ILO policy guidelines for evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 3rd edition
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<tr>
<td>ACTEMP</td>
<td>Bureau for Employers’ Activities</td>
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<td>ACTRAV</td>
<td>Bureau for Workers’ Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AER</td>
<td>Annual Evaluation Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>C&amp;KM</td>
<td>Communications and knowledge management</td>
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<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>Department Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDG</td>
<td>Deputy Director-General</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEFP</td>
<td>Departmental evaluation focal point</td>
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<td>DW</td>
<td>Decent Work</td>
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<td>DWCP</td>
<td>Decent Work Country Programme</td>
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<td>EAC</td>
<td>Evaluation Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>EM</td>
<td>Evaluation manager</td>
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<td>EVAL</td>
<td>Evaluation Office</td>
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<td>GB</td>
<td>Governing Body</td>
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<td>GED</td>
<td>Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch</td>
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<td>HLE</td>
<td>High-level evaluation</td>
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<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
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<td>IERF</td>
<td>Impact Evaluation Review Facility</td>
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<td>IGDS</td>
<td>Internal Governance Documents System</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NECD</td>
<td>National Evaluation Capacity Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD/DAC</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARDEV</td>
<td>Partnerships and Field Support Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFA</td>
<td>Programme Financial and Administrative Section (of the Governing Body)</td>
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<tr>
<td>P&amp;B</td>
<td>Programme and Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRODOC</td>
<td>Project document</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROGRAM</td>
<td>Strategic Programming and Management Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>QCPR</td>
<td>Quadrennial comprehensive policy review</td>
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<td>RBM</td>
<td>Results-based management</td>
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<td>REO</td>
<td>Regional evaluation officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>RBSA</td>
<td>Regular Budget Supplementary Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>RBTC</td>
<td>Regular Budget Technical Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>Regional Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
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<td>SEO</td>
<td>Senior evaluation officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Secretary-General</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>TOR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNCT</td>
<td>United Nations Country Team</td>
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<td>UNDACF</td>
<td>United Nations Development Assistance Framework</td>
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<td>UNDS</td>
<td>United Nations Development System</td>
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<td>UNEG</td>
<td>United Nations Evaluation Group</td>
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Introduction

What is evaluation and why is it important?

Evaluation in the International Labour Organization (ILO) is primarily used as a management and organizational learning tool to help ILO constituents and staff members support decent work (DW) and social justice. Evaluation is a critical means to improve decision-making, generate knowledge in the organization and provide verifiable evidence of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation provides an assessment of a particular intervention, focusing on what works, what does not work, and why this is the case.

Evaluations also examine whether or not the best approach was taken and if it was optimally executed. They focus on the achievement of development results within their respective contexts, taking into account design, implementation and management processes. The ILO evaluation policy bases its definition of evaluation on that employed by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) as presented in box 1.

The ILO evaluation policy

The Evaluation Office (EVAL) is governed by the ILO evaluation policy and the ILO evaluation strategy, which are updated on a regular basis. These are the two key governance-level documents that define the ILO’s organization-al approach and results-based framework for evaluation.¹ The evaluation strategy is operationalized in the context of the ILO’s Strategic Plan and the biennial programme and budget (P&B). The evaluation function is independently evaluated every five years at the request of the Governing Body (GB) to review progress and the effectiveness of the function.

Additional high-level parameters for evaluation are elaborated in internal documents The ILO Evaluation Office (ILO 2009b; ILO 2011e).² In addition, the ILO adheres to the latest designated good practices in evaluation within international development, such as the Norms and Standards for Evaluation of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG 2016). Evaluations are also an integral part of the ILO accountability framework (ILO 2010).

FURTHER READING:

² Independent evaluation of the ILO’s Evaluation Function, Final Report

Navigating the policy guidelines

The ILO policy guidelines for evaluation are intended to provide a complete package of guidance for ILO staff, who are tasked with planning, managing, overseeing and/or fol-

¹ For a glossary of evaluation terms used officially by the ILO, see OECD/DAC (2002).

² Links to the IGDS are accessible to ILO staff only.
BOX 1. Definition of evaluation

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.

Source: OECD/DAC (2002)

Following up on an evaluation’s recommendations. The most recent version of these guidelines can also be accessed on EVAL’s public website.3

These guidelines, while available as a formal and freestanding document, also serve as the backbone of the “i-eval resource kit”. The kit consists of the guidelines and a USB key in one package. It was conceived to serve as a gateway into ILO expertise and knowledge on evaluation for both ILO managers and practitioners. For those who require information on a more detailed level, the USB key, which includes the policy guidelines in PDF format, provides hyperlinks to evaluation-related guidance notes, tools, checklists and protocols. Where applicable, suggestions for supplementary reading have been included. The online web version will be updated on a regular basis to reflect the latest developments and will be stored primarily on EVAL’s public website and on its Knowledge Sharing Platform.

Key to the hyperlink icons used in the guidelines and accessing the documents

Book icon – Links to a document or website that offers further information

Sheet of paper icon – Links to an EVAL Guidance Note

Pencil icon – Links to an EVAL Checklist, Template or Tool

When a document is cited as “internal” or “intranet” it can only be accessed through the ILO’s intranet. Non-ILO officials may request a copy of such documents by sending an email to EVAL@ilo.org.

3 The ILO evaluation guidelines are an integral part of the mandate of the Evaluation Office (ILO 2011d, ILO 2014).
The policy guidelines are organized in the following format:

**Chapter 1** provides an overview of the principles and rationale guiding evaluations in the ILO, and aims to clarify basic concepts. It serves as an introduction to explain the added value of evaluation to the organization in the context of results-based management (RBM);

**Chapter 2** focuses on the ILO’s operational approach to evaluations, both centralized and decentralized;

**Chapter 3** guides the reader through the processes of planning and managing evaluations;

**Chapter 4** lays out the framework for conducting an evaluation; and

**Chapter 5** identifies means for communicating evaluation results and knowledge dissemination.
1. Principles and rationale for evaluation in the ILO
The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the general principles and rationale for evaluation within the ILO. It also places evaluation in the broader context of the ILO, outlining the various frameworks and policy initiatives, which should be taken into account as part of evaluations. The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- Evaluation in the context of the ILO’s RBM framework;
- Guiding principles of evaluation in the ILO;
- Evaluation in a changing development environment;
- The ILO’s evaluation function; and
- The role of the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC).

### 1.1 Evaluation in the ILO’s results-based management framework

The aim of evaluation in the ILO is to support improvements in projects, programmes, policies, and to promote accountability and learning. This is consistent with the UNEG Norms for the UN System, which states:

> The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning. Evaluation aims to understand why — and to what extent — intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking, development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness (UNEG 2016).

ILO evaluation and the organization’s RBM are interlinked: according to *Results-based Management in the International Labour Organization: A Guidebook* (ILO 2011a), the evaluation process provides “a distinct, essential and complementary function to performance measurement and RBM.”

RBM tends to be used to monitor progress towards intended outcomes, whereas evaluation examines the extent to which outcomes were achieved, as well as whether or not any unintended outcomes emerged.

Evaluations utilize information from RBM-based monitoring systems to conduct in-depth assessments of contribution, relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. Evaluation also brings elements of independent judgement to the performance system and provides recommendations for appropriate action from management. Evaluation also makes essential contributions to RBM by informing its planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting cycle. For these reasons, evaluation is an essential component of RBM.

Independent, objective and impartial evaluations are usually considered a precondition for accountability. The ILO accountability framework (ILO 2010) comprises a full range of instruments, which, taken as a whole, establish the accountability of staff members.

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4 RBM is defined by the ILO as “a management approach that directs organizational processes, resources, products and services towards the achievement of measurable outcomes” (ILO 2011a).

5 According to (OECD/DAC, 2002), accountability is the “obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans. This may require a careful, even legally defensible, demonstration that the work is consistent with the contract terms.”
at all levels for their decisions and actions. To foster accountability, evaluation in the ILO aims to inform managerial decisions involving line management and constituents to inform future planning in a particular technical area or country context, and to inform policy in the ILO or among partner country governments in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2015).

1.2 Guiding principles of evaluation in the ILO

All aspects of evaluation in the ILO are guided by the ILO evaluation policy and the ILO evaluation strategy which adhere to the OECD/DAC Principles (OECD/DAC 2010c) and UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation (UNEG 2016). The evaluation function is designed to be objective and independent, with the aim of enhancing external credibility, fostering a culture of learning and providing support to the governance and oversight roles of the GB.

The evaluation strategy incorporates the key guiding principles of the Strategic Plan, which call upon evaluation to strengthen knowledge development and accountability in the areas of DW, international labour rights and standards, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, as well as to enhance the relevance and utility of evaluation to constituents. The advent of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places new demands on ILO initiatives to be complimentary with relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This means that evaluations must consider how ILO initiatives fit within this new development context.

Evaluation should contribute to decision-making through evidence-based assessment of strategies, policies, programmes and projects. The evaluation function in the ILO is designed to ensure transparency and independence of evaluations; this in turn, reinforces the credibility and utility of evaluations. Line managers are called upon by the ILO Director-General to safeguard the integrity of the evaluation process by ensuring adherence to the ILO evaluation policies and guidelines and use of the evaluation system. Box 2 outlines the principles of ILO evaluation, which are drawn from internationally accepted norms and standards of independent evaluations in the United Nations (UN) system. Box 3 describes specific ILO principles for evaluation.

1.3 Evaluation in a changing development environment

Evaluations with partners are growing in importance. This is with partners in the United Nations Development System (UNDS) in the
context of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) or equivalent planning frameworks, including the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the government of the programme country and donors who support the programme(s), are growing in importance. Demand is also growing for evaluation of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) and similar country-level programme frameworks as well as for projects by individual agencies, such as the ILO. This is particularly true in the context of the challenge and opportunities presented by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the national sustainable development strategies, which countries will have to consider. The introduction of the SDGs has meant that the ILO has to look both inward and outward as it works to optimize its contribution to the SDGs through the Decent Work Agenda. As the ILO has acknowledged, it will not be ‘business as usual’ in going forward. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies data, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as playing key roles in informing the follow-up and review processes of the work of UNDAF in all relevant countries.

To ensure evaluations can serve as evidence for decision-making and provide a compelling performance story, front-end analysis of SDG/DW connections are required so as to gain an understanding and agreement on interventions, their logic and why they are expected to work. In addition, at the country level it is critical that ILO continues to focus on National Evaluation Capacity Development - that is, supporting countries in collecting the necessary country data and building of national M&E capacity for the primary purpose of country-led development.

Evaluation is essential for demonstrating the achievements of the UN system. The United Nations Secretary-General’s (SG) opening remarks of the High-Level Meeting on “UN Results: Are we achieving them? How do we know?” in April 2013 stated that, “All of us share a responsibility to strengthen the evaluation function. We have to tackle the challenge at several levels”. The SG also noted that the UN system was “… encouraged by the support of member States for rigorous evaluation.” At the High-level Panel Event, entitled “Bridge to a Better World - Evaluation at the Service of the Post-2015 Agenda”, held in March 2015 as part of the declaration of 2015 as the “International Year of Evaluation”, the UN SG further stated “Evaluation everywhere, and at every level, will play a key role in implementing the new development agenda ... Evaluation is not easy. Nor is it popular. But it is essential. The current constrained budgetary climate makes it more important than ever.”

In 2014, the first landmark, stand-alone United Nations General Assembly Resolution, entitled “Building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level” was approved, emphasizing the importance of building capacities for the evaluation of development activities at country level through the interaction and cooperation among all the relevant partners, including those of the UN System, the national and international stakeholders, to coordinate efforts to further strengthen national capacities for evaluation.

BOX 2. Principles of evaluation

✓ **Usefulness:** The selection, design and follow-up of evaluations aim to be useful, particularly to support decision-making.

✓ **Impartiality:** Evaluation processes are established to minimize bias and protect impartiality at all stages of the evaluation, thereby supporting the credibility of the evaluation function and evaluation results. Reports must present the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations in a complete and balanced way.

✓ **Independence:** There should be a clear separation of evaluation responsibility from line management functions. Evaluators are selected with due regard to their independence and professionalism to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

✓ **Quality:** Each evaluation should employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented, covering appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation.

✓ **Competence:** Those engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities shall have all necessary skills to conduct high-quality and ethical work as defined in the UN Evaluation Group’s professional standards.

✓ **Transparency and consultation:** Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. This improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Source: IGDS Number 74: The ILO Evaluation Unit, 2009

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BOX 3. Specific ILO principles for evaluation

✓ Promote and facilitate the use of results for decision-making processes and organizational learning to better fulfil the ILO’s mandate.

✓ Limit of management influence over TOR, scope of the evaluation and selection of evaluators.

✓ Involvement of constituents and others as appropriate, in the planning, implementation and reporting process.

✓ Uphold of the ILO mandate and mission by selecting an evaluation approach and methods that reflect the tripartite organization, its focus on social justice, and its normative and technical mandate.

✓ Adequacy of treatment of core ILO cross-cutting priorities, such as gender equality and non-discrimination, promote standards, tripartite processes and constituent capacity development.
The UN General Assembly resolutions on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system makes reference to evaluations as an integral part of UN system work. ILO is committed to contributing, as part of its mandate, to the aims and objectives of QCPR resolutions, aligning its strategic plan cycles with the UN system and QCPR planning cycle as part of reinforcing ILO’s involvement in UN system-wide activities. The QCPR resolutions, within a focus on strengthening RBM, specifically includes evaluation-related points, such as operational activities for development of the United Nations system providing support to national institutions in evaluation capacities; harmonizing requirements related to evaluation, including requirements of funders; the role of system-wide evaluation; the participation of national governments in the evaluation of UN development assistance; and the development of integrated approaches and support to evaluation.

In a video statement to the High-level event of the UNEG evaluation week in 2016, the ILO Director-General echoed this sentiment by highlighting the important link between evaluation and the SDGs to the ILO. He explained the significant contribution that evaluation will have to make to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and how the provision of evaluative evidence will guide the ILO to realize SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth.

1.4 The evaluation function in the ILO

According to internal document IGDS Number 75 (V.2) Evaluation in the ILO, “The evaluation function is designed to be objective and independent, with the aim of enhancing external credibility and the culture of learning and providing better support to the governance and oversight roles of the Governing Body.” (ILO 2011d, p. 1). High-level evaluations (HLEs) and the Annual Evaluation Report (AER) are submitted to the GB and discussed in the Programme, Financial and Administrative Section (PFA). The annual programme of evaluation is approved by the GB, which may initiate additional independent evaluations. The GB is also kept informed on progress made with the implementation of evaluation recommendations.
EVAL is mandated to manage the evaluation function and ensure proper implementation of the evaluation policy. EVAL’s structure and modalities of operation are designed to protect its independence. The Director of EVAL reports directly to the Director-General and provides an annual evaluation report and the findings of the HLEs directly to the GB each November. These HLEs, managed directly by EVAL, may cover strategic or institutional issues, policy outcomes and DWCPs and follow-up is monitored by the GB and the EAC. The AER includes a discussion on the implementation of the ILO’s evaluation strategy and an assessment ILO’s effectiveness and results. EVAL is also responsible for elaborating policies, setting operational guidelines and conducting quality control for evaluations of projects and programmes. It systematically monitors follow-up to project level evaluation recommendations and has, since 2014, taken on more responsibility to provide support on impact evaluation (IE) through advisory services and quality appraisals of IEs conducted in the ILO.

1.5 The role of the Evaluation Advisory Committee

The EAC (ILO 2008a) was established by an internal circular to provide a mechanism for overseeing the use, implementation and 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 recommendations.

The scope of the EAC’s functions includes all independent HLEs with particular emphasis on strategy and outcome evaluations, country programme evaluations and major thematic evaluations. The Committee may also consider feedback on follow-up plans and actions to evaluation recommendations taken for large, development cooperation projects. The EAC provides additional assurance to the senior management team and to the Director-General by ensuring that the follow-up to evaluation recommendations is transparent and regularly conducted.

In addition, the EAC functions as a forum for internal dialogue on the implementation of the ILO evaluation policy and strategy to ensure that evaluations are credible, impartial and independent. It may also discuss draft plans for carrying out independent evaluations and provide its recommendations to the Director-General or EVAL, as appropriate. Among other functions, the EAC informs the department of Strategic Programming and Management (PROGRAM) on the findings and recommendations of evaluation reports that could be used in developing new P&B proposals. The Committee also provides advice on any evaluation issue that may be of interest to the Director-General, and verifies that all independent evaluations adhere to the ILO Policy on public information disclosure (ILO 2008b).
2. Operational approach to evaluation in the ILO
The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the operational structure of evaluation in the ILO by detailing the various forms of evaluation that are conducted under the evaluation policy and how these evaluations are undertaken. The chapter will provide an overview of the following topics:

- Types of evaluation: strategy and policy evaluations; DWCP evaluations; thematic evaluations; impact evaluations; project evaluations; joint evaluations and external evaluations;
- Regional and departmental evaluation networks; and
- Evaluation schedules and work plans for regions and departments.

### 2.1 Types of evaluation: centralized and decentralized evaluations

Since 2005, the ILO evaluation function has incorporated a combination of centralized (governance-level) and decentralized evaluation responsibilities. Independent strategy and DWCP evaluations are governance-level
d evaluations, which are conducted or managed directly by EVAL. In some instances, EVAL also undertakes thematic evaluations whenever there is a substantive request.

All other types of evaluation are decentralized since their direct management and resourcing are primarily the responsibility of departments and regions, with EVAL providing oversight. Decentralized evaluations may include thematic evaluations, project evaluations, impact evaluation and joint evaluations, as well as all forms of internal evaluations, including self-evaluations.

Governance-level evaluations aim to generate insights related to organizational performance in the context of the RBM system. These contribute to high-level decision-making about policies, strategies and accountability. The GB and ILO senior management participate in the process of identifying priorities for evaluation as well as determining the timing and intended use(s) for each evaluation. To this end, a process of informal consultations on the selection of topics for high-level strategic evaluations and their terms of reference (TOR) is organized on an annual basis. A rolling three-year evaluation programme of work with proposed HLE topics is then presented to the GB each November for its approval.

Decentralized evaluations focus on programmatic areas that are more directly under the control of managers. These include development cooperation projects, country programmes and reviews of technical interventions from all sources of funding, including the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) and Regular Budget Technical Cooperation (RBTC). An annual overview of project evaluations is provided and shared with key stakeholders.

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8 Also referred to as “high-level” in these policy guidelines.
Figure 1. Evaluations and the ILO’s results-based framework
The ILO evaluation policy provides an operational framework that serves different needs and aims to generate knowledge and inform decisions at different levels of programming within the Office, as presented in figure 1.

The Department Directors (DDs) and Regional Directors (RDs) take responsibility for ensuring that evaluation work is completed for projects and programmes that fall under their administrative responsibility. ACTRAV and ACTEMP take on that responsibility for evaluations of workers’ and employers’ development cooperation. For quality control purposes, these decentralized evaluations are overseen by departmental evaluation focal points (DEFPs) or regional evaluation officers (REOs), but the process and final report require approval by EVAL. Evaluation managers’ responsibilities are separate from those of project managers, and their duties are illustrated in table 1.

EVAL designed and implemented an Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP) and maintains a list of certified evaluation managers in the ILO. DEFPs and REOs are responsible for assisting in the identification of an evaluation manager, separate from project management, who is responsible for the actual management of the evaluation process. The role of EVAL is to focus on quality control and technical support to departments and regions, profile evaluation results, encourage their use and share experiences in order to promote organizational learning. Responsibility for financing decentralized evaluations is with those managing the projects or programmes. The aims, designated responsibilities and timing of the various types of evaluation in the ILO are described in sections 2.1.1 to 2.1.8 and further summarized in table 2.
<table>
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<th>Actor</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tr>
<td>RD and DD</td>
<td>✓ Ensures principles supporting the evaluation function apply to all evaluations falling within their domain&lt;br&gt;✓ Ensures compliance with Office policies, including required self-evaluation and internal evaluation of programmes and projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO responsible official</td>
<td>✓ Ensures that sufficient funds are secured for evaluations at the intervention design stage&lt;br&gt;✓ Provides administrative and technical support for the evaluation, including help in preparing the TOR, including participation in the evaluation workshop&lt;br&gt;✓ Provides comments on the draft report&lt;br&gt;✓ Line management responds to evaluation recommendations (both mid-term and final evaluations) according to ILO evaluation policy&lt;br&gt;✓ Follows up on the evaluation and disseminates lessons learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVAL</td>
<td>✓ Provides standards and guidance on evaluation procedures and methodologies&lt;br&gt;✓ Assures quality of reports meet international standards; monitors compliance with ILO evaluation policy throughout the process&lt;br&gt;✓ Approves the final evaluation report prior to submission to donor&lt;br&gt;✓ Stores all evaluation reports and related documents in the i-Track database. Publishes high-level evaluation reports and summaries of independent evaluations&lt;br&gt;✓ Initiates the procedure for management response to evaluation recommendations for independent evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REO</td>
<td>✓ Provides support in the planning of evaluation for the region. This includes the submission of annual plans to EVAL for approval and implementation of the regional evaluation work plan&lt;br&gt;✓ Provides support in the case of evaluability studies or scoping mission&lt;br&gt;✓ Identifies and briefs the evaluation manager&lt;br&gt;✓ Works with evaluation manager to facilitate access to evaluator profiles for selection&lt;br&gt;✓ Approves the selection of evaluator, including consulting the evaluation consultant database; approves the final version of the TOR; and consults with EVAL, as required&lt;br&gt;✓ Reviews the final evaluation report and completes the relevant submission documents prior to submission to EVAL for approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFP</td>
<td>✓ Provides support in the planning of decentralized evaluations for the department&lt;br&gt;✓ Provides support in the case of evaluability studies or scoping mission&lt;br&gt;✓ Works with evaluation manager to facilitate access to consultant profiles for selection&lt;br&gt;✓ Approves the selection of evaluation consultant; DEFP should consult the evaluation consultant database. Approves the final version of the TOR and consults with EVAL as required&lt;br&gt;✓ Reviews the final evaluation report and completes the relevant submission documents prior to submission to EVAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2. Operational approach to evaluation in the ILO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation Manager</strong></td>
<td>✓ Drafts TOR in consultation with stakeholders (including donors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Submits draft TOR to stakeholders for additional comments, revises the TOR then submits TOR to REOs or DEFPs for approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Finds an evaluator and submits to REOs or DEFPs for approval, EVAL should be consulted as necessary to cross-check with the evaluation consultant database.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Once evaluator is approved, negotiates terms and finalizes evaluator arrangements including briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Works with project staff to ensure evaluator is provided with adequate documentation and access to data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Reviews first draft of inception and evaluation report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Circulates the draft report to stakeholders for comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Consolidates comments received from stakeholders and sends them to the evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Reviews final evaluation report to ensure quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Submits final report package (including the submission form and evaluator review form) to REOs or DEFPs for initial approval and then sends to EVAL HQ for formal approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Once approved by EVAL, the evaluation manager endorses payment to the evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project/ Programme Manager and staff</strong></td>
<td>✓ Provides input to TOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Ensures consultant has adequate documentation, assists in data gathering and logistical support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Arranges meetings and coordinates exchanges between the evaluation team and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Participates in evaluation workshop and provides input to evaluation manager on draft report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation Consultant</strong></td>
<td>✓ Undertakes the evaluation according to the agreed TOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Prepares and submits inception report, draft and final evaluation reports to evaluation manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Is always an external individual for all independent evaluations, but may be aided by an internal ILO evaluator independent of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Must be independent and has sole responsibility for the substantive content of the final evaluation report in line with EVAL quality requirements and formats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARDEV</strong></td>
<td>✓ Receives evaluation report after approval from EVAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Ensures evaluation report is submitted to donors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2. Types, designated responsibilities and timing of high-level and decentralized evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of evaluation</th>
<th>Main purpose</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance-level Independent</td>
<td>Strategy, policy</td>
<td>✓ Review major policies or institutional issues ✓ Assess impact, effectiveness and benefits of ILO core strategies as described in P&amp;B ✓ Improve strategies, policies and the functioning of the Office</td>
<td>EVAL to plan and manage ✓ GB and senior management confirming topics ✓ EAC reviewing follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance-level Independent / internal</td>
<td>DWCP</td>
<td>✓ Assess the extent to which significant impact is being made towards DW and related DWCP Outcomes set out in the P&amp;B ✓ Feed into country tripartite dialogue on impact, effectiveness and relevance of ILO action at the country level</td>
<td>EVAL to plan and manage ✓ Regional Offices responsible for financing internal Country Programme Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralized Independent / internal</td>
<td>Thematic evaluation</td>
<td>✓ Develop cross-cutting lessons, including success stories to innovate and feed into departmental/regional learning on specific technical interventions and strategies</td>
<td>Technical departments, other technical groups and regions to plan and manage ✓ Technical programmes and regions to provide resources ✓ EVAL to oversee and on ad hoc basis to initiate and undertake independent thematic evaluations on specific topics of interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 Adapted from A New Policy and Strategic Framework for Evaluation at the ILO.
## 2. Operational approach to evaluation in the ILO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Costs and Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact evaluation</td>
<td>Assess effects and impact of specific policy and programme interventions on beneficiaries</td>
<td>Technical departments, other technical groups and regions to plan and manage</td>
<td>Based on work plans of IEs and as part of technical programme implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint evaluation</td>
<td>Assess jointly with partner organizations, programmes where ILO is one of several partners managing and implementing joint programmes in order to ensure ILO’s contribution is being sufficiently addressed</td>
<td>Management of ILO’s input to evaluation supervised by REOs or DEFPs</td>
<td>Subject to planning and reporting schedule according to project / programme document of agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External evaluation</td>
<td>Conducted by entity outside ILO for accountability or learning purposes. The evaluation is undertaken, funded and managed by the external entity</td>
<td>Departments must contact EVAL in the case of external evaluations to ensure the process is appropriately negotiated in accordance with the ILO evaluation policy</td>
<td>Mid-term or final evaluation. May also be done as cluster evaluations to assess a funding package across programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project evaluation</td>
<td>Assess projects for relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and contribution to broader impact</td>
<td>DDGs and RDs responsible for ensuring application of ILO evaluation policy</td>
<td>Mid-term or final or as stipulated in the project evaluation plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint evaluation</td>
<td>Determine appropriateness of design to ILO’s strategic and national DW programme frameworks</td>
<td>Management of evaluation supervised by REOs or DEFPs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>EVAL provides oversight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost of evaluation to be included in project budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.1 Strategy and policy evaluations

Evaluations of ILO strategies and policies are conducted in order to provide an account of results to the GB. The focus of these evaluations is on specific outcomes within the frameworks provided by the strategic plan (SP) and P&B. These HLEs aim to assess relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, and identify potential for impact and sustainability of the associated SP strategies.

Each year, EVAL manages at least two strategy and/or policy evaluations and one DWCP evaluation. In accordance with ILO guidelines, EVAL is responsible for these evaluations. The evaluation team is to be composed of one or more external consultant(s) and an ILO senior evaluation officer without prior association to the strategy or policy. These evaluations are financed by EVAL through its regular budget and may benefit from cost-sharing with ILO regions or departments.

Strategy and policy evaluations are generally conducted over a six- to nine-month period. These evaluations usually begin following their approval by the November GB meeting and are finalized prior to the subsequent November GB meeting. The evaluation summary report and the office response to the evaluation recommendations are presented to the ILO’s GB. Follow-up to HLEs is reviewed by the EAC, which in turn reports to the Director-General on actions taken in response to the evaluation’s recommendations.

FURTHER READING:

- EVAL’S high-level strategy and policy evaluations
- Governing Body Discussions of high-level evaluations (strategy and Decent Work Country Programme evaluations)
- Protocol 1: High-level Evaluation Protocol for Outcome/Strategy Evaluations

2.1.2 Decent Work Country Programme evaluations

DWCPs are the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries and represent distinct ILO contributions 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 specific countries. They are a means of identifying challenges, achievements and the ILO’s contribution towards national development objectives, DW and related DWCP Outcomes that are established in the P&B.

Furthermore, DWCP evaluations focus on the coherence and coordination of the ILO’s work with other UN agencies in UNDAF. They also generate information that can feed into country tripartite dialogue on the effectiveness, relevance and impact of ILO interventions at the country level. In consultation with the regions, EVAL manages at least one DWCP evaluation each year at the governance level. Since 2013, DWCP evaluations have been conducted using a cluster approach. This means that the evaluation examines a subregional cluster of DWCPs instead of a single country. This offers more cov-
erage, value for money and an opportunity to look at subregional contextual factors as they pertain to the implementation of DWCPs.

FURTHER READING:

- ILO Decent Work Country Programme: A Practical Guidebook, version 4 (ILO 2016d)
- EVAL’s high-level Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) evaluations
- Governing Body Discussions of high-level evaluations (strategy and Decent Work Country Programme evaluations)
- Protocol 2: High-level Evaluation Protocol for DWCP Evaluation

2.1.3 Project evaluations

ILO project evaluations consider the relevance of project design (as it relates to the ILO’s strategic and national policy frameworks) and the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes. They are used to improve project performance and contribute towards organizational learning. These evaluations help those responsible for managing the resources and activities of a project enhance development results along a continuum from short- to long-term, along a linked chain of results (log frame).

Project evaluations also serve accountability purposes by reporting to donors and national partners on the extent to which the intended outcomes were achieved. They also offer evidence of whether or not the activities and outputs described in the project document were actually undertaken and/or produced. This is important for demonstrating that ILO is a responsible steward of funding.

Project evaluations are the building blocks of ILO’s Strategic Plan. They do not stand alone, but rather are intended to feed into and align with the key policy outcomes of the ILO. Project evaluations provide crucial information which, when aggregated, offer insight into the strategic level of progress made towards key ILO policy outcomes. Project evaluation is one means of further empowering local actors and moving the decision-making processes closer to the national partners. In the context of project implementation, this evaluation process provides space for reflection about how the ILO and its national partners can better support each other to achieve the desired development results.

Project evaluations can take the form of internal evaluations, independent evaluations or external evaluations, each with their own degree of independence. These types of decentralized evaluation are associated with different actors and varying degrees of impartiality and costs, as shown in Table 3. Evaluations can also be categorized by their timing in the implementation process, as presented in more detail in Box 4. Budget-based and evaluation scheduling requirements for project evaluation are described in Table 4.

FURTHER READING:

- EVAL’s project evaluation summaries
- List of all Guidance, Checklists, Protocols, Templates and Tools
Table 3. ILO decentralized evaluation approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation type</th>
<th>Evaluation management</th>
<th>Evaluation implementation (evaluators)</th>
<th>Degree of independence</th>
<th>Financial costs to the ILO</th>
<th>Organizational Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Self-evaluation</td>
<td>ILO (including project management)</td>
<td>ILO (including project management)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Internal evaluation</td>
<td>ILO (including project management)</td>
<td>ILO (project management works with external evaluation consultant or ILO internal evaluator)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Independent evaluation</td>
<td>ILO (excluding project management) with evaluation process overseen by EVAL and its network</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 External evaluation</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Medium to high</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. ILO policy requirements for project evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project US$</th>
<th>Under 18 months</th>
<th>18 to 30 months</th>
<th>Over 30 months</th>
<th>Multiphase projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 million</td>
<td>Initial M&amp;E appraisal by EVAL see Evaluation Tool: M&amp;E plan appraisal tool, Independent Mid-term and Final independent, Recommended: evaluability assessment</td>
<td>Initial M&amp;E appraisal by EVAL, Annual review, independent mid-term and final independent. Recommended: evaluability assessment</td>
<td>Initial M&amp;E appraisal by EVAL, annual review, mid-term independent, final independent, Recommended: evaluability assessment</td>
<td>Once project has passed the various time thresholds, the requirement for that timeframe kicks in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 million</td>
<td>Final independent evaluation</td>
<td>Mid-term (self or internal) &amp; final independent evaluation</td>
<td>Annual review, mid-term (self or internal), final independent evaluation</td>
<td>Once project budget reaches US$ 1 million an independent evaluation is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500,000 to 1 million</td>
<td>final internal evaluation</td>
<td>Annual review, final internal evaluation</td>
<td>Annual review, mid-term internal, final internal evaluation</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 500,000</td>
<td>Final self-evaluation</td>
<td>Annual review, final self-evaluation</td>
<td>Annual review, mid-term self, final self-evaluation</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 These are the minimum requirements of the ILO; one can go beyond these subject to circumstance.
2. Operational approach to evaluation in the ILO

Communicating evaluation results and knowledge dissemination

BOX 4. Categorizing evaluations by timing

- **Annual reviews**, such as Technical Development Cooperation Project Reports from PAR-DEV, focus on outputs and outcomes of projects, programmes, strategies or policies. They are a form of internal evaluation during which the stakeholders reflect upon how well the intervention is progressing towards achieving its objectives, taking into account available M&E data. Reviews with this type of focus may also be organized to look at specific issues. ILO managers and Chief Technical Advisers (CTAs) are responsible for annually reviewing and reporting their progress. PROGRAM and PARDEV oversee the processes at an organizational level and report performance to the GB.

- **Mid-term evaluations** should take place during the implementation of projects, programmes, strategies or policies. The exact timing will vary, and should be flexible if justified. They are most useful when a number of planned activities have been delivered, and a considerable percentage of funds have been spent. Mid-term evaluations aim to assess the continued relevance of an intervention and progress made towards achieving its planned objectives, offering an opportunity to make modifications to ensure they are achieved (see Guidance Note 2: Mid-term evaluations) EVAL has oversight responsibility for all independent mid-term evaluations.

- **Final evaluations** focus on the outcomes of projects, programmes, strategies or policies and the likelihood that they will achieve impact. These evaluations provide an opportunity for in-depth reflection on the strategy and assumptions guiding the intervention. They assess the extent to which an intervention achieved its objectives and may recommend adjustments to its strategy. They are also a means to assess how well intervention-level actions support higher level ILO strategies and objectives, as articulated in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and the ILO’s Programme and Budget (P&B). EVAL has oversight responsibility for all independent final evaluations. Regional and department-level evaluation officers have responsibility for hands-on supervision.

- **Ex-post evaluations** take place after completion of the project with the aim of assessing longer term effects of specific interventions. They can be part of strategy/policy, thematic or country programme evaluations that also consider linkages between different interventions and longer term development outcomes. The primary purpose of these evaluations is to examine the sustained impact of a particular intervention.
2.1.4 Thematic evaluations

**Thematic evaluations** assess specific aspects, themes and processes of ILO’s technical work, and may also focus on particular departments, issues or approaches. Thematic evaluations provide the means for ILO technical programmes to explore the effectiveness and impact of particular approaches and to foster learning. They can be used to examine ILO work across contexts, identifying key lessons learned that may be more generalizable than those which emerge from single project evaluations. Given the focus of thematic evaluations on effectiveness and outcomes, these evaluations are typically conducted towards the end of interventions.

Technical departments are generally responsible for initiating, planning, managing and funding these evaluations. EVAL provides oversight and may assist in designing these types of evaluation in collaboration with technical departments. EVAL may also undertake independent thematic evaluations on an ad hoc basis.

**FURTHER READING:**

- EVAL’s thematic evaluations

In addition to the above-mentioned tables, the following are also required:

- ✔ All evaluation reports must be sent to EVAL for storage, including self-evaluations and internal evaluations of projects with budgets of less than US $1 million.

- ✔ A single evaluation may be conducted to cover several projects, which are clustered by theme or geographic focus, provided the evaluation: (a) applies a scope, purpose and methodologies comparable to what would be used for an individual evaluation; (b) has donor consent for the use of a **cluster evaluation**; and (c) is approved by EVAL or REOs for projects with a budget of over US$ 1 million.

- ✔ In addition to these mandatory requirements, evaluations should also be considered, irrespective of size of funding and timing, if the project is of a pilot or innovative nature; or if the country, theme, implementing partners or source of funding is new to ILO.

**FURTHER READING:**

- ILO Development Cooperation Manual

2.1.5 Synthesis reviews and meta-studies

**Synthesis reviews and meta-studies** examine a set of evaluation reports in order to extract key lessons learned, emerging good practices and results that are relevant across diverse contexts. These studies are intended to enhance the utility of evaluation for users both internal and external to the ILO by synthesizing findings from an array of evaluations related to a particular topic into information that is accessible to a broader audience.

Although synthesis reviews and meta-studies examine similar aspects of ILO evaluations, their purposes are somewhat different. Synthesis reviews qualitatively identify themes...
and patterns across lessons learned, emerging good practices and evaluation findings. With a strong learning orientation, they present these data in an organized way so that users may quickly identify and use information that is most useful to them. In contrast, meta-studies are more oriented towards an aggregated assessment of project performance against key criteria. This helps the ILO better understand what works, where and on which aspects the ILO is either weak or strong.

FURTHER READING:
- EVAL’s synthesis reviews and meta-studies

2.1.6 Impact evaluations

IEs aim to assess the “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended” (OECD/DAC 2002). A key feature of IEs is that they aim to assess the contribution or attribution of a specific intervention or set of interventions (policy or other form of implemented intervention) to an identified outcome or effect on the ultimate beneficiaries or target groups. IEs are part of the knowledge base on effective policy solutions by providing empirical documentation for an intervention. The planning, management and funding of IEs are the responsibility of technical departments. EVAL’s role is to facilitate the use and application of IEs in a credible manner through appropriate guidance and to provide quality assurance.

EVAL has developed a variety of resources to support IE:

- An Impact Evaluation Framework: EVAL developed a position paper about how, when and why IEs should be considered and implemented, based on input from ILO staff. The position paper covers key issues such as the specific use and purpose of IE; the match between evaluation research questions and appropriate methodology; use of a range of complementary and available methodologies; the feasibility and value of IEs; and the need to not only identify impact (what) but also the how and why.

- An Impact Evaluation Review Facility (IERF): EVAL established a review mechanism, which allows ILO staff to ask questions and request reviews of concept papers, full proposals, plans and reports to assist with planning, designing or implementing IEs (EVAL_impact@ilo.org). A Briefing Note on the operation of this facility is available.

- An inventory of impact evaluations conducted at the ILO: The inventory allows easier access to institutional knowledge in a variety of intervention areas.

- A quality appraisal of ILO impact evaluations: In order to monitor and report on the progress ILO is making in its use and quality of IE, EVAL will periodically commission a quality appraisal of IEs across the organization.

- An Informal Impact Evaluation Network as Community of Practice: This informal group of colleagues involved and interested in IEs meets on a regular basis to share experiences and provide peer review of IE, as required.
These resources are intended to support the ILO to further enhance its capacity regarding the use of IE; to document knowledge of what works and for whom; and to assess impact.

FURTHER READING:

- Guidance Note 13: Impact Evaluation
- Briefing note on IE

2.1.7 Joint evaluations

Joint evaluations are evaluations where ILO partners with another entity jointly manage and implement an evaluation. These are often of a joint project/programme as foreseen in the relevant programming documents or Donor Agreements, and to which different partners contribute through funding, specific components and/or joint activities. There can also be joint evaluation of a project/programme implemented by ILO only; however, this is where some other entity, often the donor (can also be a national or an international partner), is jointly managing the evaluation with ILO to meet institutional specific requirements. Joint evaluations can be a way of meeting different institutional requirements for evaluations – for instance ILO and donor – in an effective and efficient manner. Any evaluation can be conducted as a joint evaluation and there may be varying degrees of collaboration among partners, depending on the extent to which they cooperate in the evaluation process, merge their evaluation resources and combine their evaluation reporting.

According to the OECD/DAC, joint evaluations can help overcome challenges related to attribution assessing the effectiveness of programmes and strategies, exploring complementarities of efforts supported by different partners, and analysing the quality of aid coordination.

Joint evaluations address the expanding portfolio of evaluation work being planned, managed and financed jointly by the ILO and national and international development partners, the most prevalent of which have been linked to UNDAF and Joint Programmes of the UN at country level. The SDGs with their requirements for country-led evaluations and integrated support from the UN system and other partners, may enhance the call and opportunities for joint evaluations. These can be as cluster evaluations, individual programmes/projects not designed as joint programmes, but linked through national strategies of SDGs, REOs or DEFPs of the joint evaluation. These can range from evaluation management or evaluation coordination arrangements; timing; link to any partner-specific mandatory and complementary evaluations; to funding and reporting on the evaluation. Specific guidance has been developed by EVAL for joint evaluations. In cases of donors requesting joint evaluations,
please refer to guidance note 14 and/or seek EVAL guidance as quickly as possible. For additional guidance on financing for joint evaluations, see section 3.5 on “evaluation budget”.

FURTHER READING:
- Guidance Note 14: Joint Evaluation
- Managing Joint Evaluations (OECD/DAC, 2010c)
- Quality Standards for Development Evaluation (OECD/DAC, 2010b)
- Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations UNEG, 2014

2.1.8 External evaluations

External evaluations are evaluations carried out by entities outside ILO following other institutional requirements and procedures. This normally occurs whenever donors want to conduct evaluations of programmes or projects they have funded. Traditionally, these are for the institutional purposes of accountability and organizational learning across programmes and projects, such as all projects in a given country or region and/or within a specific theme or area of work or funding, normally irrespective of the implementing partners. External evaluations can also be carried out for individual programmes and projects for which ILO has taken the implementation lead. The ILO evaluation policy allows for such external evaluations of ILO activities by donors funding those activities as long as they are not at the expense of evaluations managed and organized according to ILO evaluation policy.

The ILO evaluation policy clearly states that the organization prefers independent evaluations to external evaluations given the value placed on evaluation to contribute to organizational learning and improved organizational practices.

The role of ILO in external evaluations by donors where ILO is one of the implementing partners of activities funded by that donor, is as a key stakeholder and source of information, participating in the interest of contributing to organizational learning. Recommendations from such external evaluations are useful input to the overall work of ILO in a particular area and are to be considered as appropriate (they are not covered by the ILO evaluation management response system).

EVAL recommends any programme or project staff member to get in touch with EVAL at ILO HQ or at the appropriate regional office if an external evaluation is being proposed. This is particularly recommended if the donor is requesting an external evaluation as part of the project design and programme agreements. Funding included for evaluations in ILO projects is not normally extended to external evaluations unless specifically indicated and agreed to, and in this case, only for complementary activities, such as the key stakeholder workshop and local cost, but not for the evaluation team. In the case of entities carrying out external evaluations that are intended to include ILO activities not funded by the entity which is proposing the external evaluation, ILO has to assess in each case whether or not participation would be within the scope of ILO involvement in building the overall knowledge base on work in the particular area.
2.2 Regional and departmental evaluation networks

Regional evaluation networks support the planning and implementation of evaluation activities, especially for decentralized development cooperation projects. A regional network comprises a designated evaluation officer from a Regional Office and evaluation coordinators in Decent Work Teams and Country Offices. REOs oversee the internal country programme reviews and development cooperation project evaluations. They oversee and advise on the process of planning, managing and following up on DWCP reviews and independent project evaluations, including the approval of the final TOR and the selection of consultants. These REOs also oversee reporting on follow-up to recommendations from evaluations, which fall within their responsibility.

Each ILO department has a designated evaluation focal point that is responsible for coordinating evaluation activities. EVAL provides technical guidance and assistance to these focal points and has oversight for quality control of decentralized evaluations. DEFPs oversee and advise the planning, management and follow-up processes for thematic reviews and evaluations of centralized projects.

REOs or DEFPs work in conjunction with project management and EVAL to identify an evaluation manager. The pool of qualified evaluation managers has expanded given the implementation of EVAL’s EMCP. Given their qualifications, these individuals should be sought out for evaluation management. For RBSA evaluations, a percentage of resources is set aside for M&E. Evaluation managers

2.3 Evaluation schedules and work plans for regions and departments

Each biennium, EVAL takes a comprehensive approach to planning decentralized evaluations that involve managers in departments and regions. Based on lists produced by the i-Track database, evaluation focal points develop two-year rolling work plans to implement the evaluation plan. These should be discussed across the Office to identify opportunities for collaboration and consolidation in order to develop a comprehensive and cohesive evaluation work plan across the ILO. These work plans should provide details of all decentralized independent evaluations scheduled for the upcoming year, as well as plans to conduct training and other capacity-building activities. The timing, scope and orientation of evaluations (while often determined by contractual obligations) should be synchronized to the greatest extent possible with higher management and constituent information needs in order to improve their
relevance and adequately address performance. Annual reporting takes place on the progress made towards regional and departmental evaluation work plans.

2.4 Evaluation of Regular Budget Supplementary Account

The ILO’s funding base consists of assessed and voluntary contributions. Voluntary contributions include the RBSA, which allows development partners to provide un-earmarked core funding to the ILO, thereby increasing the Office’s capacity to deliver and achieve results at the country level. ILO Office Procedure Number 63 names EVAL (ILO 2009e) as being responsible for RBSA evaluation oversight. This Office Procedure establishes the procedural steps and accountability for the use of a RBSA reserve set aside for oversight and M&E. It covers the allocation of these funds and their release, and the respective roles and accountability of headquarters and regions for implementing and reporting on the use of RBSA funds for these purposes.

This reserve can only be used to finance the following:

☑ The establishment and maintenance of results-focused monitoring and reporting practices in the regions and at HQ;

☑ The development of monitoring systems and the establishment of baselines against which to assess and report on results; and

☑ The conduct of independent evaluations and internal reviews of activities directly, but not exclusively, linked to RBSA allocations.

RBSA evaluations are included in the sample of evaluation reports that are part of regular (biannual) quality appraisals commissioned by EVAL and carried out by external consultants. A review of these studies has shown that the average quality rating of the RBSA evaluations is slightly higher than that of non-RBSA evaluations, though the difference is statistically insignificant.
3. Planning and managing evaluations
This chapter describes key aspects on how to plan and manage decentralized evaluations. This section describes EVAL’s policy for conducting these activities by describing the following topics:

- Defining the purpose, scope and stakeholders of an evaluation;
- Theory of change and evaluability;
- Stakeholder involvement;
- Consideration of gender issues;
- Defining evaluation questions and criteria;
- Drafting and circulating the Terms of Reference (ToR);
- Establishing the evaluation budget; and
- Evaluation teams for independent evaluations: roles and skills.

3.1 Defining the purpose, scope and evaluation stakeholders

Before conducting an evaluation, a number of key steps must be taken, as summarized in figure 2. This process ensures that the evaluation design process is participatory, transparent and independent of any one stakeholder’s specific interests. Since these steps also establish the credibility and utility of the evaluation exercise, they should be adhered to as closely as possible. Whenever a new project is approved and an evaluation is required, EVAL enters a planning record into the i-Track database. These planning records serve as a work plan for administrative and technical backstopping offices to prepare for upcoming evaluations.

Figure 2. Key steps in planning and managing an evaluation
Representatives from project management should be involved in the initial determination of an evaluation’s objectives, coverage and key stakeholders. It is also important to engage ILO’s primary stakeholder groups (i.e. constituents) to help determine the scope of the evaluation and identify key questions to be addressed by the evaluation. Donor representatives should also be involved as appropriate.

An evaluation’s scope can be defined in terms of time and space (e.g. project start/end date, or by project phase and geographical areas of an intervention’s implementation) or elements of a project. The consultation process helps project management and the evaluation manager accommodate the priorities of key stakeholders when drafting the TOR and avoid making major revisions after circulation. When determining the purpose and scope of the evaluation, those drafting the TOR should keep in mind that the evaluation itself should be designed to effectively address its purpose and use resources efficiently (i.e. time and money).

### 3.2 Theory of change and evaluability

The reference point for evaluation should be the relevant strategy, programme or project document (PRODOC). These documents should provide the background and rationale of the programme/project, including its planned activities, outputs, objectives, outcomes, corresponding outcome indicators and assumptions. An appropriate programme/project design and a well-written programming document are important for setting a strong foundation for an evaluation. Programming documents should specify links between different levels of results frameworks such as DWCPs, P&B outcomes, policy outcomes, country programme outcomes, and those at the project level. These should also be considered integral to the rationale and design of an evaluation.

Programmes and strategies are based on an intervention logic, or a **theory of change** often expressed in a log frame and at times in a logic model. For technical areas, regions and the organization as a whole, the SP and P&B together serve as an overarching theory of change. Projects and policies that are implemented should be considered within the wider context of the SP and P&B to which they connect and should highlight the relevant aspects. Prior to the evaluation, the project/programme manager should provide all relevant documents, which outline the theory of change, and any revisions made to it during the intervention’s implementation to the evaluation manager for the preparation of the TOR. At times, the reconstruction of some form of theory of change based on the relevant documents may be necessary, including the details of the logical framework. This is to provide a result framework against which the achievements of the programme/project can be assessed.

Theories of change are valuable because they help to clarify the linkages between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. This offers an opportunity to identify what needs to be examined in order to test a particular
theoretical proposition. This is increasingly important as ILO will be called upon to show its contribution to the SDGs and a compelling performance story starts with an understanding of the underlying theory of change associated with the programme/project.

Reviewing the theory of change also helps to determine whether it is possible to evaluate the intervention when conducting **evaluability** assessments (box 5). This process should be conducted during the planning stage and may require an additional scoping mission or scoping of activities, in particular for projects with budgets over US$5 million.

Any evaluability assessment would normally be undertaken in coordination with the REO and support of an evaluation expert, who is capable of conducting a technical assessment of the basic parameters for a comprehensive evaluation. If an evaluability assessment finds that existing information is lacking, or that aspects of a programme are not evaluable, the results of this exercise can be used to help narrow down the set of key evaluation questions, develop the methodology, identify appropriate timing, or indicate remedial steps to be carried out prior to an evaluation.

**FURTHER READING:**

- Guidance Note 16: Evaluability of ILO Programmes and Projects
- Guidance Note 1: Using Theory of Change for Evaluation

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**BOX 5. Evaluability is assessed at three key stages**

1. During the proposal design of a project: this is carried out through the M&E appraisal.
2. At project start-up: within the first year of the intervention, there should be an evaluability assessment that can be used to validate the M&E system in place.
3. Before the evaluation of an intervention: this is carried out through an examination of the project document. This includes the project log frame, an assessment of the intended outcomes, and an investigation into data that exists in relation to the questions which need to be addressed through the evaluation.

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**3.3 Stakeholder involvement**

The ILO’s primary stakeholders are the tripartite constituents, who comprise its organizational membership. Other key stakeholders may be relevant to HQ and field staff as well as national partners, such as United Nations officials from partner agencies, government officials in collaborating ministries, implementing agencies and representatives of other partners such as donor representatives, as listed in **box 6**. Another important group of stakeholders are the beneficiaries of ILO’s work. Participation by these stakeholder groups can help to ensure the evaluation is relevant and useful.

Participation and sensitivity to diversity is one of the guiding principles of ILO’s tripartite approach and one of its comparative strengths. The core stakeholders should participate as early as possible in the planning stage to cre-
ate a common understanding about the purpose and use of the evaluation and the approach to be taken. The relevant stakeholders should be involved in defining the main focus and the key questions that the evaluation should address.

Stakeholders may also participate as key informants, being interviewed individually, in groups at workshops or consulted through questionnaires. Maximizing participation in the planning phase helps to ensure that the evaluation’s focus and methodology are appropriate and offers an opportunity for key stakeholders to take ownership of the evaluation. This can encourage uptake/use of the evaluation’s results.

Engaging stakeholders in evaluation also helps to build their evaluative capacity and national evaluation capacity development is more important in the era of the 2030 Agenda in supporting countries to monitor and evaluate their progress towards the SDGs. Developing the evaluation capacity of constituents is also one of the priorities of EVAL and the ILO’s evaluation strategy. Training materials have been developed for this purpose.

FURTHER READING:

Guidance Note 7: Engaging Stakeholders in Evaluation

Evaluation training for tripartite constituents: Presentations, learning activities and reference materials (ILO 2012)

BOX 6. Stakeholders of ILO evaluations

Primary stakeholders

- Representatives of governments (e.g. ministries of labour)
- Representatives of employers’ organizations
- Representatives of workers’ organizations

Other key stakeholders (for projects and DWCP)

- ILO HQ staff of cooperating departments
- ILO field staff
- United Nations agencies in country
- Non-governmental organizations
- Other partners in country (e.g. donor agencies)

3.4 Consideration of gender and discrimination issues for evaluations

Gender and non-discrimination are considered cross-cutting policy drivers for ILO work. This means that all projects and programmes should take these into account during project design and implementation. Because of this, all evaluations should ensure that there is appropriate consideration of gender and
non-discrimination issues in their design, analyses and reporting. This includes assessing the extent to which projects are sufficiently addressing these issues in their projects.

EVAL has communicated its commitment to supporting the examination of gender issues in evaluation by mandating that any TOR, which are disseminated for an evaluation, must include, at a minimum, the following language:

*The gender dimension should be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. Moreover, the evaluators should review data and information that are disaggregated by sex and gender, and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve lives of women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.*

Certainly, this is the first step towards ensuring gender issues are well represented in evaluations. The ILO has an obligation to report on several indicators related to the inclusion of gender issues in evaluation reports in the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP on gender). Evaluation managers and stakeholders should consider gender issues and other issues related to non-discrimination whenever developing or responding to TOR and assess whether or not these issues are adequately represented. Furthermore, these same groups should examine inception reports, data collection plans, evaluation reports and any other deliverables which an evaluator may produce to ensure gender is or will be appropriately addressed. While disaggregation of data by gender is an important first step in understanding how programmes and policies affect men and women differently, it is not always sufficient. A more comprehensive approach should involve an investigation of how gender inequality interacts with other forms of inequality.

Additionally, gender inequality should be examined as a structural and systemic issue anchored in cultural norms and standards. In addition to gender, the ILO Gender, Equality and Diversity branch (GED) has made disability a priority area of its work and has published a strategy document (ILO 2015) related to this topic and an *ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality* (ILO 2016a). Given the guiding principles outlined in the above-mentioned document, ILO evaluation should consider the extent to which:

- projects incorporate disability inclusion into their designs and subsequent implementation;
- the implementation adheres to the above-mentioned principles; and
- projects contribute to increased inclusion of people with disabilities.

The ILO’s 2014–2017 Disability Inclusion Action Plan highlights the intent of the ILO to have disability inclusion explicitly referenced in its programming and in outcome areas, cross-cutting themes and governance outcomes. If project documents specifically refer to the incorporation of such issues, it is imperative that the evaluation take this into account during the design and implementation stages.
3.5 The evaluation budget

Most ILO evaluations are financed from programme or project budgets. As per the ILO evaluation policy, a minimum of 2 per cent of total project funds should be reserved for self-evaluations, internal evaluations and independent evaluations. Use of the resources under the dedicated evaluation budget line requires approval of the assigned evaluation manager and an ILO evaluation officer. Before funds allocated for evaluations or balances thereof can be moved to other budget lines, approval from EVAL is required.

In addition, ILO policies also recommend that resources be set aside for monitoring, collecting baseline data and reporting. In input-based budgets, these resources can be entered under the appropriate budget line, depending on the activity (mission credits, subcontracting to hire a research firm to collect baseline data, budget line for a workshop/seminar for consulting stakeholders on project results, etc.). Figure 3 provides a financing overview for M&E activities in ILO project budgets.

On a case-to-case basis, EVAL may exceptionally allow a lower percentage dedicated for evaluations depending on certain variables, such as the size and nature of the project, and expectations in terms of evaluation deliverables. DEPFs and REOs are available for consultation to help determine an appropriate cost estimate for evaluation activities in case the 2 per cent provision is considered excessive or not adequate. EVAL approval is required for such exceptions.

When joint evaluations are undertaken, it is EVAL’s policy that relevant projects set aside 2 per cent of their project funding for evaluation. This is intended to cover the costs of the ILO portion of a given joint programme. However, the budgeting for joint evaluations may also depend on the financing arrangements made for a given evaluation. According to UNEG’s guidance on joint evaluations, it is important to start with the question of cost and then discuss how contributions will be managed and provided. The guidance also provides five key questions to consider when addressing issues of financing joint evaluations, which include:

- Which agency/agencies will provide cash or in-kind contributions?
- Will there be equal sharing of the costs among all partners?
- Will resources be pooled or will there be individual payments of expenditure?
- Will one agency administer the funds on behalf of all? According to what rules? With what kind of control and audit in place?

GLOSSARY

JOINT EVALUATION An evaluation to which different donor agencies and/or partners participate collaboratively in the management of an evaluation, often of a joint programme/project.
What are the procedures for agencies transferring funds to/receiving funds from other agencies?

3.6 Defining evaluation questions and criteria

Evaluation questions should be formulated to seek appropriate answers on a project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and/or impact. In line with United Nations good practices for evaluations, the ILO expects that each evaluation will assess these key criteria, which are outlined in table 5. The inception report should address the extent to which certain criteria may or may not be evaluable in a given context. In instances where there are insufficient data to address certain criteria, the evaluator should determine which criteria can best be addressed in order to use evaluation resources most efficiently.

The key evaluation criteria can be used to formulate appropriate evaluation questions. While the evaluation criteria are fairly standard, evaluation questions must be tailored to the specifics of the project, the answers to which should lead to recommendations for guiding key decisions. Whenever one develops evaluation questions, the evaluation...
Table 5. Definition of key evaluation criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation criterion</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention</td>
<td>The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, global priorities, and partners’ and donors’ policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validity of intervention design</td>
<td>The extent to which the design is logical and coherent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention progress and effectiveness</td>
<td>The extent to which the intervention’s immediate objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of resource usage</td>
<td>A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of management arrangements</td>
<td>The extent to which management capacities and arrangements put in place support the achievement of results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention</td>
<td>The strategic orientation of the project towards making a significant contribution to broader long-term, sustainable development changes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The likelihood that the results of the intervention are durable and can be maintained or even scaled up and replicated by intervention partners after major assistance has been completed.</td>
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</table>

3.7 Drafting and circulating the terms of reference

The TOR document forms a substantive part of the contractual basis for undertaking an evaluation. Writing the TOR with sufficient clarity and detail will improve the basis for joint understanding with the evaluator about what is expected to be delivered. A well considered and a well written TOR are the foundation of a good evaluation. The TOR specifies the rationale for the evaluation and summarizes different stakeholders’ expectations for the evaluation. It also describes the project or programme to be evaluated and its context.

Delays in the evaluation process can add to overall evaluation costs. Therefore, a realistic timeline for the evaluation should be developed. This should take into account national contexts, such as national holidays if site visits will be taking place. The evaluation manager should take into account the time needed to complete the tasks specified in the TOR.

The TOR should be circulated to key evaluation stakeholders for their input on the draft. Once inputs are received the evaluation manager should consider the priorities of the main stakeholders. This is done as part of the preparation of the TOR, which should be circulated for comment to all key stakeholders of the evaluation.
manager should incorporate comments and produce a final version, which is again circulated for approval by key stakeholders. Finally, it will be circulated to the REO or a senior evaluation officer for approval.

FURTHER READING:
- Checklist 1: Writing terms of reference
- Checklist 2: Rating the quality of terms of reference
- Checklist 5: Preparing the evaluation report

3.8 Evaluation teams for independent evaluations: roles and skills

Experienced external technical experts and professional evaluators are engaged to undertake independent evaluations and must be deemed independent of the project or programme being evaluated, and free of any conflict of interest. For an evaluator to be considered independent, they must fulfil the following requirements:

- Have no previous or current involvement or offers of prospective employment in the ILO project or programme being evaluated; and
- Have no personal links to the people involved in managing the project/programme.

Both external and internal evaluators should adhere to the highest level of technical and ethical standards. They should fulfil the criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility, and should abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System (UNEG 2008). Consultants should undergo an orientation on the ILO’s guidelines and quality standards for evaluation. When an evaluation team is being developed, it is recommended to include a national evaluation consultant as a local expert. If possible, the evaluation team should combine solid evaluation expertise, sufficient technical knowledge on the area of work and strong regional and local knowledge of the area. In addition, there should be a gender balance among team members, with at least one person possessing gender-based knowledge.

The evaluator may subsequently adapt the methodology proposed in the TOR, but any changes should be agreed upon between the evaluation manager and the evaluator. This agreement very often takes the form of an inception report, which is contractually specified and approved by the ILO, and described in more detail in section 4.1.

The consultant should also be supplied with the necessary EVAL guidance on preparing the evaluation report formatting (Checklist 5), writing the inception report (Checklist 3), as well as the ILO Guidance on integrating gender in monitoring and evaluation of projects (Guidance Note 4).
FURTHER READING:

- Guidance Note 4: Integrating gender in monitoring and evaluation of projects
- Guidance Note 5: Using the EVAL consultant database
- Guidance Note 6: The evaluation manager: role and function
- Checklist 3: Writing the inception report
- Checklist 5: Preparing the evaluation report
- Further reading: External collaboration contracts, (ILO 2011b)
- Further reading: Procurement, (ILO 2011c)
4. Conducting the evaluation
The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the main phases for conducting an evaluation. By the end of this chapter, the reader will have a general understanding of the following key elements and products, as shown in figure 4:

- The inception report;
- Data collection and analysis: tools and methods;
- Conclusions and recommendations;
- Generating lessons learned and emerging good practices; and
- Reporting and dissemination of results.

### 4.1 The inception report

ILO evaluations are typically conducted in four phases. In the first phase, the evaluation manager prepares the TOR, the evaluation plan and budget. In the second phase, the evaluator prepares an operational evaluation plan, known as the inception report, which should be aligned with the TOR. The third phase focuses on data collection and analysis, formulating conclusions and recommendations, generating lessons learned and emerging good practices, and preparing the draft report. The fourth phase focuses on the finalization and dissemination of the report. In the case of independent evaluations, this leads to the initiation of the management response to evaluation recommendations.
The inception report can be developed upon approval of the TOR. The purpose of the inception report is to ensure a common understanding of the TOR and to agree on the way forward. The timing and approval of the inception report should be listed as an output in the TOR. In addition, stating the methods of data collection, data analysis and reporting is required in the inception report. The choice of any site-visits by the evaluator should also be specified.

ILO evaluation managers play a critical role in ensuring that evaluations are carried out credibly, particularly with regard to employing sound methods. Approval of the inception report by the evaluation manager constitutes an acceptance by the ILO of the results generated through the proposed methodology. Therefore, it is important for the evaluation manager to review the interview lists and guides, questionnaires and sampling, among methodological aspects of the inception report, for any aspect that could bias and distort results. Finally, inception reports should be shared with key stakeholders for their information and comments.

FURTHER READING:
- Checklist 3: Writing the inception report

### 4.2 Data collection and analysis: tools and methods

To strengthen the credibility and usefulness of evaluation results, most ILO evaluations use a mix of data sources which are collected through multiple methods. The data to be collected during an evaluation and the selection of data collection methods depend on several factors, including: the evidence needed to best answer the evaluation questions; data availability, including disaggregation by sex; the methods and analyses that are most appropriate to generate useful findings and address the evaluation criteria; the degree of equitable participation by women and men as key stakeholders in the evaluation; and the feasibility of data collection based on time and resource availability, in addition to consideration of the local context.

#### 4.2.1 Types of data

Primary data consists of information evaluators observe or collect directly from stakeholders about their first-hand experience with the intervention. Such data are collected through the use of surveys, meetings, focus group discussions, interviews or other methods, which involve direct contact with the stakeholders. These data can facilitate deeper understanding of observed changes and the factors which contributed to change.

Secondary data are collected by the ILO, or other individuals or agencies for purposes other than those of the evaluation. They can take
many forms, but usually consist of documentary evidence that has direct relevance for the purposes of the evaluation: nationally and internationally published reports; economic indicators; project or programme plans; monitoring reports; previous reviews, evaluations and other records; country strategic plans; and research reports. Exploring the availability of relevant data should be carried out by project staff when designing the M&E plan for a project in order to ensure that the data are available and usable for evaluation purposes. Making use of already existent data can be cost-effective and save time, but this should not replace the collection of primary data.

4.2.2 Quantitative and qualitative techniques

A range of methods and tools can be used to collect and generate data for evaluations. Each tool or method has advantages and disadvantages in terms of time, usefulness and resource requirements. Table 6 presents a detailed list of qualitative and quantitative data collection tools and methods, including a short description and analysis of their advantages and challenges.

To carry out their functions effectively, evaluators need to interview staff members, and have access to all relevant Office documents. Staff members at all levels are expected to fully cooperate with evaluators and take all necessary steps to ensure timely access to requested information. In most cases, collection of data through interviews and focus groups should be carried out in a confidential manner without the involvement of those whose work is being evaluated. Evaluators requiring assistance should be provided with the help they need (e.g. non-ILO translators). Evaluators should report to EVAL any problems in obtaining cooperation or documents requested.

4.2.3 Data quality

In some cases, the evaluation may be limited by the absence of baseline data. In other cases, there may be a lack of data relative to the evolution of outcomes for a comparison group, which could make an assessment of the effectiveness of interventions and the identification of causal links difficult. Where baseline surveys and studies have not been undertaken or are not of the required quality, the evaluator should identify how data should be collected in order to secure a reasonable proxy for the assessment of initial conditions. For instance, evaluators may conduct in-depth interviews (e.g. structured interviews and/or focus groups discussions) with project beneficiaries and have them reconstruct the logical chain of behavioural, productive or organizational changes generated or supported by the intervention.

FURTHER READING:

- Guidance Note 8: Data collection methods
- Checklist 4: Validating methodologies
- UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, 2009
Table 6. Evaluation methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Advantage(s)</th>
<th>Challenge(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>QUALITATIVE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>Systematic analysis of existing documentation, including quantitative and descriptive information about the initiative, its outputs and outcomes, such as documentation from capacity development activities, donor reports and other evidence.</td>
<td>Cost-efficient.</td>
<td>It can be difficult to code and analyse documentary evidence. It can be difficult to verify reliability and validity of data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview (face-to-face, telephone or computer-assisted)</td>
<td>Solicit responses to questions designed to obtain in-depth information about a person’s impressions or experiences. Can be fully structured, semi-structured, or unstructured.</td>
<td>Facilitates fuller coverage, range and depth of information on a topic.</td>
<td>Can be time consuming.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct on-site observation</td>
<td>Entails use of a detailed observation form to record accurate information on-site about how a programme operates (ongoing activities, processes, discussions, social interactions and observable results as directly observed during the course of an initiative).</td>
<td>Can see operations of a programme as they are occurring.</td>
<td>It may be difficult to categorize or interpret observed behaviours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus group interview</td>
<td>A small group (6 to 8 people) is interviewed together to explore in-depth stakeholder opinions, similar or divergent points of view, or judgements about a development initiative or policy, as well as gather information about their behaviours, understanding and perceptions of an initiative or to collect information around tangible and intangible changes resulting from an initiative.</td>
<td>Quick, reliable way to obtain common impressions from diverse stakeholders. Efficient way to obtain a high degree of range and depth of information in a short time. Single-sex interviews (e.g. with women only) often provide information and qualitative insights that are not articulated otherwise. This can also apply to other groups.</td>
<td>It may be hard to analyse responses. Requires trained facilitator. May be difficult to schedule.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Conducting the evaluation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key informant interview</strong></td>
<td>Qualitative in-depth interviews, often one-on-one, with a wide range of stakeholders who have first-hand knowledge about the initiative’s operations and context. These experts can provide particular knowledge and understanding of context, problems and recommend solutions. The majority of questions are open-ended and meant to stimulate discussion.</td>
<td>Can provide insight on the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions. Can provide different perspectives on a single issue or on several issues. Is subject to sampling bias. There has to be some means of verifying or corroborating information.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expert panel</strong></td>
<td>A peer review, or reference group composed of external experts to provide input on technical or other substance topics covered by the evaluation.</td>
<td>Adds credibility. Can serve as additional (expert) source of information that can provide greater depth. Can verify or substantiate information and results in topic area. Cost of consultancy and related expenses, if any. Must ensure impartiality and be free from conflicts of interest.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Case study</strong></td>
<td>Involve comprehensive examination through cross-comparison of cases to obtain in-depth information with the goal to fully understand the operational dynamics, activities, outputs, outcomes and interactions of a development project or programme.</td>
<td>Useful to fully explore factors that contribute to outputs and outcomes. Require considerable time and resources not usually available for commissioned evaluations. Can be difficult to analyse.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Survey (samples of respondents, including project/programme and control observations)</strong></td>
<td>A sample of the project/programme population, with sex-disaggregation (and possibly of a control/comparison group) is extracted. Questionnaires can be administered electronically through dedicated software or, more common, face-to-face by enumerators on the basis of a pre-written and pre-coded questionnaire. Entries are recorded on electronic support media and analysed using computer software on the basis of standard descriptive, inferential and econometric techniques.</td>
<td>The sampling procedure should aim to select a statistically representative subset of the population. Large sample sizes allow for more refined analysis and are representative of more subcategories of the population (subregion, province, etc.). Trained specialists are required for survey design planning and data analysis. It can be costly and time-consuming to implement wider surveys.</td>
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</table>
4.3 Conclusions and recommendations

Once data have been collected and analysed, and the findings presented and discussed, accurate conclusions should be drawn from the findings. Conclusions provide summary judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated intervention, which should be fair, impartial and supported by evidence.

Recommendations are “proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a development intervention; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources” (OECD/DAC 2002) and should meet the requirements in preparing the evaluation report (Checklist 5). Recommendations should also: be linked to the conclusions; be clear, concise, actionable, and time-bound; they should specify who is called upon to act, and distinguish the priority or importance; and acknowledge whether or not there are resource implications.

FURTHER READING:
- Checklist 5: Preparing the evaluation report

4.4 Generating lessons learned and emerging good practices

One of the purposes of evaluation in the ILO is to promote organizational learning. Evaluations are expected to generate lessons that can be applied elsewhere to improve programme/project performance or impact.

Each ILO evaluation report should contain lessons learned, which summarize knowledge or understanding gained from experience related to the intervention under evaluation. Lessons learned can highlight the strengths and weaknesses of interventions to improve quality of delivery; contribute to sharing innovative responses to potential challenges; and/or allow practitioners to reuse lessons from previous experience into the design of future projects. They also contribute to learning and knowledge sharing among stakeholders by helping them to better understand the design, monitoring and evaluation of a given intervention, and identify where collaboration and coordination need to be strengthened.

These lessons have to be captured, validated, stored, disseminated and reused if they are to fulfil their purpose. Capturing lessons learned involves gathering, documenting and analysing evaluation findings. This may occur at the end of the intervention, or at the end of an intervention’s phase. Lessons learned can address both the internal and external logic of interventions. The intervention’s theory of change, design, development objective and strategy are subject to critical scrutiny. Reviewing the internal logic can help project or programme managers to determine whether or not they are doing the correct things, by examining how to improve the current way of working or managing activities. Focusing on the external logic helps managers to know whether the right thing is being done, by questioning assumptions about how the project, programme or policy works, including the manner in which it fits into the broader context and environment.
A lesson learned may become an emerging good practice when it additionally shows proven marked results or benefits and is determined by the evaluator to be considered for replication or up-scaling to other ILO projects. An emerging good practice should demonstrate clear potential for substantiating a cause-effect relationship and may also show potential for replicability and broader application. It can derive from comparison and analysis of activities across multiple settings and policy sources or emerge from a simple, technically specific intervention.

**FURTHER READING:**
- Guidance Note 3: Evaluation lessons learned and emerging good practices
- Template: Lessons learned
- Template: Emerging good practices

### 4.5 Reporting

For each evaluation report, a draft and a final version must be prepared. The draft version provides stakeholders with an opportunity to provide feedback prior to the preparation of the final evaluation report. As stated in the Director-General’s announcement on *Evaluation in the ILO* (ILO 2011d), officials are expected to fully respect the confidential nature of draft evaluation reports and to strictly follow the guidelines established for handling such documents. **Preparing the evaluation report (Checklist 5)** presents a sample structure of an evaluation report and identifies the standard elements that should be addressed in each evaluation.

The evaluation report should stimulate readers’ interest and economize their time. It should be well-structured, clear and concisely written, using plain, factual language and a constructive writing style. This enhances the overall value of the evaluation. Evaluators should not express their own personal thoughts/bias. Their conclusions should be based on available evidence and data.

The precise structure of an evaluation report depends on the specific focus, needs and circumstances of the project or programme and its evaluation. However, certain elements should be addressed in every evaluation report. These should meet ILO evaluation quality standards, which are consistent with the *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (UNEG 2016).

The evaluation team should always be open to input from stakeholders and consider making changes when clear evidence is provided. It is important that the team hold their ground where no clear evidence can be found for changing their findings. Robust discussion of findings can be expected, but unethical behaviour from third parties in an attempt to influence the independent evaluators should be reported to the evaluation manager and EVAL. The ILO’s anti-fraud policy is described in box 7.

**FURTHER READING:**
- Checklist 5: Preparing the evaluation report
4.5.1 Commenting on the draft evaluation report

Evaluators are expected to submit a complete and readable draft report. Officials are expected to fully respect the confidential nature of these draft evaluation reports and to strictly follow the guidelines set for handling such documents, as described in the ILO policy on public information disclosure (ILO 2008b). Evaluators send the draft report to the evaluation manager who, after reviewing the draft for adequacy and readability, circulates it to concerned stakeholders simultaneously. This prevents any single stakeholder group from influencing or changing the draft prior to wider circulation.

Stakeholders are encouraged to make written comments, but not to edit the document directly. The source of the comments will not be attributed to any stakeholder. Comments may be sent individually to the evaluation manager on a confidential basis, and/or collectively. The evaluation manager is expected to consolidate comments and request the evaluator to maintain a log of these comments and how they have been handled while honouring the confidentiality of those whom have commented.

4.5.2 Process for approving the final evaluation report

The workflow associated with the preparation and approval of final evaluation reports is presented in figure 5. The ‘evaluation package’ mentioned in the workflow comprises the report, the evaluation summary, lessons learned and emerging good practice templates, the evaluation submission form, the evaluator review form and the evaluator’s CV. The checklist for rating the quality of evaluation reports is a useful support tool in the process of approv-

BOX 7. Addressing fraud and whistle blowing at the ILO

The ILO anti-fraud policy (ILO 2009c) is concerned with acts of fraud and dishonesty committed against the ILO by its officials, external collaborators, contractors, and suppliers of goods and services. Issues arising from the private and personal activities of officials are covered by the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, the Staff Regulations and the associated Office directives and Office procedures.

The term “fraud” is used in this policy to describe such acts as deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, theft, embezzlement, misappropriation, false representation, concealment of material facts and collusion.

An official of the ILO, or a person bringing the alleged case of fraud to the attention of the ILO, who acts in compliance with this policy and in good faith, shall not, based on any extent upon the fact that the person has reported an incident or participated in an investigation:

- Be dismissed or threatened with dismissal;
- Be disciplined, suspended or threatened with disciplinary action or suspension;
- Be penalized or have any other form of retribution imposed; or
- Be intimidated or coerced.
Figure 5. General workflow for approving the evaluation report

Evaluator sends zero draft report to the evaluation manager (EM)

EM reviews the draft report

EM requests the evaluator to review the draft report to comply with TORs and guidelines

Methodology complies with guidelines and TOR

EM circulates the draft report to stakeholders/clients. They send their comments back

EM consolidates the comments and sends them to the evaluator

Evaluator revises the report according to EVAL guidelines, prepares a log of comments and sends the “evaluation package” to EM

EM reviews the evaluation package for quality assurance

EM requests the evaluator to adjust elements of the evaluation package, as necessary

Approved by evaluation manager

YES

NO

EM sends the evaluation package to the REO/DEFP

REO/DEFP reviews the evaluation package for quality assurance

EM or REO/DEFP sends the evaluation package to the EVAL

At this stage of the process, the REO/DEFP and, if necessary, EVAL have an advisory function to ensure the quality of the evaluation

The evaluation package is sent back to the EM for any adjustment (might need input from evaluator)

The EVAL SEO makes sure it conforms to EVAL guidance, meets international standards, and adheres to the ILO Evaluation Policy

_approved by EVAL

YES

NO

EVAL SEO provides feedback to the REO/DEFP on corrections required before approval

EVAL SEO communicates the approval to the EM and REO/DEFP, and sends the evaluation package to EVAL’s Communications and Knowledge Management Officer

The EVAL Communications and Knowledge Management Officer informs PARDEV when it is available in i-eval Discovery, includes the evaluation summary on EVAL’s website and initiates the process for management response to evaluation recommendations for independent evaluations

NO

YES
ing the final evaluation report. Specific attention should be paid to four key outputs of the report, namely the evaluation’s findings, lessons learned, emerging good practices and recommendations.

### 4.5.3 Disclosure and dissemination of the evaluation report

Final evaluation reports are disseminated in accordance with the *ILO policy on public information disclosure* (ILO 2008b). For independent project evaluations, all key project stakeholders (i.e. the donor, the national constituents and key national partners as well as concerned ILO officials) receive a copy of the evaluation report via mail or email from PARDEV once it is finalized and approved by EVAL.

Evaluation summaries for all independent project evaluations are also available on EVAL's public website. The summaries provide the main findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from evaluation reports. Interested parties can receive an electronic copy of the full report by accessing *i-eval Discovery*. EVAL reserves the right to withhold certain evaluation reports if they are considered below standard or if they contain confidential information whose wider dissemination could harm certain individuals. EVAL will provide an explanation in cases where the release of a report is denied.
5. Communicating evaluation results and knowledge dissemination
The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it describes processes and applications available for communicating evaluation results. This includes communication strategies, the i-Track database, i-eval Discovery, lessons learned, emerging good practices, knowledge dissemination strategies and the AER. The second purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the management response follow-up exercise to evaluation recommendations and explain its importance.

5.1 Communicating evaluation

5.1.1 Communication strategies

Evaluation users will be interested in various parts of the report. Some may be interested in recommendations that affect their work; others may be interested in broader lessons or emerging good practices. It is important to plan a communication strategy for the evaluation report to decide who may need information from the evaluation, and the manner in which it should be communicated. It is more likely that users will find evaluations useful if they meet to discuss the main points face-to-face with the evaluators, instead of just receiving a report for comment.

5.1.2 The i-Track database and i-eval Discovery

All evaluations are systematically scheduled and stored in the i-Track database. This includes mandated independent or internal evaluations, as well as joint, external, impact and high-level evaluations that cover the ILO’s work. The knowledge generated from these evaluations in terms of lessons learned, emerging good practices and recommendations are also stored in the i-Track database and are made available through i-eval Discovery. This information is meant to support organizational learning and can be used to inform the design and implementation of ILO programmes and projects. The i-Track database and i-eval Discovery therefore serve as knowledge management and organizational learning tools. Box 8 describes the main elements of the i-Track database and i-eval Discovery.

i-eval Discovery is an interactive application that acts as an interface to the complements the i-Track database. The purpose of i-eval Discovery is to encourage the use of evaluations. The application visually displays all of the ILO’s evaluations, recommendations, lessons learned and good practices through a user-friendly mapping feature. Information can be tailored to meet specific criteria by applying various filters, such as by year, country/region, theme, evaluation type, timing and nature. Such information is helpful, particularly when informing project design, implementation and organizational learning.
5.1.3 Learning from evaluations: lessons learned and emerging good practices

Evaluations are expected to highlight useful lessons learned and emerging good practices, which can be replicated to other interventions in the same technical field and/or geographical area in an effort to improve programming and contribute to organizational learning. ILO officials should consult previous evaluation reports, including their lessons learned and emerging good practices, whenever developing technical tools and designing new programmes or projects.

FURTHER READING:
- ILO Development Cooperation Manual, chapter 4 Project Design
Communicating evaluation results and knowledge dissemination

5. Communicating evaluation results and knowledge dissemination

5.1.4 Knowledge Dissemination

The project manager, the responsible ILO official, the evaluation manager, the REO and the DEFP are encouraged to disseminate evaluation report summaries to other interested individuals, who may be internal or external to the Office. The relevant technical specialists in HQ and the field should also disseminate relevant lessons learned and emerging good practices to interested officials and partners.

Knowledge dissemination may also take the form of conferences, workshops, training sessions, or seminars and may be hosted by EVAL, the evaluator, project staff members or other stakeholders. Large projects may have a dissemination strategy as part of their M&E plan that targets a specific range of clients. For higher level strategy, policy and country programme evaluations, the report and specific follow-up on recommendations and lessons learned are presented to the EAC and the GB.

5.1.5 The Annual Evaluation Report

EVAL produces an AER that is presented to the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee of the GB each November. The AER summarizes the evaluation activities of the Office, including progress made in implementing the evaluation policy; number of independent evaluations carried out in the reporting period; and status of the management follow-up to HLEs. The AER also contains EVAL’s assessment of ILO’s effectiveness and results.

5.2 Management response to evaluation recommendations

The final action on an evaluation report is to initiate the process for management response follow-up exercise to its recommendations. The purpose of this is to strengthen the use of evaluation findings and promote organizational learning and accountability from evaluation results. Management’s response to evaluation recommendations contributes to improved programme and project design and delivery. It also aims to increase stakeholder and management buy-in to the findings, in addition to facilitating in-depth dialogue about evaluation results and ensuring follow-up of recommendations through formal processes. Evaluations lead to organizational learning only when the resulting recommendations are systematically followed up by line management.

Independent high-level strategy, policy and country programme evaluations are presented to the GB in November and serve as decision-making papers. An official management response from the Office forms part of the report. A summary of the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations is reported in the AER and presented to the GB.
in November of the following year. The Office is accountable to the GB for implementing the recommendations of these evaluations. For that reason, the Director-General created the EAC to monitor and ensure adequate management follow-up to HLEs.

For decentralized evaluations, active and routine follow-up of recommendations is initiated by EVAL and carried out by management. EVAL collects management response data and reports to the GB each November on project recommendation follow-up in its AER. In order to systematize reporting for the management response follow-up to evaluation recommendations, the Office has established certain procedures and templates. While EVAL is developing an automated system to streamline and facilitate management response to evaluation recommendation, an overview of the current workflow is shown in figure 6.

Line management can present an overall response to the evaluation, but must also address each recommendation in the template individually, acknowledging whether it is accepted or rejected. If rejected, an explanation must be provided and, if accepted, management must provide a response that describes planned action, any progress made, resource implications and to whom the management’s response is addressed to. This finalized management response template with the action plan is then sent to EVAL within a month of the evaluation’s approval.

Updates on the progress of implementing the action plan are sent to and are recorded by EVAL. Once a year, EVAL conducts an annual review of management response and a summary of the findings are reported in the AER and is submitted to the GB each November. The roles and responsibilities of specific actors for the management response to HLEs are highlighted in table 7.

FURTHER READING:

Guidance Note 15: Management follow-up for independent project evaluations

Good Practice Guidelines for Follow up to Evaluations (UNEG, 2010)
5. Communicating evaluation results and knowledge dissemination

**Figure 6. Management response workflow to recommendations from independent project evaluations**

1. EVAL approves the evaluation report for independent evaluations and sends to the Communications and Knowledge Management (C&KM) Officer for processing.
2. EVAL’s C&KM Officer prepares the management response template and a Minute, which is signed by the director of EVAL and sent to the line manager responsible for the project, copying the SEO, and the DEFP/REO (depending on whether or not a project is decentralized or centralized).
3. The line manager coordinates with relevant project staff to complete the management response template. The response must acknowledge if a recommendation is accepted or rejected. For accepted recommendations, an action plan must be provided. A rejection of a recommendation must be justified.

**Flowchart:**
- **Responses sent back to EVAL**
  - **YES**
  - **NO**
- **Responses sent back**
  - **YES**
  - **NO**
- **First reminder Minute is sent to the line manager, copying the REO/DEFP and the SEO. This time, the DD or RD is also copied.**
- **Responses sent back to EVAL**
  - **YES**
  - **NO**
- **A final reminder minute is sent to the line manager, copying the REO/DEFP, SEO and the DD/RD.**
- **Responses sent back to EVAL**
  - **YES**
  - **NO**
- **The management response is registered as "no response" in the Annual Evaluation Report (AER).**
- **All management response data are analysed by EVAL each June and reported to the GB each November in the Annual Evaluation Report (AER). Information is analysed by region, sector, theme and target group. Regions/departments/units with a low response rate are identified.**
Table 7. Roles and responsibilities for management response to high-level evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Role and responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EVAL</td>
<td>✓ Conducts independent HLEs and ensures that evaluation recommendations comply with the quality criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Supports EAC in monitoring the management response by requesting and ensuring timely reporting from line management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Final responsibility for AER, including section featuring report on follow-up to HLEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible line manager</td>
<td>✓ DD (Policy and strategy evaluations) or RD (Country Programme evaluations) submits management response via EVAL to EAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Follows up on evaluation recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Coordinates implementation with other entities of the ILO, as applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAC</td>
<td>✓ The EAC was established by internal circular (245) to provide a mechanism to oversee the use, implementation and follow-up to lessons learned and recommendations resulting from ILO evaluation activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The GB</td>
<td>✓ Recipient of the status report on the implementation of recommendations as part of the AER as well as of the Office management response to HLEs in GB paper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Evaluation informs the ILO on how to best maximize results. It supports decision-making processes by providing evidence on the performance of interventions, essentially on what works and why this is the case. In particular, evaluation identifies which dimensions of an intervention should be replicated and which areas could produce better results by incorporating certain adjustments. This is achieved by making recommendations and signalling lessons learned and good practices. It is this principle that makes evaluation an essential component of organizational learning and to RBM.

The ILO’s institutional mechanisms, namely the ILO evaluation policy and the ILO evaluation strategy, guide all aspects of evaluation in the organization. EVAL is mandated to manage the ILO’s evaluation function, which is designed to be objective and independent. It is responsible for managing HLEs and monitoring follow-up to evaluation recommendations, the results of which are reported on a yearly basis to the GB. EVAL is also responsible for establishing evaluation guidelines, setting quality control of evaluation components for ILO interventions, elaborating policies and producing synthesis reviews and meta-studies on specific evaluation-related topics.

To undertake the large number of centralized and decentralized independent evaluations that are required each year, EVAL relies on its extensive network of REOs, DEFPs and evaluation managers. In this effort, EVAL developed the i-eval resource kit, a fundamental tool designed to help guide practitioners through the evaluation process. The resource kit is composed of this current edition of the ILO policy guidelines, in addition to the more than 60 evaluation guidance notes, templates, tools and protocols which are updated on a regular basis. With growing demand for development evaluation in the ILO and in the UN system as a whole, particularly with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, these components are essential building blocks for nurturing, supporting and strengthening evaluation culture in the ILO.

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For the latest information on EVAL’s products, services and training opportunities, visit our website: www.ilo.org/eval

To subscribe to our triannual newsletter, email us at: eval@ilo.org

For technical assistance on impact evaluation, email: EVAL_IMPACT@ilo.org

For access to evaluation reports, visit i-eval Discovery at www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery

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References

List of EVAL Guidance Notes

1. Using theory of change for evaluation (under construction):

2. Midterm evaluations:

3. Evaluation lessons learned and emerging good practices:

4. Integrating gender in monitoring and evaluation of projects:

5. Using the EVAL consultant database:

6. The evaluation manager: Role and function:

7. Engaging stakeholders in evaluation:

8. Data collection methods (under construction):

9. Self & internal evaluations for projects (under construction):

10. Using i-eval Discovery (under construction):

11. Evaluation models (under construction):

12. Applying cross-cutting themes (under construction):

13. Impact evaluation:
14. Joint evaluation:

15. Management follow-up to recommendations for independent project evaluation:

16. Evaluability of ILO programmes and projects (under construction):

17. Conducting Decent Work Country Programme Internal Reviews:

18. External evaluation (under construction):

For a full list of evaluation checklists, templates, tools and protocols, see

**ILO References** *


* Non-ILO Officials can request “intranet only” documents from EVAL@ilo.org


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Other references


