



Quick Facts

► High-level independent evaluation of ILO's COVID-19 response (2020-22)

► Description and purpose of the evaluation

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the ILO has had to rapidly adapt its program tools, intervention models and development cooperation projects to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Without question, the pandemic will have an enduring impact on the ILO's work and the organisation will need to continue to adapt its strategy and actions.

[This high-level evaluation](#) (HLE) provides insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the ILO's response to the implications of COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 – March 2022. The HLE specifically focuses on assessing two dimensions: how well the ILO adapted so that it could continue to deliver its mandate and, secondly, how well the Organization refocused its policy work to meet the changing needs of constituents during the crisis.

The HLE aims to provide the ILO's constituents with:

- Findings on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the world of work and how the ILO has adapted and strengthened its work in response to these changes;
- Analysis of key lessons from the ILO's COVID-19 responses;
- Recommendations on how to support member States in providing a fully inclusive and sustainable recovery from the crisis; and

- Accountability on the ILO's response and the extent of its alignment with the ILO Centenary Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

► Methodology

The evaluation followed the ILO Evaluation Office's [High-level evaluation protocol for policy outcomes and institutional evaluations](#). Mixed methods were used to provide an evidence-based assessment of the ILO's response to the crisis:



Comprehensive document review of relevant policy, strategy and management documents.



354 interviews (47 per cent female) with staff, constituents and other stakeholders.



Synthesis review of 87 relevant project evaluations conducted in the period



2 surveys of staff and constituents: response rate for the staff survey was 13% (292 responses) and for the constituent survey was 8.5% (129 responses)



8 country case studies: Viet Nam, Indonesia, Thailand, Madagascar, South Africa, Argentina, Mexico and Iraq. Regional: Western Balkans
6 topical case studies: social dialogue, ITCILO and CINTERFOR, KM and research, Standards (Seafarers/ Maritime sector), UN reform, Green Jobs and Just Transition



KEY FINDINGS

ILO governance systems were challenged in unprecedented ways, demanding speed, adaptability and new virtual processes, while preserving social dialogue. Despite reservations about virtualization of governance systems, constituents were satisfied that the ILO's response was appropriate and that the ILO remained committed to social dialogue throughout the crisis.

1 Key findings at the institutional level

- The ILO's management and governance adapted well to changed circumstances, ensured constituent engagement and support were maintained, and introduced new systems to allow staff to continue to work.
- In the crisis phase, the ILO worked with its constituents to protect the safety and health of their members, developed resources to support employment and enterprise continuity, and influenced and helped implement emergency social protection measures. Gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives were included in this work.

KEY FINDINGS (CONT'D.)

2 Key findings on inclusive economic growth and employment

- The threat of enterprise failure was seen as a priority. The ILO scanned global best practices in supporting enterprises, distributed weekly updates, and produced support recommendations for constituents and knowledge products to directly support enterprises.

3 Key findings on promotion of protection of all workers

- The promotion of labour standards to protect workers' rights was crucial and the ILO made significant contributions to their reinforcement, playing a facilitating role in social dialogue and coordinating action promoting adherence to international labour standards.

4 Action on promoting universal social protection

- The ILO supported social protection interventions for vulnerable groups, included informal workers, refugees, migrants, people with disabilities and those living with HIV. Over half of ILO COVID-19 related social protection interventions were reported to have contributed to gender equality.

5 Key findings on ILO Action alignment with UN and global responses

- At the country level, ILO was reported to have influenced over 120 Socio-Economic Response Plans (SERPs). Calls for new models of development financing will require ILO to acquire greater expertise in the "whole of government" approach as well as further human resources to manage the workload associated with this approach, especially at the country level.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to strengthen the capacity of tripartite constituents to enhance and adapt their services to contribute to the development of effective global, regional and national post-pandemic recovery policies and actions.

Develop an Organization-wide crisis response strategy encompassing both headquarters and the field.

Enhance the ILO's capacity to monitor, report and evaluate crisis response actions that are developed and implemented outside the normal programming cycle.

Strengthen the institutional capacity of governments to respond to systemic crises through Universal Social Protection.

Continue to strengthen constituents' capacities to sustain international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work for workers, even during a crisis, and develop inclusive, gender-responsive policies for the protection of workers in insecure forms of work.

The ILO should more clearly integrate just transition into its post-pandemic employment and skills development strategies and actions, and use its experience and expertise to implement approaches with maximum potential for impact.

