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FOURTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Knowledge Strategy 2018–21

Purpose of the document

This paper presents the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21 and the Governing Body is invited to endorse it and provide guidance on its implementation (see the draft decision in paragraph 45).

Relevant strategic objective: All four strategic objectives.

Main relevant outcome/cross-cutting policy driver: All outcomes and all cross-cutting policy drivers.

Policy implications: It will provide guidance to ILO knowledge development and dissemination for 2018–21.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None at this stage.

Follow-up action required: Implementation of the Knowledge Strategy 2018–20.

Author unit: Office of the Deputy Director-General for Policy (DDG/P).

Related documents: ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008); resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work; GB.306/PFA/12/3; GB.326/PFA/6.

I. Introduction: the new Knowledge Strategy, its origins, purpose and elements

1. The ILO's mandate for social justice requires the ILO to continue to deepen its leadership and influence in the achievement of decent work. To that end, the Office is striving to strengthen significantly its role as a knowledge leader, its understanding of transformative changes in the world of work and its capacity to respond effectively to major emerging issues. This is one of the six goals of the ILO's Strategic Plan 2018–21 which set out a strategic vision (ILO 2021) and was adopted by the Governing Body at its 328th Session (November 2016). This goal was informed by the importance attached to enhancing the ILO knowledge base in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization of 2008 and also in the resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2016 (2016 resolution), which called on the ILO, among other things, to:
 - (a) continue to strengthen its policy-oriented and evidence-based research, taking into account the needs of ILO constituents, to support informed policy dialogue, with attention to the challenges and opportunities associated with the future of work;
 - (b) strengthen the knowledge base to improve understanding of the contribution of the integrated approach to decent work for sustainable development; and
 - (c) further enhance Members' capacity to produce, use and share statistics and information covering all four strategic objectives and the cross-cutting issues, and information on best practices, including through voluntary national peer reviews.
2. In approving the programme of work to give effect to that resolution, the Governing Body at its 329th Session in March 2017, requested the Office to submit a new Knowledge Strategy for 2018–21 in November 2017.¹ The Knowledge Strategy presented here responds to that request and builds on the three areas identified in the resolution. The strategy also draws from the Governing Body review of the implementation of the Knowledge Strategy for 2010–15,² and the Programme and Budget for 2018–19, including the knowledge dimensions of the Centenary Initiatives launched in 2013.³
3. The Strategy aligns with and supports Outcome A in the Programme and Budget for 2018–19, "effective knowledge management for the promotion of decent work". Outcome A emphasizes the role of knowledge in promoting decent work. Deepening the ILO's culture of cooperation, helping constituents to generate data and analysis, and engagement with key partners are significant components of Outcome A that are also reflected in this Knowledge Strategy.
4. The recent Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on Knowledge management in the United Nations system⁴ notes that the United Nations as a whole has not yet developed a comprehensive knowledge management system. However, the JIU report describes the ILO as "one of the pioneering organizations to have embraced the concept of knowledge

¹ [GB.329/PV](#), para. 35; and [GB.329/INS/3/1](#), para. 30 and item 5.1 in the appendix.

² [GB.306/PFA/12/3](#).

³ [GB.319/INS/3/1](#), para. 38.

⁴ [JIU/REP/2016/10](#).

management” as early as 2002.⁵ The new Knowledge Strategy aims to further develop the ILO’s commitment in this critical area.

II. Challenges to be addressed and lessons learned

Progress made under the Knowledge Strategy 2010–15

5. The ILO’s Knowledge Strategy 2010–15, of which the “main goal” was “to improve the quality and relevance of ILO work”,⁶ had three components; strengthening evidence-based analysis to support the Decent Work Agenda, reinforcing knowledge exchange, and improving dissemination of ILO knowledge.⁷ The Governing Body’s review of that Strategy⁸ confirmed the strategic importance of strengthening the ILO’s research capacity in pursuit of evidence-based analysis as a key component of a well-informed policy process.⁹
6. Implementing the strategy resulted in some significant improvements in the ILO’s research and knowledge capacity. For example, in 2014 the ILO launched the Information and Knowledge Management Gateway (Gateway), a portal that collects, aggregates and shares relevant country-specific information and data across strategic knowledge dimensions; version 2.0 debuted in 2015. The ILO’s Knowledge Strategy on social protection floors combines evidence-based global advocacy work and awareness raising, along with information exchange among constituents and has proven an effective way to leverage the ILO’s limited resources for more visibility and shape global debates. Similarly, the ILO’s work on domestic workers and migrant domestic workers has developed a “One ILO” approach to country assistance by bringing together the four strategic objectives, facilitated by a headquarters and field working group.
7. The evidence-based knowledge products generated under these integrated strategies has also enabled the Office to engage successfully in international forums such as the G7, G20 and BRICS (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa), where our technical assistance has influenced policy recommendations. This has allowed the ILO to play an increasing role in global policy debates, integrating the Organization’s normative framework on decent work into multilateral economic dialogue.
8. In response to a recommendation from the *ILO Field Operations and Structure and Technical Cooperation Review* (2014),¹⁰ a compilation of knowledge products and services organized in relation to a country typology based on income levels (low, middle and high

⁵ *ibid*, para. 26

⁶ [GB.306/PFA/12/3](#), para. 5.

⁷ *ibid*.

⁸ [GB.326/PV](#).

⁹ [GB.326/PV](#), para. 604.

¹⁰ Available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_236172.pdf.

income countries) has been developed and is available on the ILO's website. Work is ongoing to find a more dynamic way of presentation.¹¹

Challenges remain

9. Despite progress made, in deepening the ILO's research capacity and knowledge base for informed policy-making under the 2010–15 Strategy, challenges remain in making the ILO the global centre of excellence for research and knowledge about the world of work that informs policy dialogue. The Governing Body review noted, for example, that efforts should be made to increase the quality, relevance and accessibility of ILO research and analysis, as well as the consistency of flagship reports.
10. The Governing Body urged the Office to work towards better collaboration between headquarters and the field and with other organizations and to boost its statistical capacity. Within the Organization, continued attention to building an institutional knowledge-sharing culture is critical. Similarly, more emphasis needs to be placed on the integrated approach to research in order to realize the four strategic objectives. The ILO also needs to increase its use of technology to disseminate its message and to do so in a more user-friendly way.

III. The Knowledge Strategy 2018–21

11. The Knowledge Strategy for 2018–21 will be guided by the three components outlined in the 2016 resolution. In so doing, it aims to make further progress in developing the ILO's pivotal role as a global centre of excellence in labour statistics, research, knowledge management and policy development in all areas relevant to the world of work.¹²

Objective 1: Strengthened policy-oriented and evidence-based research, taking into account the needs of ILO constituents, and informed policy dialogue with attention to challenges and opportunities associated with the future of work supported

12. It is envisaged that with more high-quality research and stronger statistical data that pay careful attention to constituents' needs as well as emerging challenges in the world of work, constituents will be better equipped to engage in a variety of policy-setting dialogues at national, regional and international levels.
13. As reflected in the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21, the Centenary Initiatives are at the centre of the ILO's work for the period of this Knowledge Strategy. They directly inform and drive the policy and enabling outcomes. Through these Initiatives, the ILO will focus research and policy development on a number of the challenges and opportunities presented by the rapidly changing world of work.
14. Under the Future of Work Initiative, the ILO will continue to produce thematic briefs and other knowledge products that explore frontier issues in the world of work that provide an evidence base for policy dialogue. This will be supplemented on a regular basis by targeted

¹¹ www.ilo.org.

¹² GB.328/PFA/1, para. 36.

research for the Global Commission on the Future of Work that facilitates discussion on overarching themes in the future of work. The global view that may be reflected in these products could form the basis for more country- and regional-level products and enhanced global advocacy efforts.

15. Other Centenary Initiatives will provide a significant opportunity to both capture and generate knowledge using ILO research on challenges and opportunities facing Members in the context of the future of work. For example, the Women at Work Initiative, building on the ILO–Gallup report *Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men*,¹³ will continue to produce new empirical and policy analysis through 2019.
16. Similarly, the Green Initiative is already focusing on the needs of constituents in the context of issues of climate change and work. The Initiative will continue to produce country-level assessments of the employment implications of specific climate change policies, in coordination with ILO field offices and the Research Department. The Initiative has also identified the need to engage in sector-specific studies in order to better understand the implications of climate change and environmental policies on mining, agriculture and tourism, for example. An update to the *Skills for green jobs: A global view* will offer a global snapshot of changes in policies on skills development and identify new gaps and challenges countries are facing in their transition to environmental sustainability.¹⁴
17. The End to Poverty Initiative is designed specifically as the vehicle to take forward the ILO’s work in implementing the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (2030 Agenda). The 2030 Agenda is universal and covers all aspects of sustainable development.
18. Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) have a critical role to play at the national level in capturing constituents’ needs and designing relevant ILO responses, in line with ILO guidelines which stipulate an integrated and balanced approach between the four strategic objectives.
19. Key elements from needs assessments of social partners conducted by the Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP) will be an integral part of the process for identifying priorities for the knowledge agenda.
20. The ILO will also step up its efforts to better capture constituents’ needs through national-level meetings, national, subregional and regional research networks and cooperative activities with universities, institutes, governments and non-governmental organization institutions. Work will be undertaken to reach out to the research institutes linked to workers’ and employers’ organizations selected in consultation with ACTRAV and ACT/EMP and to tap knowledge from them. International research events, such as the biennial Conference of the Regulating for Decent Work Network, will be organized that bring these networks together to discuss research outcomes and develop policy implications.
21. Through meetings and online forums, ILO Global Technical Teams (GTTs) share new research, knowledge and global and regional debates, identify opportunities for integrated approaches and more effective ways of implementing them. Regional and subregional ILO experts in the GTTs, including experts from the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin (Turin Centre), will serve as a primary vehicle for collecting and assessing these critical knowledge gaps in the regions that affect the ILO’s ability to offer sound and relevant policy recommendations. This will inform research projects undertaken at headquarters that

¹³ Available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_546256/lang--en/index.htm.

¹⁴ Strietska-Ilina, O. et al. 2011. *Skills for green jobs: A global view: Synthesis report based on 21 country studies*, Geneva, ILO.

respond better to constituents' needs. The Office is working to improve the GTTs so that they might discharge their knowledge function more effectively, consistent with the findings of the recent high-level evaluation of the field structure.¹⁵

22. The ILO's access to multilateral policy forums such as the BRICS, G7 and G20 will continue to offer an important opportunity to gain greater insight into leading economies' needs and priorities. In light of the growing demand for ILO's technical analysis in these policy forums, the ILO will strengthen its strategic engagement with them by providing solid and relevant analysis. Engagement in these forums also provides the ILO with an opportunity to develop stronger evidence-based responses to policy recommendations that may be at odds with the Decent Work Agenda.
23. The policy impacts of ILO research depend critically on the quality of research. Under the new Knowledge Strategy, strengthened quality control mechanisms for research and publications will be implemented. The ILO publishing policy (2015) will be applied more rigorously. The impact of the Research Review Group will also be reviewed and appropriate changes made where necessary, in order to take fuller advantage of external expertise.

Objective 2: Strengthened knowledge base to improve understanding of the contribution of the integrated approach to decent work for sustainable development

24. Deeper insight and stronger empirical evidence on how the four strategic objectives of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda interact with each other for the promotion of decent work for sustainable development will be necessary to achieve progress towards integrated and coherent policies for decent work.
25. Greater understanding of the interactions among the four strategic objectives will facilitate the development of policies designed to achieve decent work that embody well-justified strategies to achieve maximum impact. Research and knowledge products will document the evidence of how the pursuit of each strategic objective contributes to the others and how actions aimed at one objective affect progress towards the others – or the trade-offs involved – in order to support comprehensive policy recommendations. Such knowledge can facilitate constituents' action to promote decent work, for example, in legislative and/or enforcement initiatives, ratification and/or implementation of international labour standards, and more informed social dialogue. A more focused and future-oriented research agenda will also facilitate stronger implementation of the ten policy outcomes in the Programme and Budget for 2018–19, as well as the cross-cutting policy drivers.
26. Developing an effective integrated approach to key policy issues will build on the successful experiences of recent initiatives. For example, the ILO strategy on decent work for domestic workers is founded on an understanding of the drivers behind decent work deficits in this sector. Questions most frequently asked by constituents and others are regularly collected according to policy area, including working conditions, labour and social protection, child labour, formalization, labour inspection, labour migration, and organizing, and serve to guide the development of thematic policy resource packages posted on the dedicated ILO [web page](#).
27. The new Knowledge Strategy will also provide further depth to the integrated approach by developing evidence that shows *how* that approach has contributed to achieving decent work in real terms. For example, greater understanding, within country- and region-specific

¹⁵ See GB.331/PFA/9, Part II, “Independent evaluation of the ILO's field operations and structure (2010–16), para. 39.

contexts, about how the extension of social protection floors has interacted with efforts to eliminate child labour, or how greater adherence to fundamental principles and rights at work has contributed to the development of employment policies that further decent work, will result in more effective “knowledge for policy” processes and products. This approach can only work with stronger collaboration between headquarters and the field, as well as within headquarters, and the efforts already initiated to achieve this will be reinforced.

28. This approach highlights the advantages of sharing country experiences, as each national framework integrates the four strategic objectives to varying degrees. The ILO will showcase country experiences in a variety of publications and other knowledge products, as well as events that allow for discussion of challenges and opportunities.
29. The Knowledge Strategy will leverage an important new source of evidence of the impact of the integrated approach that results from the 14 indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that specifically pertain to the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda.¹⁶
30. The design of several SDG indicators reflects the integrated approach of the Decent Work Agenda by addressing two or more strategic objectives as well as the cross-cutting issues of gender equality and non-discrimination. For instance, SDG indicator 8.8.2 on national compliance of freedom of association and collective bargaining, when taken together with other indicators, reveals linkages between information on fundamental principles and rights at work and the overall quality of employment and state of social dialogue institutions in a country. Further disaggregated by sex and migrant status, the indicator will help in designing informed social protection and gender equality policies targeted to these groups.

Objective 3: Members’ capacity to produce, use and share statistics and information enhanced

31. Enhanced statistical capacities will enable member States to identify priorities and target their resources more effectively and their enhanced ability to share information will help them achieve greater participation in effective cross-border dialogue to develop more effective policy solutions.
32. Five main lines of action will be pursued in building the capacity of Members to collect and analyse data on the status of the decent work objectives and facilitating tripartite discussion of concrete experiences.
33. First, the knowledge components of the ILO flagship programmes will be strengthened to produce relevant statistics and analysis and identify best practices for the use of ILO constituents, while drawing upon critical lessons from recent experiences. For instance, the Better Work programme provides statistics on workplace compliance to support constituents to protect labour, create employment and enhance social dialogue at the enterprise levels. Statistics on the compliance of hundreds of workplaces across the garment sector are made publicly available in aggregate form and individually. This drives strong results, including the improvement of labour law enforcement and social dialogue, which has resulted in higher productivity and competitiveness. The IPEC+ programme will regularly update comprehensive data on child labour, forced labour, and modern slavery to provide member States (at a regional and international level) an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the issues and in turn use this to design new national policies and programmes. This work

¹⁶ The Global Indicator Framework to monitor progress on 169 targets of the SDGs was agreed upon by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2017. The framework has about 232 indicators and each indicator has been assigned to one or several organizations to coordinate efforts around collection and reporting of national data.

has already begun with the release of the 2017 global estimates on child labour at the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁷

34. Second, assistance to member States in strengthening their Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) will focus on integrating data on all four strategic objectives as a concrete way of enhancing national employment strategies and services.
35. Third, technical assistance efforts will also focus on filling important gaps in labour statistics with respect to sectors (including the rural sector), cooperatives, wages and informality, as well as labour migration and other emerging topics. Assistance will be provided to support efforts to enhance administrative records from labour inspection or employment services, as well as new sources of statistical data based on “big data” to broaden the scope and coverage of gaps in information and statistics. In addition, it will strengthen member States’ statistical capacity through regular courses organized together with the Turin Centre on various issues related to measuring decent work, including the Labour Market Statistics and Analysis Academy.
36. Fourth, the Office will continue to enhance dissemination of data through its statistical database, ILOSTAT, the world’s leading source on labour market statistics, now enhanced with the SDG indicators agreed upon by the United Nations General Assembly. Where applicable, the data is disaggregated by sex, age, occupation, disability or migrant status. To reduce member States’ burden of reporting manually, the Office will enhance automated data exchange with countries and also improve coordination with other international organizations. Data visualization and access to data will be improved by introducing additional features and tools in ILOSTAT. Researchers and users will be able to embed specific ILOSTAT data directly into their websites, social media and other online platforms.
37. Fifth, further steps will be taken to promote tripartite sharing of experience and good practices through in-depth country-policy studies. Such studies may be in the context of voluntary peer reviews should they be introduced by the Governing Body.¹⁸

IV. Implementation of the Knowledge Strategy: The way forward

38. In order to support the three objectives of the Knowledge Strategy discussed above, the Office will make changes in the way it manages and shares information, subject to budgetary constraints. Technology will need to play a key role, as well as the creation of a culture of robust information sharing, since the substantive knowledge underpinning the three objectives of the new Knowledge Strategy resides across the Organization, in the field and at headquarters.
39. A fundamental challenge for the ILO, as for many organizations, is how to make all of the relevant information it generates available and easily accessible on a system-wide platform to all staff. The ILO will identify incremental steps to strengthen its knowledge management. These may include, for example, creating a single repository for knowledge products generated by and relating to staff, such as mission reports and calendars of seminars and seminar reports and transition to a single system for content management. Platforms for dialogue and document sharing could also be streamlined.

¹⁷ ILO, 2017. *Global estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016*.

¹⁸ See Governing Body decision in [GB.328/PV](#), para. 489.

40. The Office will also make its knowledge products on integrated approaches to promoting decent work for sustainable development accessible to constituents in a practical and useful way, taking full advantage of new communications tools. Particular efforts will be directed to presenting major statistical trends and research findings in an easy and accessible manner with the support of interactive websites.
41. Knowledge dissemination to member States and the social partners will need to become more robust. Some initiatives may be relatively straightforward, such as increasing the availability of publications in francophone countries, as the Governing Body requested. Distribution of knowledge products could be accompanied more frequently by targeted publicity and/or workshops to demonstrate their content and potential value added.
42. The Office is planning to release ILO Gateway 3.0 with several improvements. Users will see only those data sources that are updated and maintained. All data sources will be linked with each other automatically. Gateway 3.0 will be fully integrated into the ILO public website and have a more user-friendly navigation system.
43. In recent years, the ILO has considerably increased the use of social media channels and new communication tools, like interactive charts and digital applications, as a means of reaching new audiences. The Office will continue to embrace the use of other digital technology such as mobile applications, Facebook Live sessions, Slido and Adestra Message Focus, in order to reach new audiences and engage more directly with them.
44. The Office will continue to strengthen its governance and management function for knowledge sharing and dissemination taking advantage of the existing Publishing Committee, the Knowledge Management Coordination Team (KMCT),¹⁹ the GTTs and other mechanisms in various departments. The work planned under enabling Outcome A in the Programme and Budget for 2018–19 will be an integral part of this Knowledge Strategy. The strengthened knowledge governance and management function will coordinate all Office work on knowledge sharing and oversee the kinds of content that need to be captured, codified and shared, as well as recommend standardized practices.

Draft decision

45. *The Governing Body endorses the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21 outlined in paragraphs 11 to 37 and requests the Director-General to take into account its guidance in implementing the strategy.*

¹⁹ The KMCT was established in 2014 to lead the Office's work on knowledge management. [GB.326/PFA/6](#), para. 19.