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Discussions of high-level evaluations: Strategies and Decent Work Country Programmes

Purpose of the document

The present document provides a summary of the findings and recommendations of three independent high-level evaluations conducted during 2013. The final section of each evaluation summary contains a set of recommendations requiring follow-up and sets out the Office response. The Governing Body is invited to endorse the recommendations and request the Director-General to ensure their due implementation (see the draft decision in paragraph 131).

Relevant strategic objective: Relevant to all the strategic objectives, but particularly employment and social protection.

Policy implications: The final section of each evaluation summary contains a set of recommendations, the implementation of which may have policy implications.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Follow-up to the recommendations will be reported to the Governing Body through the Annual evaluation report 2013–14.

Author unit: Evaluation Unit (EVAL).

Related documents: GB.319/PFA/7.

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Introduction

1. The present report provides a summary of the findings of three independent high-level evaluations conducted by the ILO's Evaluation Unit in 2013. All evaluations have been undertaken based on the criteria, established by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and evidence of impact and sustainability, through the analysis of the ILO's work in selected countries and at the global level. A six-point rating scale, ranging from "very unsatisfactory" to "very satisfactory", was applied to complement evaluation findings. High-level evaluations aim to generate insights into organizational-level performance within the context of the results-based management system of the ILO and are expected to contribute to decision-making on policies and strategies, and to accountability.
2. The independent evaluations conducted in 2013 covered the period 2008–12 and focused on the following topics:
 - (i) the ILO's strategy on occupational safety and health;
 - (ii) the ILO's strategy to promote sustainable enterprises and decent work; and
 - (iii) the ILO's strategy to promote decent work in the Arab region: A cluster evaluation of Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Part I. Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy on occupational safety and health: Workers and enterprises benefit from improved safety and health conditions at work (outcome 6)

Introduction

3. Protection of workers from injury, sickness and disease is a core element of the ILO's mandate, which is set out in the Preamble of its Constitution. Its importance as a central component of decent work is reflected in the global strategy on occupational safety and health adopted at the 91st Session (2003) of the International Labour Conference.¹
4. The fundamental pillars of the global strategy include the building and maintenance of a national preventative safety and health culture and the introduction of a systems approach to occupational safety and health (OSH) management at national and enterprise levels. The strategy foresees an ILO action plan for its implementation concerning five main areas: (i) promotion, awareness raising and advocacy; (ii) ILO instruments; (iii) technical assistance and cooperation; (iv) knowledge development, management and dissemination; and (v) international collaboration.
5. The Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment (SafeWork) was assigned responsibility for implementing the global OSH strategy in accordance with the

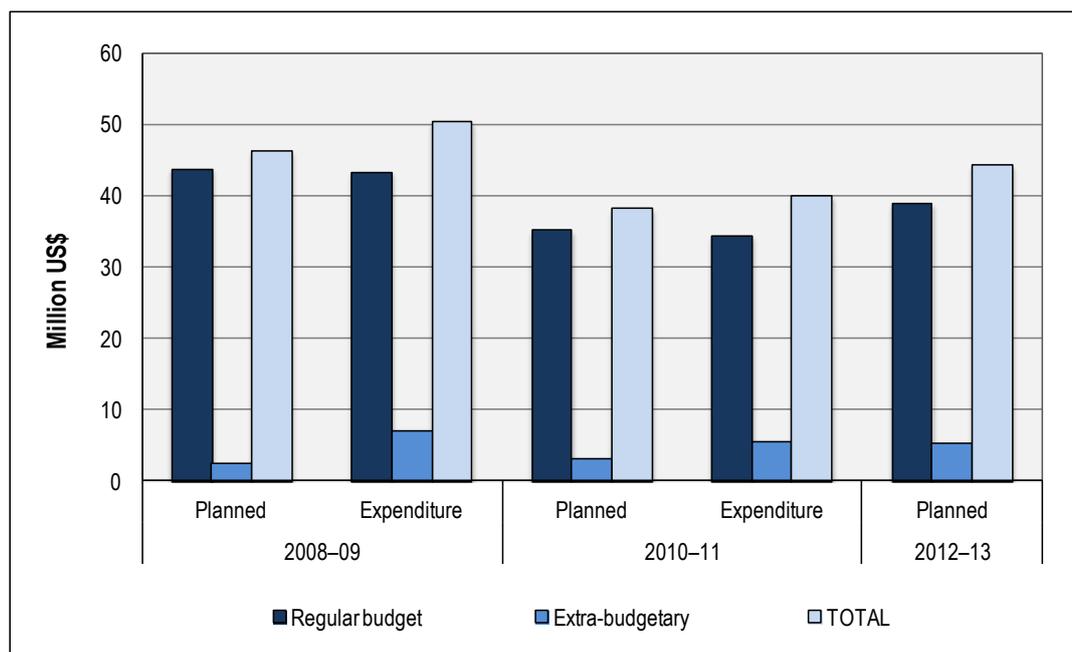
¹ ILO: Conclusions concerning ILO standards-related activities in the area of occupational safety and health – A global strategy, *Provisional Record* No. 22, International Labour Conference, 91st Session, Geneva, 2003.

strategic framework provided within intermediate outcome 3b of the Programme and Budget for 2008–09 and outcome 6 of the programmes and budgets for the 2010–11 and 2012–13 biennia. The five major goals of SafeWork are:

- (i) to develop national preventive policies and programmes to protect workers in hazardous occupations and sectors;
 - (ii) to extend effective protection to vulnerable groups of workers falling outside the scope of traditional protective measures;
 - (iii) to better equip governments and employers' and workers' organizations to address workers' well-being, OSH and the quality of working life;
 - (iv) to increase recognition of the social and economic impact of improving workers' protection through OSH measures; and
 - (v) to maintain and expand a network of internationally active institutions and organizations, streamline the OSH knowledge base and promote ILO policies.
6. The evaluation of the strategy took place during a period of organizational transition and reform, which placed SafeWork within the Governance and Tripartism Department. The findings and recommendations of this evaluation aim to contribute to the Office's ongoing efforts to improve its organizational structure and strategy to carry out its global OSH mandate and achieve its objectives.
7. The results of the evaluation are based on information gathered through desk reviews, case studies and interviews of over 100 persons, and from 54 survey respondents.

Operational approach

8. The ILO has introduced specific policies and strategic activities to promote its global OSH targets. The policy framework includes the particularly relevant outcome 6 on occupational safety and health; the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187); the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155); the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161); the global OSH strategy (2003); and the Plan of Action (2010–16) to achieve widespread ratification and effective implementation of the occupational safety and health instruments (Convention No. 155, its 2002 Protocol and Convention No. 187), adopted by the Governing Body at its 307th Session (March 2010).
9. These strategies and policies aim to improve the OSH situation globally by motivating decision-makers and employers' and workers' organizations and eliciting a commitment from them to improve their national OSH systems and infrastructure.
10. In the Programme and Budget for 2012–13, the Office indicated an allocation of US\$38.9 million in the regular budget and an estimated expenditure of US\$5.4 million in extra-budgetary resources for the implementation of the global OSH strategy (figure 1). This represents an increase of US\$3.8 million from the US\$35.1 million regular budget allocation for the previous biennium. Similarly, extra-budgetary funding also shows a slight increase of US\$2.3 million.

Figure 1. Budgets for outcome 6 (planned budget and expenditures) ²

11. Despite strong global interest in promoting OSH, technical cooperation funding shows only a marginal increase in extra-budgetary resources since 2008. OSH programmes at the country level have relied on a small number of major donors.

Summary of findings

A. *Relevance, responsiveness and value added*

12. The existing global OSH strategy and the programme and budget strategy for outcome 6 build upon the ILO's comparative advantage in producing a number of important outputs that complement global and national efforts to improve OSH capacities. For example, OSH conditions have been linked to work on employment promotion and sustainable enterprises (outcomes 1 and 3). Similarly, OSH policy advice supported tripartite participation in the development of national OSH programmes, while training materials and courses in the design of national OSH programmes and risk management for workplace-level action have been used to promote the protection of workers' safety and health. These activities aimed to strengthen the influence of the social partners and social dialogue (outcomes 9, 10 and 12), and to respond to a tripartite consultative advisory group's requests regarding sectoral OSH issues (outcome 13).
13. Although SafeWork's capacity as the technical nucleus for OSH is widely recognized, the programme's level of proactive involvement was found uneven and in some cases, non-existent. The evaluation concluded that SafeWork often lacked the strategic focus and operational strategy to optimize the ILO's comparative advantage in this field.

² These budget figures have been extracted from the programme implementation reports for 2008-09 and 2010-11 and the Programme and Budget for 2012-13.

B. Coherence

- 14.** The ILO has used its advisory and convening role to raise awareness of global OSH issues and the need for standards application. This has been done through SafeWork's well-established working relationships with key partner institutions, including international organizations, national technical institutes, universities, professionals' associations, and training and information centres. This has helped the programme maintain its leadership role at the international level.³ However, work on advocacy and partnerships places heavy demands on staff time and resources and prevent SafeWork from making optimal use of these networks and partners.
- 15.** Evaluation findings suggest that collaboration with internal partners already addressing donor interests such as the BetterWork programme, the HIV/AIDS and the World of Work Branch (ILO/AIDS), the Green Jobs programme, the Better Factories Cambodia programme and the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme was not always optimal. Although there has been collaboration with other departments that include OSH activities within their scope of work, this collaboration has been uneven and ad hoc. In general, technical cooperation (TC) projects would benefit from greater SafeWork involvement during the identification and design phase to ensure that greater emphasis is placed on capacity building and sustainability.
- 16.** The case studies⁴ conducted for this evaluation show uneven quality in SafeWork's technical cooperation project proposals as far as the application of a results-based framework is concerned. Only a few proposals provided details on situational analysis, client and outcome analysis, identification of strategies and assumptions, management plans and implementation processes. In addition, progress reporting and evaluations were not consistent in assessing progress against objectives.

C. Effectiveness

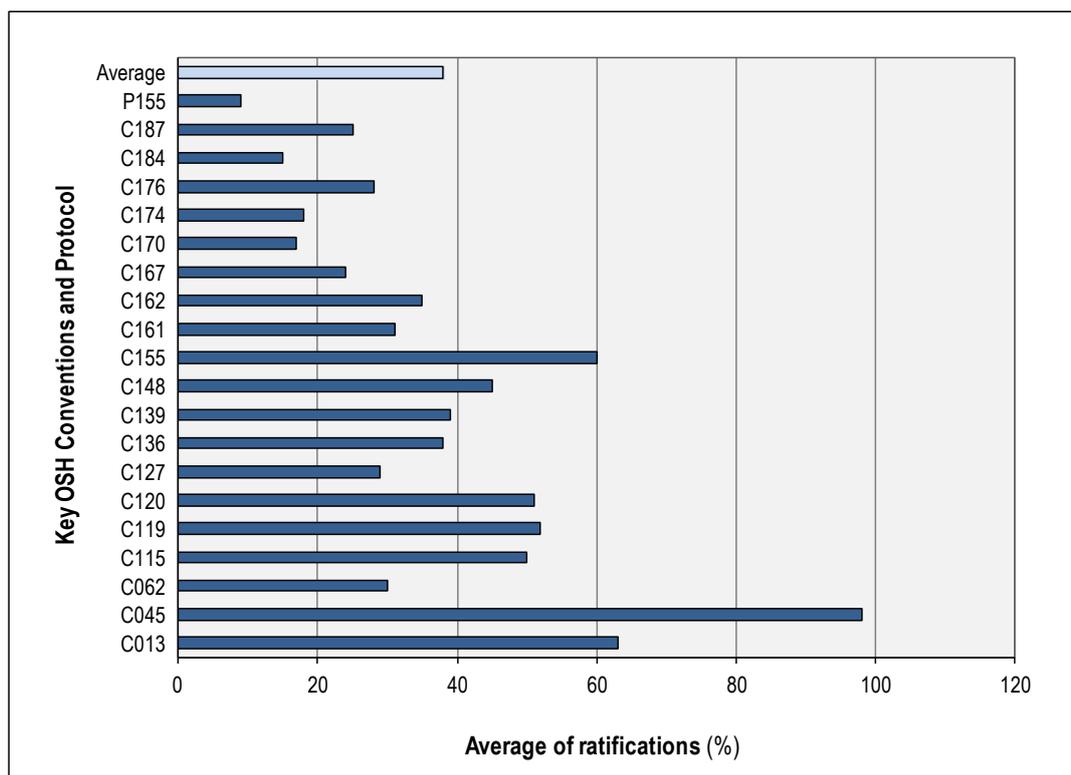
- 17.** The ILO has adopted more than 40 standards and over 40 codes of practice dealing with OSH. Approximately half of all ILO instruments deal directly or indirectly with OSH issues. The ratification of these instruments so far has generally been limited, with an average of about 39 ratifications for each of the 19 key OSH Conventions. Only nine countries have ratified the Protocol to Convention No. 155 (figure 2).⁵

³ SafeWork regards local OSH directorates, labour inspectorates and OSH officers in trade unions and employers' organizations at the national level in member States as core programme partners.

⁴ The eight case studies were prepared for Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Viet Nam and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

⁵ In the ILO context, a Protocol is linked to a Convention which it may either partially revise or supplement. It is open to ratification by a State already bound by or simultaneously ratifying and becoming bound by the Convention in question.

Figure 2. Ratifications of key OSH Conventions and the Protocol to Convention No. 155



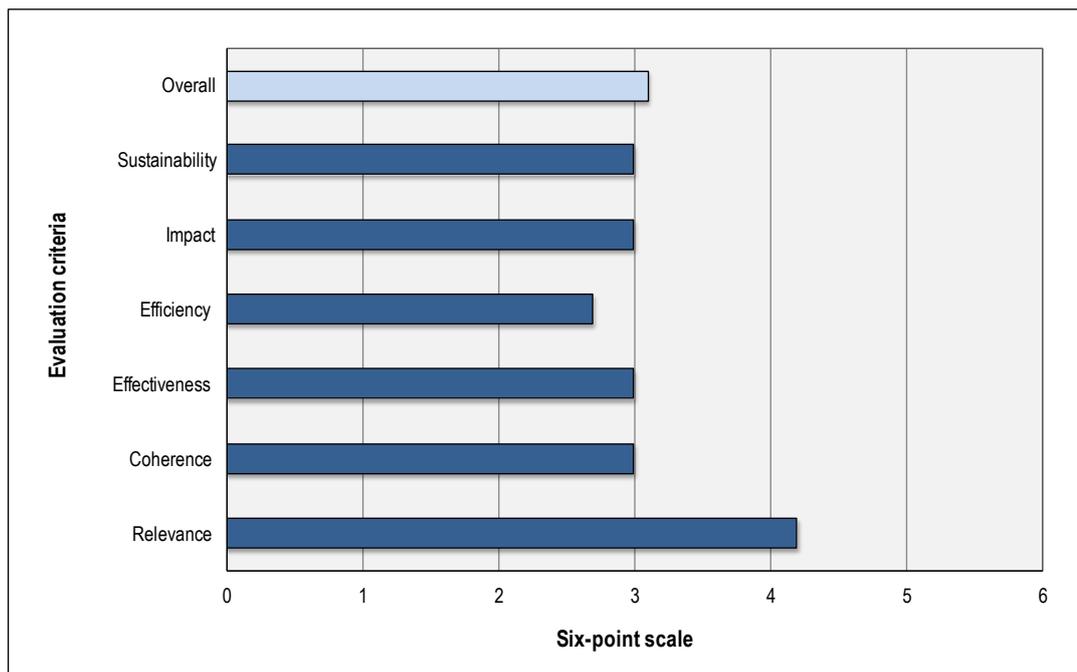
18. Launching national OSH programmes has been hampered by the limited availability of TC funding for capacity building on the implementation and enforcement of national OSH directives and laws. Priority is being given to building the capacity of governments and local organizations to develop and implement policy changes that can be linked to the ratification of ILO Conventions, and to the application of OSH standards and codes of practice.
19. Gender equality in the global strategy and country programme outcomes is mainstreamed in OSH Conventions, programme publications, training materials and action. However, gender equality objectives within the outcome 6 strategy are not duly documented.
20. With regard to the ILO's International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS), effectiveness was rated as "somewhat satisfactory". Procuring relevant database and knowledge products from countries received particularly low ratings. Constituents and experts also noted an inadequacy of resources and products relevant to middle- and low-income countries. However, OSH experts regularly access the CIS for OSH information in their work at the national level.⁶
21. The effectiveness of the CIS as a global knowledge platform on OSH was rated "satisfactory". However, the usefulness of the OSH encyclopaedia was considered

⁶ Other most accessed sources of information on OSH are: the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH); the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE); the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS); the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA); the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC); the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH); the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the United States; the National Safety Council (NSC) of the United States; the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the United States Department of Labor (US-OSHA); and the World Health Organization.

“somewhat satisfactory”. Some of the most pressing barriers to the effectiveness of the CIS’s services include a lack of practical tools, with the materials being too technical for wider reference, and knowledge products being too European or American in focus, which affect their applicability in low-resource and weak institutional settings.

22. The evaluation indicates that enhancing the visibility of the CIS as an OSH knowledge hub at the country level is important. Respondents across the categories also point to the fact that the CIS needs to review the information and database to make it more relevant, practical and accessible through an interactive and user-friendly platform. Overall, while the relevance of the CIS was rated as “satisfactory”, efficiency⁷ and effectiveness⁸ were rated as “somewhat unsatisfactory” (figure 3).

Figure 3. CIS: Overall scores on evaluation criteria



Six-point scale: 1 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = somewhat unsatisfactory, 4 = somewhat satisfactory, 5 = satisfactory, 6 = very satisfactory.

D. Efficiency

23. Evidence gathered through the evaluation indicates that SafeWork could have improved the efficiency of OSH activities through better coordination and communication between field and headquarters staff and project management.
24. SafeWork has benefited from the increased decentralization of technical backstopping responsibilities to the Decent Work Technical Support Teams (DWTs). However, the information flows between project, field office and headquarters staff are not clear and often dilute accountability for delivery. The efficient implementation of regional and

⁷ Efficiency is measured in terms of competitiveness, resource generation and resource use (for instance, high investment in publishing the OSH encyclopaedia, without reviewing its actual usage).

⁸ Effectiveness is measured in terms of procuring and disseminating national databases, updating OSH profiles, supporting the implementation of the ILO’s OSH strategy, and coordination with national networks.

interregional technical cooperation often requires communication, coordination and technical support from DWTs.

E. Impact

25. ILO support for strengthening OSH systems has had a significant impact on improving OSH conditions in member States, through capacity building, awareness raising and technical assistance aimed at strengthening national OSH systems. Although the ratification of OSH international labour standards is still an issue, governments have made significant strides in advancing national legal frameworks for the protection of OSH. There are significant limitations on national-level data collection, monitoring systems, workplace-level awareness – particularly in under-served sectors such as agriculture, small businesses and the informal economy – and quality and reporting on inspections.
26. While ILO interventions such as the BetterWork and Better Factories Cambodia programmes could turn partner countries into ethical sourcing options for global buyers and consumers, and lead to improvements in the more visible or physical problems, there are a number of labour rights issues⁹ that remain unaddressed.

F. Sustainability

27. The technical soundness and long-term relations that the ILO has developed through the tripartite process means that it is well positioned to support the sustainability of its OSH programme's results. However, the unpredictability of extra-budgetary resources is a negative factor when it comes to ensuring the sustainability of the ILO's impact, as it means that the ILO has to depend on existing institutional capacities to carry on its achievements in a sustainable way.

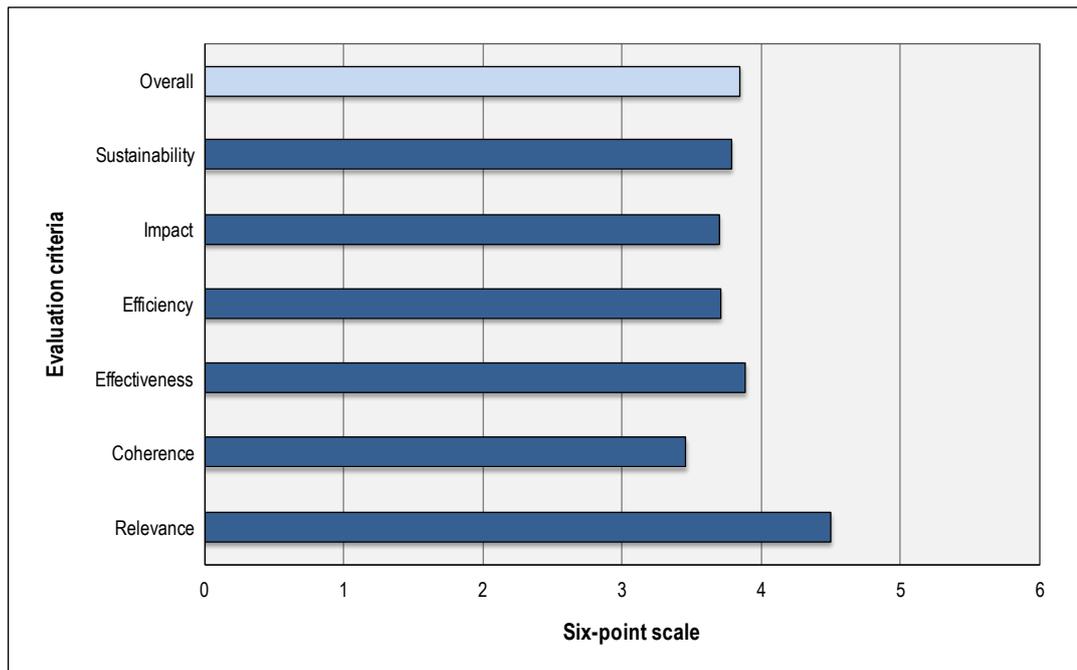
Overall assessment of the strategy

28. The overall scoring¹⁰ of the performance of the global OSH strategy based on the evaluative criteria shows that, while the relevance of the strategy was “satisfactory”, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability were rated as “somewhat satisfactory” (figure 4).

⁹ Such as the undermining of freedom of association and collective bargaining by managers, abusive attitudes towards workers on the part of supervisors, insufficient provision of medical care and sick leave, and discriminatory hiring practices.

¹⁰ Based on composite scorings by country offices, DWTs, tripartite constituents, external experts and the evaluation team's observations.

Figure 4. Overall performance score



Six-point scale: 1 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = somewhat unsatisfactory, 4 = somewhat satisfactory, 5 = satisfactory, 6 = very satisfactory.

Lessons learned

- Work on advocacy and partnerships places heavy demands on staff time and resources. The work could be managed more efficiently if the relationships between partners were rationalized and roles were prioritized and defined. This will require defining the comparative advantages among different technical units and ensuring synergies while keeping in mind that OSH cuts across most areas of the ILO's work.
- The extent to which SafeWork identifies priorities and synergies among external organizations and internal units depends on a clear understanding of the comparative advantages and divisions of labour.
- Achieving a higher rate of ratification and implementation of existing standards is a priority for the programme; limited resources should be used effectively to promote ratification and apply the latest standards.
- In order to gain support for the application of OSH standards at the national level, local capacities should be strengthened to allow the achievement of OSH indicators to be measured more effectively. This could lead to sound situation analysis, which would be useful for long-term technical cooperation.
- The development of technical documentation, in collaboration with other international partner agencies, should be adjusted to constituents' specific needs. This would entail devising creative communication approaches, including information products for different levels of users.
- Great potential exists to put in place longer term national SafeWork programmes and strategies that could have a lasting impact. Integrated programming initiatives on child labour, training for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and outreach to

the agricultural and informal economies, and with ILO/AIDS, are already being designed and some have been funded. Efforts to realize this potential through innovative project design and collaboration with internal partners that are already addressing priority donor interests appear promising.

- A closely monitored communication process also needs to be established to ensure regular input and timely follow-up between field and headquarters staff.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

29. To maintain the relevance of its OSH programme, the ILO should ensure that SafeWork complies with its strategic mandate for an operational strategy based on priority areas of action that respond to constituents' needs to ratify, implement and enforce the application of relevant OSH Conventions. This strategy should take into account the technical support required by ILO field offices to achieve target country programme outcomes that aim to establish a comprehensive global knowledge base for preventative measures and a more conducive environment for the enforcement of OSH standards in the workplace.

Recommendation 2

30. The Office's OSH programme needs to improve its advocacy and partnering strategy to better serve its most important target groups and partners, and improve its impact. The means of achieving greater coherence and complementarity among institutions and across programme components should come through well-defined country and regional initiatives.

Recommendation 3

31. In keeping with its intention of placing greater emphasis on supporting national capacities to apply key OSH Conventions, the Office should support country-level mechanisms that are specifically linked to policy and programme development. This could improve measurements for decent work OSH indicators so that they better convey the progress being made within the longer term framework of country-level OSH programming.

Recommendation 4

32. The Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch should support SafeWork in the development of gender-sensitive programming by adopting more systematic procedures to ensure gender mainstreaming on a wider scale, particularly in designing and targeting programming initiatives and priorities. This would require greater attention to the systematic collection, measurement and gender analysis of OSH data to identify gaps between the safety and health of men and women at the workplace.

Recommendation 5

33. Considering the global advances in OSH information systems, products and technology, and new providers of information, the ILO's CIS should revise the production and dissemination of OSH information products and tools. This could be done within the wider review of the Office's knowledge management strategy and its cost-recovery policy for

information dissemination, including in relation to the updating of the ILO *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety*.

Recommendation 6

34. Field staff should be consistently involved in OSH technical cooperation development and implementation. Well-defined processes for working with DWTs and headquarters should be established to minimize the bottlenecks in the efficient delivery of technical cooperation and to ensure the Office-wide improvement of systems.

Recommendation 7

35. The ILO's occupational safety and health interventions must be guided by the global OSH strategy and, most importantly, by the ILO's normative mandate with regard to OSH standards to ensure the detection of workers' rights violations, focusing on the less obvious infractions.

Recommendation 8

36. The Office must actively involve tripartite constituents in increasing the sustainability of its OSH outcomes. This will require strong strategic alliances as well as a well-defined methodology within the Organization for supporting and coordinating such involvement.

Office response

37. At its 104th Session (2015), during its recurrent discussion on social protection, the International Labour Conference will review the achievements, gaps and challenges for future ILO action on OSH presented in this evaluation. The Office has taken careful note of the recommendations and agrees with them all. The following paragraphs respond to the eight recommendations formulated in the evaluation summary.

Recommendation 1

38. The Office's OSH programme will continue to focus on establishing national prevention policies and programmes, strengthening legal frameworks and prioritizing actions to respond efficiently to constituents' needs.

Recommendations 2 and 4

39. As OSH cuts across most areas of ILO work, synergies will be enhanced through mainstreaming and improved cooperation among outcomes and programmes, especially in the areas of employment promotion, sustainable enterprises, sectoral activities, HIV/AIDS, social dialogue, migrant workers, better work, green jobs and gender equality.

Recommendation 3

40. With regard to the relevance and content of the OSH strategy, political decisions by the International Labour Conference are guiding the Office's efforts. However, the Office acknowledges the need for greater emphasis on supporting national capacities to apply key OSH instruments and improve measurements of OSH indicators within the context of the decent work framework.

Recommendation 5

41. Although the effectiveness of the CIS as a global knowledge platform on OSH was rated “satisfactory”, the effectiveness and efficiency of its services and products were rated “somewhat satisfactory”. Hence, continuous efforts will be undertaken to improve the global OSH knowledge platform to make it more relevant, practical, user-friendly and easily applicable in low-resource and weak institutional settings.

Recommendation 6

42. Technical cooperation will remain an important tool of the operational OSH strategy and means of action in providing direct assistance to the constituents. Since the irregularity of extra-budgetary resources has become a major factor, partnerships with the donor community and the scaling up of inter-agency cooperation with major OSH players at the global, regional and national levels will be fully explored to ensure the sustainability of achieved improvements and future actions.

Recommendation 7

43. A thorough review of the evaluation report and its recommendations will be undertaken to explore possible adjustments to any part of the Office’s work that might bring about further improvements in the application of OSH instruments. This will be done by paying greater attention to the ILO’s normative mandate on OSH standards, and ensuring the detection of workers’ rights violations, focusing on the less obvious infractions.

Recommendation 8

44. To ensure important OSH improvements and to increase the sustainability of produced outcomes, the Office will pursue tripartite constituents’ wider involvement in the formulation of OSH priorities, operational strategies and concrete actions. While their involvement is well ensured at headquarters, there is room for improvement at the regional and national levels. Thus, given the varying national OSH situations and constituents’ needs, coordination between headquarters and the field on the design and implementation of country programme outcomes will be improved to guarantee better efficiency in delivery.

Part II. Independent evaluation of the ILO’s strategy to promote sustainable enterprises and decent work (outcome 3)

Introduction

45. This evaluation considers the progress made and issues to address with regard to the implementation of the conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 96th Session (2007).¹¹ These conclusions emphasize the importance of the promotion of sustainable enterprises as a

¹¹ ILO: Conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises, *Provisional Record* No. 15, International Labour Conference, 96th Session, Geneva, 2007.

major tool for achieving decent work, sustainable development and innovation that improves standards of living and social conditions over time. Sustainable enterprises are a principal source of growth, wealth creation, employment and decent work in most countries. Promoting sustainable enterprises is fundamentally about strengthening institutions and governance systems that nurture enterprises and encourage them to operate in a sustainable manner. This requires that the needs and interests of the enterprise be balanced with the aspirations of society for a path of development that respects the values and principles of decent work, human dignity and environmental sustainability. These aims call for new forms of cooperation between government, businesses, labour and society at large.

- 46.** Given the breadth of the action being taken, the scope of the evaluation was narrowed to the time period from 2007 to 2012. The focus was placed on three indicators under outcome 3 of the Strategic Policy Framework 2010–15:
- (i) reform of policy and regulatory frameworks to improve enabling environments for sustainable enterprises;
 - (ii) implementation of entrepreneurship development policies and programmes for the creation of productive employment and decent work;
 - (iii) implementation of programmes to foster the adoption of responsible and sustainable enterprise-level practices.
- 47.** After a preliminary desk review and scoping exercise, field missions were undertaken to Kenya, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania, desk reviews were carried out of documentation on work done in Indonesia, Peru and Zambia, and a survey was conducted of ILO field specialists on enterprise development. Approximately 60 interviews with key informants were carried out.

Operational approach

- 48.** The Office was specifically called upon to focus on practical and demand-driven responses while focusing on the key elements of sustainability and decent work. In 2009, in response to the conclusions of the International Labour Conference, the ILO laid out a three-pillar strategy of:
- (i) creating the right conditions for sustainable enterprises to thrive and create jobs;
 - (ii) stimulating entrepreneurs to fulfil their ambitions to build businesses; and
 - (iii) nurturing sustainable and responsible workplaces that combine increased productivity and a smaller environmental footprint with improved working conditions and industrial relations.
- 49.** Three concerns that cut across these elements are: gender equality and empowerment; the upgrading and formalization of informal enterprises; and environmental sustainability and greening enterprises and jobs. The strategy is ongoing and, in June 2013, was further informed by the discussions of the International Labour Conference on sustainable development.

Summary of findings

A. *Relevance and coherence*

50. The evaluation found that the Office is moving in the right direction in implementing the sustainable enterprises strategy. It has developed or refined high-quality tools and materials, has been prolific in generating relevant studies and analyses, and has engaged in policy dialogue and collaboration with tripartite constituents and United Nations (UN) partners, within the framework laid out in 2007.
51. However, the level of effort across the various indicators has been uneven, with more effort and resources focusing on entrepreneurship projects and programmes than on other pillars. Overall, the strategy is anchored by adequate core technical expertise to maintain key products and support innovation. However, country and global operations are to a large extent financed through technical cooperation resources. Despite TC expenditures of an estimated US\$80 million per biennium, many projects continue to be too stand-alone, with separate websites, results frameworks and reporting practices.

B. *Efficiency*

52. At the country level, innovations have been introduced in support of improved workplace practices and revamped materials to better address rights and the protection of workers. However, the short duration of projects, restrictions on the use of mobilized resources, and the wide geographical and sectoral spread of the interventions have meant that their intended use is only partially being realized.
53. Innovative approaches being used to address the enabling environment, including policy-oriented assessments, show promise in improving the impact and sustainability of the ILO's project work. The move towards more analytical assessments of the enabling environment is a substantive way of linking enterprise development to a broader discussion of decent work and employment at the national policy level, provided that these assessments cover the decent work challenges linked to enterprises. To date, few ILO-supported country-level decent work strategies consider private sector enterprise development beyond the potential for enterprise-level job creation.
54. The ILO has numerous success stories demonstrating the strengthening of constituents' capacities to understand the needs of enterprises so as to better address the policy and regulatory mix that enables growth with decent work. The review of the projects, however, shows that transitioning from a largely technical cooperation approach focusing heavily on training takes time and may not be as readily financed by donors. Linking private sector and sustainable enterprise development to the broader national decent work policy debate is seeing greater potential; however, hard evidence on how this has worked is still in short supply.
55. In many countries, the ILO is lacking the analytical perspective to guide a longer term country-level vision for a more strategic and integrated approach to decent work. Without this, ILO country offices tend to respond to shorter term and pragmatic approaches to enterprise development, which governments demand and donors fund, tending to overlook opportunities for longer term and more systematic change, in the hope of offering simple solutions to complex problems.
56. Enterprise development is a high priority for constituents, as reflected in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). Case study reviews conducted for this evaluation showed that this priority status has not always translated into a coherent longer term DWCP vision

for the ILO's sustainable enterprise development initiatives. Projects and donors still largely structure the ILO's actions at the country level, which has been seen as sometimes being too supply driven. However, the ILO's major donor agencies have integrated private sector development as a key element in their approach to development cooperation and the ILO's technical cooperation base for implementing the strategy is impressive.

- 57.** This evaluation did not focus extensively on well-established products such as the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) and Know About Business (KAB) programmes, however, it found that both are in demand and the quality of service is well regarded. Through project work, the Office has also promoted local and sectoral sustainable enterprise strategies, recently expanded to include strategies for greening enterprises and the creation of green jobs, all of which have shown promise in areas such as accessing vulnerable groups, hazardous work in SMEs, and targeting job-creating opportunities. Particularly impressive is the work done to address women entrepreneurship. A more concentrated effort and more targeting through sectors, communities and vulnerable groups would add focus, increase visibility and, potentially, have a higher impact.
- 58.** Major advances have been made in value-chain analysis and development, particularly in tools and conceptualization; operationalization of this work requires ongoing integration into the design of technical cooperation proposals and a longer term and flexible programming environment that includes joint programming with other organizations. Evidence suggests that this transition is under way.
- 59.** The application of responsible and sustainable workplace practices has been championed by one large but well-developed initiative, the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme, through funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). The initial pilot phase generated insights and lessons learned from eight country-level cases; second phases have subsequently been applied to refine and expand the promotion of decent workplace practices at the national, sectoral and enterprise levels. The dependency on two donors, however, poses uncomfortable risks for this promising area of work, which could flounder if funding were not sustained.
- 60.** The work to promote enterprise associations and cooperative enterprises was found to have great potential but is currently underdeveloped, in large part due to limited funds and, as yet, too few cases of cooperative approaches being integrated into small enterprise development technical cooperation. There is a clear need to focus on innovative models that attract young entrepreneurs and meet their needs through solid business performance and value added, delivered through cooperatives to their members. These business aims are not inconsistent with the social agendas of cooperative institutions. The recent addition of social finance to the strategy mix would provide an additional means of reinvigorating cooperative approaches that integrate financial services and know-how.
- 61.** The sustainable enterprise knowledge base, including recent studies, guides and other products, is impressive. The dissemination of this know-how, through the establishment of interactive platforms and systems that reach out to enterprises, their service providers and those constituents supporting and guiding small enterprise development, is under way but is fragmented. There is also a need to reduce external and internal user barriers and to integrate content and messages to encompass the broader Decent Work Agenda.
- 62.** There is currently no clear orientation and coordination within the Office on how the sustainable enterprise strategy could tap such resources in the longer term for small enterprise strategy development at the country level.

63. Meaningful engagement with the private sector as investors and donors will be increasingly relevant for decent work outcomes. This engagement needs to go beyond private sector partnerships and the Office is struggling to articulate an actionable strategy.

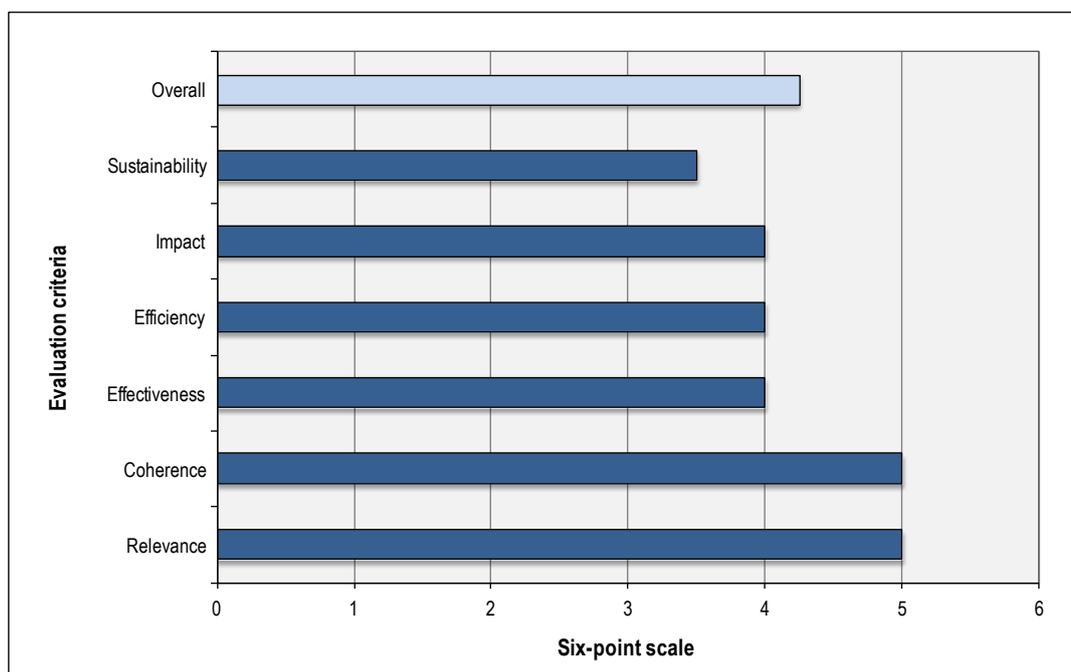
C. *Impact and sustainability*

64. The Office has developed methodologies and completed studies to assess the impact of its more established products, including the SYIB and KAB programmes, and the results of these studies document job-creation activities. Results monitoring, though clearly established, is not yet standard practice for tracking the quality or durability of jobs being created through enterprises. For this reason, little can be reported on the sustainability of the jobs being created. Regarding the sustainability of the ILO's capacity to deliver and maintain high standards, the resource base and technical calibre of staff provide grounds for optimism.

Overall assessment of the strategy

65. The overall scoring of the performance of the strategy to promote enterprises and decent work based on the evaluative criteria shows that, while the relevance and coherence of the strategy was “satisfactory”, effectiveness, efficiency and impact were rated as “somewhat satisfactory” while sustainability was edging towards “somewhat unsatisfactory” (figure 5).

Figure 5. Overall performance score



Six-point scale: 1 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = somewhat unsatisfactory, 4 = somewhat satisfactory, 5 = satisfactory, 6 = very satisfactory.

Lessons learned

66. Given the breadth of this evaluation, numerous lessons learned were generated, of which only a few can be mentioned in this summary.

- The “enabling environment” policy work has highlighted the difficulty of revising laws and regulations to allow enterprises to grow sustainably if key institutions do not have the will or capacities to implement changes. Addressing this will be a major challenge for enabling environment initiatives. Planning for and monitoring improvements in institutional capacities and practices will be critical to reinforcing the change process.
- At the enterprise level, there is growing appreciation that the quality of work has a significant effect on productivity and profitability. Equally important, but less understood, is the effect of productivity and profitability on workers’ employment situations. In the end, sustainable enterprises are about achieving a virtuous circle that results in and sustains decent work. While expanding and strengthening enterprises to generate new jobs, future action needs to focus on determining if and how this virtuous circle is being reached.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

67. The ILO should establish a standardized country assessment to diagnose decent work priorities and integrated responses within specific country contexts, in which sustainable enterprise can be better embedded.

Recommendation 2

68. The Office should prioritize a small number of countries in which to develop a longer term vision and strategy for sustainable enterprise development, to allow adequate time for the progression of all dimensions of the sustainable enterprise model, including the critical elements of social and environmental sustainability.

Recommendation 3

69. The Office should more actively solicit public–private partnerships with non-profit foundations that can accommodate longer term strategies for small enterprise development at the country level.

Recommendation 4

70. The Office should integrate into the entrepreneurship pillar monitoring and evaluation data and measurement of key indicators to monitor progress towards improving the rights and working conditions of workers in newly formed or strengthened enterprises.

Recommendation 5

71. The Office should move forward the programming to support the area of critical importance on “productivity and working conditions in SMEs” to link more directly to ILO expertise in areas of working conditions, safety and health and other forms of rights and protection, integrating components for a more substantive treatment of these dimensions.

Recommendation 6

72. The Office should ensure that youth entrepreneurship and youth enterprise development strategies, and youth employment, are conceived, programmed and linked in a coherent manner.

Recommendation 7

73. The Office should continue the drive towards larger, more integrated and policy-oriented projects to roll-out politically sensitive work on enabling environments for enterprises, working within UN partnerships where scale justifies the higher transaction costs involved.

Recommendation 8

74. The Office should finalize the overhaul of key products for enterprise development, integrating new communication technologies and revamping existing ones, to better respond to external and internal user needs that can extend past the life of individual projects; furthermore, it should pool project resources within technical cooperation to develop and roll-out new information technology (IT) features in a timely manner.

Recommendation 9

75. The Office should reposition the work on cooperatives after a successful phase focusing on legal reform, to support more cooperative development on the ground and to reflect the growing interest in the social economy.

Recommendation 10

76. The Office would benefit from aligning ILO enterprise approaches in relation to green jobs and the green economy with the ILO's strongest comparative advantages and linking them with UN partners for green technology advisory services, in which the ILO has limited comparative advantage.

Office response

77. The Office welcomes the finding of the evaluation that the strategy implemented since 2010 is very relevant and that its implementation is moving in the right direction, assisting national constituents with high-quality products to respond to the priority for sustainable enterprise development.
78. The Office acknowledges that results achieved are still uneven and accepts the recommendations made with some qualifications. The approach to the enabling environment for enterprises has expanded coverage and advanced in achieving policy outcomes but is still a work in progress. Similarly, the shift in focus of the work on cooperatives from the successful advisory services on legal reform to the creation and management of cooperatives, and social economy enterprises, is progressing. Both areas will be pursued actively. In particular, the enabling environment continues to be a priority for product development and roll-out in the coming biennium.

Recommendation 1

79. In order to better embed enterprise development in policy and regulatory agendas there is indeed a need to link that development more closely and consistently to policy and institutional frameworks both within the market systems and in the policy sphere. It should be noted that it is often hard for constituents to influence the relevant portfolios, such as finance, infrastructure, and industrial and trade policy.

Recommendations 2 and 3

80. The recent evolution of the enterprises portfolio shows that projects are becoming larger and more integrated while headquarters regular budget resources are channelled into fewer country programme outcomes. In 2013, new technical cooperation approvals of US\$40 million were allocated to four projects. The call for long-term strategies and commitments is welcome, but overall planning and budgeting processes are not currently supported either in the ILO or by the majority of national partners and donors. The Office welcomes the idea, but in the light of experience doubts that foundations have longer term funding commitments than traditional official development assistance. Current public–private partnership procedures also make it very difficult to mobilize meaningful contributions from private sector donors. Moreover, the most important potential for engagement with the private sector would seem to lie in joining forces and leveraging private sector know-how and reach to promote decent work in sustainable enterprises, rather than using it simply as a source of extra-budgetary funding.

Recommendation 4

81. With regard to recommendation 4, work is already advancing and all the Enterprises Department's products are setting out intervention models, which meet stringent requirements for results measurement in terms of decent work outcomes. The corresponding logical frameworks and indicators include proxies for the dimensions of decent work which can be captured and monitored.

Recommendations 5 and 6

82. The global product on productivity and working conditions in SMEs is being implemented under the Programme and Budget for 2012–13 in partnership with the Skills and Employability Department (EMP/SKILLS), the Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL) and SafeWork. The homonymous areas of critical importance were launched in May 2013 and an initial joint workplan was resourced and is being implemented with additional ILO units and in the field. The Enterprises Department has engaged in multiple discussions with the coordinator for youth employment and the area of critical importance on youth employment, which should provide new opportunities to ensure coherence among the elements of the youth employment strategy.

Recommendation 7

83. With regard to UN partnerships, the Enterprises Department is developing opportunities for work with other UN agencies with regard to value-chain development – for example, with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Training Centre of the ILO – and productivity – for example, with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). However, as far as the enabling environment is concerned, international financial institutions and development banks are more promising partners.

Recommendation 8

84. The recommendation is welcome. The overhaul of the single most important and used product to date (the SIYB programme) will be completed by the end of 2013 and work on the Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) programme is under way. Due to limited staff and non-staff resources, renewal has to proceed sequentially and cannot progress for several products at the same time.

Recommendation 9

85. The Office considers the fact that the rural economy has been identified as an area of critical importance is a major opportunity to make use of the new product for cooperative management entitled "My.Coop". Hands-on support and development of the social economy is part of the ILO's response to the crisis in Greece.

Recommendation 10

86. The implementation of the conclusions on achieving decent work, green jobs and sustainable development, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 102nd Session (2013), as well as the follow-up to the green initiative proposed by the Director-General will provide significant opportunities. A close partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNIDO in support of capacity building and assistance in the design and implementation of national policies for greater environmental sustainability has been established. A Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP, the ILO, UNIDO and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) concerning the Partnership for Action on Green Economy was signed in February 2013 and initial resources have been mobilized.

Part III. Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy to promote decent work in the Arab region: A cluster evaluation of Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Introduction

87. The scope of the study included the ILO's programmes in Lebanon, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory¹² from 2008 to 2012 covering two-and-a-half biennia (Programme and Budget for 2008–09, 2010–11, and 2012). In addition, the evaluation examined how well the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) was able to support these programmes.¹³

¹² Only Jordan had a DWCP in place, while Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory had decent work strategies and are in the process of developing their first decent work programmes.

¹³ The clustering was done in agreement with ROAS on the basis of commonalities in terms of decent work deficits and the ILO programme approach, the high concentration of ILO activities in the region, and the ILO's close involvement with the UN community.

- 88.** The Evaluation Unit managed the evaluation in coordination with ROAS. Independent consultants were engaged to undertake specific evaluations, while a team of international consultants triangulated the data and finalized the cluster analysis.
- 89.** Methods of data collection included desk reviews of relevant documents, interviews with key stakeholders including tripartite constituents and social partners, and consultations with ROAS staff members.
- 90.** Lebanon, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory face challenging political and economic conditions. The social, political and economic situations in Lebanon and Jordan have been influenced by the Arab Spring in recent years, particularly as a result of the influx of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and the ensuing pressures on employment, resources and infrastructure in the host nations. None of them has a fully-fledged ILO office. Clearly, ROAS has a high degree of responsibility for, and interest in, delivering ILO commitments on the ground.
- 91.** The labour and economic conditions, including weak economic growth, relatively high unemployment, insufficient skill development, low female labour force participation, weak migrant labour rights, inadequate social protection and low adherence to fundamental principles and rights at work provide a challenging set of decent work issues to be addressed by the ILO.

Operational approach

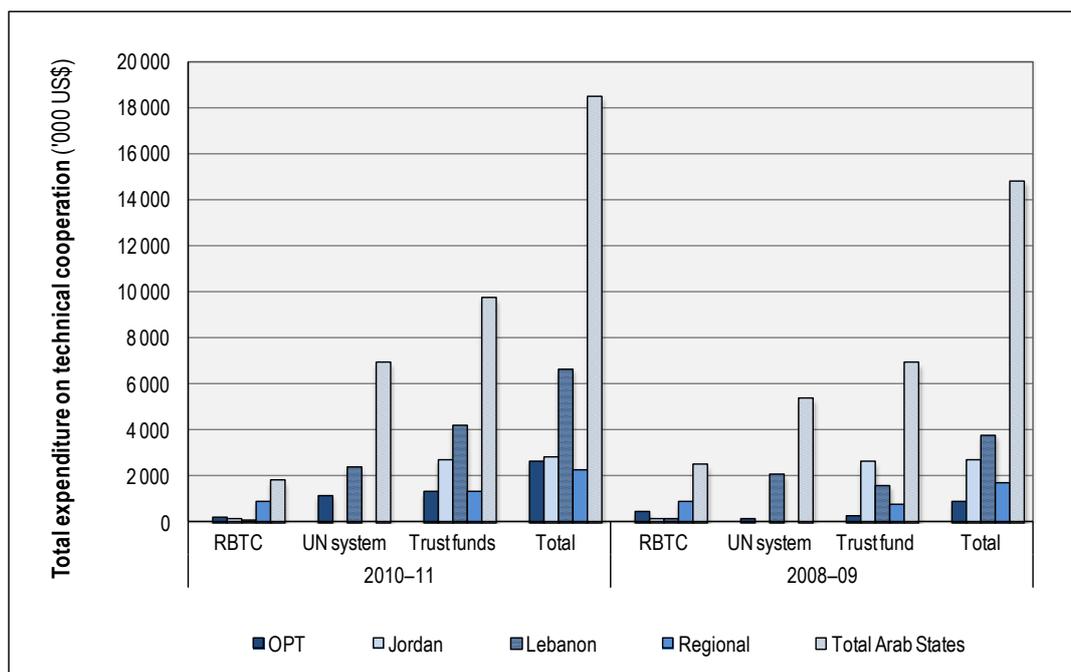
- 92.** The Arab Action Agenda for Employment (Arab Employment Forum (AEF) Action Agenda) constitutes the overarching framework for ILO interventions in the Arab region.¹⁴ In addition to the AEF Action Agenda, country-specific development frameworks and decent work strategies have formed the basis of ILO cooperation in Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
- 93.** The financial profile¹⁵ shows that the total expenditure on technical cooperation for the region was US\$18,465,000 for the biennium 2010–11, with an almost 20 per cent increase over the biennium 2008–09. For both the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Lebanon, the technical cooperation expenditure in 2010–11 was significantly higher than in 2008–09, while in Jordan it was relatively consistent, with a marginal increase. Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) expenditure for the Arab region also shows an overall 30 per cent increase¹⁶ between 2008–09 and 2010–11.

¹⁴ The AEF Action Agenda was drafted during the Arab Employment Forum held in 2009. It is aligned with the ILO's Global Jobs Pact, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Arab Decade for Employment (2010–20). Key priorities are: decent employment, sustainable growth and recovery; improving management of labour migration, employment and development; building adequate social protection systems and protecting people; strengthening international labour standards and workers' rights; social dialogue and tripartism for crisis analysis and response; promotion of sustainable enterprises for job creation and retention; and regional initiatives and partnerships.

¹⁵ As per *ILO programme implementation 2008–09*, Appendix VIII, p. 199 and Appendix IV, p. 183; and *ILO programme implementation 2010–11*, Appendix VI, p. 123 and Appendix III, p. 115.

¹⁶ For the Arab region, RBSA expenditure was US\$1,506,000 for 2008–09 and was US\$1,953,408 for 2010–11.

Figure 6. Financial profile: Biennia 2008–09 and 2010–11



Summary of findings

A. Relevance

94. The decent work strategies and priorities identified in Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory are aligned with the priority areas identified in the AEF Action Agenda as well as with the priorities of national development plans. However, a multitude of national development frameworks (for instance, in Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory) or the lack of one (such as in Lebanon) pose challenges in aligning priorities and strategies. The findings of the evaluation suggest that ROAS has made attempts to match the needs and priorities identified by the national constituents despite frequent changes in political leadership and development frameworks. Greater inclusion of the Decent Work Agenda in the UN framework¹⁷ has further enhanced the relevance of decent work strategies. However, the ability to follow the United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF) was noted as a general challenge in the volatile environment.
95. The involvement of the tripartite constituents in decision-making processes at the level of policy and legislative reforms and implementation mechanisms in Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory was noted as a key strength of the Office.

¹⁷ The Occupied Palestinian Territory completed its first UNDAF in August 2013. Prior to that, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory the UN followed biennial medium-term response plans (MTRPs) in 2009–10 and 2011–13.

Table 1. ILO agenda in Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Country	Specific national and UN development frameworks guiding ILO work	ILO SPF results addressed through “target” CPOs
Jordan	Jordan’s National Agenda (2006–15), Executive Development Programme (2011–13), National Employment Strategy (2011–20), and UNDAF (2013–17). The ILO is present in four of the five UNDAF outcomes	17 of the 19 SPF outcomes (under all four SPF strategic objectives)
Lebanon	No particular national plan or employment strategy in place. Other available frameworks such as Paris III, ministerial statements, sector strategies followed. The ILO is present in four of five outcomes set in UNDAF (2010–14).	Nine of the 19 SPF outcomes (under all four SPF strategic objectives)
Occupied Palestinian Territory	Palestinian Employment Programme (PEP) as per Palestinian Development and Reform Plan (2008–10) and National Development Plan (2011–13). Medium-term response plans (MTRPs), phase I, 2009–10 and phase II, 2011–13. UNDAF (2013–17) being prepared where the ILO, along with constituent partners, is actively present.	Seven of 19 SPF outcomes (under SPF strategic objectives 1, 3 and 4)

96. The evaluation noted overwhelming concerns among the constituents regarding the influx of Syrian refugees in the last two years. These concerns relate to unemployment, pressure on infrastructure and amenities, and insufficient social protection. Engaging with emerging workers’ organizations was also noted as a challenge. Decent work deficits and partnerships there need to be reviewed in the light of these new developments so as to better align and communicate the ILO’s strategy in the coming years. The emerging scenario demands more flexibility from the ILO, in terms of both its partnerships and intervention framework, in order to meet the expectations of national constituents within a politically and institutionally uncertain environment.

B. Coherence

97. The national projects (TC-funded and RBSA-funded) were well aligned with the ILO SPF objectives and outcomes. None of the projects assessed as part of the evaluation were considered irrelevant to the context or national development priorities applicable during the evaluation period, although investments in an HIV/AIDS project in Jordan were questioned.

98. While effective collaboration through joint UN programmes was noted, there is scope for greater coherence with the UN and other donor agencies working on similar mandates, especially in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Lebanon. The evaluation also notes human resources constraints and lack of adequate coordination among project staff, leading to multiple channels of communication with constituents. In light of the evaluation findings, coordination arrangements between project staff, the regional programme unit and the decent work team may need to be reviewed.

99. In the absence of an overall results framework in Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, measuring higher level outcomes has been challenging. A separate metastudy of TC project evaluations¹⁸ also reports that the results frameworks in TC projects were generally weak, especially in the areas of need analysis, defining indicators, baselines and log frames. Substantial delays in implementation often resulted in changed strategies, rendering original results frameworks less applicable.

¹⁸ ILO: *Results of ILO technical cooperation activities in the Arab States region: A synthesis of project evaluations, 2008–12* (Geneva, 2012). The report analyses the results of 22 TC project evaluations in the region, including those in the three countries covered in this evaluation.

C. *Efficiency*

- 100.** The analysis shows that Strategic Objective No. 1 (Employment) has received an overwhelming part of the funding (78 per cent of the total technical cooperation funding in the region).¹⁹ This corresponds to the Office's focus on supporting livelihood, skills and enterprise development in the region. However, it also indicates that the other pillars of the Decent Work Agenda are not receiving due attention and do not reflect donors' funding preferences.
- 101.** In terms of projects, both procedural delays and operational delays due to the lack of required human resources at the country level affected time efficiency. Low levels of resources and unrealistic project durations were also identified as significant constraints to efficiency in the execution of technical cooperation. Additional constraints related to frequent changes in leadership at the national (ministerial) level.

D. *Effectiveness*

- 102.** In Jordan, ILO initiatives significantly contributed to policy-making and the development of national-level frameworks.²⁰ The effectiveness of initiatives to promote gender equity was significant. ILO technical products and services were effective in promoting the Decent Work Agenda in selected economic sectors (BetterWork Jordan), in supporting the rights of migrant workers, in advancing labour inspection systems, and in strengthening social dialogue between workers' and employers' organizations.
- 103.** The factors contributing to the effectiveness of the ILO's interventions are: the favourable financial profile of the ILO in Jordan, appropriate infrastructure, high absorptive capacity, good rapport with national constituents, especially the Government, and relatively better political stability. However, the findings of the evaluation suggest that the programme would benefit from more coherence among the various activities.
- 104.** In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the ILO's contributions to the MDG-F Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment led to improved gender equality due to the enhanced participation of stakeholders, and better servicing and capacity building of women workers. The Office's efforts led to the constituents adopting various ILO products,²¹ the establishment of a social security framework, the development of a minimum wage policy based on the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131) and the Minimum Wage Fixing Recommendation, 1970 (No. 135), enhanced social dialogue, a national employment policy, legislation on SMEs in line with international labour standards, and the revitalization of a national tripartite committee.
- 105.** Strong relations between the ILO and the social partners, and the high quality of products were key contributors to progress, while procedural delays and lack of a clear strategy and

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Some of the notable frameworks in Jordan address: child labour (the National Framework for Child Labour), minimum wages, pay equity, HIV/AIDS at the workplace, the social protection floor, putting the Economic and Social Council (ESC) and the National Tripartite Council for Labour (NTC) into operation, the establishment of a maternity fund, SMEs (the National SME Strategy), the mainstreaming of entrepreneurship education, labour inspection (the National Labour Inspection Strategy) and employment (the National Employment Strategy).

²¹ Know About Business was included in national vocational training curricula, a national OSH profile was drafted, a child labour statistical tool was adopted, and a Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) tool was effectively applied in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

means for engaging with emerging workers' organizations were identified as gaps. Significant loss of ground in the area of vocational training was noted as the national Government decided to partner with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) despite having a long-term partnership with the ILO. Limited human resources at the national level and high dependence on ROAS to respond to technical assistance needs in a dynamic scenario were observed as other limiting factors.

- 106.** In Lebanon, the ILO's assistance with pension and health-care reforms was recognized at the highest levels. The Office's support was also effective in strengthening the labour administration system, instigating the institutional reform of the National Employment Office (NEO), setting up the Electronic Labour Exchange (ELE), improving Palestinian refugees' access to decent work through Employment Service Centres (ESCs), and in introducing a code of conduct for private employment agencies. The ILO also supported progressive legislation to support migrant workers and migrant domestic workers, and to combat trafficking and hazardous forms of child labour.
- 107.** It is noted that despite an impressive portfolio of projects, complementarity (inter-project as well as with projects being implemented by other agencies on similar themes) was improved. A greater focus is required to promote social dialogue and the capacity building of constituents.
- 108.** Overall, the evaluation team observes that greater use of risk assessment could have led to a better understanding of the impact of the regional crises on industry and labour relations. The regional and country teams could have used the Office's experience in dealing with Palestinian refugees in responding to the evolving Syrian refugee crisis.

E. Impact

- 109.** At the cluster (subregional) level, the impact has been most significant in the areas of employment and social protection. The impact is evident in the promulgation of national legislations, government decrees and codes, systemic reforms, strengthened institutional mechanisms, the adaptation and use of global products, and greater inclusion of decent work priorities in the national-level UN frameworks.
- 110.** The ILO's contribution to the cross-cutting themes of gender equality and the capacity building of constituents is notable. In order to sustain these results and overcome the decent work deficits, the countries would need to focus on improved social dialogue and greater application of norms and standards.

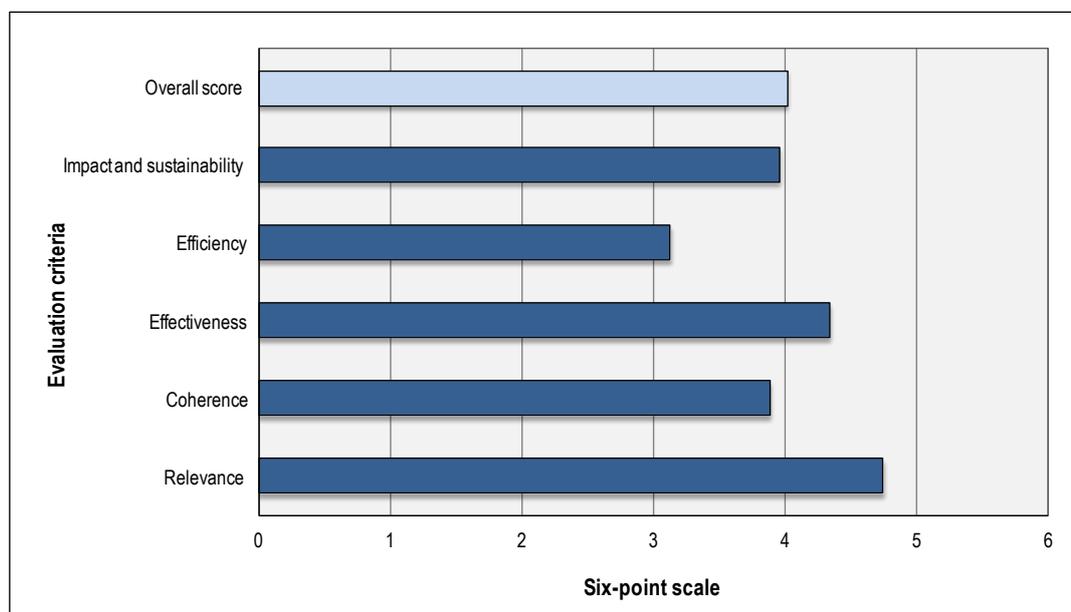
F. Sustainability

- 111.** Despite the lack of fully-fledged country offices, the ILO has been able to focus its operations within a decent work programme framework in Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The policy and legislative reviews and changes, greater inter-ministerial coordination, and the capacity building of ministries of labour and other constituent partners are likely to have a positive bearing on the sustainability of efforts. However, some of the technical cooperation projects, especially short-term projects, face challenges in sustaining impact. In particular, two of the main challenges to sustaining results at the national level are frequent changes in national development framework/priorities (especially post-Arab Spring) and capacity gaps among constituents to support and sustain results achieved with ILO support.

Overall assessment of the strategy

112. The overall assessment²² of the evaluation criteria shows that the relevance and effectiveness of decent work strategies scored well and were rated as “satisfactory”. Coherence, efficiency, and impact and sustainability were rated as somewhat “satisfactory”. However, the overall composite score is on the lower side of “satisfactory”.

Figure 7. Overall performance score



Six-point score: 1 = very unsatisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 3 = somewhat unsatisfactory, 4 = somewhat satisfactory, 5 = satisfactory, 6 = very satisfactory.

Lessons learned

- Having a decent work strategy is important to position the ILO’s mandate within national contexts, and to clearly articulate the needs and expectations of constituent partners. At the same time, complementarity within programmes is necessary for optimal contribution to decent work outcomes.
- In countries where political stability is a challenge, the focus on policy and legislative reforms with tripartite involvement contributes to sustained results.
- Strategic collaboration with social partners in areas of common interest is necessary to leverage strengths and outreach. In other words, converting competition into collaboration is the way forward in low-resource settings.
- Responsiveness to context and constituents’ needs is necessary to maintain the ILO’s comparative advantage in the region. This requires flexibility in systems and

²² The assessments use a six-point scale where 1 is “very unsatisfactory” and 6 is “very satisfactory”. The scores were based on the analysis of performance against the evaluation criteria used in the country reports. Each of the broad evaluation criteria was further divided into sub-criteria and scored on the same scale. Scores for each broad criterion, therefore, represent a composite score of sub-criteria. Finally, taking into account the scores obtained by each country, a composite of composites (double composite) was calculated. Analyses of the metastudy of TC evaluations in the Arab region were also included in the overall composite score.

approaches, and in the use of technical and financial resources, particularly in dynamic local contexts.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- 113.** Decent work programming in the region needs to be flexible: the ILO should emphasize to constituents its position as a long-term development partner (as opposed to humanitarian crisis response agency). The Decent Work Agenda and the AEF Action Agenda should continue to be used as the core references in the ILO's future strategy in the region. Decent work programming in the region needs to be flexible to accommodate emerging technical assistance needs at the national level.

Recommendation 2

- 114.** Prepare tripartite constituents to develop consensus on engaging with emerging workers' organizations: the Office needs to take into account the rapidly changing priorities of the constituents and emerging workers' organizations to maximize its outreach and relevance.

Recommendation 3

- 115.** Develop and share the ILO's strategy to address the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan: the political instability in the region and the resulting changes in the priorities and concerns of constituents is a challenge. At the same time, the movement of refugees is a reality that needs to be taken into account in future decent work programmes. As the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)²³ suggests, Syrian refugees in camp as well as non-camp settings need long-term support in employment and income generation. The ILO has considerable experience and expertise in crisis interventions and these should be considered in the development of a strategy to address the needs of Syrian refugees in respect of decent work.

Recommendation 4

- 116.** Greater coordination with the UN and the social partners at the programming level: although good examples of inter-UN coordination were recorded, greater harmonization with other donor agencies working on common issues is suggested. This is particularly important to leverage technical and financial resources, and to avoid the duplication of efforts.

Recommendation 5

- 117.** Build upon past work on gender equality in the world of work: significant results achieved under gender mainstreaming and the rights of women workers should be further strengthened. Future projects should consider addressing the issues surrounding skills, employment, rights and protection of migrant and refugee women workers. Opportunities for joint UN programmes in this regard should also be explored further. At the same time,

²³ UNHCR: *From slow boil to breaking point: A real-time evaluation of UNHCR's response to the Syrian refugee emergency* (Geneva, Policy Development and Evaluation Service, Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2013).

the Office should consider the gender disaggregation of results achieved through appropriate indicators at project, programme, and DWCP levels.

Recommendation 6

- 118.** Greater emphasis on outcome-level reporting using results-based management approaches: the evaluation finds that reporting on progress and results is often project based, while overall outcomes at the programme level are not well recorded. The lack of a decent work programme in Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory is a plausible reason for this. The upcoming decent work programmes there present an opportunity to define the results framework and set up robust monitoring and reporting systems, including DWCP reporting, that go beyond the biennial programme reports.

Recommendation 7

- 119.** Greater coordination and complementarity among projects and staff: the evaluation notes that coordination and complementarity among projects should be further improved. ROAS may want to consider developing a defined coordination and review system aimed at enhancing complementarity. As Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory prepare their first decent work programmes, a stronger mechanism for coordination at the local level may also be considered. As far as possible, decentralized management and decision-making should be promoted.

Recommendation 8

- 120.** Regional-level initiatives for the dissemination of good practices and results achieved through ILO support: the evaluation notes several good practices in terms of processes followed to achieve significant results in areas of gender equality, rights and protection for migrant and refugee workers, social protection, skills and enterprise development, and labour- and employment-related policies. Evidence of cross learning was, however, limited. Greater visibility of ILO work is required at national and regional forums, especially among the donor community.

Office response

- 121.** ROAS is pleased to have received the opportunity to review its strategy and operations in three key places in the region. The political and economic situation in the region is clearly complex and major changes have taken place in recent years in many of the countries for which ROAS is responsible. The structure and procedures of ROAS are unique and were designed to reflect regional needs and realities – but clearly there is a need to re-examine these to ensure that they represent the best means possible to address the needs of the tripartite constituents in a dynamic environment.
- 122.** ROAS accepts the recommendations offered and has the following comments.

Recommendation 1

- 123.** ROAS recognizes that it needs to be more agile in the current fluid regional situation. The Office has already adopted different approaches in forthcoming projects but will also investigate using scenarios and other methods to remain flexible and responsive.

Recommendation 2

124. The Office already promotes dialogue and fostering relationships with new, as well as existing, representative organizations. ROAS will review its activities in this area in order to identify whether new methods or approaches are possible.

Recommendation 3

125. ROAS has been developing its approach to the Syrian refugee crisis for some time and work in this area is progressing. The situation is changing quickly, with many actors present and working in the field, but ROAS is engaged in multilateral efforts to address the problems associated with the growing number of refugees.

Recommendation 4

126. ROAS is actively engaged in dialogue and coordination with UN agencies and other organizations. For example, ROAS has partnered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and the United Nations Population Fund in key projects, and other opportunities are examined on a case-by-case basis where complementarity is possible. The Office has already made efforts to broaden its work with other agencies (notably recent work in Yemen) and will review its ability to work with other partners.

Recommendation 5

127. The importance of work in this area is well recognized. The regional problem of gender-based discrimination and the low level of female labour market participation are well noted and gender work is a key pillar of work in the region. ROAS has recently added a regional statistician to the staff and will examine additional means to reflect gender in project design and statistical assessments.

Recommendation 6

128. ROAS recognizes that the lack of decent work programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Lebanon has potentially obscured the reporting of ground-level results. The Office will take the opportunity to review its local-level activities and ensure that monitoring and reporting systems reflect efforts and results on the ground.

Recommendation 7

129. ROAS recognizes that the unique structure and procedures of the Office may need to be reviewed and changed to reflect the needs of constituents and to better implement projects in the various places in which it operates. Many of the problems in this area have already been recognized and efforts have been made in the past year to coordinate better in places where there is no ILO office. Extra resources in Jordan and Yemen have been dedicated to ensure better coordination and cooperation, and similar efforts may be made elsewhere, as appropriate.

Recommendation 8

130. The Office has organized a number of regional activities in the past, notably some where regional initiatives were showcased. These include events related to domestic workers,

wages, human trafficking and women's rights. The Office is also making efforts to build bridges to the rest of the Middle East and North Africa region.

Draft decision

- 131. *The Governing Body requests the Director-General to take into consideration the findings, recommendations and lessons learned of the three high-level independent evaluations presented in this summary and to ensure their due implementation.***