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## Annual Evaluation Report 2019–20

### Purpose of the document

This document provides the Governing Body with a progress report on the ILO Evaluation Office's work covering the reporting year 2019–20, as measured against the indicators and targets in its results-based Evaluation Strategy 2018–21. It also looks at the ILO's overall effectiveness, based on the most recent findings from Decent Work meta-studies, and explores an evaluative framework that is responsive to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Governing Body is invited to endorse the recommendations in this report (see the draft decision in paragraph 65).

**Relevant strategic objective:** All.

**Main relevant outcome:** Enabling outcome B: Effective and efficient governance of the Organization.

**Policy implications:** The recommendations of this report will have policy implications.

**Legal implications:** None.

**Financial implications:** Time of existing staff.

**Follow-up action required:** Approved recommendations will be inserted into the rolling action plan in the appendix to track follow-up.

**Author unit:** Evaluation Office (EVAL).

**Related documents:** GB.337/PFA/6; GB.334/PFA/6; GB.332/PFA/8; GB.331/PFA/8.

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## ▶ Introduction

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1. As is customary, this Annual Evaluation Report (AER) spans two calendar years: the last quarter of 2019 and the first three quarters of 2020. The ILO's Centenary (2019) gave considerable impetus to results-based management in the ILO, fostering progress on the more transformative elements in the the ILO Evaluation Policy (2017) and the ILO results-based Evaluation Strategy (2018–21). Subsequently, 2020 started with similar enthusiasm but was marred by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Evaluation Office (EVAL) acted to adjust and adapt methods <sup>1</sup> to continue the evaluation agenda in this new and challenging environment. Equally important was a rapid evidence review, <sup>2</sup> released in April 2020, of lessons learned from previous economic crises, to support the ongoing process of repurposing or developing new activities to address the repercussions of the pandemic. Part of the reason why crises do not always receive the attention they deserve from an evaluation perspective is that gathering data during a crisis is generally challenging, as attention is focused on the response. During the COVID-19 crisis, the situation was further aggravated by restrictions on travel and global lockdown measures. However, EVAL's proactive and adapted approach highlighted the fact that credible and independent evaluations in the midst of a crisis are possible and essential for continued accountability and real-time learning. Thus, progress on implementation of the Evaluation Strategy was only marginally affected.
2. Part I of this report details the progress made, by outcome and biennial milestone as identified in the Evaluation Strategy (2018–21). A total of 15 biennial milestones have been met ahead of time or are on track for completion by the end of the current biennium, while 4 are at risk. Overall, EVAL managed to stay on track with its evaluations during the crisis, while continuing the transformation process that it had embarked on following the 2016 independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function (2016 IEE). Work continued on harmonizing procedures and maintaining the quality and use of evaluations, while modernizing operations through updated and advanced guidance, web-enabled tools and new evaluation methods, such as clustered evaluations, as well as on better reflecting the ILO's distinct normative and tripartite mandate in evaluations. The COVID-19 crisis provided an incentive to speed up strategic clustering of evaluations and the work that EVAL had already started to increase efficiency in the evaluation process by reducing travel and relying more on national evaluation capacity. Nevertheless, experience so far suggests that network technology provides only a partial answer to the problem of distance, and that the human element in data collection techniques cannot be underestimated.
3. Part II of the report provides EVAL's annual assessment of the ILO's overall effectiveness, using its established decent work results performance assessment methodology. Over the years, this methodology has matured and its various iterations yield a robust picture of trends and systemic issues. The COVID-19 crisis requires results-proven measures to mitigate and overcome its long-term negative consequences in an efficient manner. Results from the latest decent work results assessment and lessons learned from previous crises provide useful insights that can inform the ILO's response. Part II of the

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<sup>1</sup> ILO, *Implications of COVID-19 on Evaluations in the ILO: Practical Tips on Adapting to the Situation. Operating Procedures*, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> ILO, *ILO's Response to the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Workers and Enterprises: What Evaluative Lessons can be Drawn from the ILO's Past Response to an Economic and Financial Crisis?*, 2020.

report therefore draws on this evidence to inform the current response. It also makes suggestions as to how the evaluation process can be adapted in order to share real-time lessons learned and innovative practices under the current challenging conditions. Part II concludes by outlining the broad contours of an evaluative framework that is designed to assess the ILO's performance in responding to the current crisis and to inform future decision-making and crisis responses.

## ▶ Part I. Implementation of the ILO's Evaluation Strategy

### Progress made towards achieving key milestones

- Part I is organized by strategic outcome. For each sub-outcome, the status with respect to meeting the biennial milestone (2020–21) of the relevant indicator is given: achieved; on track; at risk; or not yet started. From a total of 19 sub-outcomes, 1 milestone has already been met before the end of the biennium, 14 are on track to be met by 2021, and 4 are at risk of not being met.

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

#### Sub-outcome 1.1. Evaluation activities conducted in a timely fashion and in accordance with Evaluation Policy requirements

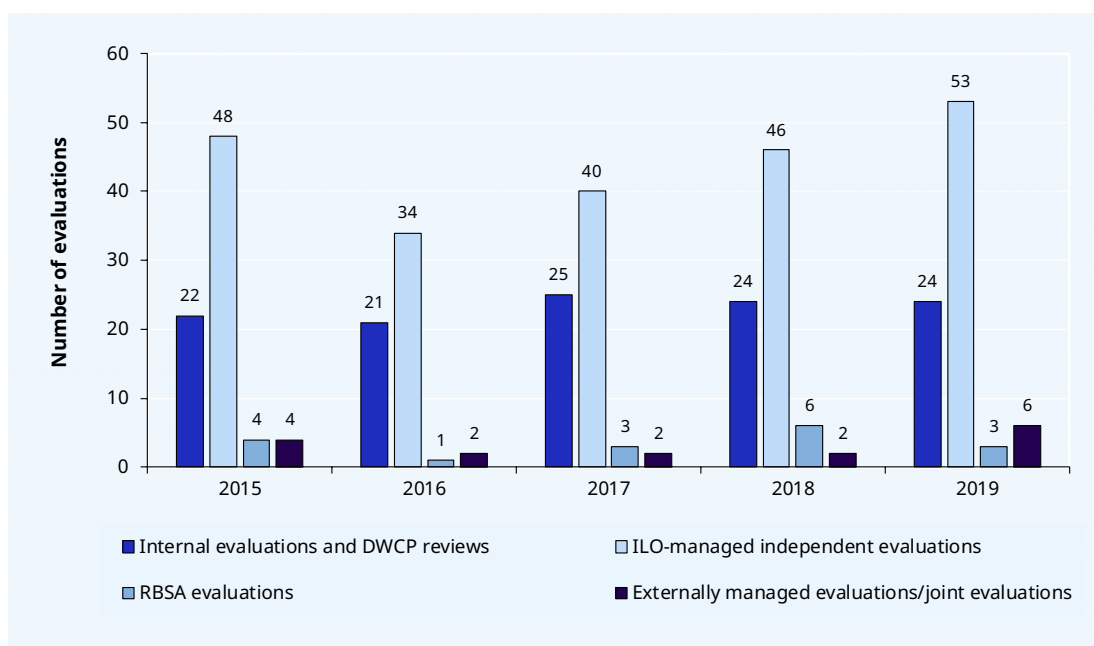
Indicator 1.1: All mandatory evaluations are completed in a timely manner for use by management, constituents and donors.	Baseline: 90% coverage for independent evaluations and 33% coverage for internal evaluations.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, 95% of independent evaluations and 75% of internal evaluations are completed in a timely manner to influence decision-making.		At risk

- Project evaluations describe the relevance and performance of ILO interventions. These evaluations inform the ILO's results-based management and organizational learning. All evaluations are publicly available via EVAL's web-based application, *i-eval Discovery* (see sub-outcome 3.1).
- A total of 58 independent project evaluations were completed.<sup>3</sup> This represents an increase of 7 per cent from the previous year (figure 1). Six independent evaluations scheduled to be completed in the reporting year were postponed. This represents a delay of 10 per cent of scheduled independent evaluations, and a drop in the percentage of planned evaluations completed on time to 90 per cent. While some types of delays are expected,<sup>4</sup> EVAL has a reliable monitoring system in place to ensure that all independent evaluations are eventually completed. The number of completed independent project evaluations attained a five-year high in 2019. This highlights the capacity challenges faced by the network, particularly in the regions, since the workload has to be managed using capacity that is already overstretched. As clustered evaluations gain momentum, the number of annual evaluations is expected to stabilize or decrease.

<sup>3</sup> This includes five external evaluations, three Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) evaluations, one joint evaluation and five clustered evaluations. Three evaluability assessments were also completed in 2019 but are not included in the overall total of independent evaluations completed that year.

<sup>4</sup> These can include uncertainties concerning project extensions and challenges in finding qualified evaluators and evaluation managers.

► **Figure 1. Number of completed evaluations by type, 2015–19**



7. As in previous years, submission rates for internal project evaluations have been below expectations, with only 24 of the scheduled 54 internal evaluations completed. This represents a 44 per cent completion rate (a decrease of 2 per cent from the previous year). Recent efforts made by EVAL, by means of the Internal Evaluation Certification Programme (IECP), to improve the capacity of ILO staff to undertake internal evaluations have not yet yielded the expected improvement in completion rates over the medium term (see indicator 1.2.1).

### Selecting high-level evaluation topics for strategic use

8. The selection of topics for high-level evaluations is determined through a consultative process that culminates in a rolling work plan. The process includes providing constituents with an opportunity to comment on the draft work plan; obtaining feedback from the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC); and reviewing ILO Governing Body documents that refer to the need for evaluation. EVAL balances the inputs with the need to ensure that topics which have not been evaluated for a lengthy period receive due attention (table 1).

► **Table 1. Rolling work plan of high-level evaluation topics, 2021–24**

Year	Institutional or outcome level	Outcome level	Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) <sup>1</sup>	Comments from constituents
2021	Action Plan for Gender Equality <sup>2</sup>	Promoting fair and effective labour migration policies <sup>3</sup>	Asia and the Pacific	Inputs received suggest a strong consensus on the topics and timing of evaluations.
2022	Independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function (external to EVAL) <sup>4</sup>	ILO response to COVID-19 <sup>5</sup>	Europe and Central Asia	Inputs received suggest a strong consensus on the topics and timing of evaluations. Some inputs included suggestion on the scope of the COVID-19 evaluation.

Year	Institutional or outcome level	Outcome level	Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) <sup>1</sup>	Comments from constituents
2023	Rural economy <sup>6</sup>	Unacceptable forms of work <sup>7</sup>	Arab States	Some inputs received suggested that deciding on topics for 2023 may be premature. Other inputs related to the scope of the two proposed evaluations or alternative topics (youth unemployment, labour inspection, skills, OSH, and the ILO's participation in UN reform).
2024	Development and use of labour statistics <sup>8</sup>	Application of international labour standards <sup>9</sup>	Africa	Some inputs received suggested that deciding on topics for 2024 may be premature.

<sup>1</sup> DWCP high-level evaluations are rotated among regions on an annual basis.

<sup>2</sup> Institutional: Due as part of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21 approved by the Governing Body (GB.332/INS/6, March 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Prior outcome: The International Labour Conference resolution concerning fair and effective labour migration governance adopted in June 2017 called for a high-level evaluation of work to promote fair recruitment. This evaluation was initially scheduled for 2019 but following consultations was postponed to 2021.

<sup>4</sup> The ILO results-based Evaluation Strategy 2018–21 calls for an independent evaluation in 2021 to assess the results and impact of the Evaluation Strategy in the context of the Evaluation Policy. EVAL proposes that this exercise – to be managed by an entity external to EVAL – is postponed to 2022, so that it can cover the full implementation period of the Evaluation Strategy. An updated evaluation strategy (2021–24) will be presented to the Governing Body in 2021 as part of the AER 2020–21 and subsequently adjusted on the basis of the independent external evaluation to be carried out in 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Institutional: It is proposed that a comprehensive evaluation of the ILO's response to COVID-19 takes place in 2022. Part II of this report provides more background.

<sup>6</sup> Prior outcome: Has not been evaluated before; selection based on inputs received from prior consultations.

<sup>7</sup> Outcome: Has not been evaluated for at least two biennia; selection based on inputs received from prior consultations.

<sup>8</sup> Institutional: Has not been evaluated before; selection based on inputs received from prior consultations.

<sup>9</sup> Outcome: Has not been evaluated before in full; selection based on inputs received from prior consultations. This evaluation was initially scheduled for 2022 but is proposed to be postponed until 2024 owing to conflicting priorities in 2022 and concerns about appropriate timing.

**Recommendation 1: Endorse the topics for high-level evaluations in 2021 and 2022 identified in the rolling work plan, including the postponement to 2022 of the five-yearly independent evaluation of the evaluation function.**

### Sub-outcome 1.2. Strengthened evaluation capacity of staff in regions and departments

Indicator 1.2.1: ILO staff evaluation capacities are upgraded.	Baseline: By end-2017, 77 staff members had been certified as evaluation managers and 2 were certified as part of the IECF.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, at least 120 ILO staff members are certified as evaluation managers or internal evaluators.		Achieved



9. EVAL’s decentralized evaluations rely on colleagues in regions and departments to play an active role in evaluation management. To ensure capacity to perform these tasks, EVAL introduced a suite of training programmes, such as the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP) and the IECF. In addition, regional offices occasionally conduct general training on monitoring and evaluation for their staff.
10. To date, 123 staff members have been certified as evaluation managers and 25 staff as internal evaluators, thus exceeding the target for end-2021. The outlook for continued growth is bleak: little or no evaluation training was conducted in the first three quarters of 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>5</sup> EVAL is addressing this challenge by working with its partner, the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO), to adapt the EMCP workshop for e-learning. In addition, the advanced-level EMCP course to enhance skills of IECF-certified colleagues will also need to be converted into an online version to meet the needs for capacity development. Although an IECF was scheduled in 2020, the pandemic resulted in it being postponed.

Indicator 1.2.2: The ILO evaluation network is functioning based on clearly established roles and job descriptions.	Baseline: Currently, evaluation network functions (departmental level and evaluation managers) are performed on a voluntary basis, resulting in limited availability of evaluation capacity.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, a fully functioning evaluation network is firmly embedded in the relevant regional and departmental functions, and appropriate resources and incentives are allocated.	At risk	

11. EVAL developed specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART) outputs with indicators and targets for evaluation-related tasks during the last biennium, which were adopted in early 2020 by the Human Resources Department as part of the ILO’s Performance Appraisal System. This contributes to formal recognition of the tasks performed by evaluation managers on a voluntary basis. EVAL also developed a draft job family and tailored job descriptions for evaluation officers, as part of its efforts to institutionalize the network, but the approval process has been slow.
12. The decentralized evaluation function continues to face challenges in matching over 50 independent evaluations per year with evaluation managers. This reflects the need for an increase in certification and measures to better incentivize this critical task. In order to improve the matching of demand for evaluation managers with supply, EVAL has created a database in its knowledge sharing platform (KSP) that contains a list of all EMCP trainees, access to the evaluation report(s) that they managed and the ex-post quality appraisals associated with them. This will facilitate the identification of evaluation managers as needed. In summary, while progress has been made towards the end-2021 target, additional efforts are required to realize a fully functioning and credible decentralized evaluation network with appropriate incentives.

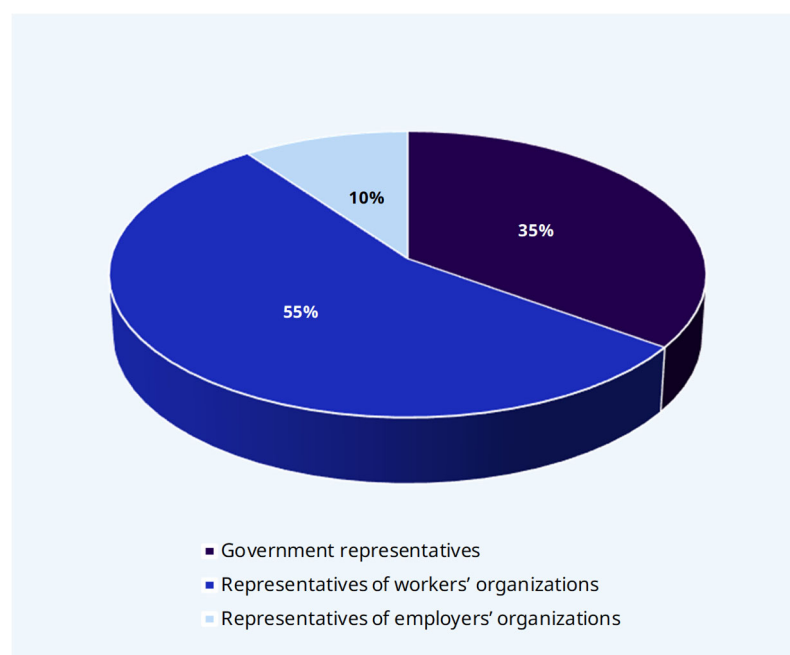
<sup>5</sup> A total of 58 staff members (55 from Asia and the Pacific and 3 from Europe) were trained in general monitoring and evaluation principles to enhance evaluation culture during the last quarter of 2019.

### Sub-outcome 1.3. Constituents engaged in monitoring and evaluation of Decent Work Country Programmes and development cooperation activities in an SDG-responsive manner

Indicator 1.3: Relevant monitoring and evaluation training is mainstreamed into training and capacity-building programmes for constituents in order to enhance their participation in evaluations.	Baseline: During 2010–17, 1,052 constituents were trained, 124 of them in 2016.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, at least 150 constituents (in equal proportions from the three groups) given tailored evaluation training as part of larger EVAL and ILO-wide training programmes.		On track

- 13. During the 2018–19 biennium, EVAL developed a training programme for ILO constituents to evaluate the Decent Work Agenda in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To date, a total of 134 representatives of governments and employers’ and workers’ organizations have been given tailored evaluation training. In addition, 27 constituents from Europe participated in EVAL capacity-building activities on results-based management, monitoring and evaluation at the end of 2019.
- 14. To facilitate access to training materials during the COVID-19 pandemic, an online version of the training programme for constituents was made available. Coordination with technical departments, regions and the ITC–ILO will be intensified throughout 2020, to embed evaluation training modules in other capacity-building programmes and regional workshops. Additional efforts will be required to increase the participation of representatives of employers’ organizations, in order to ensure equal coverage and reach the overall target of 150 constituents by the end of 2021 (figure 2).

► **Figure 2. ILO constituents trained in evaluating the Decent Work Agenda in the era of the SDGs**



### Sub-outcome 1.4. Evaluation integrated in DWCPs and development cooperation activities, including a focus on SDGs

Indicator 1.4: Number of DWCPs and development cooperation projects that have well-established evaluation processes and mechanisms in place and that regularly engage with constituents in meeting monitoring and evaluation requirements.	Baseline: No baseline yet established.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, 75% of DWCPs and development cooperation projects have mechanisms in place to assess their evaluability and responsiveness to SDGs and the level of participation of constituents in monitoring and evaluation.		On track

- 15. An SDG DWCP evaluability diagnostic instrument (EDI) was administered between 2018 and 2020 in four DWCPs. <sup>6</sup> The instrument contributed to reinforcing the design and implementation of DWCPs in terms of evaluation and monitoring and reporting (M&R) plans for country-level and SDG targets.
- 16. During the current reporting period, and in light of UN reform and the revised United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), EVAL revisited the EDI to reflect the responsiveness of DWCPs with regard to their alignment with and support to the UNSDCF, evaluation, and M&R. EVAL’s joint leadership role, through the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), in the development of the UNSDCF’s EDI informed this process. The EDI and other evaluability tools <sup>7</sup> have been incorporated into institutional guidance. Increased coordination with the regions will improve the implementation of the tool in upcoming DWCPs.

### Sub-outcome 1.5. Established capacity of regions and departments to mainstream and use evaluation

Indicator 1.5: Evaluation-related initiatives taken by regions and departments other than mandatory requirements systematized.	Baseline: Examples of such initiatives and their use have not been systematically documented since the AER 2015.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, a systematic process for quantitative and qualitative documentation of initiatives by departments and regions will be in place to show progressive increase and added value.		On track

- 17. There continues to be strong potential in the regions and departments <sup>8</sup> to integrate initiatives other than mandatory evaluations into their work for knowledge-building purposes. EVAL developed a systematic documentation process to capture them as part of its KSP (*i-eval* cloud), where staff can seek guidance, access documentation and provide inputs on related initiatives. These evaluative initiatives range from developing

<sup>6</sup> Burundi, Iraq, Sri Lanka and Suriname. The EDI was applied to the ILO’s country results framework in Argentina.

<sup>7</sup> EVAL’s Country Programme Outcome Evaluability toolkit and checklist for an evaluable DWCP results framework.

<sup>8</sup> There has been more investment over time in project-based monitoring and evaluation officers in the regions and departments. To date, there are close to 40 monitoring and evaluation officers, which is an increase over the figure cited in last year’s report.

a theory of change, integrating M&R, conducting synthesis reviews and identifying various lessons learned and good practices (see table 2).

► **Table 2. Selected overview of non-mandatory evaluation initiatives**

Type of evaluation initiative	Number of evaluation initiatives in departments and regions
Meta-studies/synthesis reviews	1 global; 1 Africa; 2 Asia; 1 Latin America
Self-evaluations	1 global
Impact-related assessments	1 global; 1 Arab States; 1 Asia
Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation approaches	2 global; 1 Arab States; 1 Latin America
Knowledge management and communication	2 global; 1 Africa; 1 Latin America
Capacity-building	1 global; 1 Africa; 1 Asia; 1 Latin America
Evaluation of national policies and plans	1 Asia

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

### Sub-outcome 2.1. Use of strategic cluster evaluations to gather evaluative information more effectively

Indicator 2.1: Strategic clustered evaluations established as a modality in a substantial proportion of programmes and projects.	Baseline: Currently, no documented processes or procedures are in place to conduct strategic clustered evaluations for development cooperation projects.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, a procedure for strategic clustered evaluations approved by a critical number of donors (25%) will be in place.		On track

18. Clustered evaluations integrate an envelope of project evaluations into a single evaluation within a common strategic, thematic or geographical programme framework. They are part of EVAL’s efforts to improve efficiency while enhancing strategic learning. From 2018, 6 per cent of all evaluations have been clustered across all regions, covering projects funded by a critical number of 10 donors from the ILO’s list of its 20 largest contributors to development cooperation. These clustered evaluations have produced on average more lessons learned than traditional evaluations, thus showing a higher learning potential.
19. Guidance on how to conduct *strategic clustered evaluations* for projects was produced as part of the updated 2020 *ILO policy guidelines for evaluation* (4th edition). While discussions with donors increasingly include the option of clustering, as recommended in the AER 2018–19, these need to become more systematic to illustrate the advantages for clustered evaluations, leading to a procedure used by a critical number of donors.

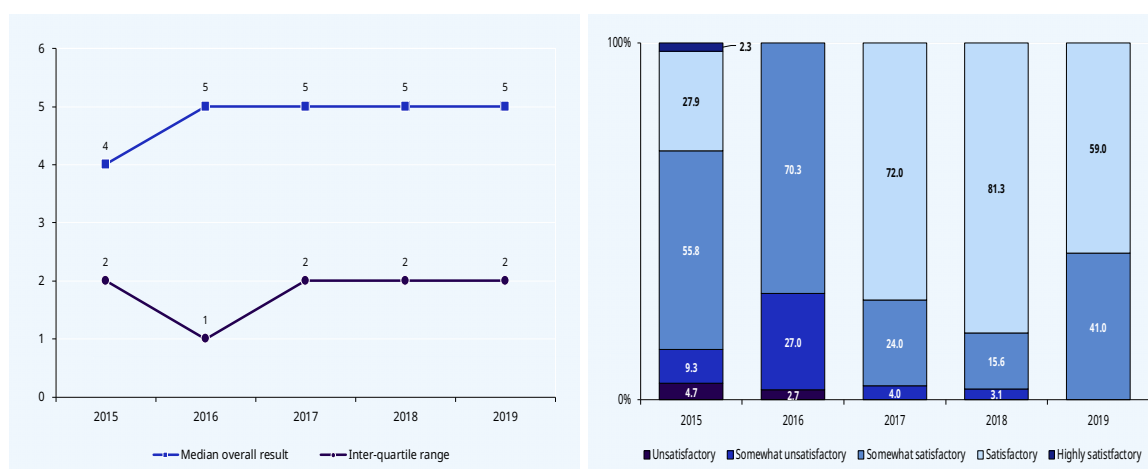
- 20. An ongoing review of clustered evaluations will document the experience and strategic value of this type of evaluation. Early indications suggest that clustered evaluations contribute to a more strategic and comprehensive validation of the ILO's performance, by better capturing the ILO's specific normative and tripartite mandate, its contribution to the SDGs and its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 21. Six per cent of planned mandatory evaluations are currently identified as clustered. Some departments and regions are planning or have agreed with EVAL to use the approach in a number of global/multi-country projects as part of a strategic approach to evaluations.

### Sub-outcome 2.2. Improved quality of internal, decentralized and centralized evaluations

Indicator 2.2.1: All evaluations of development cooperation projects comply with OECD and UNEG norms and standards and are tailored to the ILO's specific mandate and learning needs.	Baseline: Ex-post quality assessment for 2015–17 shows that about 90% of development cooperation project evaluations meet the required quality standards.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, quality assessment confirms that 95% of development cooperation project evaluations meet OECD and UNEG standards.		On track

22. EVAL involves evaluation managers, departmental evaluation focal points, regional evaluation officers and senior evaluation officers in providing real-time quality assurance for project evaluations. Ex-post quality appraisals (QAs) undertaken by an external firm complement this process. EVAL continues to build momentum on the quality of evaluation reports. Figure 3 shows that the proportion of reports with a rating equal to or above “Somewhat satisfactory” has continued to increase steadily since 2015. While 96 per cent and 97 per cent of reports belonged to those categories in 2017 and 2018, respectively, all reports completed in 2019 (assessed in 2020) received a rating equal to or above “Somewhat satisfactory”.

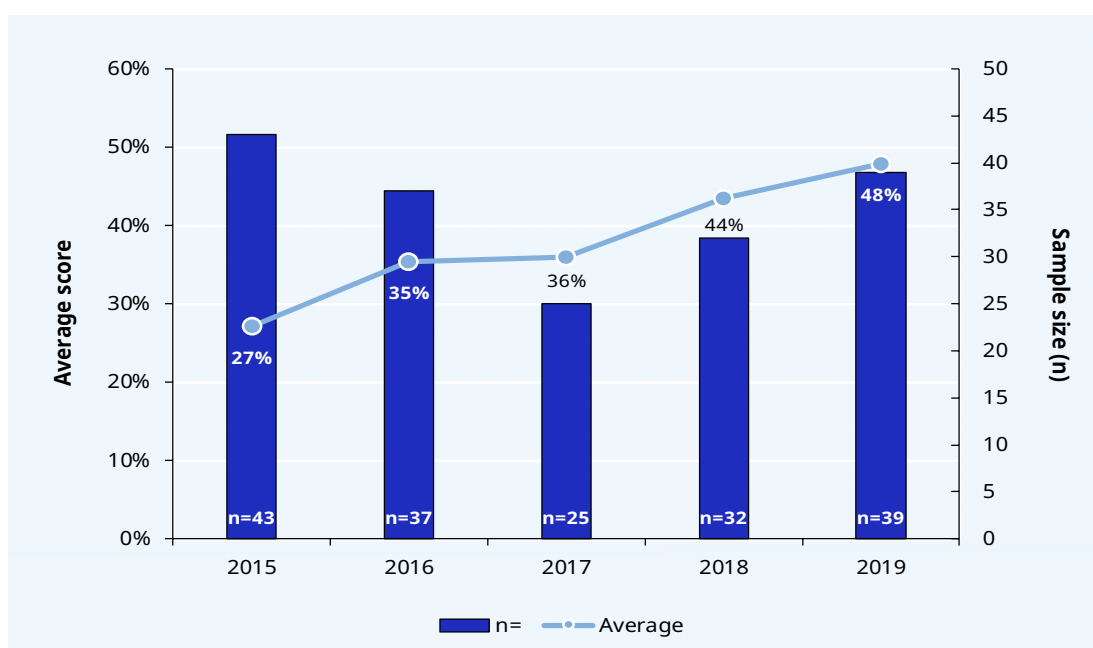
► **Figure 3. Project evaluation reports, overall ratings and annual trend** <sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Results for 2015 and 2016 are taken from the independent quality assessment (IQA) conducted in 2017. Results for 2017 and 2018 are taken from the IQA conducted in 2019. Results for 2019 includes all the evaluation reports that were reviewed during the previous and the current IQAs.

- 23. Ex-post QAs also seek to determine the comprehensiveness of evaluation reports in including all mandatory components. There has been a significant improvement in the average result for this parameter, from 87 per cent in 2015 to 92 per cent in 2019.
- 24. In 2020, a sample of five internal evaluations completed in 2019 were assessed to compare their results against independent evaluations: three were considered to be “Satisfactory”. In view of the small sample of internal evaluation reports reviewed, however, no conclusions were drawn about the significance of the differences in quality between independent and internal evaluations.
- 25. Gender issues continue to be better covered in evaluations. The 39 independent evaluations assessed in 2019<sup>10</sup> scored an average rating of 4.31 points. According to the criteria established in the Evaluation Performance Indicator for the 2018 UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality and the empowerment of women, the ILO approached the UN-SWAP requirements, with a positive trend in the extent to which ILO evaluations mainstream gender issues in their reports. Figure 4 shows the adjusted scores since 2015, presented as percentages of the maximum number of points that could be obtained.<sup>11</sup>

► **Figure 4. Adjusted meta-scores for gender issues mainstreamed in reports, 2015–19**



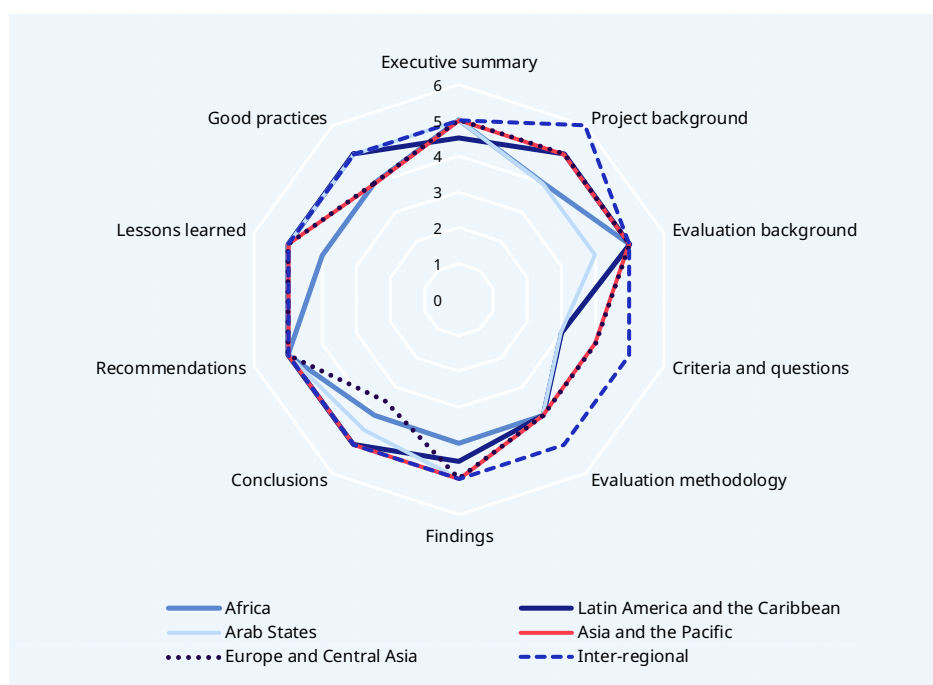
<sup>10</sup> All 58 2019 evaluation reports were appraised for quality. The analysis presented here, based on a sample of 39 reports, represents almost 70 per cent of analysed reports.

<sup>11</sup> The meta-scores obtained between 2015 and 2018 were divided by 12 (the maximum possible meta-score based on the 2014 version of the scorecard), while the meta-score obtained in 2019 was divided by 9 (the maximum possible meta-score based on the 2018 version of the scorecard).

Indicator 2.2.2: Additional capacity released in EVAL at headquarters to focus on new evaluation models by reducing oversight of regional evaluations of development cooperation projects.	Baseline: The 2016 IEE identified the issue of independence at the regional level as a priority and recommended the integration of regional evaluation officers as full staff members of EVAL.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, all evaluations in the regions are conducted to the highest standard of independence, requiring minimal oversight by EVAL at headquarters.		At risk

26. The ex-post QAs conducted a comparative analysis of evaluation reports across regions (see indicator 2.2.1), which showed a relatively high level of quality and consistency of independent evaluation reports (figure 5). This was achieved without any changes in EVAL’s oversight role. The expectation that a direct reporting line for regional evaluation officers (REOs) to EVAL headquarters – as recommended by the 2016 IEE – would reduce the oversight required and allow for more strategic tasks has not yet been met. During the last biennium, EVAL prepared an internal review that analysed reporting lines for REOs and included a presentation of possible scenarios. This review was discussed with senior management, including regional directors, towards the end of 2019 but, owing to different perspectives on structural versus behavioural independence, a consensus has not yet been reached. In summary, despite the lack of reduction in terms of workload required to oversee decentralized regional evaluations, EVAL has been able to focus extra efforts on new evaluation models (see indicators 2.2.3 and 2.2.4).

► **Figure 5. Median scores of quality appraisals by component and region, 2019**



Indicator 2.2.3: Corporate governance-level evaluations incorporate UNEG norms and standards and are tailored to the ILO’s specific mandate and learning needs.	Baseline: Independent review in 2013 confirmed quality met required standards, as reconfirmed by the 2016 IEE.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): The 2021 independent evaluation of the ILO’s evaluation function confirms that corporate governance-level evaluations are tailored to the ILO’s specific mandate and continue to be of good quality as benchmarked against similar evaluations in comparable UN agencies.		On track

27. Protocols for corporate governance-level evaluations, referred to as high-level evaluations, were updated in 2019 to reflect the revised UNEG norms and standards. The protocols include a requirement to better reflect the normative dimension of the ILO’s work, social dialogue, gender, disability and other non-discrimination issues. An independent review in 2013, validated by the 2016 IEE, confirmed the high quality of such dimensions in evaluation reports. In anticipation of the upcoming independent evaluation of the evaluation function (proposed to be rescheduled to 2022 – see table 1, footnote 4), EVAL is preparing for an interim, ex-post QA of the quality of selected high-level evaluations in 2021, which will generate additional evidence.

### Sub-outcome 2.3. Credible impact evaluations conducted to build knowledge for effective policy interventions

Indicator 2.3: Impact evaluations are considered credible and used for documenting effective policy interventions.	Baseline: Quality of impact evaluations not optimal or uniform, as indicated in EVAL stocktaking report of 2014. A new ex-post quality analysis of a sample of impact evaluations, to be carried out in 2018, will establish a new baseline.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, 85% of impact evaluations at the ILO will be considered credible and will meet required quality and relevance standards.		At risk

28. In support of credible and quality impact evaluation and impact studies by departments and regions, EVAL updated the [guidance on impact evaluation](#), including an online list of resource documents (manual, guidelines, database and portals, etc.). This will complement the existing Impact Evaluation Review Facility (IERF), which was created to provide the required institutional review to ensure the quality and credibility of impact evaluations. However, the IERF is not fully used by units to ensure that their impact evaluations are based on sound design, thus potentially putting their credibility at risk. An inventory of impact evaluations has been made available on EVAL’s KSP as a resource for sharing examples and experience. The quality and credibility of impact evaluations will be analysed by an ex-post QA, which will apply the updated guidance note as a baseline. Results from the QA will inform any required updates, to strengthen the use and credibility of impact evaluations.



### Sub-outcome 2.4. Evaluation framework further aligned with ILO mandate and context, including SDGs

Indicator 2.4: ILO-specific evaluation approaches, models and methods used for evaluations at various levels.	Baseline: Currently, minimal ILO-specific approaches and models are used in ILO evaluations.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): Updated evaluation framework applied in 50% or more of evaluations, and 20% of evaluations have SDG-specific indicators.		On track

29. EVAL developed [methodological guidelines](#) in 2019/2020 to ensure that evaluations are more responsive to the ILO’s normative and tripartite mandate and to promote more strategic clustered evaluations. Existing guidelines and toolkits were also revisited to better integrate gender equality and non-discrimination issues (including disability), the SDGs and environmental concerns. The revised evaluation approaches and methods were applied in 2019–20 for most decentralized evaluations, particularly the pilot clustered evaluations (see sub-outcome 2.1). The latter will be analysed in 2021, to inform an updated evaluation methodological framework for applicability on a larger scale. Preliminary findings based on EVAL’s latest ex-post QA of evaluations (see indicator 2.2.1) suggest a somewhat satisfactory integration of tripartism, social dialogue, international labour standards and gender considerations into evaluations. Inclusion of environmental and disability concerns and the SDGs needs to be further strengthened. Evaluation methods and questions to assess the ILO’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic will also be added to the framework.

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

### Sub-outcome 3.1. Strengthened accessibility and visibility of evaluation information through *i-eval* Discovery

Indicator 3.1: <i>i-eval</i> Discovery contains all planned and completed evaluations, including recommendations, lessons learned and good practices; is consistently accessed by internal and external users; and is considered the gateway to ILO evaluation information.	Baseline: Based on data provided by INFOTEC, the average use was in the range of 2,000 during 2018–19.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, <i>i-eval</i> Discovery will be broadly used internally and externally as the gateway to reliable ILO evaluation information. Target: 50% increase over baseline level.		On track

30. Launched in 2016, [i-eval Discovery](#) makes available a full suite of evaluation information to constituents, staff and donors for transparency, accountability and accessibility purposes. It is an interactive, web-based application that displays all planned and completed evaluations, recommendations, lessons learned, good practices, evaluation summaries and management responses to evaluation recommendations (made

available during the first quarter of 2020).<sup>12</sup> The application received widespread acknowledgement for its innovation and support to organizational learning and project design, implementation and reporting. A total of 1,471 users accessed *i-eval* Discovery during the reporting year, 73 per cent of whom were new users.<sup>13</sup> Given these figures and *i-eval* Discovery’s links to other ILO applications,<sup>14</sup> EVAL is confident that the end target for 2021 will be met.

### Sub-outcome 3.2. More targeted communication of evaluation findings

Indicator 3.2: Revised communications strategy leads to better targeting of evaluation findings to management, constituents and other users.	Baseline: The 2016 IEE recognized progress made (newsletters, think pieces, <i>i-eval</i> Discovery) but called for better presentation of evaluation findings to improve use.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): The 2021 independent evaluation of the ILO’s evaluation function acknowledges progress made in the communication strategy.		On track

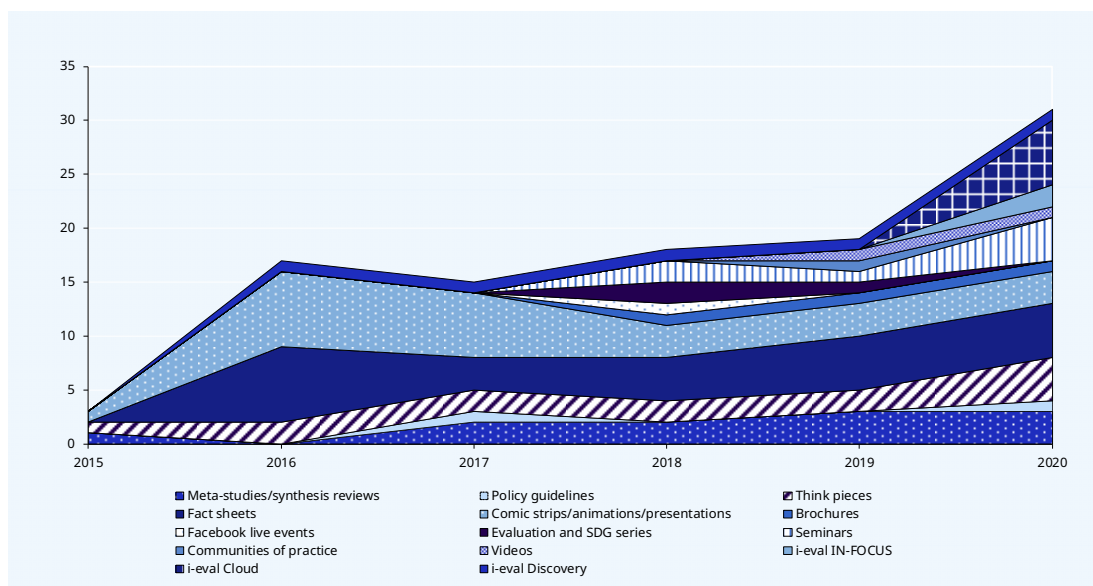
31. EVAL’s communication plan for 2018–21 is designed to better serve the needs of stakeholders and to convey evaluation findings to management, constituents and other users. Good progress was made on the plan’s 17 targets in 2019: 10 targets were achieved or exceeded expectations, 2 were partially achieved, 3 were not achieved and 2 are pending more information.
32. EVAL also created new communication products in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include a guidance document on the [implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO](#), a report on the evaluative lessons that can be drawn from the [ILO’s past response to an economic and financial crisis](#), and a note on sharing experience of implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO (available internally on EVAL’s knowledge sharing platform), to help staff plan and implement evaluations under challenging conditions. An event was also held about communicating evaluation results to ILO staff and the public. Over the past five years, EVAL has expanded the number and scope of communication products and tools to better communicate evaluation-related information (figure 6).

<sup>12</sup> This includes over 1,200 completed evaluations, almost 1,900 lessons learned, over 800 good practices and over 6,000 recommendations (as of 2 July 2020).

<sup>13</sup> These figures are based on INFOTEC data up to 31 May 2020.

<sup>14</sup> This includes the [Development Cooperation Dashboard](#) and the [Decent Work Results Dashboard](#).

► **Figure 6. EVAL products and tools, 2015–20** <sup>15</sup>



### Sub-outcome 3.3. Improved use of evaluation findings and recommendations by constituents and management for governance and decision-making

<p>Indicator 3.3.1: EAC advice on timing and use of evaluation prompts more robust uptake of evaluation findings for policy and strategic decisions at the global and regional levels.</p>	<p>Baseline: The EAC met on average four times per year and qualitative analysis showed that it held strategic debates on about 40% of the corporate governance-level evaluations. Although the regions participate in the EAC, there are no regional evaluation advisory committees.</p>	<p>Status</p>
<p>Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, the EAC continues to meet on a consistent basis (four times annually), holds strategic discussions on 75% of corporate governance-level evaluations and maintains a renewed focus on coalescing support to address systemic issues identified in evaluations. Target on expanding practice of regional evaluation advisory committees to be set subject to outcome of pilot.</p>		<p>On track</p>

**33.** The EAC is on track to achieve the goal of holding four meetings in 2020. The Committee is engaged in strategic discussions on two thirds of high-level evaluations (table 3). It is likely that the EAC will achieve the end-2021 target.

**34.** The EAC is making progress in renewing its focus on coalescing support to address systemic issues identified in evaluations. The Committee received a thematic report on the ILO’s efficiency in using evaluation results. It has also received guidelines for conducting evaluations during the COVID-19 pandemic and the report on the evaluative lessons to be drawn from the ILO’s past response to an economic and financial crisis.

<sup>15</sup> Constant number of communication products produced each year: one Annual Evaluation Report, three high-level evaluations and three newsletters. The number of social media platforms have remained constant since 2016, in addition to the number of modules in *i-eval* Connect (EVAL’s knowledge sharing platform).

35. The element of the indicator that calls for expansion of the practice to regional evaluation advisory committees (REACs) has not yet been achieved. In late 2018, EVAL informed the EAC that the new strategy required the formation of REACs. In 2019, the regions of the Americas and the Arab States expressed interest in principle in pilot-testing REACs. EVAL prepared terms of reference for their piloting but implementation has been delayed.

► **Table 3. Discussion of high-level evaluations by the EAC**

High-level evaluation	Status of work plan	Review of discussions that took place in the EAC, including comments on the work plan and progress
Youth Employment (2018)	Completed. <sup>1</sup>	In February 2019, the work plan was approved and a progress report requested. The verbal progress report was approved in September 2019 with the condition that additional information on recommendations Nos 1 and 5 would be provided to EVAL, which was submitted in February 2020.
Arab States (2018)	Completed. <sup>1</sup>	In February 2019, the work plan was approved, and a progress report requested. The verbal progress report was approved in September 2019, with a request to send information to EVAL on recommendations Nos 1, 4 and 7 (subsequently received).
Capacity development (2018)	Work plan approved. <sup>2</sup> Implementation in progress.	In February 2019, the work plan was approved with minor revisions and a progress report was requested. After some delays, the EAC was presented with a progress report in February 2020, which included the preparation of terms of reference for an internal steering committee to coordinate the implementation of institutional strategy on capacity development. The EAC requested a second progress report in six months.
Informal economy (2019)	Work plan approved. <sup>2</sup> Implementation in progress.	In February 2020, the EAC approved the follow-up work plan and confirmed that a verbal progress report on its implementation would be due in six months.
Southern African Development Community (2019)	Approval of work plan deferred.	In February 2020, the EAC expressed satisfaction with all of the proposed actions, except for recommendation No. 3. It requested the Africa Regional Office to provide more details in a subsequent meeting.
Public-private partnerships (2019)	Work plan approved. <sup>2</sup> Implementation in progress.	In February 2020, the EAC approved the follow-up work plan. The Chairperson expects the EAC to receive a progress report next year.
Other strategic discussions of systemic issues	Efficiency of the ILO based on evaluation results.	EAC meeting in February 2020.
	Evaluation and COVID-19 response.	EAC meeting in June 2020.

High-level evaluation	Status of work plan	Review of discussions that took place in the EAC, including comments on the work plan and progress
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IN-FOCUS paper on evaluation lessons learned from the 2007–08 economic crisis in context of COVID-19.

EAC meeting in June 2020.

EVAL collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee and its Network on Development Evaluation and UNEG on COVID-19.

EAC meeting in June 2020.

<sup>1</sup> “Completed” indicates that the verbal and written final progress reports submitted by the responsible department have been accepted by the EAC and no additional reporting is required.

<sup>2</sup> “Approved” reflects the approval of the work plan only.

Indicator 3.3.2: Enhanced follow-up to evaluation recommendations through systematic monitoring.	Baseline: Follow-up to management response stood at 83% in 2016 (partially addressed and completed).	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, the automated application for management to follow up on evaluation recommendations will lead to both higher quality of evaluations and higher quality of management responses to evaluation recommendations (target 90%).		On track

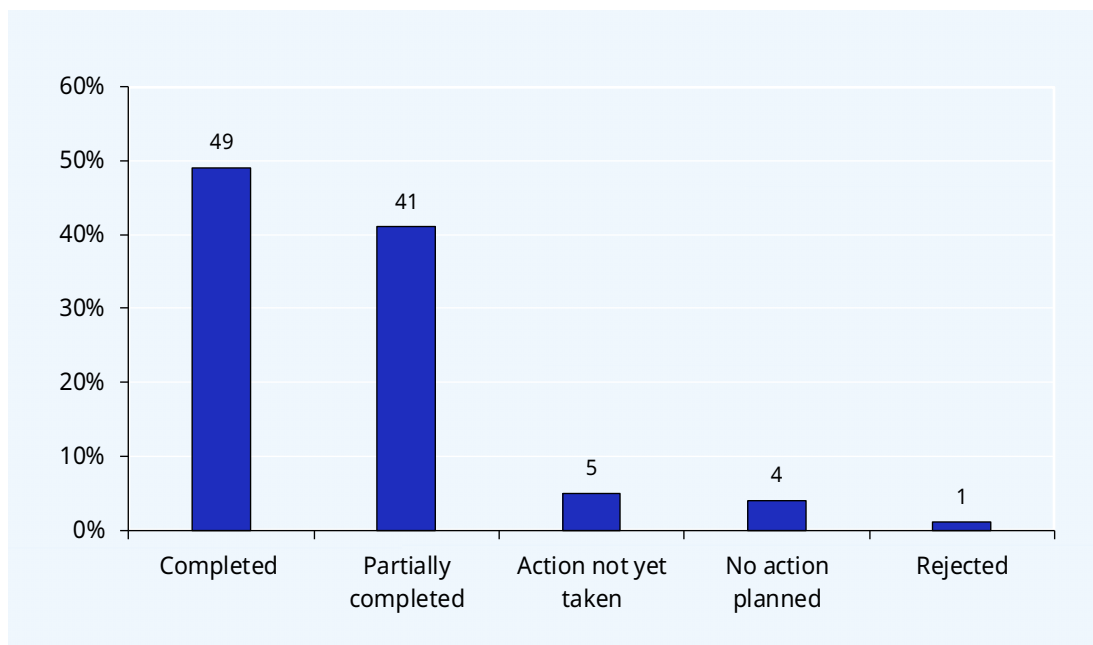
- 36.** Line managers are accountable for providing a management response to recommendations from independent evaluations. They must indicate whether a recommendation is: completed; partially completed; if no action is planned; <sup>16</sup> if action has not yet been taken; <sup>17</sup> if it is rejected; or if it is not applicable.
- 37.** For the period under review, all of the required 52 management responses were received from independent evaluations, representing management responses for 502 recommendations. Ninety per cent of recommendations were completed or partially completed (figure 7 and table 4), an increase of 16 per cent from the previous year. The quality of management responses is high, considering the good level of completion rates and the very low proportion of recommendations that were rejected or for which no action is planned. The target is therefore on track to be met.

<sup>16</sup> “No action planned” refers to when the recommendation has been accepted but action to address the recommendation is not planned.

<sup>17</sup> “Action not yet taken” refers to when the recommendation has been accepted but action to address the recommendation has not yet been implemented.

38. Similar to the last reporting period, the majority of recommendations do not involve high resource implications, thus indicating that cost is not an obstacle to action being taken (figure 8). Moreover, 93 per cent of recommendations were considered to be of medium or high priority, and 43 per cent of recommendations required a short time frame to implement.

► **Figure 7. Management responses to evaluation recommendations, 2019**



► **Table 4. Management responses to evaluation recommendations, by administrative region or office/unit, 2019**

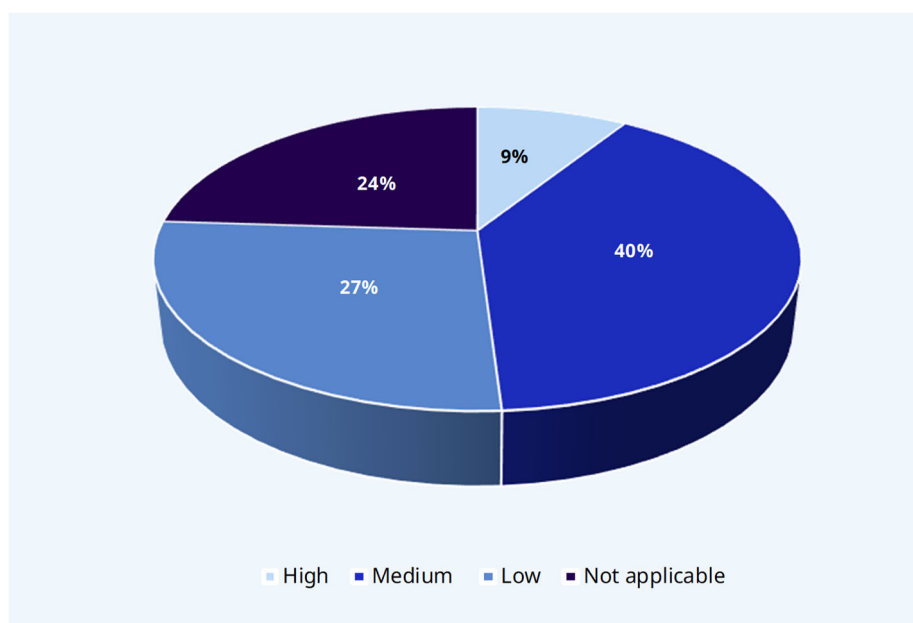
Administrative region or office/unit	Evaluation reports requiring management response (52)	Completed	Partially completed	No action planned	Action not yet taken	Rejected	Not applicable
	<b>No. of recommendations</b>						
Africa	131	73	46	7	4	1	0
Arab States	37	14	19	0	4	0	0
Asia	144	49	78	4	10	3	0
Europe	100	59	37	1	3	0	0
Latin America and the Caribbean	36	19	10	4	3	0	0
<b>Subtotal for regions</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
ENTERPRISES	3	2	0	0	1	0	0
MIGRANT	6	3	3	0	0	0	0
SKILLS	24	13	10	1	0	0	0
SOCPRO <sup>1</sup>	11	11	0	0	0	0	0
YEP <sup>2</sup>	10	3	2	1	2	2	0

Administrative region or office/unit	Evaluation reports requiring management response (52)	Completed	Partially completed	No action planned	Action not yet taken	Rejected	Not applicable
	No. of recommendations						
<b>Subtotal for offices/units</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percentage</b>		<b>49%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total of completed and partially completed management responses</b>			<b>90%</b>				

<sup>1</sup> Social Protection Department.

<sup>2</sup> Youth Employment Programme.

► **Figure 8. Percentage of recommendations by resource implications, 2019**



Indicator 3.3.3: Enhanced use of evaluations in strategic guidance, reviews and reporting for strategic plans, programme and budget records and other high-level plans and strategies.	Baseline: The AER documents the use of recommendations and lessons learned from evaluations (40–50% for the period 2010–15, based on stocktaking exercise).	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, 80% of evaluation recommendations and findings are fully or partially reflected in relevant strategic guidance and reporting (for example, implementation reports, 2020–21 Programme and Budget reports and other strategic and programmatic documents).	On track	

39. Evaluation findings and recommendations are increasingly being used to inform strategic guidance and reporting (table 5). In particular, 83 per cent of high-level evaluations (five out of six) conducted in 2018–19 were reflected in the ILO’s programme implementation reports (2018–19). In addition, there was substantial reference to evaluation in the ILO Programme and Budget 2020–21 and its preparations. EVAL expects all high-level evaluations from 2020 to be used in a similar manner and that the end-2021 target will be met.

► **Table 5. Examples of evaluation use, 2017–20**

Examples of evaluations that have been used	Specific reference of use	Observations
Independent high-level evaluation: Skills (2016)	Programme and Budget for 2020–21	Develop an ILO strategy on skills development and lifelong learning to promote implementation of the Centenary Declaration.
Independent project evaluation: Labour standards in global supply chains – Garment sector, Asia (2019)	Programme implementation report (PIR) 2018–19	Illustration of how a development cooperation programme has led to significant progress in application of international labour standards.
Independent high-level evaluation: Informal economy (2019)	PIR 2018–19	Provision of information about gaps in budget, pledged and actual, for policy outcome 6 on transitions towards the formal economy.  Instrumental in drawing lessons that could be used for future programming of work in this thematic area.
AER 2018–19 (2019)	PIR 2018–19, multiple references	Decent work performance and challenges as measured in the ILO effectiveness section of report.  Progress in implementation of Evaluation Strategy.
Independent high-level evaluation: Public–private partnerships (PPPs) (2019)	PIR 2018–19, multiple references	Lessons learned about PPPs as source of decent work knowledge.  Lessons learned about PPPs as flexible sources of non-financial resources for the promotion of decent work.
Independent high-level evaluation: Southern African Development Community (2019)	PIR 2018–19, multiple references	Lessons learned about the importance of explaining tripartism and engaging other actors for policy coherence towards decent work.  Lessons learned about the importance of national funding strategies for resource mobilization.
Independent high-level evaluation: Response to the Syrian refugee crisis (2018)	PIR 2018–19	Lessons learned about the relevance of M&R for results-based management (RBM).



Examples of evaluations that have been used	Specific reference of use	Observations
Independent high-level evaluation: Field operations and structure (2018)	PIR 2018–19	Lessons learned about relevance of M&R for RBM.
Independent high-level evaluation: Social protection floors (2017)	Report for the International Labour Conference recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) 2021	Necessary for governance work and guiding the work that the Office is undertaking.
	Strategy for flagship programme on social protection floors 2021–25	Serves as input to drafting of the new strategy.
	Development of technical delivery facility to provide support to constituents	Served as input in developing innovative services for constituents.
	PIR 2018–19	Lessons learned about the relevance of global advocacy work to maximize impact of advocacy with limited resources.
Synthesis review of social protection (2020)	Report for the International Labour Conference recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) 2021	EVAL’s draft synthesis review served as an input into the recurrent report of the Office; final version of the synthesis report published to feed in to the Conference discussion as part of the governance process.
Decent work results meta-analysis (2018)	Programme and Budget 2020–21	Improvement of the strategic risk register for 2020–21 and improving RBM tools.
Synthesis review of global supply chains (2019)	337th Session of the Governing Body	<p>Informed the Governing Body’s discussion of the mid-term report on implementation of the ILO programme of action on decent work in global supply chains.</p> <p>The Governing Body requested the Office to continue to take into account the findings of the independent synthesis review and to continue to implement the programme of action work plan before a final report is submitted to the Governing Body in October 2022.</p>

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### Sub-outcome 3.4. Evaluations used to meet strategic knowledge requirements through further analysis of findings and results of evaluations

Indicator 3.4.1: Evaluation findings analysed, synthesized and documented in knowledge products in support of planning and knowledge-building.	Baseline: In the previous strategy period, 22 think pieces, meta-studies and synthesis reviews were carried out.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): By end-2021, the number of knowledge projects produced will have increased by 25% and the 2021 independent evaluation of the ILO’s evaluation function will have confirmed that topics are in line with strategic knowledge requirements.		On track

**40.** EVAL is proactive in analysing and presenting evaluation findings in user-friendly formats to support strategic knowledge requirements. Requests for specific and thematic knowledge products received from technical departments have been addressed; in addition, EVAL has supported recurrent discussions of the International Labour Conference and reporting on the ILO’s annual overall effectiveness (see Part II). In the current reporting period, EVAL produced four synthesis reviews, one meta-analysis, two think pieces and two In-Focus learning series <sup>18</sup> that are all aligned with strategic knowledge requirements. EVAL is therefore on track to increase the number of knowledge products by 25 per cent over the baseline of an average of three studies per year.

Indicator 3.4.2: The AER provides an annual overview of overall effectiveness of the ILO.	Baseline: Analysis of decent work results and effectiveness of ILO development cooperation completed, covering 2009–16 with ongoing revision of methodology.	Status
Biennial milestone (2020–21): Analysis conducted up to 2021 and communicated to relevant parts of the ILO for use, and the AER reports on the uptake and use of the findings.		On track

**41.** EVAL continues to provide annual analyses of the ILO’s strategic relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency as required, and as part of reporting on indicator 3.4.2. Part II of this report therefore provides results on the ILO’s overall effectiveness, based on a robust methodology using 26 performance indicators.

<sup>18</sup> All reports are accessible on [EVAL’s public website](#).

## ▶ Part II. Assessing the ILO's effectiveness and results

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### 2.1. Introduction

42. Part II of the report presents an annual overview of the ILO's overall effectiveness, as required by the ILO's Evaluation Strategy (indicator 3.4.2). Effectiveness and accountability are assessed by analysing evaluation reports of development cooperation projects as proxies for performance and lessons learned. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on world of work issues have further amplified the need to make optimal use of evaluative evidence. Using evaluative findings can help the ILO to avoid repeating mistakes of the past and leverage successes and learning on how to cope with such crises.
43. In section 2.2, the findings of the most recent decent work results studies on the ILO's effectiveness are presented. These findings, combined with lessons learned from previous crisis situations, are unpacked in section 2.3 to inform preparations for an evaluative framework that is responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic, while also advancing the transformational goals of the Evaluation Policy and Strategy. The broad contours of such a framework, presented in section 2.4, provide principles and evaluation questions to guide the planning, management, M&R and conduct of ongoing or upcoming evaluations in a manner that best supports the ILO's ambitious agenda to respond to the pandemic while maintaining focus on its Decent Work Agenda and relevant SDGs.

### 2.2. Overall effectiveness of ILO operations for the period 2019–20

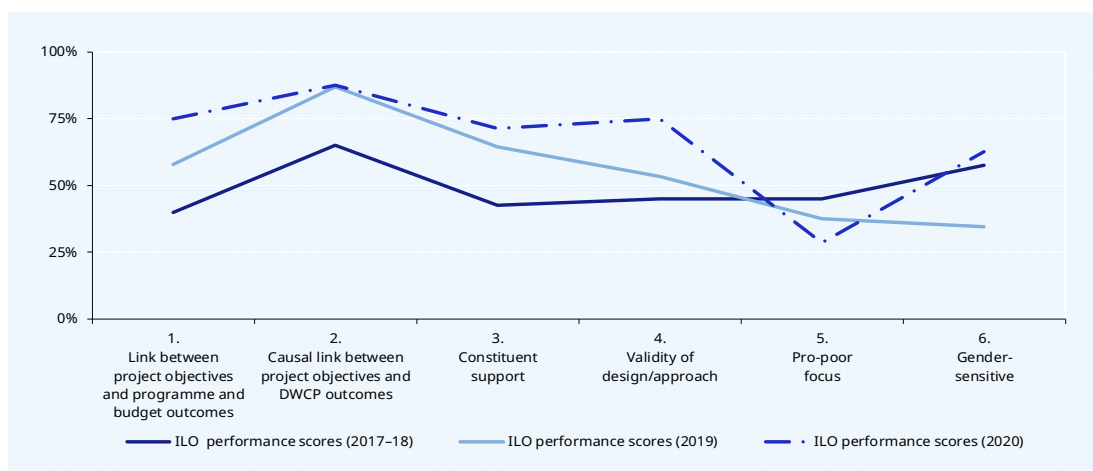
44. EVAL has undertaken a series of meta-analyses of project evaluations for almost a decade now, as part of its efforts to provide regular feedback on the ILO's effectiveness in advancing decent work. The latest study reviews the ILO's performance in 2019, as well as a limited sample of evaluation reports for 2020.<sup>19</sup> Predefined performance criteria were used to assess the effectiveness of operations, rated on a four-point scale: unsuccessful (1); partly successful (2); successful (3); and highly successful (4). In alignment with current development cooperation concerns, two new criteria were piloted, to examine disability inclusion in ILO operations and the ILO's contribution to the SDGs. The analysis also incorporates a comparative approach, in order to display performance trends since 2013.
45. Overall, performance observed in 2019 was comparable with that in 2017–18. The effectiveness, sustainability and impact of ILO operations continued to score "successful" in 2019, while their relevance, strategic alignment and efficiency scored "partly successful". Preliminary results for 2020 indicate an improvement in the relevance and alignment of the ILO's work, reaching a score of "successful", with steady trends for the effectiveness and efficiency of operations.

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<sup>19</sup> As part of the rolling process of appraisal of evaluation reports.

### 2.2.1. Strategic relevance and alignment

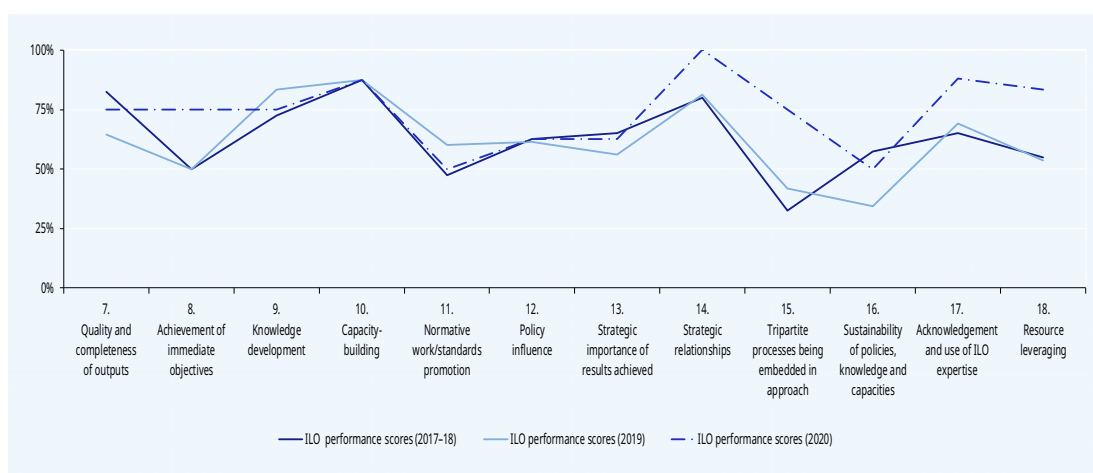
► **Figure 9. Percentage of projects with “highly successful” or “successful” scores for strategic relevance and alignment** <sup>20</sup>



- 46. The highest scores in 2019 relate to the relevance of project objectives to DWCP or country programme outcomes (figure 9, criterion 2), and the support received from constituents in project formulation and implementation (criterion 3), thus responding to national decent work needs. Average performance was observed in the validity of the projects’ design (criterion 4) and their linkage with strategic organizational outcomes (criterion 1). Main weaknesses in this performance category were related to the extent to which poverty reduction (criterion 5) and gender strategies (criterion 6) were integrated into projects, which often lacked measures to address inequalities.
- 47. Preliminary results for 2020 indicate overall strong performance, with improvements in the design of ILO development cooperation projects, notably their gender sensitivity. A slight performance decrease was identified with regard to the inclusion of a poverty reduction approach in operations.

### 2.2.2. Effectiveness, sustainability and impact

► **Figure 10. Percentage of projects with a “highly successful” or “successful” score for effectiveness, sustainability and impact**

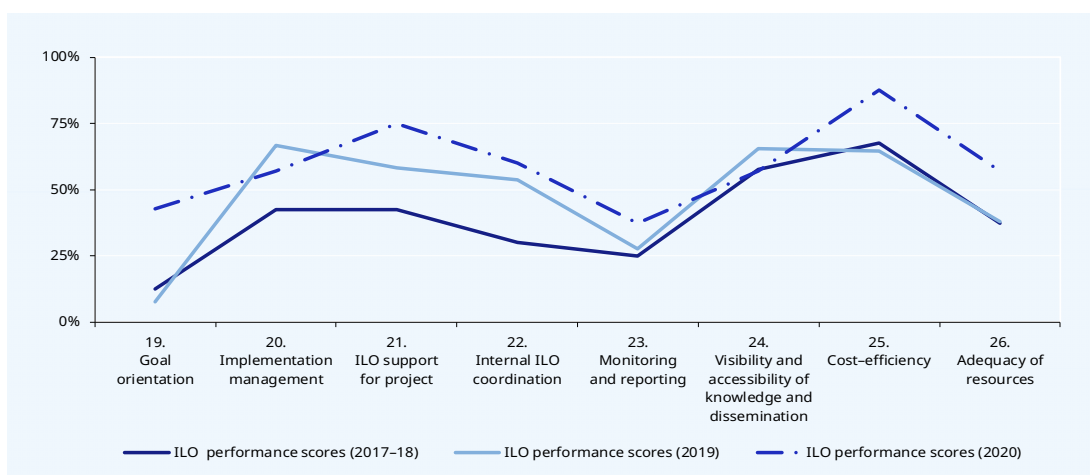


<sup>20</sup> The percentage for each performance criterion corresponds to the ratio of projects that received a score of 3 and 4. This applies to figures 9, 10, 11 and 12.

- 48. In terms of overall effectiveness, sustainability and impact, development cooperation projects continued to perform satisfactorily in 2019 (figure 10). Areas of strength were capacity-building at individual and institutional levels (criterion 10); knowledge development (criterion 9); and strategic relationships leveraged and maintained (criterion 14). The ILO’s expertise was acknowledged and used (criterion 17). Despite the good quality of the outputs achieved (criterion 7), only half of the projects assessed met their immediate objectives (criterion 8), and projects showed average performance in relation to policy-influencing activities (criterion 12), the promotion of international labour standards (criterion 11) and the ability to leverage resources to boost results (criterion 18).
- 49. Most concerning was the low performance rating with regard to the sustainability of interventions (criterion 16), with only one third of projects having some prospects of maintaining, advancing or scaling up existing operations. Missed opportunities were also observed in the extent to which projects incorporated or strengthened social dialogue and tripartism (criterion 15).
- 50. A slight improvement in the overall effectiveness of interventions was noted for 2020, particularly in the sustainability of interventions and the promotion of social dialogue and tripartite approaches.

### 2.2.3. Implementation and efficiency of management and resources

► **Figure 11. Percentage of projects with a “highly successful” or “successful” score for implementation and efficiency of management and use of resources**

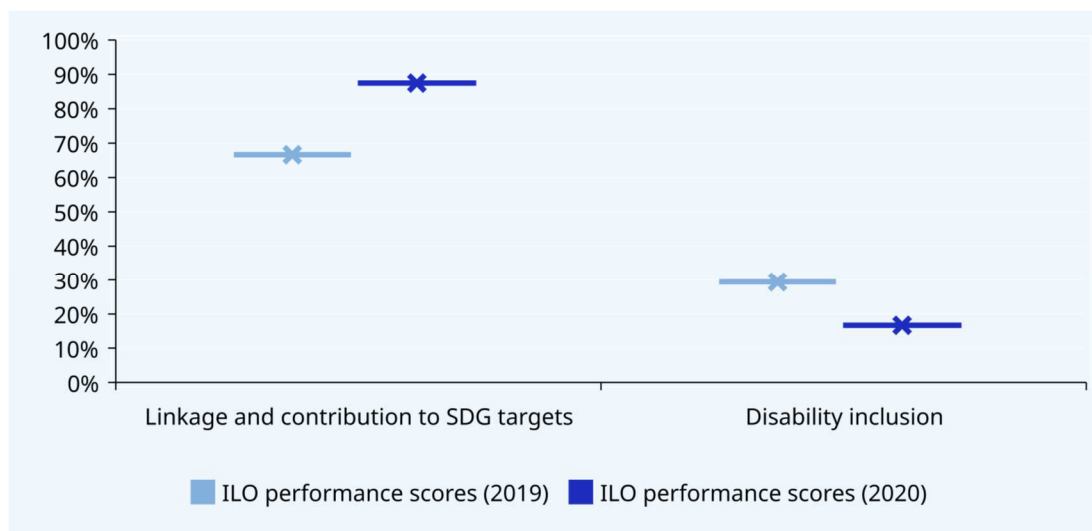


- 51. Average performance ratings were observed in the implementation and efficiency of operations in 2019 (figure 11). The strongest results related to the ILO’s capacity to manage (criterion 20) and support (criterion 21) project implementation, to establish internal synergies (criterion 22) and to disseminate knowledge for organizational learning (criterion 24).
- 52. Whereas over one third of projects faced resource constraints (criterion 26), resources were used strategically and effectively (criterion 25). Low ratings persisted in M&R mechanisms (criterion 23), with just over one quarter of projects having satisfactory frameworks in place. Projects’ goal orientation (criterion 19) had the lowest rating of all the criteria.

- 53. Partial results for 2020 show higher performance ratings in this category, notably for the overall cost-efficiency of operations and adequacy of resources. Slight performance improvements were also noted in the projects’ goal orientation and M&R.

### 2.2.4. Current development cooperation concerns

► **Figure 12. Percentage of projects with a “highly successful” or “successful” score for linkage and contribution to SDG targets and disability inclusion**



- 54. To reflect current development cooperation concerns, two new criteria were developed and piloted in the latest meta-analysis (figure 12). Assessed projects in 2019–20 included strategies to integrate SDGs into national development strategies and priorities in each country’s UNSDCF or United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and incorporated mechanisms to monitor progress at policy level. Capacity development, policy advice, and knowledge development and dissemination were found to be key drivers of well-coordinated SDG-related activities.
- 55. The extent to which ILO operations address disability inclusion strategies is an area with significant scope for improvement, with less than 30 per cent of projects with a successful performance. In such cases, evaluations noted positive results in the inclusion of monitoring frameworks that were sensitive to disability issues, the increased participation of disadvantaged groups in project implementation, and leveraged strategic partnerships.

## 2.3. Implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on EVAL’s transformational agenda for more strategic and comprehensive evaluations

- 56. Credible independent evaluations in the midst of the crisis can be an important input into future post-COVID-19 decisions within the ILO and by development partners, including on how evaluations are undertaken. The new Evaluation Policy (2017) and Strategy (2018–21) spurred ambitious plans for innovation through clustered evaluations to ensure full evaluative coverage of all country programmes (DWCPs) and programme and budget outcomes. As reported in Part I (indicator 2.1), progress has been made towards these goals. Clustered evaluations have become a much more accepted modality since last year. This process is likely to be accelerated by the pandemic

and its aftermath, as development partners appreciate the need for focused and strategic evaluations with a reduced burden on constituents and other stakeholders.

- 57.** Programmatic frameworks have been issued by the UN <sup>21</sup> and by individual UN agencies in response to the COVID-19 crisis, including the ILO. The foremost is the policy response framework <sup>22</sup> proposed by the Director-General, which formed the basis for discussion at the Global Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work held in July 2020. Programme and budget indicators were also provisionally revisited <sup>23</sup> as part of outcome-based work planning, to identify areas through which COVID-19 response measures could be formulated, tracked and reported. Nearly all ongoing development cooperation projects have undergone some degree of readjustment, and efforts continue to be made to leverage additional resources at all levels, including through the joint UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund mechanisms.
- 58.** This unparalleled crisis calls for greater organizational agility, coherent action and effectiveness. There is also scope to improve the relevance, efficiency, results and sustainability of the ILO's interventions in due course. Moreover, it demands preparedness to generate and record evidence and lessons, to inform the ILO's support as the world transitions from immediate to longer-term socio-economic response measures. To ensure that all of this is well captured, there is an urgent need for an evaluation framework that takes into account the Office's overall policy response framework, the adapted programme and budget indicators and the projects and programmes to deliver the organizational intent and commitments. Partnerships with other UN agencies to undertake joint evaluations are also expected to increase, thus speeding up progress on UN reform and system-wide evaluations at country (UNSDCF) and global levels.

### 2.3.1. Unpacking performance information and lessons learned to inform an evaluative framework responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic

- 59.** To support organizational efforts for a timely and informed response to the COVID-19 pandemic, EVAL released, in May 2020, an issue of *i-eval IN-FOCUS* setting out the key lessons learned, in terms of operational effectiveness, from the ILO's response to the 2007–08 global economic crisis. This study, combined with regular assessment of the ILO's overall effectiveness (see section 2.2 above) and an additional comparative analysis by programme and budget outcomes most relevant to the ILO COVID-19 response, enabled EVAL to put together data and findings to inform an evaluative framework responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 60.** The overall conclusion suggests that crisis response frameworks at institutional level are effective in delivering comprehensive and integrated regional and national support. Whereas the ILO's effectiveness has remained strong in the relevant technical policy areas, challenges persist at the level of operational efficiency (table 6). An evaluation framework would greatly benefit from a theory of change for the ILO's COVID-19 policy response (including indicators and linkages to the programme budget and SDGs), to allow for comprehensive assessment of an effective response.

<sup>21</sup> UN, *United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19*, April 2020.

<sup>22</sup> ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work*, 5th ed., June 2020.

<sup>23</sup> ILO, *Programme and Budget 2020–21, Output Indicators: Technical Notes for Planning, Monitoring and Reporting on Results*, PROGRAM, April 2020.

► **Table 6. Performance information and lessons learned <sup>24</sup> by key pillar of the ILO’s policy response framework**

<p><b>Pillar 1: Stimulating the economy and employment</b></p>	<p><b>Overall effectiveness (2013–19)</b> Initiatives in this category were responsive to needs and led to strengthened capacities, effective influence of policies and leveraged partnerships. Tripartism was reinforced but improvements are required for targeting poverty and gender-responsiveness. ILO’s internal coordination, monitoring and reporting, and adequacy of resources need strengthening.</p> <p><b>Key lessons learned from the ILO’s response to the 2007–08 crisis</b> The “One UN” approach enabled the ILO to define decent work priorities. DWCPs were placed as effective frameworks to mainstream the Decent Work Agenda. Social dialogue became essential for policy-making. Longer-term support strategies were needed to ensure the sustainability of results.</p>	<p><b>Pillar 2: Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes</b></p>	<p><b>Overall effectiveness (2013–19)</b> Initiatives were responsive to national decent work needs owing to constituents’ active engagement. The ILO was successful in generating knowledge, building capacities and influencing policies with sustainable results. Further efforts were needed to promote standards in employment and enterprise-related initiatives. Challenges persisted for the internal coordination of enterprise promotion projects. Resource leveraging, goal orientation, and monitoring and reporting faced recurrent performance challenges.</p> <p><b>Key lessons learned from the ILO’s response to the 2007–08 crisis</b> Engagement in global partnerships led to increased awareness of social protection and employment and boosted the leveraging of resources. Comprehensive decent work country policy assessments and multifaceted diagnostics were key for integrated support. These informed social dialogue processes and were operationalized into DWCPs for cohesive support.</p>
<p><b>Pillar 3: Protecting workers in the workplace</b></p>	<p><b>Overall effectiveness (2013–19)</b> Interventions were strongly linked to organizational and country needs. The ILO was successful in promoting international labour standards, generating new knowledge, informing policies and building capacities and strategic relationships. Further efforts were required to boost recognition of the ILO’s expertise, including tripartite approaches and sustaining results.</p> <p><b>Key lessons learned from the ILO’s response to the 2007–08 crisis</b> Successful engagement in global partnerships led to increased awareness of the ILO’s normative framework and its recognition as a knowledge-based organization. More attention needed to be paid to showing results on the nexus between workplace conditions, productivity improvement and job-rich recovery.</p>	<p><b>Pillar 4: Relying on social dialogue for solutions</b></p>	<p><b>Overall effectiveness (2013–19)</b> Interventions were responsive to national needs and strongly engaged constituents, leading to effective knowledge, capacity-building and the promotion of standards. Gender equality was fostered through relevant strategies. Project management and resource use were strong, along with monitoring and reporting. The weakest performance area was related to the goal orientation of activities.</p> <p><b>Key lessons learned from the ILO’s response to the 2007–08 crisis</b> Field-level leadership was essential in providing integrated technical support and policy dialogue. Greater attention to capacity-building activities was fundamental in ensuring policy adoption and implementation. Impact and sustainability could have benefited from more coherent policy strategies and longer-term interventions.</p>

<sup>24</sup> For analytical purposes, a tentative mapping of 2020–21 programme and budget outcomes relevant to the COVID-19 policy response pillars has been applied as follows: Pillar 1 (outcomes 3 and 8); Pillar 2 (outcomes 3, 4, 7 and 8); Pillar 3 (outcome 7); and Pillar 4 (outcomes 1 and 7).



## 2.4. Towards an evaluation framework for the ILO strategic response to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world of work

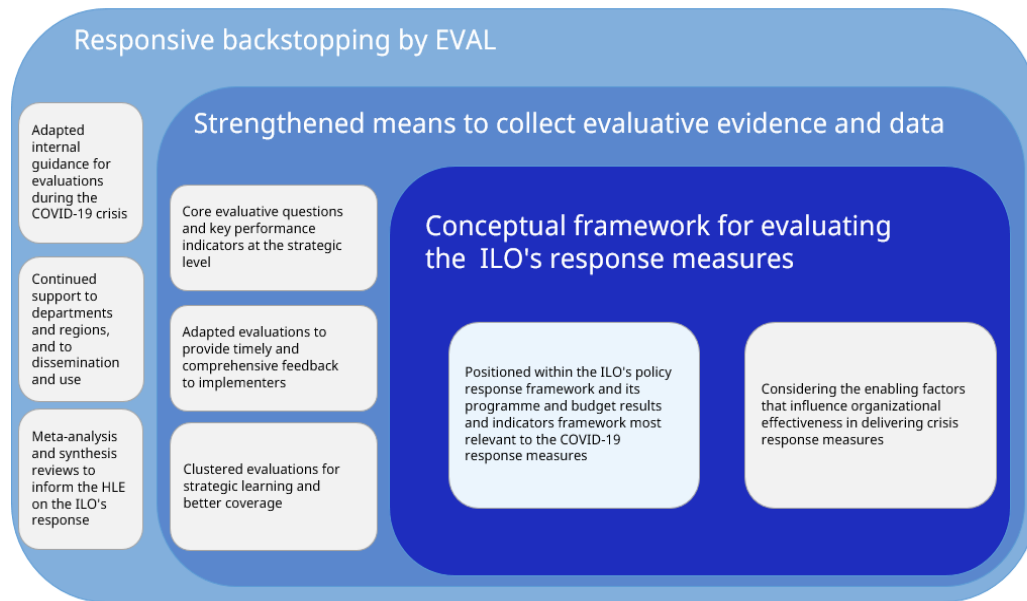
61. Preliminary work is under way to build an evaluation framework that could serve as a model of “what” is to be evaluated, based on the proposed ILO’s policy response framework (see section 2.3), the programme and budget outcomes and indicators, and the OECD Development Assistance Committee criteria. The evaluation framework will lead to a comprehensive assessment by also incorporating lessons learned from past experience (see section 2.3.1) and performance interest areas for organizational effectiveness, such as adaptability; internal coherence; timeliness of the response; and strategic international engagement, partnership and resource leveraging. As a normative specialized agency, it is also imperative that the ILO should embed the promotion of its core values of equality, inclusion, standards, dialogue and tripartism in the response. In compliance with the ILO’s Evaluation Policy, the proposed framework will present a model that comprehensively serves as the basis for assessing the effectiveness of the ILO’s delivery (figure 13).

► **Figure 13. Proposed framework for evaluating the ILO’s COVID-19 response measures**



62. The framework will include a robust evaluation plan, specifying tools and methodologies to ensure that data collection systems help to generate the necessary evaluative evidence on the performance and effectiveness of the ILO’s COVID-19 response. The plan will respect existing M&R procedures and will be embedded into EVAL’s integrated evaluation planning system (figure 14). The plan will be monitored to systematically document performance and identify areas with information gaps.

► **Figure 14. Key enabling elements of the proposed evaluative framework**



63. A set of key performance indicators and evaluation questions will be developed to obtain the most relevant and comparable evidence from project evaluations (figure 15). EVAL anticipates that clustered project evaluations will provide wider coverage and strategic learning than individual project evaluations, while also reducing evaluation “fatigue”. Adaptive types of evaluation will be considered for relevant projects, notably retrofitting mid-term evaluations whenever feasible into more real-time and elongated results monitoring exercises. These would result in mid-term evaluation reports that provide timely and comprehensive feedback for management decisions and strategic planning. Country programme reviews, and regional- and global-level evaluative studies, such as synthesis reviews and meta-analyses, will also be essential in obtaining aggregated results and fostering the sharing of knowledge about preliminary results. This information will, in turn, inform the overall performance assessments and high-level evaluation on the ILO’s response to COVID-19 proposed for 2022.

► **Figure 15. Illustrative sample of evaluation questions**

- How well do the ILO’s response policy and programmes reflect the concerns shared by constituents and governments?
- To what extent are existing and new actions repositioned in terms of design and implementation to enhance their relevance in the context of COVID-19?
- What adjustments have been made to indicators and their measurement efforts to provide the Office with robust feedback on the ILO’s contribution?
- To what extent has the ILO been effective and timely in providing an adapted response and guidance during the early phases of the pandemic?
- Are the ILO’s interventions effective in delivering decent work outcomes in the context of the pandemic?
- How effectively were the enabling outcomes used to improve the relevance and targeting of the COVID-19 response?
- How well did the ILO use national and international alliances and partnerships, including UN partners, for supporting Member States in protecting the rights and safety of workers while targeting the response to COVID-19?
- What contextual and organizational culture-related factors worked in favour of the ILO’s responsiveness to the COVID-19 crisis? What factors emerge as inhibiting ones?

64. The framework will be shared for wider consultations with key stakeholders, in order to obtain their inputs and suggestions, before being used as a guiding framework for assessing the effectiveness of COVID-19 response measures.

**Recommendation 2: Together with relevant stakeholders, develop an evaluative framework for the ILO strategic response to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world of work.**

## ▶ Draft decision

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65. The Governing Body endorsed the recommendations of the Annual Evaluation Report 2019–20 (paragraphs 8 and 64 of document GB.340/PFA/6) for implementation by the ILO.

## ▶ Appendix. Plan of action for the implementation of approved recommendations contained in the annual evaluation reports

### AER 2018-19

Recommendations	Long-term improvements (by 2021 or as per identified timeline)	Short-term actions 2019-20	Who/ additional cost	Status	EVAL comments
1.	Strengthening the ILO's results-based framework				
Recommendation 1: Present strategic clustering of evaluations as the preferential option to all donors when discussing agreements and use the expertise of the evaluation function to explain the benefits and various opt-out scenarios in compliance with the Evaluation Policy.	More strategic evaluations of projects and programme activities with identical or similar themes, programme frameworks or locations by means of clustering and integrated funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree with donors on reforms such as the clustering of evaluations as the default option for evaluations with opt-out clauses, budget flexibility in combining evaluation resources.</li> <li>- Prepare guidance on how to conduct clustered evaluations and conduct pilots.</li> </ul>	Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV)/EVAL (no additional cost)	<p>PARDEV: Clustering of evaluations has developed in a series of programmes and is being promoted in discussions with funding partners. In most agreements, the language on evaluation refers to the ILO's Evaluation Policy and therefore provides for clustered evaluations. An unrelated but important development is the tendency of some funding partners to foresee their own evaluations of any programme they fund, sometimes leading to duplication of efforts. PARDEV is working with EVAL to come to efficient and effective arrangements that meet the requirements of both the funding partner and the ILO.</p> <p>EVAL: EVAL has prepared standard language with options for donors to consider; and a guidance note on conducting clustered evaluations, currently being used in a number of pilots.</p>	The clustering of evaluations has become a more common practice, a process that has gained further traction with the COVID-19 pandemic. A few donors in addition apply external evaluations, which is in line with the ILO's Evaluation Policy provided they are not at the expense of ILO mandatory independent evaluations for internal accountability and learning. EVAL works with PARDEV and funding partners to arrive at arrangements that meet the requirements of both parties.

Recommendations	Long-term improvements (by 2021 or as per identified timeline)	Short-term actions 2019–20	Who/ additional cost	Status	EVAL comments
<p>Recommendation 2: Contextualize and consistently integrate the recurrent drivers for success identified in this report into project design and implementation to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the ILO’s work.</p>	<p>Systematic application of key drivers contributing to the effectiveness of successful projects will lead to a more effective ILO in which organizational learning is valued.</p>	<p>More systematic and monitored use of recurrent issues for improvement identified in the EVAL meta-studies of development cooperation project evaluations.</p>	<p>PARDEV/EVAL (no additional cost)</p>	<p>PARDEV regularly adjusts its tools and guidance for project design and appraisal, including by making use of synthesis reviews and meta-studies. Additionally, PARDEV facilitates knowledge sharing on its online Community of Practice on development cooperation for ILO staff, including on drivers for success and lessons learned from evaluations. Based on a sample reviewed by PARDEV, about half of the selected proposals provide evidence of use of evaluation findings and lessons learned during the design and appraisal stages.</p> <p>EVAL has increased the number of synthesis reviews and meta-studies to facilitate access to lessons learned. In addition, a new internal learning series, <i>i-eval</i> IN-FOCUS, was introduced in late 2019 to dive deeper into specific learning by evaluation criteria or theme. Lessons learned and good practices are systematically collected and made publicly available in <i>i-eval</i> Discovery.</p>	<p>It would be useful to introduce a mechanism to systematically keep track of the use of evaluation recommendations in project design as part of the requirement of accountability to donors.</p>

## AER 2017-18

Recommendations	Long-term improvements (by 2021 or as per identified timeline)	Short-term actions 2018-19	Who/ additional cost	Status	EVAL comments
1.	Strengthening the ILO's results-based framework				
Recommendation 1: Formalize the good practice that final progress reports incorporate self-evaluation components in lieu of a separate formal self-evaluation report.	Increased compliance with evaluation requirements; reduced reporting burden on project managers; and improved organizational learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review final progress report format.</li> <li>Include self-evaluation components in final progress reports.</li> <li>Monitor progress.</li> </ul>	PARDEV/EVAL (no additional cost)	The recommendation has been implemented. PARDEV and EVAL have developed a development cooperation final progress report that incorporates self-evaluation components (section D). It is applicable to development cooperation projects up to US\$500,000.	EVAL mapped submitted final progress reports from 1 April 2019 to 22 January 2020. Overall compliance in the use of the new template was 37 per cent.
Recommendation 2: Improve the Office-wide monitoring and reporting framework and practices for extrabudgetary-funded activities and assign clear accountability.	Clear accountability framework within the Office for integrated Office-wide project monitoring and reporting, which in turn will improve the availability and consistency of performance data and the quality of evaluation reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review accountability framework for progress monitoring and reporting.</li> <li>Ensure integration with overall Office results monitoring and reporting.</li> </ul>	PARDEV in collaboration with PROGRAM (cost not provided)	The ILO responsible official is responsible for project monitoring and for the timely preparation and submission of quality donor reports. Reporting practices for extrabudgetary development cooperation (XBDC)-funded projects have improved with the introduction of an online platform for donor reporting in 2018, which serves as a central repository for donor reports and as a management tool. This has improved the availability of data. In terms of monitoring of timely reporting, the online platform provides automatic alerts and reminders sent to the ILO responsible officials and PARDEV monitors the overall situation. The ILO responsible official generally submits	In the absence of an enforced monitoring system to assess the quality and timely submission of project progress reports on extrabudgetary funding, the steps taken do not yet address the recommendation's call for clear accountability. Progress on the roll-out of the RBM Task Force has been very slow.

Recommendations	Long-term improvements (by 2021 or as per identified timeline)	Short-term actions 2018-19	Who/ additional cost	Status	EVAL comments
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reports directly to the donor. PARDEV has no authority for, nor is it tasked with, carrying out quality assurance for technical progress reports.

The revised version of the Decent Work Results Dashboard includes a new feature to indicate the contribution of XBDC-funded projects towards the corporate results, facilitating the link with the Development Cooperation Dashboard. In terms of Office-wide monitoring and reporting, there are three important ongoing processes that are spearheaded by PROGRAM:

1. The RBM Task Force produced a mapping of monitoring tools and systems in the Office, identifying gaps and potential for streamlining. The Office is developing a new outcome-based work planning dashboard to facilitate integrated monitoring and reporting; this is expected to become operational before the end of 2020.
2. The RBM Task Force also produced specific recommendations on the application of a theory of change approach, which led to a revised methodology.

Recommendations	Long-term improvements (by 2021 or as per identified timeline)	Short-term actions 2018-19	Who/ additional cost	Status	EVAL comments
				<p>3. The Office is developing a process to further enhance its system for enhancing transparency.</p> <p>Based on these three processes, the Office will strengthen its corporate monitoring system to ensure accountability and facilitate reporting in 2020-21.</p>	