



Quick Facts

► Assessing the ILO's effectiveness and results*

► October 2022

► Background

The ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) undertakes an annual meta-analysis of project evaluations to assess decent work results and effectiveness of the organization's operations. The most recent [meta-analysis](#) includes all independent project evaluations produced in 2021 and a selection of evaluations completed in the first half of 2022. Its purpose is to inform organizational learning to optimize the delivery of decent work results. It does this by focusing on their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, in addition to identifying results that support the achievement of decent work outcomes and their sustainability. Performance around normative and social dialogue issues, gender equality, disability inclusion and just transition is also reported in the annual meta-analysis.

EVAL has conducted a [series of biennial meta-analyses](#) of project evaluations since 2011. Its findings and recommendations aim to guide the ILO's operational approach to development cooperation (DC) interventions

and informs Part II of [EVAL's Annual Evaluation Report, 2021-22](#). The following presents a brief overview of the meta-analysis's main results for the period of 2021 and 2022 (partial).



► The ILO's overall performance ratings, 2021-22

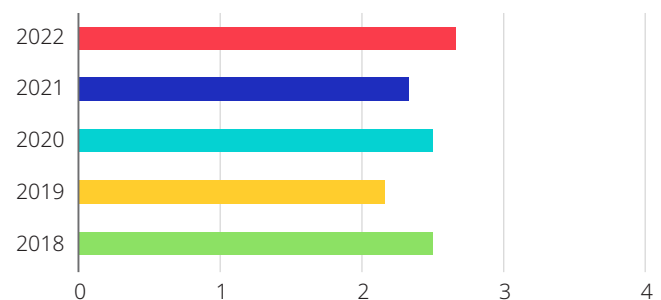
Fifty-one per cent of ILO interventions performed average or above average in 2021, with close to 60% of projects reaching the same level of performance in 2022.

The effectiveness and impact of ILO's work in 2021 and 2022 continued to show steady and positive trends, with DC projects facing recurrent challenges of complying with monitoring and reporting standards. While the strategic relevance and cost-efficiency of interventions in 2021 declined, preliminary results for 2022 showed noticeable improvements, particularly around sustainability with performance returning to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.

Performance results of DC projects for 2018-22 ranged from 2.17 to 2.67. Most notably, performance results for 2022 were the highest since the exercise began (although it is worth highlighting that data for that year are based on a small sample).

How do DC projects compare with previous ~ performance results?

Median scores for 2018 - 22 (average)



1- Highly unsuccessful, 2 - Unsuccessful, 3 - Successful, 4 Highly successful

*Based on [Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2021-22 \(partial\)](#)



How relevant and aligned is the ILO's work?

Overall, 56% of ILO projects were strategic and relevant in 2021. Whereas ILO's DC interventions linked well with the ILO's P&B, DWCP outcomes and SDG targets (in over 70% of cases), there were mixed results on the extent to which projects connected with people, notably in the areas of pro-poor focus, gender sensitivity and involvement of constituents. Less than one-quarter of projects in 2021 incorporated elements of disability inclusion perspectives in their design and implementation. Preliminary results from 2022 saw an overall uptick in the performance of interventions (74%) against the above criteria.



Have ILO's DC operations led to effective, sustainable and impactful results?

In 2021, 55% of ILO interventions effectively developed knowledge, used expertise, built capacities and developed strategic relationships. This correlates with the achievement of strategic results and contributed to an increased recognition of ILO's expertise. However, concerning were the low performance for policy influence and the promotion of the ILO's normative mandate (just over 40% of interventions performing average or above). Environmental sustainability performed the least in 2021 (20% of projects performed average or above). Preliminary results for 2022, however, identified a noticeable increase (65%) in the performance ratings for these categories (pending validation in the next DW results meta-analysis).

While there were some elements promoting environmental sustainability in certain projects, it was not taken into account in the design and implementation of 84% of ILO interventions in 2021.



Does the ILO continue to be efficient?

Less than 50% of interventions performed below average in 2021 – 22. Whereas ILO's support to projects and internal coordination scored high, overall implementation and adequate resources are areas in need of continued improvement. Results-based management approaches, including monitoring and reporting, continued to score low in 2021 and scored even lower in 2022 (90% of projects performed average or below).

The implications are such that if project design and monitoring and reporting are weak or non-existent, then real-time organizational learning that could inform and improve project design will not occur.



What is ILO's performance for specific development cooperation concerns?

Development cooperation projects implemented in 2021–22 continued to face challenges in addressing formerly cross-cutting policy drivers.

- Many projects had objectives linked to specific SDG targets, and joint implementation under a common UN system was limited.
- Less than one quarter of projects in 2021, and only 10 per cent of projects in the 2022 sample, incorporated elements of a disability inclusion perspective in their design and implementation.
- Environmental sustainability was the weakest performance area of all reported in 2021. While there were some elements promoting environmental sustainability in certain projects, it was not taken into account in the design and implementation of most interventions.
- Areas such as pro-poor focus and gender-responsiveness had mixed yet overall positive results, with stronger performance found in the 2022 sample than in the 2021 reports. Close to 60% of interventions in 2022 aimed to improve the living standards of the poorest of the population and just over 50% of projects were gender-responsive.

► What needs to be improved?

The following are selected suggestions to improve the effectiveness of ILO's operations:

Strategic relevance and alignment

- Enhance the involvement of constituents in ILO interventions
- Apply realistic approaches to intervention design (scope, timing and resources)
- Define assumptions and risks, develop contingency plans and include flexibility in the allocation of resources to address emerging challenges

Effectiveness, sustainability and impact

- Focus on sustainability aspects at the project design stage
- Promote the use of existing guidance to explicitly include all ILO cross-cutting policy drivers in project design and implementation
- Continue to identify and act upon opportunities to promote and ratify international labour standards systematically throughout the project cycle
- Ensure that initial target groups are the primary beneficiaries of results and allow for sufficient flexibility to modify interventions if this is no longer the case

Performance and efficiency

- Establish good lines of communication and coordination with other projects and partners
- Strengthen capacities to improve goal orientation of ILO interventions
- Ensure adequate availability of human and financial resources to support projects, particularly when it relates to RBM, monitoring and reporting

