



Governing Body

331st Session, Geneva, 26 October–9 November 2017

GB.331/PFA/8

Programme, Financial and Administrative Section
Audit and Oversight Segment

PFA

Date: 16 October 2017

Original: English

EIGHTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Annual evaluation report 2016–17

Purpose of the document

In Part I of the present document, the Governing Body is provided with a progress report on the ILO's evaluation work during 2016–17 as measured against its results-based strategy. Part II details the overall effectiveness of the Office from an evaluation perspective. The Governing Body may wish to take note of the present report, endorse recommendations contained therein and confirm priorities for the 2018–20 programme of work for evaluations (see draft decision in paragraph 100).

Relevant strategic objective: Relevant to all strategic objectives.

Main relevant outcome/cross-cutting policy driver: Enabling Outcome B: Effective and efficient governance of the Organization.

Policy implications: The recommendations in this report will have policy implications.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: Time of existing staff.

Follow-up action required: Approved recommendations will be inserted in a rolling action plan for tracking follow-up.

Author unit: Evaluation Office (EVAL).

Related documents: None.

Introduction

1. The second year of the 2016–17 biennium has continued to be dominated by discussions and preparations in the United Nations (UN) community concerning how best to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A range of activities completed since last year’s annual evaluation report will allow the ILO’s Evaluation Office (EVAL) to position itself to take on new opportunities and challenges. Foremost on the list of these activities was the completion of the second independent evaluation of the ILO’s evaluation function covering the period 2011–16 (2016 IEE).¹ The new draft evaluation policy set out in the appendix builds on the findings of that report and establishes a path to meet expectations in a manner that strengthens links to the ILO’s unique normative mandate, supervisory system and tripartite structure. An evaluation strategy to roll out the new evaluation policy in a sequential manner will be presented to the Governing Body in March 2018, with the first strategy covering the period of the new ILO Strategic Plan 2018–21.
2. Following established practice, Part I of this report takes stock of progress made in implementing the three outcomes identified in the current extended evaluation strategy, which ends in 2017. It also includes a summative section under Outcome 1 on improved use of evaluation by management and constituents for governance, which highlights steps taken by the Office to fulfil recommendations endorsed by the Governing Body from 2011 to 2017. Part II reports on the overall effectiveness of the Office, drawing on a recent meta-study on decent work results based on a sample of project evaluations. It further reflects on the findings of external reviews (MOPAN;² External Auditor) pertaining to the quality of data produced by monitoring and reporting systems in comparison with past findings from EVAL on this subject.
3. The findings of the 2016 IEE are encouraging since they recognize that, over the past five years, a robust, mature and independent evaluation function has been established with a relatively small budget. These findings are consistent with those of the 2017 MOPAN assessment, which scored the evaluation function as key performance indicator (KPI) 8, slightly below the “very satisfactory” mark. Part I of the report reflects on progress made in implementing the evaluation strategy and considerably benefited from the 2016 IEE. The report independently validated the overall progress made towards the evaluation strategy and concluded that seven of the 11 performance indicators had been “met” or “exceeded” and the remaining four had reached the level of “approaching”.
4. EVAL also continued its work on supporting the role of evaluation in the ILO in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), keeping in mind the constituents’ call for greater involvement in evaluations and the requisite capacity building for doing so. This connects well with the challenges posed by the SDGs, which will require strengthened capacity in monitoring and evaluation at the country level.

¹ ILO: *Independent Evaluation of ILO’s Evaluation Function – IEE, 2011–2016, Final Report* (2017). The initial IEE in 2011 gave rise to the ILO’s first evaluation strategy and enhanced the independence of the evaluation function.

² Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN): *MOPAN 2015–16 Assessments: International Labour Organization, Institutional Assessment Report* (2017).

Part I. Implementation of the ILO's evaluation strategy

Progress made towards achieving key milestones

5. The evaluation strategy during the period 2011–17 has included a results framework, with three outcomes and seven indicators that has been systematically reported on in annual evaluation reports. EVAL added four indicators under Outcome 2, which were viewed as contributing further to the original indicators. Annual reporting on all indicators was based on self-assessments and findings from biennial stocktaking workshops with the ILO's internal evaluation network.
6. In this final summative report, EVAL presents an independent validation of the performance of the evaluation function based on data from the 2016 IEE.³ Its assessment shows that the evaluation strategy has been highly successful in its own terms and that considerable work has been done both within and beyond its scope. A summative assessment of the period 2011–17 is presented in table format for each outcome.⁴

Outcome 1: Improved use of evaluation by management and constituents for governance

7. The evaluation function met all three indicators designed to assess its performance on the improved use of evaluation by ILO management and constituents for governance, as outlined in table 1.

Table 1. Progress towards the end targets of the 2011–17 evaluation strategy results framework as assessed by the 2016 IEE

Outcome	Indicator	Progress
1. Improved use of evaluation by ILO constituents and management for governance	1.1. The frequency and quality of Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) decisions and advice on relevance of evaluation programme of work to Governing Body policy decisions and strategic objectives of the Office; adequacy of follow-up to evaluation results	Met
	1.2. Annual evaluation report synthesizes recommendations and lessons learned based on evaluations	Met
	1.3. High-level evaluations assess the contributions of technical and decent work country strategies to the strategic policy framework and programme and budget outcomes	Met

³ The Governing Body called for the IEE, which was conducted independently of EVAL in accordance with the procedure agreed by the Governing Body.

⁴ The measurement criteria used in the 2016 IEE to assess performance against the moving biennial milestones are as follows: (a) Exceeding: Documented evidence substantially surpasses the stated biennial milestone in quantitative or qualitative terms; (b) Met: Documented evidence supports the main focus of the biennial milestone as having been achieved; (c) Approaching: Documented evidence demonstrates that substantive work is under way on this milestone, but the intended result has not yet manifested; (d) Missing: Little documented evidence exists to suggest that this milestone will be met within the period of the evaluation strategy.

A. *Improving the effectiveness of the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC)*

Biennial milestone 1.1 (2016–17): Four meetings per year; formal record of recommendations for evaluation programme of work (2017–18); record of EAC advice on recommendation use; EAC will coalesce support to address cross-cutting Office-wide issues that are identified in evaluations

8. The EAC was established in 2006 to oversee the use and implementation of and follow-up to lessons learned and recommendations resulting from ILO evaluation activities. The scope of its functions includes all independent evaluations, particularly strategy and policy evaluations, Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) evaluations and major thematic evaluations.
9. The role of the EAC has become more pronounced since it was reconstituted in February 2012, and it was recognized by the external auditors in 2013 as a good practice of governance. The EAC plays a proactive role in tracking progress on the status of high-level evaluations and discussing issues that require follow-up. These include management response to high-level evaluation recommendations, approving high-level evaluation follow-up workplans, and recommending studies to address pressing organizational issues. Most recently, these included a meta-study on systemic issues raised in high-level evaluations (2016) and a thematic evaluation of the ILO's work in post-conflict, fragile and disaster-affected countries (2015). The EAC also acted as a forum for internal dialogue on the 2016 IEE report and the new 2017 evaluation policy. Decisions taken by the EAC in the current reporting cycle are set out in table 2, below.

Table 2. EAC decisions on high-level evaluations and IEE, 2016–17

	High-level evaluation	Status of workplan on follow-up	Review of actual follow-up
2015	The ILO's strategy for technical cooperation	Approved	The workplan was initially rejected by the EAC in February 2016. The revised workplan was approved by the EAC in June 2016 and its implementation was approved in February 2017.
2016	The ILO's strategy and actions to promote skills development for jobs and growth, 2010–15	Approved	Implementation of the workplan was approved by the EAC in May 2017.
2016	The ILO DWCPs, strategies and actions in the Western Balkans, 2012–15	Delayed	The revised workplan was approved by the EAC in May 2017. Implementation update to EAC delayed.
2016	Independent evaluation of the evaluation function	On track	The report was approved by the EAC in February 2017 and submitted to the Governing Body in March. Regarding follow-up, the evaluation policy is included in the present report to the Governing Body and the evaluation strategy will be presented to the Governing Body in March 2018, as planned.

10. The work of the EAC has been substantive and ambitious. Since 2011, it has:
- held 21 meetings (three per year, on average; four in 2017);
 - approved nine high-level evaluation workplans upon first review;
 - approved three high-level evaluation workplans upon second review;
 - approved verbal reports to the EAC by line managers on follow-up to recommendations of 11 high-level evaluations upon first presentation; five high-level evaluations were approved following a second, more detailed presentation; and three high-level evaluations were approved following a third presentation;
 - provided input into the scoping of 14 high-level evaluations and two thematic evaluations;
 - provided oversight of and endorsed the 2016 IEE process, draft report and its draft management response; and
 - provided oversight of the consultation process on the draft evaluation policy.
11. The 2016 IEE report found that the EAC adopted a highly systematic and rigorous process of follow-up to high-level evaluation recommendations. This was carefully documented, and included multiple rounds of follow-up to ensure that management responses were both detailed and implemented. The report further noted that while the EAC functioned as intended, and demonstrated a strong organizational commitment to evaluation, committee members and constituents had identified opportunities to strengthen its activities. The first of those was to include members external to the ILO to bring new perspectives to discussions and to encourage more strategic debate. The second proposal, from the Governing Body, was to rank the topics for high-level evaluations when presenting the list of requests according to their level of demand in the annual evaluation report.

B. *Assessing ILO performance*

Biennial milestone 1.2 (2016–17): Annual evaluation reports inform the new Strategic Plan 2018–21

12. Annual evaluation reports have continuously informed the ILO's programme and budgets and strategic plans. A 2014 stocktaking exercise demonstrated that there was incremental management uptake of recommendations and follow-up as part of the reform process and in support of preparations for the Programme and Budget for 2016–17. In 2016, EVAL supported preparations for the Programme and Budget for 2018–19 and provided input for peer reviews of its outcomes. Its contributions were largely focused on how to better factor in the implications of the SDGs for the ILO's results framework with respect to evaluation.
13. The Strategic Plan 2018–21 recognizes the value of evaluation in supporting the ILO's work in terms of strengthening accountability for results. It specifies that the evaluation function is a means of assuring accountability to constituents by yielding objective information on progress in implementation and on results achieved.

14. Governing Body discussions on the Strategic Plan 2018–21 have focused on the need for using well-defined theories of change, results framework and lessons learned to inform strategies and programmes. Members of the Governing Body have also expressed their appreciation for the way in which evaluations have confirmed the alignment of activities and programmes with the Strategic Plan. While evaluations have frequently been mentioned in Governing Body discussions on the Strategic Plan and the associated programme and budget, there is little evidence that they have informed specific elements of the Strategic Plan with respect to the continuation, reinforcement or discontinuation of activities.

C. *Selecting high-level evaluation topics for strategic use*

15. EVAL holds annual consultations to select topics for future high-level evaluations that are pertinent to the Office in terms of organizational learning and results-based management. The results of these consultations determine the draft rolling workplan for proposed high-level evaluations, which is submitted annually to the Governing Body.
16. Table 3 lists proposed topics for evaluation during the period from 2018 to 2020 in addition to agreed high-level evaluations conducted since 2011, to demonstrate the breadth of topics covered. Specific feedback on consultations with constituents for proposed evaluations was low in 2017, which may warrant reconsideration of the current process.
17. Since 2013, DWCP evaluations have moved from focusing on individual country programmes to subregional cluster evaluations. This has resulted in increased learning opportunities by covering more DWCPs annually. Moreover, the scope of high-level evaluations has become broader and more ambitious as there are fewer programme and budget outcomes.
18. With regard to the selection and timing of the high-level evaluations, the 2016 IEE report recommended that such evaluations should coincide with overall programming and budgeting cycles in order to ensure that resources are available for follow-up. EVAL notes that the selection of high-level evaluation case-study countries and decisions to cluster project evaluations should be made in a coordinated manner, in order to avoid certain countries becoming over-sampled and to ensure that the scope of evaluations remains broad.

Table 3. Summary of high-level evaluation topics, 2011–20

	Institutional	Outcome level	DWCP	
	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Region/subregion</i>	
Proposed	2020	Research and knowledge development ¹	Formalization of the informal economy ²	Americas ³
	2019	ILO public–private partnerships ⁴	Promoting fair and effective labour migration policies ⁵	Africa ⁶
	2018	ILO capacity building efforts (all constituents) ⁷	Improved youth employment prospects ⁸	Arab States ⁹
Agreed	2017	ILO field operations and structure	Creating and extending social protection floors	Mekong subregion
	2016	–	Promote skills development for jobs and growth	Western Balkans
	2015	Technical cooperation	Strengthening labour inspection systems	Caribbean
	2014	–	Strategies on fundamental principles and rights at work; Strategy for coherent decent work policies	North Africa
	2013	–	Workers and enterprises benefit from improved safety and health conditions at work; Strategy to promote sustainable enterprises and decent work	Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory
	2012	Sector-specific approach to decent work	ILO strategy for integrating inclusive employment policies	India
	2011	–	Strategy to address HIV and AIDS and the world of work; Strategy for the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation	Bahia Decent Work Agenda (Brazil)

¹ Rationale: Not evaluated before; based on inputs received from consultation.

² Rationale: New topic; based on inputs received from consultation.

³ Rationale: Rotationally due in 2020.

⁴ Rationale: Requested in GB.326/POL/7.

⁵ Rationale: Not evaluated in a long time; based on inputs received from consultation; the International Labour Conference (ILC) resolution concerning fair and effective labour migration governance adopted in June 2017 called for a high-level evaluation of work to promote fair recruitment.

⁶ Rationale: Rotationally due in 2019.

⁷ Rationale: Pre-selected for 2018 in a workplan reviewed previously by the Governing Body.

⁸ Rationale: Not evaluated in a long time; based on inputs received from consultation.

⁹ Rationale: Rotationally due in 2018.

D. Independent evaluation of the evaluation function and implementation of evaluation policy

Biennial milestone 1.3 (2016–17): Independent external evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function informs EVAL's new evaluation strategy

Revision of the ILO evaluation policy

19. The 2016 IEE report noted that since 2011, substantial progress had been made in establishing an independent evaluation function, equipped with highly structured systems and processes and delivering good quality evaluations. In addition, it highlighted the need to establish an integrated evaluation planning system, improve the use of evaluation findings and enhance evaluation methods to better capture the ILO's normative mandate and tripartite structure. It further recommended that these issues be addressed and brought

in line with the 2030 Agenda and the latest United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards.

20. The new draft evaluation policy contained in the appendix builds on the 2005 policy, the findings of the 2016 IEE and seven rounds of extensive consultation processes. These consultations involved comprehensive discussions with: (a) regional evaluation officers; (b) departmental evaluation focal points; (c) the EAC; (d) regional, country directors and programme officers from the Asia and Pacific region; (e) engagement with ILO staff and constituents through a web-based survey;⁵ and (f) an extraordinary meeting with the EAC to discuss progress made in revising the policy.
21. The new draft evaluation policy is an aspirational document that ambitiously encourages the ILO's evaluation function to transition to the highest level of the Joint Inspection Unit's evaluation maturity matrix and is fit for purpose to address the opportunities and challenges ahead.
22. A new evaluation strategy, aligned with the Strategic Plan 2018–21, will be presented to the Governing Body in March 2018. The strategy will give effect to the new evaluation policy, once approved.
23. **Recommendation 1:** *The Governing Body is invited to endorse the 2017 ILO evaluation policy, taking into consideration the recommendation set out in the 2016 IEE and the broad consultative and participatory processes that took place to revise the evaluation policy, as described in paragraphs 19–22.*

Outcome 2: Harmonized Office-wide evaluation practices to support transparency and accountability

24. From the six indicators that were designed to assess the performance of the evaluation function on Outcome 2, three have been met and the remaining are approaching the target (table 4).⁶

⁵ A total of 31 constituents out of a sample of 103 responded to the survey (30 per cent). With regard to ILO staff, 166 of a total of 491 staff responded to the survey (34 per cent).

⁶ The measurement criteria used in the 2016 IEE for assessing the performance are described in footnote 4.

Table 4. Progress towards the end targets of the 2011–17 evaluation strategy results framework as assessed by the 2016 IEE

Outcome	Indicator	Progress
2. Harmonized Office-wide evaluation practice to support transparency and accountability	2.1. By 2015, 100 per cent of DWCPs and projects have mechanisms in place for regularly engaging constituents in the use of evaluation processes	Approaching (but indicator replaced by additional indicators – below)
	2.2. Upgrade and expand the use of evaluations for management (decentralized)	Approaching (but indicator replaced by additional indicators – below)
	Additional indicator A2.2.(1): Codification and upgrading of procedures and guidelines	Met
	Additional indicator A2.2.(2): Maintenance of a strong departmental and regional evaluation network	Approaching (Network and workshops have taken place. However, the use of such networks needs improvement)
	Additional indicator A2.2(3a): Use of a rigorous quality control system	Met (The system is rigorous but internal evaluations are excluded)
	Additional indicator A2.2(3b): Follow-up to evaluation recommendations	Met (The follow-up system is improving and in 2015–16, 89 per cent of recommendations were completed or partly completed)

E. Upgrading and expanding the use of decentralized evaluations for management

Biennial milestone 2.1 (2016–17): Action taken on 75 per cent of recommendations specifically targeted at constituents

Engaging constituents in the evaluation process

25. Constituents have increasingly been targeted in evaluation recommendations, starting from 25 per cent in 2011 (figure 1). Over the past six years, recommendations have: (a) prompted constituents to take ownership of project outputs and outcomes; (b) encouraged stakeholder participation in the drafting and approval of evaluation terms of reference and (c) generated discussion forums at the end of evaluation processes.
26. In 2016, 151 of the 372 total recommendations (41 per cent) targeted constituents. While this reflects a 10 per cent drop from 2015, it is higher than the overall six-year average of 36 per cent. Of the 41 per cent of recommendations that targeted constituents, high levels of action resulted from 59 per cent of recommendations; 33 per cent led to moderate levels of action; and no action was taken in respect of 8 per cent of recommendations.⁷ Figure 2 shows constituent involvement in response to the 2011–16 recommendations. As in previous years, this milestone surpassed its target by 7 per cent in 2016, when combining the percentages of high and moderate levels of action taken by constituents.
27. While these figures point to a positive trend since 2011, findings from the 2016 IEE report indicate that there is room for improvement in terms of strengthening constituents' demand

⁷ “High levels of action” refers to recommendations addressed in full and “moderate levels of action” to recommendations addressed in part.

for, participation in and ownership of evaluation.⁸ The report further notes that their “capacity to implement recommendations generally remain[s] low. Involving partners more in the design, implementation and follow-up of evaluations can help strengthen their interest in evaluation and facilitate the use of evaluations as a tool for social dialogue”.⁹

Figure 1. Number of recommendations targeting constituents in comparison with total, 2011–16

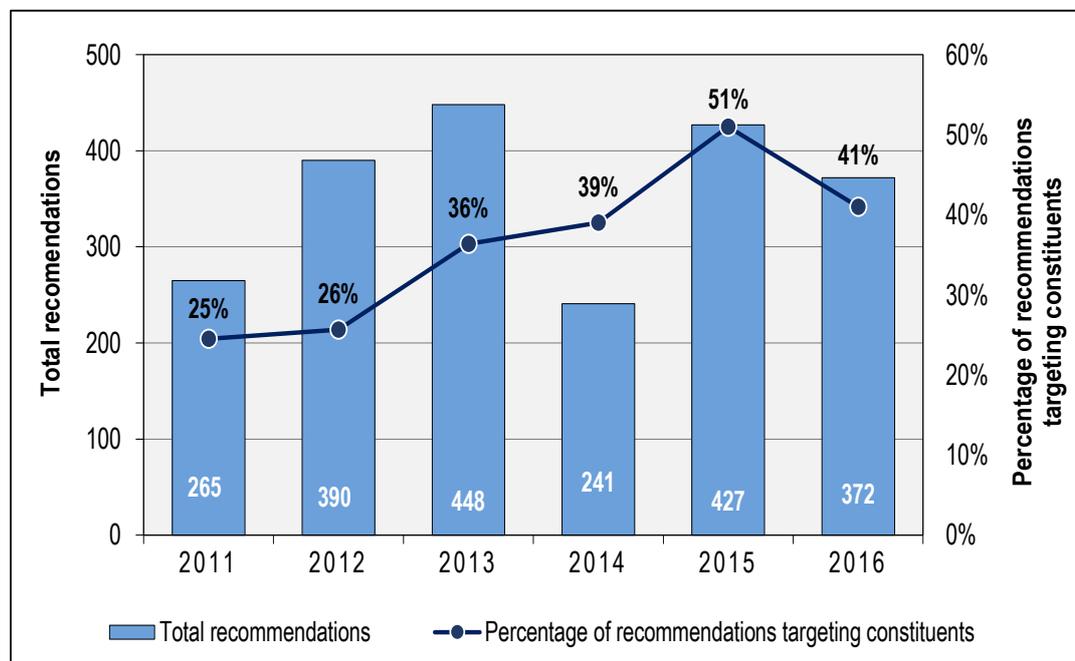
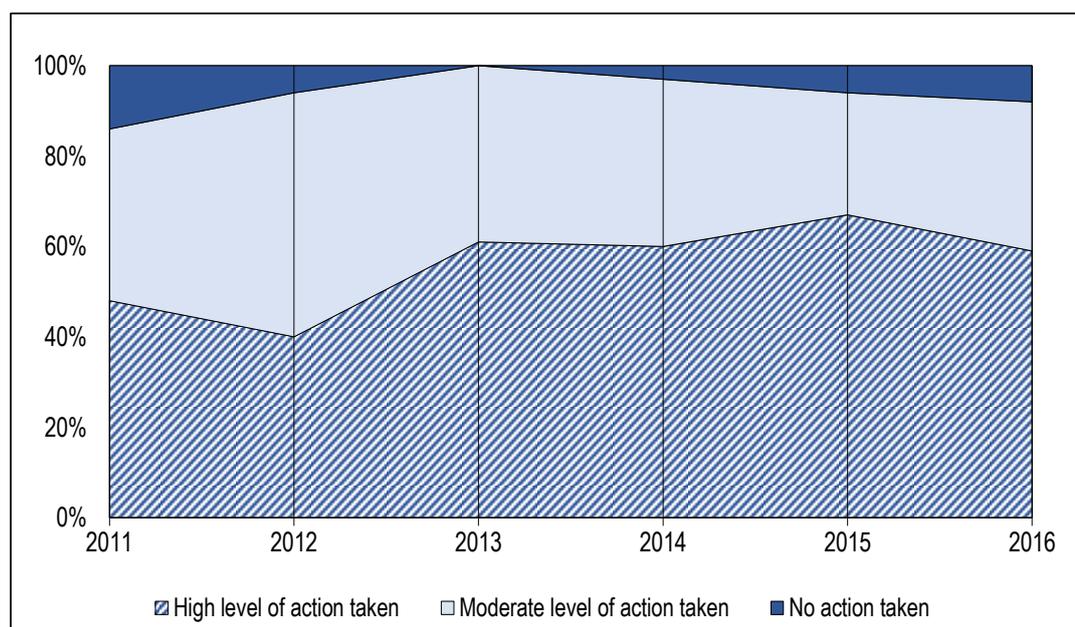


Figure 2. Constituent involvement in response to evaluation recommendations, 2011–16



⁸ ILO, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 86.

Biennial milestone 2.2 (2016–17): 95 per cent submission rate of mandated internal evaluations available for use by management

Enhancing self-assessment and critical reflection through internal evaluations

28. In 2011, the threshold for conducting independent evaluations was increased to US\$1 million and the policy for conducting internal evaluations was formalized to include projects with a value greater than US\$500,000. Self-evaluation is encouraged for all projects below the half a million threshold. While these internal evaluation reports are neither technically overseen by EVAL nor provided with the same quality assurance mechanism as independent evaluations, they are regularly requested by EVAL as part of knowledge management. While the number of internal and self-evaluations grew steadily from 24 to 39 during the period 2011–14, fewer have been received since that time, even though the number of projects falling within the budgetary threshold requiring an internal evaluation has increased (table 5). This decrease indicates that such evaluations are either not being submitted to EVAL or not being completed. Consequently, despite considerable efforts none of the biennial targets since 2013 have been met.¹⁰
29. In an effort to increase awareness of internal and self-evaluations and enhance capacity for conducting internal evaluations in line with biennial milestone 3.1, EVAL administered the first evaluation training programme on how to conduct internal and self-evaluations in April 2017. As a result, and in combination with a drive to monitor more rigorous compliance, it is expected that these evaluations will be submitted on a more regular basis.
30. In terms of evaluation quality, similar issues were raised in the 2016 IEE report, specifically in recommendation 7, which refers to the need to expand the quality assurance system to include internal evaluations, and switch to an annual or real-time independent quality assurance system. EVAL is committed to addressing this recommendation, but will do so within limited evaluation resources and with a focus on strengthening a culture of (self-) learning among managers as part of results-based management.

Table 5. Internal and self-evaluations submitted to EVAL, 2011–16

Internal and self-evaluations	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
DWCP reviews	8	6	7	4	5	5	35
Internal and self-evaluations	24	34	31	39	22	16	166

F. Harmonizing and standardizing types of evaluations and associated roles and responsibilities to improve use, quality and efficiency

The codification and upgrading of procedures and guidelines

31. In an effort to establish strong, cohesive evaluation practices throughout the ILO, in 2011 EVAL developed the *i-eval* resource kit for ILO staff responsible for planning and managing evaluations. The kit, which consists of the evaluation policy guidelines and supporting tools in the form of guidance notes, checklists, templates, tools and protocols,

¹⁰ Biennial milestone 2.2 (2012–13): All internal and self-evaluations are accessible and searchable in the database; biennial milestone 2.2 (2011): 20 per cent increase in use of self-evaluation to address organizational issues; 20 per cent use of project final progress report.

was updated in 2012 and 2017. The supporting tools and instruments have been reviewed on a yearly basis and have increased in number over time. At present, they consist of 18 evaluation guidance notes, ten checklists, ten templates, four tools and two protocols.

32. Findings from the 2016 IEE report recognize that EVAL has developed a comprehensive set of policy guidelines and supplementary tools to support the evaluation function since 2011. Creating quality products and making them available has proved useful for evaluation practitioners. While the IEE also recognizes progress achieved in upgrading evaluation procedures and guidelines, EVAL will continue its efforts to build evaluation capacity and support results-based management and overall organizational learning.¹¹ The resource kit will be further updated in 2018 to reflect the new ILO evaluation policy and strategy.

Networks and collaborations

Internal network

33. EVAL maintains an internal ILO evaluation network, composed of regional evaluation officers and departmental evaluation focal points, which has been active throughout the current biennium. A biennial workshop was held with all network members in early 2016. Four conference calls were held with the regional evaluation officers, including a joint conference call with departmental evaluation focal points. Moreover, the new evaluation policy benefited from two additional consultations with the internal network, bringing the number of events held to date during the biennium to seven.
34. Despite this level of activity, the 2016 IEE found that there was scope to facilitate the evaluation network more actively, by placing emphasis on more regular meetings and nurturing a stronger sense of identity (belonging to an evaluation community) and exchange between departmental evaluation focal points and regional evaluation officers. The revised evaluation policy and evaluation strategy will outline how to foster a stronger sense of community and evaluation culture.

External network

35. The external evaluation network comprises UNEG, the International Development Evaluation Association, and regional and national evaluation organizations and societies. Over the last five years, EVAL participated in various UNEG working groups and task forces. EVAL co-hosted the 2016 annual UNEG meeting and co-organized discussions among Geneva based agencies on the UNEG roadmap for SDGs and evaluation to be presented at the 2017 annual UNEG meeting. Following this meeting, EVAL invited the co-chairs of the professionalization task force to conduct a workshop on the UN Evaluation Competency Framework for agencies based in Geneva. EVAL is constantly ensuring that the participation in external networks are focused on effective collaboration and access to knowledge and experience that directly benefits evaluation in the ILO.

¹¹ ILO, op. cit., pp. 38 and p. 67.

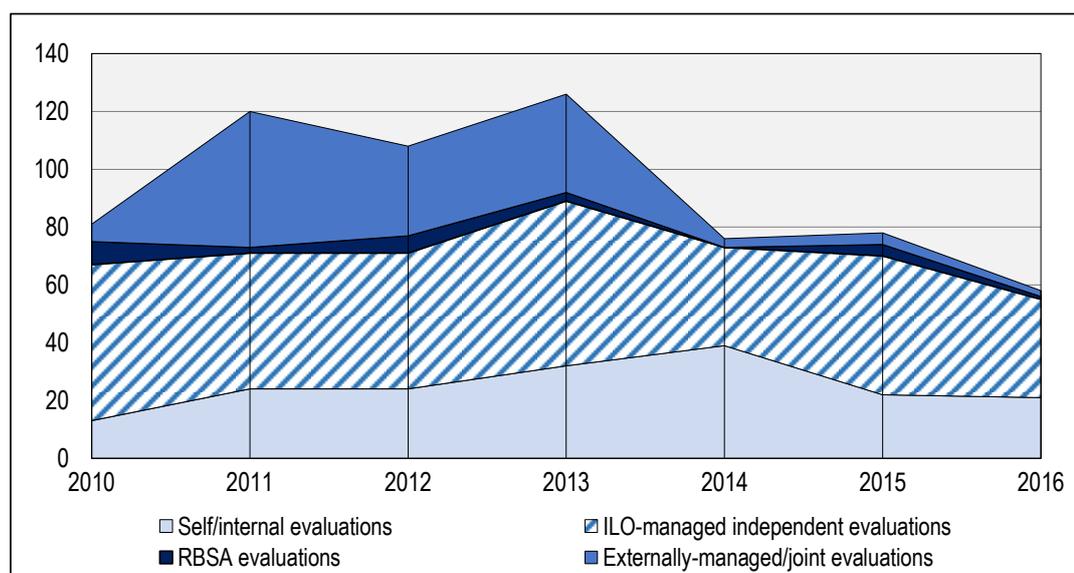
Collaboration between EVAL and the International Training Centre of the ILO

- 36.** The International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC–ILO) and EVAL have benefited from extensive collaboration on the production of numerous guidelines, training materials and courses. These include the following:
- layout and printing of three editions of policy guidelines for evaluation (2011, 2013, 2017);
 - Internal Evaluation Training Programme (IETP) (2017);
 - at the request of the Board and Director of ITC–ILO, EVAL oversaw and managed a fully independent evaluation of two recurring editions of five ITC–ILO academies (2014);
 - Evaluation Training for Tripartite Constituents (2012); and
 - Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP) conducted on an annual basis since 2011.
- 37.** These projects involved hundreds of trainees and were successfully completed. The 2016 IEE acknowledged EVAL’s commitment to supporting synergies with the ITC–ILO. EVAL is currently developing guidelines for evaluation consultants, in addition to a revised training package on evaluation for tripartite constituents (including in the context of SDGs), both of which will be complete by the end of 2017.

*Upgrading decentralized evaluations and increasing their use**Independent project evaluations*

- 38.** The *i*-Track database systematically tracks and records all projects that require evaluation. It is an instrumental tool for providing timely and accurate information on the number of planned and completed evaluations to constituents, donors and ILO officials. During the period from 2010 to 2016, the average number of ILO-managed project evaluations was 46 (figure 3). During the past seven years, numbers have varied, with the most seen in 2013 (57 evaluations). The projected number of ILO-managed evaluations for 2017 is 73; this higher number is due to evaluations being carried over because of project delays and is likely to return to normal by the end of the year.
- 39.** The number of external or joint evaluations is unpredictable and depends on joint funding trends and donor policies. In 2016, only two externally managed and joint evaluations were conducted. While this is on a par with levels from 2014, it represents a drastic decline since 2011–13 when the average was 37. However, the high levels during that period were largely due to the large number of joint project evaluations due under the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. A total of 21 internal and self-evaluations were received in 2016, slightly fewer than the six-year average of 27 (see biennial milestone 2.2).
- 40.** Since late 2016, EVAL has been developing an integrated evaluation planning system to improve the coordination and sequencing of evaluation reports, with a view to making more strategic and cost-effective evaluations. It is expected that the system will facilitate EVAL’s policy direction, as echoed in the 2016 IEE, to undertake more cluster evaluations and thereby improve strategic focus and quality.

Figure 3. Number of evaluations by type, 2010–16

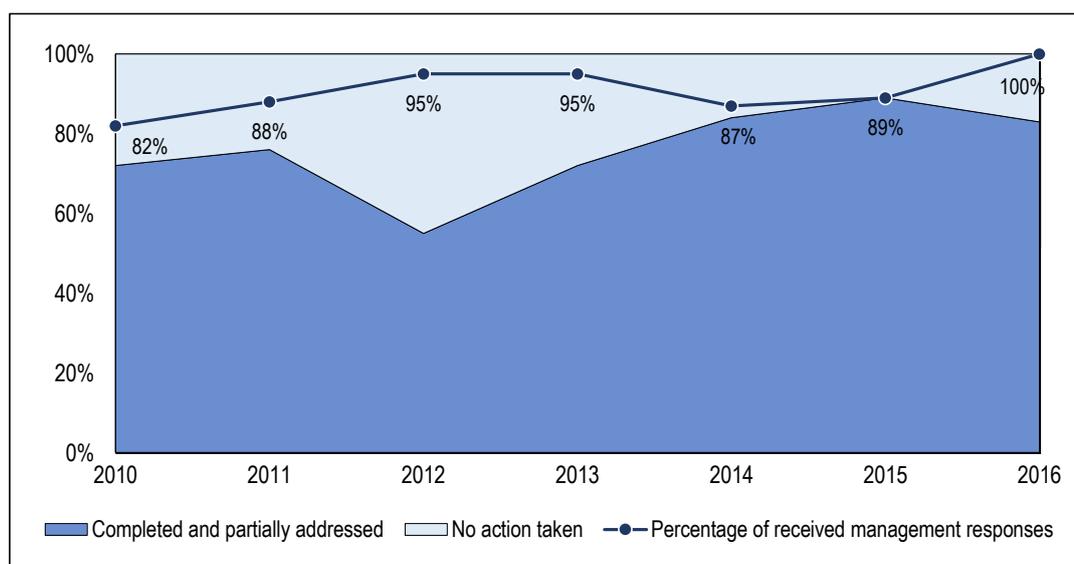


Follow-up to project recommendations

41. Project management is required to respond to recommendations that stem from all independent evaluations. Of the 37 independent evaluations received in 2016, 33 were required to undertake the management response exercise, which contained a total of 352 recommendations (table 6).¹²
42. Since 2010, EVAL has received an average of 91 per cent of management responses for independent evaluations and, notably, achieved 100 per cent for the first time in 2016 (figure 4). Altogether, 82 per cent of recommendations were completed or partially addressed in 2016, representing a modest increase, in comparison with the 2010–16 average of 76 per cent. While these data reflect strong management commitment to results-based management and organizational learning, EVAL has nonetheless faced challenges in receiving management responses to evaluations recommendations in a timely manner, and has often had to send up to three reminders. In response, EVAL is developing an automated system to modernize the way in which such information is tracked (see Outcome 3).

¹² From the four evaluations that were excluded, two were externally managed, one was completed too late in the year to undertake the exercise and the management response from a thematic evaluation was presented to the Governing Body.

Figure 4. Evolution of follow-up to evaluation recommendations, 2010–16

Table 6. Management response to evaluation recommendations, 2016¹³

Administrative region or sector	Evaluation reports requiring management response (33)		Recommendations		Completed	Partially addressed	No action taken
	Management responses received		In reports	With responses			
	No	Yes					
Africa	0	7	86	86	34	20	32
Americas	0	2	24	24	13	10	1
Arab States	0	1	10	10	7	1	2
Europe and Central Asia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asia and the Pacific	0	10	105	105	65	31	9
Subtotal	0	20	225	225	119	62	44
Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP)	0	1	8	8	2	6	0
Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV)	0	1	9	9	3	6	0
Employment Policy Department (EMPLOYMENT)	0	3	27	27	11	16	0
Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE)	0	4	36	36	12	12	12
Social Protection Department (SOCPRO)	0	1	14	14	6	3	5

¹³ Some departments do not appear in table 6 either because a project under their technical responsibility was decentralized to the regions or the project was below the budget threshold for management follow-up.

Administrative region or sector	Evaluation reports requiring management response (33)		Recommendations		Completed	Partially addressed	No action taken
	Management responses received		In reports	With responses			
	No	Yes					
Conditions of Work and Equality Department (WORKQUALITY)	0	3	33	33	24	9	0
Subtotal	0	13	127	127	58	52	17
Total	0	33	352	352	177	114	61
Percentage	0	100	–	100	50.3	32.4	17.3

82

Proactive use of recommendations, lessons learned and good practices

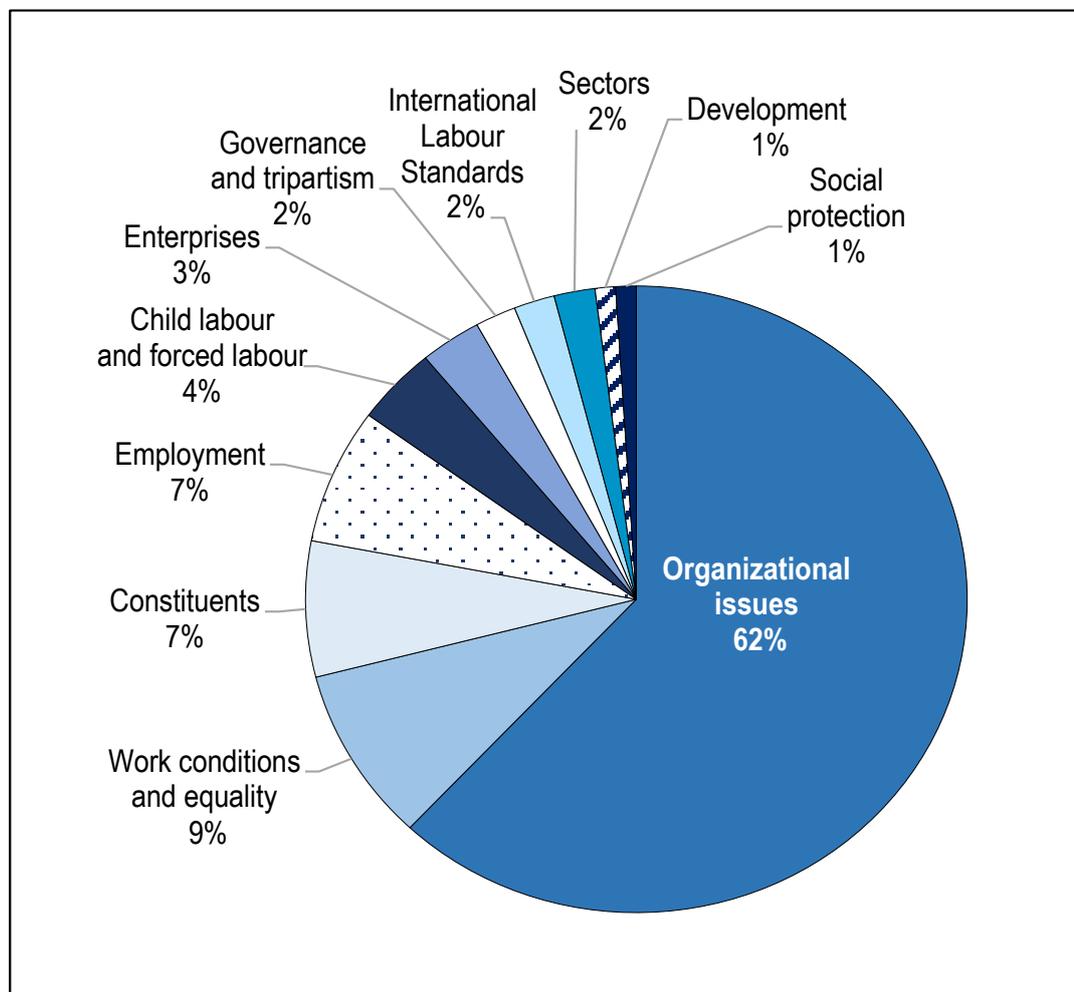
- 43.** From 2011 to 2016, evaluations generated 1,762 recommendations, 456 lessons learned and 267 good practices. They contain a wealth of information, which is expected to inform programme/project design, implementation and overall organizational learning. To encourage their uptake, EVAL has systematically collected and stored them in the *i-Track* database, which is publicly accessible via *i-eval* Discovery (see section H).
- 44.** During the same six-year period, the majority of recommendations were related to management issues (62 per cent),¹⁴ such as planning and programme design, programme implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This was followed by work conditions and equality (9 per cent), employment (7 per cent), and building constituents' capacities (7 per cent); see figure 5.
- 45.** The majority of lessons learned reported in 2016 were also directed towards management issues (64 per cent), followed by international labour standards (14 per cent) and child labour (7 per cent). Similar data also emerged with regard to good practices, in respect of which management issues ranked the highest (45 per cent), followed by work conditions and equality (18 per cent).
- 46.** In 2014, EVAL introduced structured criteria with a view to improving the way in which lessons learned and good practices were prepared and captured in evaluations, which requires evidence-based analyses that indicate cause and effect, potential for replicability, administrative issues and links to cross-cutting issues. As a result, the quality of evaluation reports has been improved and their use by technical experts encouraged. This effort was also recognized in the 2016 IEE report.¹⁵

¹⁴ "Management issues" refers to areas in need of addressing that are related to operational and efficiency issues in all phases of a project's cycle (design, appraisal, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

¹⁵ ILO, op. cit., p. 38.

47. The 2016 IEE found that 85 per cent of reports provided relevant recommendations.¹⁶ The use of recommendations generally depends on the interest of staff in evaluation since strengthening systems for their follow-up is needed, particularly at the regional level.¹⁷

Figure 5. Recommendations by theme/technical subject, 2011–16



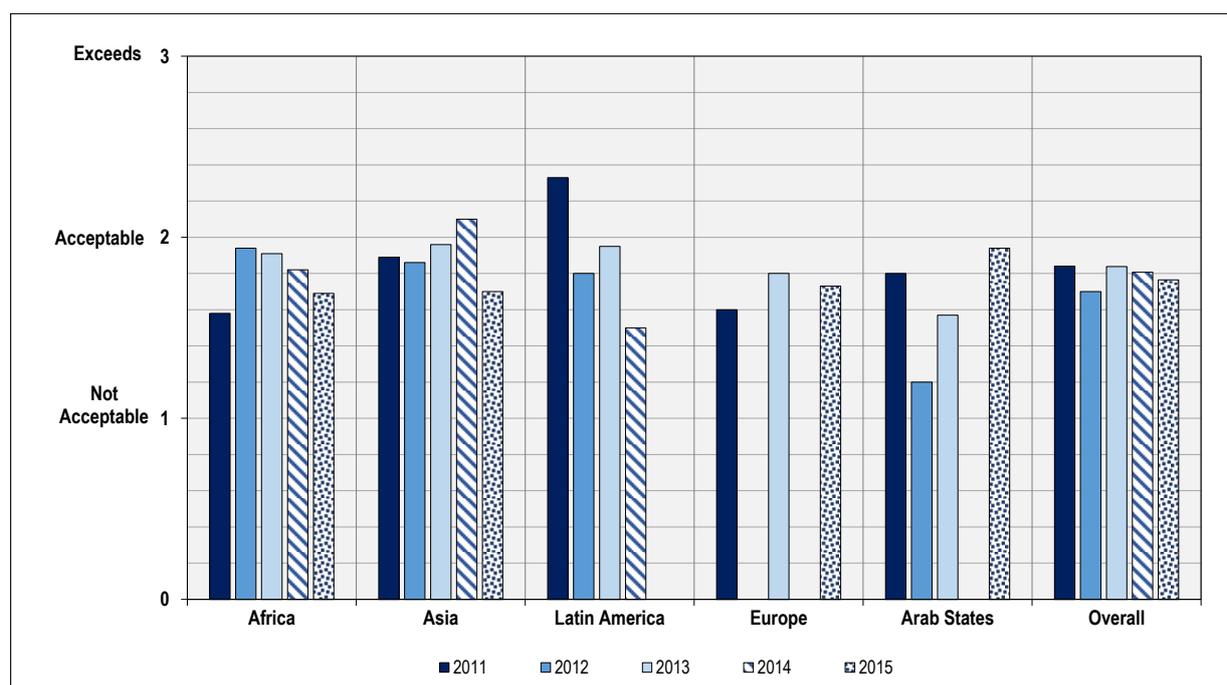
Quality of independent project evaluations

48. EVAL established a quality assurance system for independent evaluations that is multi-layered, methodical, rigorous and consistent with UNEG requirements. Evaluation managers supported by regional evaluation officers and departmental evaluation focal points are the first level of quality assurance. Senior evaluation officers are also accountable for the quality of decentralized independent evaluations. Evaluation reports are subject to biennial quality assessments. These assessments show that while the development of substantial guidance material and capacity-building efforts, as mentioned under biennial milestone 3.1 and section F, ensured that quality remained at acceptable levels, quality did not improve over the period in question. Figure 6 presents the results of the ILO's external assessments of evaluation quality using a 0–3 scale (where 1: does not meet UNEG standards; 2: meets UNEG standards; and 3: exceeds UNEG standards).

¹⁶ ILO, op. cit., p. 36.

¹⁷ loc. cit.

Figure 6. Mean independent quality ratings of independent evaluation reports, 2011–15



49. The 2016 IEE undertook a more nuanced examination and concluded that evaluations were overall using appropriate methods for data collection and analysis and that their quality had significantly increased since the initial IEE. Subsequently, EVAL undertook an analysis of its quality appraisal mechanism in early 2017. The findings showed that while quality had indeed remained consistent, there were weaknesses in EVAL's assessment methodology. Evaluation reports had become increasingly comprehensive over the years, covering more standard elements (from 75 per cent in 2013 to 96 per cent in 2015) and these variances had not been taken into account when scoring their quality. In response, EVAL made substantial revisions to the quality appraisal tool which is currently being applied to assess a large number of evaluation reports covering the period from mid-2016 to mid-2017.

Outcome 3: Evaluation capability expanded through enhanced knowledge, skills and tools

50. The performance of this outcome is measured by two indicators (table 7). The biennial milestone for evaluation capacity and practice among ILO staff and constituents far exceeded its targets, demonstrating a strong desire for training activities. The new evaluation policy addresses the issues described in the second indicator and it is expected that these will be met in the upcoming biennium.

Table 7. Progress towards the end targets of the 2011–17 evaluation strategy results framework as assessed by the 2016 IEE

Outcome	Indicator	Progress (2016 milestones)
3. Evaluation capability expanded through enhanced knowledge, skills and tools	3.1. Evaluation capacity and practice among ILO staff and constituents improved	Exceeding (Training throughout the Organization and among constituents has been successful)
	3.2. For evaluation network, standardized roles and responsibilities applied throughout the ILO	Approaching (Standardization is in progress, the approach and processes to be followed are currently under discussion)

G. Evaluation capacity and practice among ILO staff and constituents

Biennial milestone 3.1 (2016–17): 75 constituents and 75 ILO officials develop specialized evaluation knowledge through ILO training over 2014–15 levels

51. Over the reporting period, EVAL progressively expanded and improved its mix of training products and services. In 2012, EVAL produced training materials for constituents to improve their evaluation capacity, which are currently being revised. A diagnostic tool to enhance the evaluability of DWCPs in the context of SDGs is being prepared. It includes a framework for the rapid assessment of national, structural and technical capacities and needs with a view to ensuring the systematic monitoring and review of decent work activities in the context of the SDGs, which will identify further capacity and training needs.
52. In 2013, EVAL, the ITC–ILO and the Human Resources Development Department (HRD) launched the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP). In 2017, the fifth EMCP was conducted in South Africa in order to increase evaluation capacity in the region. The average level of satisfaction with the quality of the training is 92 per cent. Currently, a total of 105 trainees have completed the programme (65 per cent).
53. EVAL developed the Internal Evaluation Training Programme (IETP) in 2016 with a view to improving the quality of self-evaluations and internal evaluations, and pilot-tested the programme in April 2017. Twenty-four staff members from most regions and from headquarters participated in the training. The end-of-activity questionnaire showed a high level of satisfaction from participants (92 per cent).
54. The Office has exceeded the target for this milestone since the beginning of the strategy. A total of 1,052 constituents and 626 ILO staff have been trained in evaluation since 2010–17 (table 8). The combined number of constituents and ILO staff trained has far surpassed the target, by 280 per cent. While this is a notable achievement, the 2016 IEE findings note that trained evaluation managers view their certification and the experience of managing evaluations as sufficient to meet their professional objective but would benefit from refresher training because of infrequent practice.¹⁸

¹⁸ ILO, op. cit., p. 49.

Table 8. Constituents and ILO officials trained in evaluation, 2010–17

Persons trained	Africa	Americas	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe	HQ	Total	Target 2010–17
Constituents	619	104	85	184	60	0	1 052	300
ILO staff	122	77	82	112	53	51	497	300
EMCP	44	5	3	32	5	16	105	–
IETP	8	1	1	2	4	8	24	–
Total	793	187	171	330	122	75	1 678	600

Biennial milestone 3.2 (2016–17): Departmental evaluation focal points have elements of evaluation responsibilities included in their job descriptions, with input from EVAL for the corresponding part of their performance appraisals; certified evaluation managers receive recognition in their performance appraisals

Further professionalization of evaluation in the ILO

55. Findings from the 2016 IEE illustrate that incentives to engage in evaluative activities have been somewhat weak for non-evaluation professionals. Part of the solution would be to include some evaluation responsibilities in the job descriptions of departmental evaluation focal points, evaluation managers or focal points. Doing so would recognize their role and formalize the required competencies and responsibilities of officials engaged in evaluation work. In order to incentivize and strengthen the evaluation manager system, EVAL encourages evaluation managers to work with their supervisors so that such work is recognized in their annual performance appraisals.
56. These issues are addressed in the new 2017 evaluation policy. This development, therefore, provides EVAL with a basis to continue work with relevant parties, such as HRD and other departments and regions, to ensure that this milestone is met. Addressing these issues will respond to one of the recommendations put forth in the recent IEE.

H. Improving the use of evaluation knowledge systems

57. Improving the quality of evaluation products and services to strengthen their use and accessibility has always been an important objective for EVAL. While the 2016 IEE recognizes that the Office has made considerable progress and demonstrated commitment in this regard, there is room for improvement particularly in terms of communications, developing integrated evaluation planning, modernizing the *i-Track* database and strengthening the management response exercise to evaluation recommendations. EVAL has made progress on these projects since the 2016 IEE.

The i-Track database

58. The *i-Track* database stores all planned and completed evaluation reports, irrespective of their timing, type or nature. The 2016 IEE report notes that the database is unique and ahead of its time due to its comprehensiveness as an electronic repository. It further notes that the effort made to maintain the database has been exemplary.¹⁹ Recognizing that the database rests on older technology, EVAL is in the process of modernizing it with support

¹⁹ ILO, op. cit., p. 62.

from the Information and Technology Management Department (INFOTEC). New features include information on evaluation clustering options, in direct response to a recommendation made by the IEE on integrated evaluation planning systems.²⁰ Such proposals are recognized in the 2016 IEE report as being relevant, timely and promising a high return on investment.²¹

i-eval Discovery

- 59.** *i-eval Discovery* acts as an electronic interface for the *i-Track* database. The initial phase, launched in December 2016, illustrates all completed evaluations, recommendations, lessons learned and good practices in an interactive mapping feature. It was designed to improve and facilitate user experience for accessing evaluation information. Launched in August 2017, the second phase publicly displays all planned evaluations to support donor relations and evaluation management. Numerous information sessions on how to use and access the platform were conducted in ILO departments and in the field. The 2016 IEE report recognizes *i-eval Discovery* as an innovative vehicle for encouraging the uptake of evaluations.

Automated management response system to evaluation recommendations

- 60.** Recognizing that the process for collecting management responses could benefit from specific measures to improve efficiency, by the end of 2017 EVAL will launch an automated system to keep track of management responses for independent evaluations. This effort is also in response to recommendation 9 in the 2016 IEE report concerning the need to strengthen the decentralized evaluation management response mechanism.

Communications

- 61.** Increasing the visibility and understanding of evaluation through communication activities are essential components of the evaluation function, particularly for advocating evaluation use. Since 2011, EVAL has produced various communication products and services that have increased in number and scope over time, such as newsletters, fact sheets, *i-eval Discovery* and new social media efforts (figure 7), which the 2016 IEE report notes are used by 75 per cent of surveyed respondents.²² While the IEE recognizes that over the past six years this increase represents a notable achievement, especially considering human resource constraints, it notes that there is room to grow specifically in terms of revisiting EVAL's 2014 communication strategy with the aim of creating more targeted products.²³

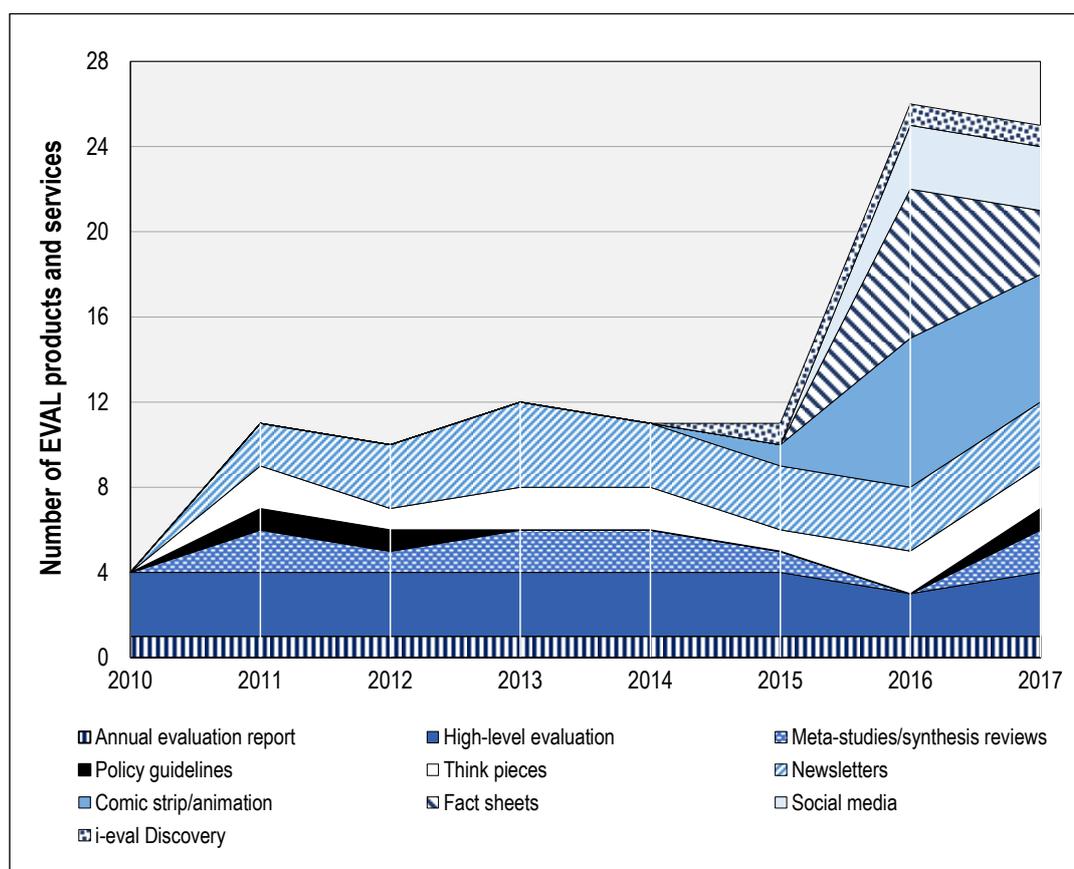
²⁰ ILO, op. cit., p. 79.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 62.

²² *ibid.*, p. 39.

²³ *loc. cit.*

Figure 7. EVAL products and services, 2011–17



Note: "Comic strip/animation" refers to evaluation-related topics communicated by means of animated short films, comic strips and PowerPoint presentations for high-level evaluations.

I. Use of evaluation by departments, regions, the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference

62. EVAL's sustained advocacy for supporting the use of evaluation has led to an increase in the uptake of findings and recommendations by ILO management. Particular attention is devoted in this section to follow-up to recommendations approved by the Governing Body in annual evaluation reports. Meticulous records on follow-up by key departments have been kept in rolling action plans reproduced in consecutive annual evaluation reports. As the current evaluation strategy for the period 2011–17 is coming to an end, key examples of the uptake and use of evaluation activities are set out in a summative overview in paragraphs 62–70.

Uptake of evaluation findings

Improving evaluability through enhanced design and monitoring and evaluation

63. In response to the recommendation made in annual evaluation reports from 2011–12 to 2014–15 to strengthen the ILO's appraisal function and shift the focus from appraisal at the back-end design stage to upfront design support, a development cooperation design support facility using external expertise was established in 2016–17 to improve the quality of project proposals and, consequently, their evaluability, by strengthening results-based management, formulating theories of change and logical frameworks. The Partnerships

and Field Support Department (PARDEV) was assisted by the ILO's Business Process Review, which confirmed the importance of this EVAL recommendation in redesigning this facility.

64. In response to a recommendation in the Annual evaluation report: 2011–12 to improve the quality and record-keeping of progress reports in a single repository, PARDEV has cooperated with INFOTEC to develop a Sharepoint document management system. Progress has been made in this respect in 2016–17 as the Business Process Review again recognized that this recommendation was crucial and recommended an “end-to-end” project cycle management system.
65. Several flagship programmes and large projects have applied global monitoring and evaluation systems. Increasingly, dedicated monitoring and evaluation officers are recruited both at the country office and project level, often as a result of recommendations made as a result of evaluability assessments and mid-term evaluations. An increasing number of evaluability assessments or reviews of large-scale projects are being completed, including as part of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Improving results-based management system and tools

66. As recommended in the annual evaluation reports for 2012–13 and 2013–14 to the Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM), the Programme and Budget for 2018–19 introduces improvements in the corporate results framework with performance indicators at the outcome level, baselines, targets and outcome strategies based on theories of change. New measures introduced to improve the implementation of 2016–17 programmes covered the possibility of linking a country programme outcome to multiple indicators within the same policy outcome and a “markers system” to better plan and report on cross-cutting dimensions. The 2016 DWCP guidebook underscores the importance of including theories of change when designing DWCPs, and of applying appropriate planning, monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms.

Evaluation activities in regions and departments

Building the knowledge base

67. The Employment Policy Department, with support from EVAL, carried out a meta-analysis to identify and develop intervention models on employment promotion by using project evaluations and other evidence-based literature. Meta-analysis and synthesis reviews are often carried out in preparation for Regional Meetings and strategic reviews.²⁴
68. Impact evaluations of specific interventions continue to be carried out. The Better Work Branch (BETTERWORK) completed a global impact assessment; in addition, a number of impact evaluations were published in 2017 and more are under way. As part of EVAL's support to impact evaluation, its Impact Evaluation Review Facility has provided quality oversight and recommendations to a number of the impact evaluations under way.

Building evaluation capacity

69. Regions and departments are engaged in building monitoring and evaluation capacity for staff, constituents and other partners. The Youth Employment Programme's executive

²⁴ The ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, for example, carried out a synthesis review of lessons learned in youth employment and women's empowerment; a meta-analysis of evaluation findings; and a synthesis review of lessons learned and results achieved by the ILO's 2010–15 work in the region, for the purpose of informing a regional strategic review exercise.

course, held in Amman in July 2017, discussed cutting-edge techniques for evaluation and results-based management for active labour market programmes.

Use of evaluations for specific policy decisions or changes in approach

70. There are multiple examples of evaluation recommendations and findings being adhered to and built into specific project designs.²⁵ Lessons learned from evaluations, often documented through synthesis reviews, are used for global conferences and discussions.²⁶

Evaluation use by the Governing Body and International Labour Conference

71. In various instances, the Governing Body has made encouraging remarks in cases where direct uptake of evaluation findings and recommendations has informed ILO programming and strategic direction. Such remarks have included that the ILO should complete the follow-up to high-level evaluation recommendations using evaluations as a basis for the review of policies, structures and approaches; and appreciation for the way in which evaluations have documented the need for further efforts in specific areas.
72. Synthesis reviews produced by EVAL in the form of working papers have informed the ILC recurrent discussion reports and deliberations since 2013.²⁷ Standards and resolutions adopted by the ILC contain references to the ways in which technical work and cross-cutting policy issues must include evaluation activities.²⁸ Furthermore, resolutions have called for specific evaluations, such as the high-level evaluation of public–private partnerships to be conducted in 2018.

Part II. Assessing the ILO’s effectiveness and results

73. EVAL has regularly provided assessments of the ILO’s effectiveness and performance in areas related to strategic relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency in past annual evaluation reports.

ILO performance through development cooperation

74. Development cooperation projects and programmes are a means of delivering ILO outcomes at the strategic objective, programme and budget and DWCP levels, and constitute the majority of resources available to deliver country programme outcomes.

²⁵ Such as the Regional Fair Migration Project in the Middle East (FAIRWAY), where donor participation in the design process provided the basis for the systematic use of the evaluation recommendations.

²⁶ For example, for upcoming work on Global Compacts for refugees in September 2017 and the preparation of the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, to be held in Buenos Aires, 14–16 November 2017.

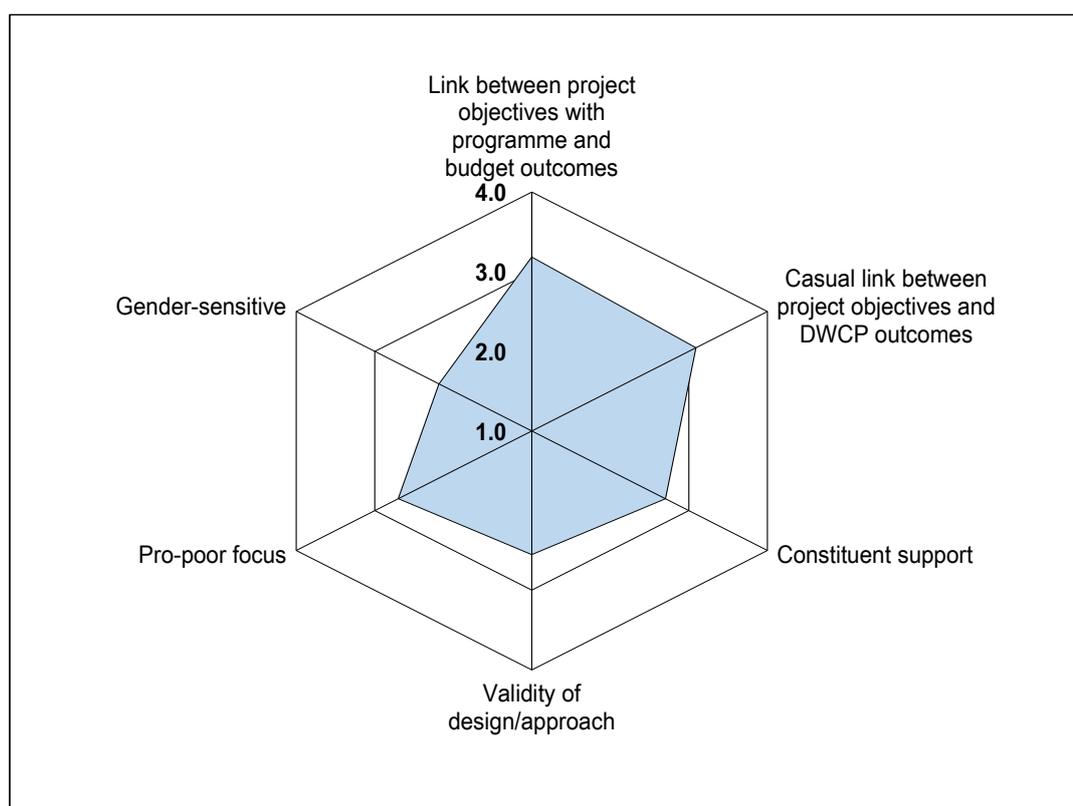
²⁷ Overview of all synthesis reports on recurrent discussions, including current ongoing discussion.

²⁸ The Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), provides, for example, that crisis response in the immediate aftermath of a conflict or disaster should include “applying a gender perspective in all crisis prevention and response design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities”, para. 8(g).

Consequently, development cooperation evaluations can provide credible feedback on the ILO's effectiveness and operational performance.

75. In 2017, EVAL conducted a meta-study on decent work results to impartially assess ILO performance based on the findings and conclusions of a representative sample of 40 final independent project evaluations from 2013 to 16, distributed across strategic objectives and regions. The 2017 meta-study builds on the methodology used in two previous comparable meta-studies conducted in 2011 (covering evaluation reports 2009–10) and 2013 (covering 2011–12). Ongoing work on improvements to future methodologies will provide more comprehensive analyses of development cooperation effectiveness, particularly with respect to the 2030 Agenda and increased focus on results from the ILO's strategic objectives.
76. Development cooperation performance was assessed through an ex-post rating of 26 performance indicators, based on evaluation reports.²⁹ Figures 8 to 10 present the results in the three main performance areas, namely: effectiveness, sustainability and impact were rated successful for nearly all projects; strategic relevance and alignment were relatively successful; and implementation performance and efficiency of management were rated less successful. A four-point scale was used with specific definitions of how to assign scores for “unsuccessful” (score = 1), “partly successful” (score = 2), “successful” (score = 3) and “highly successful” (score = 4).

Figure 8. Average rating on strategic relevance and alignment performance criteria



²⁹ The sample was selected to represent distribution across sectors and regions, to the extent possible. The analysis shows no significant variation across regions or strategic objectives.

Figure 9. Average rating on effectiveness, sustainability and impact performance criteria

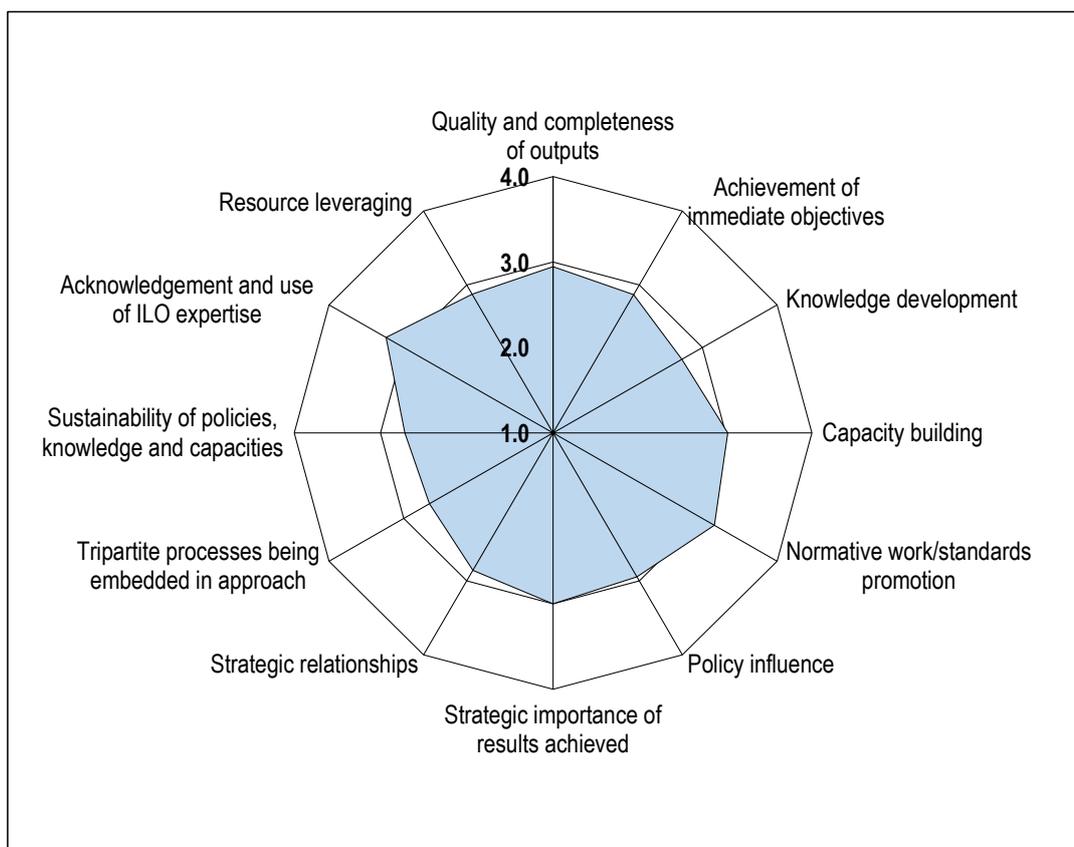
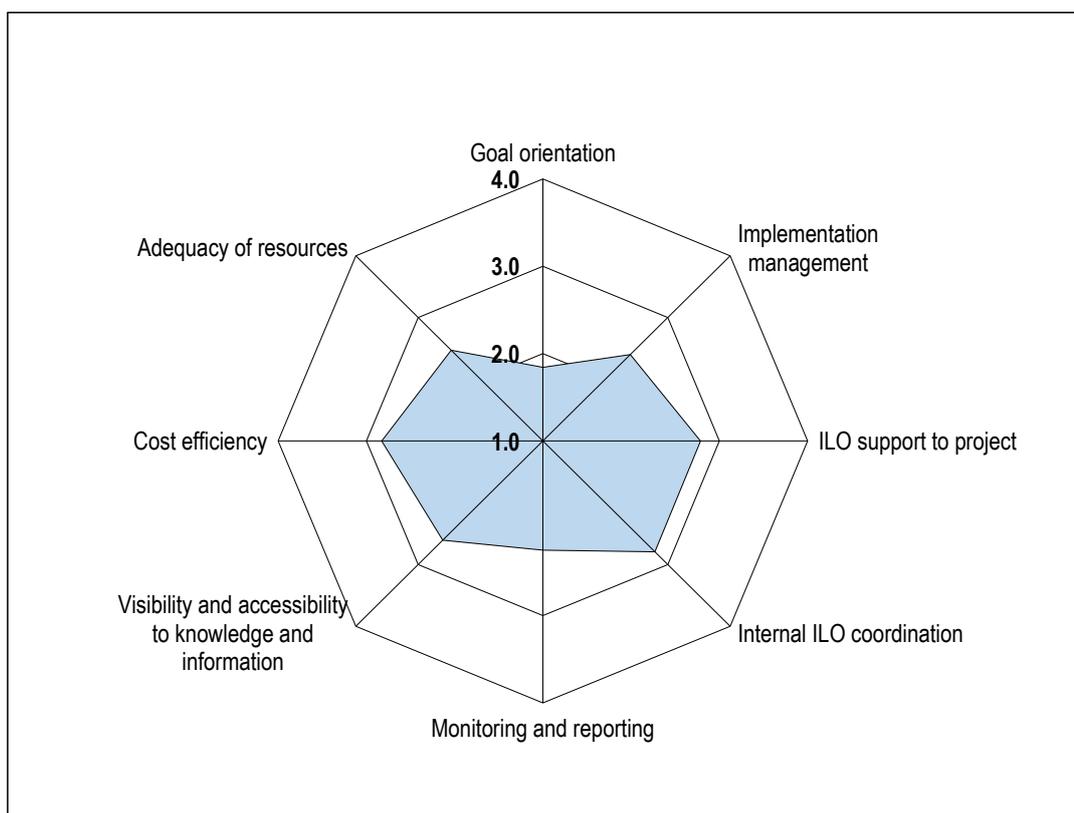


Figure 10. Average rating on implementation performance and efficiency of management and resource use performance criteria



Strategic relevance and alignment

77. Nearly all projects demonstrated clear relevance to DWCPs and programme and budget outcomes (figure 8), but other aspects, such as design and alignment, were not rated as highly. Constituent involvement was not always well integrated into project formulation or implementation. While most project designs and approaches were rated positively, others were overambitious or faced challenges due to an inadequate assessment of the country context. The inclusion of gender sensitivity in project design was only partly successful; this indicator received one of the weakest scores.

Effectiveness, sustainability and impact

78. The ILO's overall performance in terms of effectiveness of DC was mostly favourable and received the highest score (figure 9). Planned outputs were largely completed to a high level of quality, and significant progress was usually made on immediate objectives, including knowledge development, capacity building, normative work/standards promotion and policy influence. Project achievements were found to have strategic importance at a country level in almost all cases. In most cases, tripartite processes were embedded in the approach of projects, but almost one third of projects showed a need for improvement in this area. Two-thirds of projects have some tangible prospects in terms of sustainability.
79. Acknowledgement of and use of the ILO's expertise received the highest score. The ILO's technical expertise received the most appreciation; however, this topic was addressed in fewer than 50 per cent of evaluations.

Implementation and efficiency of management and resource use

80. Most projects were rated positively in terms of their implementation and efficiency (figure 10). Cost efficiency, as well as the support provided by the ILO, were considered positive in the majority of projects. Internal coordination within the ILO usually went well, with projects often collaborating with or supporting other ILO initiatives. Most projects also managed to leverage a reasonable amount of resources from sources outside the ILO in order to support project implementation. Other aspects of implementation and management faced more challenges. The aspects rated lowest were the project's goal orientation, and monitoring and reporting. Weaknesses frequently noted included poor alignment of indicators with objectives and a lack of clarity in the definition of and differentiation between indicators, targets, activities, milestones and results. In many cases, some of these elements were absent.
81. In approximately half of projects assessed, insufficient human or financial resources meant that not all project outputs or objectives were achieved, or that they were not carried out on schedule (also reported in the previous two meta-analyses). The assessment of implementation management was variable: approximately half of projects assessed experienced significant challenges. Lastly, the visibility and accessibility to knowledge and information generated by the project were positively assessed in fewer than 60 per cent of projects. This assessment suggests opportunities for improvement.

Issues and recommendations on operational effectiveness

82. The meta-analyses of evaluations of development cooperation projects are intended to provide part of the documentation for the ILO's performance and operational effectiveness over time, in order to highlight areas where the ILO needs to strengthen its effectiveness and demonstrate improvement.

83. Previous meta-studies have identified recurrent issues and made recommendations on specific actions related to the ILO's operational performance (table 9). The 2017 meta-study confirms that many of these recommendations remain valid.
84. This analysis shows that the ILO is highly effective in its response to national and interregional demands and priorities and subsequent delivery of quality strategic results through normative work and standards promotion, combined with policy influence and capacity building using ILO expertise. A cluster area that is consistently identified in the studies as in need of strengthening is internal monitoring, reporting and evaluability to improve the link between performance and strategic decision-making.

Table 9. Recurrent issues in need of improvement identified by the meta-studies conducted in 2011, 2013 and 2017

2011	– Efficiency, sustainability, risk management and monitoring and evaluation practices found to be generally weak; unsatisfactory specification of outcome levels and results and inadequate use of associated indicators, baselines and data measurement systems
2013	– Weak use of monitoring and evaluation, reporting against results and adequacy of resources; internal project design and implementation management practices found to be weak
2017	– Constituent involvement not always well integrated into project formulation or implementation; project designs/approaches overambitious or inadequate assessment of country context; gender sensitivity of project design – Tripartite processes and engagement need improvement; prospects for sustainability often limited – Goal orientation of the project, and monitoring and reporting often weak; poor alignment between indicators and objectives; lack of clarity in the definition of and differentiation between indicators, targets, activities, milestones and results; insufficient human or financial resources affecting achievement of planned project outputs or objectives; significant challenges with regard to implementation management and tightening project focus on gender considerations

Optimizing internal monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems in the ILO

85. Over the past two years, external and independent reviews of the ILO's results-based management framework – namely, the 2017 MOPAN exercise, the 2016 IEE and the 2016 Report of the External Auditor on results-based management – have identified the need to reinforce internal monitoring, reporting and evaluability to improve the link between performance and strategic decision-making. These reviews have highlighted design, progress monitoring and evaluation, identifying results and impacts as three main areas of concern (table 10).

Table 10. Key monitoring and evaluation issues identified in external reviews (2016–17)

Improving the ILO's monitoring and evaluation		Identified constraints and challenges	Identified scenarios
Design	Theories of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The poor articulation of theories of change for programmes falls short of identifying full sets of results (MOPAN, 2017) ■ The ILO should move away from inflexible logical frameworks to a theories of change approach that provides for a more dynamic monitoring and evaluation function (IEE, 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To reconsider how the theories of change and the causal relationships up to the impact/strategic objective level can be presented to improve measurability and accountability for results (External Auditor, 2016)
	Monitoring and evaluation frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inadequate baselines, indicators, targets and unreliable data collection tools (IEE, 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To craft a programme monitoring framework and related tools to enable a transparent, reliable, uniform and evidence-based assessment (External Auditor, 2016) ■ To improve the quality and utility of monitoring frameworks (MOPAN, 2017)
	Evaluability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evaluability is not seen as an integrated results-based management component (IEE, 2016) ■ Rarity of monitoring and evaluation specialists (expected to advise on evaluability) within the ILO (IEE, 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To prioritize the strengthening of evaluability and monitoring systems, including through the inclusion of monitoring and evaluation specialists in decent work teams and development cooperation projects (IEE, 2016)
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The corporate monitoring system does not appear to be adequately resourced (MOPAN, 2017) ■ The emergence of an evaluation culture is inhibited by underinvestment in monitoring and evaluation specialists (IEE, 2016) ■ Insufficient time of monitoring and evaluation specialists to support monitoring or evaluation functions (IEE, 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To ensure that sufficient resources are allocated from development cooperation projects, Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) and in DWCPs to build monitoring and evaluation systems capable of capturing contributions to the SDGs and policy changes (IEE, 2016)
Progress monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation plans and systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Programme management system does not fully enable monitoring and reporting against results and the achievement of strategic objectives (External Auditor, 2016) ■ Monitoring and evaluation tends to be looked at only towards the end of the project design process, leaving little time for baseline studies to be conducted (IEE, 2016) ■ Unsatisfactory monitoring and evaluation plans are often neglected (MOPAN, 2017) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To improve the quality and utility of the data produced by monitoring and evaluation systems (MOPAN, 2017)
	Capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The lack of monitoring and evaluation capacity within projects and programmes limits the data available to evaluations (IEE, 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To strengthen results-based management and monitoring and evaluation systems to promote DWCPs, and programme and project evaluability (IEE, 2016)
	Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The absence of good monitoring data is driving many of the demands for the ILO to intervene in areas not central to its mandate (IEE, 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clarify the boundaries of the evaluation function regarding results-based management and monitoring and evaluation functions (IEE, 2016)
Identifying results and impacts	Logical frameworks and monitoring and evaluation systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unclear and incomplete performance indicators do not allow for measuring results and sufficiently capturing evidence regarding long-term outcomes and the ILO's contribution (MOPAN, 2017) ■ Absence of a common monitoring framework that integrates activities and information hinders effective review of progress towards planned results (External Auditor, 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To identify and prioritize the expected changes or outcomes achievable within a given period, express and measure them following the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) attributes and indicators, baselines and targets and present them under the strategic objective to which they contribute (External Auditor, 2016)

86. While recent annual evaluation reports for the most part recognize that there has been significant improvement with regard to the ILO's results-based management performance, concerns about weaknesses in monitoring and reporting systems have been raised consistently since 2011 (table 11).

Table 11. Monitoring and evaluation issues and recommendations identified in annual evaluation reports, 2011–12 to 2015–16

Year	Issues identified	Theme
2011–12	<p>Recommendation: <i>To improve the quality of project design during the proposal stage and consider stronger mechanisms for linking final proposal quality to originating unit accountability</i></p> <p>EVAL's Strategic Policy Framework 2010 review showed the need to have greater coherence among results and accountability framework, quality of indicators, assumptions and risk assessments.</p>	<i>Logical and monitoring frameworks</i>
2012–13	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>To provide proactive support, including training for the development of evaluable strategies and indicators</i> ■ <i>To develop logical frameworks for accountability and boost the collection of baseline measurements</i> ■ <i>To include planning and budgeting of outcome-based, funded monitoring and evaluation activities</i> <p>EVAL highlighted the non-existence of monitoring plans for the programme and budget outcomes, the weak monitoring and evaluation systems applied to RBSA activities, the weak use of monitoring and evaluation, and the adequacy of resources, which bound the overall operational performance of development cooperation projects.</p>	<i>Monitoring and evaluation plans, systems and resources</i>
2013–14	<p>Recommendation: <i>To strengthen monitoring and the evaluation and the internal system for reporting on the implementation of programmes and projects and make theories of change a compulsory requirement at all levels of the ILO's results-based management system</i></p> <p>EVAL reported weak evaluability of logical frameworks and monitoring and evaluation plans at the proposal and implementation stages, including at the DWCP/country programme outcome level, which limits measuring outcomes and impact evaluations. These factors are combined with identified resource constraints, inadequate or absent monitoring and evaluation frameworks, lack of evaluability assessments, poor understanding of impact evaluation and a lack of awareness of the availability or adherence to guidance from EVAL.</p>	<i>Logical monitoring and evaluation framework evaluability, resources</i>
2014–15	<p>Recommendation: <i>To place greater focus at the design phase to develop theories of change, logframe, performance indicators, measurement strategies, and monitoring and evaluation plans</i></p> <p>EVAL highlighted the weaknesses of logframes to measure results and the need to invest in developing more robust theories of change, and reliable, regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation plans generally need a more systematic, structured and comprehensive approach; the low priority given to monitoring and evaluation during project implementation limits measurement of, and reporting on, results.</p>	<i>Logical framework, theories of change and monitoring and evaluation plans</i>
2015–16	<p>Recommendation: <i>To fully integrate evaluation into related planning, implementation and capacity building</i></p> <p>EVAL identified the need to reinforce monitoring and evaluation components within projects, and new impact monitoring and impact assessment of items used by flagship programmes.</p>	<i>Monitoring and evaluation framework</i>

87. Weaknesses that persist relate mostly to theories of change, logical and monitoring and evaluation frameworks, resource allocation and the absence of systematic evaluability assessments, which would facilitate productive evaluations. Poorly formulated logical and monitoring frameworks, particularly with regard to performance indicators, continue to limit the capacity of the ILO to identify and measure the full extent of its results and impact. The ability to do so would enable the ILO to provide solid documentation of the effectiveness of its development cooperation work.

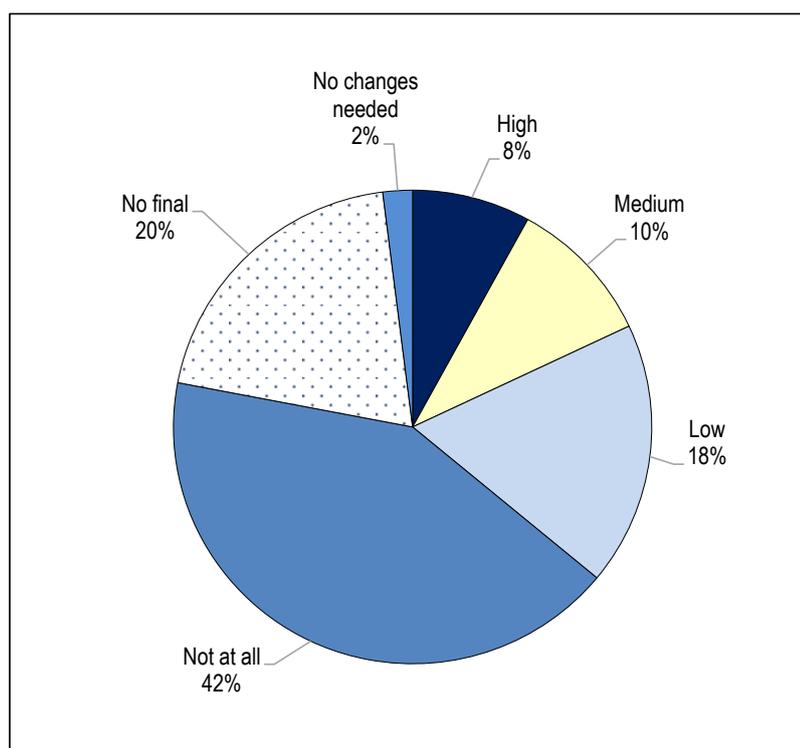
An assessment of proactive measures to improve monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems in high-value projects

88. Since 2012, EVAL has provided two types of support for improving internal monitoring and evaluation systems.
89. At the policy and country programme outcome level, since 2013 it has been conducting evaluability assessments of country programme outcomes that have identified critical weaknesses related to poor monitoring and evaluation plans, milestones, baselines, risks and assumptions, which limit the ILO's capacity to comprehensively report on its achievements at the outcome level. In response, PROGRAM has included specific guidance on designing evaluable country programme outcomes in its DWCP guidelines, including the quality assurance mechanism during DWCP preparation, and in various EVAL guidance notes and checklists to improve the quality of logframes and monitoring and evaluation systems for improved evaluability.
90. At the development cooperation project level, over the past three years EVAL has been supporting the monitoring and evaluation design and roll-out of high-value projects (over US\$5 million) in two ways. The first is by the provision of ex ante support, through initial monitoring and evaluation appraisals of project proposals prior to their approval. This work entails checking the monitoring and evaluation components of project documents using an EVAL checklist. In so doing, EVAL has aimed to contribute to the robust design of logical frameworks and monitoring and evaluation systems at the project design stage, without compromising their independence.
91. The second level of support provided by EVAL relates to the recommendation to undertake an evaluability review within one year of project start-up. Based on terms of reference and guidance developed by EVAL, projects are requested to hire a short-term specialist with additional support from EVAL and the regional evaluation officer/departmental evaluation focal point to diagnose the roll-out of monitoring and evaluation plans, systems and to recommend improvements.
92. In order to take stock of the impact of these proactive measures, in 2017 EVAL commissioned a study by an external consultant to review the inputs provided over the past five years.

Ex ante monitoring and evaluation appraisals

93. The study concerned found that the majority of EVAL's inputs and suggestions had been neglected in the final design of projects (figure 11).

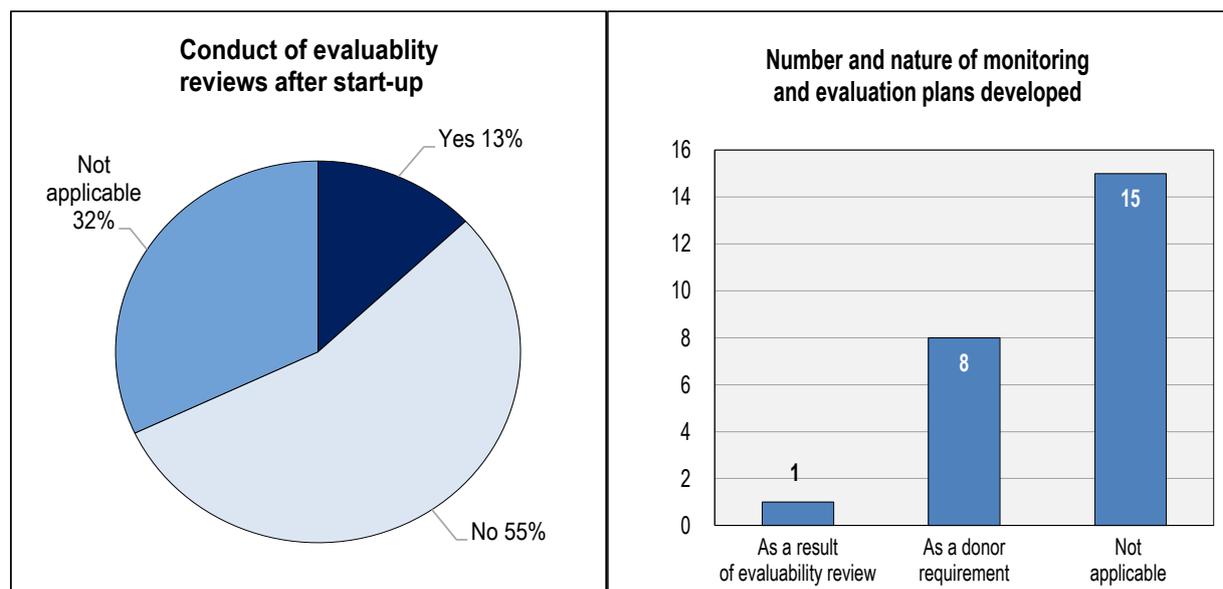
Figure 11. Percentage of inclusion of EVAL's inputs in final project design



Evaluability review after project start-up

94. A mere 45 per cent of projects included the recommended funds for financing an evaluability review after start-up. Moreover, the number of such reviews conducted was minimal (13 per cent) and only one led to follow-up by designing a full monitoring and evaluation plan (see figure 12). This poor result can be attributed in part to the low use of the available guidance notes on the subject, the ambiguity as to whether evaluability reviews are mandatory or recommended, and limited understanding of responsibilities and accountability in relation to the development of monitoring and evaluation plans.
95. Flagship programmes and other global programme approaches or frameworks can provide opportunities for more comprehensive, systematic and multi-layered monitoring and evaluation plans to demonstrate achievement at all levels, including broader outcomes.

Figure 12. Conduct of evaluability reviews after start-up and number and nature of monitoring and evaluation plans developed



96. Adequate monitoring and evaluation designs and plans will become more important with respect to the 2030 Agenda and the need to assess the ILO's contribution. In the future, EVAL will continue to provide support to PARDEV and technical departments with a view to improving monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the project design phase.
97. With regard to evaluability reviews, more drastic measures will be required in order to ensure that high-value projects undertake evaluability reviews within one year from start-up. The study suggests that urgent measures are required to reinforce monitoring and evaluation systems of high-value projects.
98. The initiative taken by PROGRAM in June 2017 to establish a task force to improve results-based planning, monitoring and evaluation systems in the ILO provides a timely opportunity to review the other systemic issues.
99. **Recommendation 2:** *Given the importance of reinforcing monitoring and evaluation systems of high-value projects (over US\$5 million), evaluability reviews should be undertaken as a compulsory requirement within one year of project start-up in order to ensure that a robust monitoring and evaluation plan has been established.*

Draft decision

100. *The Governing Body takes note of the present report and endorses the recommendations (paragraphs 23 and 99) to be included in the ILO's rolling plan for the implementation of recommendations to be reported on in the annual evaluation report 2017–18. It also confirms the priorities identified in the report for the 2018–20 programme of work for evaluations.*

Appendix

ILO Evaluation Policy (2017)

I. **Purpose, concepts, rules and use of evaluation within the Organization**

Introduction: Rationale for a revised policy in a changing international context

1. Inspired by internationally accepted norms and standards, the first ILO Evaluation Policy was adopted in 2005 in an effort to strengthen the evaluation function. The policy and its implementation were independently evaluated in 2010, a process which resulted in an improved and independent function. A time-bound evaluation strategy was introduced to operationalize the policy, in which progress made towards its outcomes was reported on a yearly basis to the Governing Body in the annual evaluation report.
2. The evaluation function was again independently evaluated in 2016 to assess its overall performance since 2011. This *Independent evaluation of ILO's evaluation function 2011–2016* (ILO, 2017) noted the substantial progress made in establishing an independent evaluation function equipped with highly structured systems and processes, in addition to delivering good quality evaluations. It highlighted the need to establish an integrated evaluation planning system, improve the use of evaluation findings and enhance evaluation methods better to capture the ILO's normative mandate and tripartite structure. Its recommendations were to address these issues and simultaneously bring the evaluation function into line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the revised United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (UNEG, 2016).
3. The evaluation policy builds on the previous policy, the recent independent evaluation of the evaluation function and an extensive consultation process involving staff and constituents. It is an aspirational document that ambitiously encourages the ILO's evaluation function to transition to the highest level of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) evaluation maturity matrix.¹

Objective of the new evaluation policy

4. Evaluation is expected to promote accountability and learning. Evaluation aims to understand why – and to what extent – intended and unintended results were achieved. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking and organizational effectiveness.²
5. The new evaluation policy aims to:
 - reinforce knowledge-generation sharing of the ILO's substantive work, and the processes, approaches and institutional arrangements for implementing such work;
 - strengthen the complementarity between evaluation and other oversight and monitoring functions within the Office;
 - clarify standards for engaging constituents in evaluation; and

¹ JIU classifies the ILO's evaluation function in its top cluster, signifying that the Evaluation Office (EVAL) is transitioning to level 4 of its maturity matrix. *Analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system* (JIU/REP/2014/6), p. 20.

² United Nations Evaluation Group: *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (UNEG, 2016), p. 10

- clarify the division of responsibilities in the ILO for carrying out an evaluation.³
6. The evaluation policy and its implementation are guided by internationally accepted norms and standards, such as the *UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (UNEG, 2016) and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) principles for evaluation of development cooperation.⁴ The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the associated resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work with emphasis on results-based management provide further overall guidance. Developments in the United Nations system will be considered in the use of the policy.

A shared vision for the evaluation culture within the ILO

7. A sustained, expanding institutional culture of mutual accountability, ownership, transparency and quality improvement is a strong vision shared by the ILO Governing Body and the Office. An evaluation culture to use evaluation for better performance, effectiveness and learning in the pursuit of the Decent Work Agenda is at the core of this commitment. It is critical for members of the Governing Body, as well as external partners, to be fully confident that evaluation functions in the Office are systematically fulfilled in a transparent, independent, reliable, credible and professional manner. A theory of change will be used to elaborate on the vision and mission to advocate, guide and demonstrate the role of evaluation within the ILO.

Definition of evaluation

8. The ILO adopts the definition of evaluation established by the United Nations Evaluation Group.⁵ Evaluation should not be confused with implementation monitoring and reporting, audit, inspection, investigation or assessment of individual performance. Although it takes the form of data-based analysis, evaluation is not academic research as evaluation focuses on assessing the value or results of action actually taken for a specific purpose.

Implementation of the evaluation policy

9. The Evaluation Policy is an aspirational document that sets out principles for evaluation. A time-bound evaluation strategy that is aligned with the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21 identifies outcomes and targets through which the policy will be implemented. Relevant Internal Governance Documents System (IGDS) circulars related to the Evaluation Office's (EVAL) role and the evaluation policy guidelines will be updated as required in order to be

³ The policy does not cover the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, which is subject to its own internal evaluation procedures.

⁴ UNEG: *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (2016); Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC): *Evaluating Development Co-operation – Summary of Key Norms and Standards* (2010); OECD/DAC: *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* (2002).

⁵ “An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.” UNEG: *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*, (2016) p. 10.

in line with the policy. Procedures for any waivers from the policy will be outlined in the policy guidelines.

Integrating evaluation with results-based management

10. The ILO results-based management system is delivered through a medium-term strategic plan and a biennial programme and budget. The Office will ensure that the cycles for major programme evaluations are synchronized with the different stages of planning, programming and budgeting cycles.
11. Evaluation findings and recommendations will be used during the preparation of programme and budget proposals to link budget decisions more closely to expected outcomes. Particular emphasis will be placed on how programme managers use evaluation information to improve performance indicators and targets, which are used to monitor the contribution of specific activities to objectives and outcomes.
12. The Office is committed to having adequate ***monitoring and reporting capacity*** so as to strengthen and facilitate the extent to which the ILO's work can be evaluated. An enabling environment for evaluation requires:
 - a logical framework and results framework for planning and project documents exist in order to track and report on progress made against milestones and targets based on the systematic application of the theory of change approach;
 - comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems and staff capacity with minimum requirements for organizational units and projects based on size and nature of the area of work, which are in line with thresholds set by the evaluation strategy or policy guidelines;
 - institutional incentives for staff to engage in evaluation activities and to use and learn from evaluations.
13. The ILO evaluation function will focus on supporting complementary activities that will enhance the extent to which projects can be evaluated in a manner that does not undermine its independence. These include appraising proposed project designs at the formal appraisal stage related to capacity for evaluation, including plans for integrating baseline measures and resourcing activities so as to assess innovative and pilot work in a critical manner.

II. ***Guiding principles of the ILO Evaluation Policy***

Key evaluation principles

14. The Office is committed to ensuring the independence, credibility, utility, impartiality, transparency and independence of evaluation through adherence to the following six core principles:
 - *Adherence to international good practice.* The ILO Evaluation Policy will be consistent with internationally accepted evaluation norms, standards and good practices, and will be harmonized with the UN family in the context of results-based management approaches.
 - *Upholding the ILO mandate and mission.* The ILO evaluation approach and methods will reflect the Organization's tripartite structure and focus on social justice, and its normative and technical mandate.
 - *Ensuring professionalism.* Evaluations will be managed by staff with the necessary evaluation management competencies and training, and will use ILO quality standards for evaluation management. Evaluations will be undertaken by qualified technical experts and evaluators; they will combine technical and evaluation experience and competencies with the appropriate skills set. Evaluators will adhere to the highest

ethical and technical standards, apply methodological rigour and respond to all criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility, including the responsible handling of confidential information.

- *Transparency and learning.* Evaluations will be conducted using a transparent process involving stakeholders as required to ensure factual accuracy and full ownership. Evaluation findings and recommendations will be disseminated to constituents, donors, the ILO and other agencies and partners concerned, in order to inform decision-making processes and support organizational learning.
- *Independence of process.* The ILO will ensure separation of evaluation management and implementation responsibility from line management functions for policies, programmes and projects, and will select evaluators from a wide and diversified pool according to agreed criteria for the purposes of avoiding any potential conflict of interest.
- *Gender equality and non-discrimination.* Evaluations will ensure that there is appropriate consideration of gender and non-discrimination issues in their design, analyses and reporting, while also addressing UNEG gender-related norms and standards.

Principles for evaluation approaches at the ILO

15. The ILO evaluation function is committed to *enhance further evaluation value through methods specific to the ILO Decent Work Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) context.* Evaluation approaches, methods and frameworks will be participatory, people-centred, inclusive of human rights and gender equality, and adapted to the ILO's specific mandate and context, but with due consideration of UN system-wide developments and approaches. Evidence from ILO research and the ILO Committee of Experts' observations, as relevant, should be included in evaluation, as appropriate.
16. To support organizational learning, the evaluation function will consider tools such as selected impact evaluations and meta-studies, to assess the Office's development effectiveness and impact of its work. This includes its contribution to decent work and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
17. Evaluations within the ILO will be conducted in the most effective and efficient manner. This will include the clustering of evaluations of projects and programme activities under identical or similar themes, programme frameworks and locations, provided that funding agreements, timing, specific focus and the nature of activities allow it. This will be guided by established principles and approaches to clustering of evaluations. This approach, if pursued consistently, will enable evaluations to be more strategic and cover broader performance issues, such as the contribution to the Decent Work Agenda and SDGs.

III. Evaluation types and responsibilities

18. *Independent evaluations* and reviews are managed by EVAL or independent ILO officials, overseen by EVAL and carried out by EVAL officers or external independent evaluators. *Internal evaluations* are managed by ILO staff, with the support of consultants or qualified ILO officials following a formalized evaluation process. *Self-evaluations* or reviews, as managed and conducted by ILO line management, are not independent but all contribute to the ILO's organizational learning. *External evaluations* are evaluations of ILO activities that are commissioned, managed and implemented by entities external to the ILO (mostly by donors) to fulfil their own accountability purposes. Findings from these evaluations can be useful for the ILO, but cannot replace ILO organizational learning and accountability needs.
19. Independent strategy and policy evaluations, Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) evaluations and selected thematic evaluations are considered to be *centralized evaluations*.

These are independent evaluations that are managed and coordinated by EVAL. *Decentralized evaluations* include thematic evaluations (other than those managed by EVAL), project evaluations, impact evaluations, joint evaluations and internal reviews, which also include self-evaluations. Their resourcing is primarily the responsibility of departments and regions. Mandatory independent decentralized project and joint evaluations are managed through the evaluation management system established and overseen by EVAL, based on a network of certified evaluation managers, departmental evaluation focal points and designated evaluation officers at the regional level. *Interim or mid-term evaluations* are carried out during implementation, *final evaluations* upon completion of a programme or project, and *ex-post evaluations* sometime after completion to allow for a particular focus on long-term achievements and sustainability.

Strategy and policy evaluations

20. Evaluations of ILO strategies and policy outcomes will be designed to assess their effectiveness and impact. Within the frameworks provided by the relevant strategic planning and programming documents, such as the strategic plan, the programme and budget and cross-cutting drivers, these high-level evaluations will focus on continued relevance, as well as on how to improve efficiency, effectiveness, potential for impact and sustainability of the associated strategies. Evaluations can focus on specific outcomes of the ILO results framework or an institutional strategy or approach. Each year, EVAL will propose topics to the Governing Body and conduct a minimum of two evaluations of this type.

Decent Work Country Programme evaluations

21. DWCPs are the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries, and represent the distinct ILO contribution to UN country programmes. The ILO supports independent evaluations of DWCPs to provide its national and international partners with an impartial and transparent assessment of the ILO's work in these countries. These evaluations are a means of validating the achievement of results and the ILO's contribution towards national development objectives, decent work and related country programme outcomes, as set out in the programme and budget. DWCP evaluations can be clustered around subregions and also organized as cluster evaluations that cover development cooperation (DC) activities and projects. Each year, EVAL will conduct at least one evaluation of this type, with the aim of increasing their number as clustering and integration of project evaluations in the ILO become more of an established practice. Regions will conduct country programme reviews as required for management and learning purposes.

Thematic evaluations

22. Thematic evaluations assess specific aspects, themes and processes, and can also focus on specific sectors, issues or schemes. Thematic evaluations provide a means for ILO technical programmes and regions to explore the effectiveness and impact of particular approaches in depth. These evaluations can draw on lessons learned at the project level, both inside and outside the ILO, and focus on themes that have significance beyond a particular project. ILO technical programmes are normally responsible for conducting and resourcing such thematic evaluations on a scheduled basis, with support from EVAL.

Impact evaluations

23. Impact evaluations aim to assess the “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended”.⁶ An impact evaluation is usually distinctive in its focus, conceptually and

⁶ OECD/DAC: op. cit., 2002.

methodologically, in determining the form and level of attribution that can be given to specific factors, including policies, programmes or interventions. Impact evaluations in the ILO are primarily for knowledge building on effective policy interventions and under the responsibility of technical departments. EVAL provides an impact evaluation framework with guidance, and ex-post quality appraisals and exchange of experience through a community of practice.

Joint evaluations

24. Joint evaluations are evaluations foreseen in joint project/programme documents or donor agreements. They may satisfy ILO evaluation requirements. According to the OECD/DAC, joint evaluations can help overcome attribution problems in assessing the effectiveness of programmes and strategies and the complementarities of efforts supported by various partners, as well as the quality of coordination of development cooperation.

Project evaluations

25. Independent project evaluations assess DC projects and programmes as a means to deliver ILO outcomes to constituents at the programme and budget and DWCP levels. They consider the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes, and test underlying assumptions about contributions to broader developmental impacts. Project evaluations have the potential to:
- improve project performance and contribute towards organizational learning;
 - help those responsible for managing the resources and activities of a project to enhance development results from the short term to a sustainable long term;
 - assess the effectiveness of planning and management for future impacts;
 - support accountability aims by incorporating lessons learned in the decision-making process of project stakeholders, including donors and national partners.
26. Requirements for project-level independent, internal evaluations and self-evaluations are established by EVAL, reviewed on a regular basis and reflected in its evaluation policy guidelines. These evaluations are based on a project's budget-size threshold, reflecting levels of investment risk of the ILO, and on duration, reflecting needs and opportunities for adjustment. Such requirements will also include compulsory evaluability reviews for high-value projects in their start-up phase. Resources for conducting project-level evaluations will continue to be included in project budgets, based on established criteria set out in the evaluation policy guidelines, and to ensure that evaluations are considered an integral part of project implementation.

IV. Evaluation governance in the ILO: Institutional framework, roles and responsibilities

The evaluation agenda and programme of work

27. The ILO's evaluation function will integrate planning for evaluations at all levels to:
- build a robust evidence base to support high-level evaluations;
 - allow for integrated budgets and more strategic evaluations, including clustering of evaluations whenever effective and efficient, to minimize the number of evaluations and provide broader strategic findings, results and impact;
 - ensure a link and complementarity between evaluative studies, knowledge documentation and relevant research.

28. **Centralized evaluations:** To ensure evaluations are timely, issue-oriented and results-focused, EVAL will propose to the Governing Body each year, in conjunction with its submission of the annual evaluation report, a proposed rolling programme of evaluation work for major independent evaluations, particularly at the strategy and policy levels.
29. **Decentralized evaluations:** Mandatory evaluations, whether independent or internal, will be part of an integrated planning and scheduling process maintained and overseen by EVAL, based on funding agreements and approved programme and project documents. Department directors and regional directors, through the Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV), are responsible for ensuring that provisions for evaluations are made in the project budgets as per the Evaluation Policy. Directors and regional directors are responsible for ensuring that evaluations under their administrative authority are completed in line with the schedule. Evaluation activities that lie outside mandatory requirements are managed by departments and regions.

Reporting on evaluations to the Governing Body

30. Results from high-level evaluations are submitted to the Governing Body through the Programme, Financial and Administrative (PFA) Section of the meetings. An annual evaluation report is submitted to the PFA Section of the Governing Body to provide an overview of the performance of the evaluation function in the ILO, covering all levels and types of evaluations, including evaluation activities throughout the Office. Drawing on centralized and decentralized evaluations as well as synthesis reviews and meta-studies, the annual evaluation report will also expand on the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness in delivering the Decent Work Agenda, while highlighting selected organizational lessons and governance issues. The annual evaluation report will also cover management follow-up on evaluations and list completed and ongoing evaluations.

The Evaluation Advisory Committee for oversight of evaluation use

31. The Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) is established in line with good practice to provide a mechanism to oversee the use, implementation, follow-up to lessons learned and recommendations resulting from ILO evaluation activities. Its objective is to promote institutional follow-up on independent evaluation findings and accepted recommendations, and to provide pertinent information and advice to the Director-General on progress made by the Office.
32. The scope of its functions includes all independent evaluations with particular emphasis on strategy and outcome evaluations, country programme evaluations and major thematic evaluations. The EAC may also consider feedback on follow-up plans and actions taken in relation to a selected number of large development cooperation projects of particular strategic importance.

Evaluation at the regional and departmental levels

33. *Regional and departmental evaluation networks* support the planning and implementation of evaluation activities for development cooperation projects. At the regional level, the network comprises designated evaluation officers at the regional offices to support the planning and implementation of evaluation activities with help from certified evaluation managers. Reporting lines and responsibilities of the designated evaluation officers will be reviewed to ensure the highest possible level of independence and impartiality of evaluations undertaken in the regions. The establishment of regional advisory bodies, based on the model of the central EAC, can improve evaluation follow-up and regional learning on systemic issues.
34. At the department level, the network comprises designated departmental evaluation focal points to support the planning and implementation of evaluation activities with help from

certified evaluation managers. EVAL provides technical guidance and assistance to the network and maintains final oversight to ensure quality and independence. The ILO's incentive system for staff engagement in evaluations will be reviewed to encourage participation in evaluations and use of evaluation results. This will include a review of job descriptions and performance appraisals based on identified evaluation competencies and clear reporting lines for staff carrying out specific roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process.

- 35 EVAL will provide final oversight of the evaluation of decentralized projects through appropriate quality control. Annual or biannual ex-post quality assurance reviews of independent mandatory project evaluations will be continued and expanded to include a sample of internal evaluations within resource levels and available capacity.

Structure and role of the Evaluation Office

36. EVAL ensures coherence and focus in the use of evaluations within the Office. EVAL is mandated to manage the evaluation function and ensure proper implementation of the Evaluation Policy. EVAL's structure and methods of operation are designed to protect its functional independence.
37. The Director of EVAL reports directly to the Director-General. The incumbent should have qualifications and experience in evaluation, the related fields of strategic planning, basic and operational research and knowledge management, and should have excellent management and leadership attributes. Those criteria will be applied each time a new Director of EVAL is recruited.
38. EVAL is responsible for devising policies, setting operational guidelines and conducting quality control of evaluations for projects, programmes, partnerships and strategies. It also manages high-level evaluations. With support from the EAC, EVAL is accountable for the systematic monitoring of follow-up to recommendations, which have been accepted by management, and then reporting on such follow-up to the Governing Body. EVAL is expected to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field of evaluation theory and methodologies. EVAL is also expected to participate in internal and external networking as part of an effort to enhance the policy and practice of evaluation in the ILO.

The Office's disclosure policy for the dissemination of evaluation results

39. The ILO endorses the UNEG standard on disclosure policy and makes key evaluation products publicly accessible to bolster the Office's public accountability. Final evaluation reports are disseminated in accordance with the Office Directive *Classification of ILO Information Assets*, IGDS No. 456 (version 1). For independent project evaluations, all key project stakeholders – i.e. the donor, the national constituents and key national partners as well as ILO officials concerned – receive a copy of the finalized evaluation report. This is the responsibility of the evaluation manager and PARDEV. To ensure transparency and accessibility, all evaluation information is stored in the central repository of evaluation documentation, and is accessible through a web-based public platform using easily accessible means of dissemination, and targeted to specific audiences.

V. Financial resources for evaluation

40. Within overall ILO programme and budget parameters, the Office secures regular budget funding for the core ILO Evaluation Function, to ensure that the Evaluation Policy and strategy can be implemented, as required, in response to the ILO level of activities. Funding for the evaluation of extra-budgetary activities will be guaranteed by including a dedicated amount for evaluation in project budgets. A more efficient and strategic use of extra-budgetary evaluation funds will be explored by integrating all budget sources and clustering

evaluations whenever strategically and procedurally possible. In addition, the establishment of an evaluation trust fund to pool evaluation funds for smaller projects will be considered. The overall aim will be to approach a combined evaluation expenditure of 1.5–2 per cent of total expenditures, as recommended in international evaluation standards.

VI. Use of evaluations in post-evaluation follow-up

Management response and follow-up to recommendations

41. The Office is committed to strengthening stakeholder engagement throughout the evaluation process to ensure that the evaluation's findings and recommendations are action-oriented. Thinking about the use of an evaluation should start at the planning stage rather than when the final report is submitted. Evaluations should, when applicable, be used beyond the individual programme or project they cover.
42. The Office promotes evaluation use and follow-up by using an interactive process that involves all stakeholders. This will require management to integrate evaluation results and recommendations into policies and programmes and conduct systematic follow-up to evaluation recommendations. More specifically, the Office undertakes that:
 - centralized evaluations will use the management response mechanisms, with review by the EAC;
 - all decentralized evaluations, whether independent or internal, should have a management response;
 - implementation of management responses from decentralized evaluations should be systematically tracked, including over time, with an analysis of the level of implementation and use of management responses;
 - EVAL's annual evaluation report should continue to provide the Governing Body with an overview of implementation of management responses from decentralized evaluations.

Evaluation as knowledge products

43. The Office will continue to produce knowledge products from evaluations, such as meta-studies, synthesis reviews, meta-analyses and think pieces. Knowledge dissemination may take the form of conferences, workshops, training sessions or seminars. Large projects may have a dissemination strategy as part of their monitoring and evaluation plan to target a specific range of clients. Evaluation reports are stored in a systematic manner and the knowledge generated in terms of lessons learned and from emerging good practices is made available through a web-based public platform.

VII. Framework for evaluation capacity development

44. In support of quality use of evaluation in the context of the SDGs and to further the evaluation culture, evaluation capacity will be built internally in the ILO and among constituents and, where appropriate, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies.
45. Training activities within the ILO will focus on evaluation management and internal evaluations with the overall aim of improving quality and increasing the pool of evaluation managers.

Constituent engagement

46. Enhancing evaluation capacity for constituents will focus on the inclusion of social partners in United Nations evaluation capacity development activities related to the SDGs and to enhance involvement of constituents in the evaluation process.

47. Subject to capacity and demand, tripartite constituents and other relevant stakeholders, will be included more systematically in evaluations (e.g. development of terms of reference, dissemination events) so as to strengthen interest in evaluation and facilitate the use of evaluation as a tool for social dialogue.

VIII. Conclusion

48. The Evaluation Policy will provide the Governing Body with consistent and coherent oversight and an organizational learning monitoring system for the Office's activities, and will enable the Office to reinforce the use of evaluation for improved planning, monitoring and performance measurement at the strategic, programme and project levels.
49. The Evaluation Policy and linked strategies will be evaluated by an independent evaluation team, after five years, to assess its impact on the functioning and performance of the Office.