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Programme, Financial and Administrative Section

Audit and Oversight Segment

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Annual evaluation report 2022–23

Purpose of the document

This document provides the Governing Body with a progress report on the ILO Evaluation Office's work covering the reporting period 2022–23, as measured against the indicators and targets in its results-based Evaluation Strategy (Part I). It also looks at the ILO's overall effectiveness (Part II). The Governing Body is invited to endorse the recommendations in this report (see the draft decision in paragraph 91).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

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

Policy implications: Yes. Work across the policy outcomes on issues relevant to decent work and productivity.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Yes.

Author unit: Evaluation Office (EVAL).

Related documents: GB.343/PFA/9; GB.340/PFA/6; GB.337/PFA/6; GB.334/PFA/6; GB.332/PFA/8; GB.331/PFA/8.

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▶ Introduction

1. The period under review in this report, particularly the latter part of 2022, has played a pivotal role in shaping the future trajectory of the evaluation function within the International Labour Organization (ILO). It marked the conclusion of the 2018–22 strategy, the conduct of an independent evaluation of the evaluation function in 2022 (2022 IEE) covering the past five years, and the development of a new Evaluation Strategy for 2023–25. This new strategy thoroughly builds upon the outline for an updated ILO results-based Evaluation Strategy 2023–25, which was officially endorsed by the Governing Body during its 346th Session. [1] It incorporates the valuable insights and recommendations gathered during the deliberations of the relevant Governing Body documents, as well as extensive consultations within the evaluation network. As a result, the 2023–25 Evaluation Strategy has been significantly enhanced and refined to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with the Organization's goals.

2. Despite the disruptive impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the ILO has gained valuable experience and insights through evaluations over the past few years, which are reflected in key documents and decisions. While evaluations are crucial for learning and accountability, their aim of effectively communicating evidence-based findings to practitioners and decision-makers may occasionally fall short. A strong evaluation and learning culture is an essential ingredient for this to work. The period under review has also shown that, post-COVID-19, there have been challenges on that front, with more difficulties in getting access to stakeholders in certain countries; encountering less cooperative attitudes; and sometimes facing cumbersome procedures, both internally and externally to the ILO. After a period during the COVID-19 pandemic when evaluations were mostly conducted remotely, it may well be that now that we have returned to direct observation on the ground, full acceptance of what is sometimes seen as an intrusive evaluation process needs to be fully restored.

3. As part of the new Evaluation Strategy, the evaluation function will expand the use of participatory methods in evaluations to increase the likelihood of use of evaluation findings. This approach will facilitate meaningful engagement with the social partners, government counterparts and beneficiaries, enabling a comprehensive assessment of results and impact achieved. To balance the workload with the available capacity, and enhance credibility, it will be imperative to emphasize a focus on learning and ensure that evaluations are conducted for the right purposes and at the appropriate time. Cultivating a supportive evaluation culture characterized by critical thinking and evaluative logic is crucial for this purpose. Professional judgement should play a key role in determining when evaluations are necessary and when they are not, as there is a point where excessive evaluation can hinder utility and overwhelm users' capacities to absorb information. It is for this reason that the new strategy has enabling outcomes for evaluation to support its purpose, role, implementation and enforcement.

4. Part I of this report offers a preliminary overview of the progress achieved towards the 2023 milestones outlined in the strategy. It evaluates the performance of the evaluation function by assessing the selected performance indicators, to measure progress towards the three outcomes in the Evaluation Strategy. Given that this is the first report on the implementation

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[1] The Annual Evaluation Report 2021–22 included an outline for an updated Evaluation Strategy (2023–25) (Part III), which was endorsed by the Governing Body during its 346th Session.

of a new Evaluation Strategy, it is understandable that there may still be gaps in terms of performance and results related to the 2023 milestones as the evaluation function pivots its approaches, tools and capacity to align with the new directions set out in the strategy.

5. Part II offers a comprehensive analysis of the Office's effectiveness, utilizing a recent meta-analysis of decent work outcomes. By leveraging evaluations carried out in the previous year as proxies, the report aims to assess the overall performance of the Office. Although this approach simplifies the assessment process to some extent, it has proven to be a systematic and reliable method employed by the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) for over a decade. An important advancement in this year's report is the inclusion of linkages between evaluation projects and policy outcomes, specifically through the connection with country programme outcomes (CPOs). By establishing these linkages, the report seeks to provide insights into the performance of the ILO's efforts by policy outcomes, thus enhancing the understanding of the Organization's effectiveness as measured against the ultimate results-based framework, namely the programme and budget. While there are still limitations in the methodology and representativeness of the sample of evaluations, initial results so far are promising. In addition, the section also explores the latest findings from an evaluation of activities funded through Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) resources.

▶ Part I. Progress made towards achieving key milestones

6. Part I of this report is organized by strategic outcome, as identified in the Evaluation Strategy 2023–25. For each sub-outcome, the status with respect to the 2023 milestone of the relevant indicator is provided ("achieved", "on track" or "delayed"). The new strategy also includes five enabling outcomes that are identified as being essential to achieving the end targets. Of the 21 biennial milestones for 2023, 19 are "achieved" or "on track" and two are "delayed". Moreover, all five enablers of the enabling environment are "on track."

Outcome 1. Enhanced capacities at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels for planning, undertaking and using evaluations

Sub-outcome 1.1. Improved strategic planning and coordination with key internal and external stakeholders strengthen evaluation effectiveness and efficiency

Indicator 1.1.1: Degree to which effective integrated criteria-based procedures and practices are institutionalized and applied in the ILO to reduce the volume of evaluation, and have strategically oriented evaluation learning and evidence by 2025.	Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Guidance and procedure on criteria-based integrated evaluation planning developed and tested in at least one region and one department. Criteria-based selection is defined and applied not only to undertake fewer, but more strategic, evaluations (instead of financial thresholds).	Target (end of 2025): Integrated criteria-based evaluation planning is used in at least 50% of all regions and departments to reduce the volume of evaluations and have more strategic-oriented evaluations.
Custodians: EVAL, Partnering for Development Department (PARTNERSHIPS), regions and technical departments, in particular regional evaluation officers (REOs) and departmental evaluation focal points (DEFPs).		Status: On track

7. The new Evaluation Strategy for 2023–25 addresses barriers identified in the 2022 IEE and EVAL's 2023 biennial workshop. It introduces the Criteria-based Integrated Evaluation Planning System (CIEPS) to enhance the use of evaluation results. The CIEPS identifies evaluations that meet the ILO's knowledge requirements and learning needs, while maintaining accountability. It prioritizes strategic evaluations and considers different evaluation types. The financial threshold for triggering evaluation requirements remains unchanged, but regions and departments can request waivers based on justifying criteria, resulting in fewer but more strategic evaluations.

8. The CIEPS process has been piloted in the Asia and the Pacific region, encouraging collaboration and integration with other knowledge providers in the region. Strategic cluster evaluations have increased and planned workload has decreased. Before the end of 2023, the process will also be tested for a number of departments. Specific criteria are applied in the annual evaluation planning process to waive certain evaluation requirements. Factors such as new intervention models, project upscaling, strong monitoring and reporting systems, embedded monitoring and evaluation officers and learning potential are considered to determine evaluation requirements and waivers. The CIEPS will be further refined and transformed into formal guidance and procedures by the end of 2023 for roll-out in all regions and departments. The challenges in implementing the integrated evaluation planning system involve integrating it into existing knowledge or evidence gap mapping exercises within the Office. This would help identify how evaluations can address those specific needs. Additionally, the system would greatly benefit from flexible and pooled funding mechanisms to reduce the transaction costs associated with strategic, clustered or ex-post impact evaluations covering multiple projects.

Indicator 1.1.2: The existence of coordinated and complementary evaluations with other oversight functions, knowledge and learning mechanisms in the ILO by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** Mechanism to improve coordination and complementarity between evaluation, oversight and knowledge-sharing and learning functions developed and discussed with the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC).	**Target (end of 2025):** Report of the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee to the Governing Body acknowledges progress in coordination and complementarity.
Custodians: EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, regions, technical departments, Research Department (RESEARCH), Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM), Office of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO) and the IOAC.		**Status:** On track

9. EVAL has actively engaged in discussions with the IAO and the IOAC to enhance the complementarity between evaluation and audit functions. As a result of these discussions, a standard operating procedure is being developed to promote and facilitate collaboration.

10. The primary objective of this standard operating procedure is to streamline coordination and encourage the sharing of reports between the evaluation and audit teams, specifically regarding project audits and evaluations. By aligning their efforts and knowledge, these teams can more efficiently identify and address relevant issues during missions and subsequent reporting.

11. The IOAC will play a role in assessing the long-term impact and effectiveness of these measures, with the aim of driving tangible improvements in organizational performance. Strengthened coordination and information-sharing will enhance the ILO's overall governance

processes, ensuring greater transparency and accountability in programme and project implementation.

12. Furthermore, there is an ongoing exploration of enhanced collaboration and complementarity between evaluation and knowledge-sharing and learning functions, including research. This includes potential collaboration on impact evaluations to address existing evidence gaps.

Indicator 1.1.3: Percentage of mandatory evaluations that are completed in a timely and quality manner until 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** 94% of independent evaluations are completed in a timely and quality manner.	**Target (end of 2025):** 95% of mandatory and corporate evaluations are completed in a timely and quality manner.
Custodians: EVAL, regions and departments, including evaluation network.		**Status:** On track

Project and programme evaluations

13. The ILO has a long history of conducting and using evaluations to help inform decent work, results-based management and organizational learning. EVAL makes all evaluation-related information available via a publicly accessible dashboard – *i*-eval Discovery. The dashboard includes information on the evaluation planning schedule, in addition to data on completed evaluations, recommendations, lessons learned, good practices and management responses to the evaluation recommendations.

14. A total of 70 independent evaluation reports were completed in the current reporting period (2022). This represents an increase of 11 independent evaluations (16 per cent) from the previous reporting period. More independent evaluations were completed in 2022 than in any other year. EVAL is piloting an integrated evaluation planning system, with the aim of conducting a more flexible and negotiated approach to whether a planned evaluation should be undertaken or not. This will result in more strategic and clustered evaluations, and will also help to alleviate excessive workloads of the ILO's small evaluation network (see indicator 1.1.1). While more independent evaluations were completed in 2022 than ever before, six independent evaluations were either delayed or not completed – representing a completion rate of 92 per cent for the current reporting period, thus slightly below the milestone of 94 per cent.

15. As in previous years, submission rates for internal evaluations remain a challenge. Of the 25 internal evaluations due in 2022, 17 were submitted – representing a completion rate of 68 per cent. Low completion rates for internal evaluations are largely due to lower compliance with self-reporting and the need for the evaluation function to enforce the completion of independent over internal evaluations as a result of heavy workloads.

▶ **Figure 1.   Number of completed evaluations by type, 2016–22**
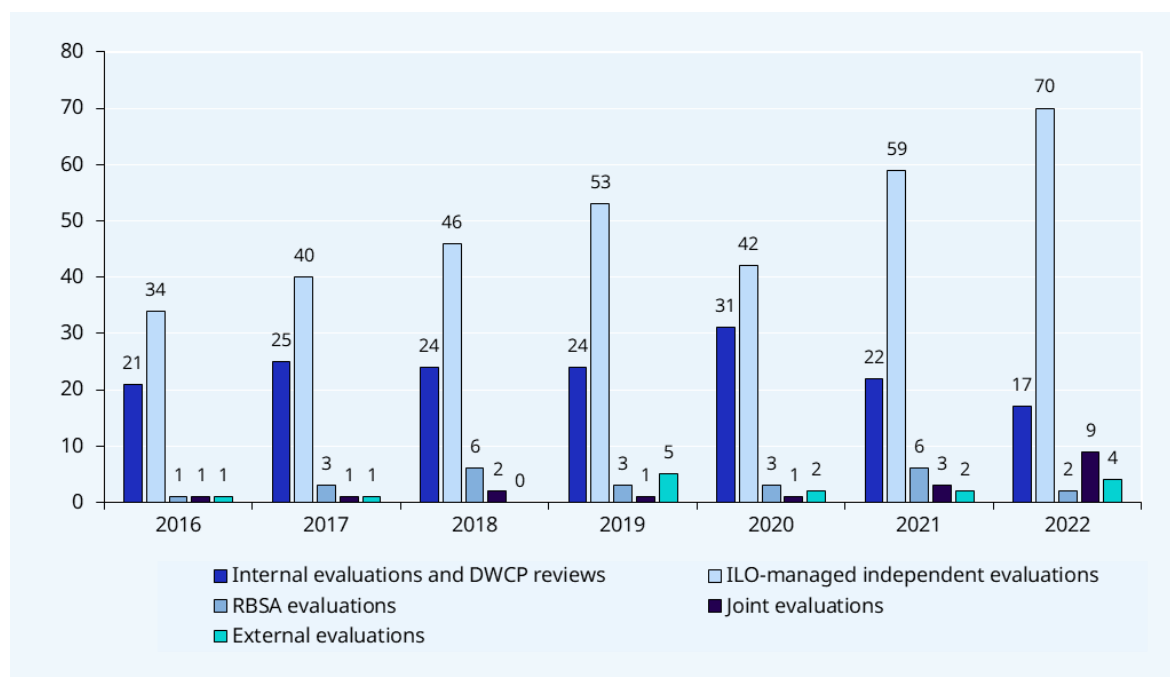
Selecting high-level evaluation topics for strategic use

16. During 2023, EVAL successfully completed all high-level evaluations (HLEs) within the designated time frames. The topics covered included the rural economy, fundamental principles and rights at work, and ILO work in post-conflict countries (Arab States). External ex-post quality controls conducted on the HLEs conducted in 2022 yielded satisfactory ratings and comparable scores are expected for the 2023 HLEs.

17. The selection of topics for HLEs follows a process involving constituents and the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC). This collaborative approach results in the development of a rolling work plan (table 1). In early 2021, the EAC requested EVAL to incorporate the criterion "contribution to recurrent discussions" in the selection process, a requirement that has been implemented in table 1. The work plan remains flexible, allowing for annual adjustments to accommodate emerging developments or urgent evaluation requirements.

> **Recommendation 1: Endorse the topics for high-level evaluations for 2024 identified in the rolling work plan and provide guidance on topics for future years.**

▶ **Table 1.** Rolling work plan, 2023–26

Year	Institutional or outcome level	Outcome level	Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP)	Outcome consultation process
	Topic	**Topic**	**Region/subregion**	
2026	Outcome 5 (2022–23) and output 3.2 (2024–25): Skills and lifelong learning [1] Or Institutional: The ILO's disability inclusion strategy	Outcome 1: Normative action [2] Or Institutional: A review of the ILO's action programme modality [3]	Asia and the Pacific	Consultations suggest a consensus with the relevance of all identified topics for confirmation of selection at the latest by end 2025.
2025	Outcome 3: Evaluation of youth employment strategy 2020–30. [4]	Outcome 2: With a focus on social dialogue and tripartism [5]	Latin America and the Caribbean	Consultations suggest a consensus with the relevance of the identified topics for confirmation of selection at the latest by end 2024.
2024	Institutional: Development and use of labour statistics [6]	Institutional: ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25 [7]	Africa	Consultations suggest a consensus with the relevance of the identified topics. It was suggested that the evaluation of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy to 2024 be advanced so the results could feed early enough into the preparation of the new strategy.
2023 Completed	Completed: Outcome 3: With a focus on rural employment	Completed: Outcome 6: Fundamental principles and rights at work	Completed: Arab States	

[1] The ILO's strategy on skills and lifelong learning for 2022–30 includes a requirement for a midterm review in 2026. For this review to maintain its independence, it is recommended that it be conducted as a high-level evaluation (HLE) and be incorporated into the work plan for 2026. Alternatively, a final evaluation can be carried out at the conclusion of the strategy in 2030. [2] This evaluation has been postponed multiple times and is now being proposed for another delay. However, considering the recent completion of the fundamental principles and rights at work evaluation in 2023, which extensively covered components of the ILO's normative mechanism and the application of labour standards, further postponement seems to be justified. [3] The Programme and Budget 2024–25 calls for a review or evaluation at the end of the biennium of the functioning of the priority action programmes to determine if and how this implementation approach should continue in 2026–27. An independent HLE may be the appropriate modality for such a review, which would cut across the four action programmes. [4] The last HLE of youth employment dates back to 2017. The follow-up plan of action on youth employment for the period 2020–30 does refer to evaluation activities but is not specific about the timing for a midterm or final evaluation. An internal progress report will be discussed during the October–November 2023 session of the Governing Body. [5] This evaluation was originally scheduled for 2024 but is now rescheduled to 2025 for it to feed into the recurrent discussion report on social dialogue (scheduled for discussion in 2026). [6] Institutional: This area has not been previously evaluated and has been proposed in earlier consultations. Moreover, it has become increasingly important due to the requirements of solid data and statistics emphasized during the COVID-19 pandemic. [7] The ILO development Cooperation Strategy was last evaluated in 2015. The current strategy is due to come to an end in 2025.

Sub-outcome 1.2. Enhanced evaluation capacity further strengthens evaluation function to implement its programme of evaluations

Indicator 1.2.1: Availability of improved training and recognition of, and incentives for, regional and departmental evaluation officers, focal points and evaluation managers in the ILO by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** New products and services (such as advanced training, cost-recovery for the evaluation network) are designed with the Human Resources Development Department (HRD), the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) and Financial Management Department (FINANCE) to further incentivize and recognize ILO staff (notably REOs, DEFPs and evaluation managers).	**Target (end of 2025):** 100% of REOs benefit from a standardized job family aligned with the ILO's job family for evaluators. 30 ILO staff are certified through an advanced Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP+).
Custodians: EVAL, HRD, and ITCILO.		**Status:** On track

18. As part of the 2018–22 Evaluation Strategy, efforts were made to recognize, incentivize and strengthen the capacities of members within the evaluation network. However, a key structural weakness is the voluntary basis of certain functions. The 2022 IEE emphasized the importance of continuous efforts to improve the stability of the network, ensuring the delivery of independent and credible evaluations within the ILO.

19. In 2023, the ILO introduced a job family specifically for full-time evaluators, marking the first time this has been done. Efforts are under way to extend this recognition to REOs. It is important to enhance incentives for voluntary roles within the evaluation network, such as evaluation managers and departmental focal points. This requires going beyond the existing formal certification process (EMCP) and incorporating evaluation tasks into performance appraisals, which has already been achieved. Additionally, there should be advanced training and incentives, including cost recovery mechanisms for managers whose staff is assigned to evaluation tasks that serve the ILO. The focus for the remainder of 2023 will be continued collaboration with the ITCILO and HRD in developing an advanced training programme for evaluation managers (EMCP+) in the latter part of the year.

Indicator 1.2.2: Number of standard training activities organized by the ILO for tripartite constituents that are supported by EVAL to mainstream concepts on the evaluation of decent work until 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** EVAL (including the REOs and DEFPs) supports at least one standard training activity organized by the ILO with the ILO tripartite constituents on evaluation of decent work.	**Target (end of 2025):** Three training activities organized by the ILO for tripartite constituents are supported by EVAL to mainstream concepts on the evaluation of decent work.
Custodians: EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, regions, Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP), ITCILO and PROGRAM.		**Status:** Achieved

20. During the previous strategy period, EVAL made some progress in integrating evaluation into seven standard training initiatives for ILO's three constituent groups. This integration aimed to maximize their contributions to evaluation processes at the country, regional and global levels.

21. As part of the current Evaluation Strategy, ongoing efforts are being made to further strengthen the evaluation culture by building the capacity of constituents within their absorption capacity on evaluation design and processes related to Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and project activities, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. Collaboration with other departments and the regional offices continues to be a priority, ensuring that evaluation concepts are incorporated into standard capacity-building programmes. This collaboration helps to foster a holistic approach to capacity development, integrating evaluation principles across various aspects of the Organization's work. Since 2022, EVAL has supported four training activities [2] with constituents on results-based management and monitoring and evaluation to ensure evaluation concepts were mainstreamed, exceeding the biennial milestone for 2023.

22. Furthermore, the evaluation function continues to promote the institutionally mainstreamed diagnostic tool of EVAL in the design of DWCPs to conduct rapid evaluability assessments of national, structural and technical capacities. Such assessments are essential for identifying areas that require strengthening and for providing the necessary training to facilitate systematic monitoring and evaluation of decent work within the framework of DWCPs and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Indicator 1.2.3: Percentage increase in the number of ILO staff graduated as EMCP-certified.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** 5% increase against 2022 baseline in the number of qualified EMCPs.	**Target (end of 2025):** 10% increase against 2022 baseline in number of qualified EMCPs.
Custodians: EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, regions, HRD and ITCILO.		**Status:** Achieved

23. During 2018–21, the Evaluation Strategy set biennial milestones that aimed to increase the number of ILO staff trained as evaluation managers. The target number for trained staff as evaluation managers was progressively raised in this period. These individuals serve as valuable human resources within EVAL's hybrid, decentralized evaluation system.

24. As of the end of 2022, the number of ILO staff who became certified evaluation managers reached 150. The continued demand for EMCP training has led to a significant expansion of the pool of certified evaluation professionals, with a 12.6 per cent increase. As of June 2023, there were 169 certified staff members, surpassing the established milestone. This demonstrates the Office's success in building a larger group of qualified professionals equipped with evaluation expertise.

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[2] Two in Africa and two in Europe and Central Asia.

Outcome 2. Enhanced evaluation systems and processes leading to more credible, strategic and higher-quality evaluations

Sub-outcome 2.1. Use of more strategically oriented evaluations provides evaluative information that is more responsive to strategic and learning needs, enhancing the knowledge base on the ILO's contribution to decent work and providing more learning opportunities

Indicator 2.1.1: Degree to which clustered evaluations are institutionalized and functional in the ILO and are supported by donors by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** Clustered evaluations guidance and procedures updated, and practice adopted for 30% of all required project evaluations.	**Target (end of 2025):** At least 60% of ILO donors are involved in cluster evaluations, including 15 of the largest ILO donors.
Custodians: EVAL (including REOs and DEFPs), regions, technical departments, PARTNERSHIPS, FINANCE donors.		**Status:** On track

25. The introduction of systematic clustering in project evaluation, as part of the 2016 policy, aimed to achieve two main objectives: enhancing the strategic value of evaluations and mitigating evaluation fatigue. The 2018–22 Evaluation Strategy witnessed a significant increase in the number of clustered evaluations, surpassing the set goals. The baseline of 48 per cent of all donors involved in a cluster evaluation is well on track to be approached in 2023. The milestone for 2023 to see 30 per cent of mandated project evaluations covered through cluster evaluations will benefit from the integrated evaluation planning system and increased awareness being rolled out.

26. Recent studies and assessments show that clustered evaluations have effectively reduced evaluation fatigue by nearly 40 per cent, as reported by informants involved in different projects. Additionally, there are efficiency gains as the average cost of clustered evaluations accounted for 0.83 per cent of the total project budget, below the standard ratio of 2 per cent. All of this was achieved without compromising the quality of clustered evaluations, as measured by the ILO quality appraisal system. Clustered evaluation reports received a rating of five on a one-to-six scale, aligning with the ILO's overall quality appraisals. Still, there are major challenges to be addressed. Clustered evaluations are still too often driven by opportunities rather than planning. Administrative difficulties and transaction costs linked to separate budgets have led to a significant portion of clustered evaluations involving only one donor.

Indicator 2.1.2: Degree to which impact and ex-post evaluations are integrated into the evaluation plan of the ILO by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** An approach to integrating impact and ex-post evaluations in the evaluation plan is established and agreed with technical departments and regions, demonstrating added value of the ILO's contribution to decent work and social justice.	**Target (end of 2025):** At least one ex-post evaluation and one impact evaluation are undertaken by EVAL or a technical department with support from EVAL.
Custodians: EVAL, technical departments and regions (including REOs and DEFPs).		**Status:** On track

27. The new evaluation strategy continues to decentralize impact evaluation responsibilities to the regions and departments but provides a more proactive role to EVAL and the departments and regions to jointly identify impact evaluation needs as part of the CIEPs process. A voluntary trust fund for pooling evaluation funds, known as the ILO Evaluation Trust Fund (IETF), has made great strides towards its establishment. This fund aims to provide flexible resources for various evaluation activities, particularly ex-post and impact evaluations.

28. A draft procedural guide and template to record and direct the integrated evaluation plan by region and department have already been prepared and tested by EVAL. As the CIEPS process is further rolled out and becomes a standard evaluation planning process in all departments and regions, it is expected that the identification of knowledge needs and evidence gaps in the ILO will be more clearly articulated. The CIEPS process proposes using global technical team meetings, regional monitoring and evaluation committee meetings, and the outcome-based work planning processes to identify such needs.

Sub-outcome 2.2. Appropriate methodologies' responsiveness to the ILO's mandate, context and learning needs

Indicator 2.2.1: Degree to which participatory methods for evaluations are further developed and applied for an enhanced use of results by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** Guidance materials developed to support centralized and decentralized evaluations include participatory methods in their design. Upgrades in EVAL's ex-post quality appraisal of evaluations are made to measure use of evaluation results.	**Target (end of 2025):** At least 10% of surveyed evaluation users positively report on using evaluation results.
Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).		**Status:** On track

29. EVAL is developing comprehensive guidance material to improve evaluation practices. This includes specific focus on increasing the participation of constituents, beneficiaries and other stakeholders in the evaluation process. These guidance notes will consider feedback received through EVAL's rolling quality appraisal process of evaluation reports, as well as the incorporation of innovative good practices identified through extensive literature reviews. The guidance material will also be broadly disseminated and will encourage feedback from stakeholders.

30. Recognizing the limitations of the current evaluation quality assessments, which tend to prioritize standardization over appropriateness and fit for purpose, EVAL has initiated a pilot project to collaborate with project managers and country or department directors to address these shortcomings (see indicator 2.4.1).

Indicator 2.2.2: Development of improved ILO evaluation policy guidelines and guidance material to best reflect the ILO's mandate and policy drivers by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** Results from EVAL's ex-post quality appraisal of independent evaluations are used to identify improvements to methods and approaches.	**Target (end of 2025):** At least three guidelines are updated or added for evaluations to best reflect the ILO's mandate and policy drivers.
Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).		**Status:** Achieved

31. EVAL continuously improves and updates the guidelines and guidance materials to align with best practices, incorporate innovative methods and approaches, and reflect learnings from ex-post quality appraisals of evaluations.

32. In 2023, an analysis was conducted of the 2022 quality appraisals of evaluation reports to determine how effective the ILO's integration of gender into evaluations had been. From 2015 to 2022, the average United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) evaluation performance indicator meta-scores showed a slight but consistent improvement over time. In 2015, the ILO did not meet the UN-SWAP requirements, as their aggregate evaluation reports obtained an average score below 3.51. However, ILO evaluations have since made progress in integrating gender considerations, coming closer to meeting the UN-SWAP requirements.

33. From 2018 to 2020, there was a small decrease in meta-scores, from 5.22 to 4.13. Despite this decline, the meta-scores still indicated that the ILO's efforts were approaching the requirements set by the 2018 UN-SWAP Technical Note. Subsequently, there was a notable improvement in meta-scores, from 4.13 to 5.71, between 2020 and 2022, again indicating that the ILO was approaching the requirements. However, even with the improvement in the meta-scores, the ILO fell short of meeting the requirements in 2022. The threshold to "meet requirement" was established at 6.50, suggesting that, despite the progress, the ILO still had work to do to fully meet the expectations outlined by UN-SWAP.

34. Through the use of this type of analysis, an updated supplementary note for "3.1. Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation" was created to reflect the learnings from the analysis and provide examples of concrete best practices that could be used by all evaluators to improve the integration of gender equality and address the areas of improvement that were identified.

▶ Figure 2.   UN-SWAP gender meta-scores obtained between 2015 and 2022
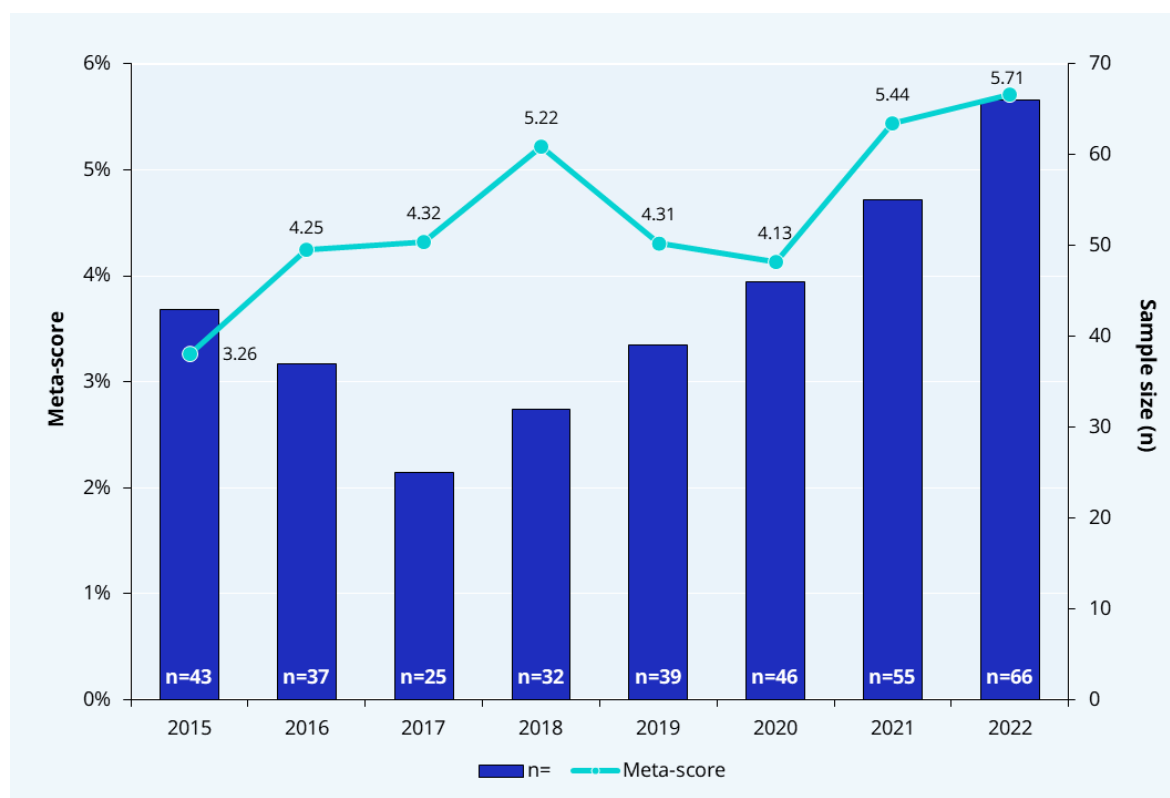
Sub-outcome 2.3. The ILO's continued involvement in relevant initiatives in the United Nations system and multilateral institutions strengthens the independence, quality and credibility of its evaluation work

Indicator 2.3.1: Outcomes and products of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) working groups integrated into Evaluation Strategy guidance documents by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** EVAL participates in three UNEG working groups and contributes to at least one joint inter-agency initiative.	**Target (end of 2025):** At least one ILO evaluation Strategy guidance document has benefited from EVAL's contribution to relevant initiatives in the United Nations system and multilateral institutions.
Custodian: EVAL.		**Status:** Achieved

35. The UNEG Work Plan 2023 focuses on three strategic objectives (SOs): developing professional norms and standards (SO1), enhancing professionalization and capacity (SO2), and influencing policymaking through evaluations (SO3). These objectives are pursued through 18 working groups comprising 246 staff members from 39 UNEG member agencies. The plan includes activities such as peer review of evaluation offices, ethics, gender and human rights in evaluations, evaluation function, policy influence and data analytics.

36. For over a decade, EVAL has actively participated in various UNEG working groups, contributing to the improvement of evaluation professionalization, methods, national evaluation capacities and understanding the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on evaluation. [3] Notable initiatives in 2023 include collaborating with the ILOITC to develop an online self-paced foundation course for mid-level evaluation officers, to be used across the entire United Nations system. EVAL is also co-leading the Prosperity Pillar of a joint UN inter-agency initiative to synthesize key results achieved on the Sustainable Development Goals informing future development agendas, the results of which will be discussed in the Summit of the Future in 2024. [4]

Sub-outcome 2.4. Quality of all types of evaluations assures credible, useful evaluation results that can be acted upon by management and constituents

Indicator 2.4.1: Availability of an improved and effective quality assessment mechanism in the ILO by 2025 to assess the utility of independent evaluations.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** A concept note on novel approaches towards assessing utility-focus evaluations is prepared.	**Target (end of 2025):** At least 10% of evaluations apply novel approaches towards assessing their utility.
Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).		**Status:** On track

37. Systematic quality assessment of evaluation reports is a core component of EVAL's approach to ensuring high-quality reports that are useful and impactful. Over the past seven years, appraised reports consistently received a median score of 5, indicating a "satisfactory" rating.

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[3] In 2023, these included professionalization, methods, decentralized evaluations, evaluation use, data and AI, and national evaluation capacity development.

[4] The SDG Synthesis Coalition is grouped around five pillars (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership). The Prosperity Pillar (co-lead by EVAL) covers Sustainable Development Goals 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Figure 3 illustrates the stable overall median score, while the inter-quartile range recovered to 2 in 2022, suggesting consistent quality across evaluations.

▶ **Figure 3.   Overall median score and evolution of ratings per year [5]**
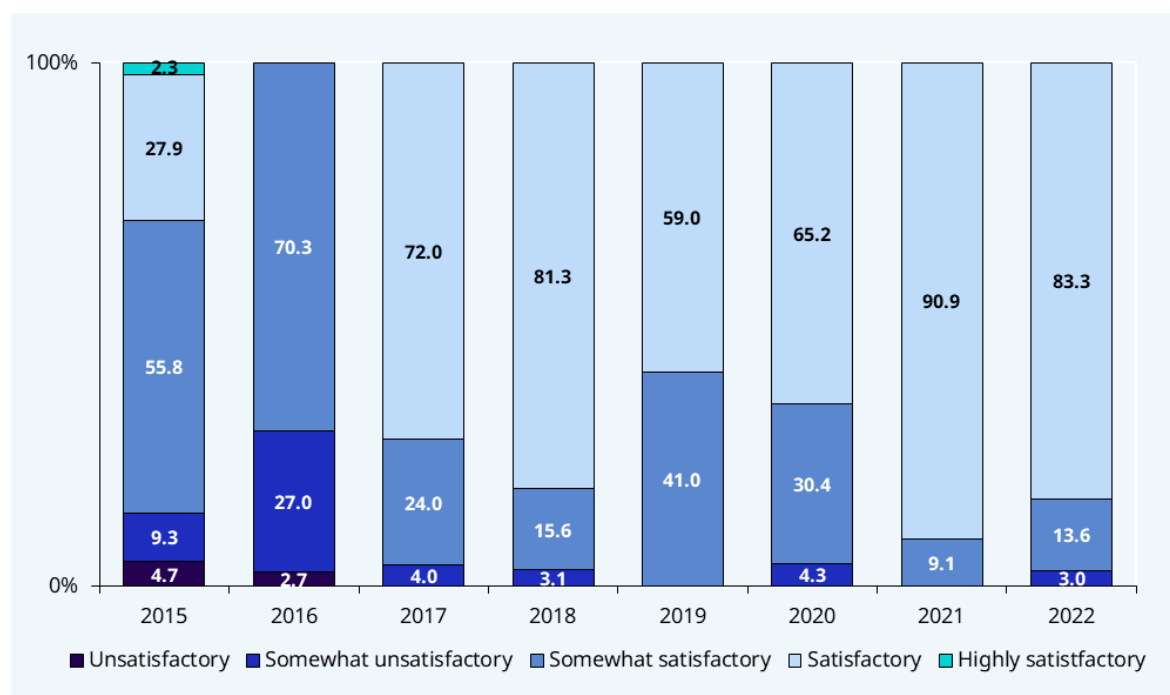
38. The percentage of reports achieving a "satisfactory" rating has notably improved, rising from 28 per cent in 2015 to 83 per cent in 2022. Evaluations across departments and offices demonstrate a generally consistent level of quality, as do evaluations across regions, with all regions receiving a "satisfactory" rating overall. However, there is some variation in median scores per component among regions.

39. The Asia and the Pacific region stands out for performing well, receiving a "satisfactory" rating in nine out of ten components. In contrast, the Europe region exhibits more variability, with only four reports available, including one "highly satisfactory" component and two "unsatisfactory" components.

40. No causal relationship was found between the evaluation budget or time frame and the overall rating of an evaluation report. However, it is worth noting that the average evaluation time frame in 2022 was slightly longer, likely due to the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

41. While the quality assurance process is integral to the ILO's evaluation function, there are limitations that prioritize standardization over appropriateness and relevance. To address these concerns, a pilot project has been initiated, focusing on ten recently completed evaluations representing various regions and themes. The project aims to assess the value and effectiveness of incorporating broader perspectives in evaluating report quality. Expected to conclude in the last quarter of 2023, the project will generate a comprehensive report with recommendations for enhancing EVAL's approach to quality assessment.

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[5] Results for 2015 and 2016 are from the quality assessment conducted in 2017 by Artival. Results for 2017 and 2018 are from the quality assessment conducted in 2019 by Universalia. Results for 2019, 2020 and 2021 include all the evaluation reports that were reviewed through rolling real-time quality assessment by Universalia.

Indicator 2.4.2: Operational and effective quality assessment process for impact evaluations in place and applied in the ILO by 2025.	Biennial milestone (end of 2023): A standardized quality assessment tool and communities of practice guidelines for impact evaluations are agreed and introduced.	Target (end of 2025): At least 50% of impact evaluations in the ILO use EVAL's quality assessment tool and communities of practice for impact evaluations.
Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).		Status: On track

42. In the new strategy period, EVAL will strengthen its role to provide guidance and quality appraisals of impact evaluations undertaken in the ILO. The ex-post quality review of impact evaluations conducted in 2022 and finalized in 2023, on a sample of 15 impact evaluations undertaken in the last decade, showed that overall quality was reasonable, but that it was inadequate in terms of the utility in providing recommendations and policy advice. The assessment also highlighted various recurring issues with impact evaluations, such as a lack of a theory of change, an insufficiently developed evaluation framework and insufficient details on the applied methodology, to name a few. Most of the reports had credible findings, but few addressed the validity beyond the specific case and wider policy implications. EVAL will continue to provide real-time quality assessment of impact evaluation designs and methodologies through its Impact Evaluation Review Facility.

43. The ex-post review of impact evaluations also provided the quality assessment tool called for in the 2023 milestone of this indicator, which will be used to assess the quality of impact evaluations on a rolling basis as part of the quality appraisal process. An *i*-eval THINK Piece on the ex-post quality review has been published.

44. In the communication plan for raising awareness on the new Evaluation Strategy, a specific component will be dedicated to sharing information on the facilities on impact evaluation available to colleagues in the departments and regions, and a new community of practice will be launched by the end of 2023.

Outcome 3.   Expanded knowledge base of evaluation findings and recommendations that effectively contributes to organizational learning and enhances organizational effectiveness

Sub-outcome 3.1.   The ILO's evaluation dashboard (*i*-eval Discovery) is revamped with improved functionality and use

Indicator 3.1.1: Existence of an improved *i*-eval Discovery for enhanced visibility and use by 2025.	Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Revamping of *i*-eval Discovery ongoing to better capture and tag evaluations, and improved evaluation management experience.	Target (end of 2025): 20% increase in the use of *i*-eval Discovery and more user-friendly access through AI plug-ins or comparable innovations.
Custodians: EVAL, Information and Technology Management Department (INFOTEC). Required coverage and availability of evaluation information and outcomes, and awareness and support activities of a communications campaign.		Status: On track

45.   Launched in 2016, the *i-eval Discovery* dashboard enhances the accessibility and visibility of evaluation information. It publicly displays all planned evaluations and completed evaluations, along with their related summaries, lessons learned, good practices, recommendations and management responses to evaluation recommendations. As of early June 2023, *i*-eval Discovery contained over 1,500 evaluation reports, nearly 2,500 lessons learned, more than 1,200 good practices and almost 2,000 recommendations.

46.   For the past two years, EVAL has been working with INFOTEC to modernize the database (*i*-track) that underpins the *i*-eval Discovery dashboard. The launch of the project's first phase will take place before the end of 2023. The project's second phase – which includes an overhaul of how evaluations are planned, managed and completed – will be launched in 2024.

47.   Some key elements of the new design include the enhanced tagging of evaluation information, [6] and the active participation of various officers [7] throughout the evaluation process, which will inform the evaluation's progress in real time. It will explore the possibility of applying AI to facilitate evaluation. The enhancements will improve evaluation use and the user's experience when accessing the new *i*-track database and the *i*-eval Discovery dashboard.

Sub-outcome 3.2. Better targeted knowledge and communication products strengthen their potential use and integration in the ILO's knowledge base

Indicator 3.2.1: Development of enhanced synthesis and meta-analysis reports responsive to needs by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** Approach to a revamped needs-based synthesis and meta-analysis of evaluative information is established.	**Target (end of 2025):** Five audience-specific products of synthesized information on evaluation results and learnings are produced.
Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).		**Status:** On track

48.   Evaluations conducted within the ILO hold significant potential as important tools to provide learning opportunities and address critical questions. As emphasized in the 2022 IEE report, EVAL has consistently produced high-quality knowledge products, including THINK Pieces, synthesis reviews and meta-studies using evaluation reports. Additionally, EVAL organizes learning series to facilitate discussions on findings and recommendations. However, despite these efforts, the use and uptake of evaluation products by stakeholders remain limited, indicating a need for improved engagement.

49.   In the current strategy period, EVAL has continued to generate synthesized information based on evaluation findings and their relevant lessons, aligning with identified needs. This has been accomplished through the production so far of four thematic synthesis reviews on labour protection, decent work in the rural economy, fundamental principles and rights at work, and the ILO's work in Yemen and Iraq; two meta-studies measuring the performance of development cooperation and RBSA-funded interventions; and four studies in the *i*-eval THINK Piece series. Furthermore, thematic synthesis reviews were produced in the Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe and Central Asia regions on gender equality mainstreaming, child labour, youth employment, social dialogue, occupational safety and health, and social protection.

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[6] This includes clustered evaluations, project codes, donors and an improved search function.

[7] These include the evaluation managers, DEFPs, REOs, senior evaluation officers and the knowledge management officer in EVAL.

50. To improve the uptake of synthesized evaluative evidence, EVAL is piloting a refined approach for the annual assessment of the ILO's performance effectiveness to provide evidence that better meets the information needs of stakeholders. This approach entails a shift from a reporting format primarily based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee criteria to a more thematic approach aligned with the ILO's strategic priorities. It will highlight successes, challenges, lessons learned and examples of innovative work. Furthermore, performance results will be presented based on CPOs and policy outcomes, allowing for tracking progress and generating lessons related to the implementation of these objectives. This new approach, once validated, will be applied to other knowledge products to enhance learning and decision-making processes within the ILO. The outcome of this innovative approach can be consulted in Part II of this report.

Indicator 3.2.2: Functional and effective mechanism to validate good practices in place in the ILO by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** Concept note on the validation process of good practices developed and discussed with regions and departments.	**Target (end of 2025):** At least 25% of good practices are validated using the agreed validation approach before being shared with communities of practice and global technical teams.
Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).		**Status:** Delayed

51. A total of 1,225 good practices have been identified through evaluations since 2005, with 722 of them generated in the past five years. This abundance of knowledge holds significant potential for replication and upscaling in future projects. EVAL, in collaboration with the regional network and technical departments, is developing a concept note to validate the emerging good practices identified from evaluations. EVAL also monitors the quality of the "good practices" component in independent evaluations. The latest assessment reveals a slight decrease in the score, from five in 2021 to four in 2022. Notably, there is a growing trend of weakness in good practices that specify target users, with a higher percentage of evaluations in 2022 omitting references to target users compared with previous years. These issues, along with others, will be addressed in the concept note that outlines a validation process for good practices to be finalized in the first quarter of 2024.

Indicator 3.2.3: Extent to which innovative ways to present targeted evaluation results exist and are applied in the ILO by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** Revamped communication strategy ongoing to include innovative ways to present targeted evaluation results.	**Target (end of 2025):** 25% of new communication and knowledge management products incorporate innovative ways to present targeted results.
Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).		**Status:** On track

52. EVAL's communications products are diverse and have grown both in quantity and scope since 2016 (figure 4). They are primarily used to provide constituents, donors and ILO staff with targeted and useful evaluation information to help inform decision-making. To build on the achievements from the previous Evaluation Strategy, EVAL will develop a new communication plan for the next three years, which will include innovative ways to present evaluation results. The communication plan will be informed by the new Evaluation Strategy, its related theory of change and the results from the biennial workshop that EVAL hosted in February 2023 with the evaluation network.

53. An information guide on the 2022 HLE of ILO's COVID-19 response was launched during the first quarter of 2023. It engaged the ILO's wider audience of the topic in a new and innovative manner. Preliminary findings indicate that the reactions and use of the information guide were favourable, leading to similar activities in the future.

▶ Figure 4.   **Number of evaluation-related communication products, 2016–23**
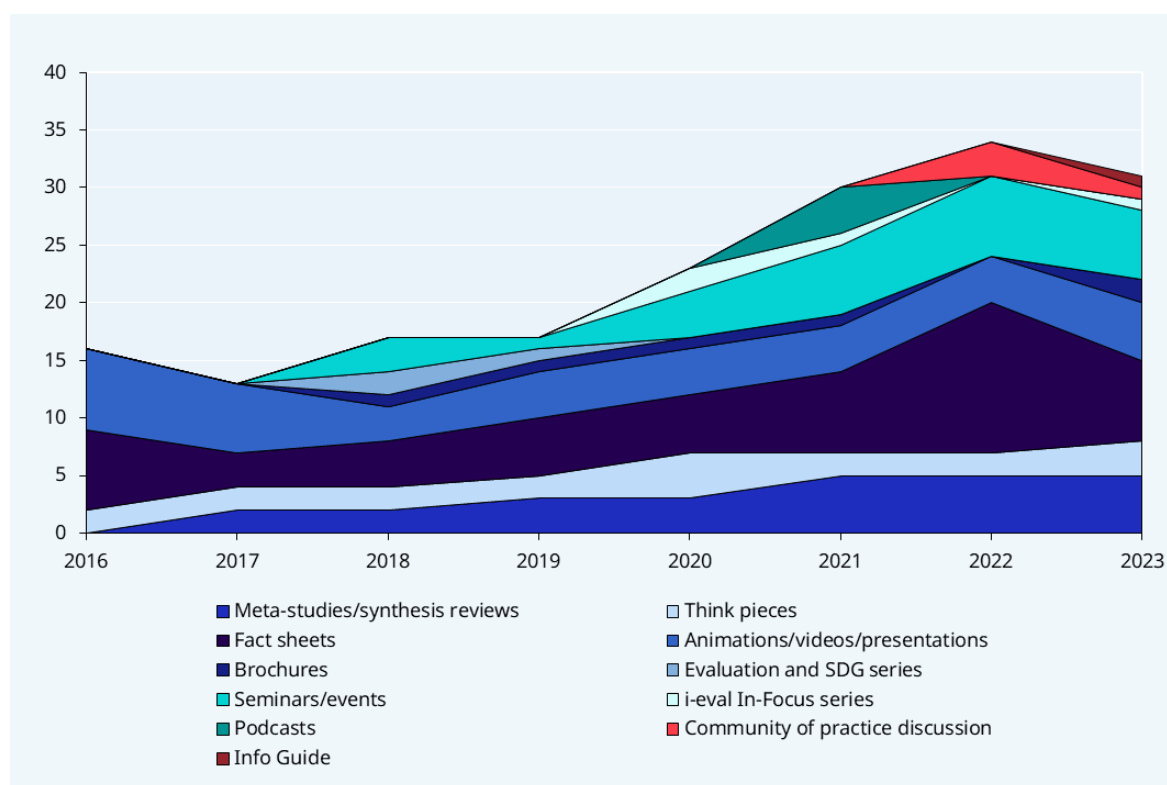
Indicator 3.2.4: Percentage of evaluation recommendations fully or partially implemented within 12 months of completion of evaluation. Effective mechanism to assess the quality of follow-up to recommendations in place in the ILO by 2025.	Biennial milestone (end of 2023): 75% of recommendations were fully or partially implemented within 12 months of completion of evaluation. Process to assess quality of follow-up established.	Target (end of 2025): 85% of recommendations were fully or partially implemented within 12 months of completion of evaluation.

Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions, technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).	Status: Achieved

54. Management responses to recommendations from independent evaluations are required to be submitted by line managers, indicating whether: (a) action taken in response to a recommendation has been completed or partially completed; (b) no action is planned; (c) action has not yet been taken; or (d) the recommendation has been rejected. The timeliness and quality of management responses have improved since the launch of EVAL's Automated Management Response System in 2018.

55. For the period under review, all of the required 66 management responses to recommendations from independent evaluations (100 per cent) were received, accounting for a total of 555 recommendations. Of these recommendations that have been addressed by line

managers, action has been "completed" or "partially completed" for 79 per cent of recommendations, thus achieving the milestone for 2023 (figure 5).

56. As in previous years, the majority of recommendations do not involve high resource implications. In 2022, this accounted for a total of 87 per cent of recommendations (figure 6), indicating that cost is not an obstacle for a recommendation to be actioned. Moreover, 96 per cent of recommendations were considered to be of medium or high priority (figure 7) and 87 per cent of recommendations required a short- to medium-term time frame to implement (figure 8).

▶ **Figure 5.   Status of management responses to evaluation recommendations, 2022**
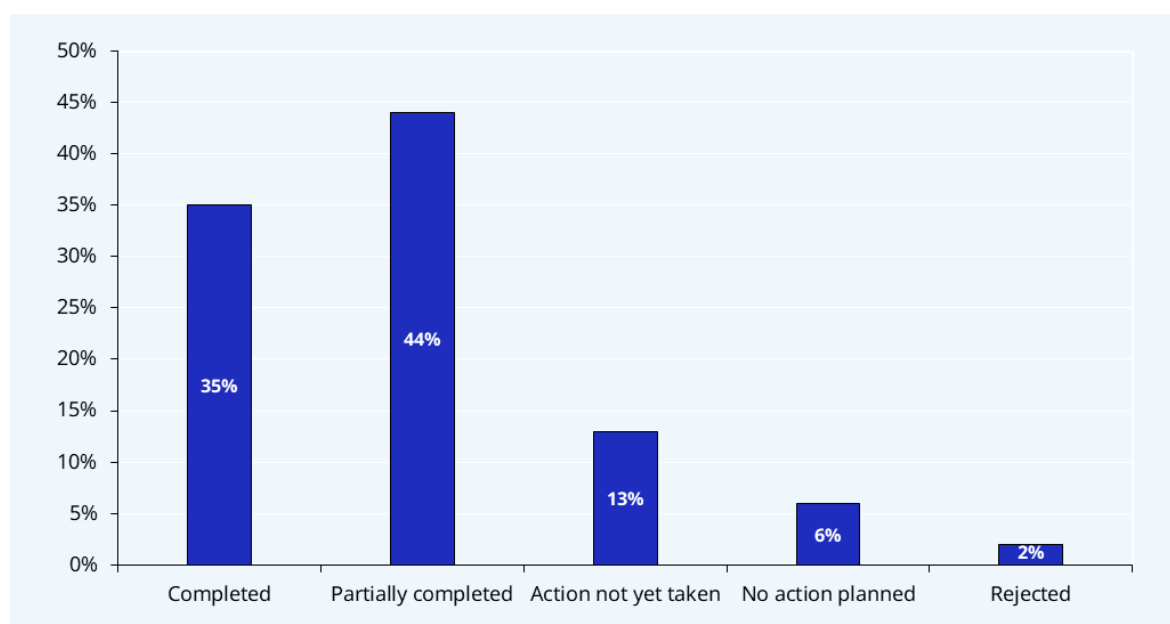
▶ **Figure 6.   Recommendations by resource implications, 2022**
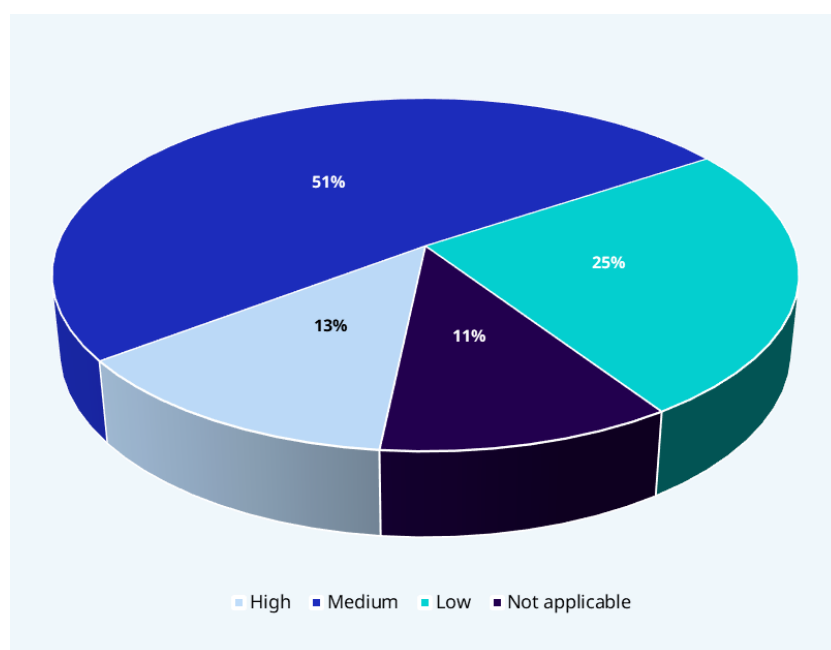
▶ **Figure 7.   Recommendations by level of priority, 2022**

64%

32%

2% 2%

■ High   ■ Medium   ■ Low   ■ Not applicable

▶ **Figure 8.   Recommendations by time frame, 2022**

32%

55%

10%

3%

■ Long-term   ■ Medium-term   ■ Short-term   ■ Not applicable

▶ **Table 2.   Status of management responses by regions and departments, 2022**

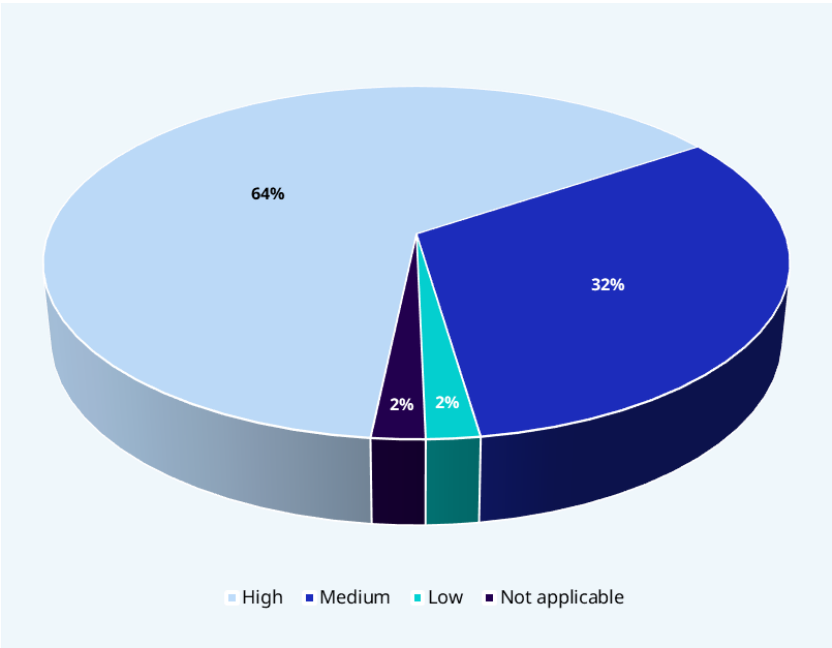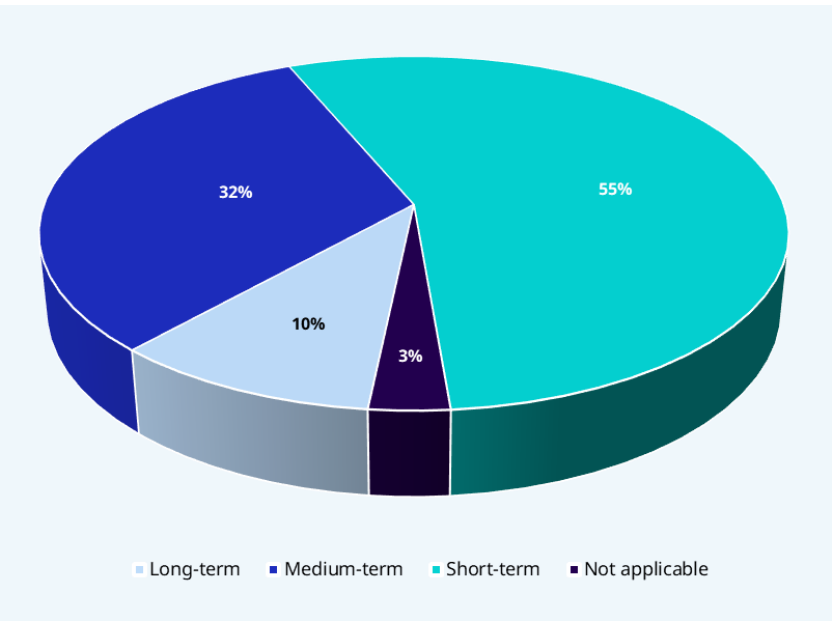| Administrative region or office/unit	Evaluation reports requiring management response (66)	Completed	Partially completed	No action planned	Action not yet taken	Rejected	Not applicable
	No. of recommendations						
Africa	169	43	71	17	34	4	0
Arab States	78	42	16	3	13	4	0
Asia and the Pacific	119	53	46	7	11	2	0
Europe and Central Asia	26	3	20	0	3	0	0
Latin America and the Caribbean	53	8	41	0	4	0	0
Subtotal for regions	**445**	**149**	**194**	**27**	**65**	**10**	**0**
EMPLOYMENT	20	7	10	1	2	0	0
ENTERPRISES	17	7	5	3	1	1	0
GOVERNANCE	26	4	19	1	2	0	0
NORMES	9	1	8	0	0	0	0
SOCPRO	25	17	6	0	0	2	0
WORKQUALITY	13	12	0	1	0	0	0
Subtotal for offices/units	**110**	**48**	**48**	**6**	**5**	**3**	**0**
Grand total	**555**	**197**	**242**	**33**	**70**	**13**	**0**
Percentage		**35%**	**44%**	**6%**	**13%**	**2%**	**0%**
Total of completed and partially completed management responses		**79%**					

Sub-outcome 3.3. Improved tracking of uptake and use by constituents and management of the knowledge and lessons generated from evaluations for governance and decision-making

Indicator 3.3.1: Extent to which the profile of evaluation results is strengthened in the ILO's strategic and programmatic documents (programme and budget, programme implementation report, Governing Body reports), and knowledge-sharing platforms.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): EVAL's integrated evaluation planning approach promotes the enhanced use of findings in governance and reporting mechanisms of the ILO.

Target (end of 2025): Evaluation findings are part of at least one strategic and programmatic document, and in one knowledge-sharing platform.

Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs). **Status:** Achieved

57. According to the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25, the evaluation function is considered a valuable driver of performance improvement and the Organization's strategic focus will remain committed on fostering a strong evaluation culture, with increased uptake of findings and recommendations.

58. EVAL closely monitors the uptake of evaluation findings in key strategic documents such as the ILO's programme and budget. A study conducted from 2021 to 2023 revealed 115 references to EVAL outputs in 34 strategic documents, including Governing Body reports, programme and budget and programme implementation reports.

59. While an average of 14 per cent of strategic documents used evaluation findings and recommendations from the 240 sampled documents in 2021–23, there was a variation in usage. In 2021, only 10 per cent of Governing Body reports contained references, compared with 22 per cent in 2022, and currently 11 per cent in 2023 (partial results). Notably, gender equality, research and knowledge management, and a Standards Review Mechanism for the Tripartite Working Group were among the most-cited topics (figure 9).

60. Specific examples illustrate the practical impact of evaluations. Independent project evaluations on labour relations, collective bargaining, occupational safety and health, working conditions and labour migration significantly influenced the formulation of strategy texts for outcomes 1 and 6 in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2024–25. The high-level evaluation on the COVID-19 response played a crucial role in shaping Report V, the background report for the 2023 recurrent discussion. These instances demonstrate how evaluation findings actively inform and shape the ILO's policies and actions to address important labour-related issues. [8]

▶ **Figure 9.**   **Distribution of common topics using evaluation references**

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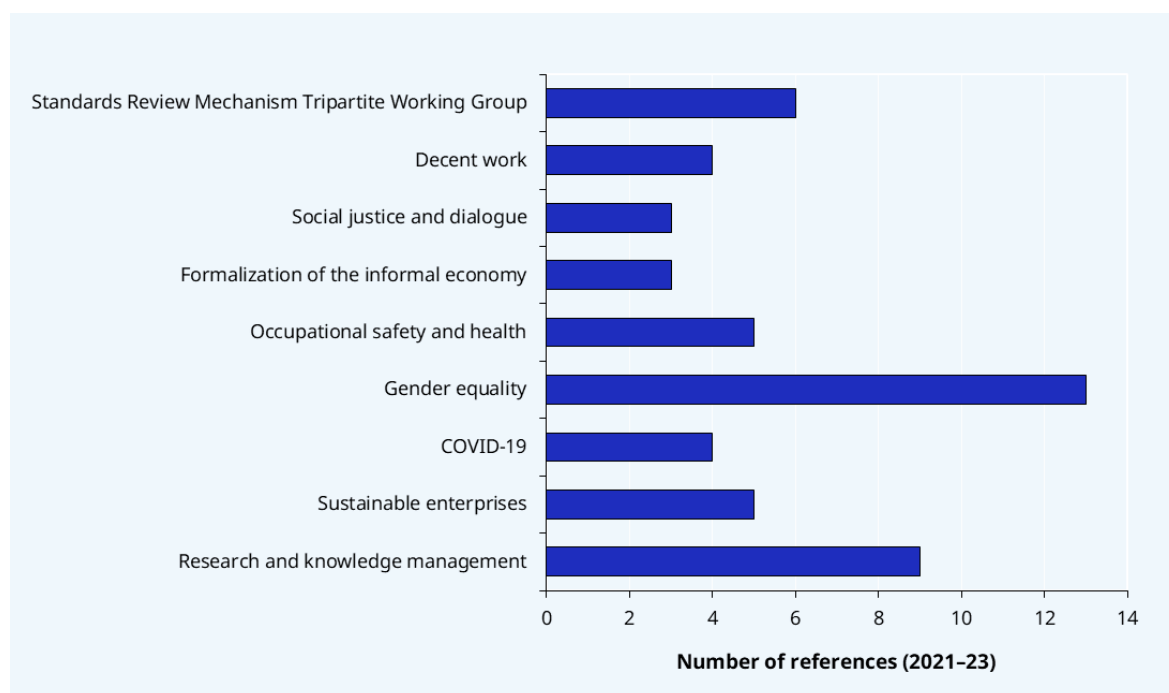
[8] The Programme Implementation Report 2022–23 had not been released at the time of writing; however, the Programme Implementation Report 2020–21 provides a good example of evaluation findings and recommendations being used. The report includes eight references to evaluations, including the *High-level independent evaluation of ILO's research and knowledge management strategies and approaches 2010–19*; and the *High-level independent evaluation of the ILO's Decent Work Programme in the Andean countries of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 2016–19.* The report uses the HLEs to provide evidence and support for strategic topics.

Indicator 3.3.2: Enhanced strategic role of the EAC and regional chapters in the ILO by 2025 for the strategic identification of knowledge requirements, uptake and use of evaluation results.	Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Approach concept note on the role and membership of the EAC and regional chapters reviewed and agreed with the EAC and the regions.	Target (end of 2025): EAC discussions are 90% on strategic issues, focusing on evaluation insights and implications arising from HLE, synthesis reviews and meta-analyses.
Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).		**Status:** Delayed

61.   In anticipation of the appointment of a new EAC chair, EVAL conducted consultations and updates through correspondence with EAC members. Additionally, EVAL conducted correspondence-based consultations to gather views on the selection of topics for HLEs in the coming years. In response to a request from the EAC in 2021, EVAL incorporated the criterion of "contribution to recurrent discussions" in the selection process, which has since been implemented. This consideration has been carried through by EVAL during the consultation of constituents on EVAL's rolling work plan for 2023. A concept note on the role and membership of the EAC and regional chapters will be developed in a consultative and inclusive manner once the new chair is in place.

Indicator 3.3.3: Number of comprehensive and timely overviews of the overall effectiveness of the ILO produced annually by 2025.	Biennial milestone (end of 2023): One annual overview of ILO effectiveness produced and results presented to the Governing Body through the annual evaluation report.	Target (end of 2025): Three annual overviews of ILO effectiveness produced and results presented to the Governing Body through the annual evaluation report.
Custodian: EVAL.		**Status:** Achieved

62.   EVAL maintains its commitment to delivering annual performance assessments of the ILO's decent work results and effectiveness, evaluating strategic relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency. This assessment is based on a well-established and robust methodology, using ILO development cooperation projects as proxies. Performance is measured through the evaluations of projects with budgets over US$1 million on a rolling basis, assessing them against 29 performance indicators. These assessments are aggregated and reviewed to provide the annual performance assessment of the ILO's strategic relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency.

63.   For the first time, the results are now presented following a more thematic approach that aligns with the ILO's policy outcome and CPOs. This approach aims to present evidence that is better tailored to meet information needs (section 3.2.1). Part II of the report provides a summary of this exercise.

Enabling environment

Enabler 1: Degree to which a functioning trust fund exists in the ILO by 2025 that is supported by donors.	Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Approach to a functioning trust fund discussed and agreed among ILO custodians.	Target (end of 2025): Consultations started with at least two donors based on concept note on the trust fund.
Custodians: PARTNERSHIPS, FINANCE and EVAL.		**Status:** On track

64. Following extensive internal discussions, an initial concept note for the IETF will lay the basis for a voluntary functioning trust fund within the ILO. The IETF will provide support for the evaluation of development cooperation activities, with a primary focus on enhancing organizational learning. It will allow EVAL to conduct ex-post and impact evaluations to draw insights from past experiences and guide future initiatives. The ILO will actively seek dedicated voluntary contributions from development partners to secure funding for the IETF. Once established, the IETF will be under the management of EVAL. EVAL will engage in consultations with managers, actively seeking input from the EAC and the Governing Body to identify knowledge gaps and learning needs that can be addressed through the fund. The IETF will facilitate evaluations requiring longer-term time frames that cannot be accommodated within project timelines.

Enabler 2: Percentage of ILO DWCPs and development cooperation-funded interventions that are responsive to constituents' institutional capacity needs and their on-the-ground realities.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** At least 50% of ILO development cooperation projects involved constituents in design and implementation. At least 60% of new DWCPs (against 2022 baseline) involved constituents in their design.	**Target (end of 2025):** At least 60% of ILO development cooperation projects involved constituents in design and implementation. At least 70% of new DWCPs (against 2022 baseline) involved constituents in their design.
Custodians: Evaluation network (EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, evaluation managers) ACTEMP, ACTRAV, PARTNERSHIPS and PROGRAM.		**Status:** On track

65. An inclusive, constituent-oriented project cycle that allows for the incorporation of constituent needs through consultation is essential in creating an enabling environment for evaluation. By actively involving constituents, the impact and sustainability of interventions get reinforced. In turn, an enabling environment strengthens evaluations by enhancing their capacity to inform project implementation and organizational learning, ultimately leading to more effective and meaningful outcomes.

66. According to the results from EVAL's meta-study on decent work results and the effectiveness of ILO operations, 64 per cent of ILO development cooperation interventions demonstrated strong performance in involving constituents in their design and implementation. This represents a significant increase of 22 per cent since 2021. Additionally, all approved DWCPs in 2022–23 have benefited from the involvement of constituents during their formulation, surpassing the biennial milestone for 2023.

Enabler 3: Integrated evaluation needs into monitoring and evaluation frameworks of development cooperation projects by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** ILO key custodians discuss and agree on practical ways to strengthen monitoring procedures, including evaluability assessments of development cooperation-funded interventions.	**Target (end of 2025):** 20% increase (against 2022 baseline) in ILO development cooperation-funded interventions that have proper monitoring systems in place, as confirmed in evaluability assessment.
Custodians: PROGRAM, PARTNERSHIPS, EVAL, regions and technical departments.		**Status:** On track

67. The improvement of monitoring and reporting practices is essential to support evaluative needs in the ILO, including as a prerequisite for improved integrated evaluation planning. Furthermore, enhanced monitoring and reporting is crucial to ensure the ILO addresses underperforming projects and programmes on a real-time basis.

68. Progress has been made in strengthening the ILO's monitoring and reporting systems since the introduction of the new Evaluation Strategy 2023–25. A participatory analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of monitoring and reporting has been undertaken by the Office to identify practical solutions of enhancing its robustness, efficiency and relevance. These will be agreed upon by all relevant departments at headquarters and in the field and will involve information technology enhancements and procedural changes. The aim is to augment the comprehensiveness, reliability, accessibility and timeliness of monitoring data for effective decision-making, accountability and organizational learning. Implementation of these improvements is expected to occur in 2024–25.

Enabler 4: Number of strategic programmatic and knowledge-sharing and learning discussions to which EVAL contributes with evaluative inputs.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** EVAL (including REOs and DEFPs) invited to at least two strategic programmatic, knowledge-sharing and learning discussions to provide evaluative inputs.	**Target (end of 2025):** EVAL (including REOs and DEFPs) invited to at least four strategic programmatic, knowledge-sharing and learning discussions to provide evaluative inputs.
Custodians: EVAL (including REOs and DEFPs), regions, technical departments, RESEARCH, PROGRAM, IAO and IOAC.		**Status:** On track

69. The evaluation network actively participates in Office-wide strategic, programmatic and knowledge-sharing events, although this could be more systematic. EVAL and the REOs participated in the semi-annual regional outcome-based work planning meetings in 2023, offering valuable feedback on lessons learned from development cooperation projects and DWCPs towards achieving programme and budget outcomes. EVAL's annual overview of trends in the ILO's effectiveness and results, based on project evaluations (see Part II), has recently been enhanced by providing a comparative review of performance based on policy outcomes and clusters of CPOs. This has the potential to improve the contribution EVAL can make to these strategic outcome-based work discussions.

70. Furthermore, there are commendable examples of the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific REO's active participation in workshops for regional programme officers and monitoring and evaluation officers in Asia and the Pacific, as well as the Latin America and the Caribbean regions. These events often benefit from synthesis reviews of evaluation reports in thematic areas to stimulate discussions and foster greater collaboration and learning. Implementing such systematic approaches will enhance the contribution of the evaluation network to the ILO's evidence-based decision-making processes.

Enabler 5: Availability of formal training that integrates evaluative thinking in the ILO by 2025.	**Biennial milestone (end of 2023):** Training module on evaluation for ILO staff under development.	**Target (end of 2025):** Training module on evaluation for ILO staff available in ILO People.
Custodians: HRD, ITCILO and EVAL.		**Status:** On track

71. Over the years, EVAL has achieved success in integrating evaluation concepts into the ILO's e-Governance training and increasing the knowledge of evaluation among ILO staff through the

induction programme. However, the findings from the 2022 IEE report highlighted the ongoing need to strengthen the evaluation culture across the entire Organization to enhance its utilization.

72. To address this, one approach is to foster critical reflection and evaluative thinking among staff for creating an effective and learning organization. In collaboration with the ITCILO, EVAL will deploy an online training module on evaluation for all staff during the current strategy period. Parallel discussions have commenced with HRD to ensure that the module is made available in ILO People's training catalogue.

73. By making the training module widely accessible, EVAL aspires to facilitate the integration of evaluation principles and practices into the daily work of staff, ultimately contributing to more effective and informed decision-making processes.

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

74. For close to a decade, EVAL has been conducting annual assessments of the ILO's effectiveness through its annual evaluation report. These assessments rely on the analysis of independent evaluation reports of development cooperation projects, which serve as proxies for measuring performance and capturing lessons learned. This data allows EVAL to report on the ILO's overall development effectiveness, as required in the previous and current Evaluation Strategy.

75. In Part II of this report, EVAL presents the findings from the most recent meta-analysis, focusing on all independent project evaluations conducted in 2022. Additionally, interesting data has been gathered on the performance results achieved by interventions funded with RBSA funds from 2018 to 2022. This data supplements our overview of trends in the ILO's effectiveness and results. The report has also been enriched by providing a comparative review of performance based on policy outcomes and clusters of CPOs across the different regions.

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

76. The effectiveness of operations was evaluated using a set of 29 predefined performance criteria, which were rated on a four-point scale: unsuccessful (1), partly successful (2), successful (3) and highly successful (4). [9] As stated in Part I, the reporting on the ILO's effectiveness and results now adopts a thematic approach for the first time, aligning with the strategic priorities of the Organization and highlighting innovative work examples. By presenting performance results based on CPOs and policy outcomes, the aim is to enhance the learning process and support informed decision-making.

2.1.1. The ILO'S overall performance ratings, 2022

1 In 2022, 58 per cent of ILO interventions demonstrated average or above average performance, indicating a 7 per cent improvement compared to the performance levels observed in 2021.
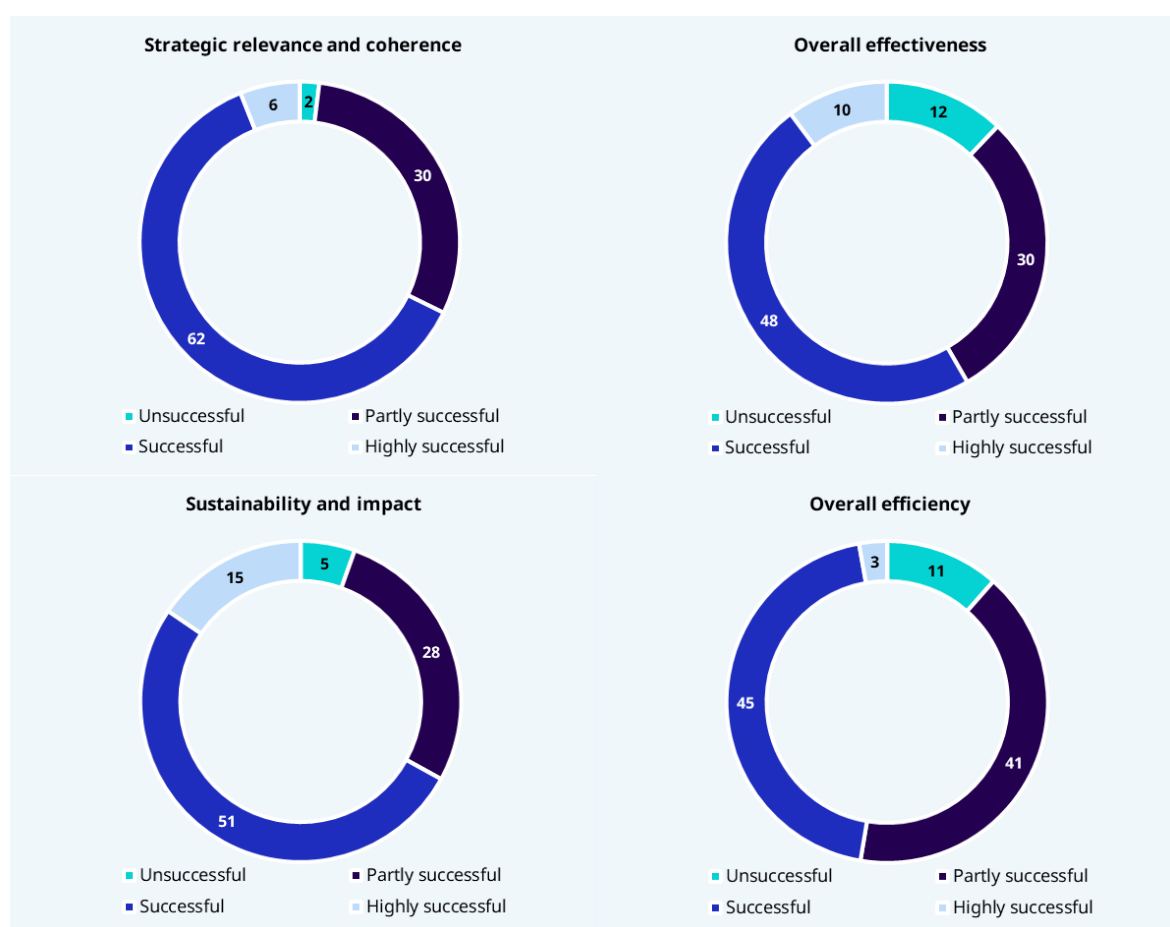
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[9] Performance information was structured around four main categories: strategic relevance and alignment; effectiveness, sustainability and impact; implementation performance and efficiency of management and resources used; and current cooperation development concerns.

77. Aggregating performance results by cluster of performance criteria, nearly 70 per cent of the evaluated interventions exhibited strategic relevance and coherence, and achieved positive sustainability and impact outcomes in 2022. However, when considering overall effectiveness in achieving results, the ratings were positive but displayed more variability, with approximately 60 per cent of interventions attaining successful performance (figure 10).

> **2** The weakest performance results were observed in terms of overall efficiency, with less than 50 per cent of ILO interventions performing at an average or above-average level in this aspect.

▶ **Figure 10. Aggregated results by cluster of performance criteria, 2022 (percentage)**

Strategic relevance and coherence

- 2 — Unsuccessful
- 30 — Partly successful
- 62 — Successful
- 6 — Highly successful

■ Unsuccessful   ■ Partly successful
■ Successful   ■ Highly successful

Overall effectiveness

- 12 — Unsuccessful
- 30 — Partly successful
- 48 — Successful
- 10 — Highly successful

■ Unsuccessful   ■ Partly successful
■ Successful   ■ Highly successful

Sustainability and impact

- 5 — Unsuccessful
- 28 — Partly successful
- 51 — Successful
- 15 — Highly successful

■ Unsuccessful   ■ Partly successful
■ Successful   ■ Highly successful

Overall efficiency

- 11 — Unsuccessful
- 41 — Partly successful
- 45 — Successful
- 3 — Highly successful

■ Unsuccessful   ■ Partly successful
■ Successful   ■ Highly successful

2.1.2. How relevant and coherent was the ILO's work in 2022?

▶ **Figure 11. Percentage of interventions with "highly successful" or "successful" scores for strategic relevance and alignment, 2020–22 [10]**
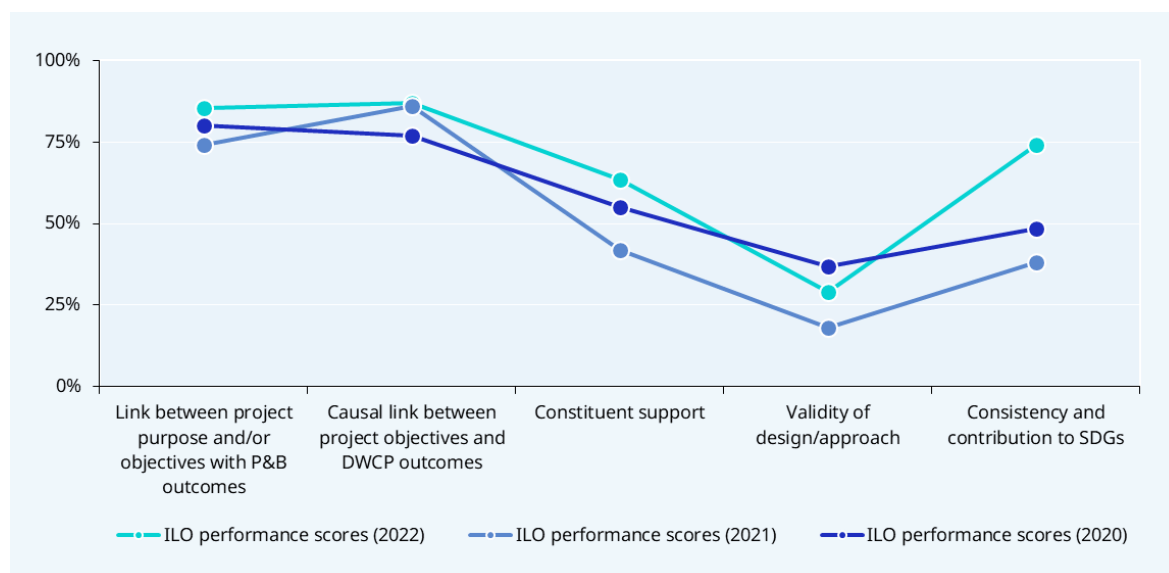
3   **There was an increased level of performance in 2022 regarding the involvement of constituents in the design and implementation of initiatives, with successful involvement reported in over 60 per cent of the assessed cases, demonstrating the ILO's commitment to engaging stakeholders in their development cooperation efforts.**

78. The results from 2022 remained consistent with previous years, although certain key areas showed further improvements in performance. In 2022, 67 per cent of the overall performance was positive in terms of strategic relevance and coherence. In over 80 per cent of the cases, the ILO's development cooperation interventions were found to be linked effectively with the programme and budget and DWCP outcomes, reinforcing their strategic relevance.

79. The ratings from 2022 also indicated strong performance in terms of consistency and contributions of the ILO's work to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly when compared to the two previous years, where ratings were positive for less than half of evaluated interventions. However, an ongoing area of weakness since 2020 relates to the validity of design in intervention, with poor performance attributed to unrealistic expectations and timelines.

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[10] The percentage for each performance criterion corresponds to the ratio of projects that received scores of 3 and 4. This applies to figures 11–14.

2.1.3. Did ILO development cooperation operations lead to effective results in 2022?

► **Figure 12. Percentage of interventions with "highly successful" or "successful" scores for effectiveness, 2020–22**
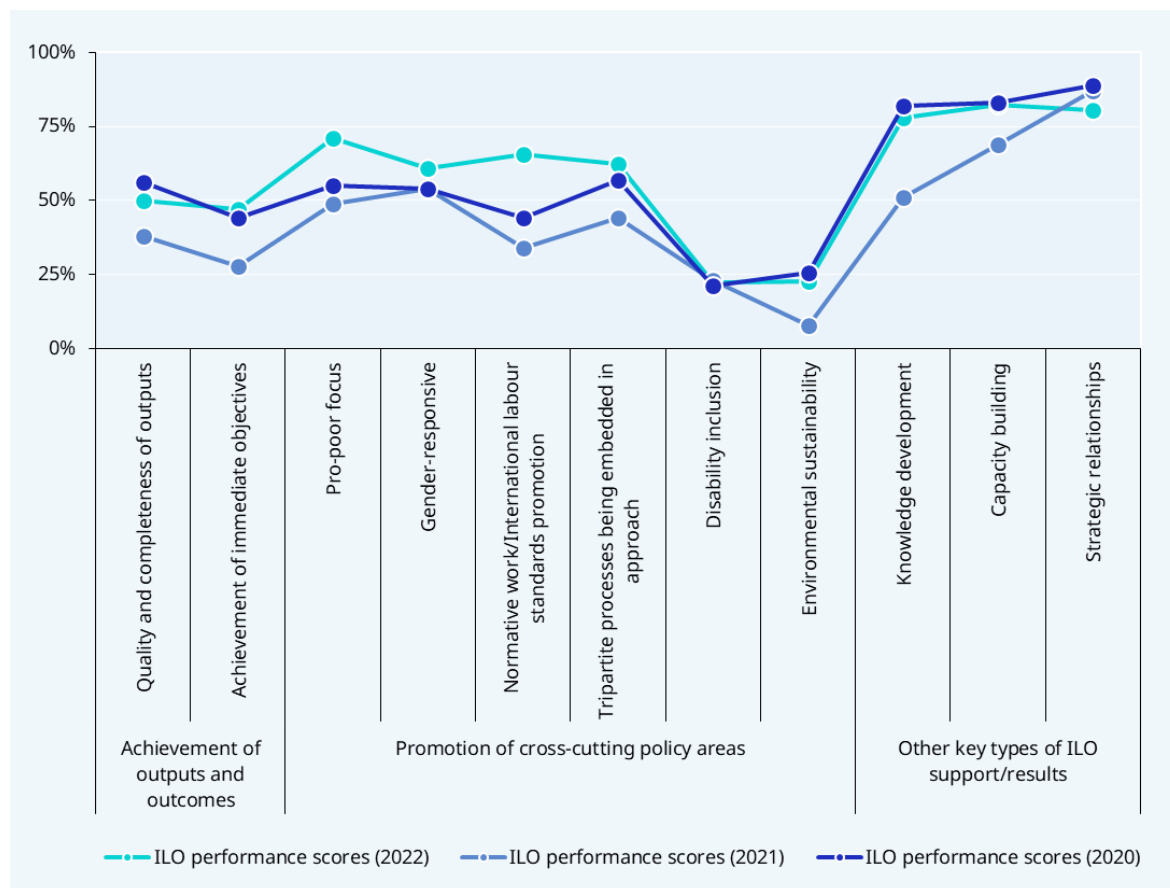

| 4 | Continued weak performance was observed regarding the responsiveness of interventions towards disability inclusion and environmental sustainability. |

80. Comparatively, the effectiveness of interventions in 2022 improved significantly compared to 2021, as illustrated in figure 12. In 2022, nearly 50 per cent of interventions demonstrated successful attainment of their respective outputs and outcomes. However, this achievement was often hindered by implementation delays caused by factors such as COVID-19, socio-political issues and overly ambitious designs.

81. Despite these challenges, there was commendable performance in promoting crosscutting policy areas in 2022. Notably, interventions aimed at improving the living standards of the poorest of the population exhibited strong results, with 70 per cent performing at or above the average. Gender-responsive interventions, progress in normative work and the promotion of international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue also demonstrated success in over 60 per cent of interventions. In 2022, approximately 80 per cent of ILO interventions effectively utilized knowledge, expertise and capacity-building, and developed strategic relationships. This accomplishment contributed to the attainment of strategic outcomes and enhanced recognition of the ILO's expertise, as highlighted in section 2.1.3. Less than one quarter of projects demonstrated satisfactory performance across all years in these areas.

2.1.4. How sustainable and impactful were ILO interventions in 2022?

▶ **Figure 13.   Percentage of interventions with "highly successful" or "successful" scores for sustainability and impact, 2020–22**
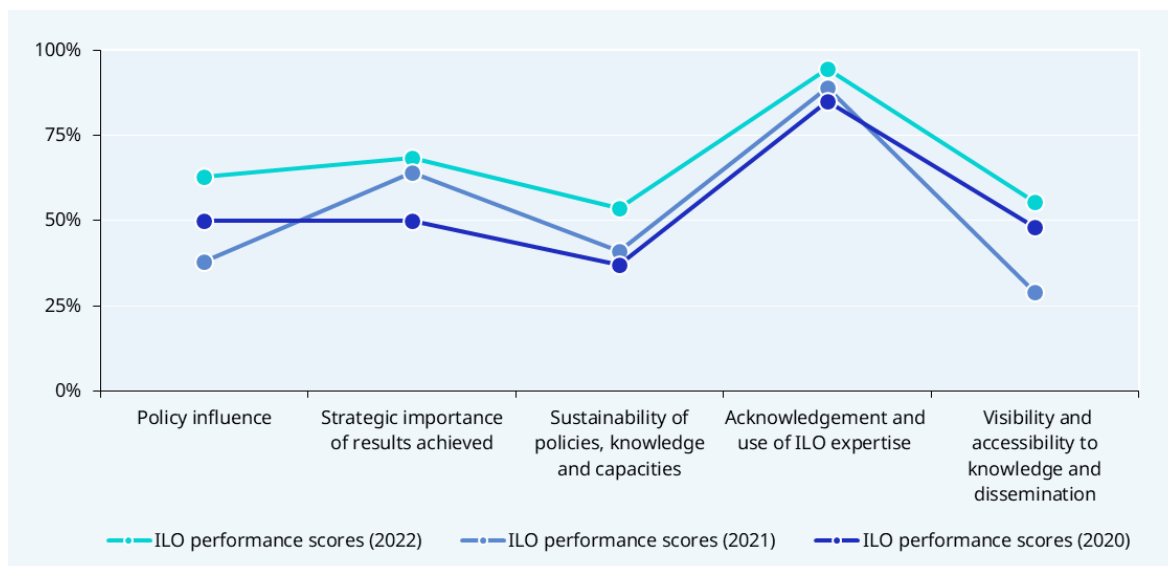

5 In 2022, performance related to sustainability and impact exhibited its highest level compared to previous years. Over 60 per cent of projects facilitated policy discussions and yielded influential results, with the achieved outcomes holding significant strategic importance.

82. Stakeholders demonstrated ownership and commitment, sufficient capacity and resources to maintain or scale up advancements achieved in more than half of the assessed interventions.

83. Furthermore, the ILO's expertise was acknowledged in over 90 per cent of projects, indicating the Organization's recognized contribution and credibility in various endeavours. The knowledge generated through these initiatives was effectively disseminated in over 50 per cent of initiatives.

2.1.5. Did the ILO continue to be efficient in 2022?

▶ **Figure 14. Percentage of interventions with "highly successful" or "successful" scores for efficiency, 2020–22**
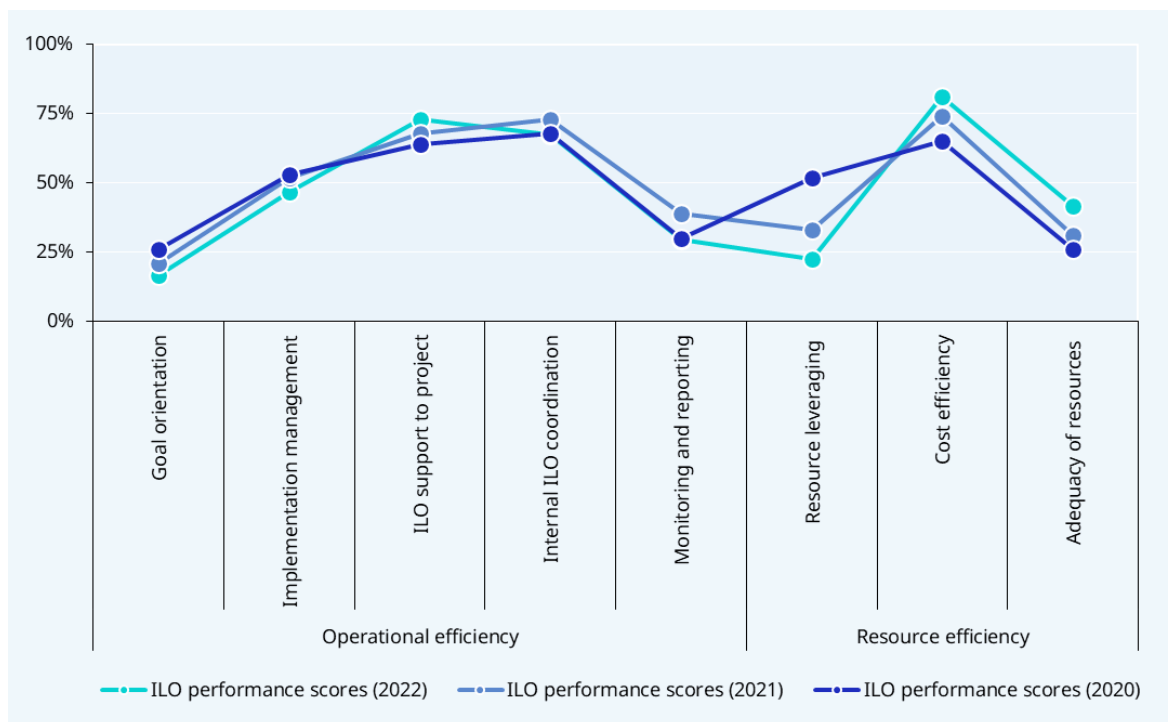
6 The overall performance on efficiency continued to be low in 2022, with less than 50 per cent of interventions achieving average or above-average scores.

84. The strongest performance was consistently associated with the quality of the ILO's technical, programmatic, administrative and financial support to projects, as well as internal coordination within ILO programmes and units.

85. However, resource-leveraging and the adequacy of human and financial resources remained areas of poor performance, displaying similar trends observed in previous years. These results contrast with the high levels of cost-efficiency achieved over time, indicating a discrepancy between resource planning and project outcomes.

86. Implementation management exhibited variable performance, with slightly over half of reports receiving successful ratings across the years. The weakest results were observed in goal orientation, with the lowest ratings recorded in 2022. This can be attributed to limited results frameworks, unrealistic targets and inadequate indicators, leading to challenges in monitoring project progress. Linked to this, insufficient performance was identified in monitoring frameworks and reporting within close to 70 per cent of projects, highlighting areas that continue to require further attention and improvement.

> ▶ **Box. Findings from the independent review on the effectiveness of the Regular Budget Supplementary Account fund in delivering decent work results, 2018–22**
>
> Over the years, EVAL has conducted independent reviews of the effectiveness of the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) fund in delivering decent work results. The assessments followed the same methodology as the performance review of development-cooperation-funded interventions. The latest review was conducted in 2023, focusing on the fund's strategic importance and its funded interventions for the period 2018–22. The findings of this review complement the evidence presented in the previous meta-study of RBSA-funded interventions from 2013 to 2017.
>
> The review revealed predominantly positive performance results of RBSA-funded interventions from 2018 to 2022. Overall, these interventions either matched or outperformed development cooperation-funded initiatives in 81 per cent of the effectiveness criteria for decent work results.
>
> Notably, the strategic relevance of RBSA-funded initiatives exhibited high-performance trends, with over 75 per cent of interventions achieving average or above-average performance in establishing causal links between project objectives and DWCP outcomes. Interventions also demonstrated a strong connection with policy outcomes. In addition, RBSA-funded interventions demonstrated strong performance in their focus on poverty reduction.
>
> Regarding effectiveness, more than 80 per cent of assessed RBSA-funded interventions demonstrated significant achievements in establishing strategic relationships, contributing to knowledge development and capacity-building. Sustainability and impact were also notable areas of success, as interventions excelled in promoting the use of ILO expertise, with over 80 per cent performing at an average or above-average level.
>
> Regarding implementation performance and efficiency in management and resource allocation, interventions displayed high effectiveness in internal coordination, providing robust support, satisfactory management and cost-efficiency.
>
> Barriers to achieving desired results included internal factors such as inadequate intervention design, implementation challenges and lack of goal orientation. External factors – such as political will, institutional and political instability, varying capacities of social partners, natural disasters and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic – also posed challenges to the attainment of objectives.

2.2. Performance trends by policy outcome and country programme outcomes by region, 2022

87. For the first time, as a pilot experience, the effectiveness meta-analysis includes a comparative assessment of performance by policy outcomes, and their associated CPOs and regions, for the period 2021–22. An innovative methodological approach has been followed to determine performance, by means of aggregating average weighted scores to look at performance of CPOs and policy outcomes via their associated projects. While based on an overall robust sample, individual results need to be interpreted with caution. [11] Nevertheless, several interesting trends emerge that should be analysed further.

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[11] A total of 56 assessments of final independent evaluation reports completed in 2022 were used for this review. Overall performance by policy outcome, CPO and region resulted from using a composite rated score that was calculated based on the ratings assigned against the 29 predefined criteria presented in section 2.1. However, it should be noted that averaging a small sample with heterogeneous results can lead to misinterpretation. Therefore, to ensure an adequate interpretation of results, the level of representativeness of performance results by policy outcome is provided.

7	The pilot meta-analysis with a policy outcome focus shows that the CPOs related to "strong tripartite constituents and social dialogue" and "protection at work for all" – as well as "social protection" (policy outcomes 1, 7 and 8, respectively) – exhibited the strongest overall performance. Asia and the Pacific had the strongest overall regional performance (73 per cent), followed by Africa (69 per cent).

88. Overall, all CPOs related to policy and enabling outcomes demonstrated successful performance, as depicted in figure 15. Considering the sample size, the CPOs related to strong tripartite constituents and social dialogue – as well as protection at work for all (policy outcomes 1 and 7, respectively) – exhibited the strongest overall performance. When evaluating the effectiveness in achieving planned results, sustainability and impact, the highest performance was observed among CPOs associated with social protection (policy outcome 8).

▶ **Figure 15.   Average performance by policy outcome in 2022** [12]

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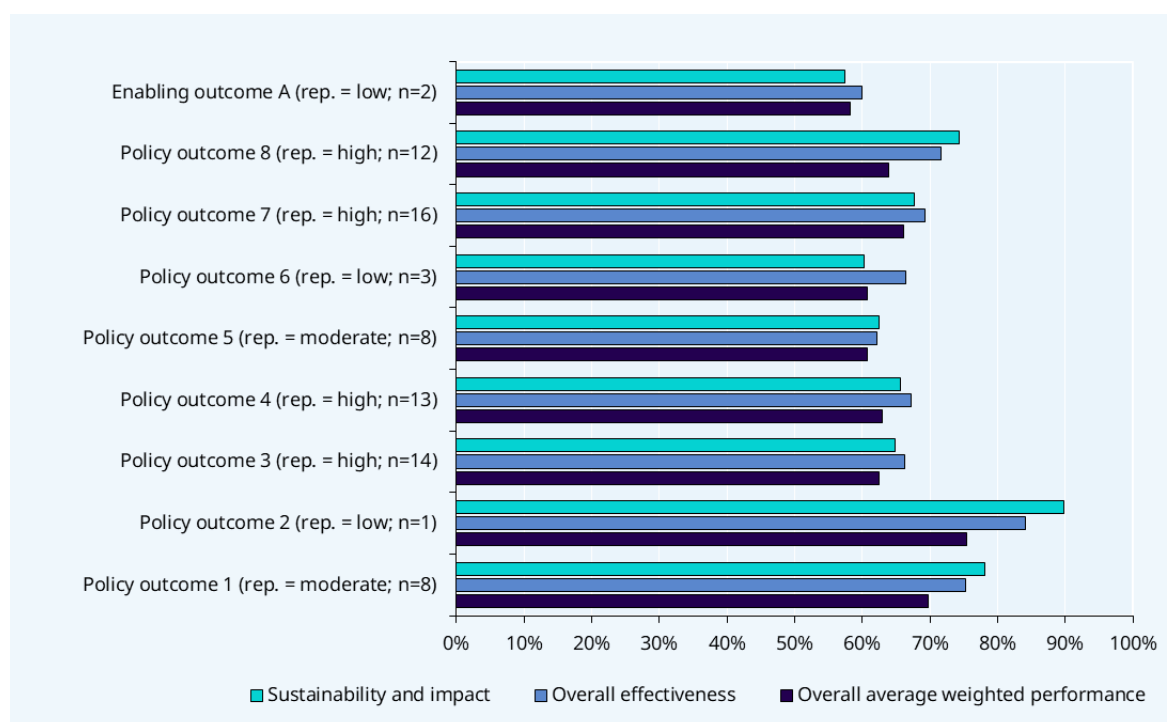
[12] The figure contains the level of representativeness ("rep.") of the sample to indicate the extent reported performance results can be extrapolated to the universe. Source: ILO Programme and Budget for the biennium 2022–23.

Enabling outcome A	Improved knowledge and influence for promoting decent work
Policy outcome 1	Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue
Policy outcome 2	International labour standards and authoritative and effective supervision
Policy outcome 3	Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all
Policy outcome 4	Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work
Policy outcome 5	Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market
Policy outcome 6	Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work
Policy outcome 7	Adequate and effective protection at work for all
Policy outcome 8	Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all

89. Upon closer examination of the performance by region, the strongest overall performance (73 per cent) was observed in Asia and the Pacific. Particularly noteworthy were the results achieved through the CPOs related to effective protection at work (policy outcome 7), which showed significant accomplishments in capacity-building, normative work, promotion of standards, social dialogue, tripartism, policy influence and knowledge development.

90. Another region that demonstrated strong overall performance was Africa (69 per cent), specifically concerning CPOs associated with sustainable enterprises (policy outcome 4). [13] Additionally, interregional CPOs linked to policy outcomes on strong tripartite constituents, social dialogue and social protection (policy outcomes 1 and 8) displayed satisfactory results (over 70 per cent) in terms of their overall effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

> **Recommendation 2: The ILO Evaluation Office should continue exploring innovative ways and adopting new approaches to synthesize evaluative evidence and present performance results on the ILO's overall effectiveness. This will serve to provide better targeted evidence-based information to aid in decision-making processes.**

▶ Draft decision

91. **The Governing Body endorsed the recommendations of the annual evaluation report 2022–23 (paragraphs 17 and 90) for implementation by the ILO.**

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[13] The level of validity performance results by CPOs for the remaining regions was low, and therefore not presented in this section.