



Quick Facts

► High-level independent evaluation of ILO's programme of work in Central Asia (2018–22)

► October 2022

► Description and purpose of the evaluation

This high-level evaluation of the ILO's programme of work in Central Asia examined the extent to which the ILO's programmes in Central Asia - specifically in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - are effectively serving as instruments to achieve the Organization's Decent Work Agenda. Given the COVID-19 pandemic the evaluation includes consideration of the ILO's support to countries to address emergent decent work challenges. In line with international good practices, the evaluation examined the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the programmes in each country.

► Methodology

The evaluation followed [EVAL's high-level evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy evaluation](#). The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Data was derived from various methods:



Comprehensive document review



Survey administered to ILO constituents and staff: response rate of 42%



68 interviews (26 women and 42 men) from various stakeholders



17 beneficiaries of ILO training programmes participated in focus groups

The ILO programmes in Central Asia comprise of diverse technical advisory activities, such as:

- **Core labour standards:** raising awareness and enhancing compliance with international labour standards;
- **Employment:** providing technical assistance for labour market research, recommending policies and ways to improve public employment services;
- **Social protection:** analysing existing systems, identifying, and costing needed reforms, and recommending policy options; and
- **Skills:** carrying out labour demand assessments, supporting the development of competency-based training curricula etc.



KEY FINDINGS

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

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

3 The ILO and its constituents identified many factors that either helped or hindered country programmes' effectiveness. Key success factors included access to the ILO's technical expertise, active participation from national constituents, strong ILO management, effective use of ILO research, and well-designed interventions. Identified constraints included: varying capacity of social partner institutions, variances in political will for reforms, economic or political instability, and COVID-19-related delays.

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

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

6 One of the main strategies used by the ILO to promote sustainability was building constituents' awareness, capacity and ownership of the Decent Work Agenda reforms. The ILO's awareness-raising and capacity-building activities reached diverse audiences in significant numbers and resulted in its tripartite partners and others gaining greater understanding of international labour standards, more frequent and effective tripartite social dialogue, and improved capacity by social partners to represent their members' interests.



KEY GOOD PRACTICES



Supporting workers' organization research activities on pandemic effects and the formulation of policy recommendations



ILO participation in country-level inter-agency working groups to promote inter-agency cooperation and programme coherence



Supporting national and international alliances in favour of fundamental principles and rights at work



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

The ILO should endeavour to mobilize additional resources from donors so that it can continue its support to national counterparts in Central Asia, especially in the areas where it has successfully provided policy advice but needs implementation support.

The ILO should strengthen DWCP monitoring activities in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, by improving the formulation and monitoring of programme indicators and indicator targets



QUOTES

► Voices from constituents

"The pandemic situation brought many new issues like social subsidies, with which we had no prior experience, and the department held regular consultations with the ILO."

"Based on ILO webinars and technical support, the Ministry of Labour, in consultation with the social partners, developed a plan to prevent mass layoffs of workers and provide social guarantees during a pandemic."

"ILO has shown flexibility to address the need [for adapted research methodologies] and quickly provided the needed technical support."

► Voices from ILO staff

"Why is the ILO accepted? The professionalism of the team. The ability to explain complicated concepts in clear terms about what would be gained."

