

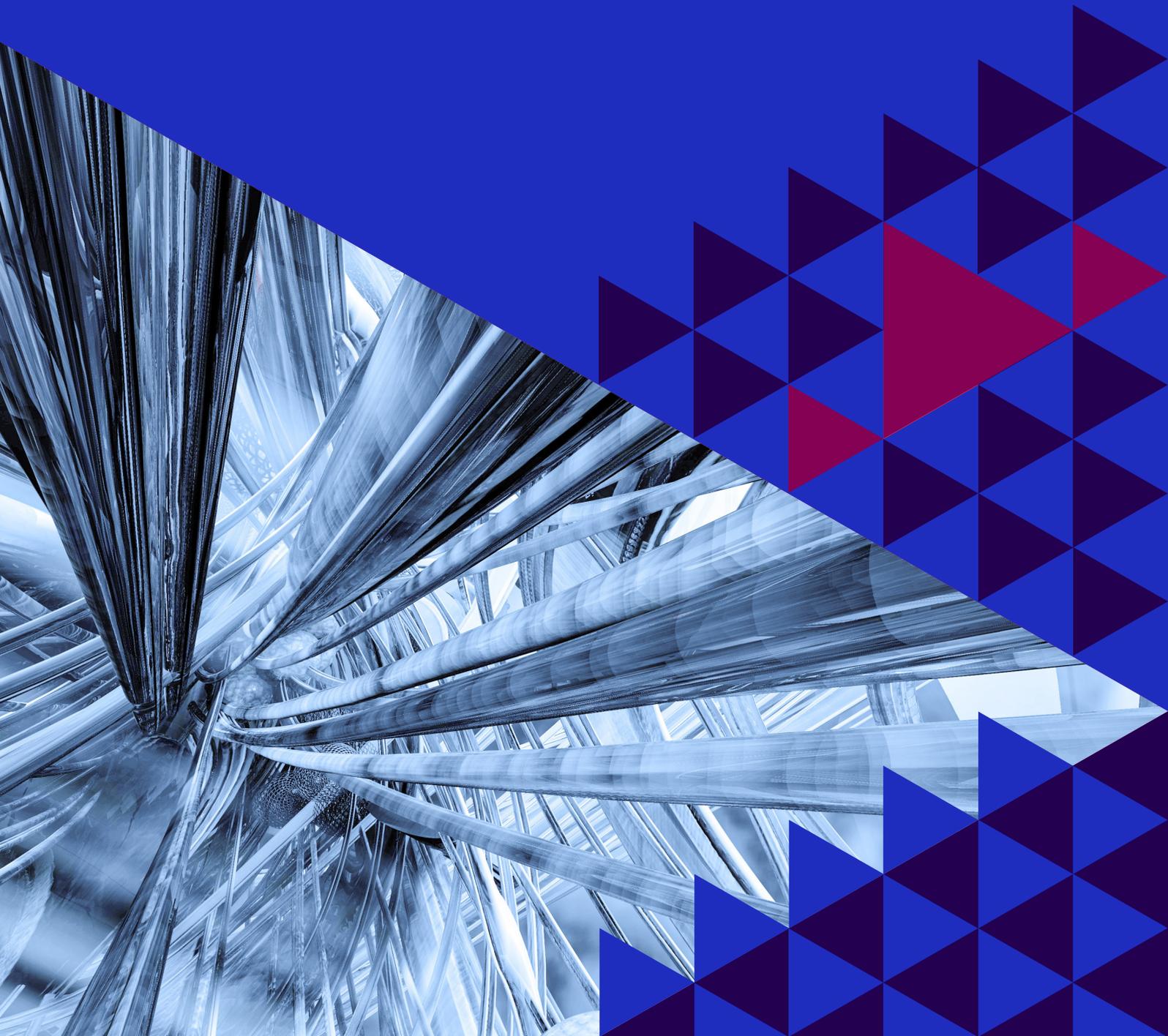


International
Labour
Organization

► Strategy and policy

► Evaluation Office

► High-level independent evaluation of ILO's research and knowledge management strategies and approaches 2010–2019



▶ **High-level independent
evaluation of ILO's research
and knowledge management
strategies and approaches
2010–2019**

Evaluation report
September 2020

Evaluation Office

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► Abbreviations

ABND	Assessment Based National Dialogue
ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities
AER	Annual Evaluation Report
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China
CINTERFOR	Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training
CEARC	Committee of Experts on Application of Conventions and Recommendations
Cabinet	ILO Cabinet (DG's Office)
CO	Country Office
CoP	communities of practice
CPO	Country Programme Outcomes
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DC	Development cooperation
DCOMM	Department of Communication and Public Information
DDG/FOP	Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships
DDG/MR	Deputy Director-General for Management and Reform
DDG/P	Deputy Director-General for Policy
DG	Director-General
DW	Decent Work
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Team
EMPLOYMENT	Employment Policy Department
EPIC	Equal Pay International Coalition
EPLex	Database of national provisions on employment protection
EVAL	Evaluation Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
G-7	Group of Seven
G-20	Group of Twenty
GB	Governing Body
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	Gender Equality and Discrimination
GTT	Global technical team
GWR	Global Wage Report (ILO)

HRGE	Human Rights and Gender Equality
HQ	ILO headquarters
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILOSTAT	Database and resources for producing labour statistics
INTSERV	Internal Services
IRLex	Legal database on industrial relations
INFOTEC	Information and Technology Management Department
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
IRLex	Legal Database on Industrial Relations
IT	Information Technology
ITC/ILO	International Training Centre of the ILO
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
KM	knowledge management
KMCT	Knowledge management coordination team
KS	Knowledge sharing
Labordoc	ILO Digital Repository
LRGE	Labour Rights and Gender Equality
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MER	Monitoring, evaluation and reporting
NATLEX	Database of national labour, social security and related human rights legislation
NORMES	International Labour Standards Department
NORMLEX	Information System on International Labour Standards
OBW	Outcome Based Work plan
OCT	Outcome Coordination Team
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PAGE	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
PARDEV	Partnerships and Field Support Department
P&B	Programme and Budget
PROCUREMENT	Procurement Bureau
PRODOC	ILO publications production management unit
ProDoc	Project document
PROGRAM	Strategic Programming and Management department
RB	Regular Budget

RBM	Results Based Management
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
RESEARCH	Research Department
RO	Regional Office
RS	Research
RS&KM	Research and Knowledge Management
RQ+	Research Quality Plus, an IDRC research product assessment tool
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIMETI	System of Information for Monitoring and Evaluation of Child Labour
SKT	Strategic Knowledge Team
SKILLS	Skills branch/programme
SMMTI	Municipal System for Monitoring of Child Labour
SocPro	Social Protection department
SP	Strategic Plan
SPF	Strategic Policy Framework
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
STATISTICS	Department of Statistics
ToC	theory of change
ToR	terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNSDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Framework
VZF	Vision Zero Fund
WESO	World Economic and Social Outlook
WHO	World Health Organization
WORKQUALITY	Conditions of Work and Equality Department

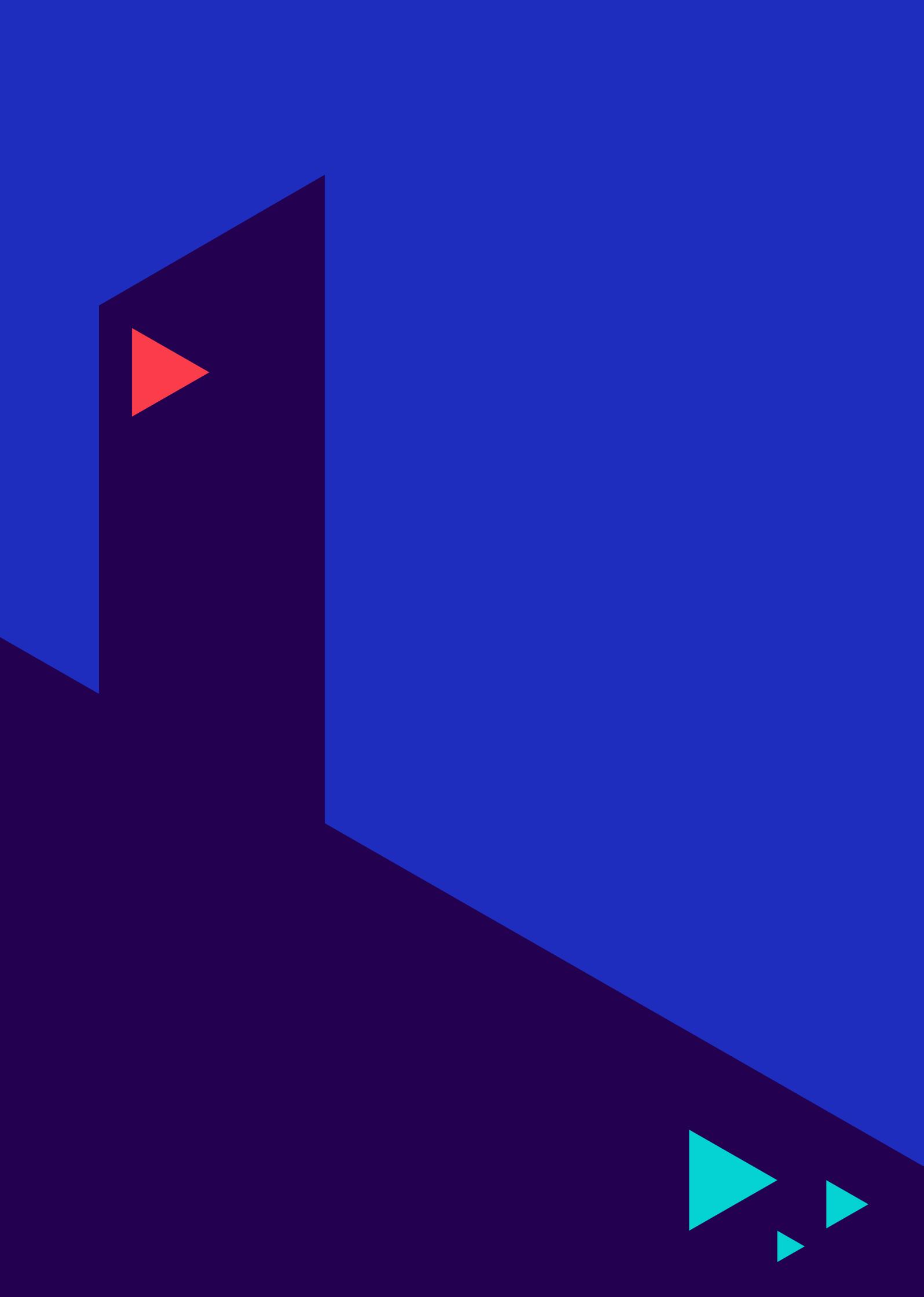
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Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the ILO Evaluation Office.



► Executive summary

Purpose and Scope

This report presents the findings of the high-level evaluation ILO's research and knowledge management strategies and approaches (RS&KM)¹ during 2010–18 conducted by the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) in 2020. The evaluation was undertaken using internationally accepted evaluation criteria covering relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Data derived using various methods (desk reviews, synthesis reviews of related project evaluations, interviews, surveys and case studies) were triangulated to ensure consistency and reliability.² While preparatory work had started before the COVID-19 pandemic, the greater part of the evaluation process had to be undertaken when countries had already imposed lockdowns and travel restrictions. This affected the evaluation process and required adapted methods.³ Interviews were conducted via videoconferencing and by telephone. This may have somewhat limited the possibility of validating results reported by the Office on the ground but was compensated for by using multiple sources of evidence.

The evaluation aim to generate insights into organizational performance within the context of the ILO's results-based management system, and are expected to contribute to decision-making on policies, strategies and accountability. Responses to COVID-19 will inevitably affect the ILO's future work. The evaluation look back at previous work to present ideas on how to undertake future work in this new context.

Knowledge management refers to the complete process of identifying, developing, managing and sharing knowledge, including a range of knowledge products that include products and knowledge from research. The end of the evaluation period was within the time frame of the *ILO Strategic Plan 2018–21*, the *Programme and Budget for 2018–19*, the *Programme and Budget for 2020–21*, the *Knowledge Strategy 2018–21* and, more recently, the *Research Strategy 2020–21*. These strategies and plans were the basis for the forward-looking assessment part of this evaluation, aiming to support the ILO in its next steps.⁴

Summary of Findings

Relevance

Key finding 1: *The design of RS&KM is relevant to, and integrated in, the ILO's results framework. It also aligns with the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework 2010–15, Transitional Strategic Plan 2016–17, Strategic Plan 2018–21, and respective programme and budget documents. RS&KM also contributes to achieving the SDGs, as the ILO is leader of SDG 8 and the custodian agency for 14 indicators on many aspects of decent work.*

Key finding 2: *There are relevance gaps in relation to the “One ILO” approach for RS&KM. Inconsistent use of the Knowledge Strategies 2010–15 and 2018–21, inconsistent methodologies, know-how and quality of RS&KM across the Office contribute to reduced relevance as well as inefficiencies.*

The institutional relevance of RS&KM has a long history in the ILO and was leveraged in the Strategic Plan 2018–21, when it started figuring as enabling outcome A. Plans to improve a “One ILO” approach towards

1 RS&KM refers to “research and knowledge management strategies and approaches”, unless otherwise specified.

2 Country or topical case studies and other supporting documentation for each evaluation are available upon request at eval@ilo.org.

3 ILO, *Implications of COVID-19 on Evaluations in the ILO: Practical Tips on Adapting to the Situation, Operating Procedures*, (2020).

4 Data were collected by means of a synthesis review of evaluations; a desk review of documents; remote interviews with stakeholders (118 interviews); nine case studies by typology of approaches to RS&KM - institutional databases and portals; global research products; RS&KM in the policy departments; RS&KM in development cooperation projects; regional knowledge management initiatives; RS&KM in global programmes (knowledge management initiative as integral to global thematic strategy and approach); global advocacy for decent work in the SDGs; and RS&KM in response to external shocks (not planned in the biennial programme and budget, and requiring quick response); and web-based surveys of ILO staff (358 respondents) and constituents (52 respondents).

RS&KM are expressed in the Programme and Budget for 2020–21, in which the policy departments (including the Research Department (RESEARCH) and the Statistics Department (STATISTICS)) propose research agendas that nevertheless seem to overlap considerably, suggesting assumed synergies. The ILO has been engaged with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development since its inception and has been designing and implementing RS&KM aligned with its SDG mandate.

Existing gaps include excessive reliance on informal knowledge exchanges that compartmentalize RS&KM design. In the absence of a theory of change and long-term vision, the greatest sources of RS&KM agenda-setting are endogenous to the ILO and bound by the Office structure (staff's workflow, demands from the ILO's regional and country offices and ILO departments). Donors are another critical source of agenda-setting, with agendas not always reflecting similar priorities and with a less prominent role for the constituents. Good practices are not necessarily acknowledged and institutionalized with senior management support, and are not based on a clear understanding of the RS&KM's value added.

Coherence

Key finding 3: *The understanding of what research and knowledge management specifically entails varies across the Office. This compromises coherence in the ILO's guidance for RS&KM at all levels. The prevalent understanding is one of an integrated approach to RS&KM, in which research is an input to knowledge management, which in turn feeds into further research efforts.*

Key finding 4: *There is a gap between the ILO's expectations of knowledge management and the resources committed to it, as well as a lack of internal coherence regarding the structure and governance of research and knowledge management.*

Key finding 5: *Many RS&KM initiatives do not have a proper business case with work plans and dissemination plans, or results frameworks and instruments to monitor achievements and assess performance.*

The ILO has complex institutional guidance for research and knowledge management, with parallel developments that affect the institutional governance of both. This is manifested in different understandings of RS&KM across the Office.

Senior management support is needed to reinforce the implementation of the *Knowledge Strategy 2018–21* as a continuous and Office-wide function that is constituent-oriented. Coherence could be improved by the development of a results framework for knowledge products, with indicators comparable to those of other United Nations (UN) agencies.

Effectiveness

Key finding 6: *RS&KM are core to the ILO's mandate and have accomplished a wide range of achievements, from generating highly utilized research to launching knowledge-sharing instruments and establishing practical knowledge management processes, with the research and knowledge development dimension of the ILO's recent response to COVID-19 emerging as a possible model for effective RS&KM.*

Key finding 7: *The ILO produces valuable knowledge products that are reportedly highly utilized by governments, social partners and other stakeholders. The research and other knowledge products are generally well respected and utilized due to their quality and perceived relevance.*

Key finding 8: *Although RS&KM facilitates productive collaborations with partners, their success is more limited in fostering teamwork and a learning culture within the ILO's compartmentalized and risk-averse dynamics.*

RS&KM are core to the work of the ILO and are generally referenced in most projects, programmes and initiatives, although not always explicitly included in their strategies or theories of change. Internal col-

laboration between units, the production of publications, South–South and triangular cooperation, and practical approaches, such as toolkits and assessment tools, are examples of RS&KM that most facilitate access and use by constituents.

There are significant institutional challenges to building strong RS&KM at the ILO. The lack of operationalization of knowledge management encompasses a lack of coordination, institutional support, capacities and incentives for knowledge management and information sharing.

Efficiency

Key finding 9: *Since budget and operational tools are not currently designed to distinguish RS&KM investments and activities, the determination of efficiency is significantly hindered by lack of financial data.*

Key finding 10: *RS&KM governance lacks strategic coordination. While the global research publications are coordinated, the wide range of other research conducted across the Office is not. Similarly, knowledge management is integrated into efforts across departments without sufficient institutional clarity, prioritization or coordination from the Office.*

Key finding 11: *RS&KM are essential for enabling the achievement of the ILO's results-based framework, although they are not fully mainstreamed into programmes, projects, monitoring and evaluation.*

Key finding 12: *Knowledge management tools have supported progress towards mainstreaming gender equality. This has occurred to a much lesser extent when addressing equal opportunity for people with disabilities or from vulnerable situations.*

The programme and budget and other operational tools are not designed to report separately on RS&KM components, limiting the ability to determine efficiency. Some obstacles to better efficiency are the limited collaboration and teamwork within the Office and the reported limited staff available to inform and influence/advise target audiences.

There is no overarching RS&KM coordination to ensure synergistic, strategic institutional efforts. Although global research (such as flagship reports) is coordinated through the programme and budget and the Publishing Committee, other policy research, while responsive to constituents' demands, is not institutionally coordinated. Knowledge management leadership and governance have been even more limited: it is not sufficiently endorsed and promoted by senior management, and lacks sufficient funding.

While RS&KM components are integrated into efforts across all policy outcomes in the programme and budget and strategic planning frameworks, they are not clearly articulated into programmes and project documents, results frameworks, and other corporate monitoring and accountability documents. Without explicit RS&KM results frameworks, it is currently challenging to determine their contribution.

Likelihood of Impact

Key finding 13: *The outputs of the ILO's RS&KM inform international debates and influence global agendas and policy recommendations, such as through the G7, G20 and the UN system.*

Key finding 14: *The outputs of the ILO's RS&KM inform and influence Member States in developing and establishing national strategies and agendas, collective agreements and policy enactments that contribute to advancing social justice and promoting decent work.*

Key finding 15: *The outputs of the ILO's RS&KM are taken up by workers' organizations for advocacy and the promotion of decent work.*

Key finding 16: *Employers' organizations use the outputs of the ILO's RS&KM for learning and to inform technical studies.*

The ILO’s RS&KM are used for advocacy and the promotion of decent work and social justice, they inform and promote labour norms and standards, and they have influenced policymakers to improve decent work policies.

Furthermore, some RS&KM contribute to the accountability and transparency of the ILO, to the credibility of the ILO in areas such as green jobs, and to positioning the ILO on topics not generally associated with the Office.

Knowledge products were found more likely to produce change when anchored in a dialogue with constituents and decision-makers. There remains limited knowledge in the ILO about the usefulness and uptake of research and knowledge products, as well as limited accountability.

Sustainability

Key finding 17: *The ILO’s RS&KM offer stronger sustainability prospects when contributing to capacity development and when outcomes have influenced national agendas and policies.*

Key finding 18: *The ILO’s RS&KM are frequently faced with funding and institutional challenges, and confront unclear sustainability prospects.*

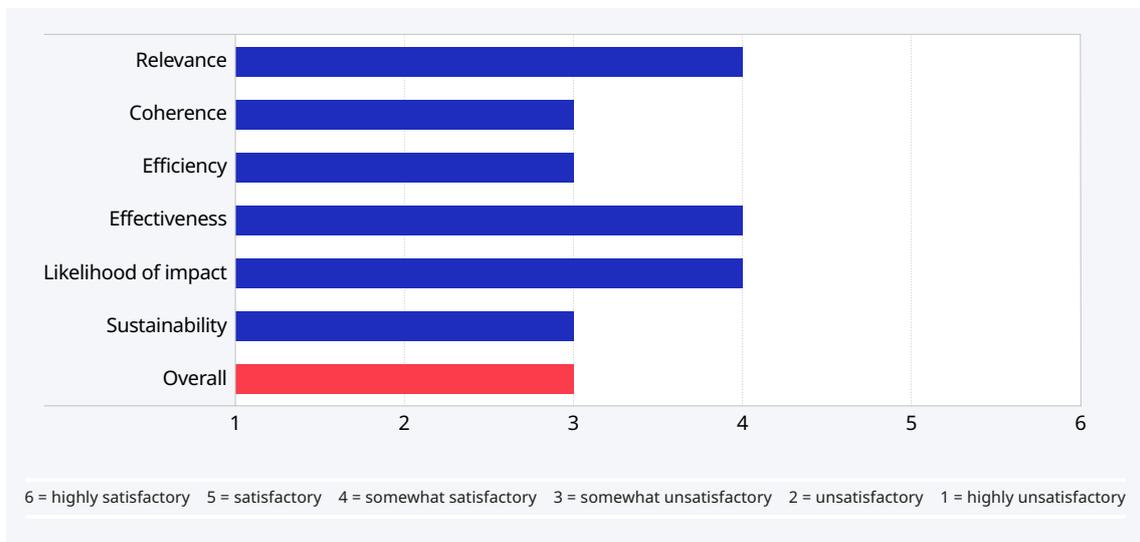
The ILO’s RS&KM were used by workers’ organizations and by governments, and to a lesser extent by employers’ organizations. Sustainable outcomes can benefit from more differentiated targeting of RS&KM, from needs assessment and co-design to dissemination.

Robust exit strategies are frequently lacking for RS&KM. Many development cooperation projects do not have a proper exit strategy or do not factor RS&KM into their scope. The evaluation found many other examples of RS&KM with weak sustainable funding and/or institutionalization. Processes to scale proofs of concept and good practices are insufficiently formalized.

Overall assessment

Figure A presents a general assessment of the identified performance levels for the ILO’s RS&KM.

► **Figure A. Findings of the high-level evaluation: Scoring**



Conclusions and lessons learned

1. The relevance of the ILO's knowledge products to the needs of the world of work at the global, regional and country levels is assured by the ILO's unique data, supported by the ILO results framework and strategies to identify global, regional and country needs. RS&KM contribute to achieving the SDGs, especially SDG 8 and others for which the ILO is a custodian. The robustness of the design of knowledge products depends on the level of understanding of their expected value added at all levels.
2. RS&KM are somewhat coherent with the ILO's external cooperation, and internal and global frameworks. The evaluation revealed lack of one common understanding for both research and knowledge management, and of institutionalized governance structure at all levels. Coherence of RS&KM with ILO policies for results-based management is limited. This creates gaps to measure achievement and performance of RS&KM outputs and outcomes.
3. The ILO has made great strides in delivering on its mandate and achieving its goals through RS&KM. Research is used as evidence by stakeholders in dialogue at the global, regional and country levels. Collaborations across the United Nations and with other institutions have enhanced quality and expanded reach. However, RS&KM efforts have been hindered by insufficient prioritization and operationalization of knowledge management, such as a lack of coordination, institutional support and capacities for RS&KM, infrastructure for collaborative and dynamic knowledge-sharing, and incentives for knowledge management and sharing.
4. RS&KM are integral to the functioning of the ILO but there is a lack of institutional coordination and governance structures that ensure consultative agenda-setting, and distinct design, monitoring and reporting processes. Budgeting and operational tools are not currently designed to articulate RS&KM investments and activities, leading to a lack of clear RS&KM strategies or goals.
5. The ILO's RS&KM contribute to informing and influencing international and national agendas and policy recommendations. However, there is limited knowledge about the usefulness and uptake of research and knowledge outputs, and also limited accountability, which can reduce opportunities to identify and scale up good practices that would increase the likelihood of impact.
6. There is a contribution of the ILO's RS&KM to sustainable outcomes (such as policy change), which can be enhanced with targeted initiatives, from RS&KM design to dissemination. Many RS&KM lack sustainability, often relying on short-term funding and/or improper scaling and institutionalization, and absence of, or weakly defined, exit strategies.
7. Key lessons learned relate to how the ILO's internal collaboration and teamwork can be harnessed well in unique situations, such as with COVID-19; and how multidimensional and multi-project RS&KM initiatives are more likely to produce change, particularly when supported by a theory of change reflective of a targeted dissemination strategy.
8. Good practices include: the ILO's research and knowledge development on the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of online collaboration and virtual tools; the potential of global technical teams to facilitate global collaboration and knowledge-sharing; the use of evidence-based dialogue with the government, social partners and others; and research collaboration, where meaningful inclusion of constituents can lead to stronger results.
9. Looking to the future, constituents would value more evidence-based country research, more infrastructure for collaborative and dynamic knowledge-sharing, more evidence-based regional research, more evidence-based sectoral research, and an improved database on standards.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- 1. The ILO needs to develop a long-term vision for research and knowledge management that is supported by a theory of change and equipped with a robust results-based framework.**

Such a theory of change would establish causal pathways to systematize cross-technical collaboration and synergies, multidimensional approaches, the scaling up of good practices, and the institutionalization of lessons learned. A results framework and instruments would help to better assess the value for money (efficiency), reach (effectiveness), uptake and use (impact), and social benefits (sustainability) of RS&KM.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, Deputy Director-General for Management and Reform (DDG/MR), Strategic Knowledge Team	High	Current biennium	Low

Recommendation 2

2. The ILO needs to provide RS&KM with adequate leadership, governance structure and staffing capacity.

It is necessary to strategically position knowledge strategies and approaches in the organizational structure, with top management providing support to knowledge management and being closely connected to relevant units. The RS&KM governance structure should enable coordination and foster synergies between research and knowledge management, with necessary staffing and a balanced scope of work (see also Recommendation 3). This could be achieved through a layered structure with a management committee and a cross-departmental project team.

Strengthened RS&KM coordination should also build on the Publishing Committee's responsibilities so that strategic direction can be set across all levels of the ILO to strengthen research and knowledge development and improve the enabling conditions and typology of RS&KM outputs currently in use. This would include recommending priorities for the production of technical research and knowledge products, based on a strategic analysis of knowledge needs reflecting constituents' demands and required synergies to enhance uptake and influence.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Cabinet, DDG/P (in particular RESEARCH and STATISTICS), working with other policy departments, DDG/FOP, Information and Technology Management (INFOTEC), regional and country office representatives	High	Current biennium	Moderate

Recommendation 3

3. The ILO should continue to mainstream knowledge management throughout the Organization and better operationalize it, including making ongoing efforts to build a safe, open learning culture.

Practical guidance and support should be provided to staff to facilitate knowledge management adoption and implementation, and to mainstream knowledge management, knowledge-sharing and knowledge monitoring in the annual objectives of the staff and within regular activities. However, for collaboration and knowledge-sharing to thrive, the ILO should develop a safe and open learning environment.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, DDG/FOP, DDG/MR, PARDEV, Human Resources Development Department	Medium	Current biennium	Low

Recommendation 4

4. Global technical teams should continue to be supported and scaled up to become the ILO's cross-cutting technical practice that pools diverse expertise to address constituents' most pressing challenges and ultimately enable the ILO to meet its strategic objectives.

Global technical teams as a vehicle for global technical knowledge development and sharing should be equipped with knowledge management instruments, such as knowledge platforms and communities of practice, allowing a larger community of members to form synergies and share knowledge on technical as well as cross-cutting themes. The ILO's successful experiences illustrated in the full report could inform the design of the knowledge platforms and services provided by the communities of practice (such as queries and e-discussions, for example). Global technical teams should be capacitated and resourced to allow effective functioning and delivery of selected products and services.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, DDG/FOP	High	2021–23	Moderate

Recommendation 5

5. The ILO should accelerate installing an infrastructure that facilitates knowledge-sharing and collaboration.

Technological improvements made over the past decade have not yet addressed some of the ILO's core knowledge management needs. Based on the establishment of SharePoint sites across the Organization, a content management architecture, with processes and capacities that facilitate sharing transactional and operational knowledge across departments and offices (such as mission reports and terms of reference), should be developed, including with an internal taxonomy and metadata to foster the use of a common language; it should also facilitate content retrieval and enhance the consistency of content categorization on internal and external platforms. The focus should be on the creation of an integrated environment for collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
INFOTEC, DDG/P, ILO Library	High	2021–23	Moderate

Recommendation 6

6. RESEARCH should contribute more systemic knowledge to the rest of the ILO and constituents.

The expertise of RESEARCH adequately translates into flagship reports and other publications, but tends to be leveraged on an ad hoc basis by the rest of the ILO. There is a systemic demand for easier access to RESEARCH's expertise, with more cross-collaborations with technical departments to strengthen the causal links between research, practice and policy. Regional and field offices would benefit from RESEARCH's expertise, in the form of input on their strategic positioning, advice and expertise on research and knowledge development for constituents, and input to develop research capacity in Member States.

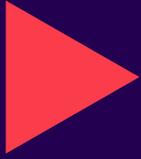
Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P	High	Current biennium	Low

Recommendation 7

7. The ILO should leverage its tripartite structure and international presence to tailor its RS&KM efforts to specific stakeholder groups.

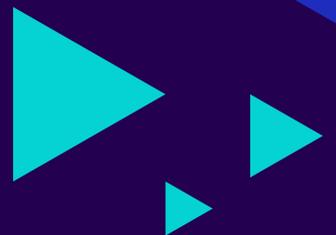
The ILO’s RS&KM frequently jointly convey research and knowledge that are broadly relevant to governments, employers’ organizations and workers’ organizations. Some, but few, knowledge products were directly targeted at a whole constituent group. The ILO could consider more frequently designing differentiated knowledge products that would enhance the overall likelihood of uptake but target a specific segment of users. The ILO should continue to integrate workers’ and employers’ organizations into appropriate ILO RS&KM processes and engage in dialogue with such organizations at different levels to enrich understanding and improve use. Specific knowledge could be used for more productive, evidence-based dialogue among workers and employers, and between stakeholders.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Cabinet, DDG/P, ACT/EMP, ACTRAV	Medium	Current biennium	Low



1

Introduction



► 1. Introduction

This report presents the independent institutional evaluation of the ILO's work on Research and Knowledge Management (RS&KM) strategies and approaches. The evaluation was scheduled in the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) rolling workplan endorsed by the Governing Board (GB). This topic was selected based on inputs from prior consultations with constituents and management in establishing the programme of work for high-level evaluations (HLEs). First presented in the *Annual Evaluation Report (AER) of 2017*, the topic was reconfirmed for evaluation by the GB in the AERs of 2018 and 2019.

Various declarations, policies, strategic plans, programme and budgets (P&Bs), and specific institutional strategies outline the ILO's vision and mandate on research and knowledge management. The ILO carries out research both through its central function and through its field structure where knowledge building and management are integral to the design and implementation of many programmes and projects. Research and knowledge management activities are widely distributed and diverse, often embedded within other strategies and approaches. Therefore, this evaluation went beyond an assessment of the implementation and results chain of the *ILO Research Strategy, 2020–21*⁵ and earlier knowledge strategies^{6,7} than their titles imply.

1.1. Research and knowledge management in context

The ILO is the only UN agency to bring together representatives of governments, and employers' and workers' organizations from 187 member States to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. The Organization promotes rights at work and encourages decent employment opportunities, enhanced social protection, and strengthened social dialogue on work-related issues.⁸ Currently, the ILO is also embracing a just transition to environmental sustainability in the world of work, in alignment with the 2030 Development Agenda.

Since the GB's adoption of the *Transitional Strategic Plan 2016–17*,⁹ these concerns have been consistently and explicitly incorporated into the ILO's results-based framework as five cross-cutting strategies applied to its policy outcomes of: international labour standards (ILS); social dialogue; gender equality; non-discrimination; poverty; and a just transition to a green economy.

Research and Knowledge Management are instrumental in supporting the realization of ILO's strategic objectives on employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work. One of the pioneers in knowledge management in the UN system, the ILO recognized its key role in the *Strategic Policy Framework 2002–05*. Since then, the Organization has developed RS&KM strategies and approaches guided by a range of declarations, instruments, policies and strategies adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC), the GB and the Office in response to ILC and GB decisions.¹⁰

1.2. Purpose of the evaluation

The ILO's RK&SM strategies and approaches have been reviewed but not evaluated independently before. As a strategic HLE, the assessment took a retrospective and a forward-looking approach. The assessment focused on the period 2010–2018. The ILO Centenary Initiatives and the 2016 Resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work, the 2030 Agenda, and the ILO's reform agenda have set or are setting the scene for ILO's future mandate. It is also in this context that the evaluation of the ILO's RS&KM was seen

5 ILO, *Research Strategy 2020–21*, GB.337/INS/7 (2019).

6 ILO, *Knowledge Strategy 2010–15: Achievements, lessons learned and the way forward*. GB.326/PFA/6 (2016).

7 ILO, *Knowledge Strategy 2018–21*, GB.331/PFA/4 (2017).

8 See this evaluation.

9 ILO, *Draft transitional strategic plan for 2016–17 and preview of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2016–17*, GB.322/PFA/1 (2014).

10 Annex 2.

to establish whether it addresses current mandates and upcoming challenges. Therefore, the evaluation is summative but also formative in its aim to support the ILO in its next steps.

As with other HLEs, this evaluation is intended to provide insight into the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions, while also providing findings, lessons learned, and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next P&B and strategic framework.¹¹ Evidence-based, actionable recommendations were collaboratively developed, with an emphasis on improving and enhancing the implementation of RS&KM strategies and approaches. It is anticipated that the evaluation report and the ILO's response to it will be discussed in the October-November 2020 GB session.

The purpose of this evaluation was to:

- ▶ Review the **strategies, approaches, outcomes and achievements** related to research and knowledge (summative and formative scope) with focus on the achievements and outcomes of research and knowledge strategies at the institutional level.
- ▶ Focus on the **role and contribution of research and knowledge management** through assessing the relevance and use of the research and knowledge at all levels, and as an institutional area of work.
- ▶ Consider the **quality of the research and knowledge in the context of its use**.
- ▶ Consider technological infrastructure and management in the context of how it facilitates gathering and use of knowledge. It is **not intended to evaluate the information technology aspect of knowledge management in detail**.
- ▶ Review how **research and knowledge requirements are identified, designed, implemented and used** in support of the ILO's policy and technical work.
- ▶ Provide recommendations as part of the formative deliverable of the evaluation on how the **existing knowledge and research strategies can be rolled out building on the findings of the evaluation**.¹²

1.3. Analytical framework for the evaluation

During the inception phase the evaluation reconstructed a theory of change (ToC) for the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches, with the objectives to identify results chains and articulate distinctions between research and knowledge management and, therefore, refine the analytical framework and scope of the assessment. The ToC articulated the following framework:

- ▶ **Activities:** Steps described by the ILO to initiate and develop research, knowledge, and knowledge management. The triggering step is the identification of knowledge gaps identified or expressed by the ILO's constituents, staff and stakeholders that need to be addressed to support the achievement of the ILO's mandate, strategies and outcomes. Development of research products is understood as stemming from the ILO Research Department and other departments. Development of knowledge products can originate from policy and technical departments at HQ as well as from the regional offices, country offices and other field offices. Knowledge development can also be a component of DC projects. Knowledge management activities aim to deliver the institutional, organizational, cultural, and technological policies, procedures, and tools that enable knowledge sharing and support the development of knowledge.
- ▶ **Outputs:** Codified knowledge resulting from the previous activities, i.e. research and knowledge products, databases, and knowledge-sharing platforms.
- ▶ **Intermediate outcomes:** Primarily knowledge-management-related achievements, such as installing an environment for knowledge networking and collaboration, knowledge sharing and dissemination, and knowledge development.

¹¹ Annex 2.

¹² Annex 2.

- ▶ **Direct outcomes:** Attributable outcomes of the RS&KM approaches and strategies, i.e. their intended direct impact.
- ▶ **Development outcomes:** Uptake and use of research and knowledge, and contribution to the strategic outcomes of the ILO. Development outcomes are supported and influenced by a range of causalities, of which RS&KM approaches and strategies are part. There was no expectation to assess attribution at this level, except by way of an example from secondary resources or from evaluation informants.
- ▶ **Longer-term development outcomes and impact:** Depending on many factors, the evaluation did not expect to find robust evidence of a contribution to their achievement.

At the inception stage, the evaluation formulated several drivers and assumptions. Together with the reconstructed ToC, they are discussed in the section on *Coherence*. The graphical representation of the ToC is provided in Annex 1.

1.4. Definition of research and knowledge management

To further refine the scope of the assessment, the team developed during the inception phase a conceptual review of key terms. The following working definitions were proposed and used.

- ▶ **RS&KM strategies:** Refers to specific strategies developed in the period on knowledge (building, management and sharing); research, and other forms of policy-level work that has a research and knowledge component; as well as any strategies within technical areas that has an explicit research and knowledge component. Strategies also refer to relevant results frameworks such as P&Bs, and action plans and others at various levels.
- ▶ **RS&KM approaches:** Refers to initiatives, processes, mechanisms and systems used to identify, design, and implement research and knowledge management activities. Such approaches will often be integrated into geographical or sector-specific programmes and projects.¹³

Furthermore, the following definitions were used to provide a working glossary in support of the assessment.

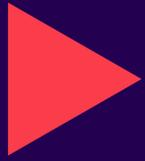
- ▶ **Research:** Detailed study of a subject, especially to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding. It is an independent¹⁴ (independent should not be construed as excluding collaborative work) creative, cumulative, and often long-term activity conducted by people with specialist knowledge about the theories, methods and information concerning their field of enquiry. Its findings must be open to scrutiny and formal evaluation by others in the field, and this may be achieved through publication or public presentation.
- ▶ **Research product:** An artefact that conveys the result of a research activity. Research products include published work (such as flagship reports, books, journal articles, conference proceedings); work presented in non-printed media (such as films, videos/CDs and recordings); and other types of outputs (such as intellectual property).
- ▶ **Research strategies and approaches:** Scientific and technical goals, processes, mechanisms, and resources to generate and disseminate new insights and analysis. This includes peer reviewed research reports.
- ▶ **Knowledge:** A human or organizational core asset that enables effective decisions and action in context. Knowledge can be individual, collective, or organizational. Knowledge is acquired through analysis, learning, or experience. Knowledge can be explicit or tacit. Examples of knowledge include insights and know-how.

¹³ Annex 2.

¹⁴ Independence in research refers to it being free to draw the conclusions that the data and hypotheses can support and not by pre-determined conclusions.

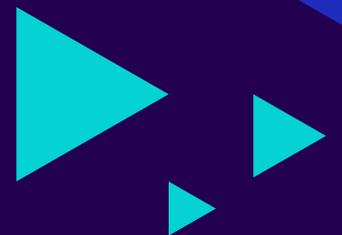
- ▶ **Knowledge management:** An organizational activity to optimize the identification, creation, analysis, representation, distribution, and application of knowledge in order to facilitate learning, innovation or uptake, and create organizational value.
- ▶ **Knowledge product:** An artefact that binds the knowledge, experience, or perspectives of an individual or organization in an explicit form so that it can be effectively accessed, stored, shared, leveraged, and maintained. Knowledge products often refer to documents but may also include multimedia (video, podcasts, etc.).
- ▶ **Knowledge management strategies and approaches:** Institutional and organizational goals, processes, mechanisms, and resources to create, store, and share knowledge. This encompasses knowledge products such as lessons learned reports, policy briefs, etc., and knowledge-sharing instruments such as conferences, workshops, communities of practice (CoP), online platforms, social media, etc.

The evaluation assessed the perspectives of the ILO's staff on the proposed working definitions, with results presented and discussed in the sections on *Relevance* and *Coherence*.



2

Methodology



▶ 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Approach

The evaluation was conducted in a consultative manner relying on strong evidence and examples from experiences in the field and, as far as possible, using theory-based approaches. The evaluation team carried out the evaluation according to OECD-DAC evaluation standards¹⁵ and the ILO Code of Conduct.¹⁶ The evaluation was designed taking into account the following key considerations.

- ▶ **Understanding the specificities of the ILO:** As the only tripartite UN agency with government, employer, and worker representatives, the ILO research and knowledge initiatives must respond to the needs of different constituencies. It was important for the assessment to have sufficient granularity to account for and reflect the respective priorities for research development and knowledge uptake from key partner and stakeholder groups (including ILO staff), in addition to the overall cross-cutting findings.
- ▶ **Complexity of attribution of research and knowledge influence:** Taking into consideration that an individual's learning and behavioral changes often come from a wide range of contributing factors, nuanced tools and techniques were necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of factors that lead to this change.
- ▶ **Importance of cultural sensitivity:** With 187 member States, the work of the Organization must examine the application of the ILO's standards within these States as well as consider matters of special interest to the regions and countries concerned. The assessment and data collection instruments used mixed methods allowing nuanced findings relevant to regional and national contexts.
- ▶ **Multi-dimensional nature of the ILO's work:** The ILO's "business model" entails different modalities of intervention, primarily setting labour standards, developing policies, and devising and implementing programmes. Each of these components generates lessons and knowledge, and triggers needs for research and synergies. The assessment was sensitive to ILO's different areas of work.

2.2. Key evaluation questions

The key evaluation questions served to frame the entire evaluation process (table 1). Initial questions were posed by ILO in the TOR and then refined based on further information provided during the scoping exercise. A robust and actionable evaluation framework¹⁷ followed the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, clearly stating primary evaluation questions with more detailed sub-questions, which were matched with indicators, data collection methods, and sources.

¹⁵ OECD, *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation. Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use*, 2019.

¹⁶ ILO, *ILO Code of Conduct: Agreement for Evaluators (updated)*, 2018.

¹⁷ See Annex 2.

► **Table 1. Evaluation key questions**

KEY QUESTIONS
<p>RELEVANCE To what extent are RS&KM strategies and approaches well-designed to address the needs of the world of work at the global, regional, and country levels?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Are RS&KM strategies and approaches in ILO relevant and contributing to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► ILO results framework, mandates and policies ► the needs and demands of constituents ► the achievement of MDGs/ SDGs ► Country strategies and UNDAFs ► Capacities of social partners? ► Are RS&KM strategies and approaches relevant for the global, technical and sectoral policies and agendas? ► Are RS&KM outcomes addressing policy and knowledge requirements of constituents? ► Are RS&KM activities and outcomes relevant to the strategies and outcomes of development cooperation projects at the relevant levels?
<p>COHERENCE To what extent are RS&KM strategies and approaches coherent and synergic with ILO's internal relevant frameworks and external cooperation and global frameworks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Are RS&KM strategies and approaches coherent with ILO policies, results framework, thematic/sectoral strategies, action plans and other relevant frameworks? ► Are RS&KM coherent with the other elements of strategies and outcomes in development cooperation projects? ► Are there appropriate and useful set of indicators to effectively assess the results, relevance and outcomes of RS&KM? Can these indicators be measurable and traceable? Can these indicators be comparable to those that aim to measure similar outcomes within the UN system?
<p>EFFECTIVENESS To what extent has RS&KM achieved its objectives and results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Did RS&KM strategies and approaches facilitate the use and application of ILO relevant research? ► What are the major results / achievements of RS&KM in ILO? ► Did RS&KM serve as a strategic tool for increasing the outreach and credibility of ILO? ► What role did different funding mechanisms, such as RBSA, play, if any, in supporting ILO's RS&KM in a strategic manner? ► What results have been achieved and/or what progress has been made in assuring that RS&KM in ILO contribute towards the Decent Work outcomes within the P&B and SPF framework during the review period? To what extent do expected results address Human Rights and Gender Equality? To what extent have RS&KM targeted Human Rights and Gender Equality as cross-cutting learning components, whenever relevant?
<p>EFFICIENCY To what extent has RS&KM delivered results in an economic and timely way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Were the right strategic partners identified and engaged with to promote RS&KM and to collaborate with? ► Are the most applicable RS&KM approaches in place to facilitate identification, development, creation and use of research and knowledge? ► Are the management of the RS&KM modality effective and efficient? ► Is ILO monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the results of RS&KM so it enhances future efforts?
<p>IMPACT To what extent has RS&KM generated higher level transformative effects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Did RS&KM effectively contribute to setting global agendas and influencing policy? ► What is the documented quality and added value of RS&KM to ILO? ► What are the impacts of RS&KM strategies and approaches in influencing and effecting research and policy agenda at different levels?
<p>SUSTAINABILITY To what extent are the net benefits of RS&KM likely to continue over the medium- and long-term?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► What RS&KM approaches were developed and are these sustainable? ► Are the RS&KM strategies effective and sustainable as well as integrated into ILOs results framework?

2.3. Process and methods

The evaluation developed its assessment and conclusions from various sources. It drew as extensively as possible on pre-existing data, comparisons and, where necessary, on primary research. The evaluation followed a multi-level approach allowing for data triangulation especially when no proper baseline was established. The methodology adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches that were redesigned to ensure safety and follow protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸

The evaluation used the following data collection instruments:

- **Secondary resources:** A collection and desk review of available resources was carried out to analyse all relevant documentation, including declarations, instruments, policies and strategies, guidelines, project documents and published outputs, progress reports, previous evaluations, and data downloaded from the Internet.
- **Observation:** Review of the ILO's online environment and activities, including the ILO Intranet, CoP, SharePoint sites, knowledge platforms, and databases.
- **Virtual interviews:** A first round of interviews was conducted during the inception phase. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these consultations served the dual purpose of refining the scope of the evaluation and collecting initial evaluation evidence. A second round of interviews was conducted during the data collection phase. In total, the evaluation conducted 118 semi-structured interviews.
- **Online surveys:** To gather information across a broad number of stakeholders, the evaluation carried out two surveys:¹⁹
 - **ILO staff:** A questionnaire was distributed to ILO staff at HQ and in the regional and field offices to collect information on the ILO's RS&KM strategies, approaches and outputs across the evaluation criteria. The survey was opened for two weeks and available in English only. It was sent to all 1,526 ILO director- and professional-level staff and feedback was gathered from 358 respondents.
 - **ILO constituents:** A questionnaire was distributed to the target users of the RS&KM strategies, approaches and outputs. The survey asked questions related to the ILO's research addressing constituents' priorities and needs, the consultation process as well as the dissemination and uptake in national/international policy-making. The survey was provided in English, Spanish and French and remained open for two weeks. It reached a random sample of 553 constituents (target 614, bounced 61) and gathered feedback from 52 respondents.

The evaluation used the following data collection and review instruments:

- **Meta-synthesis:** A synthesis review of 37 project evaluation reports was carried out by a separate external contractor as part of the evaluation research and as an input for this high-level evaluation. The results were integrated by the team as a source of information in drawing findings and conclusions, in particular on the analysis of the RS&KM implemented as part of development cooperation (DC) projects. The review sample covered projects deemed to be focusing on RS&KM or with strong RS&KM components.
- **Comparative review:** A brief review of RS&KM strategies and approaches in selected UN agencies and international financial institutions (IFIs).²⁰ Research and knowledge management strategies were reviewed from the following organizations: IFAD, the UNDP, the UNFPA, UN Women, and WHO. The

¹⁸ ILO. *Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO*, 2020.

¹⁹ The survey methodology did not necessarily allow the extrapolation of results to the entire population of ILO staff and constituents. They represent the perspectives of those who have responded to the questionnaire.

²⁰ The review selected cases on the basis of the following criteria: RS&KM initiatives implemented during the period of the evaluation, with emphasis on recent initiatives; blend of corporate, regional, and thematic initiatives; relevance for the evaluation, in particular results-oriented RS&KM initiatives; and the availability of secondary resources. The review is available as Appendix 9 of the supporting documentation and also available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_758680.pdf.

comparative review also screened previous institutional evaluations of research and knowledge management at the FAO,²¹ the UNDP,²² and World Bank.²³

- **Google Scholar:** Review of the uptake and citations in research and academic papers of the ILO's research and knowledge products. The evaluation also performed a review of a random sample of papers from United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) to assess uptake in UN country programmes. Additional online searches also included identification of references to ILO's research and knowledge products in national policies and frameworks as well as in research and publications from workers' and employers' organizations.
- **Research Quality-Assessment Framework:**²⁴ The evaluation employed an adapted version of the International Development Research Centre's Research Quality Plus (RQ+)²⁵ framework to assess how research was designed, carried out and placed for uptake in a sample of 15 knowledge products.²⁶ This adapted tool includes the consideration of key contextual influences likely to affect the quality of research for development and dimensions that characterize research quality including research integrity, research legitimacy, research importance, and positioning for use.
- **Case studies:** Eight case studies were conducted according to distinct typologies that included up to seven relevant projects, initiatives, or services (table 2). The case studies were developed to evidence the contribution of research and KM to development and social outcomes. More specifically, the case studies were illustrative of major categories of ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches.

► **Table 2. List of case studies**

Typology of RS&KM approaches: purpose and focus	Projects or initiatives reviewed
Institutional databases and portals	
KM: Assess whether they are up-to-date and widely available to users who need their content, ease of access, dynamic, costs associated with them. Internal ones relate to overall efficiency in the ILO; external ones relate to core services to constituents.	Natlex Knowledge Gateway NORMES
RS: Inputs for research projects on existing (statistical) information, knowledge and lessons learned; or outputs of research and knowledge strategies and approaches.	IRLEX CEARC digitalization process Library i-eval Discovery
Global research products	
KM: Access to data, STATS to produce them, CoPs that would allow interactive discussion about relevant research questions.	Wages Report WESO
RS: global research/influence, frontier research, SDG-targeted.	
RS&KM in policy departments	
KM: Tools for direct use, solution exchange and frequently asked questions, portals to ensure access to ILO knowledge if specialists are not able to cover demand.	SocPro Governance Employment Workquality/Inwork
RS: Policy-oriented and results-framework-oriented research; includes thematic global research programmes under policy departments.	
RS&KM in development cooperation projects	
KM: Knowledge generation and sharing for policy advice.	Uzbekistan Youth Employment in Africa Synthesis review example
RS: Operational research, field publications.	

21 FAO, Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Knowledge on Food and Agriculture, 2015.

22 UNDP, Evaluation of the Contribution of the Global and Regional Human Development Reports to Public Policy Processes, 2015.

23 World Bank Group, Knowledge Flow and Collaboration under the World Bank's New Operating Model, IEG, 2019.

24 See Annex 2.

25 Z. Ofir et al., *Research Quality Plus: A Holistic Approach to Evaluating Research* (IDRC, 2016).

26 The version of the RQ+ adapted to ILO is in Appendix 3 of the supporting documentation and also available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_758679.pdf.

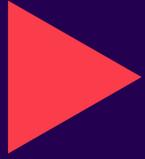
Typology of RS&KM approaches: purpose and focus	Projects or initiatives reviewed
Regional KM initiatives	
KM: Internal efficiency, access to tacit knowledge (mission findings, work planning, use of metadata for knowledge, technical advice).	Asia Portal Africa
RS: Regional research, research by Decent Work Teams (DWT), regional publications.	
RS&KM in global programmes (KM initiative integral to global thematic strategy and approach)	
KM: tools that increase efficiency in providing services and monitoring performance.	Better Work SCORE
RS: Research focused on the programme model of intervention, thematic approach.	
OSH Flagship programme SKILLS	
Global advocacy for Decent Work in the SDGs	
KM: Advocacy at the multilateral level, with UN agencies and influencing the achievement of SDGs.	EPIC (Equal Pay International Coalition) PAGE (Partnership for Action on Green Economy)
RS: Evidence-based advocacy for Decent Work actions and programmes.	
RS&KM in response to external shocks (not planned in the biennial P&B, and requiring quick response)	
KM: Office-wide structure, branding and approach to existing knowledge for an institutional-specific purpose.	Covid-19 response (formative)
RS: Cross-cutting research focused on an institutional-specific purpose.	

Data analysis was both qualitative and quantitative. The latter involved qualitative content analysis that supported the meta-synthesis process through the content analysis software Atlas.ti; and quantitative analysis including cross-tabulations of survey results.

2.4. Limitations

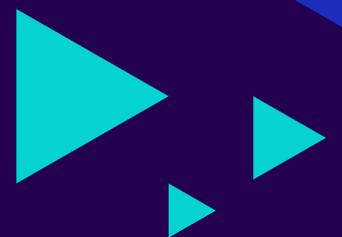
As with all evaluations, there were some **limitations** regarding this methodology. In this case, there was the very unusual global pandemic environment at the start of the evaluation, as well as other more common constraints.

- **Cancelled missions:** Due to the pandemic, cancelled travel eliminated the possibility for in-person observations and discussions. The team redesigned the methodology to best capture the data needed to answer the evaluation questions by taking advantage of virtual media. However, data collection particularly from the ILO constituents is likely to have been less rich than through field visits.
- **Condensed schedule:** With a delay to the start of the evaluation and a strict deadline for submission to the GB session, the timing was limited for an evaluation of this magnitude and complexity. The team worked swiftly but, for instance, could only leave the surveys open for two weeks, which probably limited the number of responses collected.
- **Scope and quality of data:** The quality of the assessment was dependent on the evaluation team's access to participants and the availability of pre-existing documents of high quality and currency. In effect, the evaluation was regularly confronted by a lack of "working documents" and "financial data".
- **Lack of clear definitions and results framework:** Given that this was the first evaluation of RS&KM and that it is not a programme with a results framework, the team created a ToC solely for the purposes of this evaluation and an evaluation matrix to help clarify and guide the evaluation process. However, a proper strategic results framework with indicators, targets, and adequate monitoring for the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches would have facilitated the assessment.



3

Findings



► 3. Findings

3.1. Relevance

An overall key finding that might have influenced the results for each OECD-DAC criterion is the **lack of a common understanding of what research and knowledge management actually constitutes. Understandings vary between ILO units, between HQ and field, and from person-to-person**, since an institutional approach is lacking. As a result, uncoordinated decisions and actions are taken regarding the knowledge products generated, compromising internal and external uptake. The prevalent understanding integrates the two, so that KM refers to the complete process of identifying, developing, managing, and sharing knowledge, including a range of knowledge products that include products and knowledge from research. Other understandings and what they imply, based on RS&KM outputs, function and administrative location are presented under *Coherence*.

RS&KM strategies and approaches are highly relevant to the ILO. The Centenary Declaration states that “The ILO should maintain the highest levels of statistical, research and knowledge management capacities and expertise in order to further strengthen the quality of its evidence-based policy advice.”²⁷ Globally, the Organization works in socio-economic environments that are becoming more complex. There is an increasing number of conventions to monitor and growing demands from constituents to attend. At regional and country levels, RS&KM face the challenge of supporting the adaptation of the decent work country programmes (DWCPs) to specific local needs and circumstances.

3.1.1 RS&KM strategies and approaches in the ILO results framework, mandates and policies

The design of RS&KM strategies and approaches is integrated into the ILO results framework and aligns with the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework (SPF) 2010–15,²⁸ Transitional Strategic Plan 2016–17, Strategic Plan for 2018–21,²⁹ and respective P&B documents. It is noteworthy that RS&KM is included in Enabling Outcome A in the SP 2018–21 and P&B 2018–19.³⁰ However, the ILO has a much longer history of integrating RS&KM in the SPF and P&B. For example, the Knowledge Gateway was integrated into the P&B 2012–13. Policy departments and global programmes also conduct RS&KM reflected in the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda:³¹ Employment, Social Protection, Social Dialogue and Standards (SP 2018–21). Flagship reports, such as the Global Wage Report (*GWR*) (since P&B 2010–11³²), the *World Social Protection Report and the World Employment and Social Outlook* (since P&B 2016–17³³) are other examples. RS&KM support interventions at country level (i.e. Skills and lifelong learning, Gender equality and diversity, and Occupational safety and health, currently corresponding to Outcomes 5, 6 and 7 in P&B 2020–21³⁴) and include South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC), found in all P&B documents since 2010 (i.e. P&B 2012–13;³⁵ P&B 2014–15³⁶).

The evaluation noted that the P&B 2020–21 reflects a One-ILO approach to RS&KM. At the design stage, all policy departments, including the research and statistics departments, propose RS&KM production under

27 ILO, *Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work* adopted by the ILC, 108th Session (2019).

28 ILO, *ILO Strategic Policy Framework 2010–15. Making decent work happen*, GB.304/PFA/2(Rev.) (2009).

29 ILO, *ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21*, GB.328/PFA/1 (2016).

30 ILO, *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 2018–19*, GB.329/PFA/1 (2017).

31 ILO, *Follow-up to the Resolution on the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work*, GB.338/INS/3/2 2020.

32 ILO, *Programme and Budget proposals for 2010–11*, GB.304/PFA/3 (2009).

33 ILO, *Programme and Budget proposals for 2016–17*, GB.323/PFA/1 (2015).

34 ILO, *Programme and Budget for 2020–21: Programme of Work and Results Framework*, GB.337/PFA/1/1 (2019).

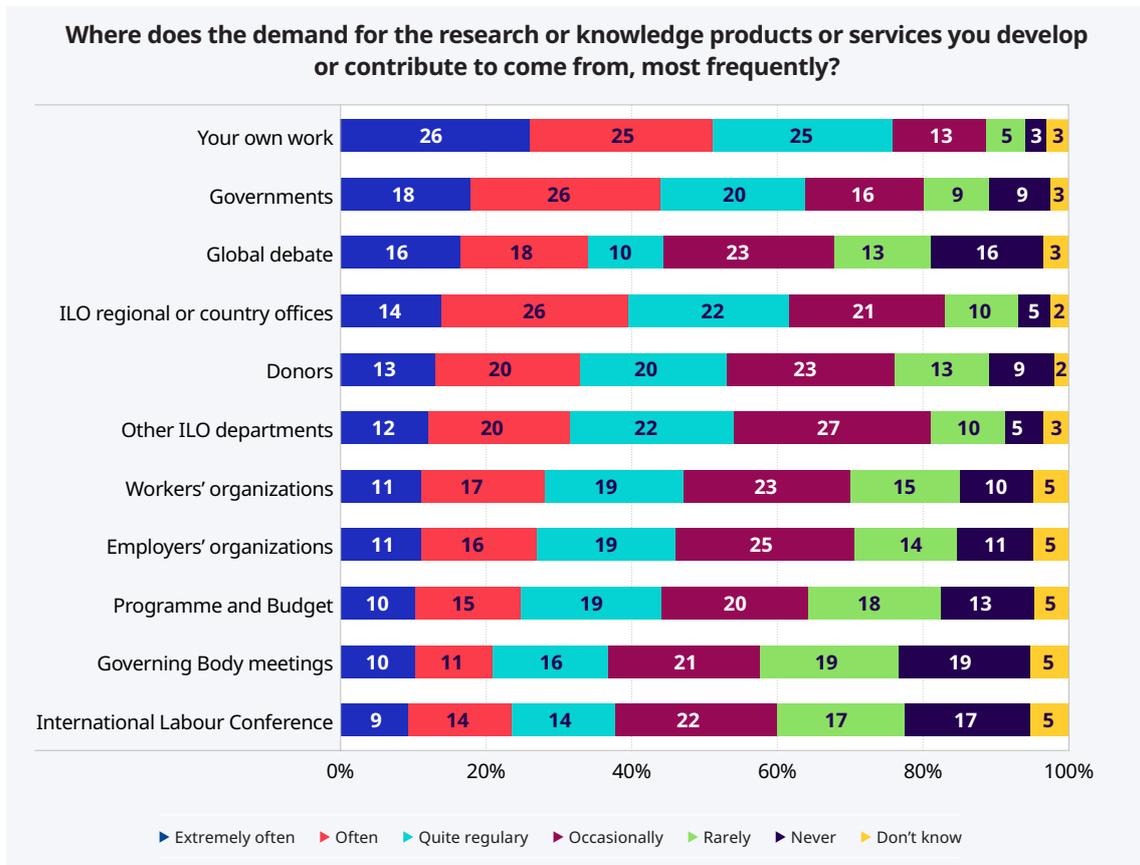
35 ILO, *Programme and Budget proposals for 2012–13*, GB.310/PFA/2/1(Rev.) (2011).

36 ILO, *Programme and Budget proposals for 2014–15*, GB.317/PFA/1 (2013).

research agendas that overlap considerably and suggest expected synergies. All these units also plan to rely on country interventions to implement RS&KM strategies and approaches. A good practice is the *Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21*,³⁷ which articulates shared responsibility and accountability for gender equality across the Organization. For instance, indicators to monitor the achievements of Output 16 in the Action Plan for Gender Equality, on knowledge and communication, were developed with the Research Department, the custodian of this outcome.

However, interviews corroborate the ‘unfinished business’ (as quoted in the SP 2018–21) regarding the strategic One-ILO approach in relation to RS&KM, by showing inconsistent methodologies, know-how, and quality across the Office, with inefficiencies and the production of contradictory results and advice. This is also found in the meta-synthesis of DC projects, in which RS&KM components tend to be designed without taking into consideration ILO’s past RS&KM activities and current RS&KM strategies. One of the explanations for this is the uneven quality management across the Office and the field, which is attributed to the lack of widespread incentives for quality work, and a traditionally compartmentalized approach to working. A related and additional explanation according to informants is the lack of knowledge exchange between staff, leading to a preference to reinvent rather than cite a methodology developed by another field office or department. Interestingly, the evaluation survey shows that staff primarily base their own work in the demand to develop research and knowledge products and services (figure 1). Nevertheless, survey results indicate some progress in integrating HQ and the field with the RS&KM agenda set frequently by governments and the ILO regional and country offices. Another, non-prevalent source of demand for RS&KM products is academia.

► Figure 1. Sources of demands for RS&KM products or services



Source: Evaluation Survey, 2020.

37 ILO, ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21, 2018.

To ensure that the ILO fulfils its mandate as a global centre of excellence of knowledge on the world of work issues, RS&KM strategies and approaches would need to be consistent across levels in HQ and the field. Some informants believe that the ILO should be like a large consulting organization, with large-scale institutional KM. This way, staff in any country should be able to work as One ILO, have access to the same methodologies, same knowledge, reuse when required, and adapt or innovate when necessary. This vision is supported by the increased knowledge that would be generated over time by DC projects and decentralized advisory support. As a knowledge Organization, the ILO should be at the cutting edge of the latest expertise delivering consistent quality but contextualized evidence-based technical advice. One informant referred also to increased national capacities and expertise in upper middle-income countries as a rationale for RS&KM and for the provision of cutting-edge expertise if the ILO wants to remain relevant. This vision was already the subject of discussion by the ILO's management in 2013–2014,³⁸ but implementation has remained partial (see *Effectiveness*).

3.1.2 Relevance of RS&KM strategies and approaches is aligned with the needs of constituents and social partners

There is evidence of RS&KM being relevant to the needs and demands of constituents and social partners at different levels. At the ILO's governance level, one example is the Standards Initiative that was led by the Director-General (DG) as one of the Centenary Initiatives. A decision was taken, in 2017, to improve information management for the supervisory bodies.³⁹ By 2020 these will be fully electronic, more transparent and modern.⁴⁰ At the policy departments level, staff deem constituents as good sources of information on the focus of knowledge and research. Institutional databases have frequently been designed and developed in collaboration with end-users (i.e. DC Dashboard, DW Dashboard and IRLEX; NORMLEX took three years of consultations with field offices and departments at HQ). In DC projects, RS&KM components are highly responsive to country needs and they tend to be designed in view of addressing, for instance, the identification of knowledge gaps, the advancement of knowledge dissemination, or the establishment of information systems.

For flagship publications, there is a good practice example from the Research Department for the latest edition of the World Economic and Social Outlook: Trends to decide on the theme. The former Director of the Research Department opened discussions with directors of policy departments, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP, out of which five themes were selected. Inter-departmental working groups submitted two-page proposals to the Publishing Committee, which came to a consensus on the theme of digital labour.

RS&KM strategies and approaches were also found relevant in contributing to the capacities of social partners through partnerships with the ITC-Turin on themes such as social dialogue⁴¹ and social protection.⁴² There is acknowledgement that ILO has unique data on the world of work. Survey results for the constituents also show a positive assessment of the relevance of the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches to their needs. Out of 51 responses, over 70 per cent agree or strongly agree that RS&KM respond to their organization's needs and goals. However, cross-tabulations indicate some discrepancies between the opinions per type of respondent. About 86 per cent of survey participants from workers' organizations agree or strongly agree that RS&KM respond to their organizations' needs and goals, compared to 62.5 per cent for respondents from employers' organizations and 54 per cent for respondents from national governments.

Several informants indicated that **the broader research and KM strategies and approaches were sometimes designed without a clear understanding of the expected value added.** Several staff reported that the KM infrastructure in particular is not relevant to their needs. Despite being a major recent improvement, the intranet and SharePoint, for instance, do not provide the services needed for content collaboration, CoP, and social networking.

38 M. Henriques, 2014. "ILO Knowledge Management Roadmap" (internal document). Geneva.

39 ILO, *The Standards Initiative: Implementing the workplan for strengthening the supervisory system: Progress report*, GB.334/INS/5 (2018).

40 ILO, *The Standards Initiative: Overall review of its implementation*, GB.335/INS/5 (2019).

41 ITC-ILO, *Social Dialogue: Strengthening Negotiation and Consultation for Decision and Policy Making*.

42 ILO, *Building Social Protection Floors for All – 2018 Progress Report*, 2018.

This situation reflects on the assessments of constituents about the relevance of RS&KM. As indicated earlier, middle-income countries with highly capacitated institutions, consider some ILO's knowledge products inadequate and lacking consistent quality management. At this level, ILO's relevance depends on highly qualified personnel and good RS&KM to remain relevant. In developing countries, global programmes should mainstream RS&KM in their service packages, irrespective of funding sources, as there are different business models in place. Constituents believe that the current ILO's RS&KM strategies are insufficient to guide global programmes, so they just do what they can to respond to specific demands for knowledge.

Lack of a strategic perspective on RS&KM strategies and approaches can be further illustrated with the global programmes' logframes. They do not sufficiently include RS&KM activities, outputs and outcomes, so relevant knowledge produced for constituents is discarded. An example is knowledge on discrimination produced by Better Work for one factory. Although it has potential to be largely used by labour inspectorates in other factories, it is not scaled up. Furthermore, relevance is compromised by the fact that the knowledge and research strategies are unheard of by some staff involved with RS&KM in the field, as was also found in the high-level evaluation of ILO's Public-Private Partnership carried out in 2019.⁴³ Survey results provide some evidence on why this may happen. They show two ways in which RS&KM needs are often identified, which may not reflect constituents' needs. One is expert judgements, where ILO researchers consider that their expertise is enough to identify research needs on regional and global trends, of which 'constituents are not aware'. Another way is that donors' agendas may have other priorities and their demands for RS&KM outputs are perceived by constituents as not well-balanced with tripartite views.

The results of the staff survey also show two promising ways to identify constituents' demands in a strategic way, through institutional processes and surveys or other formal assessments. A common way to identify RS&KM needs is individual constituents' requests. Technical staff identify research needs from the field through dialogue with world leaders, experts in the field, constituents, government officials and others in several activities (i.e. advisory groups, conferences, projects) throughout the year. Despite being relevant to the local needs of specific constituents, this may not be a strategic approach for the Organization, since it creates an excess of knowledge generation at the expense of impact on outcomes.

An important issue that influences the relevance of ILO's RS&KM agenda is the conflict of interest between constituents and within the Office, and its impact on the independence of research. The tripartite structure of ILO makes research independence and the production of research and knowledge a complex matter. A positive institutional response to this at the level of policy departments is making ILO's RS&KM increasingly strong both methodologically and statistically. A good practice is the *GWR*. In its first editions,⁴⁴ employers used to contest findings and demand methodological explanations from the DG. This was handled by negotiating complementary research, increasing the technical quality of the team, and adding an extra layer of peer review in econometrics, amid several discussions with employers. Last editions⁴⁵ did not see conflict. Alternatively, informants also referred to an ineffective institutional response of avoiding topics that are politically sensitive.⁴⁶

Several survey and evaluation informants from employers' organizations considered that their needs were not sufficiently addressed by the ILO RS&KM strategies and approaches. Employers reportedly wish to benefit from more relevant RS&KM products, such as policy guidance on skills and lifelong learning, transition to formality and competitiveness. Workers' organizations, in turn, liaise with policy departments to keep research well-balanced for the unions. In these negotiation processes, research is restructured, and definitions and methodologies adapted. Since ACTRAV and ACT/EMP also do good quality research, the Office must explore synergies with them, while remaining independent from direct influences. A promising perspective is in the *ILO Research Strategy for 2020–21*, which foresees joint regular meetings with ACTRAV and ACT/EMP.

43 ILO, Independent Evaluation of ILO's Public-Private Partnerships, Final Report 2008–2018, 2019.

44 ILO, Global Wage Report 2008/09: Minimum wage and collective bargaining. Towards policy coherence, 2008; ILO, Global Wage Report 2010/11: Wage policies in times of crisis, 2010; ILO, Global Wage Report 2012/13: Wages and equitable growth, 2013.

45 ILO, Global Wage Report 2014/15: Wages and income inequality, 2015.

ILO, Global Wage Report 2016/17: Wage inequality in the workplace, 2016; ILO, Global Wage Report 2018/19: What lies behind gender pay gaps, 2018.

46 ILO, *Research Strategy*, GB.337/INS/7 (2019).

There are two other instances critical to ILO ensuring research independence. One is the Research Department. Several stakeholders consider that it should be aware of policy discussions and the work undertaken by the rest of the ILO to make its research questions relevant for policy-making, since independence should not compromise relevance. Another instance is senior management. Once research agendas from the field are brought to HQ, informants are not clear about the approval process because identified needs are sometimes disregarded.

All-in-all, the relevance of RS&KM strategies and approaches to the needs of constituents could be strengthened by top management commitment to the added value of RS&KM for the ILO's mission and mandate. This could ensure an Office-wide standardized workflow in which HQ departments consult with regions and countries to identify constituents' needs and work with them. Key questions could be: What are the knowledge needs? What knowledge does ILO already have? What are the main gaps? Where others could fill the gaps as partners? If there is need to create new knowledge, then research is required. This would prevent a proliferation of RS&KM production with uneven quality.

3.1.3 RS&KM strategies and approaches to achieve the MDGs/SDGs

There is evidence that RS&KM contributes to the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁷ The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), for instance, was specifically designed to support ILO's role as leader for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.5.⁴⁸ This includes a focused and committed alliance between ILO, UN Women and OECD to which the ILO brings evidence and research results to ground EPIC's efforts. EPIC's activities include technical meetings with non-member countries who contribute to the topic. This helps to determine what research to conduct and promote sharing tools and ideas that ensure the global relevance of EPIC. Another example is the results-based tool in the *Action Plan for Gender and Equality 2018–21*, which supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This Action Plan includes new, ambitious and measurable indicators related to the SDGs, such as the percentage of ILO P&B policy outcomes that contribute to SDG 5 targets. PAGE is also an example of how ILO's approaches are integrated into other UN approaches to sustainable development. Its annual report 2019⁴⁹ shows progress per country for several SDGs, including decent work for all. For instance, in Kyrgyz Republic, a Skills for Green Jobs Assessment was finalized in 2018 outlining challenges and opportunities relating to capacity development in priority sectors to meet future skills needs. PAGE is also supporting the development of the Green Jobs Assessment Model prototype to inform the impact of green policies on the labour market and household income distribution.

In relation to institutional databases, there is limited integration into the SDGs. The Knowledge Strategy 2018–21 attributed to ILOSTAT the role of including the SDG indicators for which the ILO is responsible. Good practices are the mainstreaming of the SDGs in the DW Dashboard, the DC Dashboard and the World Social Protection Data Dashboards. The DW Dashboard, for instance, has data indicating that people consult it for SDGs, internally and externally to the ILO. Nevertheless, there is room for expansion, such as in the ILO institutional databases (NORMLEX, NATLEX) or other country-based databases, and in RS&KM of global programmes, such as the Skills Knowledge Sharing Platform, which do not show countries reporting on SDGs.

In DC projects, RS&KM tend mainly to be relevant for MDG 1 (eradicating poverty), MDG 2 (access to education), SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and growth), and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), although MDGs/SDGs are not necessarily specified in project designs.⁵⁰

47 UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

48 United Nations (UN), "[Sustainable Development Goals : 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth](#)".

49 Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), *Sustainable Development and SDGs: Annual Report, 2019*.

50 As the evaluation covers the period 2010–2018, MDGs as well as SDGs were taken into consideration.

3.1.4 RS&KM strategies and approaches and the technical and sectoral policies and agendas

Institutional databases contribute to the ILO's mandate of promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. NORMLEX, for instance, contains information on international labour standards by country. Governments of 187 countries send information annually to HQ on the status of implementation of labour laws, so the database relies on information from governments, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations at national level. Another example is the digitalization of reports of the CEACR, so these can be accessed remotely by experts who go on missions and by field specialists.

Global advocacy for SDGs offers an example of ways to enhance delivering as One UN. PAGE, for instance, works around making the UN system deliver as one. It is designed to leverage collective value by five agencies working together (UNEP, ILO, UNDP, UNIDO, and the UN Institute for Training and Research), each one focused on its specific areas of policy to produce a unified KM output. This strategy makes KM products more relevant because it involves colleagues from many different perspectives. Another example is EPIC, which brings together ILO, UN Women and OECD to collaborate and coordinate efforts around the topic of equal pay.

South-South and triangular cooperation have been emphasized as part of RS&KM approaches to tackle technical and sectoral agendas. Aligned with the UN Framework of operational guidelines, ILO adopted a strategy to promote SSTC as paramount in mainstreaming the Decent Work Agenda in 2012. This strategy included indicators in the P&B 2014–15 and emphasized the role of SSTC in facilitating knowledge transfer and experience on the world of work among emerging and developing countries.⁵¹ This exchange includes guidance provided by the Group of 77 and China; India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA); and Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). At the regional level, South-South cooperation is implemented by organizations such as ILO/CINTERFOR (the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training) that works as the core of a KM network of entities related to vocational training and the development of human resources.

Global programmes are a vehicle for RS&KM at the sectoral level. Examples are Better Work for the garment sector, Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) for SMEs, and the Vision Zero Fund (VZF) for garment and agriculture value chains.

Constituents positively assess the relevance of RS&KM to the global, technical, and sectoral policies and agendas. Out of 51 responses, 82.7 per cent agree or strongly agree that RS&KM are relevant for this larger context.

A research strategy is lacking in technical and sectoral policies and agendas. The research approach by the Research Department does not consider the technical and sectoral policies and agendas because it works in isolation from technical departments. Technical departments, and regional and field offices expect to be consulted with on themes, relevance, or what is needed in knowledge generation. One example is a knowledge gap on the impact of social protection on GDP. The relevance of RS&KM inputs to policy advice and capacity building becomes an ex-post externality, mainly due to the quality and variety of products and topics.

Another example is RS&KM of supply chains, which is scattered across the Office and not streamlined. Each branch or global programme uses its own interpretation and frameworks instead of adopting the same typologies, terminologies, and definitions. RS&KM is also absent in logframes and TORs of global programmes, such as SCORE, so that programme managers have to find ways to best produce and disseminate RS&KM.

Top management offers clear policy but limited strategic support for mainstreaming RS&KM in technical and sectoral policies and agendas. Some units do not strategically plan on the relevance and comparative advantage of different knowledge products to effectively address technical and sectoral policies and agendas. For instance, some informants find that policy departments lack a clear strategy with purpose, target audience, and aimed impact, underlying requests for dissemination products such as infographics.

51 ILO, Triangular cooperation and Decent Work: Good Practices, 2015.

There is also need for better scheduling of publications, to prevent launches that are just a few weeks apart, such as the WESO report and the Panorama Laboral in Latin America. Although the Publishing Policy foresees these and other issues, they seem to be enforced by top management for the flagship reports, while other knowledge products are insufficiently overseen to ensure their relevance and potential to influence policy and agendas at all levels. This strategic support for mainstreaming RS&KM may rely on existing tools and practices, such as the RQ+ tool developed by IDRC and adapted to ILO's knowledge products by the evaluation team (see section 3.3.2, and Appendix 3 supporting documentation).

3.1.5 RS&KM activities and outcomes in DC projects

From being primarily a normative institution, the ILO has progressively increased its involvement in technical cooperation/DC programmes and projects. RS&KM components were not let aside and have been progressively mainstreamed into DC projects' designs.

Evidence shows mixed levels of relevance of the RS&KM activities and outcomes to the strategies and outcomes of DC projects. There is evidence of RS&KM in DC projects designed to respond to country and regional needs. For instance, in Uzbekistan, the ILO is the only organization that has staff on the ground to conduct research and monitoring on forced labour in cotton harvesting. On Youth Employment in Africa, ILO was sensitive to the regional circumstances and developed a multi-pronged approach covering supply, demand and linkages between the two. Joint country-level research between field offices and technical departments, and methodologies and tools are in high demand for DC. A good practice is the Assessment Based National Dialogue (ABND) social protection methodology, developed initially in Asia, improved with feedback from constituents, and currently expanded to about 60 countries.

However, there are some shortcomings. **RS&KM mainstreaming is limited in the design of DC projects, despite a section on KM being integrated into the template of ILO project documents.** Meta-synthesis shows that, if RS&KM activities tended to be ex-post additions to ongoing DC projects, evidence of their relevance to the achievements of DC projects' outcomes and objectives have led to their progressive inclusion at project design level. A good practice is Better Work which, since its inception, implemented a research agenda. This know-how facilitated the design of Better Work's recent global research strategy, built significantly on the findings of the Tufts University impact assessment, which presented actual evidence for the achievement of the programme's immediate objectives.

Thus, RS&KM components in DC projects tend to be designed to support the achievement of projects' general immediate objectives, providing a fertile ground upon which they can build. RS&KM components aim essentially to enhance knowledge base, disseminate knowledge, raise awareness, and develop training materials. These outcomes serve to inform policy-making, support social dialogue, foster labour rights, strengthen labour markets, promote gender equality, and enhance capacities at institutional and individual levels.

However, RS&KM components in DC projects still tend to be built from scratch. This can be partly explained by the dependence on donors' funding and their lack of interest in financing RS&KM, as reported by staff and another HLE.⁵² However, some good practices are found in the partnership between ILO and the Mastercard Foundation to produce knowledge on youth employment and education for the Work4Youth project,⁵³ and in the Vision Zero Fund, which received funding to develop synthesis reviews on assessment reports at country level to inform their RS&KM efforts (started in 2020).

At the project evaluation stage, TORs launched between 2010–2018 do not mention ILO RS&KM strategies or products, so evaluators do not focus on them, unless they are clearly RS&KM projects.⁵⁴ This may be ex-

52 ILO, Independent Evaluation: ILO's Public-Private Partnerships, 2008–2018, 2019.

53 ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A generation at risk, 2013; ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015: Scaling up investments in decent jobs for youth, 2015.

54 ILO, Building the Knowledge Base on the Design and Implementation of Impact Evaluation of Child Labour Interventions – Final Evaluation, 2013.

ILO, Promoting Fundamental Rights and Labour Relations in Export Oriented Industries in Bangladesh – Final Evaluation, 2016.

ILO, Eliminating child labour in El Salvador through economic empowerment and social inclusion – final evaluation, 2016.

ILO, Global Research on Child Labour Measurement and Policy Development (MAP) – Final Evaluation, 2019.

plained by the fact that RS&KM strategies and approaches are not explicitly identified in EVAL's guideline for evaluation managers for writing the evaluation terms of reference⁵⁵ or in EVAL's guidelines for evaluators.⁵⁶

To improve the relevance of RS&KM in DC projects, the ILO would need to mainstream KM across the Organization, with a more comprehensive and strategic perspective. Fostering the dissemination and mainstreaming of RS&KM strategies into DC projects' design would enhance further the RS&KM contributions and impacts. This requires resources and capacitated staff in KM in DC projects. An option would be to include global technical team (GTT) and project staff in capacity building at the ILO.

3.1.6 RS&KM theory of change, inclusive in face of changing needs and new developments

Research and knowledge management strategies and approaches did not develop a ToC, despite developing the knowledge strategies (2010–15 and 2018–21) and Research Strategy (2018–21) with some levels of internal consultations. **Overall, the evaluation assessed that RS&KM is missing a long-term vision and ToC that specifies expected outcomes for diverse groups of stakeholders.** As such, the ToC would facilitate the design of joint RS&KM approaches and the establishment of synergies that could bring efficiencies and higher results to all levels in the Organization, from DC projects to global research.

A ToC would enable adjustments in RS&KM strategies and approaches when conditions change during project implementation at country level. Programme and project managers benefit from being in the field to run adaptations in activities and outcomes, although strategies to do so vary and are not coordinated. In a Better Work programme, for instance, the development of the research agenda is made especially in consultation with policy officers in the field, while in Skills, RS&KM products are elaborated in deeper consultation with governments and beneficiaries to answer current needs.

Despite the absence of a ToC, the **ILO has instruments to keep the relevance of RS&KM in the face of changing needs and new developments.** The P&B allows some level of agility and it was able to integrate the ILO's response to the COVID-19 crisis. This external shock led the Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM) to coordinate with technical departments and outcome leaders to report on what adjustments they were making. For example, the RS&KM global deliverables of the Social Dialogue unit workplan (2020–21) were adjusted following a request from the DG. As a result, three policy briefs were produced within the COVID-19 response framework. One of them was on how to use social dialogue to promote safe return to work. It was produced mostly internally by the unit, in discussions with colleagues, national consultants and social dialogue field specialists, to collect examples from countries. This is available in three languages and supported by a video. The unit received resources in Geneva and a consultant to build the COVID-19 response. Policy briefs were submitted for comments to ACTRAV and ACT/EMP, but not to the Research Department. All this work is within the framework of the P&B, in capacity development, training, publications, etc. Another example is the repurposing of the OSH flagship programme from its planned RS&KM outputs on violence and harassment at work to pandemics, with the launch of the latter RS&KM outputs postponed to later in 2020.

Some barriers to ensure continued relevance of RS&KM in relation to the changing needs and new developments were found. One of them is weak coordination mechanisms between HQ and the field to identify changing in needs. Coordination mechanisms tend to be informal and personalized rather than institutionalized, so, overall, the ILO misses the big link of operational points in the field. Another barrier is donor-dependent RS&KM strategies and approaches. Project managers try to balance changing national needs with accountability and effectiveness to donors, whilst also trying to provide global answers that go beyond their actual intervention level in enterprises and countries.

Effective means of ensuring the continued relevance of RS&KM is senior management's attention and support. This could lead to a review of the budget and resource allocation and spending to foster

⁵⁵ ILO, Writing the evaluation terms of reference (TOR), 2018.

⁵⁶ ILO, "EVAL Guidance on evaluability of ILO programmes and projects", *Guidance Note* 16, 2019.

collaboration and coordination instead of consolidating silos. The COVID-19 response framework is a unanimous best practice of the relevance of ILO's RS&KM to changing needs.

3.2. Coherence

Over the years, ILO has developed several strategies and approaches to produce, store, retrieve and use knowledge on the world of work. Between 2010 and 2018, the *Knowledge Strategy 2010–15* (extended to 2018) and the *Knowledge Strategy 2018–21* were elaborated, in line with the *Strategic Planning Framework 2010–2015*, *Transitional Strategic Plan 2016–17* and *Strategic Plan 2018–21*. More recently, a Research Strategy was also developed (2020–21). Coherence in RS&KM activities undertaken under these relevant frameworks is crucial in achieving the intended outcomes of knowledge strategies: strengthening evidence-based analysis to support the Decent Work Agenda; reinforcing approaches to and structures for knowledge exchange; and improving dissemination of ILO knowledge.

3.2.1 Baseline conditions⁵⁷ for RS&KM in ILO 2010–18

The ILO embarked on knowledge management in the late 1990's and started the current decade with a certain level of understanding and adoption of it,⁵⁸ but also with a complex baseline formed by an internal environment not highly conducive to knowledge sharing. A landmark for KM in the ILO was the results-based knowledge strategy in 2007.⁵⁹ This strategy focused on knowledge sharing and connecting people with the information they need. It establishes the outcomes for which baselines were to be established and followed up. The key assumption was a “strong human resources component, some investment in IT and an organizational learning culture that discourages a territorial and compartmentalized approach to knowledge and instead encourages and facilitates sharing of knowledge.” The ILO's efforts were positively assessed by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in 2016,⁶⁰ positioning the ILO as one of the pioneering organizations in knowledge management in the United Nations system.

Consistent with the *Knowledge Strategy 2010–15*, the evaluation found that another baseline for knowledge management was the Knowledge Gateway (a concept introduced for the first time in the P&B 2012–13 and incorporated into the *Strategic Plan 2018–21* and mentioned specifically in P&B 2020–21 under Enabling Outcome A). Launched in 2013, it inventoried 359 databases and nine different information systems, indicating low baseline with weak content governance. Gateway workshops disclosed that the assumption that staff were willing to share knowledge was not valid, and a culture that knowledge is power was prevalent. Some managers felt that sharing knowledge could risk their budget, indicating that coherence in knowledge management was threatened by budget allocation systems. As a result, data on the same issues are treated differently by different departments, making it difficult for potential users to track, and impacting on the coherence between the knowledge outputs produced. Gateway technological solutions focused on cleaning data sources and rewriting information for public consumption (i.e. “staff salary” from IRIS as “project finance” for donors). A total of 8,000 technical issues were resolved over eight years to automate sustainable data sources and provide quick access to regional and country data.

Knowledge management governance, represented by the knowledge management coordination team (KMCT), originally set up to attend to policy departments' KM needs, expanded its functions to diagnose KM issues in the Office in 2015. This initiative involved senior managers in a discussion on what a vision for knowledge management might look like and what benefits a KM governance and KMCT might bring to the ILO. For instance, this led to the development of successful but limited interventions by the KMCT with field offices. Some reported progress⁶¹ refers to increased collaboration within the Office and with

57 The term baseline conditions refer to the institutional guidance for research and knowledge management. These baseline conditions are given by the previous and current strategies, and their institutional development path that underlie current decision-making and governance of RS&KM.

58 ILO, “Proposal for the establishment of a Strategic Knowledge Team in the ILO”, (internal document), 2019.

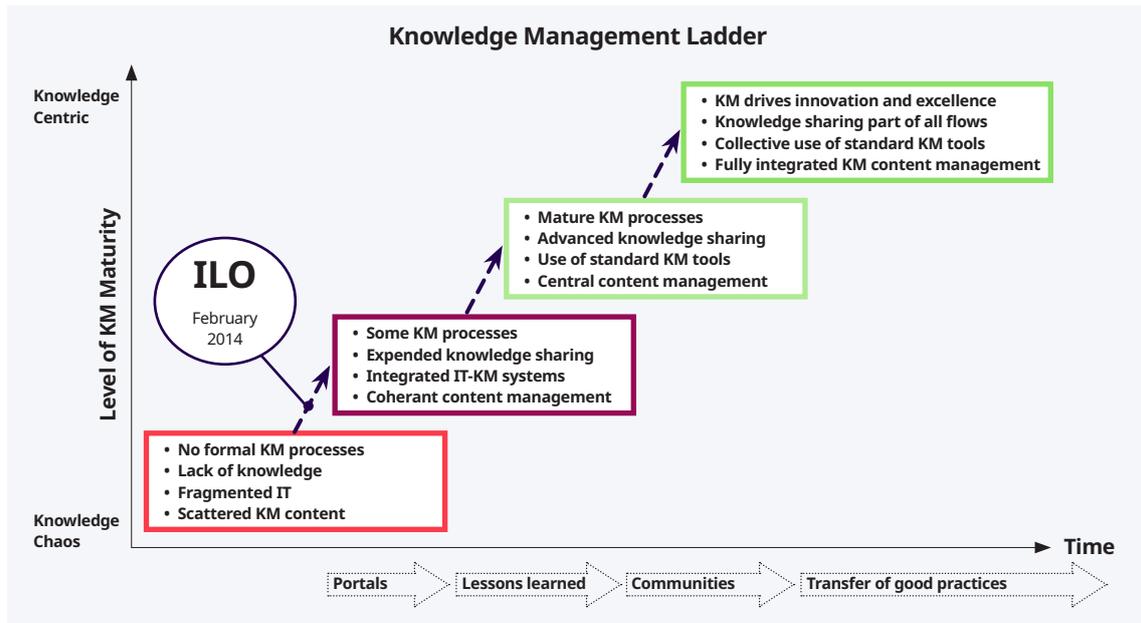
59 ILO, Results-based management: (b) Knowledge strategy. GB.300/PFA/9/2, 2007.

60 UN JIU, Knowledge management in the United Nations System, 2016.

61 ILO, [Update on the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21](#), GB.334(PFA/INF/2 (2018).

other organizations, higher quality statistics produced by the Office and members States, and increased ways to disseminate ILO’s work for practical results through technology. Nevertheless, across the Office, KM efforts continued to be fragmented, closely held by those who engage in them and without an overall strategy, leading to the replacement of the KMCT by the strategic knowledge team, as of 2019 (figure 2).⁶²

► Figure 2. ILO knowledge management roadmap



Source: Henriques M. “ILO Knowledge Management Roadmap”, ILO, 2014 (internal document).

For research, the baseline conditions were to some extent established by the work of the International Institute of Labour Studies, until 2014, and then, by the Research Department, for global research outputs. In policy departments, the baseline conditions for research were more closely aligned with the 2007 Knowledge Sharing Strategy, concerning policy and technical advice, and the *Knowledge Strategy 2010–15* focusing on research agendas arising from country positions. Part of their baseline conditions is research capacities in specific topics, such as child labour, social protection and wages. The *Transitional Strategic Plan 2016–17* sought to build on the research capacities of the new Research Department and policy departments by establishing an ILO-wide research agenda. This agenda is based on interdepartmental cooperation to strengthen the ILO’s evidence base of policy effectiveness, and to guide the ILO’s country strategies and global advocacy. The *Knowledge Strategy 2018–21* followed and expanded the ILO’s research agenda to frontier issues to support the policy outcomes in the *Strategic Plan 2018–21*. The *Update on the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21* further emphasized the need to ensure research relevance and uptake by engaging with governments and the social partners on a regular basis.

In 2019, the first standalone *ILO Research Strategy* for 2020–2021 was established. It enhances the coherence of results-based management (RBM) by providing performance measures for research products, such as citations in UN organizations’ documents for the ILO’s flagship reports. However, the current baseline conditions lack additional improvements in, for instance, the publication policy. This is currently not consistent enough with all the publication types of the Organization, despite a high-level blueprint developed in 2015.⁶³ A lack of clear guidance for publication types other than flagship and major reports remains and, according to the survey interviewees, seems not to be a priority for senior management.

62 ILO, “Proposal for the establishment of a Strategic Knowledge Team in the ILO”, (internal document, 2019).

63 ILO, The ILO publishing policy, 2015.

Additional baseline conditions stem from the multilateral partnerships established between the ILO and the other UN agencies and donors. An example is the Social Protection Inter-agency Coordination Board (an alliance of World Bank, the UN, the ILO and bilateral donors) to ensure the coordination of the ILO's policy approach with the global framework.

1. An important finding of this evaluation is that **when research and knowledge management are taken together, there is lack of a common understanding of their purpose.** This compromises a One-ILO perspective on RS&KM and leads to a lack of coherence between strategies and approaches used across the Office, with implications for further uptake of knowledge products. The prevalent understanding is of an integrated approach: knowledge management refers to the complete process of identifying, developing, managing, and sharing knowledge, including a range of knowledge products generated by research.

Three other understandings stand out from the results. First, an output-oriented approach: Since it is difficult to distinguish research from knowledge products because of the way the ILO works, it is better to consider them as the same. Especially in the field offices, where resources for research are rare, there seems little sense in distinguishing the two. Second, a functional perspective: RS&KM are two distinct (but complementary) areas of work in the ILO. Research requires technical specialists and must produce an evidence base for policy and advocacy, whereas knowledge management is done basically by everyone during their activities simply by sharing a document. In this perspective, KM may also appear as an internal management service for teamwork, organizational learning, and transparency, or as knowledge dissemination strategies (tools, conferences) to constituents and other stakeholders. As two distinct functions, KM is seen as broader, more used in field offices and possibly encompassing research, whereas research is more specialized and focused, serving strategic thinking at HQ. Another distinction here is that research products are more progressive, scientifically and analytically deeper, whereas KM focuses on subjects that are already mature, agreed upon, and can be widely shared to guide institutional development. Last, there is an administrative perspective, which associates the production of global research and knowledge to the Research Department, whereas country-based research and knowledge is produced by policy departments, field offices and decent work teams. This last perspective is the least common and considered as a failed strategy, since the production of global knowledge products cannot be separated from country-based research and knowledge.

Comments provided by staff in the evaluation survey regarding the two working definitions of RS&KM strategies and approaches⁶⁴ at the ILO (see section 1.4 of this report) indicated that 74 per cent considered the definitions clear and accurate, and 26 per cent considered them unclear, complicated, or incorrect. These comments indicate conflicting understandings, such as: research is for external use and KM is for internal use versus research is for internal use and KM is for external use; research is specialized, analytical and centralized in HQ versus research should build on lessons learned from the field, from practice; and KM is for internal use and institutional development versus KM creates more actual knowledge than research carried out by the Research Department. Some staff commented that KM is less clearly defined in the ILO than research, despite the latter being also subject to conflicting understandings, expectations, and actions.

3.2.2 Coherence of RS&KM strategies and approaches with the ILO's policies, results framework, thematic/sectoral strategies, action plans and other relevant frameworks

There is a gap between the ILO's KM expectations and the resources committed to knowledge management. The knowledge audit,⁶⁵ a cross-office task team endeavour to reorganize KM in the ILO and respond to criticisms, included staff from the technical departments, INFOTEC, DCOMM, DG, CABINET, and the field. A proposal containing a cross-departmental budget was presented to the DG in May 2019,⁶⁶ but it was not approved. Instead, a Strategic Knowledge Team was established, with a workplan aligned with the

64 Out of 284 comments, 128 were about the adequacy of the working definitions of research and knowledge management strategies and approaches provided by the evaluation team for consultation.

65 ILO, "Report on the internal audit of knowledge sharing in the ILO" (internal document).

66 ILO, "Proposal for the establishment of a Strategic Knowledge Team in the ILO" (internal document).

Knowledge Strategy 2018–21. In the process, the head of the KMCT moved back to the Research Department and there were no resources to recruit someone else. The current head of the Strategic Knowledge Team (SKT) has only 20 per cent time allocated for it, but considerably more would be needed to take KM up to the next level. SKT also counts on a KM specialist, who does good quality work on ways to translate research into policy advice, such as the “Knowledge conversations” series; and a communications and KM professional for IT, platforms, and content management. SKT's budget is attached to the Research Department, requiring negotiations for each biennium. There is a pro-rata for two posts (US\$ 76,000 for two years), and resources in support of the technical work. Therefore, SKT is not sufficiently supported by senior management to exert leadership and governance on departments' choices of knowledge approaches or to support coordination between them.

There is also a lack of internal coherence for the structure and governance of RS&KM. Informants refer to a lack of senior management support to make the knowledge strategy a continuous function and strongly relate it to other functions. This is reflected in the survey results with 37–38 per cent of staff respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that RS&KM is coherent with the ILO's results framework, mandates, and policies against 21–31 per cent somewhat agreeing. As mentioned above, KM supports research, and research feeds into KM processes and tools. Although the SKT is currently under DDG/P to keep the team small, it could have been more strategically located in CABINET, to politically strengthen knowledge sharing mechanisms and culture. At the regional level, informants also consider that there is a lack of commitment from senior management, for instance, in relation to resource allocation that goes beyond platforms for RS&KM.

The *ILO Monitor* showed the possibility of exponential increase in cross-Office collaboration, especially with units supporting Outcome 1.4. Nevertheless, there was some internal competition to produce the first policy brief and the Office-wide coordination was not ideal, as in other UN agencies. People were overwhelmed and synergies were missed.

Other examples indicate a lack of coherence in governing RS&KM. For instance, there is weak governance of multi-unit research themes, such as informality and value chains, which are not overseen by any specific department. Ad hoc coordinators are not enough, as indicated in a HLE on the formalization of the informal economy.⁶⁷ That evaluation recommended the development of a concrete formalization strategy for greater collaboration among the ILO departments and between HQ and field offices to make ‘formalization’ more explicit in the Office's work.

A possible reason advanced for each department confining the production and dissemination of RS&KM to departmental limits is their accountability for expenditures associated with specific outcomes. Outside of the Research Department, resources for research-related activities are limited, notwithstanding the production of flagship and major reports. Financial arrangements for the Research Department are not clear throughout the rest of the Organization. This leads to mismatches, such as a 2019 research paper on social protection which was published by the Research Department, without consulting the Social Protection Department, and which was not announced internally. As a result, this paper is not coherent with the ILO's advice to member States on social protection.

Constituents also refer to a lack of coherence. Employers' organizations refer to disparities between regional offices' and headquarters' approaches to research, as HQ does not always include employers organizations in the research process, whether it be in design or data collection. Workers' organizations refer to mismatches between global programmes and the ILO's mission, for instance, SCORE not taking fully into account working conditions and social justice. Another example is a concept note on youth employment that contained a mistaken approach to labour rights.

An institutional governance structure that could contribute to increased coherence between RS&KM strategies and approaches and the ILO's RBM is the Outcome Coordinating Team (OCT). Its multidisciplinary and multidepartment nature, and its role in coordinating the implementation of P&B outcomes through deliverables, RS&KM included, could support the promotion of coherence in the delivery of outcome-ori-

67 ILO, Independent High-level Evaluation: ILO's Strategy and Actions towards the Formalization of the Informal Economy, 2014–18, 2019.

ented RS&KM. However, possibly because OCT is under DDG/MR, it is not seen as a potential RS&KM governance structure.

To compensate for the lack of a macro governance, staff create a wide range of micro-governance structures for RS&KM, such as informal groups of researchers from different departments based on personal affinity and thematic expertise to produce a research output. For example, the working group for the Non-standard forms of Employment Report⁶⁸ included HQ researchers from different branches and staff from the regions. Some basic IT structure was used, such as Skype calls and a webinar to communicate with the field. This was a successful strategy to ensure coherence. However, these informal arrangements tend to leave most of the Organization out and reinforces the culture of conflict aversion. There is a need for internal debates to reach common understanding, and openness to hear different perspectives, especially for flagship and major reports. This could also increase internal use and dissemination of the ILO's knowledge.

Other relevant frameworks that support coherence of the ILO's RS&KM are multilateral alliances. PAGE, for instance, works within the governance structure provided by the alliance with four other UN agencies, to combine with relevant ILO strategies and guidance. However, there was no specific aspect of the knowledge strategy that was particularly useful in this case.

3.2.3 RS&KM coherence with the strategies and outcomes in DC projects

The meta-synthesis results indicate that **RS&KM in DC projects tend to be aligned with national plans, country programmes, and regional strategies.** RS&KM components, for instance, are designed to improve the information base on a wide range of Decent Work aspects, in line with DWCPs that normally include the measurement and monitoring of Decent Work indicators. Staff survey data indicate that more than 65 per cent consider that RS&KM strategies and approaches support the needs of constituents (around 40 per cent agree or strongly agree), more than 60 per cent consider that they support building capacities of social partners (35–43 per cent agree or strongly agree), more than 57 per cent consider that they support the development of DC projects (around 40 per cent agree or strongly agree), more than 48 per cent consider that they support country strategies and 24–30 per cent agree or strongly agree that support UNDAF. Lastly, about 60 per cent of survey respondents consider that RS&KM strategies and approaches support achieving the MDGs/SDGs. All percentages are higher for knowledge management than for research.

In addition, RS&KM components in DC projects tend to be aligned with the ILO's strategies and approaches, such as ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201)⁶⁹ the ILO Fair Migration Agenda⁷⁰ and Fair Recruitment Initiative,⁷¹ the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization,⁷² the ILO Global Jobs Pact,⁷³ the ILO's Skills Development Strategy and ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195).⁷⁴

Considering the global agenda, RS&KM in DC projects are coherent with inter-agency mandates such as Understanding Children's Work, and with other agencies' strategies such as the European Consensus on Development, the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

South-South and triangular cooperation is incorporated into the results framework and DC manual.

A how-to guide for SSTC assists in integrating SSTC into projects. It was built on the Buenos Aires Plan of Action +40 (BAPA) for the definition of SSTC and sub-modalities (i.e. country-country, city-city). Organizational capacity for coherent work on SSTC in DC projects is strengthened through staff training by the SSTC team or ITC-ILO Turin.

68 ILO, *Non-standard Employment around the World: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects*, 2016.

69 ILO, Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), (2011).

70 ILO, *Fair Migration: Setting an ILO agenda. Report of the Director-General*, ILC.103/DG/IB (2014).

71 ILO, *Fair Recruitment Initiative: Fostering fair recruitment practices, preventing human trafficking and reducing the costs of labour migration*, 2015.

72 ILO, *ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*, 2008.

73 ILO, *Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact*, adopted by ILC, 98th Session, 2009.

74 ILO, Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), (2004).

Regional and field offices provide mixed comments on the coherence of RS&KM from HQ to DC projects. Some production is perceived as of good quality and coherent with the needs of DC projects. For instance, the annual team meetings, joining 65 countries and including business issues, trainings, and networking; and the knowledge-sharing platforms, which provide concept notes, project proposals, logframes, graphs, ToRs, pictures, etc. However, some other RS&KM initiatives are perceived as disconnected (e.g. research outputs), lacking quality management, or overambitious.

There is limited evidence of global or institutional RS&KM initiatives making the most of DC projects, including those ensuring more sustainable outcomes. HQ staff refer to one-way communication of RS&KM from HQ to the field, with comparatively little from the field reaching HQ, even by way of the GTTs. Even when this information reaches HQ, there is no evidence on whether or not it is taken up in HQ research. For KM, data from the countries and regions feed into databases.

3.2.4 Indicators of RS&KM strategies and approaches

Many RS&KM initiatives do not have the proper results frameworks and instruments to monitor achievements and assess performance. None of the three key RS&KM strategies and approaches (knowledge strategies for 2010–15 and 2018–21, and the *ILO Research Strategy* for 2020–21) have a toc, inter-related results framework, full results framework with indicators and milestones, or are related to overall results framework. An effort was made in the Research Strategy, together with Statistics, to track the use of the ILO's research and data by the OECD, the UNDP, and other multilateral agencies. A good practice is the *Action Plan for Gender and Equality 2018–21*,⁷⁵ which applies the UN-SWAP categories and corresponding indicators.

At the level of DC projects, achievement and performance monitoring is uneven. In some cases, managers consider that the approval of a country report is an indicator of an intervention's effectiveness. In others, it is possible to track small-scale RS&KM outcomes. For instance, occupational safety and health (OSH) findings in the assessment phase showed that just enhancing farmers' knowledge base on risks favoured the emergence of safer work in plantations.

Another example is the *GWR*. Indicators of uptake should be in the country programme outcomes (CPOs), otherwise ILO is not achieving its mission. The *GWR* is present in only one CPO, so it does not lead to change. Other indicators, such as academics' use, which is high (but not tracked) just indicate that the report is not reaching its target audience.

The RS&KM strategies and approaches of the UN sometimes show more comprehensive results monitoring systems for RS&KM than the ILO. The comparative KM review shows that IFAD, for instance, monitors KM outputs and outcomes with indicators of readership and client surveys; the UNFPA uses the percentage of country programme documents and strategic reports that reflect uptake of evaluation references and evidence; UN Women uses indicators such as the number of downloads and visits to their website, the number of countries engaging in knowledge generation and exchange, and the level of stakeholders' satisfaction with regional office knowledge products; WHO plots the percentage of Member States satisfied with the nature of technical cooperation received.

Indicators for use and impact are limited. Informants refer to the fact that concern with measurement is new. Despite the availability of data, they feel that RS&KM indicators are not sufficient for monitoring the ILO's impact. The ILO works on complex themes, for which there are multiple interventions at country level, so attributing change to the ILO's RS&KM is a challenge. Likewise, it is difficult to track and measure advocacy work and policy influence of multilateral partnerships. Flagship reports, for instance, could provide some evidence of global change, such as a reduction in the gender pay gap in the *GWR*, but could not attribute it to the ILO's RS&KM. Alternatively, uptake is easier to measure for guides, because they usually carry an abbreviation that countries refer to in their documents (i.e. ABND). Thus, in general, staff are often comfortable with impact indicators not being comprehensive, and with receiving ad hoc information on the uptake of RS&KM.

⁷⁵ ILO, *Mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21*, GB.338/INS/7 (2020).

A good practice is provided by the Skills Knowledge Sharing Platform, which periodically collects quantitative information from the platform (profile and location of users, number of downloads, issues mostly accessed⁷⁶), and through surveys of internal⁷⁷ and external⁷⁸ users (i.e. user profile, reasons for accessing the platform, user experience, frequency/likelihood of recommending the platform to stakeholders, users' needs and satisfaction, and the means by which users disseminate the platform), Google Analytics, Twitter Analytics (especially for the E-discussions).

When there are indicators of access or use of the ILO RS&KM outputs, these generally do not affect decision-making for next efforts. Information on the number of hits or downloads is considered interesting, but rarely taken up.

There are also issues on who should be responsible for collecting data on indicators, with diverse perspectives and approaches across the Office. Some departments do not see the collection of data on indicators as part of their core responsibilities. This leads to a situation of scattered and irregular data collection of different types of information rather than institutionalized data collection that produces a robust picture of access, uptake and use of the ILO's RS&KM products and services. For some staff, this should be the responsibility of evaluations, when they are conducted. In global programmes, for instance, collecting data for research can be intrusive and time consuming, as the primary focus of their work is on collecting information for their interventions.

A way of improving the design of coherent indicators for RS&KM outcomes and uptake would be to coordinate with other UN agencies around the SDG targets and indicators for which the ILO is the custodian agency or is otherwise involved. Good practices in this direction are the knowledge-sharing platforms (i.e. World Social Protection Data Dashboards⁷⁹ and Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform⁸⁰) that provide data on SDG indicators as an integral part of the platform or as a search filter.

3.3. Effectiveness

RS&KM is core to ILO's efforts. Informants recognize the importance and critical nature of RS&KM in supporting ILO to achieve its goals and fulfil its mandate. In fact, it is so integral to the work at the ILO that RS&KM components are generally referenced in most projects, programmes and initiatives. However, there are significant institutional challenges to building a strong RS&KM at the ILO. The lack of operationalization of KM which, according to the interviews and surveys, encompasses a lack of coordination, institutional support and capacities for RS&KM, infrastructure for collaborative and dynamic knowledge sharing, and incentives for KM and sharing.

3.3.1 Achievements of ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches

Since 2010, ILO has invested human and financial resources into RS&KM and accomplished a number of achievements. The following are highlights of RS&KM achievements that best support the ILO and the challenges faced (table 3).

The current pandemic has forced the entire world to shift its way of living greatly impacting the world of work. The ILO's serial publication *Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work* stands out as a unique example of a unified, fast-acting Organization. With frequent direction from the DG and support from the DDG, a strong and dedicated global team works closely with relevant departments to develop joint research and KM that is current, useful and presents a clear voice to the world. Informants attributed the Monitor's

76 ILO, "Stats and information about the Global Skills KSP" (internal document), 2020.

77 ILO, "Global KSP Analysis Internal Survey Report" (internal document), 2016.

78 ILO, "Global KSP Analysis External Survey Report" (internal document), 2016.

79 World Social Protection Data Dashboards, <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/WSPDB.action?id=32>.

80 Skills for Employment – Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform – Bridging Education and Training in the World of Work, <https://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/index.htm>.

► **Table 3. Key RS&KM achievements and challenges**

RS&KM	Key achievements	Challenges and limitations
Research		
COVID-19 and the world of work	Cross-departmental internal collaboration; unified external communications; Leverage of Skype for Business as an effective channel for cross-departmental and cross-regional collaboration.	Recently developed
GWR, WESO, WESO Trends	Flagship reports and databases are cornerstone for ILO; well respected and highly utilized	Varied budgets impact quality and extent of knowledge sharing; weak interdepartmental coordination
Regional- and country-based research	Uptake by constituents and partners, closer to their needs, favourable to SSTC	Difficult to scale up, not incorporated into HQ's RS&KM, irregular funding
Knowledge management for internal use		
Labordoc	Improved the availability of documentation through a global content repository.	Content not consistently tagged
NORMLEX, NATLEX, IRLEX, Knowledge Gateway, Dashboards	Improved or developed new databases	Some are not consistently maintained or are moderately utilized
Intranet	Major improvement for internal communications and content collection	Only partial migration and development due to resource constraints and limited collaborative capabilities
SharePoint	Sharing working documents within departments	Lack of global internal repository and charged back mechanism is a barrier to adoption
GTT	Global knowledge sharing within departments	Not functioning at institutional level and not consistently performing
Knowledge management for external use		
Collaborative Knowledge Sharing (e.g. PAGE, EPIC)	The process of multiple partners designing and implementing RS&KM has built stronger relationships	At times, lacking in equal levels of commitment to the collaborative process; agreement requires significant negotiation
Regional KM initiatives (e.g. Asia Pacific Knowledge Sharing Platform)	KM projects for regional/national ILO staff and constituents	Not scaled, institutionalized or sustained
DC CoP	Sharing information across projects	Not moderated for more meaningful services and use
RS&KM processes		
Multidimensional approach in DC projects	Research and KM integrated into a coherent process with clear purpose	RS&KM is not articulated in logframe or monitored
Gradual expansion of local/regional initiatives with feedback loops	Slowly expand efforts so that space for continued reflection and improvements	RS&KM is not articulated in logframe or monitored; takes longer to scale up.
New publishing policy and ILO brand identity exercise	New procedures, guidelines, and checks improved quality and use	New publishing policy: for flagship reports and major publications. New ILO brand identity: all external print and digital outputs.
KM/KS integrated into the ProDoc and job description formats	Institutionalization of KM and mainstreaming in ProDoc template and job descriptions of some managers and staff	Of those reviewed, most ProDoc focus on communications but do not address KM, and managers and staff lack capacities and guidance to operationalize KM/KS

success to the DG's singular vision, and to the skilled coordination and attention to the process at all levels of management, which has led to collective action and a common agenda.

Outside of the RS&KM dimension of the COVID-19 response, informants described collaboration within ILO compartmentalized and based on personal rather than institutional relationships, often with a lack of clarity and consistency about the extent and quality of articulating and operationalizing RS&KM strategies and approaches in their work. At HQ, the compartmentalization of efforts often translates into the compartmentalization of implementation that limits knowledge sharing and use. For example, the GTT proved to be an efficient instrument to create new networking mechanisms with the ILO, providing close engagement and useful tools to ensure linkages and relevance between the needs in the field and research at HQ. However, the team's work is different for each department and is not consistently implemented across departments. In addition, some informants thought the GTT may not be optimally designed, wondering if it should be organized around outcomes rather than departments. Informants also agree that the mutual flow of information between HQ and the field has improved with the establishment of the GTT, while also not yet optimal.

On the other hand, in the field, the focus is on responding to country needs and utilizing RS&KM as is relevant to address country needs. For example, with Youth Employment in Africa, research is conducted and knowledge products are developed to inform policy dialogue, while communities of practice (CoPs) are one venue where ILO is creating space for that dialogue to occur.

Some informants feel that, although much of ILO's work has been successful, there are topics that do not receive the same level of support and others that do not get selected at all. The lack of importance placed on the knowledge and need from the field when research topics are determined or prioritized was one reason mentioned.

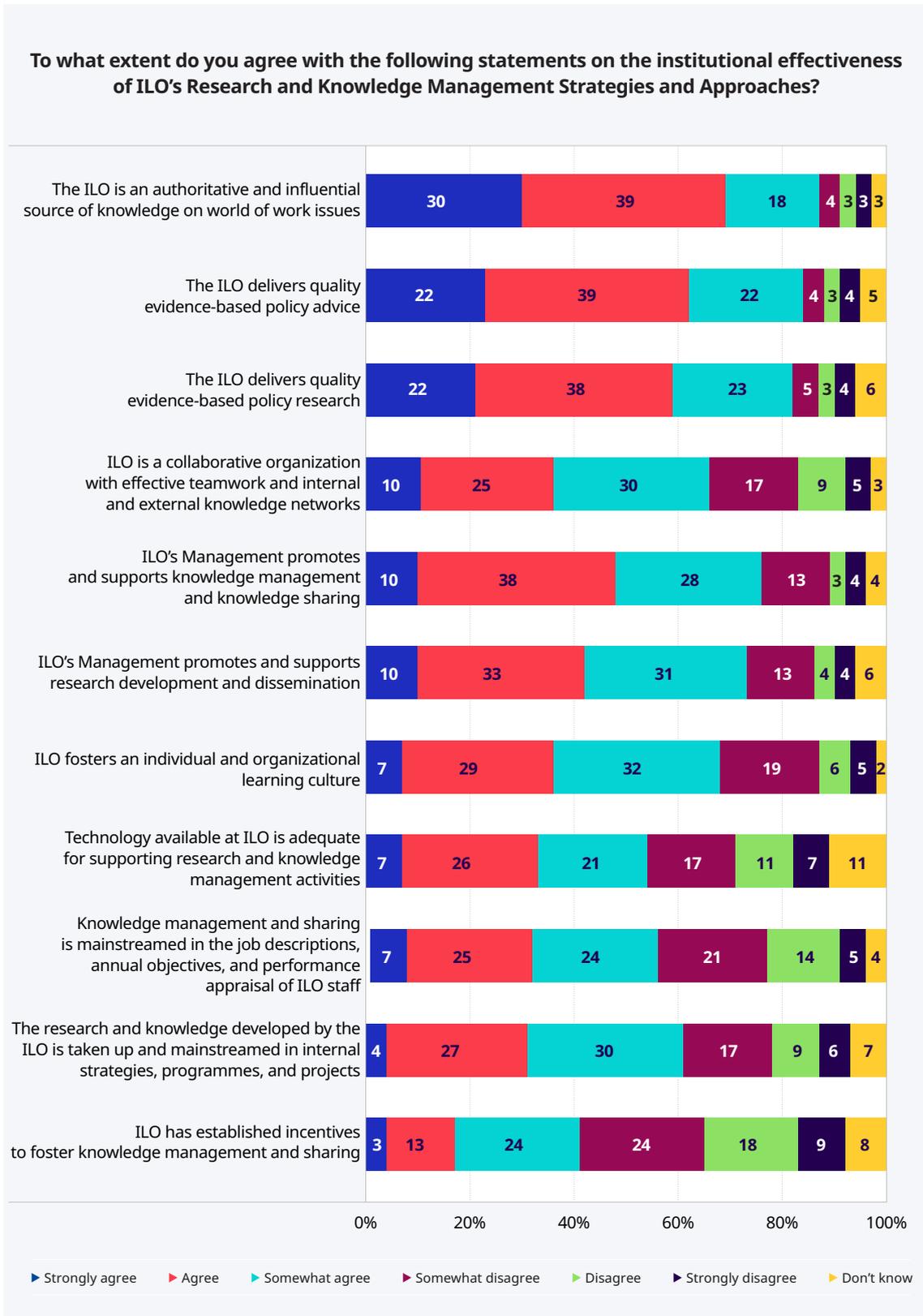
The development of policies, processes, and guidelines has also been an important RS&KM achievement that has helped to streamline and improve quality. Most significantly, the current process with the publishing committee's new procedures and guidelines include peer review, double checking accuracy and sources. Some informants also considered the new process for defining topics good progress, but too HQ focused. A few informants felt that knowledge products were lacking in meeting the needs of employers' organizations as constituent. To strengthen the consistency and coherence of ILO's external communication outputs, including the knowledge outputs, a brand team led by DCOMM and INTSERV developed and adopted a new ILO brand identity, with comprehensive guidelines and examples available to staff and stakeholders on an online Brand Hub.⁸¹ Informants describe this as an improvement over the previous platform. The ILO Brand Hub is a strong model of user-friendly presentation and logical classification of ILO publications. Most recently, the COVID-19 portal was created to consolidate and make accessible the extensive knowledge and products being generated from across the Organization.

Staff agree that the ILO is an authoritative and influential source of knowledge that delivers quality evidence-based policy advice and research. Though still fairly positive, but to a lesser extent, staff say that ILO management promotes and supports knowledge management, knowledge sharing, and research. However, the ILO is not doing as well when it comes to the learning culture, the technology available, mainstreaming KM into operational processes and the utilization of the ILO's knowledge to inform internal strategies, programmes and projects (figure 3).

Survey results and interviews indicate that the ILO's staff are more critical of the Organization than the constituents. Of all questions asked of both constituents and staff, constituents consistently feel more positively about the ILO's delivery of RS&KM and the influential and collaborative nature of its work (figure 4). This is clearly reflected in their assessment of the ILO's delivery of RS&KM. Where over half of the constituents very strongly agree that the Organization is an authoritative and influential source of knowledge on world of work issues, only 30 per cent of staff very strongly agree.

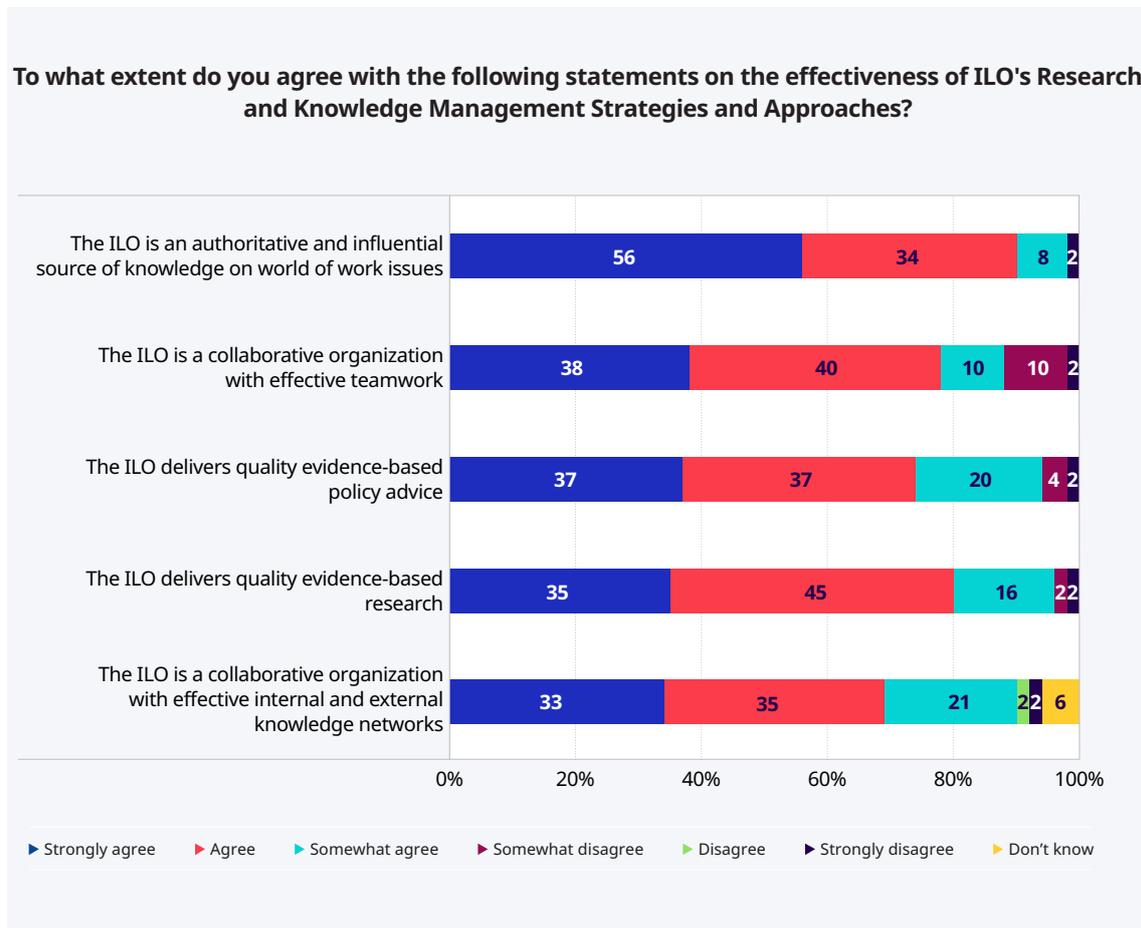
81 For information on the Brand Hub, <http://brand.ilo.org>.

► **Figure 3. Staff perspectives on ILO's delivery of RS&KM**



Source: Evaluation Survey, 2020.

► **Figure 4. Constituent perspectives on ILO's delivery of RS&KM**



Source: Evaluation Survey, 2020.

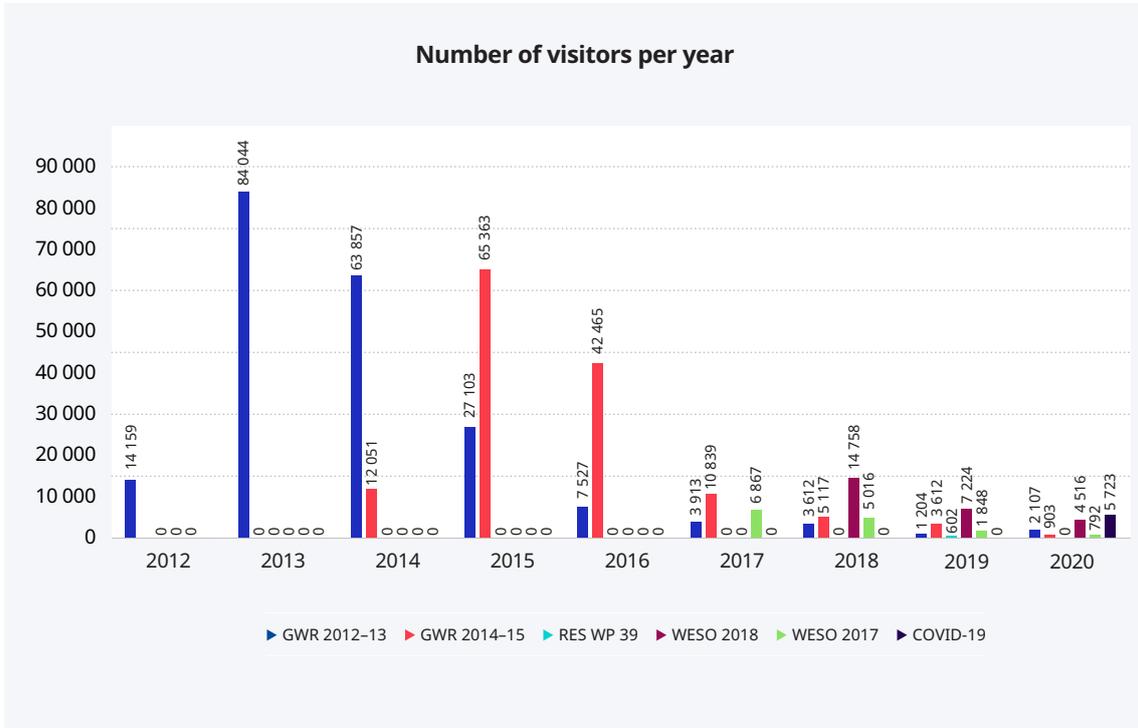
3.3.2 RS&KM strategies and approaches support use and application

RS&KM strategies and approaches facilitate use and application. The ILO produces key knowledge products that are highly utilized by governments, constituents and other stakeholders. The RS&KM strategies and approaches that most facilitate the access and use of relevant research are internal collaboration between units, policy briefs, SSTC, and practical approaches such as toolkits and assessment tools (figures 5 and 6).

At the global level, flagship reports and flagship databases have been highly utilized and are strong examples of the ILO's contribution to building valid and credible evidence about the world of work whilst at country level, knowledge is most useful and applied when there is an integrated, multidimensional RS&KM approach.

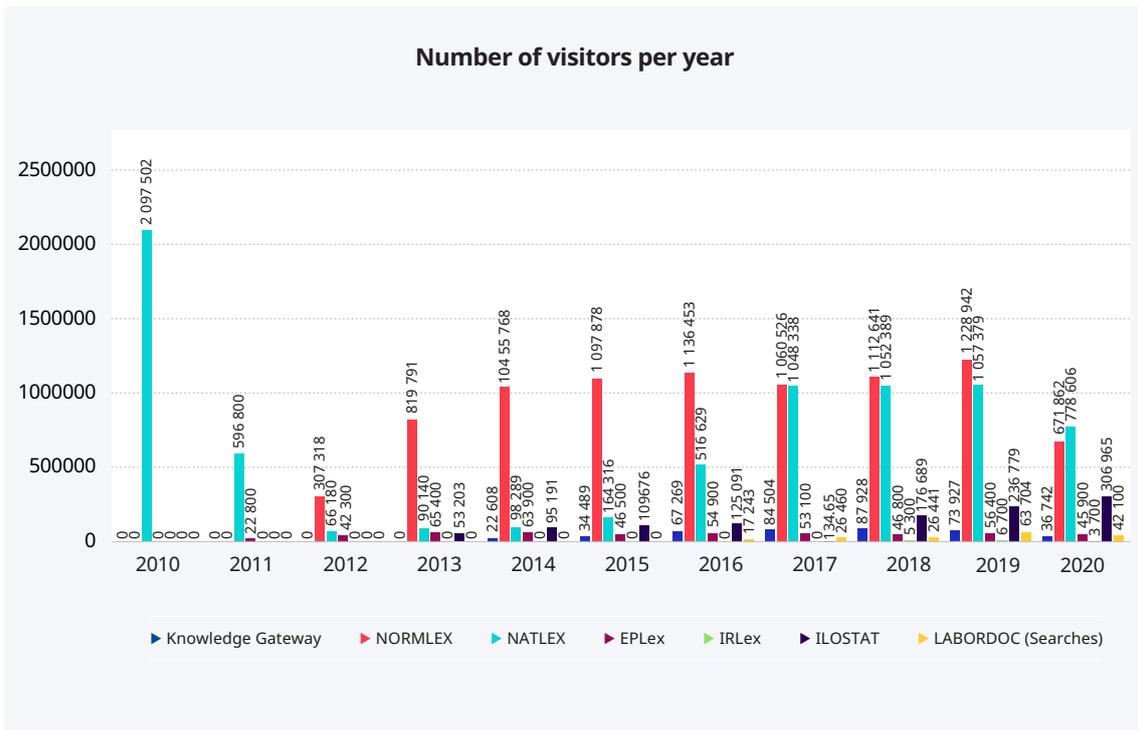
While there may be some research that is less widely used, such as working papers, there is value in providing opportunities for exploration of new angles or topics. Interestingly, although working papers are not highly used by a wider audience, in the survey, constituents reported fairly high effectiveness (figure 7). Whether or not these low stake studies are then cited in more significant research, which informants assumed they often are, there is merit in providing a space where researchers can be creative and investigate new ideas. Given the vast amount of reports, working papers, and other documents generated by the ILO, informants find it challenging to identify which knowledge products warrant their attention, which points to the need for a streamlined, coordinated or consistent institutional KM system.

► Figure 5. Visits to research web pages



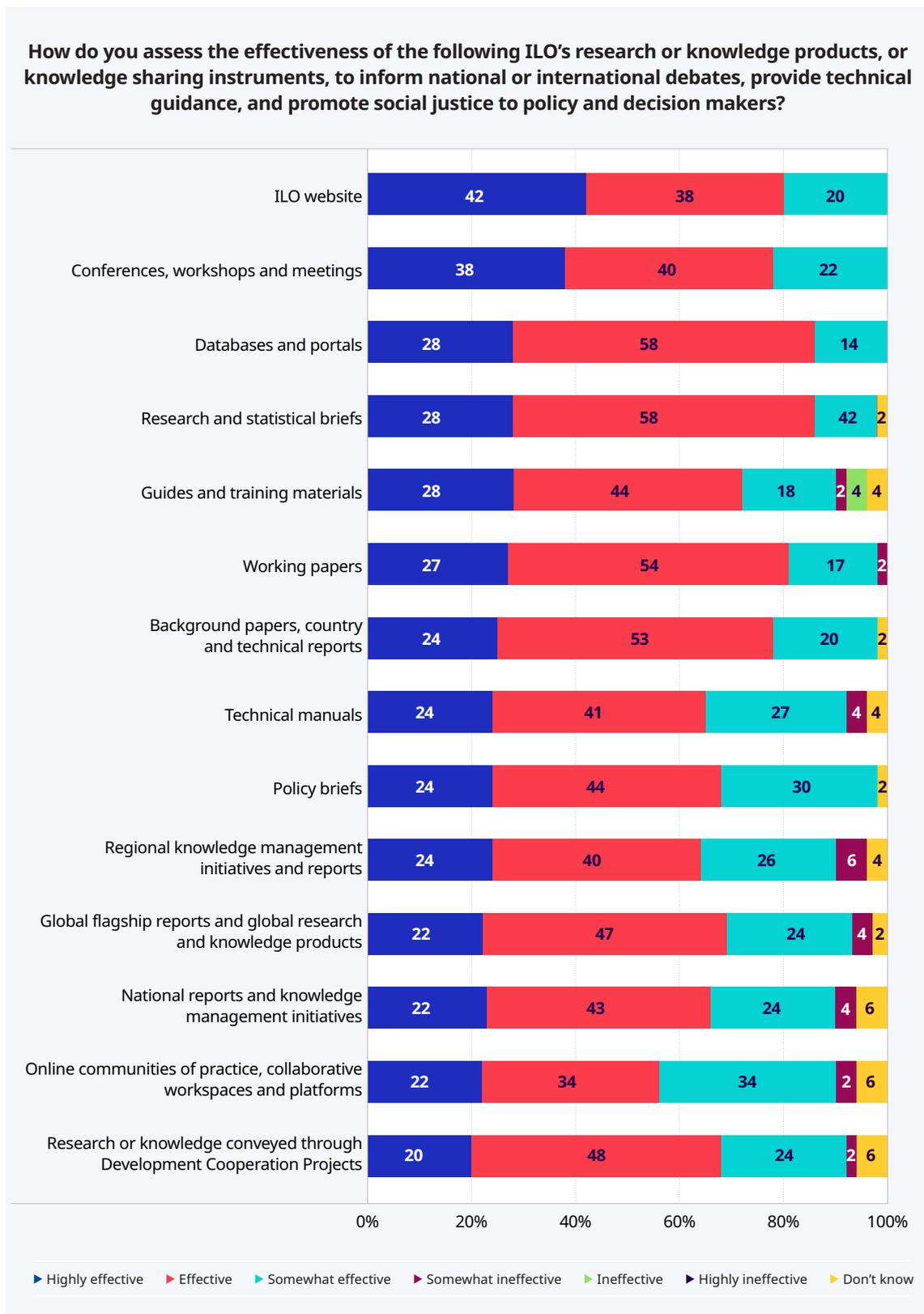
Source: INFOTEC, 2020.

► Figure 6. Visitors to institutional databases



Source: INFOTEC, 2020.

► **Figure 7. Constituents use of ILO research and knowledge products**



Source: Constituents Survey, 2020.

The majority of constituents responding to the survey said that all research and knowledge products or knowledge sharing instruments are effective. Aligned with the above web analytics, over 80 per cent of constituents say that the website, events, databases, research and statistical briefs, and guides and training materials are effective or very effective. However, the vast majority of constituents also say that working papers, background papers, and country and technical reports are effective or very effective, reinforcing informants' comments that although these types of products may not be actively utilized through the website, they remain important for the ILO's overall efforts.

Some informants highlighted another RS&KM approach, such as the Assessment-based National Dialogue methodology and the RS&KM dimension of the Vision Zero Fund, where they started small and slowly expanded to more countries, with various stages of feedback loops for an iterative process for reflection and adjustments. Although often not articulated in their designs, South-South cooperation organically emerged as participant countries shared experiences and encountered synergies.

Although RS&KM are more compartmentalized at HQ, the two are intertwined at field level. The meta-synthesis review revealed that the vast majority of RS&KM objectives in DC projects were achieved, noting that the outputs were under the control of the project and outcomes also included the participation of beneficiaries. The review also discovered that most successful cases occur when research has a clear purpose, as is generally the case with DC projects, and is integrated into a multidimensional approach with KM to support advocacy, improve evidence-based dialogue, and support decision-making. According to one informant, too often government officials and others are entrenched in old ways of thinking, evidence is key to change mindsets. For example, the FAIRWAY programme introduces broader research in seeking support from the government to conduct country-specific research, as well as regional research, to further ground dialogue and policy development in evidence. In addition, FAIRWAY importantly translates into Arabic relevant key non-project-generated documents, making them accessible to stakeholders across the region and increasing their use to inform ongoing efforts. It was reported that in Africa, organizations had been addressing youth employment in Africa through skills development. After the ILO's employment diagnostic analysis in Uganda, it emerged that the biggest factor in Africa's youth employment was the availability of jobs. This one study has reportedly influenced the ILO's regional approach to youth employment. The ILO's efforts to curb Uzbekistan's child labour and forced labour practices involve an iterative process of evidence-based dialogue with officials combined with regular monitoring of the situation and developing knowledge products that are then shared with officials and other stakeholders to inform policy decisions.

The quality dimensions of the ILO's RS&KM outputs were assessed with an adapted version of the RQ+ tool.⁸² These quality dimensions refer to three contextual factors that can affect the generation of knowledge products (data availability, supportive organizational research environment, and the stability of the political environment), and four research quality dimensions (scientific rigour, research legitimacy, research importance, and positioning for use). Together, these dimensions allow for the contextualization of knowledge production and the assessment, in addition to classical research quality parameters (i.e. methodological integrity), of criteria that support constituents' uptake and use (i.e. addressing social dialogue, inclusiveness, timeliness and actionability). Given the breadth of the ILO's knowledge production, this exercise was intended as a model for a comprehensive quality assessment process of the ILO's knowledge products to serve eventually as a basis for broader implementation after further consideration and refinement by the Organization.⁸³

The sample selection included the Fairway programme, *GWR*, Research Department working papers, the MyIPEC project in Myanmar, and Better Work as examples from the case studies that represent a range of knowledge products supporting the ILO's efforts according to approach and scope, departments, and geographical location. Fifteen products were then selected across types of knowledge products as defined by the ILO, such as flagship reports, working documents, policy briefs, brochures, and communications videos. Results from the RQ+ Tool should be understood as an example of how the process works, particularly given the limitations of this adapted version and its small sample size.⁸⁴

82 IDRC, [Research Quality Plus \(RQ+\) Assessment. Updated December 2017](#), 2014.

83 See Appendix 3 of the supporting documentation for the adapted framework that be a used a model for further comprehensive quality assessment of ILO's knowledge products.

84 For valid assessments of a programme or thematic area, IDRC suggests 10-20 projects be selected with 3-6 knowledge products per project.

This model of the RQ+ assessment adapted for the ILO showed that, for these five examples, research was conducted in generally medium-to-low risk contextual environments. The data environment was considered fairly developed, with the necessary instrumentation and measures for data collection and analysis, and credible data largely available. The overall average for research quality dimensions for this small sample was assessed as good (5.2 out of 8). As was evidenced by the surveys and interviews, this RQ+ model resulted in strong scores for their scientific rigor by demonstrating methodological integrity and research importance according to their contributions to key development priorities. When looking at the sample knowledge products’ research legitimacy, most did quite well with incorporating gender responsiveness and addressing social dialogue. However, also similar to survey and interview findings, the RQ+ results pointed to a need to improve research practices so as to be more inclusive of minorities and vulnerable groups, and to increase engagement with social partners and constituents. Positioning research for use was an area where, for this RQ+ sample, the results revealed the need to improve knowledge accessibility and sharing, as well as timeliness and actionability (table 4). As this was the first time this tool was utilized by the ILO, it is not surprising that some data were not available.

► **Table 4. Model for RQ+ assessment at ILO based on a small sample of ILO’s RS&KM products**

		Fairway	GWR	RDWP	My-IPEC	BW	Overall average	Standard deviation
Contextual factors								
CF 1	Data environment 1 (flourishing) to 4 (weak)	2	2	2	3	2	2.2	0.4
CF 2	Organizational research environment 1 (empowering) to 4 (restrictive)	1	2	2	3	1	1.8	0.8
CF 3	Political environment 1 (stable) to 4 (volatile)	3	3	2	2	2	2.4	0.5
Research quality dimensions 1 (unacceptable) to 8 (very good); IIA (insufficient information available)								
1. Scientific rigour	Methodological integrity	IIA	7.0	7.0	5.0	6.0	6.3	1.0
2. Research legitimacy	Addressing social dialogue	7.0	5.0	2.0	4.0	8.0	5.2	3.0
	Inclusiveness	IIA	5.0	3.0	6.0	3.0	4.3	1.5
	Gender	5.0	8.0	6.0	7.0	4.0	6.0	1.6
	Engagement with organizations and institutions in regions and countries	6.0	7.0	1.0	4.0	3.0	4.2	2.4
3. Research importance	Relevance	7.0	8.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.6	0.9
4. Positioning for use	Knowledge accessibility and sharing	7.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	4.0	4.4	1.7
	Timeliness and Actionability	IIA	3.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	0.8
Average per column and overall sample average for research quality dimensions		6.5	5.7	4.2	5.0	4.9	5.2	-

Notes: RDWP: Research Department working papers. My-PEC: Myanmar Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. BW: Better Work Programme - = nil.

3.3.3 Learning and collaboration within ILO

Fostering a learning culture is a work in progress. Despite some improvements over the decade, the ILO's ability to foster an effective individual and organizational learning culture is limited. In the survey, 51 per cent of staff disagree to some extent that ILO fosters a learning culture, the least favourable response of all the questions. During the evaluation, it was observed that the culture of the Organization is generally risk adverse, as many informants repeatedly confirmed the confidentiality of interviews and more than a few denied permission to be recorded, even when explained that it was strictly for note taking and not shared. In addition, some informants explicitly expressed concern about these dynamics and their limitations in fostering an open, safe learning culture, where staff feel comfortable sharing lessons learned or voicing differing opinions. A few pointed to the fact that many staff remain in their areas of expertise for over 10 years, leading to a stagnant learning culture and reinforcing the compartmentalization of efforts.

However, to create a flourishing organizational learning culture requires a focused and resourced effort. Some human resources components are in place, such as online and in-person learning for staff, and an induction and mentoring programme for new staff. However, the induction of new staff is limited and there are few mechanisms for staff to learn from each other on a permanent basis. Informal connections often occur with new staff cohorts, though they are based on each group's initiative and not an institutional process. Institutional mechanisms only partially support the Organization's commitment, such as knowledge sharing as a part of performance appraisal competencies to choose from, rather than considering it necessary or core to relevant positions. And informants provided conflicting information about a mentoring programme at the ILO. HRD describes having a mentoring programme that works well, whereas other informants say that it is not effective or minimal. Other mechanisms, such as platforms and CoPs, are important vehicles for supporting a learning culture and inclusive, productive dialogue supports building a trusting environment. However, at the core of shifting an organizational culture is institutional commitment and staff motivation.

ILO teamwork is not fully functional. In the context of a limited learning culture, only 35 per cent of staff surveyed agree or strongly agree that ILO is a collaborative Organization with effective teamwork and internal and external knowledge networks. Informants from the case studies confirmed that although collaboration occurs frequently at ILO, it is limited in nature. Many informants described silos and lack of knowledge about what others are doing, so that they are not learning from each other or ensuring complementary of work leading to duplicating efforts or even contradicting efforts. This lack of coordination and communication can have an impact on end-users. One informant described a situation where an advocate was using a report to make their argument, while the other person was making a counterargument referencing a different ILO report that had contradictory results and reportedly neither of the ILO staff members concerned was aware of the other's work.

The model for KM at the ILO is primarily based on professional connections and personal networks. This includes collaboration with RESEARCH, which is ad hoc and linked to inter-personal networks and connections rather than to the institutional setup and formal processes. This lack of streamlining sometimes impacts credibility and use of ILO research because reports might present inconsistent and even contractionary perspectives and positions.

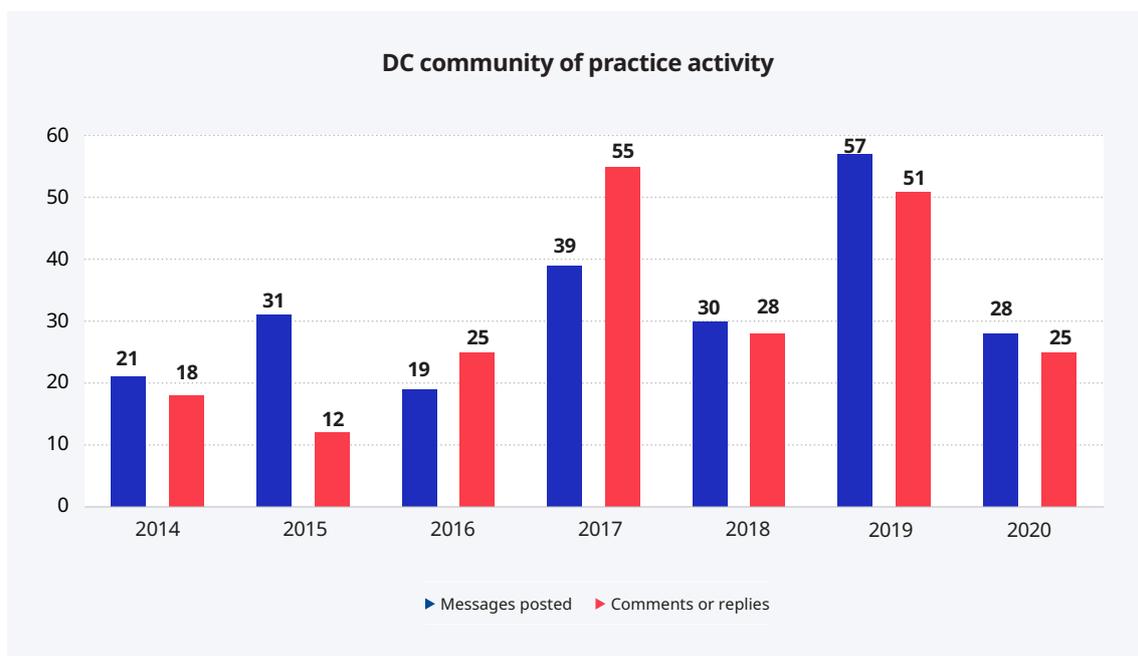
In terms of KM at the global level, GTT proved to be an efficient instrument to create new networking mechanisms with the ILO, although communications between HQ and the field could be further improved. While at the regional level, several RS&KM initiatives have organized effective teamwork and internal and external knowledge networks, but with limited institutionalization and sustainability. The Asia-Pacific Knowledge Sharing Platform had six thriving CoPs and was considered a good practice within the Organization. However, after various proposals by the Asia Pacific team, it was never brought to scale across the Organization.

In terms of KM in the field, some felt that there was, at times, a lack of a collaborative dynamic from HQ. This disconnect was noted by a few from outside of the Office, who felt decisions negotiated within the team were not then effectively communicated to the field. In addition, staff feel that the lack of streamlining of HQ's requests on the field's results adds to the workload in the field offices, and can sometimes be

significantly time consuming. However, there were pockets of well received collaboration between HQ and the field, such as with Ethiopia, in which the ILO delivered as One.⁸⁵

The Asia Pacific Knowledge Sharing platform offered a best practice with their suite of functions that supported efficiency and learning among its 7,000 members. For example, the platform offered an integrated online report facility that standardized drafting, submitting and searching for all mission reports and was accessible to all staff. It has a repository of over 15,000 mission reports that provide ILO staff with information on the history of activities which in turn informs their strategies and interactions with partners and stakeholders. Other functions were systematizing and consolidating online workplans, calendars, contact information, project information and capturing key lessons learned when staff leave their post. This ensures institutional knowledge and enhances strategic, efficient efforts in the region. Informants stated that the expansion of this practice across the Organization has been discussed, with no result at the time of this report. They pointed to a lack of sponsorship or budget and said that they continue to pursue potential avenues for realizing this institutionally. Another good knowledge sharing practice to which the informants frequently referred regards the ILO DC community of practice, which has grown to more than 400 members in the ILO (figure 8). However, some challenges remain, including limited capacities for moderation affecting the focus and effectiveness of discussions or follow-up for trainings that would facilitate continued interactions among and across cohorts. In 2020, two topics generated some level of exchange, *Better Work: Measuring progress of our sustainability efforts and Innovation during COVID-19*.

► **Figure 8. Number of posts per year on the DC CoP**



Source: Evaluation Survey, 2020.

Nevertheless, senior management can establish effective teamwork mechanisms, such as with the RS&KM dimension of the response to the COVID-19 crisis and the internal collaboration modalities upon which it relied. The increased number of virtual calls and meetings using Skype for Business and Microsoft Team has improved communications across teams and between the field and HQ. One regional office reported increasing the frequency of team calls with HQ to strategize about a response to COVID-19, as the crisis was unfolding. Others highly valued the first virtual global meeting between RO, DWT and CO Directors.

85 ILO, *ILO Programme Implementation 2016–17*, GB.332/PFA/1 (2018), para. 86.

Although that meeting occurred prior to the pandemic, they believe it is a good practice to be replicated, particularly in light of the current context. These online meetings have been very effective to facilitate cross departmental communications. The team continues to have consistent and frequent calls. The GTT reportedly hold global conference calls that are well received because they help to remove the silos. Although for a few, the COVID-19 crisis has increased their workload to such an extent that they reduced the number of meetings due to a lack of time. Conducting regular virtual meetings that include diverse participants and employ knowledge sharing tools will lead to enhanced institutional learning and collaboration.

3.3.4 RS&KM as a strategic tool for outreach and credibility

RS&KM is a strategic tool that contributes to outreach and credibility. The ILO's RS&KM supports and facilitates the ILO's credibility and outreach. The research is well respected and utilized because of its quality and neutrality, although a few informants expressed concern that research was often imbalanced in so far as it focuses on labour markets and not enough on demand-side issues, such as challenges related to productivity and an enabling business environment.

In fact, over 76 per cent of constituents agree or strongly agree that the ILO's research and knowledge management strategies and approaches served as a strategic tool for outreach and credibility; while only 41 per cent of staff say the same. However, as outlined in the coherence section, it remains a challenge for ILO to measure the extent of reach their research and knowledge products achieve.

Knowledge management activities, such as publications, knowledge portals, and the development of processes and methodologies, and events are often the ILO's first point of entry when working with a country. Informants for EPIC and PAGE consider the practical, user-friendly tools collected and generated through the initiatives to support concrete actions are of critical added value to their efforts. Others mentioned conferences and other large events as points for developing new connections and building relationships, sometimes leading to new donor interest or further support for their initiatives in general.

However, a few shortcomings were found. The Gateway was introduced to consolidate, streamline, and provide a one-stop-shop to ILO knowledge, with the intention, in part, to help develop more consistent RS&KM efforts across the house. However, its realization has been limited and its ongoing maintenance inadequate due to resources constraints and the level of ongoing efforts required to standardize policy work and update much older portions. As recently as at the time of this evaluation, a web portal was developed to compile and structure over 200 knowledge products generated by ILO in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, locating these knowledge products on ILO's main content repository (LABORDOC) was not easy, particularly with inconsistent tagging and limited integration into existing systems.

Credibility is maintained because of the ILO's ongoing efforts to conduct itself with integrity. Pressures from external forces can affect the ILO's ability to remain independent and reputable. Some informants considered certain research less credible when certain perspectives were not included. Also reported, was a case where a government official tried to exert their interests on a particular research project. These types of pressures are not unusual when stakeholders feel concerned about the impact of the information. The fact that there is such a high level of agreement on ILO's integrity by constituents and partners points to ILO staff generally managing well the complexity of these situations.

3.3.5 RS&KM facilitates collaboration with partners

Collaboration with partners is favorably assessed. There are various instances of collaboration between the ILO and external partners that utilize RS&KM strategies and approaches. Often, these partners are other UN organizations, in which case their successful joint efforts support the UN reform and the goal of building One UN. Collaboration within the UN system are primarily joint research and publications, such as SKILLS collaboration with UNESCO, the World Bank and the OECD to collect and generate knowledge products on the digitalization of skills development and the digital economy. The ILO OSH Programme is working in collaboration with the World Health Organization, New York University and others to generate a new technology that provides more accurate statistics on particular diseases. While CINTERFOR is working

with UNESCO and the World Bank on a global survey to gather good practices and encourage knowledge sharing that will help countries mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on technical vocational education and training and enable continued skills development.⁸⁶

Collaboration with the UN also involves cross-cutting themes or particular global themes. The RS&KM strategies utilized offer an opportunity to strengthen relationships among institutions and increase reach and use. The SSTC team works closely at the global level with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation and is actively involved in key UN conferences on SSTC. Several SSTC projects are also implemented in collaboration with UN organizations, such as the Mano River Union project with the UNFPA and Oxfam that is developing guidance for women entrepreneurs. In another case, the ILO has been elected co-convenor for the UN Task Force Recommendation No. 2 on knowledge management in Africa. Other examples are the EPIC and PAGE coalitions. The collaborative and inclusive nature of these efforts builds more ownership by partners, inspiring members' further commitment to support their efforts. Through their close collaboration in implementing their work, the organizations discuss and negotiate details of their efforts, each leading in aspects that relate to their expertise and mandate. Informants identified four main components to their success: 1) mutual respect; 2) clearly defined roles and responsibilities based on the strength of each organization; 3) clear ongoing communications; and 4) inclusive, participatory consensus building among partners.

3.3.6 Cross-cutting themes benefit from RS&KM strategies and approaches

Human rights and gender equality as cross-cutting learning components. Fundamentally, the ILO was mandated to promote universal and lasting peace based on social justice by ensuring that labour standards and rights are respected by member States. Therefore, labour rights have been considered a human right since ILO's inception. The ILO constitution states that "all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity."⁸⁷ In reflecting more recently on its accomplishments and challenges during its 100 years, ILO was struck by the lack of progress on women's equality and empowerment in the world of work and launched the Women at Work Centenary Initiative,⁸⁸ reaffirming its commitment to gender equality and its more recent commitment to equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work for persons from other vulnerable situations in its Centenary Declaration.⁸⁹ These commitments were then institutionally prioritized through the P&B policy outcome 6: Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work.⁹⁰

Interestingly, the constituents were twice as positive as staff about the ILO's focus on human rights and gender equality. According to the surveys, 80 per cent of constituents strongly agreed or agreed with the ILO's research (80 percent) and of knowledge management (82 percent) targets human rights as cross-cutting learning components. Whereas, 35 per cent of staff said that RS&KM was doing very well or well when targeting human rights as cross-cutting learning components. Survey responses for gender equality were similar with over 77 per cent of constituents rating the ILO as targeting gender equality as a cross-cutting learning component against 44 per cent of staff.

The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality has clearly defined the specific roles, responsibilities, indicators and targets to ensure gender equality is mainstreamed. In addition, the Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch (GED) supports the custodians of the performance indicators to achieve their targets. Tools have been developed to facilitate operationalization, such as manuals, check lists, and guidance notes. The DC manual, regular budget technical cooperation (RBTC) and SSTC have incorporated gender and, to a lesser extent, aspects of equality for other vulnerable groups.

86 ILO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Bank Group (WBG), *UN-UNESCO-WBG Joint Survey on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Skills Development during the time of COVID-19*, 2020.

87 ILO, Constitution and Declaration of Philadelphia, 1944.

88 ILO, Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21, 2017.

89 ILO, ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, ILC 108-PR6A-En.docx (2019).

90 ILO, *Programme and Budget for 2020–21: Programme of work and results framework*, GB.337/PFA/1/1 (2019).

However, these gender sensitive tools have not been used consistently. For example, the DC manual and the RBTC projects integrate aspects of gender equality throughout their guidance and yet of the 37 DC projects reviewed for the meta-synthesis, only 21 included at least one gender sensitive output, with no significant change over time. Gender-sensitive RS&KM outputs tend to be mainly publications, the collection and presentation of sex-disaggregated data, and the inclusion of gender issues in training materials. Apart from the production of RS&KM outputs that enhance the knowledge base on gender issues or advocate for gender equality, DC projects tend not to present strong evidence on the effective promotion of gender equality. Although, when gender is mainstreamed into project logframes and implementation, DC projects show significant, identifiable contributions to the promotion of gender equality. For example, when Better Work did not initially include gender in its logframe but later revised it, factual evidence was present and Better Work was able to contribute to the reduction of sexual harassment in most beneficiary countries and to reduce the gender pay gap in factories in Haiti, Nicaragua and Viet Nam. Nonetheless, there are a limited number of projects or global programmes that explore the deeper complexities of gender equality.

The larger flagship reports have addressed more nuanced analysis of gender issues in recent publications. The *Global Wage Report 2018/2019* analyses the factors behind the gender pay gap and offers policy advice on how to achieve gender parity. *WESO Trends for Women 2017* examine the gap between women's and men's access to the labour market and, once in the labour market, women's lack of access to quality jobs.⁹¹

The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) supports its members with concrete knowledge tools intended to accelerate closing the gender pay gap across all countries and all sectors. It does this by building a broad coalition of actors and champions at global, regional and local levels who support governments, and employers' and workers' organizations to take concrete steps towards achieving gender parity.⁹²

The ILO's projects have made progress in broadening and deepening understanding of and attention to gender equality, and continues to develop and refine its research and monitoring tools. Progress can be seen in contexts such as with Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), where a recent evaluation pointed to limited attention to gender issues. Consequently, PAGE has begun to emphasize gender as an important cross-cutting theme in their recent strategic plan through actions, such as supporting green industry and innovation that includes the development of national green industrial policies, and action plans supporting countries to foster gender awareness in industries and utilizing new tools such as the Green Economy Progress Measurement Framework that has helped to strengthen the gender dimension in some contexts.⁹³ Also recently, the monitor of COVID-19 has been increasingly focusing on differences in experiences by gender and now includes a section dedicated to the disproportionate impact of the world's response to the pandemic on gender equality.

Other aspects of human rights that the ILO specifically addresses are persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, as well as indigenous and tribal peoples. The ILO has committed to supporting equal opportunities and treatment for persons with disabilities and others in vulnerable situations (or non-discrimination in earlier documents), also reflected in the Centennial Declaration and Output 6.4 of the P&B reflect a strategic priority for this cross-cutting issue. These efforts are coordinated by The Gender, Equality and Diversity (GED) branch and operationalized through its Disabilities Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2014–2017, with the intention of guiding the ILO's efforts towards fully mainstreaming issues and support for the inclusion of people with disabilities across the Organization.⁹⁴ However, the data showed few examples of RS&KM targeting or involving people with disabilities. In fact, the ILO has committed limited resources and organizational priority to developing the research and knowledge tools necessary to support this effort.

Since the 1920s, the ILO has also been addressing issues supporting indigenous and tribal peoples and is responsible⁹⁵ for the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).⁹⁶ An action plan created

91 ILO, World Employment Social Outlook (WESO): Trends for Women 2017, 2017.

92 More information is available on EPIC website, <https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/the-coalition/>.

93 PAGE (Partnership for Action on Green Economy), *PAGE Strategy 2021–2030 and Delivery Plan 2021–2025 (Phase 1)*, UNEP, 2020.

94 ILO, *Disability and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2014–2017*, 2015.

95 More information is available on the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples website, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/indigenous-tribal/lang-en/index.htm>.

96 ILO, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 1989 (No. 169), 1989.

in 2015 outlines an integrated approach to addressing inequality and discrimination of indigenous and tribal peoples.⁹⁷ This is reflected in the Indigenous and Tribal People's dashboard coordinated by Social Protection.⁹⁸ Similarly, youth are a vulnerable group and the Youth Employment dashboard managed by the Employment Policy Department shares knowledge products on youth employment.⁹⁹

RS&KM in South-South and Triangular Cooperation. SSTC is another institutional priority, mentioned in the P&B 2020–21 as a mechanism for capacity building and as an important component for effective DC. The SSTC programme works collaboratively with others in the UN system, including actively participating in key global SSTC conferences, such as BAPA+40 (the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation).¹⁰⁰

As a cross-cutting theme, the SSTC programme managed by PARDEV has developed a number of tools and guidance to support the integration of SSTC into efforts across the ILO. The South-South Meeting Point provides a virtual, multilingual space where people can meet and engage from around the globe. They also manage a small fund to directly support a few projects specifically focusing on SSTC.

Collaborative efforts, such as EPIC, PAGE and FAIRWAY often utilize SSTC for peer-to-peer learning, sharing lessons learned and interactive engagement. PAGE, for example, emphasizes capacity building that includes knowledge sharing among cohorts attending the academy or other trainings, reinforcing SSTC. Likewise, CINTERFOR emphasizes capacity building and its mission is to develop a permanent learning and SSTC community among national vocational training institutions.¹⁰¹ Therefore, SSTC is integrated into their overall approach and strategies, facilitating SSTC that can be sustained in the long-term. CoPs also integrate SSTC into their activities, encouraging interactive exchanges and expanding connections. The youth employment CoPs bring together practitioners in face-to-face activities as well as virtually to brainstorm on solutions to challenges and advances in developing common understandings about how to approach youth employment in Africa.

PAGE also supports SSTC through direct and in-depth connections between countries. Although ad hoc, PAGE has connected some partner countries so that they can learn practical and specific ideas from each other's experiences, through site visits, ongoing dialogue, and presenting at each other's conferences, among other activities. One such example is between Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan, the two countries exchanged experiences and thinking about green economy policy development and practice.¹⁰²

However, RS&KM was not fully mainstreamed into programmes and projects. Programme and project documents, results frameworks, theories of change, and other corporate monitoring and accountability documents do not clearly address RS&KM. Therefore, distinguishing specific RS&KM contributions is currently a challenge.

3.4. Efficiency

Determining efficiency for RS&KM is challenging. The budgeting and operational tools are not currently designed to distinguish RS&KM investments and activities. Therefore, there is a lack of clear RS&KM strategies or goals within designs, and distinction of RS&KM activities in financial accountability. Collaboration and teamwork within the Organization is also limited, with strong compartmentalization at HQ and uneven flow between HQ and the field.

RS&KM contributions to Decent Work outcomes. RS&KM is essential in supporting the ILO's results-based framework. RS&KM components are clearly integrated into efforts across all policy outcomes in the P&B and Strategic Policy Framework (SPF), which leads to their significant support to the overarching intended

97 ILO, *Indigenous peoples' rights for inclusive and sustainable development*, GB.325/POL/2 (2015).

98 <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/indigenous-tribal/lang-en/index.htm>.

99 More information is available on the ILO's Youth Employment website, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/lang-en/index.htm>.

100 ILO, *SSTC in the ILO and international frameworks for development cooperation*, n.d.

101 More information is available on the ILO/CINTERFOR website, <https://www.oitcinterfor.org/en/general/mission-vision-and-functions>.

102 PAGE, *Partnership for Action on Green Economy: Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan*, n.d.

long-term impact of “Social justice through decent work: A fair, inclusive and secure future of work with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all.”¹⁰³

3.4.1 Resource allocation for RS&KM widely varies and is often unclear

Resource allocation in RS&KM. Human resources are a critical component of efficiency. According to the survey, about half of the staff surveyed agree or strongly agree that the time required to develop or contribute to research and knowledge products is efficient in supporting their contribution to informing and influencing target audiences. Although, overall, they rated the time efficiency for research slightly higher than that for knowledge products (figure 9).

When looking at cost effectiveness or value-for-money, there is insufficient data. The structure of the P&B 2020–21 and financial accounting are oriented around departments rather than outcomes. No specific distinction is made, therefore, for funding of RS&KM within an outcome, programme or initiative. For the 2014–2015 biennium, the P&B included for the first time, a budget line specifically for the Research Department. While the other research activities were included in the overall budgets of the relevant policy departments. The Research Department’s budget started in 2014–2015 at US\$13.5 million¹⁰⁴ and has increased to the current budget of \$20 million.¹⁰⁵

Budgets relating specifically to RS&KM in the policy departments are extremely limited and mostly reported as estimates by the informants, rather than being supported by clear documentation. This was the case when searching for the budget for gender equality, the reporting structure simply does not account specifically for RS&KM activities. Even when the entire initiative focused on RS&KM, such as flagship reports, there were still components to additional knowledge products and their dissemination that were not included in the budgets provided because the responsibility was with DCOMM and not with the implementing department.

The meta-synthesis also found that not all DC projects included clear RS&KM distinctions. For those projects that do clearly define RS&KM, their outputs and outcomes tend to be delivered in an economical way. However, delays are frequent notably due to the set-up of project teams and their turnover rates, the effective allocation of resources, and coordination issues.

In response to the P&B structure, budget decisions are determined by departmental heads. This leads to colleagues within a department actively lobbying for their budget, often feeling like they are competing with colleagues rather than finances being allocated by outcome where collaboration across departments would be necessary. A less prominent factor emerged regarding the risk-averse environment, where a few informants were hesitant to share costs or only shared them in confidence for fear of management reducing their funding.

Although it is challenging to know exactly how much funding goes to different elements of research across the ILO, it was possible to discern that funding for research varies dramatically. The Research Department receives a similar budget to other larger departments,¹⁰⁶ for example, it manages WESO 2020, which costs approximately \$1.4 million. INWORK manages the GWRs with a budget of approximately \$1 million,¹⁰⁷ a portion of which is often unanticipated due to last-minute reallocations at the end of the budget cycle. Although both are highly regarded and highly used, the almost double budget size and ability to plan spending from the beginning of the research process leads to smoother implementation and a higher production value of knowledge products.

103 GB.337/PFA/1/1

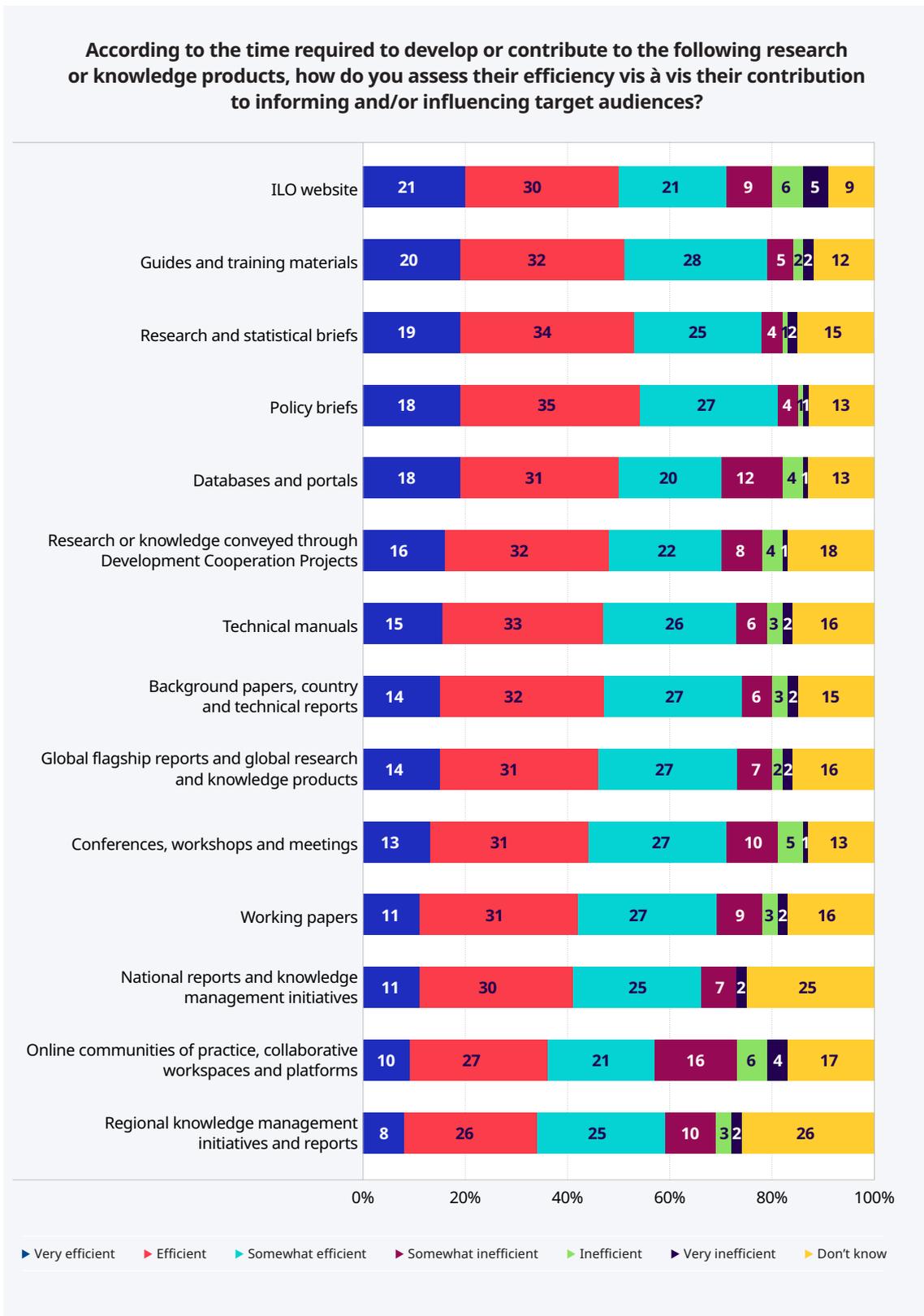
104 GB.317/PFA/1/1

105 GB.337/PFA/1/1

106 GB.337/PFA/1/1

107 Estimates provided by WORKQUALITY who are currently responsible for both reports. The calculations include staff and non-staff costs. They do not include communications and publication costs.

► Figure 9. Efficiency assessment of the ILO's RS&KM products



Source: Evaluation Staff Survey, 2020.

Comparatively, ILO's budgets are far lower than other UN agency's flagship reports. The UNDP's Human Development Report costs between \$5 million and \$7 million per year including staff, office rent and other unspecified expenses.¹⁰⁸

Nonetheless, ILO has made some strides in improving its efficiency. Institutional databases are one contribution to improving the cost efficiency of ILO, with most institutional databases developed in a cost-efficient manner. However, integration between databases is not necessarily building on long-term efficiency gains and cost-effectiveness analysis. Some systems and tools have recently been introduced that improve efficiency for publishing, such as BiblioLIVE and the smaller PublishOne.¹⁰⁹ INFOTEC oversees the scope, cost, and alignment of institutional needs for all new IT projects and PROCUREMENT ensures contractual viability and risk mitigation. However, there is no central committee to coordinate strategy on efficient publishing practices, marketing or project implementation. Sometimes less cost-efficient solutions are used, such as SharePoint instead of PublishOne, and, although BiblioLIVE is intended to centralize data processing, its use is not optimal at this stage.

The role of funding mechanisms in RS&KM. Donors are reportedly most interested in stimulating change, more specifically the outcomes and impacts to which their support has contributed. Although funding rarely supports a specific RS&KM initiative or activity on its own, informants report funding for RS&KM efforts occur as an integrated contribution necessary for achieving the desired outcomes. Similarly, funding channeled through most ILO departments often includes at least one component of research or KM in country projects, which aligns with donors' interest in outcomes-based programming and allows for more flexibility in the outputs that lead to the outcome.

The Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) was introduced in P&B 2008–2009 to address serious budgetary issues at that time and has become a significant funding modality and has currently accumulated \$27.3 million.¹¹⁰ As an alternative to funding specifically linked to a particular ILO effort, RBSA allows for unearmarked funds to be utilized in a strategic manner to support ILO's broader Decent Work Agenda through DC/technical cooperation projects that can flexibly respond to country needs.¹¹¹ Given that some informants report challenges when attempting to acquire funding for RS&KM, they consider RBSA resources critical for funding these components. One informant said that gaining RBSA funding is like "winning the lottery", because of the flexibility it offers. In fact, some see RBSA as crucial for ILO's RS&KM at the level of the policy departments.

However, there is some space for improvement related to the selection process for RBSA funds, which some informants feel is not transparent. Starting with the lack of information about the criteria for selection. One criterion might be the need to expand RS&KM in a country where specific donor funding is not available. According to a recent review of RBSA,¹¹² programming guidance is broad and has been prioritized over strategic guidance, limiting the notion of a stronger institutional performance through knowledge sharing and applying lessons learned to other projects. In addition, as with all funding mechanisms, what is requested is what is reported. In the case of the RBSA, similar to other reporting mechanisms at ILO, RS&KM activities are not clearly articulated and monitored.

When looking across all funding streams, informants report developing a monitoring practice that focuses on what the funding sources require, creating an inconsistency in quality and type of information monitored and reported on, with RS&KM not clearly identified. For instance, in partnering with the World Bank, BetterWork reportedly aligns its efforts and reporting to the World Bank's expectations on transparency with no separation of RS&KM activities. The FAIRWAY programme has developed a best practice of enhancing learning by establishing a collaborative relationship with the donor. The project's biannual meetings are

108 UNDP, *Evaluation of the Contribution of the Global and Regional Human Development Reports to Public Policy Processes*, Independent Evaluation Office (New York: 2015).

109 BiblioLIVE is a system initiated 10 years ago and launched in 2019. It stores all publications, including current and past databases to communicate with constituents. It is meant to become the Organization's database. PublishOne is a platform that supports the production of ILO working papers in the same format as flagship publications. It can also support the publications of documents at a lower cost than SharePoint.

110 More information is available on the PARDEV website, <https://www.ilo.org/pardev/donors/rbsa/lang-en/index.htm>.

111 ILO, *Core Voluntary Funding (RBSA) for ILO development cooperation*, 2019.

112 Egger, P. *Review of the RBSA funding modality* (ILO, 2020).

an important component of the learning and feedback loops within the project's process and common understanding of the context and need, which improved relationships for further funding, potentially including additional RS&KM.

Another common concern is the uncertainty of sustainability when funding comes directly from the donors. This is because donor interests and circumstances shift and funding for certain projects may be discontinued. For instance, the global programmes are fully funded by donors and if funds were discontinued, by implication the funding for the database and research related to them would cease, unless it could be acquired from elsewhere.

3.4.2 Partnerships and governance for RS&KM strategies and approaches

Strategic partners for promoting RS&KM. Partnerships are key for ensuring relevance and use. The evidence suggests successful collaborations with external partnerships overall and for promoting RS&KM. Partners are carefully selected because of a particular need and complementarity – such as, a combination of those from academia, other UN agencies, among others. However, constituents are less sure, with about half agreeing or strongly agreeing that the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches identify and engage with the right strategic partners to collaborate with and to promote RS&KM. Although only a few responded, the constituents' open-ended responses in the survey state that these partnerships should be more reliant on trade unions to help select local partners in the field to ensure less bias.

For some ILO efforts, the RS&KM design is central to strengthening partnerships and collaborations. As mentioned in the Effectiveness section, EPIC, PAGE and FAIRWAY exemplify ways in which RS&KM supports partner collaboration from the start. The biennial conference on deregulating for decent work is another good practice, where scholars and policy-makers present high-quality papers. When donors, implementing partners or others are included in regular discussions genuinely addressing issues, relevance and use of knowledge is improved.

Approaches for identification, development, creation and use of research and knowledge. ILO has designed and implemented many different RS&KM strategies and approaches that are often disjointed or not scaled across the Organization when good practices are identified, leading to limited overall efficiency with sub-optimal achievements. Scaling up some of the good practices that have emerged from the evaluation, such as CoP, the global content repository, or the multi-dimensional approach to RS&KM in DC projects, has reportedly been discussed and intended, however, it has not yet materialized.

Constituents responding to the survey confirmed this perception with just over half agreeing or strongly agreeing that the ILO has in place the most applicable research strategies and approaches to facilitate identification, development, creation and use of research, meaning that just less than half feel less positively.

Furthermore, the ILO has allocated limited resources to IT development and technology for collaboration. Although the P&B budget for information and technology in a biennium ranged from \$27.7 million¹¹³ in 2010–11 to a peak of \$50.3 in 2014–15¹¹⁴ and at the end of the period of the evaluation was \$47.5 million for 2018–19.¹¹⁵ The staffing and estimated budgets specifically for RS&KM was quite limited.

Office coordination of RS&KM. Knowledge sharing within and outside of the Office is a main factor in the effectiveness of RS&KM in the ILO. Knowledge sharing within the Office refers to inter-departmental HQ knowledge sharing and interregional exchanges. Research is integral to the ILO and effectively utilized by stakeholders, yet there is no overarching coordination to ensure synergistic, strategic institutional efforts. KM leadership and governance has been even more limited, with informants reporting that it is not sufficiently endorsed and promoted by senior management, starting with the lack of KMCT/SKT sustainable governance mechanisms and sufficient staff to ensure widespread shared ownership and contribution to KM implementation. KM activities also lacked sufficient funding to appropriately operationalize and

113 ILO, Programme and Budget proposals for 2010–11, GB.304/PFA/3 (2009).

114 GB.317/PFA/1/1

115 ILO, Programme and Budget proposals for 2018–19, GB.329/PFA/1/1 (2017).

implement the necessary components that would establish a more robust KM across the Organization. Some informants preferred the structure of the tripartite board related to the Institute, stating it ensured better governance of the research agenda. The current Research Strategy has introduced regular tripartite meetings, however, reportedly they have not been implemented as expected.

Knowledge sharing at the global level is an effective strategy to increase RS&KM results to influence the global debate on the world of work. With COVID-19, the RS&KM effort was efficient and effective due to the clear, single message from leadership that translated into top priority across the Organization. This type of clarity and continued support from the Office in other key management issues will greatly support its One ILO initiative.

Management of RS&KM. RS&KM is integral and integrated across much of ILO, requiring strong collaboration and teamwork for optimal efficiency and effectiveness. However, this collaboration remains limited mostly to the interpersonal level and does not reach the institutional level. As mentioned in the Coherence and Effectiveness sections, informants communicate and collaborate well with colleagues who are known and trusted. The survey results also corroborate this limited collaboration, with less than half of staff saying they agree or strongly agree that RS&KM is collaborative at HQ and about 30 per cent in regional and country offices.

The Research Department focuses on topics that inform constituents on labour and employment issues with the intention that the research also informs policy formulation.¹¹⁶ Other research – from flagship reports to country specific studies – is conducted across the Organization. These efforts require collaboration with different branches and departments. Some informants felt strongly that research is significantly improved when people from different perspectives and disciplines are included; raising the question of diversity of staffing as well as the make-up of a particular research team, and the balance between HQ and field office staff. In fact, collaboration mechanisms between HQ and field are not robust. Staff tend to communicate and collaborate only with those who they know and feel comfortable with. Collaboration becomes ad hoc and according to interpersonal relationships.

The RS&KM dimension of the ILO's response to COVID-19 was one good practice that was repeatedly mentioned from various parts of the Organization. Informants say senior management's single-minded message, along with urgency and prioritization at all levels is critical to successful collaboration. The flexibility in budgetary needs also emerged as key to a successful process. For example, some informants mentioned the benefits of virtual meetings in creating opportunities for more communication across locations. The flexibility in staff coverage has also improved in a few cases, such as when a staff member was so busy during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic that another staff member stepped in and reportedly gained important information from the field by connecting with the ROs, DWTs and COs in these meetings.

The governance of research and KM is also limited. Although high-quality research and knowledge products are developed and shared, there is a lack of coordination across the ILO. Internal informants are frustrated by the lack of centralized, easily accessed databases with ILO documents, such as working papers, lessons learned, and mission reports. External informants are frustrated by the ILO's inability to provide clear understanding of results that may differ depending on the ILO report referenced.

High expectations for KM at the ILO confront institutional constraints and organizational shortcomings that generate inefficiencies. Due to management decisions, the KMCT was reorganized as the SKT with less budget and less staffing with the responsibility to implement an expanded workload. In addition, the lack of clear roles and responsibilities across the Organization and insufficient high-level champions to spearhead knowledge-sharing limits reach and operationalization across the Organization. For instance, when looking at the guidelines for ToRs or project documents, there is some space for RS&KM, but operationalization has remained limited (see also Impact section).

Monitoring, evaluating and reporting results on RS&KM. The lack of distinction in the P&B and operational guidelines leads to limited monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) of outcomes related specifically to RS&KM strategies and approaches. In general, the ILO reports well on the outputs or activities accomplished

¹¹⁶ More information is available on the Research Department's website, <https://www.ilo.org/global/research/about/lang-en/index.htm>.

in Programme Implementation reports. The GB reports on the many Decent Work activities that have been accomplished throughout the year, as well as some outcomes, such as country employment policies developed or improved.¹¹⁷ Although results were not specifically categorized as RS&KM, it is possible to cull some outputs that relate to RS&KM. For example, one result reported constituents in 11 member States designed and implemented dialogue platforms to contribute to the promotion of Decent Work, such as PAGE in Peru where the Ministry of the Environment developed a public-private technical committee to discuss and agree upon environmental sustainability policy measures.¹¹⁸

MER outcomes for RS&KM are even more challenging because there is no clear articulation of RS&KM in projects, programmes and initiatives; often lacking a strategy, framework or ToC that specifically identifies RS&KM. As discussed in the coherence section, the policy outcome indicators are not sufficiently capturing the changes they intend to contribute to or affect. For example, the meta-synthesis concluded that RS&KM components in DC projects are not satisfactorily monitored and evaluated as they focus on delivery of outputs rather than measuring the changes expressed in outcomes.

3.5. Likelihood of Impact

Impact assessment is frequently a difficult exercise that faces many well-known challenges stressed by several evaluation informants. Archetypal constraints include the increased influence of a range of factors, partners, and stakeholders along the causal pathways towards development outcomes, reducing the possibility of attributing achievements to any single initiative. A second common issue relates to the timespan required to move from research and knowledge to policy use, and then implementation, and then to social benefits. Another potential limitation is the lack of adequate indicators, baselines, and targets to measure progress at the outcome level. Bearing such methodological constraints in mind, this section builds on anecdotal evidence, analysis, and expert judgement to deliver an assessment of the likelihood of impact contributed by the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches.

3.5.1 RS&KM Influence on Global Agendas and Policy

The evaluation found evidence of a contribution of ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches to influencing global agendas and policy. One notable avenue through which the ILO contributes to global agendas and policies is through a participation in the work of the G20. At the request of the G20, ILO contributes data, analysis and policy recommendations on labour, and economic and social issues. Since 2010, the ILO has delivered more than 30 reports.¹¹⁹ Examples of uptake include the ILO's policy proposal in the 2019 report *Work for a Brighter Future*¹²⁰ that was taken up in the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration *Shaping a Human-Centered Future of Work*.¹²¹ Several joint publications have also informed G20 discussions, such as the *G20 International Migration and Displacement Trends Report*¹²² produced in 2018 jointly with the OECD, IOM and UNHCR and acknowledged by the G20 Leaders' declaration on *Building consensus for fair and sustainable development*.

Another avenue for RS&KM to contribute setting global agendas and influencing policies is through UN and international partner organizations. Significant evidence can be found of the ILO's research and knowledge products cited by UN agencies and informing global development dialogue. For example, the UN World Social Report issued in January 2020 on *Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World*¹²³ uses ILO's research and knowledge products and notes the importance of facilitating access to education and decent

117 ILO, *Programme and Budget for 2020–21*, GB.338/PFA/1 (2020).

118 GB.338/PFA/1

119 More information is available on the ILO's G20 reports website, <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/multilateral-system/g20/reports/lang-en/index.htm>.

120 ILO, *Work for a brighter future: Global Commission on the Future of Work*, 2019.

121 More information is available on the G20 2019 Meeting website, <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2019/2019-g20-labour.html>.

122 OECD/ILO/IOM/UNHCR, *G20 International Migration and Displacement Trends Report*, 2018.

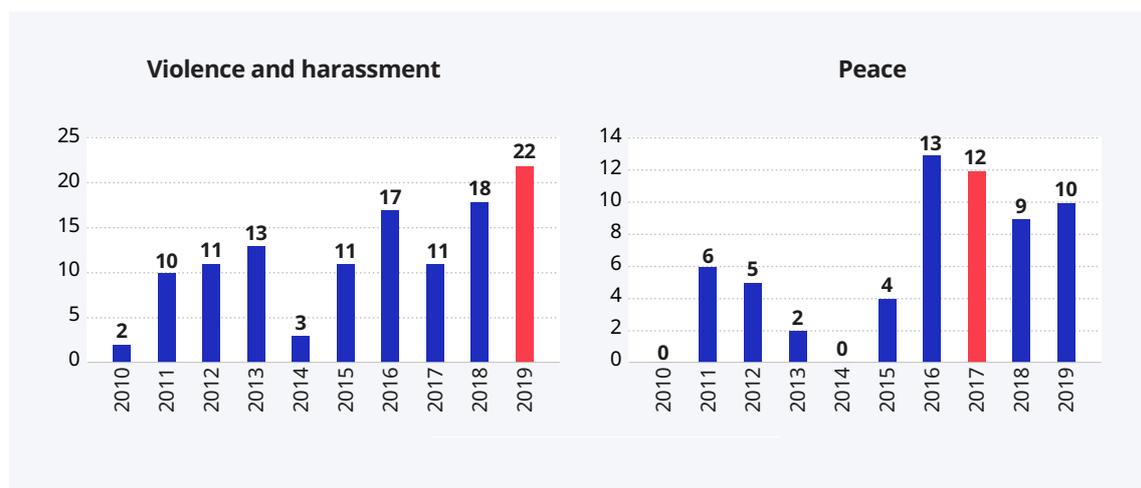
123 UN-DESA, *World Social Report. Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World*, 2020.

employment for reducing inequalities. Other evidence of the uptake of ILO's RS&KM can be found in UNDP's flagship reports. The 2015 UNDP Human Development Report on *Work for Human Development* made ample use of ILO's research and analytical work, and publications and statistics. More recently, the 2019 HDR¹²⁴ presents views on the relationship between inequality and work, and makes ample reference also to the ILO's publications, such as the *GWR*, the *World Employment Social Outlook*, and the report on *Digital Labour Platforms and the Future of Work: Towards Decent Work in the Online World*. Other periodic users of the ILO's RS&KM outputs include UNIDO's flagship series *Industrial Development Report*¹²⁵ as well as reports from UNSDF, the IOM or UN-Women. The evaluation reviewed a random sample of UNDAF/UNSDCF reports.¹²⁶ Most documents refer to ILO's Decent Work Agenda but rarely cite the ILO's research and knowledge products or mention the ILO's RS&KM approaches and strategies (except for Decent Work Teams on rare occasions). According to a survey informant, "the presence of SDG8 confirms that there is an international consensus about the importance of Decent Work however, in practice, ILO faces capacity limitations at field level when it is not physically present in a specific country and/or does not have sufficient decentralized staff to participate in national/regional dialogues that promote the achievement of objectives central to ILO's mandate (like decent work)."

The RSK&KM dimension of the ILO response to the COVID-19 crisis through inter alia the *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work* offers another *example* of global reach and uptake. The report has been widely quoted by the media (e.g. *The Financial Times*, the BBC, *Le Monde*, etc.) and influenced the UN's global response as well as regional and national policies on multiple topics related to the world of work.¹²⁷

As a proxy indicator of impact of the RS&KM strategies and approaches on the ILO's work, the evaluation attempted to identify if there would be any relationship between the quantity of research and knowledge products developed and the adoption of new recommendations. A review of the number of resources published in the ILO Digital Library on themes covered by the most recent recommendations (R205 and R206) tend to indicate higher numbers of resources added to Labordoc on related topics around the date of adoption, but the evaluation could not conclude a causality (figure 10).

► **Figure 10. Number of publications submitted per year to Labordoc matching the keywords**



Source: Labordoc and Evaluation, 2020.

124 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2019. Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century*, 2019.

125 More information is available on the UNIDO website, <https://www.unido.org/resources-publications-flagship-publications-industrial-development-report-series/idr2020>.

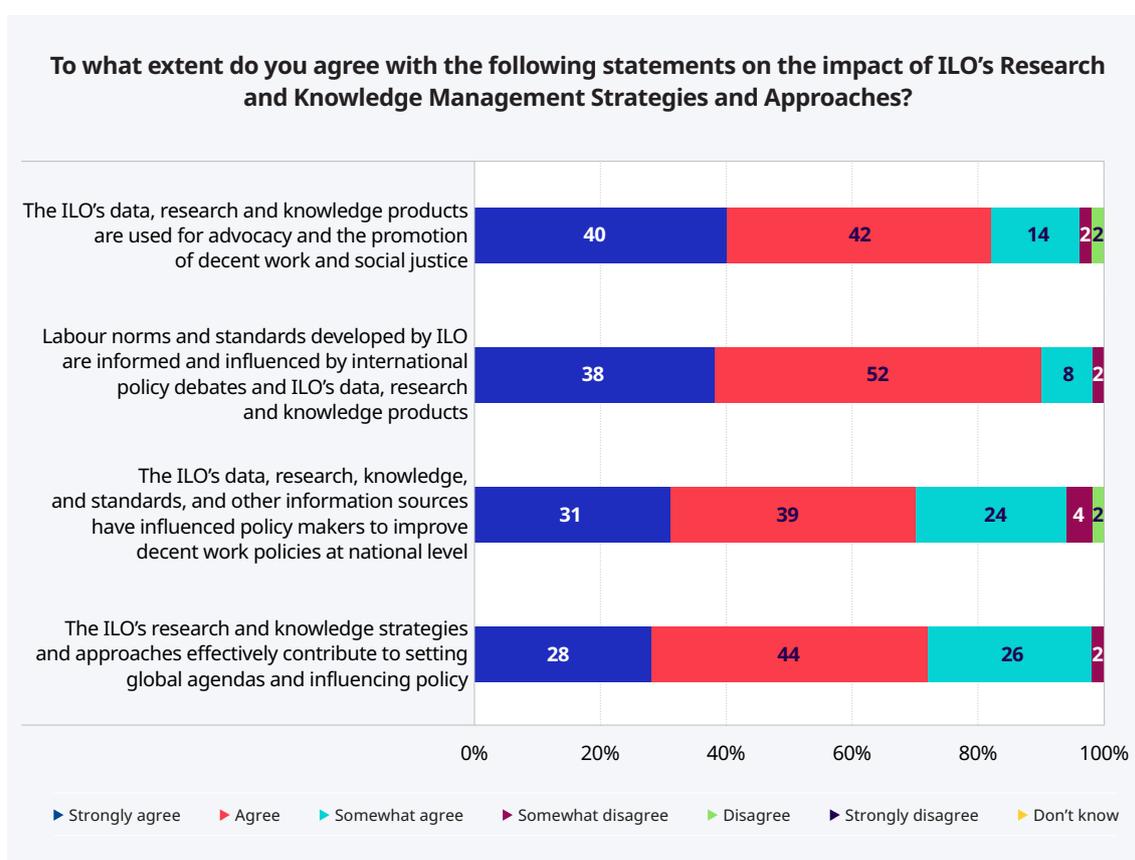
126 Afghanistan (UNDAF 2015–2019), Azerbaijan (UNDAF 2011–2015 & UNAPF 2016–2020), Burundi (UNDAF 2019–2023), Costa Rica (MANUD 2018–2022), Georgia (UNPSD 2016–2020), Jamaica (United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework in the Caribbean 2017–2021), Lebanon (UNSF 2017–2020), Mongolia (2017–2021). More information is available on the UNSDG website, <https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/country-level>.

127 For example, adaptation of EC technical assistance programmes, https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/stories/impact-covid-19-world-work-most-severe-second-world-war-ilo-assessments-and-possible_en.

3.5.2 Impact of the ILO’s RS&KM strategies and approaches for the ILO constituents

The evaluation survey of the ILO constituents points to a favourable assessment of the ILO’s RS&KM contribution to impact. About 82 per cent of the constituents participating in the survey indicated agreeing or strongly agreeing that the ILO’s data, research and knowledge products are used for advocacy and the promotion of decent work and social justice. About 70 per cent of survey respondents also reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that the ILO’s data, research, knowledge, and standards, and other information sources have influenced policy-makers to improve decent work policies at national level (figure 11).

► **Figure 11. Assessment by ILO constituents of the impact of the ILO’s RS&KM strategies and approaches**



Source: Evaluation Constituents Survey, 2020.

The ILO’s RS&KM strategies and approaches contribute to change in member States. Evidence of uptake was gathered through various sources, although full verification of the examples was not possible. One constituent indicated, for example, that the report *Work for a Brighter Future* of the Global Commission of the ILO on the Future of Work had been a very useful tool in a specific country to provide a comprehensive picture of the current and forthcoming changes in the world of work as well as guidelines for addressing them. Discussions carried out in 2019 around the report *Future of Work: A Lifecycle Approach* in the national council for tripartite cooperation and the national assembly gave additional impetus to enhancing the policies and measures in the social and labour field. ILO staff provided many other examples. One survey respondent, for instance, reported that in 2019, the *GWR* had been used in a country as the basis for preparing a chapter on wages in the report of the Ministry of Finance prepared by the Government Economist, which influenced the way the Government considers the new generation wage policy both at national and

state levels. Another staff member of the ILO mentioned that some of the recommendations provided in a country to the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, through a Chapter in the book *What works: Promoting pathways to decent work* regarding improvements in the design and delivery of the Workfare Programme were taken on board in the Workers' Rights Act enacted by the Government. Another ILO informant shared the example of a contribution of an ILO project (EDJEF) to the development of a national employment strategy in a country. The project organized three studies at the level of each governorate to consult the people, government and social partner structures, and the private sector. It carried out an analysis of all public and sectoral policies in terms of employment in order to identify the measures already adopted that will have an effect on employment in the country. The conclusions of these various consultations were used as a basis for drawing up the national employment strategy. Several ILO informants referred also to the *GWR* as an instrument that fostered or translated into technical cooperation on wages in many countries.¹²⁸ Although the influence of the report versus other inputs including ILO standards on such policy developments cannot be specified, cases were retrieved that corroborate the use of RS&KM in these policy-making processes. For example, references to the *GWR* were found in the *National Minimum Wage Panel report to the Deputy President* in one country,¹²⁹ or in the *Report of the Expert Committee on Determining the Methodology for Fixing the National Minimum Wage* in another country.¹³⁰

The ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches contribute to advocacy and the promotion of decent work by workers' organizations. According to evaluation informants, the *GWR* has been widely used by the ITUC to produce speeches, advocacy, and lobby strategies with the G20. The report was also used as part of an advocacy campaign for minimum living wage conducted by the ITUC with affiliates across several countries in different regions. The evaluation survey gathered other examples of uptake of RS&KM outputs, such as with the ACTRAV study on *Trade Union Action on Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities: a Global Overview* that was reportedly being shared and used to promote the engagement of several trade unions in a comprehensive approach to the social inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD) through labour organization system.¹³¹ Furthermore, ILO flagships such as the *GWR* and the *World Employment and Social Outlook* are quoted in many ITUC documents across a range of themes, such as economic inequality,¹³² the gender wage gap,¹³³ peace and democratic rights,¹³⁴ climate governance and transition,¹³⁵ etc. Other examples of use of ILO flagships by workers' organizations include informing the *L20 Trade Union Statement* to the G20 Joint labour, employment and finance ministers' meeting in Turkey in 2015;¹³⁶ contributing to a submission of the TUDCN-RSCD on *Fighting poverty and promoting gender equality* to the 2017 High Level Political Forum¹³⁷. A survey respondent gave another illustration of uptake, mentioning that participants who attended ACTRAV or ILO trainings or workshops, shared this knowledge upon their return, which informed the submissions and actions carried out by the workers representatives on the country's National Tripartite Forum which deliberates on all labour related issues.

Evidence was found of uptake and influence of some ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches on employers' organizations. The evaluation gathered some evidence from employers' organizations about the impact of ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches. One area of uptake relates to learning and capacity development, for instance with survey respondents commending the DWCPs and the presentations given

128 The following references of contribution were provided to the evaluation : India (extension of coverage of the minimum wage); South Africa (adoption of national minimum wage); Cape Verde (adoption of national minimum wage); Myanmar (adoption of national minimum wage); Burundi (public sector pay reform); Cambodia (increased minimum wage in the garment sector); Mexico (increased national minimum wage); Costa Rica (revision of the adjustment formula); Ethiopia (currently assisting with possible national minimum wage); Qatar (currently assisting, possible introduction of a minimum wage); Philippines (adoption of a 2-tier wage system); Bulgaria (ratification of Convention No. 131).

129 South Africa, National Minimum Wage Panel, *A national minimum wage for South Africa: recommendations on policy and implementation: National Minimum Wage Panel report to the Deputy President*, 2016.

130 Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment, *Report of the Expert Committee on Determination of Methodology for Fixation of National Minimum Wage/wages*, 2019.

131 For example: Ethical Trading Initiative. *Base Code Guidance: Disability inclusion in the global supply chain* (London: 2018).

132 ITUC, *A New Distribution of Income and Power*, 2012.

133 ITUC, *Economic and Social Policy Brief: The Gender Wage Gap*, 2018.

134 ITUC, *Freedom Report: Peace and Democratic Rights*, 2017.

135 ITUC, "Just Transition - Where are we now and what's next", *The Frontline Briefing*, 2017.

136 G20. L20 Trade Union Statement to the G20 joint Labour, Employment and Finance Ministers' Meeting. Ankara, Turkey, 3-5 September 2015.

137 TUDCN-RSCD, *Fighting Poverty and Promoting Gender Equality. Workers and Trade Union Major Group. HLPF Advocacy Paper*, 2017.

by the ILO representatives as well as the literature provided to employers' organizations. Other domains of use refer to reports and toolkits given to employers on the management of Employers' and Business Membership Organizations (EBMOs), as well as OSHA Certification Training to Employer Associations. The IOE's website also shows some level of use of the *World Employment and Social Outlook* and NORMLEX, but few references to the *GWR*. Examples of use of the ILO databases were found also from industry associations, for example by the Initiative for Compliance and Sustainability¹³⁸ that uses NATLEX to investigate the legislative evolution of social and environmental production conditions.

When it comes to the conditions of use and influence, several informants shared the perspective of an increased likelihood of impact when the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches are supported by other regional or national initiatives. This assessment was corroborated by the evaluation meta-synthesis. **RS&KM strategies and approaches are more likely to produce change when bundled in multidimensional and multi-project initiatives.** The meta-synthesis of past evaluations showed that RS&KM outcomes of the ILO's DC projects tend to generate impacts at different level. Almost every DC project in the list reviewed by the meta-synthesis was found to be contributing either to attitudinal changes, or to national strategies and agendas, collective agreements, or policy enactments. Most commonly, change pathways starts with the enhancement of the knowledge base with advocacy efforts, often together with capacity building and advisory efforts, to draw recommendations that address targeted issues in line with the ILO's outcomes and mandates. One example is the GLO/12/59/NOR project on the promotion of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining that implemented a multidimensional approach mixing RS&KM components (studies, elaboration of handbooks, dissemination of statistics, lessons learnt and good practices, database development, and advocacy efforts) with capacity building and policy advisory efforts. This contributed to the conclusion of a collective agreement for textile and garment workers and employers in a specific country.

On a note related also to binding efforts, several informants shared the view that the ILO had too many flagship and major publications, and other types of publications.¹³⁹ A more strategic approach to the overall management of publications was proposed to the evaluation as an effective option to enhance their impact. This would include for example focusing several departments on a common theme for a given period or reducing the number of publications to concentrate on the most visible and influential ones and increasing time on dissemination.

An additional enabler found to enhance the likelihood of impact is the establishment of collaborative processes. **RS&KM strategies and approaches are more likely to produce change when research and knowledge developments are anchored in a dialogue with constituents and decision-makers.** One example conveyed by informants regards the ILO's support to Uzbekistan in 2012–2014. The ILO began monitoring the cotton harvest for child labour in 2013. In 2015, as part of an agreement with the World Bank, this work was extended to cover both forced labour and child labour. The ILO's research helped to trigger a *“more real conversation with the government”* around forced and child labour in the country (e.g. in Uzbek cotton fields). The ILO's research began to be used by the Government to shape reforms. In 2020, the ILO reported that the systematic and systemic use of child labour and forced labour in Uzbekistan's cotton industry had come to an end.¹⁴⁰

In some cases, the evaluation found also that **RS&KM strategies and approaches are more likely to have an impact when anchored in a theory of change reflective of a dissemination strategy supported by coherent results frameworks and outcome indicators.** The evaluation meta-synthesis, for example, reviewed changes contributed by the RAB/15/03/CHE project on fair migration in the Middle East. The project was assessed as designed with a robust logframe, coherent with the project and oriented to respond to the needs of beneficiaries' countries in terms of social dialogue and legislative gaps. The project blended the production of an evidence base through research, the establishment of Youth Networks, advocacy efforts, which included the dissemination of infographics, together with capacity building activities relating to fair

138 ICS is an international sectoral initiative with the aim to enhance working conditions along the global supply chains of its member retailers and brands. ICS is composed of 48 multinational retailers and brands in the sectors of textile, retail, footwear, electronics and furniture.

139 A review of the ILO Digital Library indicates that, on average, around 1,200 publications are added to the ILO's Labordoc every year.

140 More information is available on the Forced and Child Labour website, https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_735883/lang-en/index.htm.

migration. The project enabled a range of outcomes, such as a contribution to the digitalization and monitoring of the complaints resolution system of the Domestic Workers Department in Jordan; the transfer of domestic workers' portfolio from the Ministry of Interior to the Authority of Manpower in Kuwait; and the introduction of a domestic workers' law in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Conversely, the evaluation of the RAF/08/06/ITA project on supporting the Development of National Action Plans in Sub-Saharan Africa through Policy Support, Research, Knowledge Building and Advocacy, in particular through Understanding Children's Work, found its design insufficiently informative about its linkages with other initiatives as well as insufficiently contextualized to each national context, and lacking a dissemination strategy for the RS&KM products. As a result, outputs were delivered, but no information was provided on the effectiveness of the strengthening of the knowledge base on child labour. The evaluation concluded that the development of a dissemination strategy would have helped to appraise research outcome achievements as the publication of a report, a book, etc., does not necessarily imply the strengthening of the knowledge base. It is, therefore, important to understand the project's audience in order to prepare adequate research products and dissemination plans accordingly.

3.5.3 Impact of RS&KM strategies and approaches for the ILO

Several outcomes of the RS&KM strategies and approaches were identified by the evaluation. The establishment of the DC Dashboard, i-Eval Discovery, and Decent Work Results dashboard has been found to contribute to the **accountability** and **transparency** of the ILO. The DC Dashboard, for example, was referred to as having contributed to the recommendations of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), despite further work being required to fully comply with IATI's standards. Previous evaluations also provided case examples of RS&KM strategies and approaches that contributed to enhancing the ILO's **credibility** in some sectors, such as with the GLO/09/07/EEC project which delivered two global studies on the green economy: i) Global study of occupational and skill needs in the renewable energy sector; and ii) Global study of occupational and skill needs in green building. These reports enhanced the knowledge base on skills needs for greening the economy and helped to position the ILO as a front-line actor in the area, and with ILO's partners such as UNEP, UNESCO, and the OECD. Another reported outcome of RS&KM strategies and approaches is to help in **positioning** the ILO in areas not generally associated with the Office. One illustration was given by the GLO/14/27/NET project that aimed to combat child labour through education. The project produced several studies and capacity-building materials, together with capacity-building and policy advice efforts. According to the final evaluation, the project's achievement was to place the ILO as a major player in global education and to create legitimacy for the ILO-IPEC to advocate for combating child labour through the international education agenda.

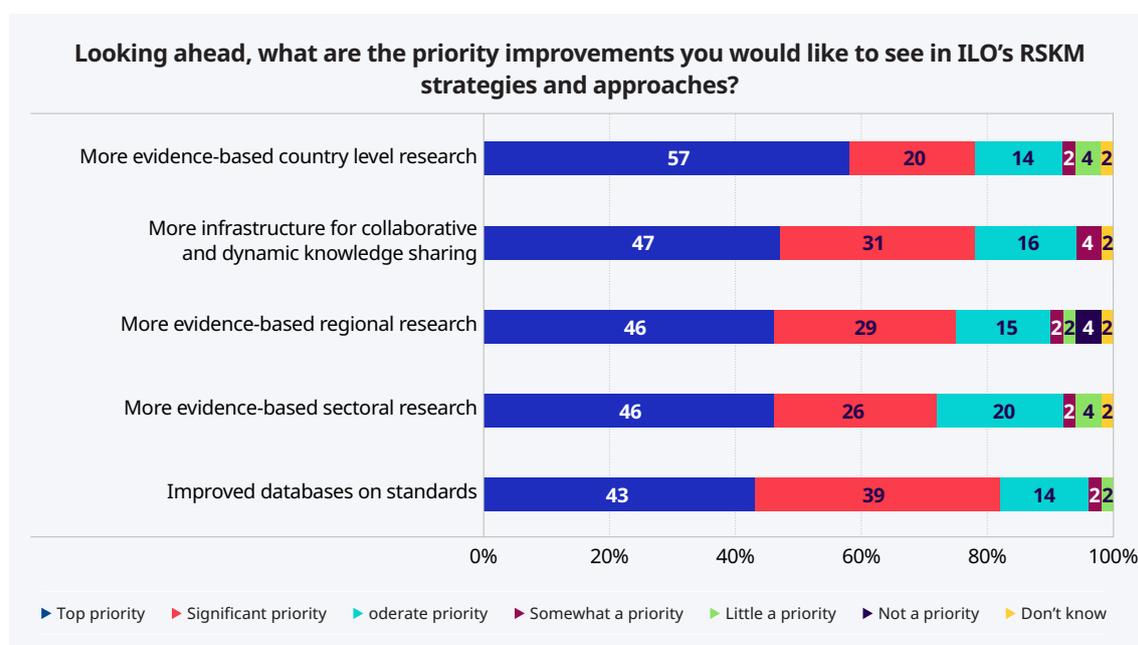
The survey of the ILO staff further returned a favourable assessment of the contribution of RS&KM to impact. For example, 62 per cent of participating staff agree that ILO's data and research/knowledge products are used for advocacy and the promotion of decent work and social justice. Furthermore, 53 per cent of participating staff agree that the ILO's data, research, knowledge, and standards, and other information sources have influenced policy-makers to improve decent work policies at national level (Appendix 5). The evaluation noted that the assessment of impact provided by the ILO staff through the survey was lower than the one indicated by the ILO constituents. One factor that may contribute this difference is the lack of awareness among the staff of the impact of the RS&KM strategies and approaches. In fact, in a few cases, the evaluation found limited interest from some staff to obtain such detailed information. **There remains limited knowledge in the ILO about the usefulness and uptake of research and knowledge products and limited accountability.** Methodological constraints were reported by staff about monitoring impact, such as the difficulty to attribute an outcome to the advice conveyed in a research or knowledge products, or the timespan required to assess impact. The Social Protection Department, for instance, mentioned using a results-based management tool to demonstrate the added value of ILO in achieving the SDGs on social protection, in order to look at impact to support the promotion of the project. However, this was referred to as challenging because it may take 10–15 years to see impact. The evaluation noted that the *Knowledge Strategy 2010–2015* indicated that “*Survey [will be] carried out to gauge satisfaction with the type and amount of knowledge conveyed through knowledge platforms*”. However, the evaluation did not find evidence

of such satisfaction surveys having been undertaken that could be leveraged to capture examples of use and outcomes.¹⁴¹

Several RS&KM strategies and approaches have been effective in facilitating the dissemination of research and knowledge towards impact. This includes initiatives as diverse as the establishment of the GTTs, for example, or dissemination plans mainstreamed in DC projects. However, **the evaluation found that good practices supporting impact are not necessarily captured, learned or scaled.** Several informants indicated for instance that the GTTs perform differently, with good practices here and there but no consolidation and systematization. Similarly, the evaluation meta-synthesis pointed out effective research and knowledge management practices in various DC projects through robust causal chains targeting change. However, these good practices are not necessarily institutionalized.

The evaluation also found that the link between research and knowledge management in establishing a pathway to change remains frequently ad hoc rather than systematized. **Knowledge management is not maximized by research to support change and increase the likelihood of impact.** Several informants indicated missed opportunities for research to be informed by field needs and to contribute to positioning the ILO at the subregional or field level. This link appears especially important as the ILO and constituents deal with complex knowledge and change conditions that call for expert advice equipped with a sound understanding of research findings. The ILO’s knowledge is not a blueprint that can be replicated over and over if the objective beyond learning is to trigger change. The research and knowledge that the ILO delivers implies that it should be contextualized, tailored to local conditions, and embedded in dialogue, knowledge sharing, and advice. The evaluation survey offered an opportunity for the ILO constituents to share perspectives on the possible next steps for the ILO RS&KM strategies and approaches in the coming years (Annex 6). The initiatives that were prioritized indicate interests spanning research and knowledge management, with the highest level of demand for *More evidence-based country research* followed by *More infrastructure for collaborative and dynamic knowledge sharing* (figure 12).

► **Figure 12. Constituents’ perspective on priority improvements in the ILO’s RS&KM strategies and approaches**



Source: Evaluation Constituents Survey, 2020.

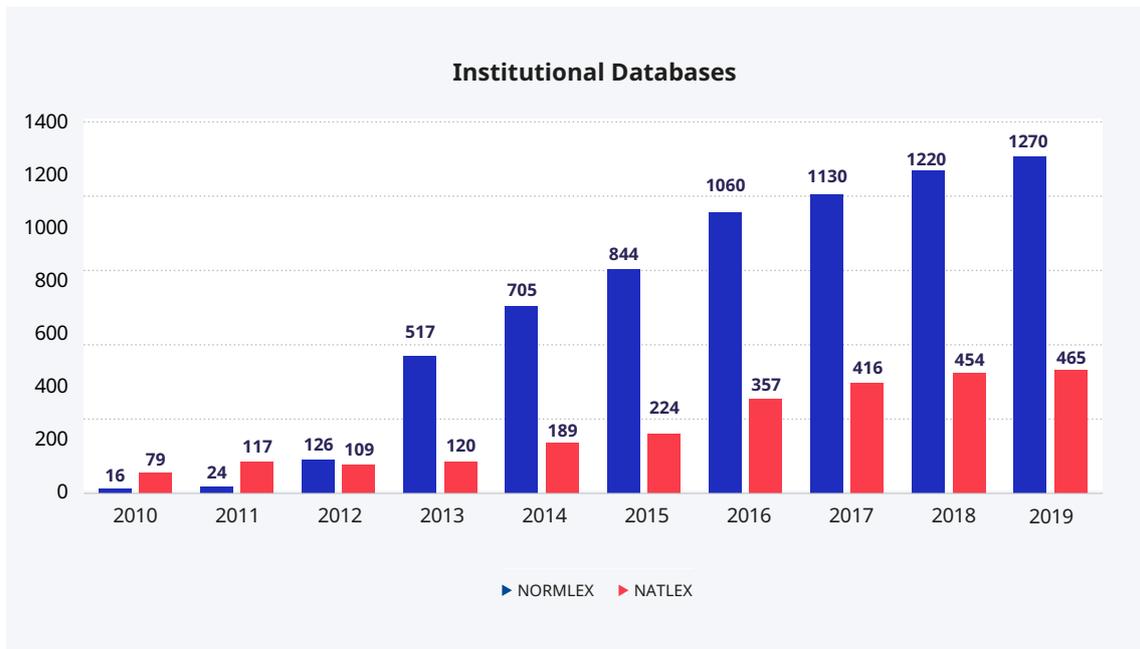
141 Comparatively, the evaluation’s review of RS&KM in the UN agencies and IFI pointed out good practices, such as with UNDP that has installed a mechanism that proposes users of UNDP’s publications to assess their quality, usefulness, and share examples of outcomes.

3.5.4 RS&KM uptake by Research and Academia

Various mechanisms foster the uptake of ILO’s RS&KM by research and academia. For instance, the Regulating for Decent Work Conference is an important event for the ILO, which is organized with academic institutions from across the world. It brings together a range of experts and scholars from various disciplines to discuss about different perspectives and state-of-the-art methodologies related to the world of work. The 6th Regulating for Decent Work Conference in July 2019 was viewed effective as it provided the space for such debates and discussions. It enabled the ILO to present research papers to scholars and policy-makers from around the world and engage in discussions while bringing external knowledge into the ILO. Another avenue for research collaboration and uptake is the International Labour and Employment Relations Association (ILERA).¹⁴² An ILERA World Congress is convened every three years, where professionals interested in all aspects of labour and employment relations meet to share ideas about new developments, ideas and practices in the field. The last ILERA World Congress took place in Seoul, South Korea, in 2018.¹⁴³ Several sessions and presentations of research findings were delivered by the ILO staff on topics such as social protection, labour relations, leave policies, industrial relations in emerging economies (including a book launch), etc. The Research Department has a number of Memoranda of Understanding with the University, which is actually part of the institutionalized protocol since the establishment of the Department. Academia is the most strategic partner of the ILO on RS&KM. However, as noted earlier in the section on *Effectiveness*, outside of the Research Department, partnerships with academia are mostly based on personal relations and there is no institutionalized protocol on it.

Nonetheless, a review of a sample of RS&KM initiatives and a number of research articles made available through Google Scholar indicates growing use of ILO’s institutional databases and flagship publications over the decade. Among the resources reviewed by the evaluation, NORMLEX is the RS&KM instrument most frequently cited by research and academia (figure 13) followed by the *World Employment and Social Outlook* reports (figure 14).

► **Figure 13. Number of research articles published annually citing the database**

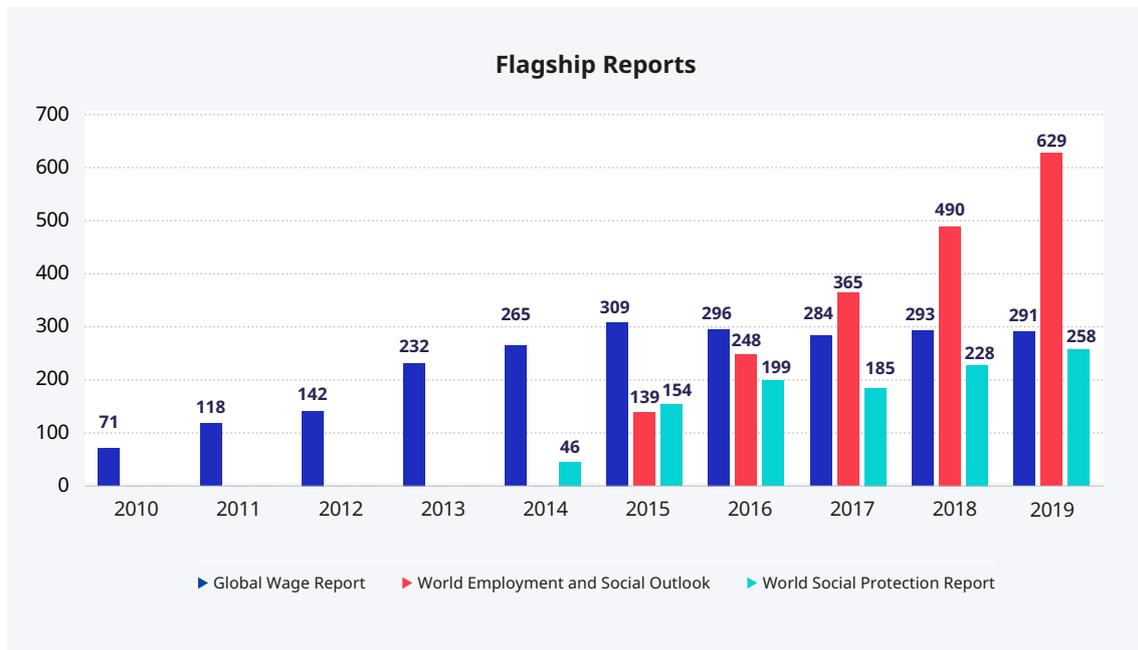


Source: Google Scholar and Evaluation, 2020.

142 The Association has over 900 members worldwide including prominent industrial relations scholars and practitioners and 36 national associations and one regional association.

143 ILERA, [World Congress 2018, 23–27 July, Seoul, South Korea](#).

► **Figure 14. Number of research articles published annually citing the report**



Source: Google Scholar and Evaluation, 2020.

3.6. Sustainability

The evaluation surveys of the ILO’s staff and constituents present somewhat comparable perspectives on the sustainability of the RS&KM’s outcomes. Despite the staff returning a less favourable assessment than constituents, both surveys largely agree that (i) “Workers’ organizations refer to or use ILO’s data, research, knowledge, standards, and other information sources to localize and adopt decent work policies; (ii) Governments refer to or use ILO’s data, research, knowledge, standards, and other ILO information sources in the design and implementation of decent work policies”; and (iii) “ILO’s research and knowledge strategies and approaches have contributed to developing an enabling environment for real change on normative labour standards”. However, respondents from both surveys agree less strongly that “Employers’ organizations refer to or use ILO’s data, research, knowledge, standards, and other information sources to localize and adopt decent work policies” (figure 15). This parallel assessment may indicate higher levels of uptake of RS&KM by workers’ organizations and governments, with room eventually for stronger collaboration with employers’ organizations to enhance the uptake and sustainability of RS&KM outcomes.

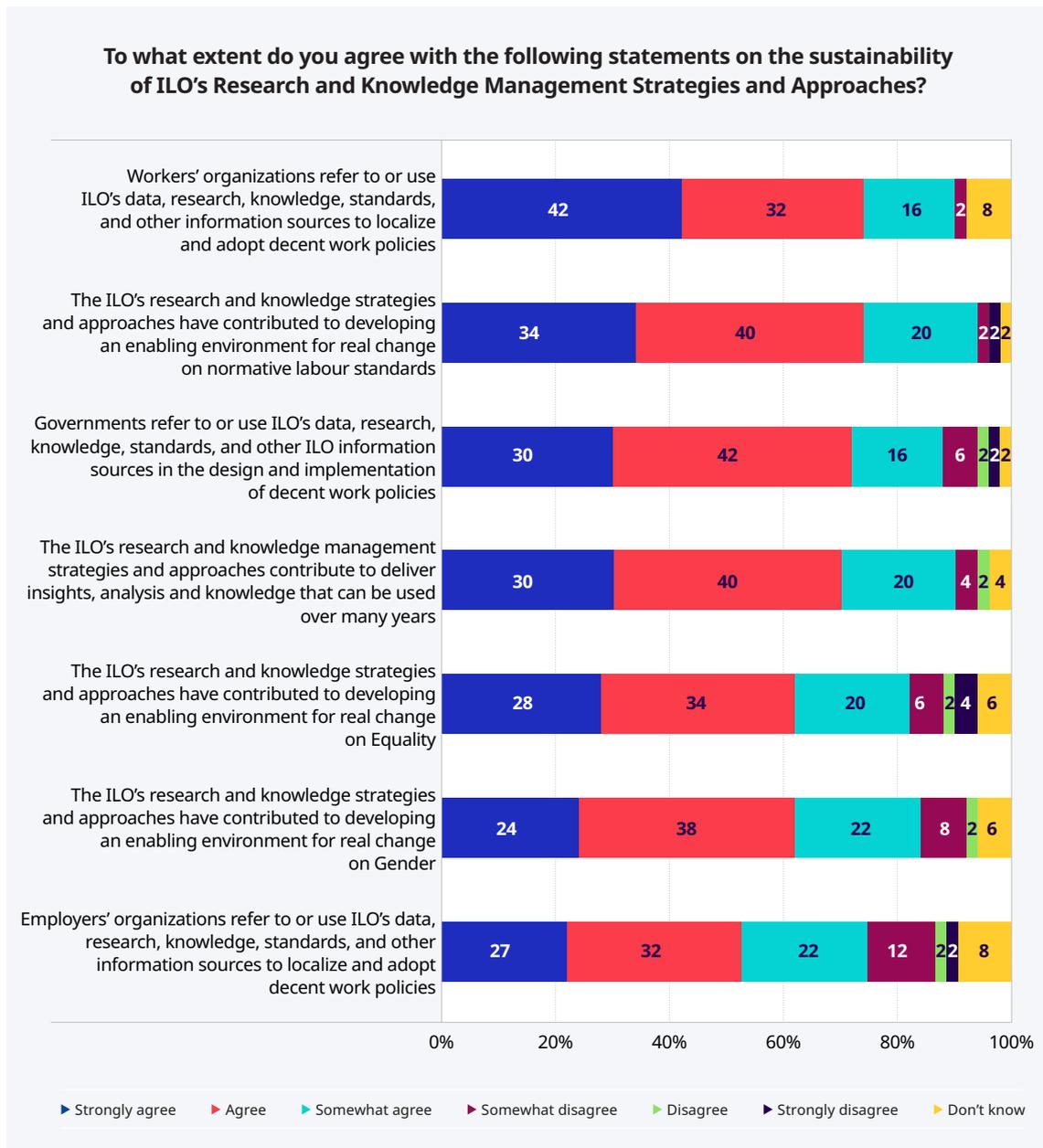
The earlier section gave several case examples of RS&KM uptake leading to impact and sustainable changes. Additional cases can be found in the contribution of DC projects to the inclusion of relevant topics in **national agendas** through the establishment of related national plans and strategies. For instance, the INT/07/15/EEC project on monitoring and assessing decent work in developing countries contributed to the establishment or revision of 13 national plans and strategies in six different countries to include decent work frameworks and principles.¹⁴⁴ In all these countries, the development of country profiles and decent work indicators, together with advocacy efforts to increase ownership of decent work concepts, and capacity-building activities to conduct research and monitor decent work, fostered a propitious political environment responsible for the records achieved. Evidence of sustainable changes at **policy level** fostered by RS&KM

144 **Bangladesh:** Poverty Reduction Strategy, 6th Five Year Plan. **Brazil:** National Policy, National Plan. **Niger:** National Development Strategy Monitoring System. **Philippines:** National Labour and Employment Plan (2011–2016); Development Plan (2011–2016). **Ukraine:** Action Plan of the Ministry of Social Policy 2013–2015, Action Plan on Economic Reforms, Employment Programme 2012–2017, State Programme on Improving Occupational Safety and Health and Working Environment, National tripartite Strategy on HIV at work. **Zambia:** Poverty Reduction Strategy..

components was also found in the final evaluation reports of DC projects. For instance, the RAB/15/03/ CHE project relating to fair migration in the Middle East contributed to the introduction of a domestic workers’ law in the UAE. For that, the project’s evidence base comprised research, the establishment of Youth Networks, advocacy efforts including the dissemination of infographics, and a capacity-building activity on fair migration.

The previous section also identified several actions and conditions enabling broader, long-term outcome and impact of ILO’s RS&KM strategies and approaches (e.g. multidimensionality, participatory processes, strategic intent). In addition, the evaluation found that **RS&KM components tend to build capacities and**

► **Figure 15. ILO constituents’ assessment of the sustainability of the ILO’s RS&KM strategies and approaches**



Source: Evaluation Constituents Survey, 2020.

therefore ensure stronger sustainability. In the case of CINTERFOR, the entire organization is organized around sustainability through capacity building, with a mission to “develop a permanent learning and SSTC community among national vocational training institutions.”¹⁴⁵ RS&KM products in DC projects tend to be associated with capacity-building activities and in thematic areas relating to the ILO’s mandate. However, a part of these capacity-building efforts is mainly directed towards capacities in research and statistics. The results are mainly obtained by “learning by doing approaches” wherein national governments and statistical offices are associated with survey and inventory efforts with a view to their being able to replicate them. Normally, related projects encompass an outcome or at least activities relating to capacity-building. Thus, RS&KM components do not seem to prioritize RS&KM capacity building unless associated with capacity-building activities. In that case, capacity building also appears to be a source of sustainability for the RS&KM components produced. The GLO/13/21/USA project on global research on child labour measurement and policy development, for instance, includes capacity-building activities related to statistics, associated with RS&KM activities (studies, datasets and knowledge-sharing events). Capacity-building activities, based on the National Child Labour Survey reports and other interactive tools, help to strengthen national statistics officers’ skills in sampling methodology, data collection and analysis, and reporting. The survey’s methodological approach prioritized national statistics offices, which encouraged full ownership of the entire process. Thus, by implementing National Child Labour Surveys and giving national statistics offices the lead, the project ensured that the research process delivered 10 national child labour surveys and supported the transfer of capacity on the child labour data collection methodology from the ILO to national statistics offices.

In DC projects, robust exit strategies are a factor that contributes to ensuring sustainable outcomes to RS&KM strategies and approaches. However, many DC projects either do not have a proper exit strategy or do not factor RS&KM strategies and approaches into their scope. According to the evaluation meta-synthesis, the sustainability of RS&KM outputs (mostly KM products) is threatened in almost 50 per cent of the DC projects analysed. In particular, platforms, databases, and CoP developed within these projects tend not to be sustainable.

On the one hand, the projects’ design often do not comprise exit strategies, a use plan, and a resource forecast for the RS&KM strategies and approaches after the end of the project. For example, the ELS/10/50/USA project relating to eliminating child labour in El Salvador through economic empowerment and social inclusion developed two databases to monitor and evaluate child labour, respectively at national and municipal levels. These comprised a System of Information for Monitoring and Evaluation of Child Labour (SIMETI), and the Municipal System for Monitoring of Child Labour (SMMTI). These databases were crucial in advancing knowledge and advocacy for child labour elimination and its inclusion in municipal policy agendas. However, the continuity of these databases was found to be threatened. The final evaluation pointed out that no resource was foreseen to continue the development of SIMETI, while both SIMETI and SMMTI were also jeopardized by a weak institutional culture of knowledge sharing at country level.

Similarly, the GLO/13/39/UCD project activities on a global action network to make agriculture insurance work better successfully established a highly dynamic Global Action Network, responsible for holding productive discussions as well as for mainstreaming knowledge produced into relevant knowledge products. Nonetheless, the design of the project did not include any exit strategy and Global Action Network members were not even informed that the network was a bounded project running towards its end. Therefore, no funding was secured, and network members could not anticipate the end of the project to prepare a continuity plan.

On the other hand, training materials, manuals and guidelines developed by DC projects tend to be more sustainable. Some of the reasons explaining their sustainability appears to be the quality of materials developed as well as efforts to establish partnerships and dissemination. The RAS/13/55/UKM project relating to fair recruitment and decent work for women migrant workers in South Asia and the Middle East, for instance, developed several knowledge tools relating to capacity building that were adopted and adapted by partners in their own capacity-building activities. In Bangladesh, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment

145 More information is available on the CINTERFOR website, <https://www.oitcinterfor.org/en/general/mission-vision-and-functions>.

and Training updated their training modules relating to outgoing and returned migrants, and NGOs used a booklet produced by the project in their pre-decision and pre-departure trainings. In Bangladesh, India and Nepal, 64 local governments mainstreamed materials produced by the project into their own trainings and also allocated additional budgets to deliver related trainings. To ensure this continuity, the project endeavoured to establish partnerships and trust with both governments and civil society organizations.

Thus, the design of an exit strategy at project elaboration phase grounded in a dissemination strategy and relevant partnerships to ensure ownership appears to be the most appropriate strategy to ensure sustainability of RS&KM strategies and approaches.

The evaluation found many other examples of RS&KM strategies and approaches lacking sustainability. This includes, for example, regional initiatives such as the Asia Pacific Knowledge Sharing Platform established in 2007–2008 which, by 2010, already had over 5,000 members. Over time, the platform has registered more than 7,000 members and captured more than 60,000 knowledge resources, including over 15,000 mission reports. The platform has hosted six active CoP enabling knowledge exchanges and mutual support between members. However, resources committed to operating the platform were reduced after 2012 and, since then, it has become partially managed and much less used.¹⁴⁶

Other similar examples can be found with the ILO's institutional databases. For instance, NATLEX offers more than 90,000 records covering 196 countries and over 160 territories and subdivisions. Records in NATLEX provide full texts or, in some cases, abstracts of legislation and citation information. While records are indexed by subject, entries appear in one of the three ILO official languages (English/French/Spanish) and in most cases, the full text of the law or a relevant electronic source is linked to the record. The database used to rely on a team of 15 external collaborators (mostly part-time) for its maintenance (about 250 new entries were registered each month). However, the budget to operate NATLEX was reduced from CHF215,000¹⁴⁷ in 2016 to CHF73,950 this year, with only three external collaborators to update it.

Another example is the Knowledge Gateway, an initiative that was envisioned in the P&B 2012–13 as the future one-stop-shop for the ILO's knowledge. The initial investment for this portal was \$2 million. Since then, IT maintenance costs charged by INFOTEC have amounted to \$75,000 per year. However, after 2016 the functional maintenance was transferred to the ILO departments while the staff in charge of coordinating the platform moved to another position. Since then, the Gateway has become largely outdated. For example, some of the statistics to which it currently refers date from 2001.¹⁴⁸

The evaluation was provided another example of uncertain sustainability with IRLEX, a legal database on industrial relations that relied on extra-budgetary resources from SIDA but its prospects are unclear after next year. While relating to SDG target 8.8 and gathering core information for the ILO's mandate, the database was not institutionalized.

Finally, several informants questioned the sustainability of the RS&KM dimension of ILO's response to the COVID-19, despite its success. Some staff indicated that keeping the showcase of the *ILO Monitor for COVID-19* continuous in the Organization requires significant statistical, research and analytical capacity for the policy departments to be produced. If it is to be maintained, it will imply for some ILO staff to put on hold regular activities to focus on the Monitor. However, in many research areas, there is only one person in charge of research and research funding is not guaranteed. As it is now, policy departments depend on donors to implement a research agenda, which changes over time.

Against this backdrop, a few additional options were proposed that could increase the sustainability of the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches. According to informants, research could become more sustainable when kept to a small number of staff by creating teams around a narrower set of topics. Therefore, creating

146 Currently, the Platform has 7,000 members but it is not managed and there are many members who are no longer in the ILO or active. In addition to a detailed KSP internal platform, the external part included six CoPs that were gradually built up. It should be noted that the CoPs went beyond staff and included constituents. Resources and management support dwindled after 2012 and had come to a virtual standstill by 2013. The software has not been updated since 2011. It is currently just hanging on with little support and is so slow that use is no longer really possible. However, the calendar and the mission reports facilities are still being used which shows it has been institutionalized to an extent.

147 CHF1=\$1.08244 (29 Sept. 2020).

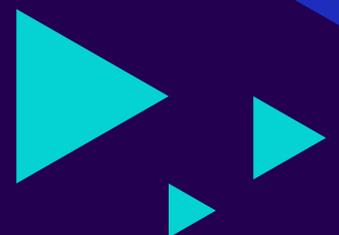
148 More information is available from the database, https://www.ilo.org/gateway/faces/home/ctryHome?locale=EN&countryCode=ATG&_afCtrl-state=vo32fd4qm_83.

research teams with specific capacity would mean reducing the number of topics, so that analysis can be more focused. Another avenue to which some informants referred would be to mainstream knowledge building into global programmes and other donor-dependent initiatives to leverage data on outcome and impact and carry out evidence-based policy research. This would engage the ILO further and more consistently in impact evaluations and other evidence-based research that shows the causal chain and the added value of effective policy interventions for their beneficiaries in order to support learning, uptake and scaling up of such effective policy interventions.



4

Conclusions, lessons learned, and emerging good practices



► 4. Conclusions, lessons learned, and emerging good practices

4.1. Conclusions

Relevance:

The relevance of ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches to the needs of the world of work at the global, regional and country levels is assured by the ILO's unique data on the world of work, supported by the ILO results framework, and strategies to identify global, regional and country needs. RS&KM strategies and approaches also contribute to achieving SDGs, especially regarding SDG 8 and others for which the ILO is a custodian. Nevertheless, the design of RS&KM strategies and approaches can be improved by increased understanding of their expected value add at all levels. Support from senior management is critical to ensure the delivery of RS&KM strategies and approaches as One-ILO, with clear ToC, and focusing on technical and sectoral policies and agendas, and in DC projects.

Coherence:

ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches are to some extent coherent with ILO's internal frameworks and external cooperation and global frameworks. There is lack of an Office-wide understanding of research and knowledge management and institutionalized governance structure at all levels. There is a need to strengthen the KM function that oversees the coherence of RS&KM strategies and approaches with ILO policies, results framework, thematic and sectoral strategies, action plans and other relevant frameworks. To ensure effective coherence, there is a need to monitor instruments to measure achievement and performance of RS&KM outputs and outcomes.

Effectiveness:

RS&KM is core to the ILO's ability to deliver on its mandate and achieve its goals. The ILO has made important strides through RS&KM. Research is used as evidence by stakeholders in dialogue at global, regional and country levels, in collaboration across the UN and with other institutions to enhance quality and expand reach. However, RS&KM efforts have been hindered by insufficient prioritization and operationalization of KM, for example, by a lack in coordination, institutional support and capacities for RS&KM, infrastructure for collaborative and dynamic knowledge sharing, and incentives for knowledge management and sharing.

Efficiency:

Assessing the ILO's efficiency specifically for RS&KM is a challenge. Although RS&KM is integral to the functioning of the ILO, there is a lack of institutional coordination and governance structures that ensure distinct design, monitoring or reporting processes. Budgeting and operational tools are not currently designed to articulate RS&KM investments and activities. Without budget and operational instruments to measure effectiveness and value for money, it is difficult for the strategy to identify and address areas of RS&KM where the ILO can contribute most effectively and efficiently. The ILO's internal collaboration and teamwork can be harnessed well in unique situations, such as with the RS&KM dimension of the COVID-19 response. However, the more typical dynamic is limited, with compartmentalization at HQ and inconsistent engagement between HQ and the field.

Likelihood of impact:

The ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches contribute to informing international forums, global agendas, and policy recommendations through the consultations and deliberations of the G7, G20, and the

UN system. Members States assess favourably the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches, with influence reported ranging from attitudinal change to orientating national strategies and agendas, collective agreements, and policy implementation. The ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches also contribute to advocacy and the promotion of decent work by workers' organizations, and to the learning and technical work of employers' organizations. RS&KM strategies and approaches were found more likely to produce change when bundled in multidimensional and multi-project initiatives, when anchored in a dialogue with constituents and decision-makers, and when supported by a theory of change reflective of a dissemination strategy setting a coherent results framework and outcome indicators. However, there is most often limited knowledge about the usefulness and uptake of research and knowledge products and limited accountability. Incidentally, this reduces any opportunities to identify and scale good practices that would increase likelihood of impact. Furthermore, the evaluation noted that knowledge management is not maximized by research to support change.

Sustainability:

The sustainability of the ILO's RS&KM strategies and approaches shows more favourable prospects when there has been a contribution to capacity development and when outcomes have influenced national agendas at policy level. As part of the enabling factors, robust exit strategies in DC projects including for RS&KM contribute to ensuring sustainable outcomes to RS&KM strategies and approaches. However, many DC projects either do not have a proper exit strategy or do not factor RS&KM strategies and approaches into their scope. Furthermore, the evaluation found many other examples of RS&KM strategies and approaches lacking sustainable funding and/or scaling and institutionalization.

4.2. Lessons learned

Lesson 1: Committing the Organization to effective RS&KM is best served by establishing a common understanding at all levels and long-term vision for RS&KM, supported by senior-level sponsorship.

Several staff in the ILO point to key questions that could be addressed to help clarify this direction, such as 'How can RS&KM bring social benefits?'; or 'What are the priority knowledge gaps and needs of the ILO staff, constituents, and stakeholders?'; or 'What is the business problem that RS&KM strategies and approaches aim to address?' Such questions can help inform the development of a conceptual framework for RS&KM. From concept to outcome, the implementation of RS&KM is more likely to produce change when embedded in multidimensional and multi-project initiatives, particularly when supported by a theory of change reflective of a targeted dissemination strategy.

Lesson 2: Research and knowledge are at the core of the ILO's work and as such require consistent, ongoing efforts to bring added value to the Organization and stakeholders.

Managing research and knowledge resources has commonalities with managing human and financial resources in the sense that these are not punctual endeavours. The ILO has worked on KM for more than two decades but is not yet functioning optimally and continues to confront operationalization shortcomings. Core KM initiatives such as CoP and a global content repository were considered relevant for the ILO almost a decade ago but remain to fully materialize. Successful RS&KM strategies and approaches, such as regional ones, have delivered the proof-of-concept but were not scaled and institutionalized. Similarly, KM has been mainstreamed in the project document template and successful RS&KM strategies and approaches can be found in DC projects, but they are not learned upon and systematized. Most often, DC projects lack adequate RS&KM components, including an exit strategy for RS&KM. KM has also been mainstreamed in many job descriptions of the ILO's managers and staff, but this has not necessarily turned into concrete objectives and appraisal, and the "last mile" is missing.

Lesson 3: RS&KM strategies and approaches require adequate management instruments that are fully funded and operational over time.

Many RS&KM strategies and approaches have sustainable outcomes but are not necessarily sustainable themselves. While many research and knowledge outputs delivered by the ILO are used, the RS&KM strategies and approaches that establish them face unclear funding prospects. In a context of limited resources, decision-making on divestment or institutionalization

of RS&KM strategies is required. However, there is a gap in the RS&KM management instruments to facilitate strategic prioritization and the realization of a long-term vision. Results-based management tools that support decision-making, assess the value for money of RS&KM initiatives, and help to transition RS&KM strategies and approaches from innovation to institutionalization, are important for the management of intangible assets such as research and knowledge.

Lesson 4: Organizational change takes time and can benefit from focused, consistent change management initiatives as well as from external shocks. The integration of the Institute and the creation of the RESEARCH department has generated positive outcomes. The ILO's staff from RESEARCH hold recognized expertise and contribute effectively to the ILO's global visibility and credibility. However, there is a demand for stronger leverage and for other departments, regional and field offices, and constituents to benefit more broadly from this expertise. Crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic proved to foster cross-departmental collaboration including with RESEARCH. The ILO's internal collaboration and teamwork can be harnessed well in unique situations, such as with COVID-19, and when catalysed by senior management.

Lesson 5: Improved culture of trust and learning is core to strong RS&KM. However, for a global organization such as ILO, it remains a challenge to make the most of RS&KM without a global infrastructure that facilitates global collaboration and knowledge sharing. Significant improvements have been realized since 2018 with the introduction of a new SharePoint intranet and a limited number of collaborative sites. However, the focus has been on content management rather than collaboration. The infrastructure component of RS&KM is key to enabling a One ILO, and to ensuring that all content that is collected and shared is accessible to all staff. Furthermore, CoP, hosted by the ICT ILO, work on a platform that does not integrate with the enterprise content management system.

4.3. Emerging good practices

Emerging good practice 1: The recent RS&KM dimension of the ILO response to the COVID-19 has created a benchmark for senior management sponsorship, fast turnaround, risk taking, quality assurance, cross-departmental teamwork, and effective dissemination. Besides demonstrating that the ILO can work strategically as One, at the operational level, it has also shown that online collaboration and virtual tools can be effective in conducting joint work with acknowledged benefits to constituents.

Emerging good practice 2: The establishment of GTTs was found to be a landmark initiative to facilitate global collaboration and knowledge sharing, foster bottom-up agenda setting, and enhance technical learning. Despite some shortcomings calling for increased sharing and integration between GTTs, this organizational modality offers strong potential to scale, for example, plugging CoP into the GTTs would expand membership and enlarge the knowledge base, by linking a KM platform such as the Asia Pacific Knowledge Sharing Platform to each GTT, by organizing virtual exchanges across GTTs, etc.

Emerging good practice 3: Technical and methodological quality, along with focus on cutting edge, highly relevant issues, makes flagship reports a reference source of knowledge to the ILO and constituents. In the first editions of the *GWR*, employers used to contest findings and demand methodological explanations from DG. This was handled by negotiating complementary research, increasing the technical quality of the team, and adding an extra layer of peer review in econometrics amid several discussions with employers. Last editions did not see further conflict and the report is considered a success. Its impact at country level could be increased through targeted dissemination measures.

Emerging good practice 4: The Uzbekistan Cotton project set in motion an integrated and interactive process that identified a knowledge gap and filled it by conducting monitoring of the child and forced labour in the cotton industry. The ILO is now helping to build local capacity so that this monitoring can be sustained within the country, without the ILO's involvement. This ongoing, evidence-based dialogue with the government and others, paced according to local needs and capacities, with support for local implementation is a strong model for projects on child and forced labour in the region, as well as for DC project design in general.

Emerging good practice 5: Meaningful inclusion of constituents in appropriate aspects of the ILO's work can lead to more relevant and impactful results of the ILO's RS&KM. EPIC has established a strong collaboration with the IOE as an important member of their coalition. The IOE has been integrated into the discussions since EPIC's inception. Their genuine, ongoing engagement as the coalition works through issues has enriched EPIC's delivery of knowledge.

Emerging good practice 6: Strong collaboration with multilateral agencies and other multiple sector stakeholders at the global level for RS&KM is critical to sustainable development. PAGE has established a strong collaboration, not just with partners, but also when looking at the intersection of the green economy with other themes. Drawing from expertise from different disciplines and backgrounds could be applied to other contexts within ILO to enrich efforts and expand use and reach.

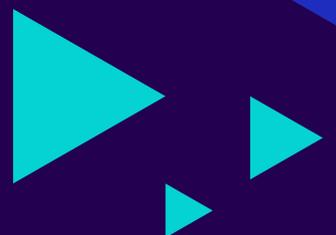
Emerging good practice 7: A specified, integrated, matrixed approach to measure RS&KM outcomes offers clarity for collaborative implementation, enhancing ILO's overall capacities and supporting One ILO. The Action Plan for Gender and Equality 2018–21 has designed indicators and targets in collaboration with those responsible for monitoring and achieving these targets across the house. The Skills Knowledge Sharing Platform periodically collects quantitative information from the platform (profile and location of users, number of downloads, themes mostly accessed), and through surveys with internal and external users (i.e. user profile, reasons to access the platform, frequency/likelihood of recommending the platform to stakeholders, user needs, user satisfaction, and means in which users disseminate the platform), Google Analytics, and Twitter Analytics (especially for the E-discussions). These approaches could be replicated or adapted for cross-cutting internal efforts.

Emerging good practice 8: Regional RS&KM initiatives provide proof-of-concept with potential to be scaled-up and institutionalized. Despite being inadequately sustained, the Asia Pacific Knowledge Sharing Platform has set a benchmark for the ILO when it comes to content collection and collaboration. The functional analysis of the platform could be reused and adapted to other regional offices or scaled globally and taken as a basis for equipping other initiatives such as the GTTs with knowledge management. Salient features of the platform include a presentation of the service offered by the regional office, a repository to share content across the region, capture of mission reports, and CoP that performed successfully during their period of operation.



5

Overall assessment

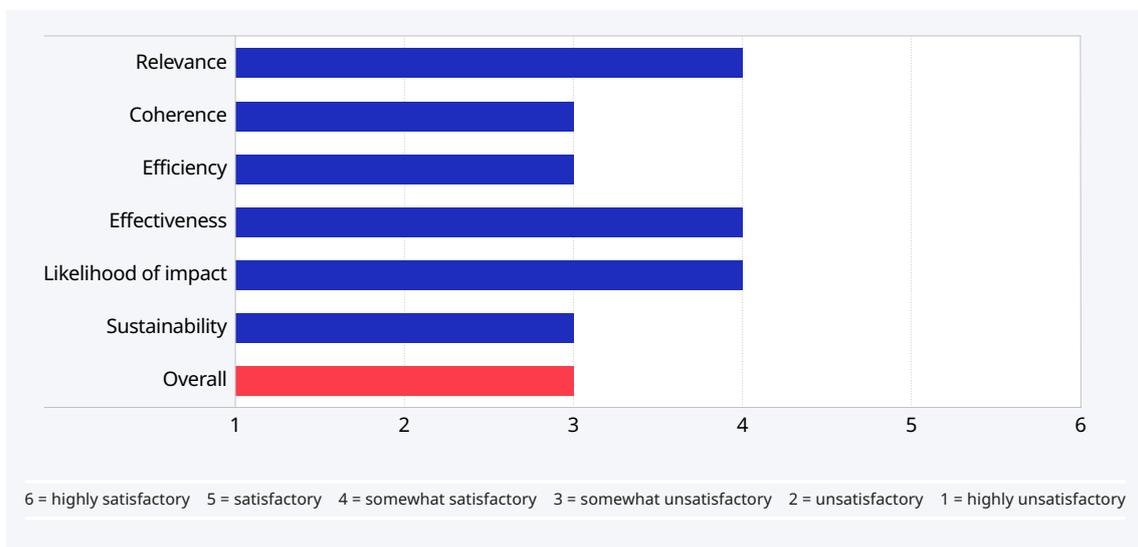


► 5. Overall assessment

The independent evaluation team expressed a summary rating at the end of the six evaluation criteria and the respective questions agreed on in the inception report based on the questions above. The evaluation used a six-point scale ranging from “highly satisfactory,” “satisfactory,” “somewhat satisfactory,” “somewhat unsatisfactory,” “unsatisfactory,” and “highly unsatisfactory.” The evaluation team used a double Delphi technique and synthesis discussion to finalize the ratings (figure 16).

The ratings in the assessment below reflect the overall identified performance levels for the ILO’s RS&KM strategies and approaches.

► **Figure 16. Overall ratings by evaluation criterion**

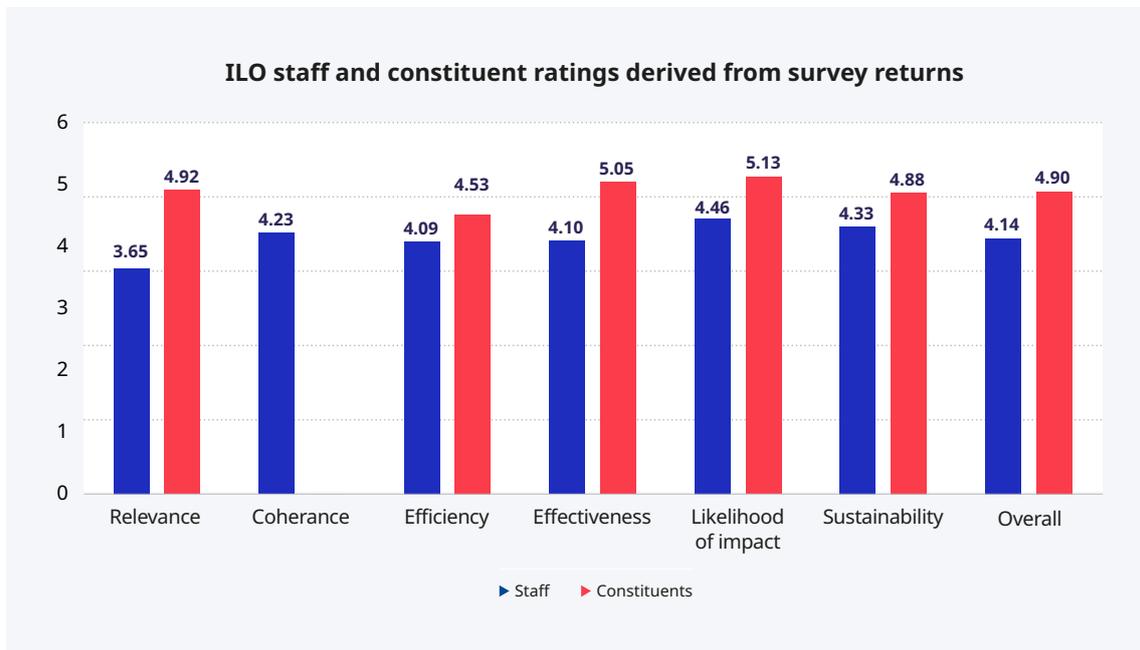


Source: Evaluation Survey, 2020.

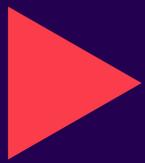
The evaluation used the surveys of the ILO staff and constituents to formulate a proxy assessment of the perceived performance of the RS&KM strategies and approaches. Each survey response in the Likert scale was translated into a quantitative rating using the same scale as above. Overall,¹⁴⁹ ILO constituents return a more favourable assessment of the RS&KM strategies and approaches than the ILO staff. The criteria where the perceived performance is most divergent are *Relevance* and *Effectiveness*.

¹⁴⁹ The evaluation survey for the ILO constituents did not include questions covering the Coherence criterion.

► Figure 17. Ratings comparison with those of ILO staff and constituents

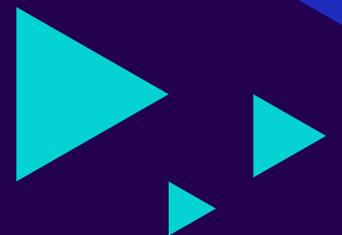


Source: Evaluation Survey, 2020.



6

Recommendations



► 6. Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The ILO needs to develop a long-term vision for research and knowledge management that is supported by a theory of change and equipped with a robust results-based framework.

Such a theory of change would establish causal pathways to systematize cross-technical collaboration and synergies, multidimensional approaches, the scaling up of good practices, and the institutionalization of lessons learned. A results framework and instruments would help to better assess the value for money (efficiency), reach (effectiveness), uptake and use (impact), and social benefits (sustainability) of RS&KM.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, Deputy Director-General for Management and Reform (DDG/MR), Strategic Knowledge Team	High	Current biennium	Low

Recommendation 2

The ILO needs to provide RS&KM with adequate leadership, governance structure and staffing capacity.

It is necessary to strategically position knowledge strategies and approaches in the organizational structure, with top management providing support to knowledge management and being closely connected to relevant units. The RS&KM governance structure should enable coordination and foster synergies between research and knowledge management, with necessary staffing and a balanced scope of work (see also Recommendation 3). This could be achieved through a layered structure with a management committee and a cross-departmental project team.

Strengthened RS&KM coordination should also build on the Publishing Committee's responsibilities so that strategic direction can be set across all levels of the ILO to strengthen research and knowledge development, and improve the enabling conditions and typology of RS&KM outputs currently in use. This would include recommending priorities for the production of technical research and knowledge products, based on a strategic analysis of knowledge needs reflecting constituents' demands and required synergies to enhance uptake and influence.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Cabinet, DDG/P (in particular RESEARCH and STATISTICS), working with other policy departments, DDG/FOP, Information and Technology Management (INFOTEC), regional and country office representatives	High	Current biennium	Moderate

Recommendation 3

The ILO should continue to mainstream knowledge management throughout the Organization and better operationalize it, including making ongoing efforts to build a safe, open learning culture.

Practical guidance and support should be provided to staff to facilitate knowledge management adoption and implementation, and to mainstream knowledge management, knowledge-sharing and knowledge monitoring in the annual objectives of the staff and within regular activities. However, for collaboration and knowledge-sharing to thrive, the ILO should develop a safe and open learning environment.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, DDG/FOP, DDG/MR, PARDEV, Human Resources Development Department	Medium	Current biennium	Low

Recommendation 4

Global technical teams should continue to be supported and scaled up to become the ILO's cross-cutting technical practice that pools diverse expertise to address constituents' most pressing challenges and ultimately enable the ILO to meet its strategic objectives.

Global technical teams as a vehicle for global technical knowledge development and sharing should be equipped with knowledge management instruments, such as knowledge platforms and communities of practice, allowing a larger community of members to form synergies and share knowledge on technical as well as cross-cutting themes. The ILO's successful experiences illustrated in the full report could inform the design of the knowledge platforms and services provided by the communities of practice (such as queries and e-discussions, for example). Global technical teams should be capacitated and resourced to allow effective functioning and delivery of selected products and services.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P, DDG/FOP	High	2021–23	Moderate

Recommendation 5

The ILO should accelerate installing an infrastructure that facilitates knowledge-sharing and collaboration.

Technological improvements made over the past decade have not yet addressed some of the ILO's core knowledge management needs. Based on the establishment of SharePoint sites across the Organization, a content management architecture, with processes and capacities that facilitate sharing transactional and operational knowledge across departments and offices (such as mission reports and terms of reference), should be developed, including with an internal taxonomy and metadata to foster the use of a common language; it should also facilitate content retrieval and enhance the consistency of content categorization on internal and external platforms. The focus should be on the creation of an integrated environment for collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
INFOTEC, DDG/P, ILO Library	High	2021–23	Moderate

Recommendation 6

RESEARCH should contribute more systemic knowledge to the rest of the ILO and constituents.

The expertise of RESEARCH adequately translates into flagship reports and other publications, but tends to be leveraged on an ad hoc basis by the rest of the ILO. There is a systemic demand for easier access to RESEARCH's expertise, with more cross-collaborations with technical departments to strengthen the causal links between research, practice and policy. Regional and field offices would benefit from RESEARCH's expertise, in the form of input on their strategic positioning, advice and expertise on research and knowledge development for constituents, and input to develop research capacity in Member States.

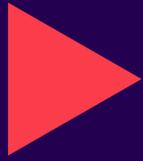
Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/P	High	Current biennium	Low

Recommendation 7

The ILO should leverage its tripartite structure and international presence to tailor its RS&KM efforts to specific stakeholder groups.

The ILO's RS&KM frequently jointly convey research and knowledge that are broadly relevant to governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations. Some, but few, knowledge products were directly targeted at a whole constituent group. The ILO could consider more frequently designing differentiated knowledge products that would enhance the overall likelihood of uptake, but target a specific segment of users. The ILO should continue to integrate workers' and employers' organizations into appropriate ILO RS&KM processes, and engage in dialogue with such organizations at different levels to enrich understanding and improve use. Specific knowledge could be used for more productive, evidence-based dialogue among workers and employers, and between stakeholders.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Cabinet, DDG/P, ACT/EMP, ACTRAV	Medium	Current biennium	Low



7

Office response



► 7. Office response

The Office welcomes the evaluation and will implement recommendations within the approved budget level for the biennium as follows:

Recommendation 1

The long-term vision of RS&KM comes from the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. It will be articulated in the Strategic Plan for 2022–25 and operationalized in the biennial programme and budget. The theory of change is embedded in the overall ILO strategy to achieve decent work results across all policy outcomes. Specific indicators on RS&KM are under the reformed enabling outcome A on improved knowledge and organizational influence for promoting decent work.

Recommendation 2

The Office is committed to strengthening the ILO's knowledge management function in line with the recommendations of the high-level evaluation. It will pursue its consultations on strategically positioning knowledge strategies and approaches in the organizational structure and providing adequate leadership on knowledge management.

Efforts to improve the functioning of the Publishing Committee will continue to fully enable it to strategically review and discuss priorities for the production of knowledge products and to fully meet its role of ensuring the quality, timeliness, relevance and coherence of the publication portfolio. Specific attention will be paid to improving the basic conditions of research and knowledge development, as well as to the typology of research and knowledge products.

Recommendation 3

The Office will promote an enhanced knowledge management culture by increasing the opportunities for staff to be acquainted with knowledge management approaches and methodologies, through training and an internal SharePoint site to access practical guides and tools, and exchange ideas and good practices. The Office will also establish clearer mechanisms to hold managers and staff accountable for their performance through the yearly appraisal system.

Recommendation 4

The Office will provide more support to the global technical teams to fully play their role as a vehicle for global technical knowledge development, sharing and dissemination. Based on a review of their needs that will be conducted as a follow-up to the high-level evaluation, relevant and specific knowledge management approaches and tools will be made available to enhance collaboration, teamwork and knowledge-sharing.

Recommendation 5

The Office will strive to roll out software (SharePoint and Office 365) to provide an integrated environment for collaboration and knowledge-sharing across the Office, including developing master data plans for the improved coordination of information sharing.

The ILO is expanding its internal topical taxonomy and developing a new taxonomy on content types, with regular updates from content managers and other users. Support materials and training will be provided to content managers and knowledge management focal points.

The Office continues to centralize the collection of all ILO publications and documents in the ILO institutional repository, Labordoc, with metadata shared with academic institutions.

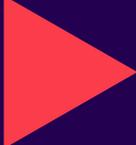
Recommendation 6

Collaborative planning and budgeting for research across the ILO takes place through the programme and budget process. Each outcome includes global products on research; country-level activities include evidence-based policy research; and the new enabling outcome A for 2022–23 will enhance collaborative research. Outcome coordination team leads will be requested to ensure that collaborative cross-departmental and field-headquarters research initiatives are systematically identified and explored. Field specialists, including from ACTRAV and ACT/EMP, will ensure the research needs of tripartite constituents are identified and the outcome coordination team lead will be responsible for ensuring that they are adequately addressed.

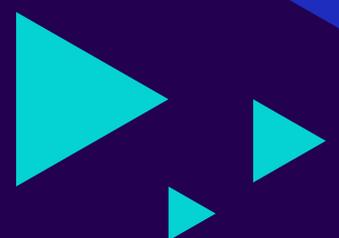
Recommendation 7

Within its overall mandate of ensuring independent research, the Office will make certain that ILO research addresses the concerns of tripartite constituents. It will tap into the knowledge generated by Member States and systematically gain insights offered by social partners through ACT/EMP and ACTRAV specialists. Systematized meetings between RESEARCH, ACT/EMP and ACTRAV will link to social partner expertise and joint discussions about how to address their concerns.

The Office will step up its knowledge uptake activities to improve the relevance, understanding and accessibility of its research products by identifying and engaging with stakeholders at every stage of the research process.

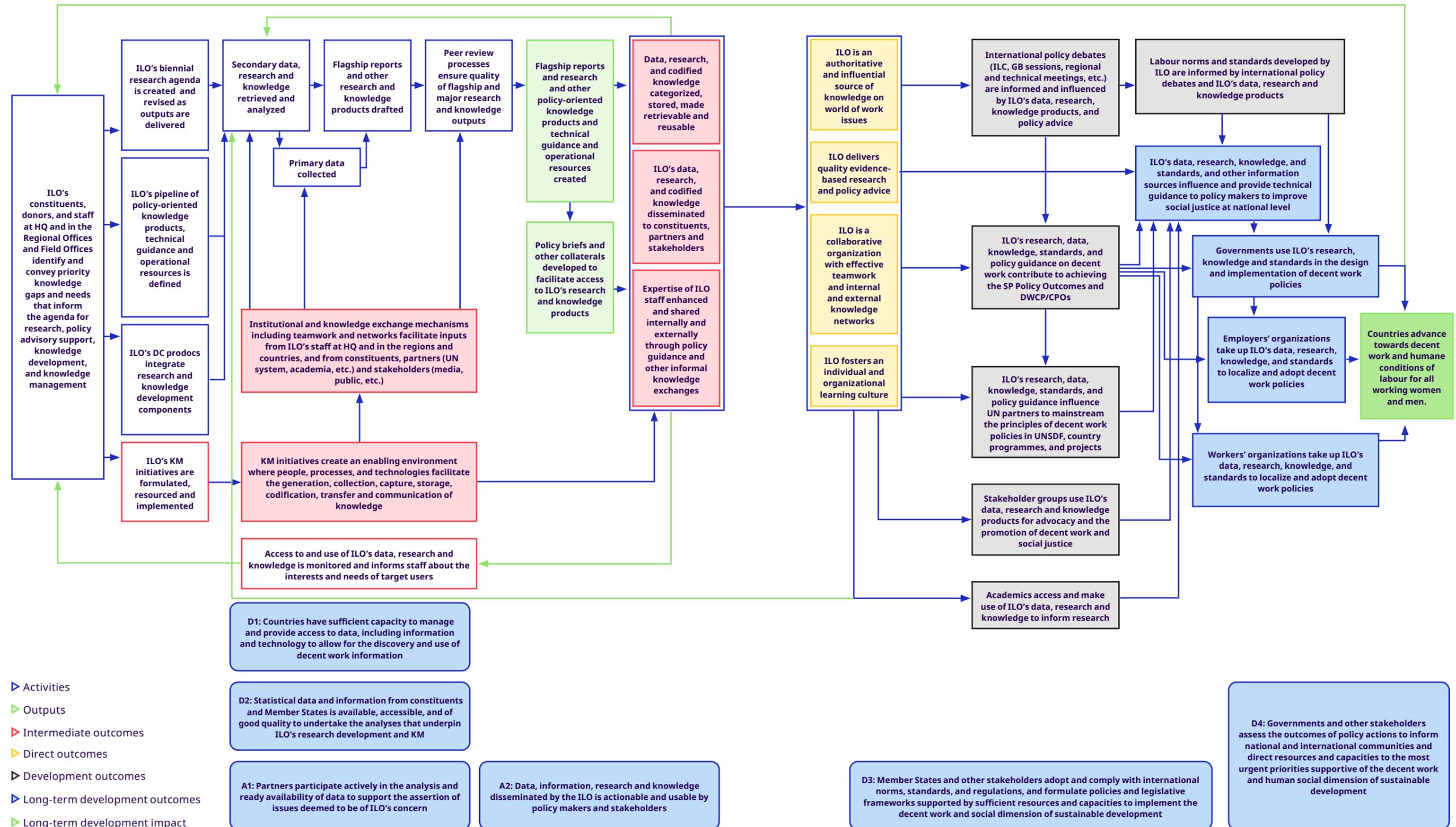


Annexes



► Annex 1. Reconstructed theory of change

► Figure 18. RSKM theory of change for evaluation purposes



- Activities
- Outputs
- Intermediate outcomes
- Direct outcomes
- Development outcomes
- Long-term development outcomes
- Long-term development impact

► Annex 2. Terms of reference

Independent Evaluation:

ILO's Research and Knowledge Management

Strategies and Approaches

2010-2018

First initial outline: December 2019

First initial draft: January 2020

First draft for circulation: 31 January 2020

Final Draft: 30 March 2020

Introduction

1. Every year the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) holds consultations to select topics for future high-level evaluations. The Governing Body then approves the selected topics. The selection of strategic evaluations customarily focuses on strategic outcomes but may also focus on institutional capacity issues. Institutional evaluations undertaken so far include development cooperation, the field structure, capacity building and public-private partnerships.
2. As scheduled in its rolling work plan endorsed by the GB the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) is now preparing for an independent institutional evaluation of the ILO's work on Research and Knowledge Management (**RSKM**) Strategies and Approaches. This topic was selected based on inputs from prior consultations with constituents and management in establishing the programme of work for high-level evaluations (HLEs). First presented in the Annual Evaluation Report (AER) of 2017 the topic was reconfirmed for evaluation by the GB in the AER 2018 and AER 2019.
3. This evaluation is pertinent and timely as the ILO is aiming to be a knowledge leader by using both evidence-based research and experience acquired through its normative and development cooperation work to provide policy advice to its constituents as well as to influence global policy debates. Various Declarations, policies, strategic plans, programme and budgets and specific institutional strategies outline ILO's vision and mandate on research and knowledge. ILO carries out research both through a central function and throughout its field structure, programmes and projects with knowledge building and management integral to the design and implementation of many programmes and projects.
4. All RSKM strategies and approaches are intended to be linked to the ILO's programming frameworks (strategic plans and policy framework; programme and budget and decent work country programmes) as well as global and regional agendas and sectoral and global strategies.
5. RSKM in the ILO are to be viewed in the context of UN system reform and the Agenda 2030. During the UN General Assembly in September 2015, the Decent Work Agenda became an integral element of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Joint Inspection Unit of (JIU) for the United Nations did a review of knowledge management in the United Nations system in 2016. This review started from the premises that knowledge is a valuable core asset of the United Nations system organizations and their best comparative advantage. The effective harvesting, codification and utilization of knowledge in the organizations and system-wide is critical for achieving the goals of the system. For the United Nations, knowledge constitutes an intangible and a concrete asset, an operational reality and a permanent aspiration, a general and a specific resource.

Background to the evaluation

6. ILO's RSKM strategies and approaches have been reviewed but not been evaluated independently before. This will also be one of the first evaluations focusing on an enabling outcome of the ILO. Research and effective knowledge management are included as one of the enabling outcomes in ILO's Programme and Budget, supporting policy outcomes on ILO's technical areas of work.
7. As a strategic high-level evaluation, it will take both a retrospective and a forward-looking approach. It will follow the standard OECD-DAC criteria for evaluations, and will have a specific focus to respond to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, gender equality responsiveness and contribution of the ILO to the relevant targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The recommendations from the evaluation are expected to inform ILO's work on this important theme in future.
8. This high-level evaluation will focus on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and impact of ILO's RSKM Strategies and approaches, focusing on the strategic and cross-office level. The evaluation will also focus on the efficiency and sustainability of ILO's RSKM strategies and approaches within the limits of availability of the data necessary to ensure a sound and accurate assessment of these two criteria. It will look at the strategies, approaches, outcomes and achievements of RSKM.
9. The evaluation will as such be able to serve as a review of past performance and identify lessons learned to be used as a baseline going forward in the context of the current ILO Research Strategy for 2020-21 and subsequent knowledge strategies to be developed. The current Research Strategy is intended to be fully aligned with the ILO's Programme and Budget for 2020–21 and Strategic Plan for 2022–25, and reflecting the outcomes of the Centenary Declaration on the future of work adopted by the ILC in June 2019 as well as the evolving United Nations reforms. The evaluation will be forward looking in assessing ILO's RSKM strategies and approaches in view of the Decent Work Agenda, the ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work, the 2030 Agenda and ongoing reform in the UN development system. Past and ongoing DWCPs, project evaluations and other reviews will constitute a key basis for the evaluation.

Background to ILO's Research and Knowledge Management Strategies and Approaches

10. During the period under review, the ILO's Research and Knowledge Management Strategies and Approaches have been guided by a number of declarations, instruments, policies and strategies adopted by the International Labour Conference, the Governing Body and the Office in response to ILC and GB decisions. The following are some of the key ones:

Global Level governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) ► The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization adopted in June 2008 (the 2008 Declaration) and Office programme of work in response (and the 2016 Declaration on Social Justice) ► ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work, 2019 ► Plans of Action for specific areas of work such as Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work ► Decent Work Agenda ► ILO's Strategic Programme Framework and Strategic Plans ► ILO's Programme and Budget
Regional and Country level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Decent Work Programmes for individual countries ► Regional Strategies, conclusions and declarations
ILO Policies and Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► ILO's Technical/Development Cooperation Strategies ► Specific strategies on Research and Knowledge ► Relevant sectoral strategies
ILO Procedures and Manuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Relevant Internal Governance Documents, particularly on decentralisation ► Relevant Financial and Programming procedures, manuals, guidelines ► Relevant manuals on Decent Work, Development Cooperation, Evaluation and related topics

ILO's work on research and knowledge management strategies and approaches

11. RSKM is integral to ILO's work in many dimensions, at many levels and for many purposes. It is part of all levels of the ILO's results framework (from Policy and enabling Outcomes, Country Programme Outcomes to global Products). Some of the RSKM work is done through Development Cooperation projects. RSKM elements are within many of the Policy outcomes in the ILO Programme and Budget and in the country programme outcomes in the DWCP as well as in the enabling outcomes on advocacy, governance and support services. Cross cutting policy drivers on international labour standards, social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination are also influencing RSKM. Sectoral and thematic strategies have been formulated over the period with RSKM elements and activities. Levels of intervention of RSKM will be, depending on the focus, at the local, national, sub-regional, regional, interregional and global levels. ... RSKM involve individual constituents as part of promoting the decent work agenda and for the organisations specifically representing constituents, Employer's and Worker's organisations.
12. Given the wide range of RSKM areas of work, a challenge will be to identify the key strategic areas of achievement that the evaluation can focus on. An appropriate typology of RSKM strategies, approaches and outcomes, reflecting RSKM as an enabling outcome should be a key part of the evaluation.

Implementation of ILO's research and knowledge management strategies and approaches

13. The work on RSKM in ILO can be considered at the following levels as a starting point
 - Research Department – Global research
 - Technical departments – policy-oriented research as part of strategic and technical work
 - Knowledge Management Coordination Team (as of 2014 and prior to that through more ad-hoc coordination mechanisms) – work on an enabling environment for the creation and use of knowledge, fostering collaboration, leading improved knowledge management and spearheading knowledge sharing.
 - Regional/sub-regional – research capacity supporting analytical work and knowledge management initiatives
 - Country level – in support of particular country analysis and as part of development cooperation projects in direct support of constituents,
 - Development Cooperation (DC) projects will have components on research and knowledge generation and sharing, either directly in support of the delivery of other components or as part of support to constituents and broader national research and knowledge agenda
14. ILO delivers a substantial part of its RSKM work through five regional offices, more than 40 country offices and as part of some of the over 600 programmes and projects in more than 100 countries. Decent Work Teams (DWT) with technical specialists are providing sub-regional technical support out of a number of locations. In some countries, National Coordinators are serving as ILO's focal point. The International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin provides capacity building support and training for constituents, including on knowledge management and innovation. In addition to ILO's regular advisory services related to its mission and normative work, development cooperation projects are implemented in countries with or without ILO permanent presence (ILO Office). Some of the countries are in fragile and post-crisis situations. Regional projects are implemented that work both at regional level and with activities in specific countries. Inter-regional and global projects will implement global and inter-regional activities that support the work of field structures as well as carry out activities in specific countries.
15. ILO is part of the UN System and has actively participated in the inter-agency work at the country, regional and global level, including One-UN and initial UN system work on the support to SDG. ILO works

with regional organisations and other regional and country level partners in line with ILO mandate and purposes.

16. Research and knowledge management are reflected across thematic areas of work in the planning and results framework for ILO's work. At the country level, this is largely captured in Decent Work Country Programmes. At the global level the Programme and Budget (P&B) document provides the Office wide results framework. Regular Outcome Based Work (OBW) planning exercises integrate the activities at the field level with the global results framework. Regular Budget (RB) and extra-budgetary funding from donors, either through Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA), earmarked country, regional or global funding, or in some cases, outcome based funding is used to support activities in the field.
17. The ILO Centenary Initiatives and the 2016 resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work, the 2030 Agenda, and the ILO Centenary Declaration on the future of work have or are setting the scene for ILO's future mandate. It is also in this context the evaluation of the ILO's RSKM needs to be seen as well to establish whether it addresses current mandates and upcoming challenges.
18. The ILO results framework consists of Strategic Plans covering four years or more, and Programme and Budgets for a given biennium. RSKM is often integrated and covered under various thematic and organisational components of the ILO results framework. All ILO Policy Outcomes are intended to draw on a consolidated research capacity, a solid knowledge base and an expanding statistical database. For each Policy Outcome specific sections have focused on "knowledge and tools"; "knowledge development and sharing"; and "key lessons from previous work". Sections for each outcome related to "partnership"; "means of action"; and "developing capacity of constituents" also refer to RSKM.
19. P&Bs have over the years included specific coverage of elements of RSKM under headings such as sections on "Improving the knowledge base of the Organization: A new product and service to constituents"; "strengthening knowledge"; "knowledge, analytical capacity and information dissemination"; "strengthened analytical and institutional capacities"; "knowledgebase" and "research, statistics and capacity development".
20. Annex I provides a more detailed chronological presentation of how RSKM has been covered in ILO's results framework, example of regional initiatives and key elements of the organisational set-up in ILO for RSKM.

Reviews and evaluations of ILO's RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

21. With RSKM being a part of ILO's work, various reviews & evaluations of ILO policies, strategies, programmes and projects have covered RSKM within given evaluation criteria and results frameworks. High-level evaluations at the corporate level, Decent Work Country Programme Evaluations, thematic evaluations, synthesis reviews, meta-studies and evaluations of country, regional and global development cooperation projects have often touched upon RSKM in its many dimensions, levels and forms. Studies have been done on RSKM dimensions and numerous manuals, guidelines, resource kits, training practices etc. have been produced related to RSKM. Office reports to the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body have covered RSKM, either specifically or as components. This wealth of information needs to be considered as it relates to the specific focus of the evaluation.
22. The 2016 JIU report on *Knowledge Management in the United Nations system* noted the pioneering work carried out by ILO. In its Strategic Policy Framework, 2002-05, ILO acknowledged the key role of knowledge management, which is as valid today as it was then, and announced its intention to develop and implement a knowledge management policy. ILO considered that investment in strategies on knowledge management and knowledge sharing was needed to, among others, "maintain its status as a leading knowledge institution in the world of work". Another factor that prompted ILO (and other organizations as well) to develop knowledge management strategies was the need to bring the field and headquarters closer together.

23. In August 2017 an internal Audit report of Knowledge Sharing was produced to identify good practices and areas for improvement with examples of solutions. Knowledge sharing and ability of the ILO to access efficiently and rapidly information and knowledge created within the ILO is critical to the achievement of ensuring ILO's capacity to be a global knowledge leader on social and labour issues
24. In May 2019, a proposal for the establishment of a new Strategic Knowledge Team (SKT) was presented to the Senior Management Team with the intention of including the proposal in the Programme and Budget for 2020-2021. The SKT was meant to be a crosscutting initiative and to take advantage of the knowledge functions already existing in various departments, coordinating work on knowledge sharing. The proposal had pillars aimed at: fostering a collaboration culture across the Office; improved knowledge harvesting and spearheading knowledge sharing to ensure easy and effective access to data, information and knowledge; and improve the systems and culture of collaboration.
25. Other Initiatives related to the concept of working with knowledge in the ILO related to Organisational Health Index encompasses performance appraisals and consequences; leadership training and knowledge sharing; and Business Process Review (BPR) aiming to improve daily management practices.

Purpose, Scope, and Clients

26. The purpose of the evaluation of ILO's Research and Knowledge Management Strategies and Approaches covering the period 2010-2018 is to:
- ▶ Review the **strategies, approaches, outcomes and achievements** related to research and knowledge (summative and formative scope) with focus on the achievements and outcomes of research and knowledge strategies at the institutional level.
 - ▶ Focus on the **role and contribution of research and knowledge management** through assessing the relevance, and use of the research and knowledge at all levels and as an institutional area of work.
 - ▶ Consider the **quality of the research and knowledge in the context of its use and its impact**
 - ▶ Consider technological infrastructure and management in the context of how it facilitates gathering and use of knowledge. It is **not intended to evaluate the information technology aspect of knowledge management in detail**.
 - ▶ Review how **research and knowledge requirements are identified, designed, implemented and used** in support of ILO's policy and technical work.
 - ▶ Provide recommendations as part of the formative deliverable of the evaluation on how the **existing knowledge and research strategies can be rolled out building on the findings of the evaluation** and on how future strategies should be designed and implemented
27. The evaluation has a proposed focus on strategies, approaches, outcomes and achievements related to research and knowledge with a formative purpose.
28. The scope of the evaluation is **office-wide** and **defining the precise scope** of this evaluation is imperative given its potential wide-ranging focus. Scope is likely to cover:
- ▶ [Knowledge Strategy 2010-15](#) (extended to 2017) and Knowledge Strategy 2018-21(formative reference)
 - ▶ [Research Strategy 2020-21](#) (formative reference)
 - ▶ Global, regional and country-level research (while statistical work can be seen to follow under this, the evaluation will not cover Statistics as such except in the way that it interacts and supports the identified scope of RSKM).
 - ▶ Research and knowledge management components across technical departments and within development cooperation projects where knowledge is generated ("operational research")

- Related work with previous Policy Integration department
- Others to be defined (ILO carries out research both through a central function and throughout its programmes and projects with knowledge building and management integral to the design and implementation of many programmes and projects)

29. The following is considered the key dimensions of the scope:

- *RSKM Strategies*: Refers to specific strategies developed in the period under review on knowledge (generation, management and sharing); research, and other forms of policy level work that has a research and knowledge component; as well as any strategies within technical areas that have an explicit research and knowledge component. Strategies also refer to relevant results framework such as programme and budget, and action plans and similar at various levels.
- *RSKM Approaches*: Refers to initiatives, processes, mechanisms and systems used to identify, design, implement and use research and knowledge management activities. Such approaches will often be integrated into geographical or sector specific programmes and projects.

30. The key dimensions of the evaluation's scope are to be further defined through the scoping exercise to lead to a suitable conceptual and analytical framework for assessing the role and results of ILO's RSKM strategies and approaches. This should take due consideration of the different levels at which RSKM is designed and implemented within ILO, from global, regional to country level; and within the ILO results framework and as an integral part of development cooperation activities. The specific evaluation questions will come from this analytical framework with due consideration to be given to the standard OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria; as well as relevant Conventions, Protocols and Recommendations from GB and ILC discussions and decisions contained in these. The analytical framework is intended to be a major outcome of the evaluation to be considered for use in future assessment of the results and use of RSKM in ILO.

31. Given the diversity of levels, purpose and scope of individual research and knowledge management strategies and approaches, a thorough scoping exercise is to be developed and implemented as a first step in the evaluation.

32. The purpose of HLEs are generally to provide insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions (actions) (summative). It is also intended to be forward looking and provide findings, lessons learned, and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next P&B and strategic framework (formative). The HLE will consider all efforts of the Office in supporting the achievement of results from RSKM strategies and approaches. The evaluation report will be discussed in the October-November 2020 GB session together with the Office's response to the evaluation report.

33. The evaluation will address key current issues and concerns of the Governing Body and the Organisation from an evaluative perspective based on the objectives, purposes and role of RSKM strategies and approaches in ILO. Suitable recommendations for enhancing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO's RSKM strategies and approaches in ILO will be made. *Apart from addressing performance issues, recommendations should also be forward-looking, with an emphasis on ways to improve and enhance the implementation of RSKM strategies and approaches, and aiming at achieving realistic added value to the ILO's objectives as laid out in the Strategic Planning, Programme and Budget documents, Decent Work Country Programmes and Development Cooperation Strategy.* Regional perspectives and dimensions in this respect will be explored as well.

34. The team of evaluators is expected to carry out a thorough scoping and consultation process as a first phase, leading to an inception report with an evaluation plan for the implementation of a global institutional level evaluation as the second phase. The scoping and consultation process is particularly relevant given the wide range of research and knowledge building and use throughout ILO, both at global, regional, country level and within regular work, programme and project modalities. The scoping phase will require expertise related to the institutionalisation and use of research and knowledge as well as evaluation expertise. As part of the initial scoping exercise, the evaluation inception report will

address the variety of RSKM strategies and approaches at relevant levels and dimensions including in the context of decentralisation, field operations, technical and policy support, technical cooperation, technical assistance, technical advisory services, as well as the concept of development cooperation. This will be included in the conceptual and analytical framework for assessing the role and results of RSKM strategies and approaches. Availability of information will also be checked to ensure a sound assessment. Main findings and conclusions from the synthesis review of project evaluation reports on RSKM activities and outcomes will complement the evaluation research.

35. The principal client for the evaluation is the Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director General and members of the Senior Management Team at Headquarters, as well as Directors and staff at both headquarters and of field offices. It should also serve as a source of information for ILO donors, partners and policy makers.

Suggested Key Evaluation Questions

36. Given the potential expansive scope and focus of such an evaluation and to ensure it addresses key current issues and concerns of the Organisation from an evaluative perspective, the evaluation will need to start with an initial scoping exercise with key stakeholders. Additional consultations will be necessary to identify additional specific evaluation questions.

37. The evaluation questions are centred on (i) relevance (e.g. “fit for purpose”), coherence and validity of the RSKM strategies and approaches; (ii) effectiveness and efficiency, and (iii) impact and sustainability of ILO’s RSKM strategies and approaches. The enabling environment within ILO for effective and relevant RSKM should be a key dimension in the evaluation questions, including the institutional framework and strategies for facilitating the development and use of RSKM strategies and approaches.

38. The following are some initial overall evaluation questions to be addressed at strategic institutional level, to be adjusted and expanded on as part of the scoping, particularly with the specificity required for a feasible evaluation:

Relevance:	<p>Are RSKM strategies and approaches in ILO relevant and contributing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► ILO results framework, mandates and policies, ► the needs and demands of constituents, ► The achievement of MDGs/ SDGs? ► Country strategies and UNDAFs? ► Capacities of social partners <hr/> <p>Are RSKM strategies and approaches relevant for the global, technical and sectoral policies and agendas?</p> <hr/> <p>Are RSKM outcomes addressing policy and knowledge requirements of constituents?</p> <hr/> <p>Are RSKM activities and outcomes relevant to the strategies and outcomes of development cooperation projects at the relevant levels</p>
Coherence	<p>Are RSKM strategies and approach coherent with ILO policies, results framework, thematic/sectoral strategies, action plans and other relevant frameworks?</p> <hr/> <p>Are RSKM coherent with the other elements of strategies and outcomes in development cooperation projects?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Did RSKM contribute effectively in setting global agendas and influencing policy?</p> <hr/> <p>Did RSKM strategies and approach facilitate the use and application of ILO relevant research?</p> <hr/> <p>What are the major results / achievement of RSKM in ILO?</p> <hr/> <p>Did RSKM serve as a strategic tool for increasing the outreach and credibility of ILO?</p> <hr/> <p>What role did different funding mechanisms, such as RBSA, play, if any in supporting ILO’s RSKM in a strategic manner?</p>

Efficiency	Were the right strategic partners identified and engaged with to promote RSKM and to collaborate with?
	Are the most applicable RSKM approaches in place to facilitate identification, development, creation and use of RSKM?
	Are the management of the RSKM strategies and approaches effective and efficient?
	Is ILO monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the results of RSKM so it enhances future efforts?
Impact	What is the documented quality and added value of RSKM to ILO, constituents and other partners and stakeholders at international, regional and country level?
	What are the impact of RSKM strategies and approaches in influencing and effecting research and policy agenda at different levels?
Sustainability	Were the RSKM approaches developed between 2010 and 2018 sustainable?
	Are the RSKM strategies integrated in ILOs results framework in a manner that leads to sustainability?

39. The scoping will identify a final set of evaluation questions to be included in the inception report based on the conceptual and analytical framework). Annex II also provides some more detailed proposed evaluation questions that are normally considered for high-level institutional evaluations in ILO.

Methodology and Approach

- 40. This evaluation will be based upon the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in June 2016. More specifically the evaluation will be conducted in accordance with [EVAL Protocol No 1: High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluations](#).
- 41. The evaluation is being carried out in the middle of a pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus. The pandemic, which has already provoked the cancelation of the 338th Session ILO's Governing Body scheduled for March 2020, is likely to have serious implications for data collection for this HLE. International travel by the evaluation team may be difficult, if not impossible. While the field missions were planned for May-June 2020, and it may be premature to draw conclusions on their feasibility at this stage, the scoping phase is likely to consider and propose alternative methodologies for the data collection, should the need arise. This could include use of national or regional consultants as part of the team for data collection or more extensive use of video-conferencing technology and other forms of online and virtual approaches building on EVAL's guidance note "**COVID-19: Conducting evaluations under challenging conditions**".
- 42. EVAL will assist with the scoping through consultation with key stakeholders and the launch of an internal online survey to gauge what is expected by colleagues from a RSKM strategy and related activities.
- 43. A review of literature and examples of evaluations and reviews, including from other parts of the UN system will inform the evaluation, in particular the scoping. This will include the definition of key RSKM strategies and approaches in the ILO, leading to a proposed conceptual and analytical framework as the basis for a specific evaluation framework with purpose, scope, possible evaluation questions and outline of methodology. Theory of Change approaches should be used as appropriate. It should be noted that many of the activities within RSKM will not necessarily have specific results frameworks or standard monitoring and reporting. The evaluation team with relevant expertise, and preferably documented knowledge of the ILO, will work with EVAL to carry out this scoping exercise to identify the key scope and focus of the evaluation.
- 44. The scoping will be based on a review of literature and examples of evaluations and reviews of RSKM for similar organisations; reviews of RSKM strategies and approaches in ILO and relevant past reviews in ILO, definition of scoping questions and processes and carrying out the scoping process. Relevant

consultations with internal and external stakeholders is foreseen, including through visits at Geneva HQ and interviews by telephone and Skype.

45. Based on the outcome of the scoping exercise the team of evaluators are expected to further develop a conceptual and analytical framework and operational plan for applying the methodology for a global institutional level evaluation.
46. A synthesis review of project evaluation reports is intended to be carried out by a separate external contractor as part of the evaluation research and as an input for this high-level evaluation. The results are to be used by the team as a source of information in the drawing findings and conclusions, in particular on the analysis of the RSKM implemented as part of DC projects. This will cover a sample of development cooperation projects considered to be particularly focussed on RSKM or with strong RSKM components. The precise scope will be determined based on the a conceptual and analytical framework and with input from the evaluation team to ensure that the synthesis review can be relevant for the specific final identified focus and scope of the evaluation and the identified evaluation questions. Qualitative content analysis can support the process through the content analysis software ((NVivo) available at EVAL.
47. The operational plan will provide a basis for the visits or alternative remote, virtual and electronic ways of covering all levels from headquarters to regional offices to country offices. Currently the intention is to cover up to maximum 10 different locations assessing g typical ILO RSKM strategies and approaches. These will be visited or consulted virtually in required details. The evaluation is expected to be a global institutional evaluation with strong evidence and examples from actual RSKM strategies and activities. A suitable qualified evaluation team will carry out the evaluation with key deliverables inception report, field visits and data collection, draft and final report, a summary presentation and an executive summary, which will serve as a basis for preparing a Governing Body document on the evaluation.
48. The evaluation team will have experience in evaluation of RSKM at the institutional, global and strategic level with preferably experience with for UN agencies and/or in the multilateral context. Thorough understanding of the unique mandate and role of research and knowledge management in the UN system and in similar organisations is required. Familiarity with ILO's normative work and tripartite structure is preferable. EVAL as the independent evaluation function will be a team member of the evaluation.
49. The inception report and evaluation framework will include a reconstructed results framework for the RSKM strategies and approaches, possibly including a Theory of Change. The inception report will also include a work plan with distribution of responsibility within the team, including for locations or case studies to be covered and report preparation. The evaluation framework will for each evaluation questions finally included, identify the proposed data collection method to be used, such as type of stakeholders, method and mean of interview, and source of data. An assessment is to be included of the reliability of the proposed methods in providing sufficient evidence and substantiation to credibly address the evaluation questions.
50. The team composition should include sufficient team members to cover the required scope of work. A detailed work plan with scope of work, level of efforts and distribution of responsibilities of each team member will be part of the inception report. The evaluation team will ensure one approach in line with required independence and quality standards and per the agreed evaluation framework presented in the inception report.
51. The evaluation team is encouraged to look at the methodologies used by other independent evaluations of RSKM strategies and approaches of other UN Agencies, but should develop its own approach -based on the core norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) - to reflect the particularities of ILO's technical/development cooperation system, its tripartite governance structure, its Decent Work Agenda, its membership of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the context of the Agenda 2030. In drawing conclusions and recommendations, the evaluation team is also expected to review as relevant the comparable results of the RSKM efforts of peer UN organizations as potential benchmark.
52. The methodology should give strong consideration to dimensions such as ILO's normative work and social dialogue, such as expressed in the cross-cutting policy drivers in place during the period: inter-

national labour standards, social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination and just transition to environmental sustainability. These dimensions should be considered as cross-cutting concerns throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation.

53. In terms of gender, this implies assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve lives of women and men through appropriate evaluation indicators, methodology and data gathering techniques. Moreover the evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and gender and involve both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.
54. The details of the methodology will be elaborated by the selected team of evaluators on the basis of the Terms of Reference (TORs) and the inception report, which are subject to EVAL's approval. It is expected that the evaluation team will apply mixed methods, which draw on both quantitative and qualitative evidence and involve multiple means of analysis.
55. The mixed methods include but are not limited to:
- ▶ Desk review of relevant documents, including evaluation reports, ILO strategic and programming documents, reports and meta-studies on funds and programs etc.;
 - ▶ Reviewing evidence of follow up to relevant evaluation recommendations and use of lessons learned by ILO management;
 - ▶ Interviewing key stakeholders, which should reflect a diversity of backgrounds inside the Office, according to sector, technical unit, regions and country situations, and representing both providers, managers and users of RSKM, to the extent possible.
 - ▶ Interviewing stakeholders outside the Office, including Governing Body members, tripartite partners, members of multilateral and bilateral partners;
 - ▶ Conducting online surveys and other methodologies to obtain feedback and/or information from constituents and other key stakeholders; and
 - ▶ Field visits or other online approaches to cover five regional offices including 10 field locations as part of further developing country case studies reflecting a sample of typical typologies for RSKM strategies and approaches.
56. Additional criteria may be added by the evaluation team. The inception report should present a detailed evaluation approach and a range of methodologies. Key questions to take into account when developing an evaluation approach for the proposal are provided above.

Summary rating

57. A summary rating shall be expressed by the independent evaluation team for the six evaluation criteria and the respective questions agreed on in the inception report based on the questions above¹⁵⁰. The evaluation shall use a six-point scale ranging from "highly satisfactory," "satisfactory," "somewhat satisfactory," "somewhat unsatisfactory," "unsatisfactory," and "highly unsatisfactory."

¹⁵⁰ Independent evaluations in the ILO are conducted by independent and external evaluators. The final project ratings are produced by these external evaluators as an outcome of the evaluation process. These ratings are based on actual programme data, interaction with beneficiaries and stakeholders as well as on project performance documents (which include self-assessed ratings).

Highly satisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that ILO performance related to criterion has produced outcomes which go beyond expectation, expressed specific comparative advantages and added value, produced best practices
Satisfactory:	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been mostly attained and the expected level of performance can be considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself
Somewhat satisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and there that expected level of performance could be for the most part considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself ;
Somewhat unsatisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and the level of performance show minor shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries;
Unsatisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have not been attained and the level of performance show major shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries;
Highly unsatisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that expected results have not been attained, and there have been important shortcomings, and the resources have not been utilized effectively and/or efficiently

Main Outputs/Deliverables/Timeframe

58. The proposed time frame for this evaluation is from April 2020 to August 2020 in accordance with the following tentative schedule:

Tentative Schedule: Institutional Evaluation of ILO's Research and Knowledge Management Strategies and Approaches

Dates	Tasks	Responsible	Outputs/ Deliverable
Dec. 2019 to March 2020	Initial concept paper scoping and preparation; identification of key parameters; kick-off meeting with key primary stakeholders; calls for expression of interest; preparation of draft TORs	EVAL	Concept note; presentation to key primary stakeholders for the scoping
First half of April 2020	Contracting and preparation	EVAL	
Second half of April/First half of May 2020	Initial Skype call with team; Scoping visit to Geneva or series of Skype calls with Geneva; desk review	Evaluation team	Initial brief scoping report outline
First half of May 2020	Inception report and evaluation framework	Evaluation team (as decided by external evaluation team)	Inception Report
May - June 2020 with parallel visits	Consultation and interviews in Geneva and in the five regional office locations, with up to 10 visits to or detailed coverage of countries in the region; field visits/coverage to be concurrent by members of the team covering both English, French and Spanish	Full team as allocated within team; provisions for one member per region	Country case study notes (as required and as per evaluation framework);
May - June 2020	Synthesis review of Development cooperation projects related to RSKM strategies and approaches	EVAL working with separate external contractor based on defined scope and research questions from RSKM evaluation team	Report of synthesis review focusing on presentation findings and analysis in structured form
May-June 2020	Survey of constituents, ILO staff and partners in RSKM (To be designed as part of the inception report (or as soon as possible after that)	Surveys to be administered through EVAL dedicated electronic survey facility	Analysis to be done by evaluation team and ready for the first draft preparation step
First half of July 2020	Preparation of initial draft -	As decided by team	First full draft
Second half of July 2020	Review of first draft and comments by key stakeholders	Key stakeholders	Consolidated comments (by EVAL)

Dates	Tasks	Responsible	Outputs/ Deliverable
Second half of July 2020	Preparation of Executive Summary as priority to serve as basis for GB Summary Paper; with key findings, conclusions and recommendations (basis for Office response to report to be included in GB summary and final report)	As decided by team	Executive Summary of 3000 words to serve as core of GB summary paper)
First half of August 2020	Preparation of second draft	As decided by team	Second and final draft (including Executive Summary of 3000 words to serve as core of GB summary paper)
Second half of August 2020	First half of August: Presentation of second draft to key stakeholders in Geneva by team leader; adjustment of second draft if needed	Team leader	Power point presentation of key points
Second half of August 2020	Final adjustment of second and final draft; possible input to GB summary paper to be prepared by the ILO	Team leader	Final version ready as input for GB document
Sep./Oct. 2020	Editing and printing of final report	EVAL	Final version printed and on posted on-line; Quick Facts, PowerPoint Presentation and possibly short video produced

Management and Responsibilities

59. EVAL will take the lead role for funding, tendering, contracting, and implementation management. The Director of the EVAL will oversee the evaluation process and participate together with selected officials of EVAL as members of the coordinating team. A Senior Evaluation Officer will serve as the evaluation task manager and as member of the evaluation team. Relevant guidelines and protocols for the evaluation will be provided by EVAL as part of ILO Policy Guidelines on Evaluation.

60. The leading external evaluator will provide technical leadership and is responsible for the team as whole carrying out the following:

- Drafting the inception report, producing the draft reports and presenting a final report;
- Providing any technical and methodological advice necessary for this evaluation within the team;
- Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases.
- Coordinating the external evaluation team, ensuring the evaluation is conducted as per TORs, including following ILO EVAL guidelines, methodology and formatting requirements; and
- Producing reliable, triangulated findings that are linked to the evaluation questions and presenting useful and insightful conclusions and recommendations according to international standards.

61. EVAL will provide support to the evaluation team by providing documentation support and facilitate access to information, key informants and other sources relevant for the evaluation. Such support includes identification of similar type of evaluations, list of key stakeholders, list and abstracts of key documents and guidance on relevant Research and Knowledge Management related documents.

Quality assurance

62. The ILO senior evaluation officer assigned to this evaluation will provide overall quality assurance and support on all key outputs.

Qualifications of the Evaluators

63. This evaluation includes a broad range of questions and will require a range of skills within but also beyond labour issues, development cooperation and organisational reviews. This evaluation will be managed by EVAL and conducted by a team of independent and external evaluators with the following competency mix:

- ▶ Prior knowledge of the ILO's roles and activities, and solid understanding of the role of research and knowledge management, in a normative, standard setting multi-lateral organisations and an organisation with strong international development cooperation and funding (essential);
- ▶ Demonstrated executive-level management experience in reviewing and advising complex organizational structures, preferably in the field of labour issues and/or technical cooperation;
- ▶ Sound understanding of the concepts and issues related to the institutionalisation and use of research and knowledge, and demonstrated knowledge and expertise of research and knowledge management, including from evaluation and organisational assessments
- ▶ Adequate contextual knowledge of the UN, including SDGs, and proven past work on strategy evaluations for UN agencies;
- ▶ Familiarity with ILO's normative work, tripartite structure and other cross cutting policy drivers;
- ▶ Expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and an understanding of issues related to validity and reliability;
- ▶ Familiarity with relevant UNEG guidance, such as the UN evaluation norms and standards, and particularly guidance on integrating gender and human rights;
- ▶ At least 10 years' experience in evaluation policies, strategies, country programmes, organizational structures and effectiveness; organisational reviews, including specifically on research and knowledge management
- ▶ Experience in evaluation of research and knowledge management, with past work on strategy evaluations for UN agencies and/or multilateral context.
- ▶ Documented experience in result-based management and UN reform;
- ▶ No relevant bias related to ILO, or work experience with ILO in the last five ten years;
- ▶ Regional experience as required
- ▶ Fluency in English, spoken and written (essential); as a team sufficient knowledge of two other ILO official language French and Spanish is required for field visits (local translation and support can be provided if needed).

65. All team members should have proven ability to work with others in the development and timely delivery of high-quality deliverables.

Selection of Team

65. Based on initial concept note and primarily stakeholder consultations, specifications for a call for expression of interest was developed and a call launched. Using an established two reviewer rating system, a shortlist of candidates that have expressed interest has been asked to provide a detailed proposal. Each received proposal will be assessed against established criteria developed on the basis of the TORs. Using this documented analysis and considering availability, the team is selected. Throughout EVAL allocates great importance to relevant technical skills including ability to deal with the complex and wide range field of research and knowledge management strategies the specifics of the UN system and the ILO, which in itself limits the pool of possible candidates. Principles of best value to the ILO, with price and other factors considered are applied.

Evaluator's Code of Conduct and Ethical Considerations

66. [The ILO Code of Conduct](#) for independent evaluators applies to all evaluation team members. The principles behind the Code of Conduct are fully consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service to which all UN staff is bound. UN staff is also subject to the specific staff rules and procedures of the UNEG member for the procurement of services. The selected team members shall sign and return a copy of the code of conduct with their contract.

Strategy for Evaluation Use

67. Efforts will be made to keep relevant identified entities in the ILO both at HQ, the regions and in the field informed about the major steps of the evaluation process. Focal points have been identified within key entities in the ILO, in particular the Policy Portfolio in which much of research and knowledge management strategies are carried out, including in the specific Research Department. Focal points will also be identified with the Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV), Bureau for Employers activities (ACTEMP), and the Field Operations and Partnership Portfolio, where regional and country level development cooperation is carried out that includes research and knowledge management. Key outputs will be circulated for comments.

68. The following products are expected to enhance the use of the evaluation findings and conclusions by developing different products for different audiences:

- ▶ GB executive summary document for the GB 2020 discussion
- ▶ The full report available in limited hard copy and electronically available on the EVAL website and
- ▶ Key findings or table of contents presented with hyperlinks for readers to read sections of the report.
- ▶ USB keys with e-copy of the report for dissemination to partners.
- ▶ A PowerPoint presentation or visual summary of the report will be prepared for EVALs website and for presentations on the evaluation.
- ▶ EVAL Quick Facts on the High Level Evaluation to be prepared.
- ▶ A short video on the key findings and recommendations.

Annex I: Brief overview of Research and Knowledge Management in ILO 2010-2018

Research and Knowledge Management in ILO Results Framework

The [Strategic Policy Framework for 2010-2015](#) discussed the role of the Office as the authoritative source of information, data, knowledge and advice on decent work policies in all their dimensions. As the centre of excellence on decent work, the Office should research, monitor and evaluate world of work trends and policies, thereby establishing a recognized competency in the policies and subject matters in which the ILO has a clear comparative advantage. A section on the knowledge based provided further details on the intended focus.

The [P&B 2010-2011](#) emphasised knowledge sharing as a key theme of ILO work and the use of the integrated strategy for the development and dissemination of knowledge of the world of work. The [P&B 2012-2013](#) (approved in June 2011) placed special emphasis on information and knowledge management as basis for improving the quality of the organisations' services to constituents and achieving operational efficiency. Inter-related tasks forces focussed on Global Research and Publications; Country Based Policy Analyse and Information; Knowledge Management Gateway (universal knowledge management portal connecting all the ILO data sources at the country level); and a Knowledge Management Steering Committee (2014) were in place and defined as part of ILO's Information and Knowledge Management Implementation Structure. Programme and Budget documents are available [here](#).

The [P&B 2014-15](#) addressed in the response of the DG to the GB discussions key strategic issues on the role of research in ILO.

The [2016-2017 transitional strategic plan](#) included discussions on an agenda for research, knowledge, labour statistics and capacity development, considering the research, knowledge and labour statistics are essential means to support the achievement of the policy outcomes. The creation of the Research Department and the launch of an ILO-wide research agenda outlines how the ILO intends to become a more influential participant in the global policy debate on employment and social issues; how constituents should be provided with evidence-based advice on policies that are effective in tackling employment and social policy challenges, including at the national level; and how get a better understanding of the trends shaping the world of work, a range of policy options to address these trends and an improved capacity of governments and employers' and workers' organizations to seize new opportunities. Core research issues were to include the assessment of "what works" (notably as part of the policy outcomes and the centenary initiatives),

The launch of a single flagship publication, namely the World Employment and Social Outlook (merging the Global Employment Trends and World of Work Report), and the production of policy briefs was intended to provide valuable tools for disseminating research findings and enabling the ILO to contribute meaningfully to relevant global forums such as the International Labour Conference, the G20 and others, as well as in national dialogues. The establishment of a Research Review Group would provide the oversight of research work and contribute to enhancing quality control. Steps were taken to foster the dissemination and application of research, including with a link to statistics and strengthened collaboration between the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin and the ILO on dissemination and use of knowledge and research. An ILO Publishing Policy was put in place in 2016.

The [P&B 2016-17](#) included a section on Research, knowledge, labour statistics and capacity development covering an agenda for research and knowledge with overarching goals and means of action. Enabling outcomes were introduced but did not include a specific enabling outcome on research.

The [Strategic Plan 2018-2021](#) includes as one of the six outcomes of ILO 2021 that ILO will significantly strengthened its role as a knowledge leader, its understanding of transformative changes in the world of work and its capacity to respond effectively to major emerging issues and, by virtue of this, is recognized as the global centre of excellence in labour statistics, research, knowledge management and policy development in all relevant areas. A section on investing in research, statistics and knowledge management called

for reinforcement of its search, statistics and knowledge based capacity so that ILO can become a better creator, compiler, broker and disseminator of research findings, statistics and information.

The [P&B 2018-19](#) carried this forward in referring to the reinforcement of the Organization's knowledge leadership through further investment in research, statistical, and analytical work is the next step in doing those things right, underpinned by the multidisciplinary approaches embedded in the policy outcomes, informed by key lessons learned from past work and with scale and impact amplified by engagement in appropriate partnerships with other actors.

It included for the first time an enabling outcome “Effective knowledge management for the promotion of decent work” covering RSKM. In the current [P&B 2020-2021](#), this enabling outcome has been maintained and adjusted as “Authoritative Knowledge and high-impact partnerships for promoting decent work”.

Regional initiatives

Regional offices and country offices have also engaged with various RSKM set-up. An example is the Asia-Pacific strategy for Improving ILO's impact through better knowledge management initiated in 2007 that created among others things the Asia Pacific Knowledge Sharing Platform (KSP). This strategy focussed on 1) developing strong internal capacity to: i) codify and share key lessons and expertise, ii) recognize and collect valuable information and resources and iii) develop and maintain networks of staff connected to relevant resources; 2) on creating Communities of Practices (CoPs) to: i) foster mutual capacity-building and learning, ii) share and leverage resources in the ILO areas of work and iii) connect ILO constituents to each other and to other stakeholders and partners; and on 3) Applying ILO expertise to: i) generate timely, evidence-based policy advice, ii) shape regional labour agendas to advocate decent work principles and iii) create demand-responsive tools, methods, approaches and systems for stakeholders.

Organisational set-up for RSKM in ILO

From 1960 to 2014, ILO has conducted research through a central independent entity, *The International Institute for Labour Studies*, which served as a strategic facility to explore emerging labour policy issues with implications for the ILO. It also provided an autonomous and informal vehicle for dialogue between the international academic community and ILO staff and constituents.

In 2012-2013, a review was done of the ILO research activities in the context of the reform launched by the new DG and on the role of the International Institute for Labour Studies. The review covered the need to strengthened research capacity, consolidate efforts and overcome dispersion to make the organisation a centre of excellence related to the world of work and to gear it to delivery of quality services. After the work of an ILO internal reform task team on research, statistics and publications that focused on the need to build crucial mass and ensure research was in support of ILO policy and activities through solid evidence based analysis, the Institute's research capacity was moved into a new Research Department, part of the Policy Portfolio along with other substantive departments. This Department is mandated to generate knowledge through the coordination of research functions with and among technical departments and to carry out an expanded programme of research with the critical mass of resources needed to address large and complex questions on which the Organization must have credible, authoritative evidence-based positions.

The ILO Governing Body periodically reviews the research agenda, including through discussions of adopted knowledge strategies for 2018-21. ILO has a Research Review Group and a Publishing Committee, which provide quality control. The Research Review Group consists of independent experts from academia or other research contexts and is chaired by the Director-General. The Group is mandated to assure the quality, academic rigour and independence of the research undertaken by the Research Department. The Group also reviews ILO flagship reports produced by the Research Department. The Publishing Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Director-General for Policy, further ensures the selection, production and distribution of high-quality products that provide a sound basis for policy advice and advocacy. It develops and ensures the implementation of publishing policies and procedures. At the regional level, regional directors may establish, in close consultation with the Research Department, committees or other structures at the regional or sub regional level to facilitate the implementation of research policies in their regions.

The International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin (ITC-ILO), develops and delivers training programmes related to ILO and constituent priorities. Programmes are delivered at the Centre, in the field and through distance-learning technologies. Specific research and knowledge management activities will also take place in the ITC-ILO but will only be covered in the evaluation when clearly linking to the defined scope. ITC-ILO is not formally covered by the ILO evaluation policy.

Information Management Services (IMS) Branch within INFOTEC with a focus on information governance, information architecture, the information lifecycle, master data management, taxonomies, indexing, cataloguing, meta-data management and managing the ILO Thesaurus.

The Department of Policy Integration served from 2010 until 2016 as the technical department providing ILO expertise on global economic trends and globalization; integrated decent work policies, programmes, and poverty reduction strategies at the national level. It was formed through transfer of certain components of work from the Statistics Department and other departments to focus in particular on the policy outcome on Policy Coherence.

Statistics is responsible for work on labour statistics development and analysis Statistics is responsible for centrally managing and coordinating the compilation, quality control and dissemination of ILO statistical information on the four pillars of decent work.

Global Technical Teams works across the organisation bring technical and policy specialist together from HQ and field with a focus on sharing knowledge for enhanced use across the organisation. At the regional and country level, regional offices has various levels of research and policy functions. The Decent Work Technical Teams created in 2011 serves as key entity for research and knowledge sharing directly in support of country level work. Policy departments provide policy-oriented research services to constituents as part of knowledge generation. The Department of Communication (DCOMM) plays a role on knowledge sharing.

Annex II: Some Initial Proposed Evaluation Questions Per Evaluation Criteria

Assessment Criteria	Questions to be addressed
Relevance of RSKM in the ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► To what extent do RSKM in ILO reflect the established priorities and outcomes of the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice and subsequent 2016 declaration; and looking forward the Centenary Declaration of 2019? ► How well do the RSKM in ILO align with the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework (SPF) 2010-15, Transitional Strategic Plan 2016-17, Strategic Plan 2018-21, related P&Bs and DWCPs as well as UN global (SDGs) and country strategies (SDGs, UNDAFs)? ► What means are there to ensure continuing relevance vis-à-vis changing needs and new developments?
Coherence & Validity of RSKM in ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► What are the baseline conditions for RSKM in ILO 2010-18? ► Are the intended objectives and outcomes of RSKM properly responding to the perceived needs and situation globally and on the ground and how are these needs identified? To which extent is any Theory of Change (ToC) informed by needs and interests of diverse groups of stakeholders through consultations? ► Do RSKM in ILO support the objectives and outcomes of the ILO's strategy programme framework, strategic plans and related strategies and policies? Do they support the priorities, objectives and the principal means of action for achieving Decent Work outcomes within the P&Bs and SPFs? ► To which extent is the ToC aligned with the international/national/regional standards and principles on Human Rights and Gender Equality (HRGE) and how it contributes to their implementation? ► Are there appropriate and useful set of indicators to effectively assess the results, relevance and outcomes of RSKM? Can these indicators be measurable and traceable? Can these indicators be comparable to those that aim to measure similar outcomes within the UN system?
Effectiveness of RSKM in ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► What results have been achieved and/or what progress has been made in assuring that RSKM in ILO contribute towards the Decent Work outcomes within the P&B and SPF framework during the review period? To which extent expected results address HRGE? To which extent have RSKM targeted HRGE as cross-cutting learning components, whenever relevant? ► How are RSKM coordinated within the Office and with other intergovernmental bodies? Have RSKM supported cooperation with other UN organizations? Are there any differences in effectiveness noticeable on these aspects between specific levels and nature (typologies) of RSKM? ► Are RSKM supporting ILOs' result-based framework at all levels? ► What are the particular issues, component or action that contribute to the various dimensions of the effectiveness of RSKM in ILO?

Assessment Criteria	Questions to be addressed
Efficiency of RSKM in ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are resources for RSKM being used in the most efficient manner? How economically are resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) converted to results? Have resources been allocated strategically to make most use of RSKM in line with priorities and focus? Do the results of RSKM justify the costs? Has there been an adequate resource investment to integrate labour rights/International Labour Standards (ILS) as well as Gender and Equality? ▶ How have RSKM supported the achievements at the field, in particular of Technical Cooperation/ Development Cooperation activities? ▶ Are there any differences in efficiency noticeable depending on specific levels and nature (typologies) of RSKM in a given country?
Impact & Sustainability of RSKM in ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can any observed changes and results be causally linked to the role of the RSKM? Did the changes result from appropriate RSKM strategies and approaches? Are there impact assessments that can support attribution of results to the nature and support of RSKMs? And if not, what other evidence is there? ▶ What are the tripartite constituents' perceived benefits from RSKM (differentiated by groups)? ▶ Is it likely that the RSKM strategies and approaches are durable and can be maintained and/or adjusted in response to changing context? Are there any differences noticeable depending on specific levels and nature (typology) of RSKM in a given country, within a specific thematic area or at a global level? ▶ What actions and conditions are required for achieving broader, long-term outcome and impact of ILO's RSKM strategies and approaches? ▶ Have target groups for RSKM benefited from a long-term realization of Labour Rights, Gender and Equality (LRGE)? Have interventions worked towards developing an enabling environment for real change on LRGE? Have they worked towards policy changes conducive to LRGE?
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How have the issues identified in past reviews of RSKM been addressed in reforms, changes and action related to RSKM? ▶ Can any contextual factors and pre-conditions be identified that will be core to continued assessment of the contribution of RSKM? ▶ What are the key issues and recommendations for ILO to consider in any future review and possible adjustment of RSKM strategies and approaches in ILO?

Annex III: Key Questions for the initial scoping survey

(These are the initial questions, precise formulation to be finalized. Survey to be administered to both headquarter and filed level to policy, research and technical support entities. Demographics will be collected to identify categories)

- ▶ What do you consider the most useful for promoting and delivering ILOs work
 - ▶ In terms of Research strategies and approaches...
 - ▶ In terms of Knowledge management approaches
- ▶ What would you like to know from the evaluation (most important evaluation question) about research and knowledge management strategies in ILO?
 - ▶ On relevance:
 - ▶ On coherence:
 - ▶ On effectiveness:
 - ▶ On Efficiency:
 - ▶ On Impact :
 - ▶ On Sustainability:
- ▶ Please provide any good examples of use of research and knowledge management in development projects (global, regional or country) and explain why you consider these useful:
- ▶ Please provide any good examples of technical, sector strategies or plans of action where research and knowledge management is well integrated and why you consider these good examples?
- ▶ How would you measure the relevance of ILO's work on research and knowledge management?
- ▶ How would you measure the use of ILO's work on research and knowledge management?

- ▶ What do you consider the most important achievement of ILO in terms of research and knowledge management?
- ▶ Please provide a concrete example of any such achievements, preferable with concrete references
- ▶ What do you think the most important achievements of ILO should be in terms of research and knowledge management?

► Annex 3. Type and number of stakeholders consulted

Inception/data collection phase

Organization, Department or Office	Number of Informants
International Labour Organization	
ACT/EMP	2
DCOMM	2
DDG/FOP	2
DDG/MR	1
DDG/P	3
DG/CABINET	1
EMPLOYMENT	3
ENTERPRISES	1
GOVERNANCE	3
IAO	1
INFOTEC	1
MULTILATERAL	2
NORMES	2
PARDEV	2
PROGRAM	3
RESEARCH	3
SOCPRO	4
STATS	1
WORKQUALITY	2
<i>Sub-total</i>	39
Other	
IOE	2
ITUC	2
<i>Sub-total</i>	4
Total	43

Location or Region	Number of informants
HQ	43
Total	43

Gender	Number of informants
Female	17
Male	26
Total	43

Data collection phase

Organization, Department or Office	Number of informants
International Labour Organization	
ACTRAV	3
BETTER WORK	1
BIU	2
DCOMM	1
DDG/P	5
DIALOGUE	1
DWT/CO-LIMA	1
DWT/CO-Pretoria	1
EMPLOYMENT	4
EMPLOYMENT SKILLS	2
EVAL	2
FUNDAMENTALS	2
GED	1
GREEN	1
HRD	1
ILO Egypt	1
ILO Library	1
ILO Uzbekistan	1
INFOTEC	2
ITC ILO	2
NORMES	5
OIT-CINTERFOR	1
OSH	1
PARDEV	2
PRODOC	1
PROGRAM	1
Regional Office for Africa	2
Regional Office for Arab States	2

Organization, Department or Office	Number of informants
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	2
Regional Office for Europe	1
RESEARCH	5
SCORE	1
SOCPRO	1
VISION ZERO FUND	1
WORKQUALITY	2
WORKQUALITY INWORK	2
<i>Sub-total</i>	65
Other	
GRADE	1
IOE	3
ITUC	1
Retired (CABINET)	1
Retired (RESEARCH)	1
Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs	1
UNITAR	1
USAID	1
<i>Sub-total</i>	10
Total	75

Location or Region	Number of informants
Africa	3
Arab States	4
Asia and Pacific	2
Europe	6
HQ	57
Latin America	3
Total	75

Gender	Number of informants
Female	33
Male	42
Total	75

Grand Total

Phase	Number of informants		
	Female	Male	Total
Inception/data collection phase	17	26	43
Data collection	33	42	75
Grand total	50	68	118

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