

Director-General's announcement

IGDS Number 137 (Version 1)



International Labour Office

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ILO accountability framework

Introduction

1. This Announcement is issued under the authority granted to the Director-General by article 8 of the Constitution of the ILO.
2. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and its accompanying resolution¹ require the Organization to review and adapt its institutional practices to enhance governance and capacity building within the context of continuing internal reform.² Further to this requirement, and, in order to improve organizational performance and reinforce the culture of integrity and ethical standards across the Office, I have decided to review and formalize the ILO's accountability framework. This action also responds to recommendations made by both the Chief Internal Auditor and the External Auditors.³
3. Underpinning the ILO accountability framework are the shared values of the Organization as defined in the Constitution of the ILO and the standards set down in the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service (2001). The ILO accountability framework comprises the full range of legal instruments, regulations and rules, policies, procedures and formally documented functions, responsibilities and authorities which, taken as a whole, establish the accountability of staff at all levels for their decisions, actions and omissions.
4. The main components of the ILO accountability framework are in place. A number of important additional measures were introduced during 2009. These included clarification of the ILO's results-based management (RBM) system, the introduction, through an internal letter of representation, of written confirmation by ILO managers that they have duly exercised delegated financial authorities and responsibilities, the introduction of a policy on risk management and a new performance management system.⁴

¹ Resolution on strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization, International Labour Conference, 97th Session, Geneva, 2008.

² ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, Annex II(A). See also Director-General's Announcement, *ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*, IGDS No. 36 (version 1) of August 2008.

³ GB.301bis/PFA/2, Report of the External Auditor 2006–07; GB.304/PFA/6/2, Report of the Chief Internal Auditor for the year ended 31 December 2008.

⁴ Information Note, *Performance management framework*, IGDS No. 100 (version 1) of 22 July 2009; Director-General's Announcement, *ILO Policy on risk management*, IGDS No. 110 (version 1) of 21 August 2009; Office Directive, *Results-based management in the ILO*, IGDS No. 112 (version 1) of 25 August 2009; and Office Procedure, *Internal letter of representation*, IGDS No. 129 (version 1) of 20 November 2009.

5. The Office will continue to ensure that the ILO accountability framework responds to evolving circumstances and takes into account best practices in the UN system. The goal is to have an accountability system in the ILO which places increased focus on results and performance-based management, gives greater flexibility and autonomy to managers in order to achieve agreed results, and emphasizes transparency as an essential feature of accountability.
6. This Announcement is effective as of the date of issue.

Scope

7. All ILO officials are covered by the accountability framework. Specific accountabilities are defined for officials who exercise statutory or delegated authorities and responsibilities which are normally set down in separate rules, procedures and other internal governance instruments.⁵

Accountability principles

8. The ILO accountability framework is guided by the following set of core principles which inform all accountability policies, processes and procedures in the Office:
 - *Clarity of responsibility:* Organizational policies and behavioural guidelines define the level and types of responsibilities attached to all positions.
 - *Alignment of accountability with organization-wide goals:* Managers, and all staff, are accountable for achieving organization-wide goals whatever their functional positions. In many instances, this will result in joint accountability for results.
 - *Delegation of authority:* Delegation of authority is formal and respects the following two requirements:
 - *Segregation of duties:* Authorizing, processing, recording and reviewing official transactions must be segregated among staff and between managers and responsible staff.
 - *Self-informing duty:* All managers and staff are expected to regularly inform themselves of organizational policies and decisions which impact on their duties and responsibilities.
 - *Cost-benefit considerations:* The cost of a process or action should be proportionate to the value of its intended results in order to ensure that resources are used in the most effective and efficient way.
 - *Performance monitoring and reporting:* Performance is monitored through regular reporting on results, with timely accounts and reliable financial and substantive reports. Related documentation should be clear and readily verifiable.

⁵ Staff Regulations, Financial Regulations and Rules, External Office Manual, ILO circulars and Internal Governance Document System (IGDS).

- *Highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct:* The exercise of authority relies on the principle of self-attestation, i.e. officials are expected to declare potential conflicts of interest in accordance with ILO rules.⁶

Responsibility, authority and accountability

9. Responsibility, authority and accountability are interrelated concepts that underpin the ILO accountability framework. *Responsibility* is the duty to act; *authority* is the right to act; and *accountability* is the requirement to account for actions, decisions taken and omissions. The ILO accountability framework brings these three components together as an essential part of the internal governance and oversight system of the ILO.

Delegation of responsibility and authority

10. Under the ILO's system of RBM, responsibility and authority may be delegated at different levels across the Office. Delegation of responsibility and authority flows from the Director-General who, as the head of the International Labour Office, is responsible under the ILO Constitution for the efficient conduct of the Office. Officials at all levels of the Office are accountable to the Director-General through their respective immediate chiefs, responsible chiefs and higher level chiefs, as appropriate.
11. All ILO officials have a responsibility to fulfil the tasks assigned to them, to comply with the Staff Regulations and other applicable rules, regulations and procedures as set down in internal governance instruments.

Conclusion

12. The ILO accountability framework is intended to foster a strong culture of accountability across the Office. I expect each ILO official to exercise his or her responsibility and functions in accordance with the principles set down in this Announcement.

Juan Somavia
Director-General

Additional reference

ILO web page on transparency and accountability:
<http://www.ilo.org/intranet/english/edmas/transparency/index.htm>.

⁶ See Office Directive, *Ethics in the Office*, IGDS No. 76 (version 1) of 17 June 2009 and Office Guideline, *Conflict of interests*, IGDS No. 68 (version 1) of 17 June 2009.