocated US\$2 million aimed at improving the social protection system in Uzbekistan. Three UN agencies participated – ILO, UNDP, and UNICEF – with UNICEF serving as lead.

The ILO's successful experiences collaborating with the World Bank in Uzbekistan on third-party monitoring of the cotton harvest were in contrast with the two institutions' misaligned policy advice on labour inspection, especially in Tajikistan. In the context of addressing child labour and forced labour in Uzbek cotton, the ILO reportedly engaged in fruitful collaboration with the World Bank, establishing a win-win relationship with a powerful ally. The ILO offered the World Bank Group a solution to its need to show compliance with social commitments within its agricultural development portfolios in Uzbekistan. At the same time, the ILO's efforts to change policies and practices contributing to child and forced labour in cotton production benefited from the backing of an important partner of Uzbekistan's reform process. As Uzbek authorities were already under pressure from Western trading partners and consumer boycotts because of the country's labour practices in the cotton sector, the risk of losing World Bank support was reportedly an additional factor tipping the scales towards needed reforms.

In contrast, ILO specialists' comments on the influence of international financial institutions, including the World Bank and CEACR comments on the labour inspection moratorium in Tajikistan in particular, suggest the ILO has not been successful in explaining and finding common ground with the World Bank on the need for a strong labour inspectorate in all Central Asian countries. The World Bank's advice on how to make Central Asian business environments more attractive to international investors ran counter to ILO Conventions and advice on regulating labour rights and has been a contributing factor to trends in the subregion towards weakening the inspection function.⁴⁴ According to one ILO specialist, a key ILO strategy to counter international financial institution policy advice was to clearly explain the economic development benefits of labour inspection. For example, the ILO hosted a large subregional tripartite conference on the topic. The results in terms of promoting policy coherence have been mixed; Uzbekistan has moved to strengthen its labour inspectorate in recent years, while in other countries, progress has been less evident. Based on its publications, the World Bank does not have a uniform policy on labour inspection, suggesting that the ILO has the potential to influence the institution's policy advice through stronger dialogue.⁴⁵



44. In addition to feedback from ILO specialists, the following research supports the hypothesis on the role of international finance institutions in trends towards weakened labour inspection: Voitkovska and Lyotov, "[Labour Inspections in Post-Soviet Countries: Reform or Collapse?](#)" *International Journal of Labour Law and Industrial Relations*, 37, Nos 2,3 (April 2021): 269–300.

45. For example, the evaluator found a 2011 World Bank technical note on [International Experiences in Reforming Labour Inspection Services](#) for the Government of Ukraine which was largely in line with ILO standards.

EFFECTIVENESS

This subsection assesses the effectiveness of the ILO's programmes in Central Asia. To do so, the evaluation examined (a) the extent to which the ILO's technical assistance and programmes contributed towards the achievement of DWCP outcomes or CPOs; (b) ILO contributions to results on cross-cutting policy drivers (social dialogue and tripartism, gender equality and non-discrimination, and environmental sustainability); and (c) overarching success factors and constraints which affected the ILO's achievements.

Objectives and results promoting core labour principles

(a) Objectives

Objectives related to social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining, and the elimination of forced labour and child labour, featured prominently in ILO programmes in the subregion. All five countries included at least one CPO related to reinforcing core labour standards in law and practice:

- ▶ In Kazakhstan, the ILO aimed to contribute to overcoming legal and practical obstacles to the exercise of freedom of association (KAZ826, KAZ801 and KZA802).
- ▶ In Kyrgyzstan, the ILO planned to (a) identify and mobilize support for needed labour law reforms; (b) improve the efficacy of the labour inspectorate; (c) improve OSH policies and management systems, with a focus on the informal sector; and (d) expand the knowledge base on child labour (KGZ102, KGZ826, KGZ802 and KGZ101).
- ▶ In Tajikistan, the ILO and constituents planned to strengthen the labour inspectorate and build social partners' capacity to address priority labour issues, including combatting child labour, forced labour and trafficking (TJK107, TJK 801, TJK802 and TJK826). These CPOs aligned with outcomes under the first and second DWCP priorities.⁴⁶
- ▶ In Turkmenistan, the ILO worked towards strengthening the country's capacity to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations (TKM826).
- ▶ In Uzbekistan, the ILO set out to (a) strengthen the capacity of labour administration systems and social partners to improve workplace compliance and ensure safe and healthy working conditions; (b) strengthen Uzbekistan's capacity to ratify and apply international labour standards; and (c) improve systems for minimum wage setting in cotton picking (UZB103, UZB826, UZB801, UZB802 and UZB903). These CPOs aligned with the previous and current DWCP priorities.⁴⁷
- ▶ All five countries had CPOs related to strengthening the institutional capacity of workers' and employers' organizations.

46. The Tajikistan CPOs aligned with the following 2020–24 DWCP outcomes: outcome 2.2: The effectiveness of the Labour Inspection is increased; outcome 3.1: Capacity of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions strengthened to increase workers' representation and effectively participate in collective bargaining; outcome 3.2: Institutional capacities of the Union of Employers of the Republic of Tajikistan strengthened; and outcome 3.3: Strengthened role and capacities of social partners to address priority labour issues, including unacceptable forms of work.

47. The Uzbekistan CPOs aligned with the following 2021–25 DWCP outcomes: outcome 1.1: Labour legislation harmonized with international labour standards; outcome 1.2: Labour law and workplace compliance mechanisms effectively applied; outcomes 4.1 and 4.2: Increased institutional capacity of trade unions and of employers.

(b) Results

The ILO contributed to strengthening country efforts to address child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (KGZ826, TJK826 and UZB901). Just prior to and during the evaluation period, the ILO supported national efforts to develop policies and action plans on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, which resulted in National Action Plans in Kyrgyzstan (2019–24) and Tajikistan (2014–20). The following results were achieved during the evaluation period:

- ▶ As part of their action plans, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan updated or created lists of hazardous work forbidden to children.
- ▶ In 2018 and 2019, the ILO supported tripartite consultations on forced labour and ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), which led to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan's ratification of the latter.
- ▶ In 2019, Kyrgyzstan agreed on a Government Resolution to approve the National Referral Mechanism on Human Trafficking and criteria for identifying victims of trafficking, including for the purpose of forced labour.

Two large ILO technical cooperation projects implemented over seven years contributed to multiple actions by national stakeholders to combat child labour and forced labour in cotton growing in Uzbekistan.⁴⁸ Successful outcomes included:

- ▶ important legal and policy revisions and tougher enforcement practices (lifting cotton production quotas, increasing penalties for the use of child labour and forced labour, strengthened labour inspectorate);
- ▶ public awareness-raising campaigns on child labour and forced labour;
- ▶ increased collective bargaining and social dialogue on wages for cotton pickers;
- ▶ improvements in seasonal agricultural labour recruitment processes;
- ▶ effective third-party monitoring and complaints reporting mechanisms.



48. These projects were "Support the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme in Uzbekistan" and "Third-party monitoring on child and forced labour in Uzbekistan".

Technical assistance from the ILO contributed to 2020 labour law reforms in Kazakhstan which strengthened freedom of association; however, ILO supervisory bodies' concerns about the treatment of trade union leaders remains an ongoing issue (KAZ826). The 2020 legal reform successfully addressed concerns raised by the CAS regarding laws that created workers' and employers' organization monopolies. The reform, which was made with the ILO's advisory services and drafting assistance, likewise included provisions to simplify trade union registration, and strengthen workers' and employers' organizations' right to organize and conduct events with international organizations. The legislation also clarified the rules regulating participation of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs in social and labour relations.⁴⁹ However, in 2021, the CEACR restated previously noted concerns regarding the numerous allegations of violations of the basic civil liberties of trade unionists, including violence, intimidation and harassment. The Committee requested the Government to accept an ILO direct contact mission in 2022, with full access to the organizations and individuals mentioned in the observations of the Committee of Experts. The mission was planned for May 2022.

The ILO's support for the efforts of workers' organizations to defeat a new trade union law that threatened freedom of association in Kyrgyzstan yielded an important victory, but work is still ongoing to ensure that future labour code reforms reflect core labour standards (KGZ826 and KGZ802). In 2019, the Kyrgyz Parliament passed a new draft trade union law. Based on ILO official accounts and document review, the law – which was drafted and passed without consultations with workers' organizations, competent government officials or ILO experts – contradicted the country's Constitution and core labour standards, including ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98. In 2019 and again in 2020, the CEACR noted with concern that, in addition to regulating in detail the internal functioning of unions by imposing excessive mandatory requirements for trade union by-laws and elections, it imposed a trade union monopoly. Since 2019, Kyrgyzstan's trade unions have been fighting the measure. The ILO contributed to successful efforts to prevent the legislation from becoming law by helping leaders of workers' organizations to build the case for its defeat and mount an effective advocacy campaign mobilizing opposition (see good practice in box 4). Several versions of the law were submitted for Presidential approval and sent back. In August 2021, the President vetoed the law for a third time. At the time of the evaluation (April 2022), ILO officials were not certain the last veto was a final defeat but expressed optimism that the next amendment would be accompanied by a consultative process. In preparation, the ILO has provided comments and recommendations to its tripartite constituents on how to harmonize the law with Kyrgyzstan's Constitution, international labour standards and other international obligations.

Box 4. Good practice: Supporting national and international alliances in favour of fundamental principles and rights at work (KGZ802)

► In Kyrgyzstan, the ILO supported trade unions' efforts to form active alliances with national human rights organizations, global trade union federations, other UN agencies and international trading and development partners in their fight against the new trade union law restricting freedom of association. After trade unions allied with national civil society groups, according to one press account, the Presidential Administration received 70,000 signatures of citizens opposing the bill.⁵⁰ Both the International Trade Union Confederation and IndustriALL mounted campaigns against the bill. Moreover, the ILO successfully brought the issue to the UNCT, where it was taken up by the UNRC, which raised objections to the law with the President. An EU delegation in Bishkek also expressed its concerns about the law during bilateral meetings and through a mass media campaign to inform the Kyrgyz political leadership of possible negative consequences regarding Kyrgyzstan's participation in the EU's GSP+ trade initiative.

49. In 2020, the CEACR noted with satisfaction that sections of law were amended so as to remove the mandatory affiliation to a higher-level association of trade unions. The CEACR also noted with satisfaction the adoption of amendments to the Labour Code and the Law on the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, enabling the participation of employers' organizations, rather than the National Chamber, in social dialogue mechanisms.

50. 24KG, *President of Kyrgyzstan re-vetoes trade unions law*, 24 August, 2021.

With ILO support, Uzbekistan made many improvements to its legal framework on labour issues, including a major revision of its labour code in 2022, resulting in greater conformity of national laws with international labour standards (UZB826). ILO specialists provided guidance on needed legal framework reforms, reviewed, and commented on draft legislation, and facilitated tripartite consultations. In addition to the 2022 Labour Code reform, the ILO contributed to changes in the Administrative and Criminal Codes, the Trade Unions Law, the Occupational Safety and Health Act and new laws on youth policy, private employment agencies, and employment. On the revised Trade Union Law, a workers' organization representative remarked, "We are very pleased that our authorities have been extended and expanded, supported by ILO experts. Today it is one of the most progressive laws on trade unions." Amended laws lifted obstacles for trade union registration and corrected old legislation that was inconsistent with international standards; for example, employers are no longer allowed to form a trade union within their enterprise. Amendments to the criminal code increased punishment for human trafficking and use of child labour and forced labour. In addition to revising its labour code and other labour-related legislation, Uzbekistan ratified five ILO Conventions between 2018 and 2022 (Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187); Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81); Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129); Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144); and ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)).

The results of ILO efforts to strengthen labour inspection in Central Asia were mixed – in Uzbekistan, the Inspectorate has been reinvigorated, while in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, progress has been minimal (KAZ129, KGZ102, TJK107, TKM826 and UZB103). In all five Central Asian countries, the ILO supported training for labour inspectors and in some countries provided other technical and material assistance. Examples of ILO interventions and their outcomes include the following:

- ▶ In Uzbekistan, the State Labour Inspectorate was re-established under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations at the end of 2018, with broader responsibilities and authority to oversee and promote improved working conditions. With ILO support, and in conformity with obligations under Convention No. 81, the Inspectorate prepared its first annual report in 2020. Based on the report, the numbers of labour inspectors, complaints, investigations into complaints and fines for violations had risen since 2018.
- ▶ In Tajikistan, the ILO was unsuccessful in persuading the Government to lift its two-year moratorium on labour inspection, which ended as planned in 2021.⁵¹ The Government and social partners took part in the discussions before the CAS in 2021 and accepted an ILO technical advisory mission. Nevertheless, as part of its response to the economic crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine, the Government recently reimposed a moratorium on all enterprise inspections.⁵²
- ▶ In Kazakhstan, the ILO followed through on an official request to assess its labour inspectorate, which resulted in many recommendations to strengthen its effectiveness. An ILO official reported that these recommendations had not yet been implemented, which s/he attributed mainly to delays resulting from a change in government.

51. In 2018, the Government of Tajikistan declared a moratorium on all types of inspection of manufacturing enterprises until 1 January 2021.

52. See <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/31825078.html>.

Objectives and results strengthening public employment services and social protection programmes

(a) Objectives

Other significant ILO workstreams in Central Asia were employment and social protection, which were mainly focused on policy-level support and capacity-building. The ILO's approach was to promote coherence between employment and social protection policies and programmes for the most vulnerable population, by linking efforts to improve social insurance, social assistance, social support services and employment programmes. The ILO's efforts were mainly in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with limited assistance provided on employment in Kazakhstan. The main country-level objectives of the technical cooperation by country were the following:

- ▶ In Kazakhstan, the ILO aimed to strengthen the capacity of the Government to implement employment policies for inclusive growth (KAZ156).
- ▶ In Kyrgyzstan, the ILO sought to (a) contribute towards raising national social protection floors and improve maternity protection for informal sector workers, and (b) increase the capacities of constituents to promote formalization in selected sectors of informal economy (KGZ154 and KGZ129).
- ▶ In Tajikistan, the ILO and constituents planned to (a) strengthen the capacity of public employment services to provide quality services to employers, unemployed youth, the self-employed, and returning migrants; (b) improve the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and formalization of employment; and (c) improve social security schemes through the introduction of minimum social guarantees (TJK128 and TJK 151). These CPOs aligned with priorities DWCP priorities one and two.⁵³
- ▶ In Uzbekistan, the ILO aimed to contribute towards (a) the enhanced effectiveness and inclusiveness of employment services and improved terms of employment, and (b) social protection floors extended and progressively raised (UZB126 and UZB128).⁵⁴ These CPOs corresponded to DWCP priorities two and three.

(b) Results

The ILO contributed to draft employment and social protection policies in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and has initiated work on the same in Kyrgyzstan (KGZ154, TJK128, UZB126 and UZB128). The ILO seized on constituent requests arising from the COVID-19 pandemic to identify and recommend strategies to modernize existing public employment and social protection systems, and improve their coverage in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. To date, the ILO's research, recommendations, training activities and facilitation for tripartite consultations have contributed to the development of full-fledged employment and social protection policies in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

53. Relevant 2020–24 DWCP outcomes were outcome 1.1: Increased capacities of public employment services to provide quality services to employers, unemployed youth, self-employed, returning migrants; outcome 1.3: Improved enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and formalization of employment; outcome 2.1: Wage and working norms setting systems improved in consultations with social partners; and outcome 2.3: Social security schemes improved through introduction of minimum social guarantees.

54. The relevant 2021–25 DWCP outcomes were outcome 2.1: Improved employment policy, aimed at creating quality jobs in the formal sector; outcome 2.2: Increased capacity of public employment services to support lifelong learning and workers transitions over their life course, with a particular focus on youth and women; and outcome 3.2: Improved social protection system to enhance coverage and sustainability by applying international labour standards.

Tajikistan

ILO technical assistance underpinned the development of new draft employment and social protection policies. However, formal approval and implementation of these policies in Tajikistan has been slow to materialize. Nevertheless, the following examples show substantial inputs for reforms coming from the ILO:

- ▶ Based on the recommendations of the 2020 ILO Working Paper “Towards a national employment strategy in Tajikistan for sustainable economic and social development”, and with the technical support of the ILO, the Organization’s tripartite constituents developed the National Concept for Productive Employment for the period up to 2040. The document, which combines employment promotion, includes youth employment and the transition to formality, as well as social protection. It was submitted to the Government in 2022.
- ▶ The ILO’s report “Assessment Based National Dialogue on Social Protection in the Republic of Tajikistan”, endorsed by constituents in May 2018, provided social protection policy options, recommendations, and rapid costing of priority policy options. The Government integrated report recommendations in the draft State Programme on Social Protection Development for the period 2020–24. However, formal approval of the programme is also pending.
- ▶ The ILO provided guidance to tripartite constituents on wage policy – with specific focus on minimum wages, collective bargaining on wages, equal pay and work standard-setting. In June 2018, the Ministry of Labour, in consultation with the social partners, developed “The State programme on improvement of working norm-setting and wage system in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period of 2019–2026.”

Uzbekistan

ILO support contributed to presidential decrees, draft national employment and social protection policies and pilot programmes to improve employment services:

- ▶ The ILO conducted the functional analysis and institutional assessment of the public employment services in 2018, which included practical recommendations on how to improve the employment centres’ service delivery model and increase the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the Active Labour Market Policies. The report was an initial input to the new presidential decrees reshaping employment policies and regulations. The report findings also guided the ILO capacity-building programme for Public Employment Service employees, which was rolled out at the regional level.
- ▶ In late 2020, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of Uzbekistan submitted the National Employment Strategy 2021–30 to the Cabinet. In 2021, the document was shared with 42 ministries for their comments, and now awaits final presidential approval. According to a government official, the Employment Strategy is “an essential national strategic document. International experts supported its development, among which the ILO was the leader.”
- ▶ In early 2021, the Uzbek President signed a decree “On measures to improve the system of social protection of the population” that also approved the concept of the National Strategy and Roadmap for Social Protection for 2021–30. The ILO assisted the Government to develop a fully-fledged National Strategy for Social Protection 2022–30, with measures to improve social assistance schemes, social insurance and vulnerable persons’ access to job placement and social care services. The Strategy, which is still awaiting formal approval from the Government, was accompanied by a three-year costed Action Plan and options for fiscal space for social protection.

Based on government feedback in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the integration of employment and social protection issues has increased constituents’ capacities to develop policy responses that meet the needs of marginalized people – such as those with multiple vulnerabilities and social assistance users. For example, one Ministry of Finance representative in Uzbekistan highlighted that collaboration with the ILO allowed the Ministry’s economists to change their mindset from a focus on cost management to explore ways to improve system services for vulnerable populations, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Objectives and results of strengthening skills development programmes

(a) Objectives

Technical and vocational skills development was a third major ILO area of intervention in Central Asia, with activities in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The main objectives of the technical cooperation by country were the following:

- ▶ In Kyrgyzstan, the ILO planned to contribute to the capacity of the Government to implement policies and programmes to increase employability of women and men in the labour market (KGZ127).
- ▶ In Tajikistan, the ILO's objective was to improve the capacities of the constituents to reform skills development systems and wage policies and align the national skills development strategy with international human resources policy instruments (TJK128 and TJK105).
- ▶ In Uzbekistan, there were no CPOs specifically focused on skills development; however, the 2021–25 DWCP includes the outcome "Modernized vocational education and training system and career guidance to increase the employability of youth, women and vulnerable groups."

(b) Results

The ILO assisted Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to adopt assessment, planning and curriculum development methodologies to better align national TVET programmes with market demand (KGZ127, TJK105 and TJK128). In both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the ILO trained several hundred national counterparts from central State bodies, employers' and workers' organizations, public employment services, statistics units and TVET institutions in selected regions on new approaches to align labour market supply and demand for skilled workers. The interventions were at the national, regional and training institution levels. The training institutions included innovative training for institution directors using an online simulator (see box 5). Between 2018 and 2021, the ILO contributed to the following results:

Kyrgyzstan

- ▶ Kyrgyzstan developed and piloted a methodology for the analysis of the short-term demand for the skilled labour force and demand driven TVET enrolment planning in three regions. These methodologies were formally adopted by the Government.
- ▶ In collaboration with employers, Kyrgyzstan developed occupational standards, competency-based curricula, and assessment tools for six qualifications in the gas, milk processing, tourism, and hospitality sectors.
- ▶ The country piloted competency-based curricula in six TVET institutions.
- ▶ It contributed to the development of a five-year TVET strategic plan to guide skills development reform in the country for the period 2021–25.

Tajikistan

- ▶ The country contributed to the development of the TVET Strategic Plan for 2021–25.
- ▶ It aligned strategic objectives and indicators on TVET within the framework of the National Development Strategy 2030.
- ▶ It piloted improvements in TVET governance at the regional level in one region.
- ▶ It developed the National Qualification Framework, consisting of nine levels.

Box 5. Good practice: Innovative use of technology

- ▶ In the framework of the project “Applying the G20 Strategy”, both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan adopted an ILO-supported computer simulator to develop TVET institution personnel’s management skills. The simulator enabled training participants to analyse their virtual institution’s internal and external environment, educational programmes, material efficiency and technical base, as well as market demand. The computer simulator was integrated into advanced training programmes for TVET managers in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. By 2021, a team of ILO-trained moderators in Kyrgyzstan had reportedly already conducted six trainings with more than 100 participants.

ILO cross-cutting policy driver results

Except for the fourth policy driver, strategies related to the ILO’s four cross-cutting policy drivers featured prominently in its programmes in Central Asia: (a) the promotion of international labour standards; (b) strengthening tripartism and social dialogue; (c) promoting gender equality and non discrimination; and (d) environmental sustainability. Key ILO intervention strategies and results in these areas are described below.

The promotion of international labour standards was both a principal and a cross-cutting objective of many of the ILO’s programmes in Central Asia during the evaluation period (KAZ826, KYZ826, TK826, TKM826 and UZB826). Programmes to uphold core labour standards had international labour standards promotion at their centre (for example, projects to combat child labour and forced labour, and promote freedom of association), while other programmes, such as the ILO efforts to strengthen social protection, raised awareness of ILO social protection standards as a reference. An outstanding result of the ILO’s work on the promotion of international labour standards in Central Asia was ten new ratifications of ILO Conventions and Protocols in four out of five Central Asian countries (see table 9). The ILO supported the ratification process through the development of legislative reviews, providing support documentation and organizing tripartite discussions. The two ratifications by Turkmenistan were especially notable, considering the ILO’s lack of in-country presence.



Table 9. ILO Conventions and Protocols ratified by Central Asian countries, 2018–early 2022

Kazakhstan
No new ratifications
Kyrgyzstan
P029 – ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) – 6 October 2020
Tajikistan
P029 – ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) – 24 January 2020
Turkmenistan
C144 – Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) – 9 September 2019
C122 – Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) – 14 April 2021
Uzbekistan
C187 – Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) – 14 September 2021
C081 – Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) – 19 November 2019
C129 – Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129) – 19 November 2019
C144 – Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) – 13 August 2019
P029 – ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) – 16 September 2019

ILO efforts contributed to strengthening social dialogue by building the capacity of social partners, as well as the national tripartite social dialogue commissions. Through its ongoing programmes, the ILO supported social dialogue in the Central Asian countries using various strategies: by building constituents' knowledge on key labour topics, helping social partners to use data and develop policy positions, and facilitating tripartite discussions among its constituents. Some outstanding examples of the ILO's successful promotion of social dialogue included the creation of the Republican Tripartite Commission on Social and Labour Issues in 2019 in Uzbekistan, and the ratification of Convention No. 144 by Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Also in Uzbekistan, tripartite social dialogue and collective bargaining officially became part of the process used to determine wages (see box 6). Despite evidence of progress, both ILO officials and constituents perceived that additional capacity-building for National Tripartite Commissions would be beneficial. Suggested areas included on wage setting, dispute resolution and creating and strengthening the capacity of subnational tripartite social dialogue mechanisms.

Box 6. Success story: Introduction of social dialogue and collective bargaining in wage determination in Uzbekistan (UZB903)

- ▶ As a result of the initiative of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, and in line with DWCP objectives, national minimum wage-setting became a collective responsibility of the Government and social partners, to be determined through social dialogue.⁵⁵ As part of the preparation for the ratification of the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), tripartite partners agreed on the consultation framework, and defined social and economic factors that should be considered when defining wage levels. The result was outlined in the new edition of the Labour Code. Later, and after intense consultations between tripartite constituents, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the decision on “Immediate objectives for an effective cotton harvest” on 30 August 2021, establishing the minimum wage rates. The subsequent Republican Tripartite Council meeting in September 2021 adopted an official protocol, which stipulated that “the minimum wage should be defined based on tripartite consultations between the Government, employers’ organizations and trade unions”. ILO officials also observed an emerging trend of collective bargaining at the grass-roots level, where cotton pickers engaged in informal wage negotiations with farmers and textile clusters. According to monitoring reports, because of these negotiations, many pickers were paid well above the minimum wage during the 2021 harvest. Tajikistan.

The ILO integrated the cross-cutting policy driver of gender and non-discrimination in many of its programmes, although the extent varied by country and workstream. The ILO’s training programmes in Central Asia included topics highlighting the specific needs of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. ILO programmes in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan include projects with a strong gender focus; overall, the workstream on social protection stands out for having consistently mainstreamed gender. Outstanding examples of gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming, and their results include the following:

- ▶ The ILO contributed to the integration of gender equality and the rights of persons with disabilities in Uzbekistan’s National Gender Equality Strategy, the 2021–25 DWCP, and the draft national social protection and employment programmes and policies.⁵⁶ The ILO provided technical support for the development of the strategy through research and capacity-building activities.⁵⁷ The three-year Social Projection Action Plan includes specific costed measures for support services for disadvantaged women and persons with disabilities entering the labour market, working in the care economy and accessing community-based social services. As a result of the ILO’s policy advice on social protection, an Uzbek official affirmed the country’s intentions to reform its system on maternity benefits, which in the future will no longer discourage female employment by placing the entire financial burden of paying benefits on employers.
- ▶ The ILO supported the Ministry of Health and Social Development in Kyrgyzstan to deliver entrepreneurship training and financial education for women. According to the final evaluation, the project increased gender awareness among public authorities and end-beneficiaries. The reported positive outcomes for women and girl trainees included improved financial literacy and increased access to financing and economic opportunities.

55. For 2021–25, DWCP Uzbekistan has two specific outputs related to minimum wage-setting under DWCP outcome 1.3 – 1.3.1: Support for the development of legislative initiatives to establish tripartite minimum wage determination mechanisms, in line with the relevant international labour standards; and 1.3.2: Constituents capacitated to improve wage-setting regulations and their effective implementation and ensure equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value.

56. The Gender Strategy outlines measures for the advancement of gender equality in economic, political and social life. In addition, outcome 3.3 of the DWCP includes specific outputs towards increased protection of women’s rights and gender equality in the labour market.

57. The ILO provided training to 15 Parliamentary Gender Equality Commission members and 40 social partner representatives to build their capacity to review national legislation from a gender equality perspective, conduct gender-responsive budgeting, understand effective maternity protection, and improve gender-disaggregated statistical data collection. The ILO also produced a national report, “Women in the World of Work”, which offered a range of policy options to reinforce gender equality in social protection and employment programmes.

In contrast to the other three cross-cutting policy drivers, the ILO's efforts to integrate environmental sustainability issues and objectives in its programming were minimal. Document review uncovered the following examples:

- ▶ With the support of the ILO, the Federation of Trade Unions in Uzbekistan has developed a report entitled "Strategy on the fair transition to an ecologically sustainable economy through the creation of green jobs". This document advocated that all ministries and the Parliament consider green principles in their internal strategies.
- ▶ In Kyrgyzstan, in 2018, the ILO produced the report "Skills for Green Jobs in Kyrgyz Republic"⁵⁸ which analysed major sectors with greening potential in the country and skills needs for new occupations and made policy recommendations.

Success factors and constraints

The ILO and its constituents in Central Asia highlighted various factors that either helped or hindered progress towards Decent Work Agenda outcomes during the evaluation period. Key success factors included access to ILO technical expertise, active participation from national constituents, effective use of ILO research and well-designed interventions. Identified constraints included: weak social partner institutions, variances in political will for reforms, economic or political instability, and COVID 19-related delays and constraints on programming. Below, the evaluation focuses in on two thematic areas – ILO personnel-related success factors and constraints, and the factors that helped Uzbekistan to emerge as an ILO success story in Central Asia.

ILO human resources as a success factor/constraint

The expertise of the Moscow-based ILO specialists on employment, social protection, labour inspection/occupational safety and health, international labour standards, employers and workers' activities were critical for the successful delivery of ILO programmes. Out of 39 evaluation respondents, 25 selected "effective contributions from ILO specialists" and 20 selected "effective ILO management" as significant underlying factors affecting the ILO's success. These were ranked first and third, respectively, with effective participation from ILO national constituents coming in second. In the case study countries, ILO tripartite constituents repeatedly praised the ILO for the quality of its technical expertise. One ILO official highlighted the specialists' effectiveness in influencing national counterparts' views and decisions: "Why is the ILO accepted? The professionalism of the team. The ability to explain complicated concepts in clear terms about what would be gained."

National coordinators (NCs) also played an important representational and coordination role for the DWT/CO–Moscow in four out of five Central Asian countries (currently, there is no NC in Turkmenistan). According to a 2017 evaluation of the ILO's field structure, the NC model as practiced in the Europe and Central Asia region was effective in reinforcing the ILO's presence in non-resident countries and representing the ILO's interests within the UNCT.⁵⁹ Another positive aspect of the NC model cited in the field structure evaluation was the relative longevity of personnel holding the position, since it was funded through core rather than technical cooperation budgets. These positive features of the management model appeared to hold true in Central Asia, based on ILO constituent and UN partner feedback. The latter's assessment of the performance of NCs was overwhelmingly positive. Positive attributes highlighted were the coordinators' knowledge of the country context, their strong support and advocacy for social partners, as well as their effective representation of the ILO with the Government and within the UNCT. For example, a government official in Tajikistan remarked, "The ILO is always seeking ways to support our initiatives. Here, special respect and merit must be given to the national coordinator, who actively helps us in this matter." ILO technical cooperation personnel in Uzbekistan found the NC was also helpful in improving coordination between projects, although they noted the issue remained a challenge.

58. https://www.un-page.org/files/public/skills_for_green_jobs_in_kyrgyz_republic.pdf

59. The 2017 evaluation of the ILO's field structure (2010–16) noted the use of national coordinators (NCs) started in Europe from 2007 onwards and has been a model for the ILO ever since. According to the evaluation, "NCs play an important role as they can: open doors, facilitate work, flag needs at country level,

Nevertheless, several ILO personnel, tripartite constituents and other partners viewed the ILO's thin in-country presence as a handicap, negatively affecting its effectiveness. When evaluation survey participants were asked how the ILO could improve its support (an open-answer question), at least one constituent from all four countries wrote that additional country-based personnel would be beneficial. NCs also indicated that, even with the support of DWT specialists, their position was often more than a one-person job. One NC noted, "Other agencies have enough staff to work effectively. Being alone is not easy." Some of the reported management challenges were the following:

- ▶ A few ILO officials indicated that, with only one NC in each country, the ILO had to be selective in the number of thematic areas on which it engaged within the UNCT, and as a result, had occasionally lost opportunities to extend its influence and access funding.
- ▶ Moreover, several key informants and past evaluations highlighted technical cooperation project managers' and NCs' dependence on Moscow for higher-level decision-making, and technical inputs sometimes caused delays. For example, an evaluation of ILO programmes in Uzbekistan noted, "While ILO's expertise and support has been valued across the board of interviewed national stakeholders, the evaluation team found a number of cases where delays in activity implementation occurred due to limited schedules of ILO specialists from the Moscow office, who in essence are in charge of thematic interventions." One NC reported that virtual participation by ILO specialists in country-level meetings had helped to alleviate this challenge. However, he noted that the current easing of pandemic restrictions had resulted in more meetings being conducted in person, and the ILO was consequently once again at a disadvantage when quick decision-making was required.
- ▶ One ILO official also noted that centralized projects had easier access to Geneva-based expertise and were less subject to decision-making delays because of DWT members' overloaded schedules. In addition, a few ILO constituents and partners cited instances when communication between the country-level, DWT/CO-Moscow and ILO Geneva had not been effective and timely, creating information asymmetries within the ILO team.

Not all ILO officials perceived human resource limitations as a major constraint, however. There were also variances by country. As an example of the latter, an evaluation of an ILO programme in Uzbekistan, as well as some national counterparts, highlighted that, with the scale and pace of reforms in the country, additional country-based technical specialists would be highly useful.

Examination of factors supporting the success of the ILO in Uzbekistan

Although there were positive results in all five Central Asian countries, ILO officials perceived Uzbekistan to have been a country where the ILO was especially effective and outlined several factors as explanation.⁶⁰ ILO officials and constituents highlighted the following factors that contributed to this success. These success factors could and in some cases did apply in other Central Asian countries as well:

- (a) **The ILO's perceived neutrality facilitated Government trust.** The ILO seized on the opportunity to restart cooperation created by Uzbekistan's request for help in eliminating systemic child labour in the cotton harvest in 2013. The initial partnership between the ILO and Uzbekistan on the elimination of child labour helped to develop mutual trust and set the stage for deeper country dialogue, first on the issue of forced labour, and later on a broader set of decent work issues.

60. For example, among the 19 ILO officials who rated the effectiveness of ILO interventions in Uzbekistan, 17 chose "excellent" or "very good". This compared to 1 out of 14 in Kazakhstan, 9 out of 15 in Kyrgyzstan, 6 out of 13 in Tajikistan and 1 out of 11 in Turkmenistan.

- (b) **The ILO aligned its interventions to reforms that had the strong commitment of the Uzbekistan Government and social partners and were backed by some international trading partners.** The ILO's first collaboration with the Government of Uzbekistan to combat child labour in cotton growing was in part a response to international pressure from trading partners and human rights groups. Later, in late 2016, the ILO effectively seized on openings to deepen cooperation in Uzbekistan when the current President came to power, bringing with him an ambitious reform agenda. In 2017, the country initiated wide-ranging economic, social and political reforms in many areas within the framework of the 2017–21 Development Strategy of Uzbekistan, and later continued under the new Uzbekistan Development Strategy 2022–26. The ILO closely aligned new development cooperation programmes with emerging reforms, opening new areas of collaboration on employment and social protection policy.
- (c) **The ILO capitalized on opportunities for close collaboration with high-level decision-makers and relatively powerful ministries in its development cooperation activities.** For example, the ILO benefited from the collaboration and backing of high-level champions within the Senate. ILO and other UN officials likewise noted that the decision by the Government to entrust the Ministry of Finance with the development of the National Social Protection Strategy was fortuitous, given the relative importance of the Ministry and its ability to influence budget decisions.
- (d) **The ILO developed effective alliances with civil society activists with shared goals.** Initially, the ILO's involvement in third-party monitoring was met with some scepticism by human rights activists in Uzbekistan, who perceived that the ILO was potentially giving cover to the Government while labour abuses continued. Later, the ILO was able to create mutually beneficial alliances with civil society that involved them as independent monitors, improved activists' access to and influence with Government officials, and benefited the effectiveness and credibility of ILO monitoring activities.
- (e) **The ILO used integrated approaches to promote holistic change.** In the context of its work on eliminating child labour and forced labour in Uzbekistan, the ILO promoted holistic change by working both at the system level (policies, legal frameworks, and national-level institutional capacity-building) and local levels (piloting models with field-level stakeholders and conducting social mobilization and advocacy campaigns in collaboration with tripartite constituents and civil society organizations). This approach enabled complementary changes at different levels, strengthening positive outcomes overall.



EFFICIENCY

The evaluation team assessed the extent and ways the ILO used its limited human and financial resources efficiently. To do so, the team (a) examined ILO personnel, national constituents and partners' perceptions of its efficiency; and (b) analysed results relative to resource allocations and expenditures.

Key stakeholder perceptions of the ILO's efficiency

Despite its relatively limited country presence in most countries, and the ILO's lean management structure overall (see box 7), the constituents perceived that they had received high-quality technical assistance. Multiple data sources showed favourable views of the ILO's efficiency in the subregion:

- ▶ Out of 39 evaluation survey respondents, 36 either strongly agreed (6 respondents) or agreed (30 respondents) that the ILO had used human and financial resources efficiently.
- ▶ Many national counterparts highlighted the speed and flexibility of ILO assistance in the subregion during the evaluation period, especially noting its flexible response to unanticipated needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. One Uzbek government official remarked, "The ILO demonstrates high efficiency in addressing the needs and does it in a short time."⁶¹ A national consultant in Uzbekistan remarked, "ILO has been fast. Speed is important and ILO understands this."
- ▶ Also in Uzbekistan, stakeholders in the social protection area highlighted their appreciation for being able to consult with ILO specialists without needing to follow time-consuming, heavy protocols. One counterpart remarked, "I think the biggest advantage of the ILO is the direct communication."

Overall past evaluations gave positive feedback on the ILO's use of human and budget resources. For example, the final evaluation of the joint UN programme on social protection in Uzbekistan indicated the programme was diligent using project funds efficiently "despite its broad scope and multitude of partners and target areas" and that the main driver of efficiency was "the technical competence and personal dedication" of the project personnel. In terms of areas for improvement, independent evaluations of technical cooperation projects in the subregion highlighted delays in achieving results in several projects for various internal as well as external causes. A few evaluations also noted the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation to identify lagging areas of progress and take corrective action.

Box 7. ILO management structure in Central Asia

- ▶ The ILO's operations in Central Asia are overseen by the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, based in Geneva. At the subregional level, the ILO DWT/CO-Moscow provides technical support and coordinates with recipient countries and donors in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, with support from four country-based NCs. The Moscow office currently has a staff of 10: 2 country office senior managers, 3 programme officers (communications, monitoring and evaluation, programmes), and five DWT specialists. In addition, there are 12 finance and administration and regional project support personnel. ILO specialists based in Geneva also provide technical support to the subregional office, especially on policy coherence, and to ILO constituents, especially in the context of technical cooperation activities. During the evaluation period, there were also approximately ten country-based technical cooperation programme personnel, with the majority based in Uzbekistan, where the volume of technical cooperation activities was highest.

61. The former recounted the ILO's quick response to a request from the President of Uzbekistan for technical inputs in an area not foreseen in the existing work plan.

COVID-19 travel restrictions resulted in efficiency gains, but there were also downsides.

Various ILO personnel, while noting the challenges of the pandemic, especially in the early days, reported that the halt to travel and the adoption of virtual forms of communication had some unanticipated positive outcomes. They cited cost savings, easier access by constituents to Geneva-based ILO specialists (albeit online), as well as more opportunities for DWT team members to work together. A few ILO officials highlighted the latter point as especially beneficial, since it enabled the development of more integrated solutions to decent work challenges at the country level. Similarly, prior to the pandemic, an ILO programme evaluation in Uzbekistan highlighted that the lack of teamwork within the DWT affected the coherence of the project, resulting in a “siloes” approach to implementation.

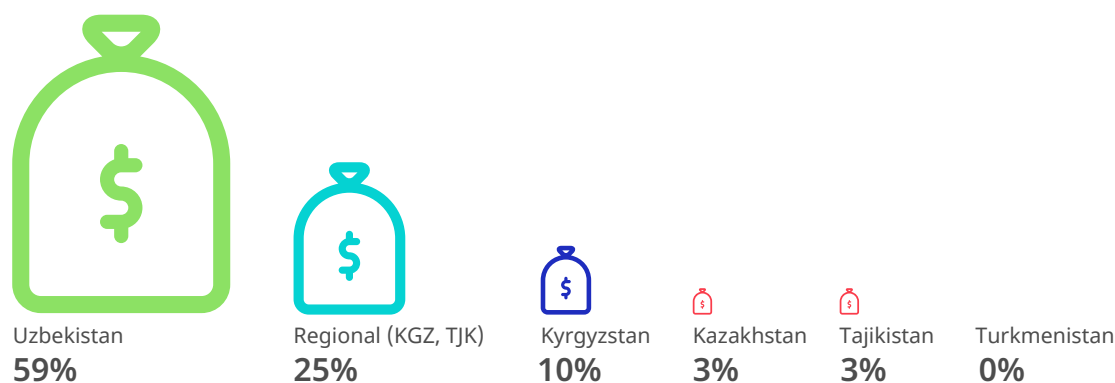
The success of DWT/CO–Moscow-hosted online programmes notwithstanding, after two years of limited face-to-face contact, several ILO officials and national counterparts expressed frustration that the Organization had been relatively slow lifting restrictions on in-person meetings and gatherings when public health concerns diminished. For example, one survey respondent expressed a strong preference for in-person technical assistance: “The ILO’s human resources potential is very strong. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, ILO staff often visited Tajikistan and did a lot of effective work in all areas of the ILO’s activities. Since the pandemic has somewhat subsided, we ask you to resume this practice of work.” Moving forward, ILO officials have reported that they are rethinking how to ensure that the cost-benefits of travel are appropriately balanced, as well as how to maintain time for DWT members to work together. Some suggestions included reserving one week a month when DWT members stay in the office for collaborative work, and limiting missions to periods when face-to-face collaboration is more critical, such as during the development and launch of new programmes.

Effectiveness of resource utilization

Budget resources were small relative to other subregions where the ILO works and were spread extremely unevenly across the five Central Asian countries. For 2018–21, the entire budget for Europe and Central Asia was US\$105 million, or 8 per cent of the ILO’s worldwide budget. The budget for Central Asian countries was approximately US\$16 million (15 per cent of the regional budget). Uzbekistan absorbed a large share of all 2018–21 expenditures in Central Asia, which reflected relatively significant donor commitments to support the elimination of systemic child labour and forced labour in the country. Total expenditures for 2018–21 technical cooperation activities in Central Asia were approximately US\$15 million. Over two thirds of all expenditures were made in Uzbekistan, and less than 1 per cent was spent in Turkmenistan. The largest share of expenditures was funded through Extrabudgetary Development Cooperation resources;

► **Figure 6.** Expenditures by country, 2018–21

Expenditures were spread unevenly across the five Central Asian countries



80 per cent of these was spent in Uzbekistan, with the remaining 20 per cent spent in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Despite the relatively few resources available for ILO development cooperation activities in Central Asia, the ILO produced desired results towards ILO P&B and CPO outcomes. Many of the decent work challenges highlighted in Chapter 2 of this report were addressed by the ILO's work on combatting child labour, forced labour and trafficking; harmonizing national laws with international labour standards; strengthening labour inspection, efforts to address informality (especially in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), and technical assistance to improve employment and social protection policies and programmes (all countries except Turkmenistan); and overcoming skills deficits by improving TVET programmes (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Based on a spending analysis of development cooperation activities, activities of 2018–early 2022 spanned nearly all P&B outcomes, albeit very unevenly distributed. Based on data from the ILO results dashboard, which records results towards ILO P&B policy outcomes, the contribution of Central Asian countries to total results was outsized relative to its budget:

- ▶ For the 2018–19 biennium, the ILO reported 23 results towards eight out of ten P&B outcomes, or 21 per cent of the total results reported in the Europe and Central Asia Region. These were spread across three of five Central Asian countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).
- ▶ For the 2020–21 biennium, the ILO reported 25 results towards seven out of eight P&B outcomes, or 24 per cent of the total results reported in the region. All five Central Asian countries achieved results.

Moreover, ILO officials highlighted that the ILO's indicators for measuring results did not capture all achievements. For example, the ILO's contributions to its constituents' successful advocacy campaign in Kyrgyzstan, which avoided the final passage of a labour law restricting freedom of association, did not count as a result, because laws did not change; nevertheless, it was an important achievement. Additional analysis of spending and results by CPO is presented in box 8. A complete breakdown of expenditures by CPO (excluding some regional and global projects) can be found in Annex F.

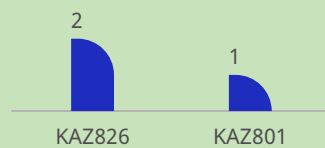
During the evaluation period, the DWT/CO–Moscow used ILO unearmarked technical cooperation funds strategically to address supervisory body comments and compensate for limited bilateral/earmarked donor funding. For example, the two RBSA projects in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which shared the same name, "Strengthened capacity of Member States to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations", were usefully tailored to assist tripartite constituents to address critical freedom of association issues raised by ILO supervisory bodies. An independent final evaluation noted, "The project [in Kazakhstan] achieved significant results with a limited budget." The projects were likewise much-needed efforts towards building social partners' capacity to participate more effectively in social dialogue, an important issue in both countries. Due to recent political and constitutional changes in Kyrgyzstan, project support, which included a detailed review of the labour code, has become more relevant, with extensive labour law reforms under consideration by the Government.⁶² The ILO also used RBSA, as well as regional and global projects for which it had more discretion on targeting, to fill in gaps in donor funding in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and enable continuity in programming.

62. The referenced document is *Assessing the Scope for Labour Law Reform In Kyrgyzstan: Issues Paper*.

Box 8. In 2018–21, the ILO reported a total of 48 results towards 23 CPOs in Central Asia

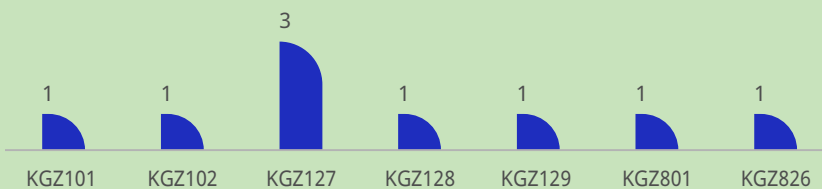
- ▶ One ILO official asserted that the ILO was able to achieve results towards CPOs without a lot of money or staff because it capitalized effectively on organizational “knowledge” as a key asset to influence change. As highlighted in the section on effectiveness, most of the reported results were related to strengthening legal and policy frameworks, and supporting the ratification of international labour conventions, areas of work requiring specialized expertise but not necessarily big activity budgets.
- ▶ **Kazakhstan:** Between 2018 and 2021, the ILO spent about US\$350,000 in Kazakhstan spread across six CPOs and reported two results. The largest share, 70 per cent of all expenditures, was allocated to the CPO KAZ826, “Strengthened capacity of Member States to ratify and apply international labour standards” (one reported result). Another 24 per cent of expenditures went towards strengthening the institutional capacity of employers and workers (KAZ801 and KAZ801), which produced one result.

Between 2018 and 2021, the ILO reported three results toward two CPOs



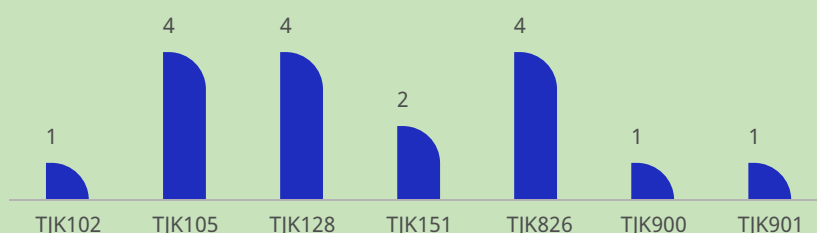
- ▶ **Kyrgyzstan:** Total 2018–21 expenditures in Kyrgyzstan (excluding regional and global budgets) were US\$489,000. During the same period, the ILO reported nine results. A large proportion of expenditures went towards two CPOs: KGZ826, “Strengthened capacity of Member States to ratify and apply international labour standards” (45 per cent) and KGZ128, “Effective measures implemented by constituents to improve integration of sustainable [micro, small and medium-sized enterprises] into global value chains” (39 per cent), with one reported result each. CPOs 801 and 802 on strengthening the institutional capacity of employers’ and workers’ organizations garnered 3 and 9 per cent, respectively, and under which two results were reported. Regional and global funds contributed towards KGZ101 (one result), KGZ102 (one result), and KGZ127 (three results).

Between 2018 and 2021, the ILO reported nine results toward six CPOs



- ▶ **Tajikistan:** Programme expenditures for 2018–21, totalling US\$495,000 were spread across seven CPOs and produced 17 results. The largest share went towards CPOs TJK128 (four results recorded) and TJK151 (two results) – on developing and implementing an integrated policy response on employment and social protection (45 per cent of expenditures) and strengthening social protection floors (15 per cent). The next-largest expenditure (29 per cent of the total) was towards building strong, representative and independent trade unions (TJK802, no results). Regional and global projects predominantly contributed towards combating child labour, forced labour and trafficking; reducing informality; and improving employment services and TVET programmes (TJK102, TJK105, TJK900 and TJK901).

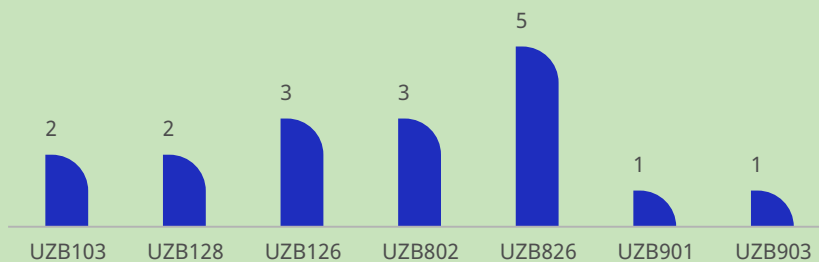
Between 2018 and 2021, the ILO reported 17 results toward seven CPOs in Tajikistan





- ▶ **Turkmenistan:** Programme expenditures for 2018–21 totalled US\$21,060. All expenditures were directed towards CPO TKM826, “Strengthened capacity of Member States to ratify and apply international labour standards”, under which two results were produced.
- ▶ **Uzbekistan:** Technical cooperation expenditures for 2018–21 totalled US\$8.76 million, and 17 results were recorded. By far the largest proportion of expenditures (90 per cent) contributed to UZB901, “Increased capacities of labour administration and social partners to improve workplace compliance and prevent forced labour” (one result). The second- and third-largest shares of expenditures went towards UZB128, “Social protection floors extended and progressively raised” (5 per cent, two results); and UZB126, “Increased capacity of constituents to develop a gender-responsive national employment policies and labour market services, particularly for youth” (3 per cent, three results).

Between 2018 and 2021, the ILO reports 17 results in Uzbekistan toward seven CPOs



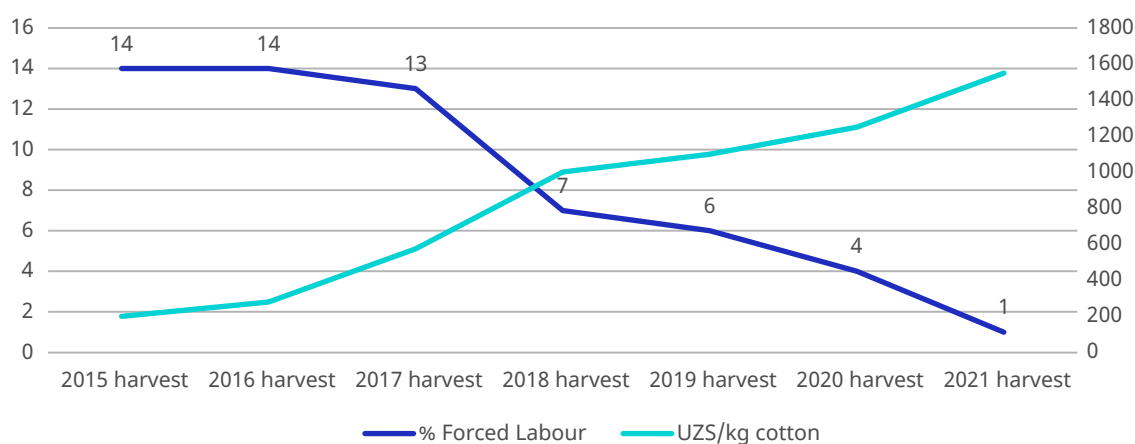
IMPACT

This subsection explores the current and potential future impact of ILO programmes in Central Asia.⁶³ In addition to success stories highlighted in previous sections of this report, the following narrative highlights outstanding examples of higher-level outcomes in Central Asia to which the ILO contributed. In a related topic, this subsection includes a brief discussion of DWCP monitoring and its limits measuring outcomes and impact.

Emerging impact of ILO programmes

Nearly a decade after the ILO's 2013 child labour monitoring mission in the country, Uzbekistan succeeded in eliminating both systemic child labour and forced labour from the annual cotton harvest. According to monitoring reports, an estimated 2 million children have been taken out of child labour and half a million adults out of forced labour since the reform process of Uzbekistan's cotton sector began seven years ago.⁶⁴ As shown in figure 7, between 2015 (the first year the ILO monitored the cotton harvest for forced labour) and 2021, the percentage of workers forced to take part in the annual harvest dropped by 13 percentage points (six points during the evaluation period). During the same period, working conditions also improved, and the average price paid to a worker for a kilo of cotton increased sixfold. These benefits accrued to an estimated 2 million seasonal agricultural workers, the majority female. According to the 2021 monitoring report, one in eight people of working age in Uzbekistan participated in the cotton harvest – the world's largest recruitment effort.

► **Figure 7.** Rate of decline in forced labour, rate of increase in cotton picker earnings per kilo of cotton, 2015-2021



The potential impact of improved compliance with core labour standards in cotton and other industries on the Uzbek economy in terms of increased trade and job creation is significant.

Already, ILO-supported reforms contributed to decisions to remove Uzbek cotton from the list of goods made with child labour and forced labour in 2019 by the US Government; the EU decision to grant Uzbekistan GSP+ status; as well as the Cotton Campaign's decision to lift the ban on Uzbek cotton in 2022. Because of these shifts and in accordance with the Government of Uzbekistan policy of cutting raw cotton exports and increasing the exports of value-added cotton products,

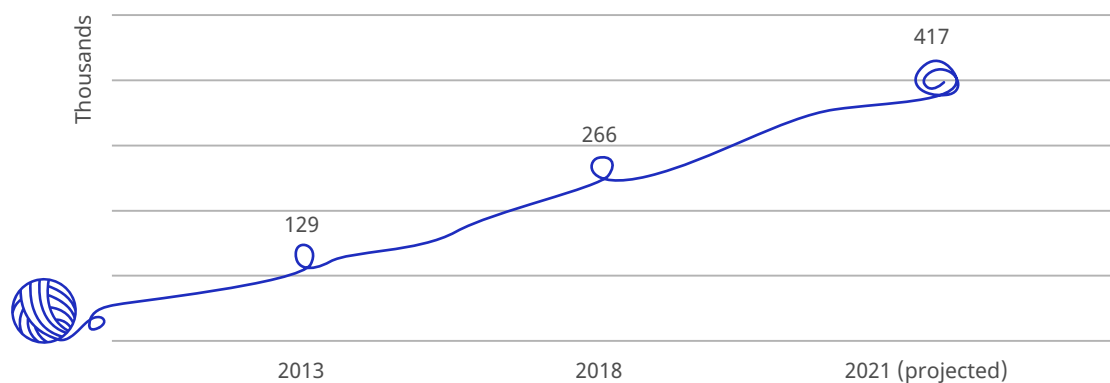
63. The findings in this subsection are based on a qualitative assessment of impact rather than the results of more rigorous "impact evaluation". The latter would require another methodology to measure changes and attribute results more accurately to ILO interventions or other factors.

64. In 2019, the CEACR noted with satisfaction that "...children are no longer involved in the cotton harvest and the systematic or systemic child labour is no longer a matter of concern. School children and students were not mobilized for cotton picking in the 2018 cotton harvest."

65. In 2013, Uzbekistan cotton yarn export was 128,712 metric tons. It increased to 265,867 metric tons in 2018 and was anticipated to show a further rise to 416,744 in 2021. Exports of cotton fabric have followed the same growth pattern. Fibre2Fashion, [Future of Uzbek Cotton](#).

both cotton yarn and cotton fabric exports of the country are increasing and are projected to continue to increase.⁶⁵ The Government of Uzbekistan has targeted reaching US\$20 billion worth of textile/ready-to-wear exports by the year 2030, and are working to increase the familiarity and sales of Uzbek textile products in the United States and the EU, a task made much easier following the lifting of the ban on Uzbek cotton.⁶⁶ ILO officials reported that the ILO was studying the feasibility of launching its flagship Better Work programme in Uzbekistan. In addition to improving working conditions in the textile sector, Better Work's presence would likely reinforce the competitiveness of Uzbek textiles in Western markets by reassuring buyers on national industry efforts to uphold labour standards.⁶⁷

► **Figure 8.** Rise of Uzbekistan's cotton yarn exports (Metric tons/year)



Source: Fibre2Fashion

The prevalence of child labour diminished in Kyrgyzstan. The ILO provided support to constituents in Kyrgyzstan to combat child labour over the last decade. As part of its efforts, the ILO collaborated with the national statistics authorities to collect comprehensive data on child labour prevalence. Although more recent data are unavailable, 2007 and 2014 surveys suggest that the ILO's efforts to build national capacity to tackle child labour contributed to a reduction in its prevalence. The survey data showed child labour prevalence declined from 32.9 per cent in 2007 to 27.8 per cent in 2014.⁶⁸

National efforts to address trafficking were strengthened in most Central Asian countries. With the ILO's assistance, Central Asian countries have put in place legal and institutional frameworks to combat child labour, forced labour and human trafficking, and to remediate their effects on victims. Recognizing these reforms, in 2021, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan moved from the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Tier 2 Watch List, for countries requiring special scrutiny, to a Tier 2 ranking, which recognized the significant efforts made by these countries to bring themselves into compliance with relevant labour standards. For three consecutive years, Tajikistan has maintained a Tier 2 ranking. In contrast, Turkmenistan, where ILO technical assistance has been minimal, received a Tier 3 ranking, which is reserved for countries that have made inadequate efforts to combat trafficking.

66. US Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agriculture Service Uzbekistan, Cotton and Products Update, December 2020.

67. ILO, [Better Work Feasibility Study Launched in Uzbekistan](#), 10 May 2022.

68. ILO, Working Children in the Kyrgyz Republic, Child Labour Survey 2014–15.

Labour inspection activities and penalties for labour code infractions increased in Uzbekistan. As a result of ILO advocacy and technical assistance, the labour inspectorate was strengthened during the evaluation period. Outreach campaigns intended to educate Uzbek workers about their rights, and to empower them with means to report violations, have resulted in a steady increase in formal complaints about issues such as non-payment of wages, workplace accidents and forced labour. The labour inspectorate received nearly 27,000 total complaints in 2020, up from 15,000 in 2018. Investigations of potential labour rights violations by companies totalled nearly 16,700 in 2020, up from just 5,600 in 2018. The value of fines levied for labour rights violations likewise more than quadrupled from 2018 to 2020.

Uzbekistan expanded and improved its social protection and employment programmes to help vulnerable populations negatively affected by COVID-19. The ILO provided policy guidance and data to help inform the response of the Government of Uzbekistan to COVID-19. Through several Presidential Decrees in July/August 2020 and August 2021, the Government extended social assistance benefits from 700,000 to 1.25 million families; increased unemployment benefits; and expanded the scope of the existing unemployment insurance scheme to include some categories of informal sector workers. It also redesigned and expanded public works programmes, extending the number of vulnerable people served from 5,000 to 500,000. The ILO contributed to these short-term measures, as well as to medium- and longer-term employment and social protection policies and plans, through various actions. The ILO (a) facilitated thematic working groups attended by high-level government officials and social partners on crisis response and recovery measures; and (b) prepared technical reports analysing the social protection system, including briefs on the extension of unemployment insurance coverage, as well as costing and fiscal space analysis. It also delivered training on relevant COVID-19 crisis response and recovery topics for staff in the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, and the Pensions Fund.

Monitoring of DWCP outcomes

Although DWCPs in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were largely effective as a results-based approach to decent work promotion, outcome monitoring and reporting could be improved. The DWCP documents in both countries articulate expected programme outputs and outcomes, which is consistent with a results-based approach.

- ▶ The Uzbekistan 2021–25 DWCP monitoring framework includes measurable indicators as well as baseline values and targets. The indicators are appropriately outcome-oriented; they measure the changes that are expected from reforms and capacity-building activities.
- ▶ The Tajikistan 2020–24 DWCP likewise includes indicators but no targets.

DWCP monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and related monitoring activities by ILO tripartite constituents, left room for improvement. On the positive side, both countries conducted annual reviews of DWCP results that reportedly focused on progress towards key, high-level outcomes. In Tajikistan, annual reviews were carried out by the National Tripartite Committee for Decent Work, which was created in 2016 specifically to monitor DWCP implementation and evaluate programmes on decent work and their impact on the country's sustainable development. It includes the ILO national coordinator and relevant government departments, as well as the social partners. The existence of such an entity suggests strong national ownership of the DWCP and interest in the monitoring progress. In contrast, according to a trade union representative, there was no precise monitoring mechanism in Uzbekistan, which s/he perceived as a gap. At the project level, ILO programmes were subject to evaluation; larger programmes were independently evaluated.

Under “areas for improvement”, according to ILO officials, there is little or no monitoring of DWCP indicators by constituents in Tajikistan or Uzbekistan. Moreover, the indicators themselves could be made more useful as a tool for tracking progress against output objectives and eventually measuring the outcome of ILO-supported policy reforms. Based on evaluation team review and stakeholder comments, DWCP indicators could be improved by distinguishing better between outcome and output type indicators, and by setting targets. In particular, and as remarked by a former government official in Tajikistan, better measurement of outcomes was needed: “If we aim at better-quality services through the improved capacity, we should not only measure the number of seminar or training participants but measure how the acquired knowledge resulted in the institutional changes, which then improved the services.”

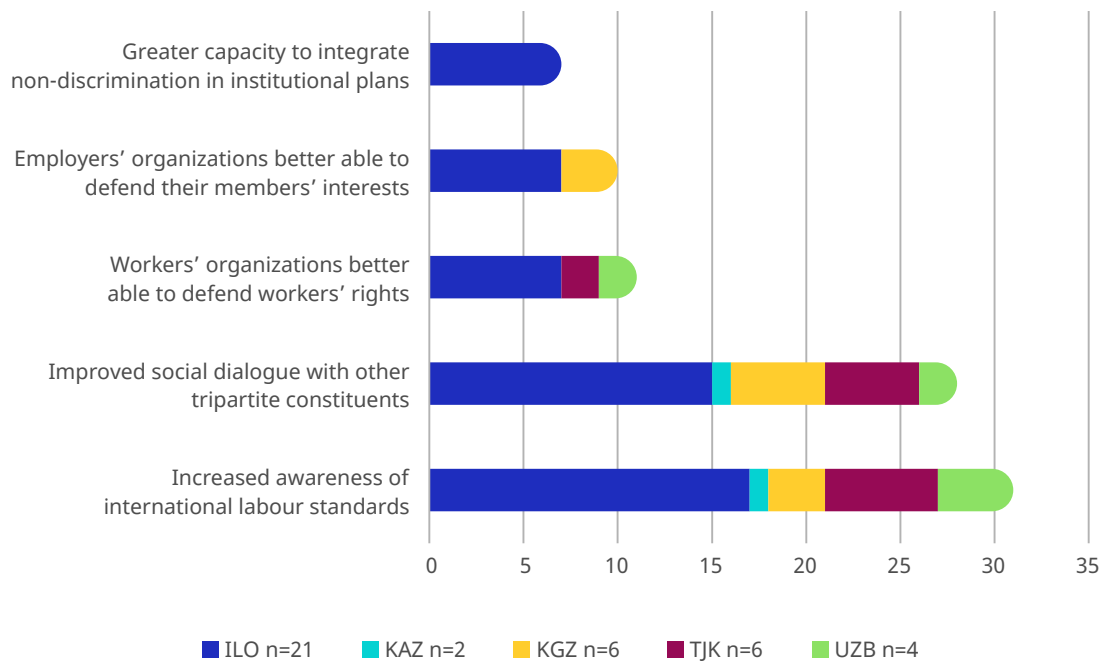
SUSTAINABILITY

On sustainability, the evaluation team identified and assessed the ILO's efforts to ensure its programmes contributed to lasting progress towards the Decent Work Agenda. To do so, the evaluation examines the extent and ways the ILO (a) built ownership and capacity among ILO constituents and other national stakeholders to fight for and continue progress on the Decent Work Agenda; (b) institutionalized processes and mandates; or (c) mainstreamed reforms in national laws and policies. It also identifies potential sustainability risks and ILO efforts to mitigate these risks.

Creation of ownership and capacity among ILO constituents and other national stakeholders

ILO programmes conducted capacity-building programmes for their constituents on a wide variety of topics and reached diverse audiences. Topics included how to detect and combat child labour and forced labour, fair recruitment practices for seasonal agricultural workers, formalization of employment, public employment services design, social protection, and social dialogue. The depth and reach of the programmes varied by country and by topic – for example, the volume of activities involving constituents in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan was less than in the other three Central Asian countries. The composition of training recipients included various ministry officials (such as Labour, Finance, Family Services and Agriculture), judicial and law enforcement officials (labour inspectors, judges and police officers), grass-roots organization representatives (women's committee, youth committees and farmers' councils), civil society activists, and workers' and employers' organization leaders. The ILO and its constituents also implemented public awareness-raising campaigns on informality, child labour, forced labour and occupational safety and health. The results of the evaluation survey suggest that the strongest results of ILO capacity-building programmes in the subregion were increased awareness of international labour standards, improved social dialogue with other tripartite constituents, and improved capacity by the social partners to defend their members' rights and interests.

The ILO's capacity-building programmes used many good practices to increase their impact. A known and relatively high risk of training programmes is that increased knowledge and awareness often does not translate into practical changes in the regular work of participants. To mitigate this risk, the ILO made frequent use of regional and South–South exchanges as a strategy to favour practical learning (see good practice in box 9), participatory approaches, and often involved high-level officials who make decisions about policies and their institutionalization. Piloting and experimentation, or “learning while doing”, was used extensively in the ILO's efforts to build capacity to monitor the cotton harvest for child labour and forced labour in Uzbekistan, and in activities that engaged workers' and employers' organizations in research, awareness-raising and advocacy for decent work causes in all countries except Turkmenistan.

► **Figure 9.** Ways the ILO built constituents' capacity

Box 9. Good practice: South-South and triangular cooperation to reinforce capacity-building outcomes

- In the framework of the "Partnerships for Youth Employment in CIS" project, the ILO supported a South-South and Triangular Cooperation programme on the transition to a formal economy. The project provided technical advice to facilitate knowledge-sharing and mutual learning, and stimulated the exchange of expertise, good practices and lessons learned from policies and programmes implemented by the constituents in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan.
- Representatives of the tripartite constituents from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan discussed the progress on transitioning to the formal economy with their BRICS (Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China) counterparts during the BRICS-CIS knowledge exchange webinar series on formalization, jointly organized by the ILO and the International Training Centre in Turin. The programme offered participants from the CIS and BRICS countries an opportunity to share experiences, engage in peer-to-peer learning and strengthen subregional cooperation to maximize the impact of social dialogue and tripartite actions on pursuing an integrated approach towards formalization. According to one ILO official, "The possibility to exchange with peers from across the globe was really appreciated by participants."

Within its capacity-building programmes, the ILO invested significantly in efforts designed to strengthen workers' and employers' organizations' capacities to carry out their core mandates. These programmes were designed to contribute to overcoming what many ILO officials identified as a major constraint negatively affecting the impact and sustainability of its decent work promotion efforts in Central Asia: social partners' limited maturity and capacity to attract and defend members' interests.

Evidence of increased social partner capacity developed during the evaluation period included the following:

- (a) **The first independent employers' organization in Uzbekistan (Confederation of Employers) was created in 2018.** Responding to concerns about the independence of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan, in 2018 the ILO supported the creation of a new, independent employers' organization, the Confederation of Employers.
- (b) **Workers and employers' organizations in Central Asia strengthened their international alliances.** After a long process of collaboration with the ILO, the JIA Business Association, which is reportedly the most active and representative independent business association in Kyrgyzstan, became a member of the International Organization of Employers. The ILO also helped the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan to become an associate member of the International Trade Union Confederation. One trade union representative from Tajikistan reported, "Trade union organizations of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan very often meet under different ILO platforms, which helps consolidate the international trade union movement and strengthen our trade unions."
- (c) **Social partners developed new membership outreach strategies.** After legal reforms re established the Confederation of Employers of Kazakhstan's status as an independent organization, the ILO helped it improve membership outreach through the development of new communication tools and strategies.⁶⁹ During the initial COVID-19 outbreak, the ILO supported the Confederation to localize and diffuse materials on "safe return work" and business continuity planning, which reportedly were well-received, and strengthened the organization's credibility among employers. The ILO provided the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan with support to establish legal clinics to address labour conflicts, which serve both members and non-members. In addition, ACTRAV is currently working with the Federation to improve its labour organizing skills, a critical issue with the growing pace of privatization and the end of State support for trade union creation.
- (d) **Social partners implemented programmes to address decent work deficits in the informal sector.** In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the ILO involved workers' organizations in campaigns to tackle informality, which reportedly resulted in participants gaining new knowledge and skills.⁷⁰

In Uzbekistan, ILO capacity-building included both social partners and civil society organizations with shared objectives. An outstanding example of capacity building towards institutionalization was the ILO's work on third-party monitoring of the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan (see box 10).

69. Since the start of 2020, the National Confederation of Employers of Kazakhstan (NKRRK) has recruited 30 new member companies, their first new members in over 10 years. The Confederation renewed membership of all associations that were earlier affiliated with it. The ILO assisted the Confederation in using social networks, its website, and member databases to increase their visibility and attract new members.

70. In Kyrgyzstan, the ILO supported the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan and its affiliate, the Construction Workers' Trade Union, to campaign against a law that enabled employers to force workers to accept informal status. Jointly, the workers' organizations promoted legal amendments to the National Tripartite Social Dialogue Commission and advocated for stronger action by labour inspectors to counter the practice. Also in Kyrgyzstan, the ILO provided support to JIA, the employers' association, to carry out a national business survey and develop a policy paper on the informal economy, including a set of proposals to facilitate the transition to formality. In 2021, the ILO again supported JIA to develop a report and policy briefs on the impact of COVID-19 on enterprises, including informal enterprises. In Tajikistan, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions led an advocacy campaign on the negative consequences of informality, which included staging mobile theatre performances in 28 cities. In 2021, The ILO also provided expert support to the Federation and its healthcare sector affiliate on developing a workers' position on the development of a healthcare insurance system that would include informal workers and workers in non-standard forms of employment.

Mainstreaming decent work reforms in policies and laws

The ILO's numerous contributions to legal reforms, and/or employment and social protection policies, built on and contributed to higher levels of awareness and ownership of the Decent Work Agenda. As highlighted in section 4.3, ILO assistance contributed to significant labour law reforms and the development of new employment, social protection and skills development policies.⁷¹ Based on ILO officials' and constituents' feedback, the adoption of legal reforms, policies and action plans by ILO tripartite constituents in Central Asia was a product of extensive awareness-raising, open dialogue, and willingness on the part of the ILO to adapt its assistance to national priorities, including those of high-level decision-makers. According to one Uzbek Labour Ministry official, "The main factor making the sustainability of results likely is their high relevance to the actual needs of the Department, but also the Ministry in general. Supported initiatives come from the policy documents, and this explains the high likelihood of their endorsement by the authorities with subsequent institutionalization of decisions."

The ILO's active engagement and capacity-building of workers' organizations, civil society leaders and labour inspectors in monitoring the annual cotton harvest in Uzbekistan contributed to the institutionalization of the practice. Over seven years, the ILO's third-party monitoring project independently monitored the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan for child labour and forced labour, in line with ILO standards and methodologies. While initially using international monitors, a practice that was both expensive and difficult to sustain, the project quickly modified its approach and engaged country-based civic activists as monitors, building their capacity through regular training programmes. According to focus group participants, a core group of activists/monitors formed in 2018. These individuals contributed monitoring data and other inputs, which the ILO used to produce the annual Cotton Harvest Monitoring report. As the end of the project drew near, the ILO took steps to institutionalize the approach. These strategies included institutionalizing third-party monitoring, building the capacity of trade unions to represent agricultural workers, and strengthening the capacity of Uzbekistan's labour inspectorate (see box 10). Moreover, according to one development partner official, the mechanisms put in place to monitor the cotton harvest (public complaints hotlines, engagement of human rights advocates, and strengthened labour inspection) are now being capitalized upon to strengthen labour protection in other sectors.

71. Although social protection and employment policies in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have not yet been formally adopted by the Government, based on key informant interviews, approval is expected in both countries.

Box 10. Good practice: Institutionalizing the monitoring of the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan

- ▶ Sustainability risks are inherent in international organization-led third-party monitoring of labour rights, which usually operate over a fixed period and are donor-financed. The ILO was relatively quick to recognize the challenge and put in place strategies to promote sustained supervision of Uzbekistan's cotton harvest.
 - (a) In 2021, civil society activists registered the social enterprise "Consulting Monitor Group", thus obtaining the needed legal status to continue independent monitoring activities in the future. As part of the transition process, the social enterprise concluded direct contracts with trained activists to monitor the 2021 cotton harvest without the ILO's involvement. Moreover, the group produced its own first Harvest Monitoring report in 2021, which was presented at the ILO's international conference on decent work in March 2022. During the same conference, leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had a series of meetings with the EU Delegation, the Swiss embassy, the German Agency for International Cooperation, the US embassy, the Cotton Campaign, and the World Bank on potential collaboration to continue third-party monitoring, as well as new activities to promote collective bargaining between cotton pickers and cotton clusters, potentially expanding to cover food and construction sectors.
 - (b) To increase the capacity of agricultural workers to defend their interests and fight exploitative labour practices in cotton and other seasonal agricultural work, the ILO supported the efforts of the trade union federation in Uzbekistan to begin organizing agricultural workers, a first in the country. One workers' organization leader highlighted progress in establishing collective negotiations on working conditions between the agricultural clusters and farmers at the district level.
 - (c) In parallel, the ILO conducted capacity-building for the labour inspectorate on monitoring forced labour in seasonal agriculture. Based on participants in an evaluation focus group with Uzbek labour inspectors, participation in monitoring cotton fields, independently and jointly with the local activists, has been a new and valuable experience for them.



Risks to sustainability

Despite the many strategies highlighted above, the evaluation team identified a number of sustainability risks:

- ▶ To date, many draft policies have yet to be fully endorsed by the Government or to have their implementation initiated, potentially limiting the institutionalization of the ILO's policy reform work. According to a few ILO specialists, the risk that draft policies fail to be endorsed or implemented was particularly high in Tajikistan, where the Government has been historically slow to formally endorse and implement policies developed by constituents with ILO support. Moreover, in all countries where the ILO contributed to labour law reforms, limited political will and capacity to apply legislation are a relatively high risk and an area where the ILO ultimately has limited control.
- ▶ Many of the ILO's interventions on employment, social protection and skills were primarily focused on policy formulation, with relatively limited and/or short-term implementation support. Evidence from past high-level evaluations (for example, that of the ILO's programme of work in South Asia) suggests that, while policy reforms are a significant achievement towards the institutionalization of the Decent Work Agenda, continuity of ILO technical guidance, as well as support for implementation in these workstreams, was important to institutionalize change.
- ▶ While the ILO is well-positioned to ensure continuous and high-level technical support through the DWT/CO–Moscow, mobilizing sufficient funding for potentially more resource-intensive implementation support may pose challenges in Central Asia. ILO officials had mixed opinions on the prospects of mobilizing adequate funding to scale up ILO activities in the subregion.⁷² The effect of the war in Ukraine on the availability of funding is yet to be seen; two of the largest regional projects with activity in the subregion were funded by the Government of the Russian Federation and a Russian gas company, which may be affected by the conflict.

72. For example, one ILO personnel survey respondent expressed disappointment that, to date, the ILO had been unable to seize upon the success of its work on the cotton harvest to significantly expand donor funding, despite strong country interest and trust in ILO expertise. Other officials were more optimistic about the prospects for resource mobilization, citing the presence of EU delegations with growing trade and political interests in the subregion, as well as the availability of various UN multi-agency trust funds, including a new multimillion dollar UN trust fund to support SDG implementation in Uzbekistan.



▶ 05

Conclusions

► Conclusions

RELEVANCE

The ILO effectively aligned its programme with tripartite constituents' priorities and needs. The courses of action undertaken were strongly and relevantly informed by ILO norms and standards, and adapted to the context of Central Asian countries:

- Overall, the constituents in Central Asia perceived the ILO's assistance to be aligned with their priorities. In particular, they expressed strong appreciation for the speed, flexibility, and adaptiveness of the ILO's assistance to meet unanticipated needs emerging from the COVID 19 pandemic.
- The ILO effectively aligned its assistance with decent work constraints identified by constituents during consultations and policy dialogue. There were some apparent gaps in the ILO's assistance programmes; examples included lack of significant progress to address the issue of forced labour in Turkmenistan,⁷³ as well as the issues of safe labour migration and entrepreneurship, and enterprise development generally.

To different degrees by country and by issue, the ILO was diligent in tackling identified constraints to decent work in Central Asia. Considering numerous observations by ILO supervisory bodies, the country programmes' significant focus on core labour standards demonstrated relevance and effective priority-setting. Similarly, the ILO's assistance to meet tripartite constituents' needs emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic showed speed and adaptiveness to unanticipated events, an exceptional achievement for a large organization:

- The ILO was responsive to its national counterparts' needs for data and policy advice in all five countries in Central Asia. Notably, the DWT/CO-Moscow was quick in developing knowledge-sharing activities on COVID-19 emergency response and recovery and adapting its programme delivery modes to COVID-19-related restrictions.
- The ILO also responded effectively to COVID-19-related public health concerns and its effects on employers and workers by providing useful OSH guidance and facilitating opportunities for tripartite dialogue on ways to deal with negative consequences of public health restrictions on livelihoods and enterprise sustainability.

73. According to the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, the Director's work in Turkmenistan has been difficult, because the country does not have independent workers' and employers' organizations. Recently, comments from the ILO's supervisory mechanism have contributed to greater dialogue between the ILO and the Government of Turkmenistan on the issue of forced labour in the country's cotton industry. An implication of this finding is that the ILO should capitalize on this opening and pursue all opportunities to support constituents' efforts to combat forced labour in the country.

COHERENCE

The ILO effectively used DWCP formulation (in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan only), policy dialogue, research activities and partnerships to align its assistance with national development strategies and priorities, as well as the efforts of UN and other international development partners. The ILO's research effectively addressed the deficit of data and analysis on labour issues that characterized the subregion and contributed to greater understanding of decent work constraints, particularly on the labour market effects of COVID-19. Considering the long list of policies and laws that were influenced by the ILO's research activities, the Organization's expertise in labour-related research methodologies emerges from this evaluation as one of its important comparative advantages:

- ▶ Surveys, diagnostics, and analytical reports produced by the ILO on many topics supported its own experts' recommendations and helped guide national priority-setting and policies. The ILO's technical assistance and use of local experts also contributed to enhancing national counterparts' research capabilities on labour topics, albeit to a somewhat limited extent.
- ▶ In both countries with DWCPs (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), the ILO capitalized on past cooperation and new programme development process to align and embed the Decent Work Agenda in larger development plans and policies. In Uzbekistan, synergies between DWCPs and the country's ambitious reform agenda since 2018 led to stronger policy dialogue and cooperation between the ILO and national stakeholders. In countries without DWCPs, the ILO was still able to engage in dialogue and constituent capacity-building on priority decent work issues, albeit on fewer issues and with more limited scope, especially in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

The ILO also contributed usefully to UN reforms towards more tightly aligned country-level cooperation through its active participation in the development of UNSDCF and thematic coordination groups, as well as through joint projects. Its dedication to collaborative work on strengthening social protection deserves particular recognition:

- ▶ The ILO's proactive efforts to raise the awareness of its social partners on the SDGs and UN agency mandates, as well as to educate UNRCs on the ILO's tripartite structure and mandate, were successful in ensuring the integration of decent work concerns in the UNSDCF in the subregion. Through coordination and joint projects, the ILO actively collaborated with other UN agencies and development partners, resulting in greater coherence of assistance programmes, particularly on social protection.



EFFECTIVENESS

The ILO contributed substantially and effectively to Decent Work Agenda reforms in multiple workstreams. Its work in Uzbekistan, and particularly its contributions to strengthening national efforts to combat child labour and forced labour in cotton growing, stand out for their depth and overall effectiveness. The ILO effectively integrated most cross-cutting policy drivers in its programmes, except for environmental sustainability. The ILO's work on social protection was particularly rigorous in mainstreaming gender and non-discrimination:

- ▶ Country programmes contributed to many noteworthy results in Central Asia in the areas of combatting child labour, forced labour and trafficking; strengthened legal protections for freedom of association; the development of employment and social protection policies and action plans; and the adoption of improved vocational training assessment, planning and curriculum development methodologies.
- ▶ The ILO's attention to its cross-cutting policy drivers resulted in Central Asian countries' ratification of ten ILO Conventions, strengthened social dialogue mechanisms, and the integration of measures to support gender equality and non-discrimination in national policies. However, results on environmental sustainability were few and relatively low-level.

On success factors, the bedrock of the ILO's contributions to decent work reforms in Central Asia was the breadth and depth of its technical knowledge, as well as the dedication of its in-country personnel. Nevertheless, the positive effects of the former were in some cases diminished by the significant workload spread over relatively limited personnel numbers and in-country representation:

- ▶ The ILO and ILO constituents identified many factors that either helped or hindered country programmes' effectiveness. Key success factors included access to the ILO's technical expertise, active participation from national constituents, strong ILO management, effective use of ILO research, and well-designed interventions. Identified constraints included: varying capacities of social partner institutions, variances in political will for reforms, economic or political instability, and COVID-19-related delays. The evaluation also highlighted many specific factors that contributed to Uzbekistan's emergence as an ILO success story, including a relationship of trust with constituents, including with high-level decision-makers within the Government, programmes' alignment with an active reform agenda and alliances with civil society activists, among others.
- ▶ The work of ILO specialists and NCs was highly appreciated by national constituents and partners. Nevertheless, the constituents, some partners and ILO personnel attributed delays in programme implementation, limitations in accessing expertise and reductions in the ILO's influence within the UNCT to the ILO's thin in-country presence and related management arrangements.

EFFICIENCY

The ILO was successful achieving measurable results, despite having relatively small budgets in most Central Asian countries. It did so by focusing its resources on high-priority issues and on policy and knowledge dimensions of problems that were well-aligned with its available human resources and areas of ILO value-added:

- ▶ Despite its relatively limited country presence in most countries and the ILO's lean management structure overall, the constituents perceived that they had received high-quality technical assistance. The move to online modes of assistance to cope with COVID-19 restrictions was a positive factor in increasing the accessibility of ILO expertise.
- ▶ From 2018 to 2021, the ILO's development cooperation activities in Central Asia produced 48 results towards P&B and CPO outcomes. Overall, the contribution of Central Asian countries to total results in the region were outsized relative to its budget. With about 15 per cent of the regional budget, Central Asia contributed to nearly 25 per cent of the reported results.
- ▶ During the evaluation period, DWT/CO–Moscow used ILO unearmarked technical cooperation funds strategically to address supervisory body comments on fundamental issues, especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. RBSA funds and regional and global projects over which the ILO had greater discretionary powers also filled gaps in bilateral donor funding for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

IMPACT

The ILO has noted the many high-level outcomes to which it has contributed in Central Asia in recent years. These have led to measurable, positive improvements in the lives of working people, the effectiveness of labour market institutions, and real and potential economic benefits for the most diligent reforming countries:

- ▶ The ILO contributed to numerous Decent Work Agenda higher-level positive outcomes in Central Asia: reductions in the prevalence of child labour and forced labour, strengthened national responses to human trafficking, improved real and potential growth in exports, greater protection of workers' labour rights through inspection and worker representation, and improved protection for vulnerable populations during economic shocks and downturns, among others.

Results-based management approaches, especially as embedded in the DWCP, were a positive factor driving effectiveness; however, weak DWCP progress monitoring limited the identification and understanding of outcomes:

- ▶ By clearly identifying priorities and desired outcomes and outputs, DWCPs in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were largely effective as a results-based approach to decent work promotion. However, the choice of indicators and use of targets, and activities to monitor progress against outcomes, were relatively weak.

SUSTAINABILITY

The ILO diligently and in many ways successfully identified and implemented strategies to promote the sustainability of CPOs and impacts. The evaluation identified many successes, creating capacity and ownership for the Decent Work Agenda, institutionalizing processes, and mainstreaming reforms in country policies and laws:

- ▶ One of the main strategies used by the ILO to promote sustainability was building constituents' awareness, capacity, and ownership of the Decent Work Agenda reforms. The ILO's awareness-raising and capacity-building activities reached diverse audiences in significant numbers and resulted in its tripartite partners and others gaining greater understanding of international labour standards, more frequent and effective tripartite social dialogue, and improved capacity by social partners to represent their members' interests. The ILO used many good practices to increase the effectiveness of its training activities in changing participants' policies and practices; examples include South-South and triangular cooperation, participative approaches and "learning while doing".
- ▶ The ILO also contributed to the institutionalization of some of the positive outcomes of its technical cooperation programmes by mainstreaming international labour standards in policies, legal frameworks, and institutional mandates. Notable examples include labour law reforms; the development of national strategies on employment, social protection, and skills; and efforts to institutionalize third-party monitoring (Uzbekistan).

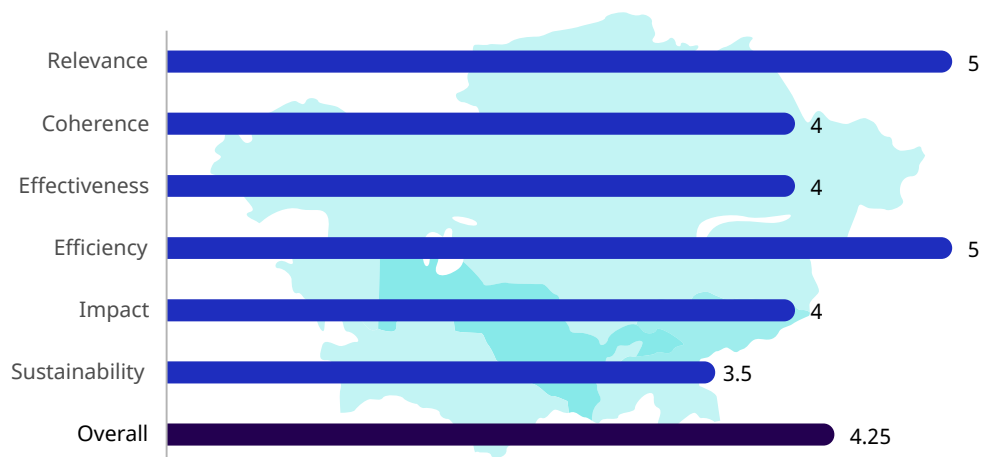
These important successes notwithstanding, the significant role played by Central Asian Governments in policy implementation in a frequently changing political landscape poses an obvious risk. Moreover, the relatively short duration of ILO support, especially in newer and complex workstreams – such as minimum wage-setting, employment, social protection, and skills programmes – poses a significant threat to the sustainability of the ILO's initial successes in the absence of follow-on support. In this context, the ILO's ability to maintain and potentially expand technical assistance through regionally based specialists and technical cooperation programmes is an important asset.

- ▶ Many of the ILO's interventions were primarily focused on policy formulation, with relatively limited and/or short-term implementation support. To date, many policies have yet to be fully endorsed by the Government, or their implementation has not yet been initiated. Moreover, while countries can reasonably expect continued support from ILO specialists, the outlook for improved resource mobilization is mixed.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Based on the preceding findings and conclusions, the evaluation team's overall scoring of the ILO's performance in Central Asia, using EVAL's six-point rating system, is presented below.

▶ **Figure 10.** Performance by evaluation criterion: 2018–22 ILO programme of work in Central Asia






▶ 06

Recommendations

▶ Recommendations


RECOMMENDATION 1

The ILO should continue to consult supervisory bodies' findings to determine gaps in the integration or implementation of Conventions as a basis for the design of technical cooperation activities. Moreover, overcoming concerns raised by these bodies should be high on the priority list of ILO country programmes in Central Asia.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO (including Workers' and Employers' Specialists), RO, NORMES		Medium-term	Variable

RECOMMENDATION 2


The ILO should continue efforts in all Central Asian countries to strengthen freedom of association in law and practice. The ILO should strengthen its support and cooperation on safe labour migration, entrepreneurship, and enterprise development in the subregion, building on its experiences and good practices in other regions. It should capitalize on all opportunities to support constituents in Turkmenistan in their efforts to eliminate forced labour in its cotton industry.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO (including Workers' and Employers' Specialists), RO, NORMES		Medium-term	Medium

RECOMMENDATION 3


The ILO should reinforce efforts to educate partners on the role and importance of international labour standards in Central Asia's economic development. To do so, ILO should:

- ▶ continue to leverage its active participation on the UNCT and in the UNSDCF development process, as well as policy dialogue with International Finance Institutions;
- ▶ continue to promote social partners' inclusion in UN country-level efforts towards achieving the SDGs;
- ▶ document and highlight successful outcomes and related spill over benefits achieved in Uzbekistan to encourage reforms in other countries in Central Asia and beyond.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO (including Workers' and Employers' Specialists), RO, NORMES		Medium-term	Low

RECOMMENDATION 4


ILO should continue to engage in research on labour topics. To increase ownership and strengthen the capabilities of national institutions and experts, the ILO should reinforce its collaboration with national institutions and experts in Central Asia.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO, RO		Medium-term	Low

RECOMMENDATION 5

Capitalizing on results to date, the ILO should endeavour to mobilize additional resources from donors so that it can continue its support national counterparts in Central Asia, especially in the areas where it has successfully provided policy advice but needs implementation support. While all resource allocation decisions should be based on the outcomes of stakeholder consultations, areas that appear to require follow-up support include wage-setting mechanisms, improving public employment services, social protection, and skills development. The ILO should:


- ▶ prioritize workstreams and countries where national governments demonstrate their commitment to decent work reforms by officially validating ILO-supported policy documents and action plans, allocating national budgets, and beginning implementation;
- ▶ continue its efforts to develop and diversify its partnerships in Central Asia as part of its resource mobilization strategy.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO, RO, Partnering for Development (PARDEV)		Short- and medium-term	Variable

RECOMMENDATION 6


Moving out of the pandemic period and based on pre- and post-pandemic evaluation findings and other lessons learned related to its field structure, the ILO should:

- ▶ continue to use and invest in online technologies for capacity-building programmes as well as country-level coordination and policy dialogue, making more selective use of face-to face missions necessitating international travel;
- ▶ re-examine decisions regarding where it posts core budget-funded technical and programme specialists, including the advantages and disadvantages of basing all DWT specialists in the same country; and consider issues such as how best to facilitate access to expertise as well as teamwork among specialists, differences in political will for decent work reforms in the subregion, and practical logistical issues;
- ▶ assess the NC management model, which seems to have been successful in Central Asia, for ways to improve it in countries where it is already used, as well as if/how to replicate it in other countries in the subregions, and elsewhere where the ILO has non-resident status.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/ CO, RO, Human Resources Development (HRD)		Short-term	Low

RECOMMENDATION 7

Based on evaluation findings and similar findings from past high-level evaluations, the ILO should strengthen DWCP monitoring activities in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan by improving the formulation and monitoring of programme indicators and indicator targets. In Uzbekistan, the ILO should support tripartite constituents to establish a more formal DWCP monitoring mechanism.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DWT/CO, EVAL, Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM)		Short-term	Low

OFFICE RESPONSE

Recommendation 1

The Office agrees with this Recommendation.

The comments of ILO supervisory bodies remain a priority for the Office in terms of technical assistance and engagement in Turkmenistan (on forced labour) and Kazakhstan (on freedom of association). Support for other areas of ILO work is conditional on progress being made on addressing the comments of the supervisory bodies in these countries.

Recommendation 2

The Office agrees with this Recommendation.

Freedom of association remains essential for all countries in Central Asia and consistent funding over the medium-long term is important to ensure sustained efforts in this regard.

Recommendation 3

The Office agrees with this Recommendation.

Policy dialogue with IFIs will continue to take place at the country level in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to strengthen policy coherence between IFIs and ILO Conventions on labour inspection. Efforts are also being pursued through UNRCs and donor partners at the country level to elaborate consistent messaging.

Initiatives are ongoing to ensure more active and systematic participation of social partners in actions for the achievement of the SDGs, particularly in UN country planning and programming processes. This builds on a special effort of the Region to provide entry points for Social Partners informing all UNRCs in the Region on the specific ILO value added to the work of the UNCTs.

Recommendation 4

The ILO agrees with this Recommendation.

The Office will identify key research topics based on consultation with its tripartite constituents and its own analysis.

Recommendation 5

The ILO agrees with this recommendation.

The ILO will continue designing new resource mobilization strategies and modalities and establishing new partnerships. Voluntary funding partnerships for earmarked contributions are a matter of convergence of national priorities/needs, funding partners' development agenda and ILO capacity.

Recommendation 6

- ▶ This recommendation is welcome and indeed ILO is coming out of Covid with a sense of better balancing face to face missions with complementary online/virtual support. There are however types of events which are connected to high level political attendance and at which sensitive issues need to be discussed and solved.
- ▶ The possibility of out-posting, either from HQ or DWT's, one or a limited number of RB core positions in a duty-station for a period of time has been positively tested in situations of crisis (for example in the Arab States Region). The Office will obviously need to balance this with the potential risk of depleting DWTs of their technical expertise.
- ▶ The NC model has proven to be a very useful one in non-resident countries. The NC role has increasingly been linked to interaction with the UN country team in situ as well, adding to the complexity of the functions.

Recommendation 7

The ILO agrees with the recommendation.

In case of Uzbekistan, the ILO will finalize the DWCP implementation plan together with the constituents.

In Tajikistan, results of implementation of the DWCP are discussed at the annual meeting of the National Tripartite Committee for decent work. The ILO will work on strengthening the capacity of the constituents to monitor DWCP implementation.

► Annex A. Evaluation Question Matrix

Evaluation Question	Data Collection Method	Required Information
Relevance		
What is the status of Decent Work Country Programming in Central Asia?	Document Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Which countries have DWCPs? In countries without DWCPs, what are ILO priorities? ► What are the main projects and programmes that have been implemented in each country in support of the DWCPs or CPOs?
To what extent did ILO programmes and projects identify and address key constraints affecting the Central Asian countries' (with focus on the case study countries) progress toward the Decent Work Agenda goals?	Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► To what extent and in what ways did ILO tackle key constraints affecting country performance promoting jobs and enterprise development, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue?
Are ILO programmes and projects relevant to tripartite constituent and other partners' needs?	Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► To what extent and in what ways are ILO tripartite constituents satisfied with ILO assistance? What might ILO have done to meet the constituents needs better?
Are the DWCPs and CPOs relevant to national, regional and international development frameworks (including to the UNCFs and the SDGs?) Are they relevant to the ILO's Programme and Budget Outcomes?	Document Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► How do ILO programmes align with national, regional and international development frameworks? With ILO strategic frameworks? ► Are there any significant gaps?
In what ways has ILO adapted its programming to incorporate a human-centred recovery from the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic? To what extent have ILO programmes and projects been designed or repurposed based on results from COVID-19 diagnostics, UN socio-economic assessments and guidance, ILO decent work national diagnostics, or similar comprehensive tools?	Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► In what ways, if at all, has ILO support contributed to the country's immediate response to COVID-19 pandemic? ► To what extent has ILO support assessed and begun addressing the country's longer term recovery needs? What are the most important examples of each? ► How has ILO adjusted the way it conducts its interventions to cope with COVID-19 restrictions? Have there been any lessons learned that might be useful when the pandemic is over?
Coherence & Validity of Design		
How well are ILO development cooperation projects aligned to the DWCPs?	Document review Key Informant Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► In what ways do development cooperation activities 2018-present align with the priorities and outcomes outlined in the DWCP? ► Are there any gaps?

<p>To what extent can the DWCPs be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion?</p> <p>Were principles of Results-Based Management applied to help the DWCPs to focus on performance and the achievement of results?</p>	<p>Document review Key Informant Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To what extent did the DWCPs establish indicators and benchmarks to measure performance toward the achievement of DWCP outcomes and/or CPOs? ▶ To what extent did the CO, ILO programme managers, and ILO tripartite constituents collect and analysis data to track performance against indicators and benchmarks?
<p>Effectiveness</p>		
<p>To what extent and in what ways did ILO support enable the Central Asia countries (with focus on the case study countries) to achieve DWCP and/or ILO country programme outcomes? What were the key factors of success? What were the main internal and external constraints/challenges?</p>	<p>Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What were the most important achievements of ILO programmes and technical assistance under each DWCP priority? ▶ What are stakeholder perceptions of ILO approaches and effectiveness? ▶ What are some examples of ways ILO support has had significant impact on policies, building partner institutional capacity, raising awareness/building knowledge and/or improving services for workers, enterprise owners and managers? ▶ What were the key factors that contributed to successful interventions? ▶ To what extent did ILO identify and mitigate risks affecting programme performance?
<p>To what extent has the ILO made progress in achieving results on crosscutting issues of standards; social dialogue and tripartism; gender equality and non-discrimination; and environmental sustainability, notably in policy dialogues, policy partnerships, partners frameworks? Were there any unexpected results?</p>	<p>Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey</p>	<p>To what extent and how did ILO contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased awareness of international labour standards. ▶ Increased government capacity to enforce national labour laws. ▶ Improved social dialogue with other tripartite constituents. ▶ Employers' Organisations better able to defend their members' interests. ▶ Workers' Organisations better able to defend workers' rights. ▶ Improve the legal framework and its application ensuring non-discrimination? ▶ Strengthen tripartite constituents' capacity to integrate environmental concerns in employment strategies and plans.

<p>To what extent have the ILO country office, regional office, Decent Work Teams, and concerned HQ Departments provided integrated and strategic technical support and fostered productive policy dialogue processes at the country level?</p>	<p>Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In which areas did the Decent Work Team and concerned HQ Departments provide strategic technical support? What assistance did they provide? What were the main results? What were the challenges? Were there any important lessons learned? ▶ To what extent are the numbers DWT specialists and areas of technical expertise sufficient to meet demand for technical advice from ILO constituents in Central Asia? ▶ To what extent was the CO effective in facilitating the design and implementation of ILO programmes in the Central Asian countries? How effective was the CO's communication with the constituents? With the project teams? What were the main challenges? What were the lessons learned? ▶ In what ways did the country office facilitate an effective and coherent response to COVID-19 by the ILO in the Central Asian countries?
Efficiency		
<p>To what extent and in what ways did ILO use its available financial resources efficiently in Central Asia? How did DWCP stakeholders perceive, or other data suggest, ILO efficiency could be improved?</p>	<p>Document Review (DWCP budget and expenditure reports) Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How effectively did ILO mobilize funding to contribute to DWCP implementation during the period? What factors constrained resource mobilisation? ▶ How did ILO tripartite and other partners perceive ILO's efficiency? Did they perceive results to be commensurate with the resources invested? ▶ To what extent did programmes spend resources as planned? Were most projects concluded on time? What factors affected spending and on time implementation?
<p>To what extent has ILO leveraged partnerships (with tripartite partners and other national institutions, International Financial Institutions and UN/development agencies) effectively to mobilise resources needed to achieve DCWP and/or country programme results?</p>	<p>Document review (Evaluation reports) Key Informant Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How actively has ILO participated in UN country programme development and implementation? What factors either facilitated or constrained ILO participation? To what extent were ILO and tripartite partners' priorities integrated in the UN country framework? ▶ How effectively has ILO promoted the Decent Work Agenda among other international development partners in Central Asia and capitalised on opportunities to create synergies, conduct joint activities and/or mobilise additional resources for ILO programmes?

Likelihood of Impact		
To what extent did ILO support contribute to significant positive changes in Decent Work in the Central Asian countries (with focus on the case study countries)?	Document review (Evaluation reports) Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To what extent and in what ways did the ILO programme results contribute to overcome key constraints to the creation of jobs and enterprise development, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue?
In what ways did ILO programmes contribute the development of awareness, knowledge, policies, and national programmes to ensure workers, employers and governments maintain focus on decent work while adjusting to the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic?	Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How did ILO try to shape country strategies to address the immediate and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on employers and workers? ▶ To what extent and in what ways was the ILO successful or may be successful?
How successful has the ILO been in influencing the policy agenda in the Central Asian countries? To what extent are ILO programmes successfully promoting the Organisation's core principles?	Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In what ways did the ILO influence the policy agenda in its areas of expertise and based on its core principles? ▶ To what extent and in what ways was the ILO successful or may be successful?
Sustainability		
To what extent did the ILO identify and implement strategies to promote the sustainability of country programme outcomes and impacts?	Document Review Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To what extent and how was the ILO effective in creating national ownership for its programmes? Building the capacity of national institutions to continue key interventions without or with less ILO assistance? Finding alternative sources of funding after the end of project assistance? ▶ Were indicators of sustainability tracked and strategies adjusted?
What are the main risks for sustainability of ILO programme outcomes and impacts and what mitigation actions are needed?	Document review (Evaluation reports) Key Informant Interviews Focus Group Discussions Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What were the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional factors positively or negatively affecting sustainable results? ▶ What actions might be taken by the ILO to overcome constraints to sustainable outcomes and impacts?
What might ILO and its partners learn from the sustainability of past ILO programmes to design strategies to improve the sustainability of ongoing and future programming?	Document review Key Informant Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What are good practices and lessons learned related to promoting sustainability from past ILO programmes in country x? ▶ What more might ILO have done to promote sustainability in its programme of work?

▶ Annex B. Draft Data Collection Instruments

ILO CO, NATIONAL COORDINATORS, AND PROJECT PERSONNEL: KII PROTOCOL

1. What factors (key constraints, stakeholder priorities, political economy trade-offs) informed ILO's operational scope in Central Asia/country X in the last 4-5 years?

- ▶ Were there specific important Decent Work Agenda items that the ILO was not able to tackle or tackle to a meaningful extent? Why not?
- ▶ In what ways was the scope of interventions similar or different in the different Central Asian countries? Is the scope of interventions in Central Asia as a subregion different from other regions? How do you explain the differences? How does ILO adapt its programmes?
- ▶ To what extent and in what ways were ILO programme design choices driven by national stakeholders? Its own or others' analytical work? What are some examples?

2. In what ways has ILO integrated cross cutting concerns related to international labour standards and social dialogue, gender and non-discrimination, and environmental sustainability into its intervention strategies?

3. To what extent and in what ways was the ILO effective in creating national ownership for the DWCP or ILO country programme objectives?

- ▶ Has the DWCP been an effective framework to establish priorities, organize, plan and monitor country level programmes to promote decent work? How could the mechanism be improved?
- ▶ To what extent has progress against DWCP outcomes been monitored? What factors encourage or discourage monitoring?
- ▶ To what extent did the ILO develop effective knowledge sharing systems, mechanisms and products to communicate knowledge generated with constituents, the wider public, ILO regional and global?

4. What do you think were the ILO's most significant contributions to decent work in Central Asia/Country X since 2018?

- ▶ What are some examples of ways ILO support has had significant impact on policies, building partner institutional capacity, raising awareness/building knowledge and/or improving services for workers, enterprise owners and managers in Central Asia/country X?
- ▶ In what areas of work was the Bank unable to make a substantial contribution? What hindered progress?

5. What were the key factors and practices that contributed ILO's success influencing the policy agenda or making other contributions to decent work in Central Asia/country X?

6. In what ways did ILO facilitate an effective and coherent response to COVID-19 in Central Asia in its areas of competence? To what extent and how has ILO's Covid-19 response been effective? (Covid-19 cross cutting)

- ▶ In what ways, if at all, has ILO support shaped/contributed to Central Asian countries' immediate response to Covid-19 pandemic?
- ▶ To what extent has ILO support assessed and begun addressing the country's longer term recovery needs? What are the most important examples of each?
- ▶ How has ILO adjusted the way it conducts its interventions to cope with Covid-19 restrictions? Have there been any lessons learned that might be useful when restrictions are lifted?

7. To what extent and in what ways did ILO coordinate its efforts with other UN organizations effectively? With other International Development Cooperation partners? In what ways, if any, could ILO be more effective coordinating/collaborating with other international organizations to promote its Decent Work Agenda?

- ▶ Relative to country X other development partners, what is the unique contribution that the ILO is bringing?
- ▶ To what extent has the UN reform agenda affected how ILO operates in Country X?
- ▶ In what ways has ILO shared its knowledge and expertise to influence the UN and other international organizations' reform agenda in country X?

8. What factors have affected ILO's capacity to deploy its human and financial resources efficiently in Central Asia/Country X? In what ways could efficiency be improved?

- ▶ How satisfied are you with the support the country programme has received from the DWT, ROAP, and ILO HQ? What are examples of positive contributions? What are your suggestions regarding how to make the contributions from these offices more strategic/effective/efficient?

ILO REGIONAL AND DWT SPECIALISTS: KII PROTOCOL

1. To which programmes did you provide technical support? What assistance did you provide?

2. What factors (key constraints identified, stakeholder priorities, political economy trade-offs) informed ILO's operational scope in Central Asia in the last 4-5 years in your area of expertise?

- ▶ To what extent has the ILO been able to work on crosscutting issues of standards; social dialogue and tripartism; gender equality and non-discrimination; and environmental sustainability?
- ▶ Were there specific important Decent Work Agenda items that the ILO was not able to tackle or tackle to a meaningful extent? Why not?
- ▶ In what ways were the key constraints, considerations, and trade-offs similar or different in the different Central Asian Countries?
- ▶ To what extent and in what ways were ILO programme design choices driven by national stakeholders? its own or others' analytical work? What are some examples?

3. To what extent and in what ways were you and your other ILO colleagues effective in creating national ownership for the DWCP or ILO country programme objectives?

- ▶ Has the DWCP been an effective framework to establish priorities, organize, plan and monitor country level programmes to promote decent work? How could the mechanism be improved?
- ▶ To what extent has progress against DWCP outcomes been monitored? What factors encourage or discourage monitoring?
- ▶ To what extent did the ILO develop effective knowledge sharing systems, mechanisms and products to communicate knowledge generated with constituents, the wider public, ILO regional and global?

4. In your area of expertise, what do you see as ILO's most significant contributions to decent work in Central Asia/Country X since 2018?

- ▶ What are some examples of ways ILO support has had significant impact on policies, building partner institutional capacity, raising awareness/building knowledge and/or improving services for workers, enterprise owners and managers in Central Asia/country x?
- ▶ In what areas of work was the Bank unable to make a substantial contribution? What hindered progress?

5. What were the key factors and practices that contributed ILO's success influencing the policy agenda or making other contributions to decent work in Central Asia/country X?

6. In your area of competence, in what ways did ILO facilitate an effective and coherent response to COVID-19 in Central Asia? To what extent and how has ILO's Covid-19 response been effective? (Covid-19 cross cutting)

- ▶ In what ways, if at all, has ILO support shaped/contributed to Central Asian countries' immediate response to Covid-19 pandemic?
- ▶ To what extent has ILO support assessed and begun addressing the country's longer term recovery needs? What are the most important examples of each?
- ▶ How has ILO adjusted the way it conducts its interventions to cope with Covid-19 restrictions? Have there been any lessons learned that might be useful when restrictions are lifted?

7. To your knowledge, to what extent and in what ways did ILO coordinate its efforts with other UN organizations? With other International Development Cooperation partners? In what ways, if any, could ILO be more effective coordinating/collaborating with other international organizations to promote its Decent Work Agenda in Central Asia?

- ▶ Relative to country X other development partners, what is the unique contribution that the ILO is bringing?
- ▶ To what extent has the UN reform agenda affected how ILO operates in Country X?
- ▶ In what ways has ILO shared its knowledge and expertise to influence the UN and other international organizations' reform agenda in country X?

8. What factors have affected your effectiveness and efficiency providing technical assistance to the Central Asian countries?

9. In what ways has ILO contributed to creating and sharing knowledge and/or raising awareness on issues affecting progress in your (area) of intervention?

TRIPARTITE PARTNERS: KII PROTOCOL

1. To what extent did ILO align its assistance to your institution's needs and priorities?

- ▶ Has ILO assistance been flexible enough to adapt to your changing needs and priorities? Examples?

2. What were the main objectives of your collaboration with ILO? To what extent has ILO support contributed to progress toward these objectives?

- ▶ In what ways did ILO contribute to building partner institutional capacity, raising awareness/building knowledge and/or improving services for workers, enterprise owners and managers?

3. What examples are there of significant ILO influence on laws and policies?

- ▶ In what ways if at all was ILO research been influential in influencing the national reform agenda? In what areas?

4. What were the main external constraints or challenges that hindered progress on the Decent Work Agenda in country x in the last 4-5 years?

5. To what extent and how did ILO provide support to your institution to respond to new needs and priorities generated by Covid-19?

- ▶ In what ways, if at all, has ILO support contributed to the country's immediate response to Covid-19 pandemic?
- ▶ To what extent has ILO support assessed and begun addressing the country's longer term recovery needs? What are the most important examples of each?
- ▶ How has ILO adjusted the way it conducts its interventions to cope with Covid-19 restrictions? Have there been any lessons learned that might be useful when restrictions are lifted?

6. How effectively did ILO engage with your institution in developing the country programme of work? Could ILO have done anything to improve its communication, coordination, and collaboration?

- ▶ Has the DWCP been an effective framework to establish priorities, organize, plan and monitor country level programmes to promote decent work? How could the mechanism be improved?
- ▶ To what extent has progress against DWCP outcomes been monitored? What factors encourage or discourage monitoring?
- ▶ To what extent did the ILO develop effective knowledge sharing systems, mechanisms and products to communicate knowledge generated with national constituents/partners and the wider public?

7. In what ways, if at all, did the ILO collaborate and or seek synergies with other development partners in Country X? How might ILO be more effective coordinating/collaborating with other international organizations to promote its Decent Work Agenda?

- ▶ Did ILO coordinate its efforts with other UN organizations effectively?
- ▶ With other International Development Cooperation partners? How?

8. In what ways are the positive changes that ILO contributed to are sustainable after the end of its assistance? What more should be done to ensure changes are lasting?

- ▶ What were the financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional factors positively or negatively affecting sustainable results?
- ▶ To what extent and how did the ILO design strategies to promote sustainability into its projects?
- ▶ Which projects were most effective promoting sustainability? What were the good practices?

9. What are the ILO's overall strengths and weaknesses in country X?

- ▶ What, if anything, is unique about ILO assistance?
- ▶ What are some examples interventions that illustrate ILO's key strengths and weaknesses?

10. Is there anything that you would like to add? Any things important that we did not cover and any other suggestions you would like to make to improve ILO assistance?

DONOR, IMPLEMENTING PARTNER, OTHER UN, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: KII PROTOCOL

1. In what ways have you and your organization collaborated with the ILO in country X? What have been the main achievements coming out of your collaboration with the ILO?

2. In what ways, if any, has ILO support has had significant impact on policies, building partner institutional capacity, raising awareness/building knowledge and/or improving services for workers, enterprise owners and managers in country x?

3. What factors in the country enabling environment have helped or hindered progress in the areas where your organization and the ILO have collaborated?

4. Based on your experience, what are ILO's strengths or comparative advantage in country x? What are areas where ILO less well adapted to provide effective assistance?

- ▶ What are some examples interventions that illustrate ILO's key strengths and weaknesses?

5. What suggestions do you have for the ILO? How might the organization be more effective coordinating/collaborating with other international organizations to promote its Decent Work Agenda and/or to support progress toward the SDGs in country X?

BENEFICIARY: FGD GUIDE

Informed Consent: The FGD facilitator will explain the purpose of the meeting and administer the informed consent protocol (which includes information about ILO, the purpose of evaluation, and explains that their participation is voluntary, and that information shared will be kept confidential. The facilitator will also request that participants in the group respect the confidentiality of their co-participants by not discussing what was discussed with others outside the group).

Introductions: We will ask each participant to introduce herself/himself and in what ways they participated in ILO programmes.

Discussion: The FGD facilitator will ask participants to answer the following questions:

Questions to be adapted to each group. In general discussion cover the following:

- ▶ Participants' needs and priorities for ILO assistance;
- ▶ Extent, if at all, that the assistance received met these needs (examples of ways needs met, examples of ways needs not met)
- ▶ Examples of ways ILO assistance (or implementing partner) useful
- ▶ Ways ILO integrated gender and diversity topics into training programmes and in the promotion of standards and norms
- ▶ Suggestions for how to improve ILO (or implementing partner) assistance
- ▶ What effect has Covid-19 had on them or their work?

SURVEY FOR ILO PERSONNEL

1. Country

- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Uzbekistan
- Turkmenistan

2. Sex

- Female
- Male

3. Years with the ILO

- 0-1 year
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- Over 10 years
- Not applicable

4. ILO technical assistance and projects over the period 2018-present have been well-aligned to ILO tripartite constituents' priorities.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

5. What suggestions do you have to make ILO technical assistance and projects more relevant to the needs of ILO tripartite constituents.

6. How would you rate the effectiveness of ILO interventions in (name of country) in the period 2018-present?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very poor

7. In which of the following intervention areas do you think ILO support has been the most effective from 2018 to the present? (choose up to three)

- Strengthening legal and policy frameworks
- Reinforcing institutional capacity of government

- Reinforcing institutional capacity of Workers' Organizations
- Reinforcing institutional capacity of Employers' Organization
- Reinforcing institutional capacity of NGOs and community-based organizations
- Raising awareness of ILO constituents and others on decent work issues
- Increasing the availability of data and other research on decent work issues
- Providing services to populations affected by labour rights violations
- Increasing access to decent jobs
- Improving social protection
- Improving Occupation Safety and Health
- Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
- Strengthening Social Dialogue
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above

8. What are some examples of successful ILO interventions in the areas listed under question 11?

- Open Answer

9. In which of the following areas do you think ILO support has been the least effective from 2018 to the present? (choose up to three)

- Strengthening legal and policy frameworks
- Reinforcing institutional capacity of government
- Reinforcing institutional capacity of Workers' Organizations
- Reinforcing institutional capacity of Employers' Organization
- Reinforcing institutional capacity of NGOs and community-based organizations
- Raising awareness of ILO constituents and others on decent work issues
- Increasing the availability of data and other research on decent work issues
- Providing services to populations affected by labour rights violations

- Increasing access to decent jobs
 - Improving social protection
 - Improving Occupation Safety and Health
 - Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
 - Other (please specify)
 - None of the above
- 10. In which of the following ways do you think ILO has been the most successful building the capacity of its tripartite constituents? (choose up to three)**
- Increased awareness of international labour standards.
 - Increased government capacity to enforce national labour laws.
 - Improved social dialogue with other tripartite constituents.
 - Employers' Organisations better able to defend their members' interests.
 - Workers' Organisations better able to defend workers' rights.
 - Greater capacity to integrate gender and non-discrimination (the special needs of women, girls) in institutional strategies and plans.
 - Greater capacity to integrate environmental concerns in institutional strategies and plans.
 - Other (please specify)
 - None of the above
- 11. What suggestions do you have for how to improve ILO's effectiveness building the capacity of its tripartite constituents?**
- Open Answer
- 12. Which of the following factors contributed were most significant to the success of ILO technical assistance and projects during the period 2018-present? (choose up to three)**
- Strong buy-in from country counterparts.
 - Effective country office management.
 - Effective ILO project management.
 - Effective contributions of ILO specialists.
 - Intervention's strategy well-designed.
 - Adequate time for implementation.
 - Adequate resources for implementation.
 - Good use of research and other data to guide interventions.
 - Effective local implementing partners.
 - Effective participation from ILO tripartite constituents.
 - Political stability.
 - Economic stability.
 - Other (please specify)
- 13. Which of the following factors were the most significant constraints affecting the success of ILO technical assistance and projects during the period 2018-present? (choose up to three)**
- Inadequate buy-in from national counterparts.
 - Inefficient or ineffective management by ILO.
 - Inefficient or ineffective management by ILO implementing partners.
 - Weak capacity of tripartite constituents.
 - Inadequate access to ILO technical expertise.
 - Inadequate financial resources for implementation.
 - Inadequate time for implementation.
 - Frequent turn-over among counterpart personnel.
 - Poor design of interventions.
 - Frequent turn-over among ILO personnel.
 - Covid-19 and/or other external political and economic crisis.
 - Lack of capitalisation of good practices and lessons learned from past interventions.
 - Other (please specify)

14. ILO coordinates its interventions effectively with its tripartite constituents.
- Always
 - Very Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
15. ILO coordinates its interventions effectively with other UN and/or country development partners.
- Always
 - Very Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
16. ILO has used its available human and financial resources efficiently to contribute to progress on its Decent Work Agenda during the period 2018-present.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
17. What suggestions do you have to increase the efficiency of the way ILO uses its human and other resources?
- Open Answer
18. Results from ILO technical assistance and projects in the period 2018-present will be sustained when ILO assistance ends.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
19. What suggestions do you have for how to make the results of ILO technical assistance and projects more likely to be sustained when ILO assistance ends?
20. The ILO's response to COVID-19 in the country(ies) where you work has been effective.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
21. What are examples of ways the ILO has been effective or ineffective responding to the immediate and/or longer-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Open Answer

SURVEY FOR ILO TRIPARTITE PARTNERS

1. **Country**
 - Kazakhstan
 - Kyrgyzstan
 - Tajikistan
 - Uzbekistan
 - Turkmenistan
2. **Sex**
 - Female
 - Male
3. **Position**
 - Government official
 - Employers Organization
 - Industry Association
 - Workers' Organization
 - Other (please specify)
4. **Years collaborating with the ILO**
 - 0-1 year
 - 2-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - Over 10 years
 - Not applicable
5. **ILO technical assistance and projects over the period 2018-present have been well-aligned to my institution's priorities.**
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
6. **How would you rate the effectiveness of ILO interventions in (name of country) in the period 2018-present?**
 - Excellent
 - Very Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
 - Very poor
7. **What suggestions do you have to make ILO technical assistance and projects more relevant to the needs of your institution?**
 - Open Answer
8. **In which of the following intervention areas do you think ILO support has been the most effective from 2018 to the present? (choose up to three)**
 - Strengthening legal and policy frameworks
 - Reinforcing institutional capacity of government
 - Reinforcing institutional capacity of Workers' Organizations
 - Reinforcing institutional capacity of Employers' Organization
 - Reinforcing institutional capacity of NGOs and community-based organizations
 - Raising awareness of ILO constituents and others on decent work issues
 - Increasing the availability of data and other research on decent work issues
 - Providing services to populations affected by labour rights violations
 - Increasing access to decent jobs
 - Improving social protection
 - Improving Occupation Safety and Health
 - Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
 - Other (please specify)
 - None of the above
9. **What are some examples of successful ILO interventions in the areas listed under question 1?**
 - Open Answer
10. **In which of the following areas do you think ILO support has been the least effective from 2018 to the present? (choose one)**
 - Strengthening legal and policy frameworks
 - Reinforcing institutional capacity of government
 - Reinforcing institutional capacity of Workers' Organizations
 - Reinforcing institutional capacity of Employers' Organization
 - Reinforcing institutional capacity of NGOs and community-based organizations
 - Raising awareness of ILO constituents and others on decent work issues

- Increasing the availability of data and other research on decent work issues
 - Providing services to populations affected by labour rights violations
 - Increasing access to decent jobs
 - Improving social protection
Improving Occupation Safety and Health
 - Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic
 - Other (please specify)
 - None of the above
- 11. In which of the following ways do you think ILO has been the most successful building the capacity of its tripartite constituents? (choose up to three)**
- Increased awareness of international labour standards.
 - Increased government capacity to enforce national labour laws.
 - Improved social dialogue with other tripartite constituents.
 - Employers' Organisations better able to defend their members' interests.
 - Workers' Organisations better able to defend workers' rights.
 - Greater capacity to integrate gender and non-discrimination (the special needs of women, girls) in institutional strategies and plans.
 - Greater capacity to integrate environmental concerns in institutional strategies and plans.
 - Other (please specify)
- 12. What suggestions do you have for how to improve ILO's effectiveness building the capacity of its tripartite constituents?**
- Open Answer
- 13. Which of the following factors contributed were most significant to the success of ILO technical assistance and projects during the period 2018-present? (choose three)**
- Strong buy-in from country counterparts
 - Effective country office management.
 - Effective ILO project management
 - Effective contributions of ILO specialists
 - Intervention strategy well-designed
 - Adequate time for implementation
 - Adequate resources for implementation
 - Good use of research and other data to guide interventions
 - Effective local implementing partners
 - Effective participation from ILO tripartite constituents
 - Political stability
 - Economic stability
 - Other (please specify)
- 14. Which of the following factors were the most significant constraints affecting the success of ILO technical assistance and projects during the period 2018-present? (choose three)**
- Inadequate buy-in from national counterparts
 - Inefficient or ineffective management by ILO
 - Inefficient or ineffective management by ILO implementing partners
 - Weak capacity of tripartite constituents.
 - Inadequate access to ILO technical expertise

- Inadequate financial resources for implementation
 - Inadequate time for implementation
 - Frequent turn-over among counterpart personnel
 - Poor design of interventions
 - Frequent turn-over among ILO personnel
 - Covid-19 and/or other external political and economic crisis
 - Lack of capitalisation of good practices and lessons learned from past interventions
 - Other (please specify)
- 15. ILO coordinates its interventions effectively with its tripartite constituents.**
- Always
 - Very Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
 - Not sure
- 16. ILO coordinates its interventions effectively with other UN and/or country development partners.**
- Always
 - Very Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
 - Not sure
- 17. ILO has used its available human and financial resources efficiently to contribute to progress on its Decent Work Agenda during the period 2018-present.**
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
- 18. What suggestions do you have to increase the efficiency of the way ILO uses its human and other resources?**
- Open Answer
- 19. Results from ILO technical assistance and projects in the period 2018-present will be sustained when ILO assistance ends.**
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
- 20. What suggestions do you have for how to make the results of ILO technical assistance and projects more likely to be sustained when ILO assistance ends?**
- Open Answer
- 21. The ILO's response to COVID-19 in the country x has been effective.**
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Not sure
- 22. What are examples of ways the ILO has been effective or ineffective responding to the immediate and/or longer-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in country x?**
- Open Answer

▶ Annex C. Documents consulted

ILO REPORTS AND EVALUATIONS

- ▶ Application of International Standards 2018, CEACR Report
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- ▶ Application of International Standards 2020 CEACR Report
- ▶ Application of key labour law provisions during the COVID-19 pandemic in Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Federation
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- ▶ Good practices on the elimination of child labour in Central Asia / International Labour Office, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) - Geneva: ILO, 2014. ILO, Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2018
- ▶ ILO, Development Cooperation Dashboard data 2018-2022 <https://www.ilo.org/DevelopmentCooperationDashboard/#ahoggxj>
- ▶ ILO Economic Growth and Decent Work, Trends in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, October 2013 https://www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS_306419/lang--en/index.htm
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- ▶ Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS Phase 1– Final evaluation <http://www.ilo.org/evalinfo/product/download.do?type=document&id=15855>
- ▶ Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS Phase 2– Mid-term evaluation <http://www.ilo.org/evalinfo/product/download.do?type=document&id=23026>
- ▶ From the Crisis towards Decent and Safe Jobs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Phase II Mid term evaluation, December 2018
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- ▶ ILO Evaluation Guidelines, Terms of Reference and Other Relevant Evaluation-related documents
- ▶ ILO Evaluation Office, ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation - Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations - i-eval resources - 3rd Edition

- ▶ ILO Evaluation Office, Protocol 2: High-Level Evaluation (HLE) Protocol for DWCP Evaluation
- ▶ ILO Evaluation Office, Conducting High-level Evaluations in the ILO: A knowledge transfer note from the Evaluation Office to Evaluators (Jan 2019)
- ▶ ILO Evaluation Office, Guidance note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation
- ▶ ILO Evaluation Office, Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate

OTHER RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

- ▶ World Bank. 2021. "Tajikistan. Country Gender Assessment" World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- ▶ Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Uzbekistan (chapters on employment and social protection prepared by the ILO)

COUNTRY LEVEL DOCUMENTS

Uzbekistan

- ▶ Decent Work Country Programme for Uzbekistan 2021-2025
- ▶ Decent Work Country Programme for Uzbekistan 2014-2016
- ▶ The 2016-2020 Uzbekistan United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF): Final Evaluation Report
- ▶ United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Republic of Uzbekistan 2016–2020 — Tashkent: Baktria press, 2015
- ▶ United Nations Common Country Analysis: Uzbekistan
- ▶ 2020 third-party monitoring of child labour and forced labour during the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan
- ▶ 2019 third-party monitoring of child labour and forced labour during the cotton harvest in Uzbekistan
- ▶ [Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic situation in Uzbekistan: income, labour market and access to social protection \(2020\)](#)
- ▶ [Assessment of COVID-19 impacts on socio-economic situation in Uzbekistan \(incomes, labour market and access to social protection\):overview of crisis response and areas of improving public policies](#)
- ▶ The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed an Order "On measures to improve the social protection system of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021-2030» Moliya Press, February 17, 2021
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- ▶ ILO, An assessment of the social protection system in Uzbekistan Based on the Core Diagnostic instrument (CODI)
- ▶ [Technical Briefing Note: Key Concepts for Framing the Republic of Uzbekistan's National Strategy for Social Protection 2030](#)
- ▶ [ILO, Technical Briefing Note: National Strategy for Social Protection: Public Financial Management, Costing and Fiscal Space Analysis](#)
- ▶ [ILO, Technical Briefing Note: Stakeholder Engagement Plan \(SEP\) for Drafting the National Strategy for Social Protection \(NSSP\) in Uzbekistan](#)
- ▶ [ILO, Uzbekistan labour market trends \(from the ILO Moscow webinar series "Thinking the labour market for a jobrich economic recovery", April 2021\)](#)
- ▶ [ILO, Towards Full and Productive Employment in Uzbekistan: Achievements and Challenges \(2021\)](#)
- ▶ [ILO, Women and the World of Work in Uzbekistan. Towards Gender Equality and Decent Work for All \(2021\)](#)
- ▶ Social Protection in Uzbekistan: Policy, Legal, Public Expenditure and Institutional Review, 2016-2020
- ▶ Key tendencies in Social Protection Expenditures in Uzbekistan (2020)
- ▶ Social Protection Strategy in Uzbekistan: Costing and Fiscal Space Options
- ▶ Assessment of the Republic of Uzbekistan social security legislation for the ratification of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)
- ▶ National Social Protection Strategy of Uzbekistan
- ▶ Concept of Social Insurance Code
- ▶ Draft law (code) on social insurance of Uzbekistan
- ▶ Concept Note for the National Strategy for Social Protection of Uzbekistan
- ▶ The role of social protection and employment promotion in the eyes of young people of Uzbekistan (survey on rapid poll results), Feb 2022
- ▶ Gender Responsive Budgeting: Manual for the Government of Uzbekistan, Oct 2021
- ▶ Energy Poverty in Uzbekistan, Feb 2022

Tajikistan

- ▶ Decent Work Country Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan 2020-2024
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- ▶ 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Tajikistan
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- ▶ From the crisis towards decent and safe jobs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Phase I - Midterm Evaluation
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- ▶ ILO, State Strategy for Labour Market Development of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020, ILO Moscow employment working paper, September 2020.
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- ▶ [United Nations in Tajikistan Annual Results Report 2020](#)
- ▶ [United Nations Development Assistance Framework \(UNDAF\) 2016-2021 for Tajikistan](#)
- ▶ [Final Internal Evaluation of RBSA-Funded Project on Social Security in Tajikistan 2016-2018 May 2018](#)

Kazakhstan

- ▶ 2020 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Kazakhstan
- ▶ 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: Kazakhstan
- ▶ Partnerships for Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States Phase 1 and 2 technical briefs
- ▶ Delivering better work outcomes: a meta-analysis of 15 ILO decent work country programme reviews / prepared by John F. Martin; International Labour Office, Evaluation Office (EVAL). - Geneva: ILO, 2014
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- ▶ [Challenges and prospects of the remuneration system discussed in Kazakhstan](#)
- ▶ UN in Kazakhstan Annual Report 2020
- ▶ UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025

Kyrgyzstan

- ▶ 2020 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Kyrgyz Republic
- ▶ 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Kyrgyz Republic
- ▶ ILO, Working Children in the Kyrgyz Republic, Child Labour Survey 2014-2015
- ▶ Independent evaluation of the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme for Kyrgyzstan: 2006–2009 / prepared by Alexey Kuzmin, Erkina Ubysheva, Craig Russon; International Labour Office - Geneva: ILO, 2010
- ▶ 2020 UN Country Results Report
- ▶ Report on Kyrgyzstan's Progress on Sustainable Development Goals
- ▶ United Nations Common Country Analysis (CCA) for the Kyrgyz Republic
- ▶ Assessing the Impact of Covid-19 on Companies, JCA, November 2021
- ▶ Access of vulnerable youth to key services in the Kyrgyz Republic, October 2021
- ▶ MICS Follow-up Survey on Covid-19 impact on children and women in Kyrgyzstan
- ▶ Regional Overview: Survey on the Socioeconomic Effects of Covid-19 on Returnees and Stranded Migrants in Central Asia and the Russian Federation

Turkmenistan

- ▶ Final evaluation of UN-Turkmenistan Partnership Framework for Development 2016-2020
- ▶ Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework between the Government of Turkmenistan and United Nations 2021-2025

▶ Annex D. List of individuals interviewed

ILO PERSONNEL

Regional Office

1. Mr. Heinz Koller, Regional Director
2. Mr. Pierre de Lame, Senior Administrator and Relations Officer
3. Mr. Daniel Smith, Liaison and Programming Officer

ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

4. Ms. Olga Koulaeva, Director
5. Mr. Mikhail Pouchkin, Deputy Director
6. Mr. Gocha Aleksandria, Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities
7. Mr. Vladimir Curovic, Senior Specialist in Employers' Activities
8. Ms. Jasmina Papa, Social Protection Specialist
9. Mr. Antonio Santos, Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Specialist
10. Mr. Valentin Mocanu, Senior Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and OSH Specialist
11. Mr. Lejo Sibbel, Senior international labour standards and Labour Law Specialist
12. Ms. Karina Levina (Ms.) Junior Professional Officer in Policy and Knowledge Sharing on Employment
13. Mr. Kazutoshi Chatani, Employment Specialist

Country Office operations, programming, evaluation, communication

14. Ms. Elena Kokoeva, Senior Programme Officer
15. Ms. Irina Sinelina, Senior Programme Officer (Evaluation)
16. Ms. Irina Melekh, Former Programme Officer

National Coordinators

17. Mr. Bolotbek Orokov, National Coordinator for Kyrgyzstan
18. Mr. Talgat Umirzhanov, National Coordinator for Kazakhstan
19. Mr. Sobir Aminov, National Coordinator for Tajikistan
20. Mr. Azizkhon Khankhodjaev, National Coordinator for Uzbekistan

Programmes and Projects

Partnerships for youth employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Phase II

21. Mr. Ramiro Pizarro, Chief Technical Adviser
22. Mr. Anastasia Dubova, Project Technical Officer - Youth Employment

Enabling environment for sustainable and resilient enterprises generating employment and decent work in the COVID-19 post-crisis recovery (Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan)

23. Mr. Mirza Muleskovic, Technical Officer on Enterprise Development

Increased capacities of constituents to develop and implement an integrated policy response on employment and social protection, supported by social dialogue (Tajikistan)

24. Ms. Ganjina Zardodkhonova, National Project Coordinator

Supporting transition to formalization through integrated and innovative social protection strategies and strengthening capacity of workers' organizations to protect and represent workers in informal employment (Uzbekistan)

25. Ms. Lilia Kachkinbaeva, Technical Officer on Transition to Formality

From Protocol to Practice: A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labor (Bridge project, Uzbekistan)

26. Mr. Hamidulla Hamdamov, National Project Officer

ILO-UNICEF-UNDP Joint Programme on Accelerating Agenda 2030 in Uzbekistan through inclusive transformation of the social protection system (Uzbekistan)

27. Ms. Nilufarkhon Kamalova, National Officer in Social Protection

Third-party monitoring (TPM) on child and forced labour in Uzbekistan

28. Mr. Jonas Astrup, Chief Technical Adviser

Support for Implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) in Uzbekistan

29. Ms. Anastasia Dubova, Project Manager
30. Mr. Anton Hausen, Chief Technical Advisor of the project

TAJKISTAN

Government Partners

1. Mr. Nurullo Mahmadullozoda, Deputy Minister of Labour, Migration and Employment
2. Mr. Qurbanov Niyoz, Head of Labour Market Department of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment
3. Mr. Himatsho Muzaffarov, Head of Analytical and Forecast Division of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment
4. Ms. Firuza Habibi, Head of Social Partnership and OSH department of Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment
5. Mr. Mehrobsho Amirbekov, Deputy Director of State Agency for Labour and Employment
6. Mr. Emin Sanginzoda, Deputy Director of the Research Institute of Labour, Migration and Employment
7. Mr. Abduvali Nabizoda, Head of Department of Summary Economic Analysis and International Relations, Statistic Agency under the President of Republic of Tajikistan
8. Mr. Dustmurod Murodzoda, Head of State Service for Inspections in the Sphere of Labour and Employment

Workers' and Employers' Organisations

1. Mr. Ismoil Fayzizoda, 1-st Deputy Chairman of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Tajikistan
2. Mr. Jamshed Yunusov, Head of socio-economic department of Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Tajikistan
3. Mr. Rajab Ulmasov, Advisor to the Chairman of Healthcare Workers Trade Unions of Tajikistan
4. Mr. Ayombek Akramov, Deputy Chairman of Union of Employers of Tajikistan

Implementing Partners

1. Professor Subhon Ashurov, ASB consulting
2. Mr. Faridun Vasiev, National Consultant

Other International Development Partners

1. Ms. Sezin Sinanoglu - UN Resident Representative in Tajikistan
2. Ms. Zamira Komilova, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Tajikistan scheduled

Focus Group Discussion

Labour Inspectors	Gender
1.	Male
2.	Male
3.	Female
4.	Female
5.	Male

UZBEKISTAN

Government Partners

1. Adiba Nuruddinova, Head of Social Policy Department, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations
2. Ekaterina Gorbunova, Director of Project Implementation Unit, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations
3. Gulrukh Niyazmetova, Head of State Labour Inspectorate, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations
4. Rafael Klivleyev, Head of Social Protection Department, Ministry of Finance
5. Kamila Zokirova, Chief Specialist, Ministry of Finance
6. Gulnora Marufova, First Deputy Minister of Makhalla and Family Support
7. Zoir Yuldashev, Head of Department on Demography and Labour Market, State Statistic Committee
8. Sherzod Abraev, Deputy Head of Department on Demography and Labour Market, State Statistic Committee
9. Abdulaziz Khaydarov, Director, Pension Fund
10. Nuriddin Shadihudjaev, Deputy Director, Pension Fund
11. Alexander Semenovich Navotny, Head of Department on Regulation of Labour and Wages, Minister of Labour, Migration and Employment

Workers' and Employers' Organizations

1. Bakhtiyor Makhmadaliev, Deputy Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
2. Mahmudjon Isaev, Head of socio-economic department, Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
3. Nodira Karimova, Head of OSH department, Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
4. Hamidulla Premkulov, Head of Legal Department, Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
5. Eka Margishvili, Executive Director of the Confederation of Employers of Uzbekistan

Implementing Partners

1. Ulugbek Mamatkhanov, Director, "SHAROIT PLUS" NGO of persons with disabilities
2. Janna Fattakhova, Independent Expert Social Protection
3. Shukhrat Ganiev, Director of the Humanitarian Legal Center

UN and Other International Development Partners

1. Ms. Sherzobdek Sharipov, Programme Associate on Public Policy, UNDP
2. Ms. Tinatin Baum, Chief of Social Protection, UNICEF
3. Ms. Leyla Strotkamp, Senior International Labor Rights Professional, US Department of Labor
4. Ms. Matluba Umurzakova, UNRC office M&E officer
5. Ms. Marina Novikova World Bank Social Protection Specialist

Focus groups

Activists involved in Third Party Monitoring	Gender
1.	Male
2.	Female
3.	Female
4.	Female
5.	Male
6.	Male
7.	Male

Labour Inspectors	Gender
1.	Male
2.	Male
3.	Female
4.	Male
5.	Female

► Annex E. 2018-2022 ILO Technical Cooperation Projects in Central Asia by Country

KAZAKHSTAN

Project title	Project status	Dates	Budget 2018-2021
1. Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS II	Active	2018-23	30,900
2. Strengthened capacity of member states to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations	Active	2018-22	317,793
Total			348,693

Source: ILO's Development Cooperation Dashboard

KYRGYZSTAN

Project title	Project status	Dates	Budget 2018-2022
1. Empowering women and girls affected by migration for inclusive and peaceful community development (UN multi partner fund)	Closed	2019-21	450,000
2. Increased capacity of constituents to implement measures aimed at facilitating the transition to formalized and sustainable enterprises, promoting women entrepreneurship, green economy and social cohesion (RBSA)	Active	2020-22	200,000
3. Strengthened capacity of member states to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil reporting obligations (RBSA)	Active	2018-22	756,742
4. Strengthening capacity of workers' organizations to protect and represent workers in informal employment and promote sustainable policies inclusive of workers in diverse forms of work arrangements (RBSA)	Active	2021-23	450,000

5. From the Crisis towards Decent and Safe Jobs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Phase II* (Government of Finland)	Closed	2014-19	830,641(est.)
6. Applying the G20 Training Strategy** (Government of Russian Federation)	Closed	2017-21	1,062,000 (est.)
7. Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS II (Lukoil)	Active	2018-23	
8. Combating Child Labour and Human Trafficking in Central Asia: Commitment Becomes Action (Government of Germany)	Closed	2017-19	
Total			3,749,383

Source: ILO's Development Cooperation Dashboard *A budget of USD 1.66 million was split between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan **A budget of USD 2,1 million plus additional allocations from the project budget was split between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Data on the exact distribution of expenditures was unavailable.

TAJIKISTAN

Project title	Project status	Dates	Budget 2018-2021
1. Increased capacities of constituents to develop and implement an integrated policy response on employment and social protection, supported by social dialogue. (RBSA)	Active	2020-22	350,900
2. Technical Support on Social Security in line with international labour standards (RBSA)	Closed	2016-18	55,004
3. From the Crisis towards Decent and Safe Jobs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Phase II* (Government of Finland)	Closed	2014-19	830,641 (est.)
4. Applying the G20 Training Strategy** (Government of Russian Federation)	Closed	2017-21	1,062,000 (est.)
5. Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS II (Lukoil)		2018-23	
6. Combating Child Labour and Human Trafficking in Central Asia: Commitment Becomes Action (Government of Germany)	Closed	2017-19	
Total 2018-2022 Budget			2,298,545

Source: ILO's Development Cooperation Dashboard *A budget of USD 1.66 million was split between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan **A budget of USD 2,1 million plus additional allocations from the project budget was split between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Data on the exact distribution of expenditures was unavailable.

UZBEKISTAN

Project title	Project status	Dates	Budget 2018-2021
1. Supporting transition to formalization through integrated and innovative social protection strategies and strengthening capacity of workers' organizations to protect and represent workers in informal employment (RBSA)	Active	2021-23	550,000
2. Capacity building on human trafficking in Uzbekistan (World Bank)	Closed	2015-22	95,000
3. The Bridge Project – Uzbekistan (USDOL)	Active	2020-22	401,094
4. Accelerating agenda 2030 in Uzbekistan through inclusive transformation of the social protection system (UN trust fund)	Active	2020-22	306,094
5. Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS II (Lukoil)	Active	2018-23	285,809
6. Third party monitoring (TPM) on child and forced labour in Uzbekistan (Multi-donor trust fund)	Active	2015-18	4,744,539
7. Support the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme in Uzbekistan (USDOL)	Closed	2014-20	3,102,081
Total			9,583,524

Source: ILO's Development Cooperation Dashboard

► Annex F. Country Programme 2018-2021 Expenditures by CPO

KAZAKHSTAN

CPO	CPO Description	Expenditures 2018-2021			
		XBTC	RBSA	RBTC	Total
KAZ156	Strengthened capacity of the government to implement employment policies for inclusive growth	10,312	0	0	10,312
KAZ129	Government takes policy measures to improve workplace compliance in line with international labour standards in agreement with social partners	0	0	11,718	11,718
KAZ161	Enhanced capacities of constituents to design shock-responsive and sustainable social protection policies	0	0	9,043	9,043
KAZ801	Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organisations	0	0	64,939	64,939
KAZ802	Strengthened institutional capacity of workers' organisations	0	0	52,577	52,577
KAZ826	Strengthened capacity of member States to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations	0	313,343	26,980	340,323
Total		10,312	313,343	165,257	488,912

KYRGYZSTAN

CPO	CPO Description	Expenditures 2018-2021			
		XBTC	RBSA	RBTC	Total
KGZ101	Targeted data collection and analysis to expand the knowledge base on child labour and to document lessons learned	0	0	0	0
KGZ102	Strengthened capacity of national institutions for social dialogue to enhance workplace compliance	0	0	1,525	1,525
KGZ126	Strengthened labour market information and analysis (LMIA) system	0	0	9,400	9,400
KGZ127	Improved capacity of the government to implement policies and programmes to increase employability of women and men in the labour market	0	0	0	0
KGZ128	Effective measures implemented by constituents to improve integration of sustainable MSMEs into global value chains	438,397	114,601	562	553,560
KGZ154	National Social Protection Floor is improved through Assessment Based National Dialogue and promotion of maternity protection	0	0	37,413	37,413
KGZ801	Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organizations	0	0	42,063	42,063
KGZ802	Strengthened institutional capacity of workers' organizations	0	22,657	108,199	130,856
KGZ826	Strengthened capacity of member States to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations	0	649,943	5,226	655,169
Total		438,397	787,201	204,388	1,429,716

TAJKISTAN

CPO	CPO Description	Expenditures 2018-2021			
		XBTC	RBSA	RBTC	Total
TJK102	The capacity of the government and social partners to address the worst form of child labour is enhanced and the knowledge base on child labour becomes more solid	0	0	0	0
TJK105	Skills development strategy aligned with international HR policy instruments (18-19 biennium) Capacities of tripartite constituents to promote formalisation in selected sectors of informal economy increased (20-21 biennium)	0	0	9,778	9778
TJK107	Increased effectiveness of labour Inspection	0	0	1,549	1549
TJK128	Improved capacities of the constituents to reform skills development systems and wage policies (18-19 biennium) Increased capacities of constituents to develop and implement an integrated policy response on employment and social protection (20-21 biennium)	0	153,897	104,813	258,710
TJK151	Increased capacities of constituents in governing social security in line with international labour standards, with particular focus on C102 and R202	0	55,004	23,070	78,074
TJK801	Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organisations	0	0	20,513	20,513
TJK802	Trade Unions have strengthened their institutional capacity to be strong, independent and representative	0	0	115,397	115,397
TJK826	Strengthened capacity of member States to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations	0	0	11,065	11,065

TJK900	The capacity of the government and social partners to address the worst form of child labour is enhanced and the knowledge base on child labour becomes more solid	0	0	0	0
TJK901	Constituents develop and implement relevant and demand driven enterprise development policies including enabling environment reforms as well as direct enterprise support	0	0	0	0
Total		0	208,901	286,185	495,086

TURKMENISTAN

TKM826	Strengthened capacity of member States to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations	0	21,060	0	0
Total		0	21,060	0	0

UZBEKISTAN

CPO	CPO Description	Expenditures 2018-2021			
		XBTC	RBSA	RBTC	Total
UZB101	Employers Organizations engaged in activities to assess and advocate for a more enabling environment for sustainable enterprises	0	0	0	0
UZB102	Decent work policies integrated in the national SDGs Improved labour market indicators and labour surveys	0	0	75,307	75,307
UZB103	Strengthened capacity of labour administration systems and social partners to improve workplace compliance and ensure safe and healthy working conditions	0	0	0	0
UZB126	Increased capacity of constituents to develop a gender-responsive national employment policies and labour market services, particularly for youth	235,808	25,370	1,111	262,289

UZB127	Effective occupational safety and health management system is developed placing particular attention to OSH in agriculture and the cotton industry	0	0	0	0
UZB128	Social protection floors extended and progressively raised	373,704	0	49,999	423,703
UZB129	Tripartite constituents' capacity to develop policies addressing HIV/AIDS in the workplace is increased	0	0	0	0
UZB801	Strengthened institutional capacity of employers' organizations	0	0	10,204	10,204
UZB802	Strengthened institutional capacity of workers' organizations	0	0	72,661	72,661
UZB803	Increased capacities of employers' and workers' organizations to participate effectively in the development of social and labour policy	0	0	0	0
UZB826	Strengthened capacity of member States to ratify and apply international labour standards and to fulfil their reporting obligations	0	0	2,570	2,570
UZB901	Increased capacities of labour administration and social partners to improve workplace compliance and prevent forced labour	7,825,740	0	86,506	7,912,246
UZB902	Strengthened constituents capacity to develop and implement policies to combat forced labour and human trafficking	0	0	0	0
UZB903	Improved system for minimum wage setting in cotton picking	0	0	0	0
Total		8,435,252	25,370	298,358	8,758,980

