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▶ Key findings and conclusions by evaluation criteria

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NAVIGATING THE CRISIS

Introduction

This section summarizes the high-level findings of the evaluation against the OECD-DAC criteria and answers the evaluation questions (see Annex B: Evaluation questions). Ratings against the criteria use a six-point scale (with 1 being "highly unsatisfactory" and 6 being "highly satisfactory"). The ratings are based on the assessments of the five evaluation team members, the Synthesis Review of project evaluation reports completed in the period, and the findings of the staff and constituent surveys (see **Annex D: Results of staff and constituent surveys**). Ratings cover the ILO's response at both the institutional and policy action levels.

Relevance

▶ **Key finding 1:** The ILO's management and governance systems adapted well to changed circumstances, ensured that constituent engagement and support were maintained, and introduced new systems to allow staff to continue to work.

▶ **Key finding 2:** Coordination to develop policy guides and knowledge products was initially lacking but this was later addressed, and some guides and products proved to be of global relevance.

▶ **Key finding 3:** In the crisis phase, the ILO worked with its constituents to promote safety and health at the workplace, developed resources to support employment and enterprise continuity, and influenced and helped implement emergency social protection measures. Gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives were included in this work.

At the institutional level, the ILO's overall response to the uncertainty and unpredictable change brought about by the crisis was highly relevant, enabling the Organization to adapt to a dramatically altered operational landscape, and to re-invent the way it delivered services to its constituents. Plans for risk management and business continuity had been in place, but these did not envisage a crisis of the magnitude and duration of COVID-19. The situation called for **management** to make quick decisions, often with imperfect information, and to adjust course as things became clearer. **Constituent engagement** through **social dialogue** remained the highest priority and continued throughout the crisis, including through virtual meetings and conferences. New systems and processes were introduced to ensure that ILO staff were safe and could continue to work in new ways or, sometimes, in new roles. The ILO gave relevant support to constituents as they grappled with the crisis, including addressing OSH issues, maintaining continuity of services for their members and enhancing their relevance through new tools and resources.

While there was no explicit ToC developed, the "four-pillar" policy framework set out a highly relevant **programme logic** sequenced initially to understand and to address the immediate effects of the pandemic on the world of work and then to contribute to human-centred recovery underpinned by social dialogue and international labour standards. As a tool to guide the HLE, the team developed a ToC retrospectively (see **Annex F: Theory of Change**) which divided the intervention logic into initial **crisis response actions** (designed to **"limit the damage"** by understanding and addressing the immediate needs and decent work deficits caused or exacerbated by the pandemic) and **recovery actions** (designed to **"build back better"**, using lessons learned in the pandemic to accelerate the achievement of the Decent Work Agenda).

Overall, ILO policy actions in the initial crisis response phase were highly relevant. While there was perhaps some over-enthusiasm in the generation of **knowledge products and policy guides** in the early stages of the pandemic, with some not being as relevant in terms of immediate constituent demand, this was brought under control and better coordinated. Some proved to be relevant at a global level, especially the *ILO Monitor* and the many sectoral and employment papers, while COVID OSH resources, and the guidelines produced to support countries to conduct rapid assessments of the pandemic impacts were applied extensively. As the synthesis review showed, **existing development cooperation projects** were generally able to remain relevant, especially those based on global programmes and interventions, which could more readily adjust delivery mechanisms and respond to new priorities rather than smaller, one-off projects which did what they could within their scope but lacked capacity to change direction in any significant way.

Actions in the crisis phase that more **directly supported people and enterprises** were also relevant: the ILO worked with its constituents to protect the safety and health of their members, including vulnerable groups, supported responsible business conduct in global supply chains such as the garment sector, developed resources to support enterprise continuity, and influenced and helped implement emergency social protection measures. Major contributions were made towards the goal of leaving no-one behind in the response by the major flagship programmes, such as Better Work and Safety and Health for All, enterprise programmes (including support for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives) as well as the migrant workers portfolio and integrated gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives. In some countries, COVID-19 response projects and social protection interventions supported employment and skills development for women, persons with disabilities, refugees, people living with HIV/AIDS and indigenous communities.

Despite elevating its profile within the UN System during the pandemic, **ILO contributions to the UN framework** for the immediate socioeconomic responses to COVID-19 were somewhat relevant but limited in scope at country level. The relevance of ILO action in support of a **green recovery and a Just Transition** was also seen as somewhat unsatisfactory, an observation reinforced in the November 2021 MOPAN assessment.

Evaluating the relevance of the ILO's recovery actions is complicated by a number of factors. First, at the time of writing, in many parts of the world, the pandemic was still in full swing with infection and hospitalization numbers still high or rising, lockdowns and travel restrictions still in place, and "recovery" in a sense yet to begin. Second, there is a huge variance in the rate of recovery between countries – while unemployment remains high in many parts of the world, in others, especially advanced economies, there has been a huge rebound in their labour markets leading to unprecedented labour shortages. Third, while the pandemic has naturally dominated policy thinking over the last two years, its impact on the world of work has since been compounded by multiple new crises including the war in Ukraine, a major energy crisis, escalating global inflation, global supply chain breakdowns, and, perhaps most worrying of all, a food supply crisis that raises the spectre of famine. Independent of these crises, there are changes in the labour market that are continuing to transform the ILO's operating environment, including shifts in the patterns of global production (for example, reshoring and near shoring), digitalization and automation of work and

the growth of artificial intelligence (AI). In the context of such change and multiple, unanticipated crises, the question arises whether the policy actions for recovery articulated in the four-pillar framework and the Call to Action will continue to be relevant?

Due to the way that response was developed, "anchored" as it was in the Centenary Declaration, ILS and the "core business" of the ILO, at a strategic level the response framework for recovery remains highly relevant and adaptable to these new global developments and to the divergent challenges at a country level. Having starkly exposed the consequences of existing decent work deficits, the pandemic appears to have galvanized global resolve to tackle many longstanding ILO goals, including universal social protection, protection of all workers, and inclusive economic growth and employment. This resolve seems unlikely to diminish in the face of the new crises though finances may be spread more thinly because of them.

Perhaps talk of "recovery" is itself an over-optimistic vision of what is attainable in the short- to medium-term. To be relevant in shaping the future of work, ILO actions will need to remain responsive to continuous, unpredictable change, not just to the damage left by the pandemic. Building back a better world of work is what the ILO was created to do in 1919. A new light has been shone on the relevance of this mission during COVID-19 and supported by its constituents, and the ILO must continue to assert the centrality of its role as the attention of the international community moves away from the pandemic and on to other global challenges.

Coherence

▶ **Key finding 4:** The pandemic led to some improved collaboration and policy coherence in the ILO. Collaborative structures and multi-disciplinary work teams were established to good effect, with the "four-pillar" framework focusing effort and creating synergies.

▶ **Key finding 5:** Internal teamwork and more frequent engagement between HQ and the field were enhanced by the increased use of virtual meetings.

▶ **Key finding 6:** Work in the pandemic continued to cohere with social dialogue principles and with international labour standards.

▶ **Key finding 7:** New collaboration opportunities with UN agencies and multilateral partners have emerged but more work and resources are needed if their potential is to be realized. In the field, high-level agreements did not always translate to a more prominent role for the ILO.

Many past ILO evaluations have described the operational problems associated with a perceived **"silo mentality"** within the Organization. This has been said to manifest itself between and even within HQ policy departments and between HQ and the field. This is not a problem unique to the ILO and is common within large, multi-department organizations. Over the years, PROGRAM has tried to drive greater levels of collaboration and policy coherence in different ways[308] and a Business Process Review (BPR) also sought to break down the silos.

The HLE found evidence that the **pandemic played a catalytic role** in improving collaboration and policy coherence. The synthesis review of evaluations conducted in the period found that the pandemic had created a "new imperative for the ILO to work as one" and "led to strengthened internal collaboration". There was a perception, also shared in some interviews, that when faced with a crisis, the ILO had some kind of inherent capacity to break out of its "silos" and to galvanise around a common cause. Examples were given of this crisis-induced esprit de corps, such as the huge collaborative effort across departments required to produce the *ILO Monitor* and to do the groundwork for the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection.

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308 For example, by introducing in 2015 "Areas of Critical Importance" around which work was intended to coalesce and by allowing results to be reported against multiple P&B outcomes.

While it is true that staff came together in a crisis, collaboration did not just spontaneously "break out" across the Organization. The **Organization's leadership** set in place **collaborative structures and multi-disciplinary work teams** to create it (for example, for the *ILO Monitor*, on "Nowcasting", the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. Uncoordinated production of policy papers and guides did happen (as one department director put it, "at the start it was almost a competition on who could produce the most briefs") but this could have ballooned into an incoherent mass of work had the DG not called for a narrowing of focus around key objectives. These objectives would eventually become the four-pillar policy framework, something which helped people see more clearly where their work fitted in the "big picture" and where natural synergies might form.

Paradoxically, COVID's **physical distancing may have also helped bring the ILO closer together**. Despite the risks of being involved in too many Zoom or team meetings, the massive increase in the use of such technology may have improved collaboration and communication within and between policy areas. Global Technical Teams, which bring together specialists from HQ and the field, used to meet physically and infrequently. The HLE learnt that during COVID, virtual meetings of some teams were held much more regularly to discuss global COVID impacts and to collectively develop responses. ENTERPRISES took this to the next level, organizing through ITCILO, a virtual "Sustainable Enterprises Exhibition" to "unlock synergies and scale effects" in the department's work, and to develop a new high-level policy strategy. More frequent and responsive engagement between HQ specialists and staff and constituents in the field similarly improved organizational coherence, though it also had workload implications. Such benefits need to be maintained – as one department director said, "this should be the new normal – we should not go back to business as usual."

Despite such promising developments in promoting policy coherence and internal collaboration, the walls of the silos have by no means crumbled. As the synthesis review found, there is a risk "of the ILO reverting to its old, more fragmented habits". As one department director said, improvements in policy coherence could quickly be lost unless the ILO took action to build on and entrench collaboration. This meant setting up **structured mechanisms to encourage and reward cross-departmental interactions** and "more action from the policy heads and DDGs" to commit to this way of working.

Despite the many difficulties faced, especially in the early stages of the crisis, the ILO worked hard to ensure its institutional governance and its policy responses cohered with **social dialogue** principles. Remote engagement has its drawbacks – especially when rapport between the parties has not yet been established – but the HLE found that the ILO and its constituents remained closely engaged at a global level and, to varying degrees, also at a country level. Remote engagement also enhanced social dialogue and consultation in some new ways, including by allowing more direct engagement between HQ and key officials in ministries of labour.

In terms of alignment with ILO strategy and key policy instruments, as mentioned above, the ILO's COVID response work was built on and cohered with the **Centenary Declaration** and, as such, also broadly aligned with the 2020–21 **P&B**. Actions at a country level broadly cohered with **CPOs and DWCP**s but, as these were not all updated to reflect the new circumstances brought on by COVID, and as reported results related to COVID were often only vaguely described, it was difficult for the HLE to determine how well actions cohered with other interventions at this level.

The **centrality of international labour standards** in the ILO's COVID response was especially important – as one senior manager said, "COVID provided a window for the world to understand why labour standards are important". The Call to Action emphasized the "promotion of legal and institutional frameworks based on international labour standards" and "occupational safety and health in the light of experience of the COVID-19 pandemic" (Paras. 12 and 13(b)(i)). The Report of

Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations[309] noted how the crisis exposed existing "blind spots" and stalled or reversed progress towards the SDG 8 vision of full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all.

The ILO was quick to link its work and its policy guidance to international labour standards, centrally positioning them as a **"decent work compass"** in the context of the crisis response, ensuring that actions reinforced key issues like OSH, protection of specific categories of workers, non-discrimination, social security and employment protection. Standards related to employment, social protection, wage protection, SMEs and workplace cooperation all shaped policy measures that promoted a human centred approach to the crisis and recovery. Notable examples included the ILO's work to update the **Maritime Labour Convention** in response to the crisis faced by workers in that sector during the pandemic, the COVID-related work linked to the **health services and tourism sectors**, and the addition of OSH as a fifth category of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

New mechanisms for **coherence and collaboration with other UN agencies and multilateral partners** emerged during the pandemic which promise much but still require substantial work, and many more resources, to realize major benefits. High-level agreements and collaborative mechanisms were established in the UN system but, for a variety of reasons, at the country level, the ILO was not always able to play as prominent a role as it would like even if it was the logical and mandated agency to do so. Its relative lack of resources at a country level, particularly in non-resident countries, was reported to restrict the scope of its activities in this area.

The HLE found that recovery from the pandemic presents new opportunities for real action on **Green Jobs and Just Transition**, but there is a gap between stated aspirations and action. Project evaluations and MOPAN's November 2021 assessment suggest that ILO actions are yet to fully align with its policy commitments. As one survey respondent put it: "Just Transition and environmental sustainability is mentioned in most programmes of the ILO, but unfortunately unless [they] specifically have them as their objective, it's often lip service." Another suggested as a means of improving policy coherence "maybe we need a Just Transition Task Force with all relevant departments".

Effectiveness

▶ **Key finding 8:** ILO planning and reporting systems did not adequately track its COVID-19 response. Adjustments were made to these systems, but results were poorly reported.

▶ **Key finding 9:** Innovative knowledge products were cited as being highly influential and elevated the ILO's profile as an authoritative source of labour market data.

▶ **Key finding 10:** Good results were identified across all the key policy areas in supporting both national policy development and programmes and measures to address the immediate impacts of the crisis.

The ILO was only partially successful in adapting its operational planning and reporting systems to track its COVID-19 response and to measure its effectiveness. Setting aside the broader question of whether its RBM system measures the right things in general (for example, the observation shared with the HLE that "spending on delivery is not a good measure of effectiveness"), making sense of P&B performance reports in their coverage of the COVID-19 response was especially challenging. Some adjustments were made at the planning stage to some CPOs (about a third according to PROGRAM), but the nature and intent of these changes were not visible through the Decent Work Results dashboard. The HLE therefore found itself in the invidious position of evaluating the effectiveness of actions without always knowing exactly what these actions were expected to achieve.

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309 ILO, "Press Release on the Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations", February 2022.

The HLE completed an arduous, line-by-line review of CPO reports and extracted what it could to tell a performance story on the COVID response, but a certain amount of subjectivity was involved in this, and important details might have been lost. In some areas, the HLE delved deeper into P&B outputs to identify connections between elements of the Call to Action and the reported results. But even with the tracking adjustments made to the monitoring and reporting system (that is, the addition of a COVID-19 "tag" at the planning stage and an optional explanatory text box at the reporting stage), data were found to be imprecise or poorly reported. For example, some rapporteurs used the text box to explain the link between CPO results and the ILO's COVID-19 response, but others used it to describe general contextual information about COVID-19 or simply left it blank. There were also probably many examples of effective ILO COVID-19-response actions which, for whatever reason, were not attached to a reported CPO result and so remained invisible.

While there were clear deficiencies in the ILO's monitoring and reporting of its COVID-19 response, it should be remembered that decisions related to adapting systems were made in an environment of great operational uncertainty. Maybe, if people knew in early 2020 that the pandemic would last for years, a more comprehensive overhaul of planning and reporting might have been triggered. Some interviewees said that, in retrospect, all CPOs should have been revised (as was the case with global deliverables). Some alluded to heated discussions at the time about important definitional issues – like how, exactly, the ILO should define a COVID response in planning and reporting terms, whether immediate or long-term responses should be the focus, and whether any of the actions within the four-pillar framework and the Call to Action were, in any real sense, new.

In the end, the ILO decided to maintain its existing approach, adding some minor tweaks to planning and reporting to capture some COVID-19-related detail, but largely reporting as usual on P&B outcomes and outputs. Qualitative reporting of the ILO's pandemic response, both within the PIR and in papers presented to the GB, showcased highlights of the ILO's work, but said little, if anything, about "lowlights" – aspects of this work that were ineffective. Such deficiencies were acknowledged by staff interviewed during the HLE, but as one said, the important question relates to if and how it might modify its approach if challenged to measure something unexpected again: "How ready are we next time?"

Evaluation procedures were updated, and protocols produced to ensure continued accountability and learning from evaluations. Three iterations of targeted synthesis reviews were produced to provide real-time learning on the effectiveness of ILO's operations in response to the pandemic effects.

The ILO made great efforts to support workers' and employers' organizations to continue to operate and service their members during the crisis. Constituents in HLE case study countries were positive about the effectiveness of these efforts, highlighting, for example, the value of information shared on international practices, guides for members on OSH, telework, and online payments, and support for improved policy advocacy and the maintenance of social dialogue.

Despite these limitations, the HLE found examples of effective policy actions both at a global level and within the country and thematic case studies. Developing **knowledge products** was a major focus of the ILO's response in the early stages of the pandemic but measuring the effectiveness of these is difficult. **Some were highly innovative and influential** while others may have only reached a limited audience. Knowledge output elevated the ILO's profile as an authoritative source of labour market data and the ILO's outreach, public engagement, and media coverage grew substantially as a result.

Work in support of inclusive economic growth and employment enabled the effects of the pandemic on national labour markets to be better understood with insights incorporated into national employment policies and programmes, youth employment strategies, enterprise support measures, sectoral responses, skills systems and supports for vulnerable groups. Work supporting

the protection of all workers helped constituents to implement their immediate COVID-19 OSH response, including in the most affected sectors and occupations, to tackle the negative effect of the pandemic on FPRW, on informality, and on women and vulnerable workers. Universal social protection was given new prominence and the ILO used its policy expertise to support new coverage in several countries (including for vulnerable groups and women) and to position the ILO with IFIs and the UN system to further expand this work. Within the UN and multilateral system, collaborative project efforts had mixed results, but the ILO has forged new agreements and partnerships that could enhance results over the long term.

According to the synthesis review, the effectiveness of **existing development cooperation projects** in the early stages of the pandemic was affected by implementation delays and the many were unable to implement activities as planned. Despite this, many showed a **good capacity to innovate** work around these obstacles using technology, although **reaching vulnerable groups** in this way sometimes proved difficult. **Many achieved good results**, especially those that focused on protecting workers, although interventions designed to grow jobs and income were less effective at the height of the pandemic.

Efficiency

▶ **Key finding 11:** ILO quickly reinvented its service delivery model, achieving efficiencies of scale in supporting constituents as well as logistical, financial, environmental and time efficiencies.

▶ **Key finding 12:** Budget flexibility allowed adaptations while maintaining accountability and funding partners were open to project adjustments. Some inefficiencies were reported in the slow mobilization of resources, including human resources.

▶ **Key finding 13:** Major programmes (such as the Better Work flagship programme and the SCORE programme) were generally better able to make delivery adjustments than smaller, one-off projects.

In response to unprecedented circumstances, ILO managed the crisis in an efficient and timely way, quickly re-inventing its service delivery model, defining a coherent policy framework, and asserting its position as a global authority on the pandemic's effects on the world work. By necessity, the digitization of its services was accelerated, enabling the ILO to achieve efficiencies of scale in the delivery of constituent support as well as logistical, financial, environmental and time efficiencies through remote engagement and less travel. New intervention models were introduced that streamlined support to constituents (for example, the development of customisable global products which EBMOs could adapt for local use). The right balance between face-to-face and remote servicing will need to be struck as pandemic restrictions ease, but it was generally agreed that the ILO would not return to its pre-COVID-19 mode of operation. The ILO's human resource management response played a vital role in ensuring business continuity although delays in staff mobilization were sometimes raised by staff and constituents as an obstacle to a timely response.

Similarly, at the governance level, the ILO was able to adapt its long-established mechanisms for decision-making and constituent engagement and achieved some new efficiencies in the process that could be continued (for example, allowing some GB issues to be resolved "by correspondence" if all parties agreed, thereby devoting more time to the face-to-face meetings to more critical or contentious governance issues). Other engagement with constituents, including at the ILC, was also efficiently maintained although some countries reported difficulties in connecting to people who lacked internet bandwidth or technology skills. More direct and improved links with some key constituent representatives were also reported (for example, engaging directly with ministry of labour policy specialists via technology).

The ILO established procedures to support budget flexibility while still maintaining accountability. With development cooperation funds, the ILO quickly reached out to its funding partners to brief them on the situations faced in the field and to discuss how projects might be adapted. Project staff in countries were not always able to adapt their projects to their new circumstances as fully as they would have liked, but they were generally able to adjust delivery modes and some outputs efficiently and to reasonable effect. The ILO was also able to mobilize new voluntary contributions from development partners to respond in a timely way to the emerging needs of constituents and to address the challenges of the pandemic.

Despite the impressive output of the Organization in its response to COVID-19 across multiple policy areas, the HLE was unable to accurately evaluate its cost effectiveness. The team's financial analysis identified a total expenditure of over US$180 million in 2020–21 on COVID-related policy actions but this figure includes broader activities in CPOs and GPs that do not relate to COVID at all. According to a senior ILO staff member, despite efforts at HQ to develop indicators or data to accurately locate responses to the COVID-19 crisis within specific outcomes or outputs "it is difficult to say how much was for immediate responses and recovery, how much money went for what. Theoretically, it would be good, but not practically possible."

Impact and sustainability

▶ **Key finding 14:** Although it will take more time for the impacts of the ILO's COVID response work to be fully revealed, the Organization took advantage of the renewed impetus for reform in some key policy areas to rapidly advance its agenda – the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is one example.

▶ **Key finding 15:** The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions could also have transformative impacts, but these will depend on strong partnerships and will require substantial financing.

▶ **Key finding 16:** Openness to the adaptive management approach used during the pandemic needs to be maintained, especially – but not exclusively – in crisis situations.

Measuring the impact and sustainability of the ILO's policy actions will require more time and commitment. However, having received a "wake-up call" on aspects of the Decent Work Agenda, many countries are now more alert to the need for action. Progress towards impacts is already evident in some areas, where the pandemic has given further emphasis to ongoing ILO advocacy efforts. A prime example is the addition, at the 110th Session of the ILC, of safe and healthy working environments as a fifth category of rights in the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

There is also a new impetus for cooperation between the ILO and other UN agencies, multilateral partners and IFIs that could allow the reach and scale of ILO's efforts in these areas to be extended. The February 2022 Global Forum for a human-centred recovery added to this. ILO has conducted substantial groundwork for the Global Accelerator, which may have huge impacts on the development of social protection systems and employment. But it is still very early days and, given resource constraints and continuing collaboration barriers, these impacts may not materialize. As so far seen in some policy areas, such as ensuring a Just Transition, there can be a gap between stated policy goals and what is ultimately delivered on the ground.

At an institutional level, the ILO has emerged from the initial crisis phase of the pandemic with experience in radically adapting its operations in quick time. While the ILO has since faced and is facing multiple new crises, the transferability of this experience is never certain as every major disruption brings its own unique challenges. Future risk management and business continuity plans will no doubt include important lessons learned from COVID-19, but they will only ever

be a guide. During COVID-19, ILO senior management faced a situation where uncertainty and confusion were everywhere, and there was no checklist that could be used that would make things any clearer.

The situation demanded agility, flexibility and a willingness to continuously assess the situation and make decisions, sometimes without all the information available. Reinforcing the importance and wisdom of this adaptive approach to crisis management can be considered a key impact for the ILO at an organizational level. Such an approach was by no means guaranteed and a more conservative "wait and see" response might easily have been adopted exactly at the time when the ILO needed to step forward. The next crisis will always be different, but the ILO needs to sustain its crisis management response. As one department director said: "We can be sure there are more crises to come and we need to ensure we have an adaptive management approach in place that sets out how we operate. We were lucky to have good leadership, but we need to formalise this approach. We need a statement of 'this is what we do' and not just hope for the best."

Improved monitoring of impacts over time will be needed, though as has been explained above, deficiencies in even the short-term monitoring of the ILO's COVID-19 response will complicate this. At best, perhaps, the ILO might be able to identify how the pandemic triggered a new imperative for renewed policy actions and the work done by the ILO during the pandemic can be viewed as important groundwork. More broadly, as 2020–21 Programme Implementation Report pointed out:

> **The Organization must keep track more precisely of the work it delivers and must do better at capturing its impact, including on end beneficiaries, while recognizing that outcomes at national level cannot be attributed solely to the ILO's contribution. This also calls for more robust monitoring on a longer timescale, not only in terms of the effects of specific ILO interventions, but also in terms of the ILO's work in given contexts over longer periods. In turn, this may imply conceiving of certain core ILO activities, such as capacity building, as longer-term endeavours. It may also involve rethinking the timescale on which the ILO can most effectively deploy the monitoring and evaluation tools at its disposal. Ultimately, it requires recognition by ILO constituents that the Organization's work, in some contexts, tends to bear fruit over multiple years" (p.81)**

Overall assessment

FIGURE 34: PERFORMANCE BY EVALUATION CRITERION: 2020–2021 ILO'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
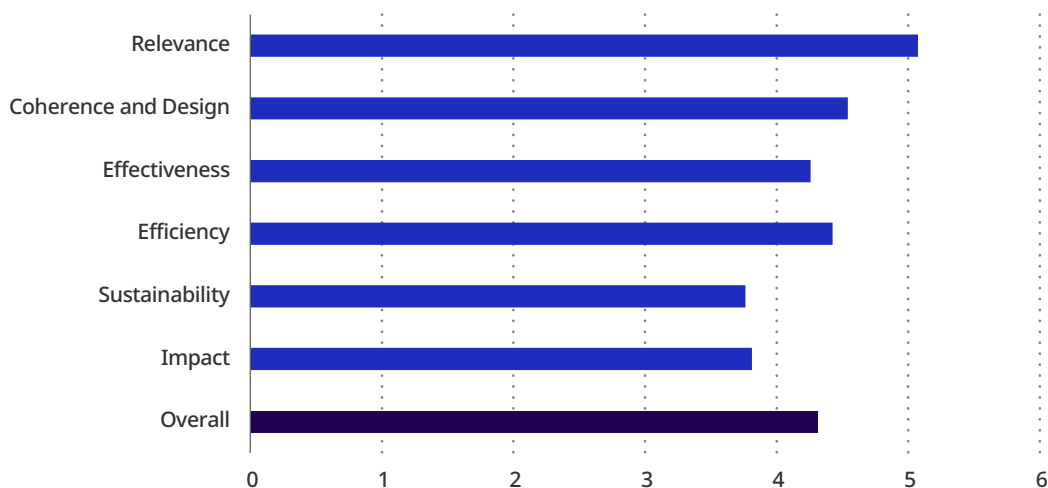
Lessons

▶ New work practices can enhance HQ interaction with the field and its understanding of the lived experience of constituents and programme beneficiaries. This can lead to a more practical and less academic approach, improving relevance, effectiveness and potential impact.

▶ The pandemic forced ILO to produce agile and innovative responses in its service delivery. Now, the Organization is better placed to encourage a culture of continuous improvement that follows this approach.

▶ The crisis response showed that leadership and putting in place the right collaborative structures can improve organizational coherence and break down silos. The leaps taken in the ILO's technological capacity can facilitate this.

▶ Digital delivery of ILO services offers opportunity to expand reach and scale, but there is a digital divide, especially in low-income countries, and the accessibility of these services needs to be considered.

▶ The monitoring and reporting of crisis response actions which by nature are conceived and implemented quickly and outside normal planning timeframes need to be improved.

▶ The pandemic will have an enduring effect on the ILO's service delivery approach, reducing travel and allowing engagement with constituents more regularly and directly online. However, in-person missions still bring many benefits in addition to those achieved by online contacts.

▶ Before the pandemic, OSH was mainly associated with industrial safety and hygiene such as the prevention of occupational accidents. The pandemic has highlighted additional dimensions, such as mental health in the workplace, which have not received sufficient attention.