



International
Labour
Organization



ILO DECENT WORK INTERVENTIONS IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

A synthesis review on lessons learned;
what works and why, 2010–2019



ILO Decent Work interventions
in global supply chains:
A synthesis review on lessons learned;
what works and why
2010–2019

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CONTENTS

Acronyms	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Executive summary	ix
1. Introduction	1
2. Objectives and methodology of the review	3
2.1 Purpose and scope	3
2.2 The document sample	4
2.3 Source limitations	4
3. What works and why	7
3.1 Nature of the ILO's work in global supply chains	7
3.2 Reported results and contributing factors by project type	16
3.3 Scaling up results	28
4. Conclusions	31

APPENDIX

Annex 1	Detailed methodology	33
Annex 2	Sample of evaluation reports screened and analysed for review	36
Annex 3	List of additional reference documents	38
Annex 4	List of interviewed stakeholders	39

ACRONYMS

ACTEMP	Bureau of Employers' Activities (ILO)
ACTRAV	Bureau of Workers' Activities (ILO)
BW	Better Work
BFC	Better Factories Cambodia
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DDG/P	Deputy Director-General Policy (Office)
DW	Decent Work
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EVAL	Evaluation Office (ILO)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
GB	Governing Body (ILO)
GIZ	(Deutsche) Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSC	Global Supply Chain
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
JTI	Japan Tobacco International
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNE	Multi-National Enterprise
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
OSH-GAP	Occupational Safety and Health Global Action Programme for Prevention
P&B	Programme and Budget (ILO)
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
USD	United States Dollar

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The study was prepared by Tony Powers, independent international evaluation consultant and managed by Patricia Vidal Hurtado, Evaluation Officer at EVAL. Guy Thijs, Director of EVAL, provided oversight to ensure the quality and independence of the study, while Wael Issa, Senior Technical Adviser on GSC (DDG/P) and Caitlin Helfrich, GSC Specialist (DDG/P), provided technical inputs, support and guidance throughout the process.

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Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of EVAL.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

This synthesis review of evaluation reports is part of the *Strategic review of the existing ILO development cooperation programmes in global supply chains*, included as a deliverable in the programme of action approved by the Governing Body (GB) for the period 2017–2021. Commissioned jointly by the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) and the Office of the Deputy Director-General Policy (DDG/P), the review followed EVAL’s established methodology for the conduct of such synthesis reviews, identifying and analysing a sample of 40 ILO global supply chain (GSC) interventions over the period 2010–2019.² The review is intended as an input into the Office’s mid-term report on the programme of action to be considered at the 337th Session of the Governing Body. To complement the analysis of the reports, some key staff in ILO HQ were interviewed to gather more contextual information and to place the review into the context of contemporary practice in GSCs.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SYNTHESIS REVIEW

Global supply chains offer a platform for the ILO to achieve outcomes in all of its work. The potential to enhance synergies across the Organization through its engagement with GSCs is strong, but its achievement in practice requires more work. The interviews suggest that more clarity is needed of the problem that the ILO is trying to address in GSCs.

GSCs are a “domain” or a context for the ILO’s work rather than a discrete category of activity. As such, any or all of the strategic objectives at the heart of the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) could conceivably be pursued within the context of GSCs. This is true not only for ILO development cooperation projects, but also for the ILO’s work more broadly, including activities funded at a country level through its regular budget.

The evaluation reports under review did not usually explore issues related to organizational synergy, but those that did commented that collaboration on GSCs needed to be strengthened across different ILO departments. The interviews highlighted good recent advances in the area of internal collaboration (most notably, the “One ILO” approach being used in Ethiopia), but broadly, truly holistic and strategic approaches were not common. Rather, operational partnerships are formed to deliver specific outputs set out in projects.

One factor mentioned in the interviews as possibly hindering this holistic approach is the lack of an organizational strategy that weaves the many different strands of this work into a coherent and logical whole. Some of the interviewees were unclear about the exact policy problem the ILO is trying to address

¹ Executive summaries are also available in French and Spanish on ILO EVAL’s website at: <http://www.ilo.ch/eval/synthesis-and-meta/lang--en/index.htm>

² More details on the methodology can be found in Annex 1.

in its GSC work and whether a separate response to the ILO's other actions in promoting Decent Work is necessary.

There is no established typology of GSC interventions within the ILO, but the projects under review were categorized under five broad headings or types, reflecting both deficit- and opportunity-driven approaches.

- A. Introduce, expand or support the Better Work (BW) flagship programme – nine of the 40 reviewed evaluation reports (22.5 per cent of the total).
- B. Improve social dialogue in larger enterprises in specific sectors involved in GSCs (other than through the Better Work approach) – three reports (7.5 per cent of the total).
- C. Enhance efficiency and productivity of SMEs and small-scale producers and link them to GSCs – 10 reports (25 per cent of the total).
- D. Address specific problems in GSC sectors related to Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) and/or Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) – eight reports (20 per cent of the total).
- E. Build capacity of constituents and public institutions and improve national systems to address decent work deficits in GSCs – 10 reports (25 per cent of the total).

The synthesis review of evaluation reports revealed that the overall project investment was heavily concentrated in the Asia and the Pacific Region and in the garment sector. In terms of the ILO's GSC-related work in sectors other than garments and agriculture, the sample of reports mainly resulted in one-off examples. This limited the scope of the review to draw broader sectoral conclusions about this work.

In terms of the five GSC approach types described above, Type E (build capacity and improve national systems) received the highest level of investment at US\$62.3 million (or 38 per cent of the total), followed by Type A (the Better Work programme) at \$55.3 million (or 34 per cent).

Three of the five defined project types had a strong focus on this sector. Better Work (Type A) is by definition a programme that targets garments and footwear (i.e. 100 per cent of its projects and costs). Capacity building and systems improvement (Type E), though broader in its sectoral focus, included some very large projects in the garment sector (three out of eight projects, but 56 per cent of costs). Two of the three social dialogue projects (Type B) also focused on the garment sector and represented the largest investment in this type (95 per cent).

A corollary to this sectoral concentration is the fact that the beneficiary targets of these projects are more likely to be employed as formal sector factory workers in larger enterprises.

Many of the reports pointed out how short project timeframes are not conducive to achieving sustainable changes for either GSC participants or supporting institutions. While immediate objectives were generally met, the impact on decent work deficits of the projects covered by the review could clearly not be assessed when evaluations were conducted at the end of projects.

End of project evaluation reports often addressed “impact orientation” to assess the likelihood that the projects' developmental objectives would be achieved. These conclusions are usually not subject to later verification through ex-post evaluations as part of the project strategy. Thematic and outcome high-level evaluations are the few exceptions that potentially can provide an overview and validation on the impact of ILO actions.

The evidence of impact in the sample of reports related to Better Work projects (Type A) was not extensive. Reference was made in a 2018 report to the findings of impact research undertaken by Tufts University for the period 2011–17, which highlighted a positive impact on labour conditions, firms' performance, supervisory skills and on workers beyond the workplace.

The reports covering social dialogue projects (Type B) referred to the likelihood of impact in the areas of OSH, the formalization of the labour status of migrant workers and industrial dispute resolution. Outcomes in some locations were minimal due to difficult project operating environments.

While many of the SME/small-scale producer projects (Type C) sought to link SMEs to GSCs, the evidence presented of impact in this respect was often minimal or unclear. Some described productivity and income gains, and the establishment of cooperative production and marketing arrangements. Others described the process of capacity building, but made no reference to impact. It should be noted that only two early evaluations of the SCORE programme, perhaps the biggest programme of this type, were part of this review.

Often targeting issues such as child labour and forced labour, the impact reported in the FPRW/OSH projects in specific sectors (Type D) included placing rescued workers in decent work, withdrawing children from labour and preventing child labour, increasing the capacity of the social partners and staff of multinational enterprises (MNEs), and implementing national plans and policies.

Evaluations of national capacity/systems building projects (Type E) recorded an impact on an innovative minimum wage collective bargaining agreement in the garment sector in Cambodia. They also recorded contributions (along with many other actors) to safety inspection and remediation in 3,000 factories in Bangladesh, increased labour inspection capacity, and enhanced capacity of a development finance institution to conduct social risk assessments.

The reports indicated that the main factors found to influence the results of projects targeting both deficits and opportunities in GSCs included: the active involvement of brands, international buyers and multinational enterprises in project implementation; the involvement of the social partners in promoting decent work at all levels across supply chains; and the continuity of effort extending beyond the time usually available through short-term projects. Longer term presence in implementation countries is considered beneficial, as identified in the Better Work programme (Type A).

The reports repeatedly cited the key role of international buyers, brands and retailers in driving participation in the different types of ILO projects targeting GSCs – including both projects aiming to eliminate decent work deficits in GSCs and those that support SMEs to be better able to access the opportunities offered by GSCs.

Governments ultimately set the policy framework for advances in the DWA in their countries and their agencies and institutions play a key role in maintaining standards in the workplace. The reviewed reports include many examples of how the ILO has worked with governments, including ministries of labour and other ministries with sectoral or trade responsibilities, to develop these policies and capabilities, including in labour inspection and labour market governance.

Workers' and employers' organizations also play vital roles in effectively supporting compliance with national legislation and international labour standards through social dialogue and sound industrial relations. The reports give examples of this as well as how the social partners play a role in awareness raising and knowledge sharing across enterprises and sectors, and in participating in national, regional and sectoral committees and taskforces targeting the elimination or prevention of child labour, forced labour and other FPRW violations.

The insights offered by the source documents on the scaling up of ILO GSC interventions proved to be limited. Better Work boasts significant reach already and has ambitious targets for expansion, but this may require a new and largely untested approach.

Many of the interventions included in the sample were “one-off” projects including some that ended without apparent follow-up eight or nine years ago. The far-reaching nature of ILO's work in GSCs, meant that the sample was too limited to confidently draw conclusions about specific sectors (except for Better Work). This prevented a confident assessment of “what works” in different locations.

Better Work (Type A) plans to quadruple its reach to 8 million workers and 21 million families “over the next few years”. Details of this plan were not discussed in any of the reports, but achieving such a target may require a different business model. More fully harnessing the reach that international brands have in their supply chains was identified as a promising approach, especially through the “Better Work Academy” initiative.

SME-focused projects (Type C) concentrated less on reducing the work quality deficits of GSCs and more on harnessing the opportunities they offer for more work and income. Various models were used, addressing a variety of barriers seen as preventing SME participation in GSCs. The impact of many of these projects was uncertain and none stood out as a shining example for replication and upscaling. But the broad theory of change is valid and the goal of linking enterprise development to the GSC economic engine is clearly something that needs to be maintained.

CONCLUSIONS

The review of evaluation reports found that the **ILO’s work within the context of GSCs was far-reaching and embraced a multitude of technical inputs from across the Organization**. This work often aimed at reducing decent work deficits in GSCs, but also included many projects that aimed to harness the power of GSCs to generate jobs, enhance livelihoods, and lift people out of poverty.

The diversity of activity seems to offer considerable scope for the ILO to work holistically within GSCs, maximizing operational synergies across the Organization and advancing multiple strategic objectives in the process. However, the interviews of key stakeholders in the ILO suggested that, with a few notable exceptions, **fragmentation of effort persists** and the overall approach to GSC-related project design had not significantly changed since the 2016 ILC discussion. Different parts of the ILO touch different parts of GSCs and different issues within them. Tackling the challenges and opportunities in different GSCs in a more comprehensive and integrated way has not so far been the norm and the big picture has been obscured.

The information gathered during the interviews suggests that there are many contributing reasons for this apparent fragmentation, but some of the interviewees suggested that the **lack of an overall strategy for the ILO’s GSC work** might be a factor. The programme of action does not seem to have pulled all of the various strands of this work together into a coherent theory of change. It is more a “to do list” than an integrative framework. Clarity is needed about what the ILO is trying to achieve in GSCs.

Without doubt, to have a theory of change, the Organization needs to first have a clear understanding of what it is trying to change – it **needs baseline data** on the existing situation at global, regional, national and sectoral levels. The interviewees suggested that such data are often missing or dispersed across different departments and not easily accessible.

The lack of monitoring and reporting systems including baseline data may also partly explain another important finding of this review, that is, with the exception of Better Work, **the impact of many of the GSC-related projects over the last nine years has not been (and possibly cannot be) fully determined**. Project evaluation reports detailed many examples of good work in GSC, validated reported project outputs, and made best guesses about the future impact of what were often short-term interventions. Insufficient attention during the project design phase to the measurement of results beyond short-term performance, and the absence of robust baseline data are issues. Without these data, projects’ monitoring and evaluation systems are bound to measure outputs rather than outcomes. In many cases, this means that for the key question “what lasting difference has the project made?” the honest answer would be “we don’t know.”

The following recommendations are put forward for further consideration:

Recommendation 1. To provide more coherence to the very broad range of GSC-related activities that the ILO undertakes, **develop a high-level strategy document** that provides a clearer definition of GSCs, articulates the various outcomes being pursued, how they are interrelated, how progress is to be measured, and what mechanisms or business processes might be put in place to maximize organizational synergy. This would complement the programme of action, helping to contextualize its interventions within a broader outcomes-based framework, and help staff see where their work might fit in the broader picture.

Recommendation 2. Strengthen GSC project design and monitoring to enable the measurement of outcomes. Evaluability assessments should also be considered.

Recommendation 3. Document and assess the “One-ILO” approach currently being implemented in Ethiopia for its effectiveness as a model for future GSC work, the conditions/circumstances needed for its replication (if successful), and any implications this might have on other ILO processes including funding (both projects and regular budget).

Recommendation 4. Consider whether **a more in-depth and comprehensive evaluation of all of the ILO’s work in GSCs is needed**. This would go beyond development cooperation projects and include all of the work undertaken on GSCs by the ILO, including in the field.

1. INTRODUCTION

Global Supply Chains³ have been a major engine for job growth over the last 25 years. Spanning sectors as varied as textiles, clothing, electronics, automotive, agriculture, food, fisheries, mining and services, they employ almost half a billion people or one in five of the global workforce.⁴

While the ILO has long recognised the opportunities and challenges that GSCs present and has sought to address these in its work, its focus on them has recently been renewed⁵ and intensified. In 2016, the 105th Session of the International Labour Conference noted both the contribution made by GSCs to economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction and the persistence of decent work deficits within them.

Subsequent to this session of the ILC, the Governing Body approved a **programme of action** for the period 2017 to 2021, which was intended to guide the ILO's work in reducing these deficits and in enhancing opportunities flowing from GSCs for productive and decent work. Actions were identified in five key areas, including knowledge generation and dissemination, capacity building, advocacy for decent work, policy advice and technical assistance, and partnerships and policy coherence.

Included as a deliverable⁶ in the programme of action was a “*strategic review of the existing ILO development cooperation programmes in global supply chains*”. This would cover:

- the **different methods and points of intervention of existing projects** addressing GSCs and the different impacts they can have on decent work deficits;
- ways to **extend the reach and increase the scope** of these impacts through up-scaling, adaptations or complementary interventions;
- ways to implement interventions based on **geography or by sector**.

³ The term Global Supply Chain refers to the “the cross-border organization of the activities required to produce goods or services and bring them to consumers through inputs and various phases of development, production and delivery. This definition includes foreign direct investment (FDI) by multinational enterprises (MNEs) in wholly owned subsidiaries or in joint ventures in which the MNE has direct responsibility for the employment relationship. It also includes the increasingly predominant model of international sourcing where the engagement of lead firms is defined by the terms and conditions of contractual or sometimes tacit arrangements with their suppliers and subcontracted firms for specific goods, inputs and services.” ILO, Decent Work in Global Supply Chains, Report IV, International Labour Conference, 105th session, Geneva, 2016, p.1. Within the ILO, the term has come to be used synonymously with “global value chains” and “global production networks”.

⁴ ILO, Fundamental principles and rights at work: from challenges to opportunities, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 106th session, Geneva, 2017, p.29

⁵ Including, for example, through the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for Fair Globalization (2008), the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (adopted in 1977 and reviewed in 2017), and the Conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 96th Session (2007). This focus has also been reinforced by Declarations recently adopted by G7 and G20 on responsible/sustainable supply chains, including the promotion of international instruments.

⁶ Under its Action Area 1 (Knowledge generation and dissemination) and Action Area 4 (Policy advice and technical assistance)

This synthesis review of evaluation reports is part of this review. Examining a sample of ILO GSC interventions over the period 2010-2019, it is intended as an input into the Office's mid-term report on the programme of action to be considered by the GB at its 337th session.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE REVIEW

2.1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Commissioned by the ILO's Evaluation Office in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Director-General Policy, the focus of the review was a desk-based analysis of a sample of relevant evaluation reports over the period 2010-19. To complement this analysis, ILO stakeholders in Geneva were also interviewed.⁷

The purpose of the review was to contribute to organizational learning and to provide effective guidance to ILO constituents on the GSC-related work carried out by the Office. Key questions to be addressed by the review are set out by topic in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Key questions of the review

Topic	Questions
Nature of the ILO's work in GSCs	How can ILO GSC portfolio be described in terms of its approach, methods and points of intervention?
	What strategy or theory of change, if any, do ILO GSC programmes take based on geography or by sector?
	Are there specific targets of intervention which are more recurrent?
	What role do government, social partners and any other supply chain actors play in addressing decent work deficits in GSCs?
	How are ILO development cooperation projects related to GSCs relevant to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks to the P&B and DWCP, the UNDAF, the relevant SDGs and National Development Strategies, including any relevant sectoral policies and programmes?
	What are the positive synergies between GSC interventions and other ILO areas of work?
	Is there evidence of obstacles and challenges in relation to synergies?
Impacts and contributing factors	What are the different impacts that projects addressing GSCs can have on decent work deficits?
	Under which conditions do GSC related interventions contribute most to tackle decent work deficits?
	Are there certain groups that benefit from the intervention more than others?
	Which key success factors, mechanisms and circumstances can be identified? Which key inhibiting factors can be identified?

⁷ Annex 4 contains the list of stakeholders interviewed as part of the synthesis review.

(Table 1 continued)

Topic	Questions
	How effective is ILO's knowledge building work on GSC in shaping GSC related interventions?
	What kinds of governance systems, including standards, in global supply chains can best address decent work deficits in GSCs?
Scaling up results	How can the reach and increase of scope of observed impacts be done through up scaling, adaptations or complementary interventions?
	Which interventions can be considered good practice and what are the interventions replicable in different contexts/countries?

2.2. THE DOCUMENT SAMPLE

Following EVAL's methodology for synthesis reviews, a preliminary shortlisting of evaluation reports was carried out based on keyword searches in EVAL's database i-eval Discovery, which resulted in the identification of 439 reports. Results from an initial content analysis reduced the number of key reports to 80 documents. These evaluation reports were listed by their geographic coverage, timeframes, evaluation type (mid-term or final, internal or independent) and, where available, the results of EVAL's Quality Appraisal. Annex 1 includes further details on the methodology applied in the synthesis review.

The consultant was required to develop criteria to select a representative final sample of 40 reports that capture the core elements of ILO's work in the GSCs— see Table 2 below.⁸ The report numbers set out in this table are used throughout the review.

2.3. SOURCE LIMITATIONS

While every effort was made to use data from the evaluation reports to answer the key review questions, it should be noted that these evaluations:

- responded to their own Terms of Reference and evaluation questions and these did not necessarily align with those of the current review;
- varied greatly in quality (e.g. some focused more on process than results);
- were interim and end of project evaluations, thus conducted when it was still too early to assess the ultimate impact and sustainability of the interventions they evaluated;
- in some areas, represented an insufficiently small sample to draw conclusions, especially in terms of “what works” for different sectors, in different places or through particular intervention types.

The limitations of the interviews as a source need also to be recognised:

- They were limited to a relatively small group of Geneva HQ staff who responded to an invitation made by EVAL and were interviewed over a period of just three days;
- The views shared with the consultant were not subject to any validation using other methods (e.g. wider surveys, workshops etc.).

⁸ Annex 3 contains the list of additional reference documents that have been used to inform the synthesis review analysis.

Table 2. Evaluation reports covered by review

#	Code	Type	Title	Region
2010-14	1	Interim	i) Pro-poor horticulture value chains in Upper Egypt – Mid Term Joint Evaluation	AFRICA
	2	Final	ii) Pro-poor horticulture value chains in Upper Egypt – Final Joint Evaluation	AFRICA
	3	Final	Eradicating forced labor from global supply chains through social dialogue – Final Internal Evaluation	AMERICAS
	4	Final	Integration of indigenous Andean producers into new national and global value chains (Spanish language)	AMERICAS
	5	Final	Competitiveness of the sugar sector in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and El Salvador – Final Internal Evaluation	AMERICAS
	6	Interim	Better work Jordan – Phase I – Mid term Internal Evaluation	ARAB
	7	Final	Youth employment through local economic development: Quang Nam, Viet Nam – Final Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	8	Final	Better Work Vietnam Operational – Final Internal Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	9	Final	Green production and trade to increase income and employment opportunities- Final Joint Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	10	Final	Support for national action to combat child labour and its worst forms in Thailand – Final Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	11	Final	Better Factories of Cambodia – Midterm Cluster Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	12	Interim	Better work Indonesia Phase II (Multi-donor/project evaluation) – Midterm Internal Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	13	Interim	i) Harnessing sustainable linkages for the SMEs in Turkey's textile sector – Midterm Joint Evaluation	EUROPE
	14	Final	ii) Harnessing sustainable linkages for the SMEs in Turkey's textile sector – Final Joint Evaluation	EUROPE
	15	Final	Sustaining competitive and responsible enterprises, SCORE Phase I – Final Evaluation	GLOBAL/MULTI
	16	Final	A programme to reduce WFCL in tobacco growing communities in Brazil (BRA/11/50/JTI) and Malawi (MLW/11/50/JTI) – Final Evaluation	GLOBAL/MULTI
2015-19	17	Final	Women's entrepreneurship development and economic empowerment (Irish Aid/PROPEL) Global Component – Final Evaluation	AFRICA
	18	Interim	Improving industrial relations for decent work and sustainable development of textile and garment industries in Ethiopia – Midterm Evaluation	AFRICA
	19	Final	ILO/IFC Better Work Global Programme – Final Evaluation	AFRICA
	20	Final	A programme to reduce WFCL in tobacco-growing communities in Zambia (ARISE I) – Final Evaluation	AFRICA
	21	Interim	Improving labour relations for decent work and sustainable development in the Myanmar garment industry – Midterm internal evaluation	ASIA PAC
	22	Interim	Combating Unacceptable Forms of Work in the Thai fishing and seafood industry (Better Fisheries Programme) – Midterm internal evaluation	ASIA PAC
	23	Interim	Better Work Viet Nam (Phase II) – Midterm Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	24	Interim	Better Work Indonesia Phase III – Midterm evaluation	ASIA PAC
	25	Final	i) Labour Standards in the Global Supply Chains: A Programme of Action for Asia and the Garment Sector – Internal Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	26	Final	ii) Labour Standards in Global Supply Chains at Programme of Action for Asia and the Garment Sector	ASIA PAC
	27	Interim	Improving working conditions in the ready-made Garment Sector in Bangladesh – Midterm Evaluation	ASIA PAC
	28	Final	Implementation of the Bangladesh Compact – Self-evaluation	ASIA PAC
	29	Final	More and better jobs through socially responsible labour practices in Asia – Final evaluation	ASIA PAC
	30	Final	Joint ILO-EU project to improve knowledge base and safety and health in global supply chains to support G20 work on safer workplaces – Final evaluation	GLOBAL/MULTI
	31	Final	Better Work Global – Phase III – Final Evaluation	GLOBAL/MULTI
	32	Final	Better Work Lesotho, Better Work Nicaragua, Better Work Haiti – Final cluster evaluation	GLOBAL/MULTI
2010-14	33	Final	Social partnership and advocacy to tackle child labour: IPEC, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP Social Dialogue and Child Labour project – Final Evaluation	GLOBAL
	34	Final	Ending forced labour, generating green jobs: An approach for the promotion of social inclusiveness and sustainable development in Brazil	AMERICAS
	35	Interim	Stop child labour in agriculture: With special focus on indigenous children and migrant workers – Midterm Evaluation	AMERICAS
	36	Final	NORAD Contribution: Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) Regional Africa (Phase II) – Final Evaluation	AFRICA
2015-19	37	Interim	Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies	GLOBAL
	38	Interim	Building a generation of safe and healthy workers: Safe & Healthy Youth – Midterm Evaluation	GLOBAL
	39	Interim	Building capacity for social compliance of investments in agriculture in Africa – Midterm Internal Evaluation 2015	AFRICA
	40	Interim	Building capacity for social compliance of investments in agriculture in Africa – Midterm internal evaluation 2019	AFRICA

3. WHAT WORKS AND WHY

3.1. NATURE OF THE ILO'S WORK IN GSCS

3.1.1. Demand for ILO work in GSCs

Market forces are helping to drive demand for ILO work in GSCs and to shape it. As GSCs connect consumers in developed countries with producers in developing countries, decent work deficits are being exposed that may have previously been in the shadows. There are major reputational and brand risks for multinational enterprises and international buyers if they are seen to be profiting from supply chains that use exploitative practices or which tolerate breaches of fundamental principles and rights at work. In effect, this has made them increasingly attentive to relevant parts of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. This also flows through to the social partners who want to strengthen their respective roles in national-level discussions and in labour inspection and enforcement systems. ILO's GSC work in Bangladesh is an example of these forces at work.⁹ While ILO was active in addressing decent work deficits through monitoring systems (child labour in particular) in the garment sector of Bangladesh since 1994 it was largely after 1,137 factory workers tragically lost their lives in the Rana Plaza building collapse in April 2013 that the Bangladesh garment sector became the subject of renewed global scrutiny. Fundamental changes in safety inspection and compliance were demanded. The ILO, donors, the social partners and MNEs were quick to respond and considerable energy and resources were dedicated to addressing decent work deficits as a result.

GSCs offer a platform for the ILO to achieve outcomes in all of its work. As such, GSCs are a “domain” or a context for the ILO's work rather than a discrete category of activity. **Any or all of the strategic objectives at the heart of the Decent Work Agenda could conceivably be pursued** within the context of GSCs. This is true not only for ILO development cooperation projects, but also for the ILO's work more broadly, including activities funded at a country-level through its Regular Budget. Promoting standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; creating decent employment and income opportunities for women and men; enhancing social protection; and strengthening social dialogue – all are of critical importance within GSCs. The evaluation reports examined in this review show that the ILO can and does play a key role in illuminating and addressing decent work deficits relating to these objectives in different GSCs. They also show that they offer opportunities for employment growth and poverty reduction.

The same can be said for the potential of GSCs in addressing the priority “cross-cutting” issues of the ILO's work, including gender equality and non-discrimination, international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, and environmental sustainability. At an organizational level, this convergence of

⁹ References to Reports 27, 28 and 31

issues and developmental needs within GSCs can be seen as **fertile ground for ILO departments and branches to integrate their programmes and development cooperation activities** to achieve results across multiple policy outcomes. The enhancements envisaged in the programme of action to “*extend the reach and increase the scope of these initiatives through up-scaling, adaptations or complementary interventions*” might also be considered in this light – that is, by systematically looking for opportunities to maximize different policy outcomes through GSC interventions.¹⁰

Equally, the **policy outcomes of other ILO development cooperation activities and projects might be enhanced** by exploiting potential linkages with GSCs and building these into project design. “Deficit-driven” interventions that aimed to correct decent work problems in larger enterprises have been prominent, but “opportunity-driven” interventions have a place too (e.g. using international buyer demand in GSCs as a driver of local economic development and small business growth or using links formed with these buyers to advance other ILO priorities). Some projects of this type were included in the review (e.g. see Reports 1, 2 and 7).

3.1.2. GSCs and synergies within the ILO

The extent to which opportunities for organizational synergy are being realised in practice was not generally explored by the reports in the review with the exception of Phase III Better Work Global project which makes the following relevant observations: “*The collaboration with other ILO units and programmes still needs to be strengthened... Representatives of these units and programmes at headquarters level acknowledge the importance of concerted efforts, but indicate that favourable attitudes towards joint action are still lacking at country and regional level, either because of missing incentives, time constraints, or lack of information*” (p.33); and “*collaboration strategies need to be explored which are light in terms of governance, respect Better Work’s partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and re-enforce Better Work’s alignment with DWCPs*” (p.10).

The interviews held in Geneva HQ as part of the review suggested that the ILO still has work to do to exploit the potential synergies described above. The representatives of different Departments and units who were interviewed described examples of internal collaboration in their project work in GSCs, but these rarely involved a truly holistic and strategic approach. Rather, they were operational partnerships formed to deliver specific outputs set out in projects.

The one notable exception and possible model for future work was the ILO’s work in the garment sector in Ethiopia. This was referred to by most of the people interviewed as a mechanism for both holistic problem solving and for establishing a “One ILO” approach to its work in a GSC at a country level. An in-depth analysis of this innovative approach was not possible within the scope of this review.¹¹ Some people commented that the circumstances of its development were especially conducive to this approach (i.e. a relatively clean slate to formulate an action plan, availability of funding that allowed an integrated approach, and commitment from ILO management at all levels) but it warrants closer examination to measure its effectiveness and impact relative to traditional project-based approaches and its replicability in other contexts.

The preferences of some donors for projects that have a narrower focus was raised as a possible barrier to a more widespread application of this One ILO approach. Such donors might signal an interest to address a specific dimension of, say, a child labour issue in a particular country, and be unwilling to also work on enabling factors that might require a broader range of responses. The project can then become the sole

¹⁰ The ILO is actively exploring how to improve the synergies of its GSC work across departments. For example, a researcher from Duke University Global Value Chain Centre was commissioned to undertake an analysis of GSC-related research methodologies undertaken across the organization. It identified substantial opportunities for increasing synergies across department” – “ILO Global Supply Chain Mapping: Department Summaries and Analysis” (unpublished)

¹¹ The ILO interventions in Ethiopia are still in an early stage of implementation and thus no evaluations have been conducted yet.

responsibility of a specific ILO unit and the opportunity for a broader organizational response can be lost. It is a dilemma for the ILO – in a competitive funding climate, it is difficult to assume a purist position about “not being donor-driven”, especially when there is an ILO unit that specialises in the solution that the donor wants.

The interviews suggested that another barrier to synergies being achieved across the ILO in its work in GSCs may be its lack of an organizational strategy that weaves the many different strands of this work into a coherent and logical whole. While the programme of action was intended to be a “comprehensive and coordinated framework” for Decent Work in GSCs, it was seen by some as being less a strategy and more a detailed “to do” list. The projects considered by this review mainly pre-dated the programme of action and, considered as a whole, are a patchwork of interventions that have been stitched together **without an overall design and the articulation of an overarching “problem”** that the ILO is trying to address in GSCs. It was also not clear to some of the people interviewed **what it is about GSCs that demands a response separate to the ILO’s other work in promoting Decent Work**. The interviews did not give the impression that the programme of action has been able to provide this clarity of design in the ILO’s GSC project work. Given the multitude of potential “touch points” for this work, continuing fragmentation might be the result.

3.1.3. GSC intervention targets

Given the expansive scope of ILO strategic interests within the GSC domain, developing an intervention typology to serve as an analytical framework is problematic. Most of the projects under review were conceived prior to the 2016 programme of action and did not adhere to any overall ILO strategy, intervention model or theory of change for GSCs. Instead, they were designed more to fit within the various Programme and Budget (P&B) Policy Outcomes “boxes” and Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) priorities that prevailed at the time.

Adding to this complexity, the projects under review often included a broad range of objectives and activities that addressed both “upstream” policy, regulatory and systemic issues and “downstream” issues at the enterprise and beneficiary level. As a result, the **projects often do not fit neatly into categories of activities**.

While recognising these limitations, in the interests of expediency, the review has grouped the report sample under five broad approach “types” for analysis purposes.¹² At a project level, there are many overlaps, but they are an attempt to capture the essence of what the projects under review were trying to achieve:¹³

- A. **Introduce, expand or support the Better Work flagship programme** – 9 of the 40 evaluation reports (22.5% of the total);¹⁴
- B. **Improve social dialogue in larger enterprises in specific sectors involved in GSCs** (other than through the Better Work approach) – 3 reports (7.5% of the total);
- C. **Enhance efficiency and productivity of SMEs and small-scale producers and link them to GSCs** – 10 reports (25% of the total);
- D. **Address specific problems in GSC sectors related to Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and/or Occupational Safety and Health** – 8 reports (20% of the total)
- E. **Build capacity of constituents and public institutions and improve national systems to address decent work deficits in GSCs** – 10 reports (25% of the total).

¹² Given the need to divide the sample of projects into groups for analysis, this was deemed preferable to over-complicating things by defining a large number of approaches. For example, a similar synthesis review completed for the period 2005-15 identified 13 “intervention points” across just 26 projects.

¹³ The synthesis review author notes there are other valid ways of categorizing these interventions.

¹⁴ Including the “Better Factories Cambodia” project (Report 11). This programme was a predecessor to Better Work, but has become progressively aligned with it in recent years.

Table 3. Approaches used by the sample of projects in their work in GSCs

Approaches	Strategy/Theory of Change	Targets	Intervention examples	Relevant deliverables from “programme of action”
Type A: Introduce, expand or support the Better Work flagship programme 9 evaluation reports (22.5% of total) covering 8 projects	Improve working conditions by (a) workplace cooperation to diagnose and fix problems (b) harnessing influence of buyers (c) publicly exposing serious non-compliance (d) building national capacity in labour market governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal sector Factory workers TCLF Women Migrant workers 	Better Work country programme implementation (enterprise assessment, training and improvement) Better Work global research and support activities	1.2 Promote tripartite consultation Convention/Recommendations 1.3 Promote Conventions on labour inspection, wages, working time and collective bargaining 1.4 Promote ratification/implementation of ILO OSH standards 1.5 Promote ratification/implementation of ILO migration Conventions 4.2 Scaling up of the ILO's existing programmes (BW)
Type B: Improve social dialogue in enterprises in specific sectors involved in GSCs 3 evaluation reports (7.5% of total) covering 3 projects	Improve working conditions and competitiveness by promoting social dialogue and collective bargaining at enterprise level, resolving conflicts and promoting changes benefiting both workers and employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal sector Informal sector TCLF, sugar Migrant workers Non-BW countries 	Efforts to improve working conditions and enterprise efficiency, quality and competitiveness through social dialogue (other than through the Better Work approach)	1.2 Promote tripartite consultation Convention/Recommendations 1.3 Promote Conventions on labour inspection, wages, working time and collective bargaining
Type C: Enhance efficiency & productivity of SMEs & small-scale producers and link them to GSCs 10 evaluation reports (25% of total) covering 8 projects	Build SME capacity to comply with the requirements of buyers (including quality, efficiency, productivity and DW standards). Improve connections to GSC buyers , so that the economic benefits of GSCs can flow to these SMEs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural poor Women SMEs and small-scale producers Informal sector 	SCORE country programme implementation (training and SME improvements to access GSCs) Entrepreneurship and skills training to enhance SME competitiveness. Build mechanisms to engage with international buyers and meet their expectations.	2.3 Technical assistance transition from informal to formal economy 4.2 Scaling up of the ILO's existing programmes (SCORE)
Type D: Address specific problems in GSC sectors related to FPRW and/or OSH 8 evaluation reports (20% of total) covering 8 projects	Eliminate and prevent serious problems in specific sectors concerning fundamental principles and rights at work through awareness raising, capacity building of social partners and the implementation of pilot interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child labour Forced labour OSH Migrant workers Environmentally sustainable production 	Actions to eliminate and prevent child labour, forced labour in sectors linked to GSCs Actions addressing occupational health and safety and other DW deficits Actions to encourage green production	1.1 Promote FPRW through programmes/alliances/campaigns/networks 1.4 Promote ratification/implementation of ILO OSH standards 1.5 Promote ratification/implementation of ILO migration Conventions 1.6 Build constituent capacity for improved engagement on relevant Conventions (national, sectoral, regional, international levels) 2.4 Establish or strengthen labour administration and inspection institutions, and to promote compliance in global supply chains 4.3 Develop new programmes in selected GSC sectors
Type E: Build capacity of constituents and public institutions and improve national systems to address decent work deficits in GSCs 10 evaluation reports (25% of total) covering 8 projects	Build capacity of key government institutions to develop policies and legislation, to monitor and enforce national regulations, and to enhance their industrial relations and development systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministries of labour Inspectorates Industrial relations system stakeholders 	Improvements to labour inspection capacity Support for development of national industrial relations and wage-fixing systems	1.1 Promote FPRW through programmes/alliances/campaigns/networks 1.3 Promote Conventions on labour inspection, wages, working time and collective bargaining 1.6. Build constituent capacity for improved engagement on relevant Conventions (national, sectoral, regional, international levels) 2.4 Establish or strengthen labour administration and inspection institutions, and to promote compliance in global supply chains 2.5 Strengthen capacities of constituents, public institutions, labour inspectorates, private actors, through training/guidelines/

The nature, scope and evaluated impact of these approaches will be discussed in more detail later in the report, but Table 3 provides a summary of the project types, describes a very broad “theory of change” for each, gives examples of issues they address and their targets, and shows their linkages (retrospectively) with the 2016 programme of action.

3.1.4. Cost, geographic and sectoral focus of GSC interventions

The **total cost** of the GSC interventions covered by the sample of 40 evaluation reports was in excess of USD 165 million.¹⁵ **Table 4** sets out details of the projects covered by approach, location, sector and cost. **Table 5** is a summary of costs by region and project type.

In terms of the five GSC approach types described above, **Type E** (build capacity and improve national systems) **received the highest level of investment** at USD 62.3 million (or 38% of the total), **followed by Type A** (the Better Work programme) at USD 55.3 million (or 34%), Type C (SMEs, small-scale producers and GSCs) at USD 21 million (13%) and Type D (FPRW and/or OSH in GSCs) at USD 20.4 million (12%).

Geographically, **investment was heavily concentrated in the Asia and the Pacific** region with 61% of total investments (USD 100.4 million) made there. Latin America and the Caribbean were the next highest at 18% (USD 30 million) followed by Africa at 16% (USD 25.6 million).

The concentration of investment in Asia-Pacific was apparent across the five GSC approach types. Of the sample, the region absorbed 80% of funds in capacity building projects (Type E), 53% of SME projects (Type C), 51% of Better Work projects (Type A) and 46% of the projects addressing specific problems in GSC sectors related to FPRW and/or OSH (Type D). Only in the small sample of specialised social dialogue-focused projects (Type B) did another region attract more investment – Africa received 53% of funds (USD 3.1 million) while Asia-Pacific received 42% (USD 2.4 million).

At a **country level**, the biggest single recipient of GSC-related project funds was **Bangladesh**, which received USD 29.9 million or 18% of total project funds covered by the review. This large investment was associated with two interventions (see Reports 27 and 28) linked to donor funds that targeted improvements in factory worker conditions in that country following the Rana Plaza disaster. The next four biggest recipients of GSC project funds were also all in Asia-Pacific – **Vietnam** (7 projects, the highest number of individual projects of any country in the sample, totalling USD 16.7 million), **Thailand** (1 large project of USD 13.7 million), **Cambodia** (2 projects totalling USD 13 million) and **Indonesia** (4 projects totalling USD 12.3 million). Outside Asia-Pacific, the biggest recipient of project funds was **Haiti** (due to one large Better Work project of USD 10.5 million). See also **Table 6**.

The **average cost of projects at a country-level** in Asia-Pacific was USD 9.1 million. This compared with Africa at USD 1.6 million, and Latin America and the Caribbean at USD 2.5 million.

Overall, 59% of the reviewed GSC-related project costs related to investments explicitly targeting the **garment sector** (including some work in footwear and textile production). Fourteen of the 35 projects covered by the review were in this sector and these had an average cost of USD 6.9 million.

Three of the five defined project types had a strong focus on the garment sector. Better Work (Type A) is by definition a programme that targets garments and footwear (i.e. 100% of its projects and costs). Capacity building and systems improvement (Type E), though broader in its sectoral focus, included some very large projects in the garment sector (3 of 8 projects, but 56% of costs). Two of the three Social Dialogue

¹⁵ Report 31, a multi-region Better Work evaluation report, covered activities included in other reports in the sample as well as some additional countries. As country allocations were not detailed in this report, the review could not include the additional costs of the extra countries in the analysis.

projects (Type B), also focused on the garment sector and represented the largest investment in this type (95% of the total in this type).

Project investment in the garment sector underpins the overall concentration of the ILO's GSC-related project activity in Asia-Pacific. Sixty-five per cent of project funds in this region directly targeted this sector.¹⁶ This is presumably a consequence of it being the primary focus of international efforts to address Decent Work deficits in GSCs and of Asia being "the garment factory for the world".¹⁷

A corollary to this sectoral concentration is the fact that the **beneficiary targets** of these projects are more likely to be employed as formal sector factory workers in larger enterprises.¹⁸ In contrast, the theory of change behind other project types, especially Type C (focusing on SMEs and small-scale producers) and Type D (projects addressing specific problems in GSC sectors related to FPRW and/or OSH), made them more likely to include beneficiaries currently working in the informal sector, in smaller enterprises or self-employment.

Outside of Asia-Pacific, there were two garment sector projects in Africa (a Better Work project in Lesotho and a Social Dialogue project in Ethiopia – total cost USD 6.5 million); one in Arab States (a Better Work project in Jordan costing USD 8.3 million); and one relatively small project in Europe (an SME project in Turkey costing USD 410,880).

The second highest level of project investment targeted the agriculture sector with an average cost of USD 1.8 million. There were 8 projects in the sample which operated across multiple sectors (with a total investment of USD 43.2 million) and there is a likelihood that many of these also had a strong focus on the agriculture sector, particularly in Africa given the economic base of many of the countries targeted by these projects (e.g. Malawi, Mozambique, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar) and their SME/small-scale producer focus. (Report 5, which covers a relatively small project in the Sugar industry, could also be included under Agriculture).

GSC-related project activity in this sector covers many different themes and theories of change making comparisons difficult and complicating the review's synthesis of the results. Projects within the sample included such diverse themes as improving collaboration among small scale farmers to improve market access (Reports 1 and 2), local economic development for youth employment (Report 7), promoting organic production (Report 4), preventing and eliminating child labour in the sector (Report 35), OSH in the coffee, palm oil and lychee sub-sectors (Report 30), and improving social compliance of agricultural investments in Africa (Reports 39 and 40).

Projects explicitly targeting sectors other than garments and agriculture generally had only a solitary example appear in the sample – including fisheries (Report 22), crafts (Report 9), sugar (Report 5), electronics (Report 29), and forestry (Report 34). Tobacco had two (Reports 16 and 20), but these were related projects that were part of a wider cooperation agreement with a Japanese tobacco company and an NGO.

While this limits the scope for the review to draw conclusions at a sectoral level, these projects still offer insights into the ILO's GSC work more broadly and will be discussed later in this report.

¹⁶ There were also a number of multi-sector projects that may have had a garment sector element.

¹⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_534289.pdf

¹⁸ A project in Turkey designed to network SMEs with larger companies in the textiles and garment sector (Reports 13 and 14) is a notable exception.

Table 4. Reviewed GSC Evaluation Reports by Approach, Location, Sector and Cost

	A – Better Work	B- Social Dialogue	C – SMEs	D- FPRW/OSH in Sectors	E – Capacity & Systems
Africa	1 project Report 19: Lesotho Garments \$3,460,000	1 project Report 18: Ethiopia Garments \$3,094,711	3 projects Reports 1/2: Egypt Agriculture \$1,005,800 Report 17: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda VARIOUS \$1,924,501 Report 36: Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa VARIOUS \$3,313,783	1 project Report 20: Zambia Tobacco \$1,600,000	1 project Reports 39/40: Africa-wide Agriculture \$2,136,378
Arab States	1 project Report 6: Jordan Garments \$8,300,000				
Asia and the Pacific	4 projects Report 8: Vietnam Garments \$1,742,543 Report 11: Cambodia Garments \$11,300,000 Reports 12/24: Indonesia Garments \$8,943,987 Report 23: Vietnam Garments \$6,000,000	1 project Report 21: Myanmar Garments \$2,424,215	2 projects Report 7: Vietnam Agriculture \$1,389,000 Report 9: Vietnam Crafts \$4,100,000	1 project Report 10: Thailand VARIOUS \$9,000,000	5 projects Report 22: Thailand Fisheries \$4,725,000 Reports 25/26: Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan Garments \$5,100,000 Report 27* (Note 2): Bangladesh Garments \$29,700,076 Report 28: Bangladesh Garments \$160,078 Report 29: Vietnam Electronics \$481,822
Europe and Central Asia	0		1 project Reports 13/14: Turkey Garments \$410,880		
Latin America and Caribbean	0	1 project Report 5: Dominican Republic, Honduras, El Salvador Sugar \$303,000	1 project Report 4: Bolivia Agriculture \$428,000	3 projects Report 3: Brazil VARIOUS \$600,000 Report 34: Brazil Forestry \$475,000 Report 35: Mexico Agriculture \$4,750,000	
Multi-region* (SEE NOTE 1)	2 projects Report 31: Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh; Haiti, Nicaragua; Jordan; Lesotho Garment * Report 32: Haiti \$10,463,555 , Nicaragua \$5,050,000 , Lesotho \$2,500,000 Garments		1 project Report 15: China, Vietnam, India, Indonesia; Ghana, South Africa VARIOUS \$8,400,000	3 projects Report 16: Brazil; Malawi Tobacco \$3,026,002 Report 30: Colombia, Indonesia, Madagascar Agriculture \$910,000 Report 33: “Over 70 countries” VARIOUS *	2 projects Report 37: Ghana, Guatemala, the Philippines VARIOUS \$8,552,660 Report 38: Myanmar, the Philippines, Vietnam, Mongolia; Côte d'Ivoire; Ecuador, Uruguay VARIOUS \$11,443,156
TOTAL	8 projects, 9 reports	3 projects, 3 reports	8 projects, 10 reports	8 projects, 8 reports	8 projects, 10 reports

Note 1: Specified country level allocations for multi-regional projects (Report 32) were added to country totals in the earlier analysis and in Table 5 below. For other multi-regional projects (Reports 15, 16, 30, 37 and 38), an equal share for each country was assumed and added to the country total. Reports 31 and 33 were global evaluations for which country allocations were not isolated and were not added to country totals.

Note 2: This project also included a Better Work component, but the report provided minimal comments on its early implementation.

Table 5. Geographic spread: summary of ILO GSC-related projects in the review sample by type, region and costs

Region	A – Better Work		B – Social Dialogue		C- SMEs		D – FPRW in sectors		E. Capacity and systems		TOTALS ALL TYPES	
	Total cost	% this type	Total cost	% this type	Total cost	% this type	Total cost	% this type	Total cost	% this type	Total cost	% ALL types
AFRICA	\$3 460 000	6%	\$3 094 711	53%	\$9 044 084	43%	\$3 416 335	17%	\$6 622 002	11%	\$25 637 132	15,6%
ARAB STATES	\$8 300 000	15%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$8 300 000	5,0%
ASIA-PACIFIC	\$27 986 530	51%	\$2 424 215	42%	\$11 089 000	53%	\$9 303 333	46%	\$49 556 808	80%	\$100 359 886	60,9%
EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$410 880	2%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$410 880	0,2%
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN	\$15 513 555	28%	\$303 000	5%	\$428 000	2%	\$7 641 334	38%	\$6 120 360	10%	\$30 006 249	18,2%
TOTAL	\$55 260 085	100%	\$5 821 926	100%	\$20 971 964	100%	\$20 361 002	100%	\$62 299 170	100%	\$164 714 147	100%
% TOTAL COST ALL TYPES	33,5%		3,5%		12,7%		12,4%		37,8%		100,0%	

Table 6. Sectoral spread: summary of ILO GSC-related projects in the review sample by type, sector and cost

Region	A – Better Work		B – Social Dialogue		C- SMEs		D – FPRW in sectors		E. Capacity and systems		TOTALS ALL TYPES	
	Total cost	% this sector	Total cost	% this sector	Total cost	% this sector	Total cost	% this sector	Total cost	% this sector	Total cost	% ALL sectors
GARMENTS	\$55 260 085	100%	\$5 518 926	95%	\$410 880	2%	\$0	0%	\$34 960 154	56%	\$96 150 045	58%
AGRICULTURE	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$2 822 800	13%	\$5 660 000	28%	\$2 136 378	3%	\$10 619 178	6%
TOBACCO	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$4 626 002	23%	\$0	0%	\$4 626 002	3%
FISHERIES	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$4 725 000	8%	\$4 725 000	3%
CRAFTS	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$4 100 000	20%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$4 100 000	2%
SUGAR	\$0	0%	\$303 000	5%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$303 000	0%
ELECTRONICS	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$481 822	1%	\$481 822	0%
FORESTRY	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$475 000	2%	\$0	0%	\$475 000	0%
VARIOUS SECTORS	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$13 638 284	65%	\$9 600 000	47%	\$19 995 816	32%	\$43 234 100	26%
TOTAL	\$55 260 085	100%	\$5 821 926	100%	\$20 971 964	100%	\$20 361 002	100%	\$62 299 170	100%	\$164 714 147	100%

3.1.5. Roles of social partners and other actors

The reports examined in the review highlighted the **vital roles played by government, employers' and workers' organizations in addressing decent work deficits in GSCs**. Governments ultimately set the policy framework for advances in the decent work agenda in their countries and their agencies and institutions play a key role in maintaining standards in the workplace. The reviewed reports include many examples of how the ILO has worked with governments, including Ministries of Labour and other ministries with sectoral or trade responsibilities, to develop these policies and capabilities, including in labour inspection and labour market governance.

Workers' and Employers' organizations also play vital roles in effectively supporting compliance with national legislation and international labour standards through social dialogue and sound industrial relations. The reports give examples of this as well as how the social partners play a role in awareness-raising and knowledge sharing across enterprises and sectors and in participating in national, regional and sectoral committees and taskforces targeting the elimination or prevention of child labour, forced labour and other FPRW violations.

The reports repeatedly cited the key role of international buyers, brands and retailers in driving participation in the different types of ILO projects targeting GSCs – including both projects aiming to eliminate decent work deficits in GSCs and those that support SMEs to be better able to access the opportunities offered by GSCs. As will be shown in Section 3 below, this issue was raised in many of the evaluation reports (e.g. Reports 5, 7, 11, 12, 18, 19, 24 and 32).

In some cases, international buyers entered into Public-Private Partnerships with the ILO to directly support its projects – e.g. Japan Tobacco International (Reports 16 and 20) and H&M (Reports 18 and 21). Other reports mention support provided by buyers for events and activities designed to complement project activities – e.g. Disney, Gap, H&M and ASICS (Report 24) and the Swiss Retailer COOP (Report 15).

Other actors also supported the ILO's work in GSCs, including other UN agencies, development agencies and NGOs. Better Work is by nature a multi-stakeholder initiative that operates as a partnership between the ILO and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank. A number of the reviewed projects were implemented jointly by a number of UN agencies (Reports 1, 2, 4, 9, 13, and 14). The roles played by these agencies and the objectives they were pursuing varied. Although some of these joint projects were intended to demonstrate the “One UN” integrated approach to delivery, the evaluation reports sometimes commented that this integration was not strong – for example, Report 4 observed that the partners operated *“to a large extent if they were carrying out a traditional project, each on its own”* (p.8); and Report 9 noted that *“while inputs converged at the beneficiary level, agencies still worked rather in parallel than jointly”* (p.9).

Other development agencies were reported to have formed useful connections with a number of projects – for example, with the German agency (GIZ) through its involvement in another ILO project on labour standards in the global supply chain that covered Cambodia, Indonesia and Pakistan (Report 24).

NGOs also often played a complementary role. For example, Reports 16 and 20 covered projects that worked closely with Winrock International, a large American NGO, on child labour projects in the tobacco sector.

3.1.6. Links between the ILO's GSC work and P&B, SDGs and other frameworks

The reports show that the ILO's project work in GSCs has the potential to contribute to a wide range of P&B outcomes as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In terms of local relevance

in (DWCPs, national development strategies, UNDAF etc.) the evaluation reports invariably rated the projects highly. GSCs represent a context for the ILO's work and, as such, most of what the ILO does has a connection (or could have a connection) with its strategic objectives. Table 7 below sets out these links in terms of the ten current P&B outcomes and the relevant SDGs.

Table 7. ILO GSC project and their links to P&B outcomes and SDGs

GSC Project Type	P&B Outcomes	SDGs
Type A (Better Work)	1, 4, 7, 9	1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
Type B (Social Dialogue)	2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
Type C (SMEs and Small Producers)	1, 4, 5, 6	1, 5, 8, 10, 12
Type D (FPRW/OSH in sectors)	2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
Type E (Capacity/systems)	2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9	1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12

Key

P&B Outcomes	SDGs
1: More and better jobs	1: No poverty
2: Ratification/application International Labour Standards	3: Good health and well-being
4: Promoting sustainable enterprises	5: Gender equality
5: Decent Work in the rural economy	8: Decent work and economic growth
6: Formalisation of the informal economy	10: Reduced inequalities
7: Promoting safe work including in GSCs	12: Responsible consumption and production
8: Protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work	
9: Fair and effective labour migration and mobility	
10: Strong and representative employers'/workers' orgs.	

3.2. REPORTED RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS BY PROJECT TYPE

The evaluation reports covered by the review were performance evaluations conducted towards the end of project implementation and thus **did not offer a clear insight into the impact of the projects they describe**. Most of the final evaluation reports in the sample covered a relatively short period of project activity (average 3 years)¹⁹ and could at best describe the “impact orientation” of the projects near or shortly after their conclusion.

Each of these evaluation reports tells a story of an intervention or project at a moment in time. For many of the projects reviewed, this final evaluation “snapshot” was taken as far back as 9 years ago and what happened afterwards is unknown – especially whether impact anticipated at that time actually eventuated, whether short-term results were sustained, and how subsequent activities in that country or sector might have been shaped by the project's experience.

The Better Work projects (Type A) were an exception in the sample as their design and longevity provided more scope for a longer-term view of impact. Once established in a country, this programme aims to

¹⁹ See reports 2,3,4,5,7,9,10,14,15,16,17,20,26,28,29,30,33,34,36. Shortest project was 1 year (#34). Longest project was 5.5 years (#10).

continue over the long term and the sample included evaluation reports that looked at country implementation over multiple phases or at global level.²⁰ But even these reports did not always deeply explore impact, focusing more on how well they met project targets and delivered planned outputs. An external impact assessment of Better Work over the period 2011-17 was completed by Tufts University, but this was not itself part of the sample as it was not overseen by EVAL.²¹ Its findings were referenced in Report 31 (Better Work Global) and so are covered below.

With these limitations in mind, some findings are presented in the following sections in response to the research questions relating to the impact that projects addressing GSCs can have, the conditions and factors that influence results and, where applicable, whether certain groups benefit more than others. Findings are discussed for each project “type”.

3.2.1. Better Work projects (“Type A”)

3.2.1.1. Reported results of Better Work projects

Better Work is one of five²² ILO “flagship” programmes, identified as part of a 2014 organizational review which called for the development of larger, integrated programmes as part of a more strategic approach to building and sustaining the ILO’s development cooperation portfolio. Focused on the garment industry, the programme is a collaboration between the ILO and the International Finance Corporation, a part of the World Bank Group.

At the national level, Better Work programmes establish a service which combines independent factory compliance assessments with advice and training designed to support practical improvements on the factory floor attained through workplace cooperation. At the global level, the programme develops tools to support factories to improve compliance and to increase their competitiveness. The programme also works closely with governments and the social partners to improve labour laws, and with donors, international buyers and retailers to support the achievement of programme goals.

Over the period covered by this review, the programme has grown to the point where it now reaches over 2 million workers in 1,500 factories across seven countries.²³ The programme has continuously evolved since its inception in 2006²⁴ and, as the evaluation reports covered by the review were written at different times since then, their findings need to be considered in this continuously changing programme context.

In terms of evaluated impact, the evidence presented in the sample of reports was not extensive. Country-level evaluation reports cited either improvements in assessed compliance of participating factories or stakeholder perceptions of improvements. For instance, the review identified positive findings on Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) been *“recognized by all stakeholders as having improved working conditions in the Cambodian garment industry. This in turn has enhanced Cambodia’s reputation abroad as a source of ethically produced garments. Improvements have been demonstrated by BFC’s own analysis of compliance data as well as by independent studies”* (report 11, p.38). A *“perception study”* reported **some improvements in the areas of OSH and industrial relations** (report 19, p.31). An evaluation

²⁰ Reports 12 and 24 (Better Work Indonesia), Reports 8 and 23 (Better Work Vietnam), Report 31 (Better Work Global), and Report 32 (“Cluster” evaluation of three countries).

²¹ Tufts University was engaged in the conduct of this evaluation from 2009-2016 using a variety of approaches including randomized control trials. It appears to be ongoing. This long term and resource-intensive collaboration provided the ILO with a depth of impact data not usually available for other interventions.

²² The five Flagship Programmes are Better Work, Building Social Protection Floors for All (SPF), International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour (IPEC+), Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR), and Occupational Safety and Health – Global Action for Prevention (OSH-GAP).

²³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_628674.pdf

²⁴ According to Report 31, the programme was “inspired” by the Better Factories Cambodia project which commenced in 2001. Better Work has since absorbed this project, though it retains the Better Factories brand in Cambodia (see Report 11).

report of BF in Lesotho (report 32) noted that the programme there *“did not have an important effect in strengthening national policies”* due in part to a *“low level of commitment by national stakeholders, especially Employers’ organizations and the Ministry of Labour”* (p.12).

A cluster evaluation (report 32) reported a “general impression” that core labour standards were improving in Haiti and measured some improvements against standards in Nicaragua and Lesotho (i.e. discrimination and freedom of association and collective bargaining). This report was pessimistic about the programme’s likely impact on national policies, concluding it was *“unlikely to achieve its goals”* in the allocated timeframe (in both Haiti and Nicaragua). In terms of working conditions (compensation, contracts and human resources, OSH and working time), the report described significant positive impact in Nicaragua (p.32), compliance rates that were “stagnating with minor variations over the cycles” (p.12) in Haiti, and mixed results in Lesotho (p.33).

At a higher level, the 2018 final evaluation of the Phase III Better Work Global project (Report 31) referenced the findings of **impact research undertaken by Tufts University** for the period 2011-17. Whereas this report was not part of the sample of reports considered by the current review, its key findings are included in **Table 8** below as it provided an overview of the range of different impact Better Work is said to have had in this GSC.

Stakeholder perceptions of the impact of Better Work were identified (report 31), though opinions differed among stakeholders as to what impact was most critical from the Better Work approach – enhancements to the **inspection role**, emphasis on **productivity**, improvement to **industrial relations**, **worker empowerment** etc. While each can play a role in addressing decent work deficits in this GSC, it is their combination (according to the Tufts research) that makes the model work.

In terms of the differential impact of Better Work on certain groups, the programme focuses on factory workers employed in the formal sector in larger companies. Beyond this, the evaluation reports offered few insights into the characteristics of Better Work beneficiaries. Some groups were sometimes mentioned in passing, but specific impact that relate to these groups were not described. For example, report 31 made a broad statement that *“experiences with migrant workers in Jordan and Vietnam have also strengthened BW’s alignment with the ILO’s emerging agenda and activities on migrant workers”* but did not provide any more detail.

The impact of Better Work on one group did receive attention in the reports – **women**. Over multiple reports and stages of the programme’s evolution, there was a recurring theme that more could be done to better define what Better Work was really aiming to achieve in the gender policy space.²⁵ For example an evaluation of 2011 on Better Factories Cambodia pointed out that *“having a majority of women beneficiaries is not equivalent to having mainstreamed gender equality which needs to be integrated systematically at policy, institutional, and beneficiary levels, by inter alia ensuring women’s access to leadership positions in trades unions, to maternity and child protection, and to protection against discrimination and harassment”* (report 11, p.40). Report 23 (2016) concluded that *“although widely recognised that 80 percent of workers in the garment industry are female, clarity on what BWV [Better Work Vietnam] is striving to achieve on gender related issues is needed”* (p.27). It went on to pose questions about whether the programme globally should be doing more to track the differential impact on women and men – such as addressing systemic gender barriers, occupational segregation etc. – rather than just tracking such outputs as the percentage of women in training. A 2017 cluster evaluation of three Better Work countries had similar reservations about gender. It pointed out that *“gender equality goes beyond a workplace free of violence and sexual harassment. There is a need to promote not only*

²⁵ A gender strategy for Better Work was released in 2018. It has four main elements covering – discrimination and sexual harassment; sexual and reproductive health and rights, maternity protection and work-life balance; representation of women in committees and organizations; and helping women develop career opportunities.

a workplace free of violence and sexual harassment, but also the creation and implementation of policies that promote gender equality in work as a whole.” It highlighted the lack of gender-sensitive indicators that track changes in the status of men and women (report 32, p.14) and a lack of awareness of gender issues in participating factories.

In terms of the factories benefiting from Better Work, evidence shows that the programme is focused on primary contractors (Tier 1 suppliers) and does not “*systematically include sub-contractors (Tier 2 and beyond)*” (report 31, p.50). This raises the question of what steps could be taken to address decent work deficits that may be hiding further down the supply chain. As Report 26 noted (p.1) “*non-compliance with minimum wage laws in the garment sector is widespread... in the lower tiers of global supply chains, where there is a high degree of informality*”. Report 11 pointed out that “*a significant loophole in the mandatory labour standards compliance reporting system lies in the fact that non-registered factories, which are not subject to assessment may be sub-contracted by registered factories to undertake the work.*” (p.8)

Table 8. Impact reported in the Tufts University research (cited in Report 31)

Impact on labour conditions and workers welfare	
Forced labour	Exposure to BW services decreases the uses and prevalence of verbal abuse among garment factories. It has also helped to prevent factories from using certain tactics associated with forced labour.
Sexual harassment	Similarly, participating in BW has led to a decrease in sexual harassment concerns in most countries where the programme is active. The researchers concluded that the improvements were directly attributable to the programme, rather than the result of external factors. The impact of BW is clearest in Jordan, where workers are now approximately 18 percentage points less likely to raise sexual harassment concerns
Reduction in excessive overtime	There is strong evidence that BW is positively influencing firm strategies regarding hours of work. Factories use multiple strategies to encourage workers to work long hours to meet production targets and retail delivery deadlines. Workers in Vietnam reported working 59 hours per week when BW conducted its first compliance assessment. By the fifth cycle this fell to less than 55 hours per week. There are signs, however, that these improvements might not be sustainable.
Increases in the worker take-home pay	Additionally, factories are increasingly moving away from low base pay strategies, thereby boosting workers' weekly pay. Assessing and advising factories on best practices in contract use have prevented the use of poorly paid, insecure or unprotected contracts that leave the worker in a precarious employment situation. The longer a factory participates in the programme, the less frequent their abuse of probationary contracts.
Closing the gender pay gap	Factories in Haiti, Nicaragua and Vietnam have seen a substantial reduction in the gender pay gap due to their participation in the programme.
Firms' performance	
Productivity	Evidence from BW Vietnam indicates that better working conditions are linked to higher levels of worker productivity. Where working conditions are better, workers reach daily production targets nearly 40 minutes faster than workers with worse conditions.
Profitability	Factories experience a rise in profitability (measured as the ratio of total revenue versus total costs) due to their participation in the programme. After four years in BW Vietnam, this measure of profitability increases by 25 per cent.
Position in the supply chain	Factory managers reported achieving better business terms with buyers. Firms that make progress on key issues, such as pay and working hours, typically see an increase in order sizes from buyers. With consistent good performance, participating factories tend to experience a sharp increase in order size. Managers also reported that the frequency of buyer audits also decreases.
Impact of Supervisory Skills Training programme	
Diverse outcomes from SST programme	<p>Lower injury rates among workers.</p> <p>Greater productivity – up to a 22 per cent increase – driven by training female supervisors.</p> <p>Fewer instances of unbalanced lines, where work piles up at some stations while other workers are idle.</p> <p>Supervisors have more confidence in their ability to do their job.</p> <p>Supervisors more likely to listen to workers' concerns regularly.</p> <p>Female supervisors showed a larger effect of training on time to target.</p>

(Table 8 continued)

Beyond the workplace	
Remittances	Researchers studied patterns in pay among workers across all countries, confirming that a significant majority of workers are sending their wages to their families.
Education	In some countries, such as Vietnam and Indonesia, workers in BW factories are better able to fund schooling for their daughters and sons. While there is no discernible programme effect in Nicaragua and Haiti, there is a decline in the number of workers reporting that their children are not in school due to financial constraints.
Health	Workers in BW factories also experience improvements to their health. In some countries (Nicaragua and Jordan) workers report a decrease in severe hunger. BW programmes in Haiti, Jordan and Vietnam have all helped to expand access to pregnancy-related healthcare. Additionally, where parents (particularly mothers) achieved better working hours and pay, their children's health also improved.
Wellbeing	Workers report high levels of life satisfaction and wellbeing if they work in factories that comply with laws regarding child labour, discrimination and forced labour.

3.2.1.2. Factors/conditions influencing results for this group of projects

Commitment from brands, international buyers and importing countries to drive improvements in standards and conditions in the GSC were highlighted as being fundamental to the Better Work approach. Examples of the positive effects of this were identified in the evaluation of BFC that pointed out the rapid expansion of Cambodia's garment exporting industry to the special access it was given to US markets which were “*conditional on Cambodia's willingness to improve labour standards*” (report 11, p.7). Better Work's precursor, the Better Factories Cambodia programme, had its origins in a request for technical assistance to support this in 2001. The significance of international buyers (including Disney, H&M, Gap, and ASICS) supporting Better Work by supplying additional funds to support programme implementation was evidenced in the evaluation of BF in Indonesia through national forums, additional training and seminars by the international buyers Disney, H&M, Gap Indonesia and ASICS (report 24, p.32).

Conversely, where this commitment was not perceived to be as strong, Better Work may have suffered. Examples of inhibiting effects are identified in the evaluation of Better Work Lesotho, Nicaragua and Haiti that reported “*that in Nicaragua and Lesotho, the support and commitment by all the brands present in the countries is an ‘assumption’ that was not properly assessed and addressed at the inception of the programme*” (report 32, p.51). In the case of Nicaragua, low levels of brand involvement “*undoubtedly hindered factories adhering to BW*” (p.14). In Lesotho, the evaluation identified declining levels of factory and worker participation – by the time the evaluation was conducted (report 32), the programme had been ended there. Another evaluation indicated that some stakeholders were at that time (2015) questioning buyer support and the programme's ability to achieve outcomes in Indonesia (report 12, p.8). Building and maintaining this commitment was seen as a priority to motivate factory participation in the programme.

While the introduction of the Better Work programme in a country offers the prospect of greater continuity of effort than a “one-off” development cooperation project, the reports often stressed that Better Work needed time and security of funding to change some mindsets, build stakeholder support and get lasting results. Some examples included:

- The difficulties faced in Indonesia to change mindsets about social dialogue and the participatory nature of Better Work. This evaluation report highlighted the pressure placed on Enterprise Assessors by participating factories who were always looking for a “quick fix” to resolve non-compliance issues, failing to understand the time needed for a real social dialogue process (report 12, p.18).
- How the employers' organizations in Indonesia did not effectively engage with the programme because they had a perception that “*Better Work's approach is on the workers' side*” and was designed to “*expose their mistakes and weaknesses*” (report 24, p.15). Correcting these perceptions would take time.

- The perceived security of funding and the dependency on a single funding source have been flagged as threatening programme continuity in the evaluation of BW in Haiti, Nicaragua and Lesotho (report 32).
- The time needed for factory-level social dialogue to endure without continuing programme support – with the programme’s continuation in Nicaragua at that time uncertain, workers and union representatives feared that “we could go back to the old times” (report 32, p.48).

Fundamental to the Better Work approach is the transparency of the factory assessment findings. By providing a window for buyers and the general public into individual factory conditions, this element of the programme was seen as driving factory improvement and compliance with key national and international labour standards, improving working conditions and social dialogue, bolstering competitiveness and encouraging ethical sourcing. For example, Report 8 (2011) stressed that the key points of leverage for achieving increased labour compliance and social dialogue “is transparency to the public” (p.3) and reported growing numbers of buyers registering to receive factory reports to meet or augment their assessment needs. This transparency has been enhanced over the years to the point where compliance data is now progressively being made available globally through a “Transparency Portal”.²⁶

Some reports also touched on the potential for Better Work to influence overall national or sectoral policies through its work at the factory-level. For instance, report 31 hailed the “bottom-up dynamic”, through which lessons learned at the factory floor “*become inputs to influence other levels of the supply chain, sectoral policies etc.*”, “*representing an important departure from “top-down” approaches engineered by experts*” (p.43). An example of this impact being achieved in practice would have been instructive, but none was provided. To maximize these effects, report 24 saw a need for clearer links to be articulated in the programme’s theory of change and intervention logic – “*the intervention’s theory of change is based on the assumption that the programme’s work at the factory level will nourish the influencing policy agenda (laws, strategies, policies and practices at the sectoral and national levels). However, there is no clear results chain linking the programme’s different outputs to the outcomes it targeted in order to achieve the overall objective (the programme’s goal)*” (p.18).

3.2.2. Social dialogue projects (“Type B”)

3.2.2.1. Reported results of social dialogue projects

A small group of projects were identified that focused on improving social dialogue as a pathway to improved wages and conditions in two GSCs. Reports 18 and 21 evaluated projects in the garment sector in two countries outside the Better Work project family (Myanmar and Ethiopia²⁷) and Report 5 covered²⁸ a small project (USD 303,000), “Competitiveness of the Sugar Sector”, in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and El Salvador.

Evidence from the reports indicate that these projects responded to a need to modernize production processes in the sector in the participating countries “*to provide better conditions for becoming more efficient and creating a value chain with greater benefits for both employers and employees*” (report 5, p.2). Using an ILO methodology called SYMAPRO that had been successfully applied elsewhere in the region, the project was set up to measure the improvements in productivity, working conditions and labour relations that were expected to flow from social dialogue between workers and employers.

Evaluations of two similar projects funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in conjunction with a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between the ILO and the Swedish

²⁶ <https://portal.betterwork.org/transparency/about> As at 10 June 2019, data were available on this portal for Haiti, Indonesia, Jordan and Vietnam.

²⁷ Following the project’s completion in 2018, Better Work commenced operations in Ethiopia.

²⁸ This was a final project report rather than an evaluation but included some useful insights.

clothing retailer, H&M²⁹, indicate that projects operated at various levels – national, regional, sectoral and enterprise – and sought to develop sound social dialogue and enterprise bargaining practices to address productivity and working conditions and reduce conflict (reports 18 and 21).

In terms of evaluated impact, **the evidence presented in the sample of reports suggested some modest outcomes in the areas of OSH, the formalisation of the labour status of migrant workers and industrial dispute resolution. Impact in some locations was minimal due to difficult project operating environments.** With respect to OSH, the evaluation evidenced how social dialogue processes triggered results. The timing of the project coincided with new legislation on OSH that required industries to adapt to new rules. Due to the compliance framework introduced and measured through the project, the compliance rate of the participating sugar mills *“was greater and more efficient than many other sectors within the country, as recognized by the authorities”* (p.4). Workplace accidents in the participating mills declined significantly (report 5, p.3).

In the **Dominican Republic**, the evaluation report described how the project adapted to an emerging labour rights problem concerning the mistreatment of Haitian **migrant workers**. Enterprise-level tools were developed to help migrant workers employed in mills to **formalise their status** (e.g. a process that allowed 361 such migrants to get the identification documents they needed for this). The project was also instrumental in setting up a union of migrant sugar cane workers, which has expanded beyond the mills to other levels of the value chain such as distilleries (p.4). Less evidence of impact in a similar intervention was found in Honduras, at least at the enterprise level. A number of political and sectoral challenges being faced at the time contributed to *“a weak environment for social dialogue”* (p.7).

Improved industrial relations and dispute resolution in the **Ethiopian** textile and garment sector stemming from the project’s support in establishing and training trade unions was also evidenced (report 18). Before this, workers often took their employers to court to resolve problems or sought the intervention of the Textile Federation. The report indicated that *“more and more disputes are being resolved at the factory level through mostly bi-partite discussion and the number of disputes reaching the textile federation has dropped significantly”* (p.34).

3.2.2.2. Factors/conditions influencing results for this group of projects

As was the case with the Better Work (Type A) projects, the level of involvement of buyers in the GSC in driving or actively supporting project goals was seen as an important influence. The review of evaluation reports shows that *“social dialogue processes... and compliance with labour rights generate interest in companies as long as they can see benefits, and can be specific. One of the biggest benefits is the added value generated that can be recognized in the value chain, is the final buyer. This is a feature that was missing in the project”* (report 5, p.27).

The involvement of a major international buyer (H&M) was concluded by the evaluation as not fully realising the project’s potential to drive change – while *“H&M has a good role to play for improving working conditions in factories because they are required to comply with the standards and maintain quality of products... the involvement of H&M as a technical partner in the project is limited and more work is required for formation of H&M image as an influencing buyer among textile and garment sector enterprises in Ethiopia”* (report 18, p.31).

Short project timeframes are a significant barrier to achieving reforms in workplace relations in contexts where these concepts are new and not well understood. Project design processes need to better respond to these differences and to avoid applying intervention models through a top-down process.

²⁹ This PPP agreement on “Promoting sustainable global supply chains in the garment industry” was signed by the ILO and H&M in 2014. The projects were: “Improving industrial relations for decent work and sustainable development of the textile and garment industry in Ethiopia” (budget USD 3,094,711) and “Improving labour relations for decent work and sustainable development in the Myanmar garment industry (ILO-GIP)” (budget USD 2,424,215)

This was the case in Ethiopia, where the project duration was too short to achieve the changes envisaged in industrial relations as a results of a design “*without proper consultations with Constituents at regional and factory level*”. The evaluation report suggested that technical assistance might best be delivered “*in the form of a programme rather than projects, to allow for the generation of lasting results and impact*” (report 18, p.46).

The “*insufficient participation of the national social partners in the project’s design stage*” and how this was detrimental to “*creating an enabling environment for the successful implementation*” of the project was pointed out (report 21). Fostering social dialogue “*entails systemic changes that demand long-term processes and implementation schedules*” (p.50). For the project design to capture the complexities of achieving these kinds of changes at the enterprise level, “*it is necessary to make a deeper approach with the direct beneficiaries*” rather than rely solely on input from constituents at the national level (report 5, p.26).

3.2.3. SME/Small-scale producer projects (“Type C”)

3.2.3.1. Reported results of SME/Small-scale producer projects

This group includes a range of interventions intended to enhance the efficiency and productivity of smaller enterprises and to link them to the economic opportunities presented by GSCs. They typically include activities that develop entrepreneurship, business management and some vocational skills to enhance their competitiveness and often try to build mechanisms to better engage with buyers and meet the expectations they have of suppliers. These mechanisms can include cooperative production and marketing arrangements.

The synthesis report reviewed 8 of such initiatives and a total of 10 evaluation reports. Included in this group is a final evaluation (Report 15) of a global project (2009-2012) that was the first phase of implementation of the ILO’s SCORE programme (Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises) in seven countries (assessing performance in the four countries it visited) and targeting various GSCs. Overseen by the ILO’s ENTERPRISE department, and funded by the governments of Switzerland and Norway, SCORE’s approach combines practical classroom training with in-factory consulting. According to its programme brochure “SCORE Training demonstrates best international practice in the manufacturing and service sectors and helps SMEs to participate in global supply chains”.

SCORE has become an important element of the ILO’s overall work in GSCs – according to the ILO website over 1400 enterprises and 300,000 staff have now participated. Along with Better Work and SYMAPRO, SCORE was singled out in the programme of action (under 4.2) for possible adaptation and scaling up.

The evaluation of Phase I of SCORE did not provide evidence on impact. While acknowledging that the programme was still in its infancy, the report instead focused on outputs like numbers trained and modules completed. Although not included in the final sample of 40 project evaluation reports, a more recent evaluation of SCORE (the 2016 mid-term evaluation of Phase II³⁰) was subsequently brought to the attention of the review consultant during the consultations and reviewed (see Annex 3). While this report was not examined in depth, it concluded that, based on company visits, case studies and testimonials produced by the project, SCORE was having a high level of impact at the company level (p.48). It also pointed out, however, that insufficient results data were being collected through the project’s monitoring and evaluation system to provide proof of SCORE’s value (p.64).

The other 9 reports in this group evaluated projects that had a variety of approaches and impact on the capacity of SME/small-scale producers and their links with GSCs. Interestingly, 5 of the 7 evaluated

³⁰ Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) Phase II, Independent Mid-Term Evaluation, 2016.

projects were joint projects involving other UN partners and pursued a range of development objectives, not all directly related to GSC integration. The impact described in these reports were often unclear or unsubstantiated.

Projects in this group had a strong focus on the rural poor and on women. While some of the other project types were clearly focused on improving working conditions in existing larger enterprises, interventions for this group were more likely to be about increasing incomes for people engaged in small enterprises and family-based production, usually in agriculture. GSCs may offer opportunities for this group, but most are likely to operate quite far down the value chain.

Evaluative evidence on initiatives aimed at enhancing the efficiency and productivity of small farmers through domestic and global supply chains pointed out the **increased productivity** across crops, the **reduced production costs** in some cases, and the **increased supply** (report 2, p.14). The report was unclear about the extent to which this reflected an increased access to global (as opposed to local) supply chains. Similarly, an evaluation of a UN-joint project on improving the capacity of the rural poor in Bolivia evidenced the increased involvement in the production chain, albeit no data was provided on how these results might have led to connections with new global markets.

The evaluation of the One UN Fund project in Vietnam with a focus on local economic development and youth employment through global supply chains was somewhat critical of the project's failure to adequately plan for impact assessment and its preoccupation with process-bound logframe indicators. It reported some **advances in productivity, product quality and OSH in SMEs** engaged in home-based weaving and linked to a GSC that supplied products to the international retailer, IKEA (report 7, p.7). Anecdotal, an agreement was reported to have been reached in which a rattan manufacturing company would train 160 women weavers in six villages who subsequently produced for the company (p.36). Another UN-joint project in strengthening supply and demand for handicrafts in Vietnam and improving environmental sustainability of production contributed to **increased incomes of participating households, decreased occupational accident rates from 31% to 8%, and environmental impact** in the form of preservation of natural resources. Activities designed to connect producers to new markets were described, including a **trade fair that generated new orders** (report 9).

Two of the reviewed evaluations covered interventions particularly targeting women entrepreneurs in Africa. Activities included capacity-building initiatives for women's business groups, the organization of events to link SMEs to markets as well as improving the enabling environment and develop income-generating capacity, productivity and competitiveness. Evaluations **did not present much evidence of project impact** and, where it did, gave no account of how this was achieved (report 17 and 36).

3.2.3.2. Factors/conditions influencing results for this group of projects

There is a need to more actively engage with companies further up the GSC in this type of project to facilitate links with the smaller-scale producers that are its focus. Evaluative evidence pointed out the reluctance to engage **larger private sector players** (report 7, p.37). *"Less dependence on public institutions and more collaboration with companies in the value chains"* was needed in which projects facilitate relationships between small-scale producers and lead firms (p.35).

Short project timeframes were generally concluded as not conducive to achieving sustainable changes for either individual producers or supporting institutions. For instance, as pointed in one evaluation report, a *"3-year period is clearly insufficient for this type of complex project, but is even more insufficient for implementing a real pro-poor approach, where processes are very slow"* (report 2, p.8). Report 1, covering the same project, noted this was particularly the case *"if you are trying to change mindsets for [a] relatively uneducated population and to transform not-for-profit associations into commercially reliable value chain partners."* (p.21)

3.2.4. FPRW/OSH projects (Type D)

3.2.4.1. Reported results of sector FPRW/OSH projects

These projects generally represent a more targeted approach to eliminating specific deficits in respect of FPRW and/or OSH in a sector or sectors and often involve the introduction of systematic policies and approaches to reduce or eliminate these deficits.³¹ Of the 8 projects of this type covered by the sample of reports, 5 address child labour, 2 address forced labour, and 1 addresses OSH. One of the forced labour projects also has a focus on environmentally sustainable practices.

Given the “upstream” nature of many of these projects – supporting systems, policies and strategies – reports often could not report impact. Their value was often presumed to be in the enhancement of future results. For instance, the evaluation of a project targeting forced labour and the promotion of the National Pact reported on the transition of workers from forced labour to alternative decent work (report 34). Related projects, funded via a PPP with Japan Tobacco International (JTI), that were designed to eliminate the worst forms of **child labour in the tobacco supply chain** in three countries³² reported impact on the **children withdrawn or prevented from entering child labour** in Malawi and Zambia; and a reduction of **time spent by targeted children working** in Brazil (reports 16 and 20).

The synthesis review identified the **instrumental role of FPRW interventions in the revision and approval of national plans and policies to combat child labour** (report 10) as well as on strengthening the capacity of social partners, with new approaches developed to reach **children in rural communities** in the hard-to-reach agricultural supply chain (report 33). In India, participating trade unions lobbied for the government to commit to the ratification of Convention 182.³³ The project “Stop Child Labour in Agriculture” in Mexico (report 35) aimed to strengthen the legislative/policy framework level, mobilize the social partners, disseminate information, and pilot interventions for the withdrawal and prevention of child labour in farm work. The report was a mid-term evaluation and indicated that the planned impact had not at that point been realised. It did describe an **innovative awareness-raising approach that tackled child labour along a value chain**, from sugar cane production to the manufacture of products containing sugar. This had involved cane growers, sugar mills, the National Peasant Farmers Confederation, the National Chamber for the Sugar and Alcohol Industry and a major international company (Coca Cola).

Knowledge generated by FPRW and OSH interventions has been used to inform other ILO initiatives, such as in the case of a project that aimed to improve the knowledge base on working conditions and OSH in selected global supply chains (coffee, palm oil and lychees). Three case studies were prepared. The report indicated that, as an impact, the project’s findings are now embedded in ILO projects that are funded by the Vision Zero Fund³⁴ – for example, in Myanmar (ginger and garment value chains) and Madagascar (textiles value chain) (report 30).

3.2.4.2. Factors/conditions influencing results for this group of projects

Approaches that combine awareness-raising, grassroots persuasion and the collective action of the social partners and individual employers to address deficits in GSCs were seen as yielding good results. Evidence was found on the extent using a persuasive approach to encourage debate, to challenge certain cultural norms and to garner support from different groups influences results – *“the combined formula*

³¹ The ILO’s FUNDAMENTALS Branch generally uses an integrated area-based approach (IABA) rather than focusing on specific supply chains. This broader approach addresses factors driving FPRW violations in a geographic area. In the area of child labour, for example, this is intended to prevent children moving from one supply chain to another or into more hidden forms of child labour.

³² The criterion used to measure this may be open to questioning – children were considered “prevented” if they participated in a Life Skills Training course at school.

³³ Although it appears to have taken longer than expected – C.182 was not ratified by India until June 2017, 6 years later.

³⁴ The Vision Zero Fund (VZF), an initiative of the Group of Seven (G7) countries, aims at preventing work-related deaths, injuries and diseases in sectors operating in or aspiring to join global supply chains (GSCs).

– *insisting on the value of education together with sensitization on the risks of child labour – seems to be a recipe that works*” (report 20, pp.29-30). *“The importance of encouraging the social partners (in this case employers) to spell out the issues of child labour from their perspectives and so encourage them to pass on good practices to their colleagues in other companies, and encourage larger companies to take action further down the supply chain where child labour may be more prevalent”* was similarly stressed (report 33, p.9). Evaluative evidence pointed out the role of trade unions, which like employers were mostly operating in the formal sector, to make a difference further down the supply chain as they are in a position *“to identify areas where they could address child labour through advocacy and influence of others and by recognising how **worker collective action and the right to organize could reduce poverty and drive out child labour**”* (p.16).

While increased transparency and awareness of FPRW and/or OSH violations are often a strong force for corrective action, publicizing these can sometimes have the opposite effect. For instance, an evaluation report referred to the growing awareness in countries involved in GSCs of the reputational risk attached to exploitative labour practices and how this has led to more attention from policy makers. In some cases, however, the result of “naming and shaming” companies engaged in FPRW violations can be less transparency, not more. A protective wall can be erected due to a fear of the “collateral damage” that can be inflicted on good employers when the failings of bad employers are publicized – *“information that can be used against us should not be shared openly”* (report 10, p.37).

A systematic approach at a country level to addressing specific problems in GSC sectors related to FPRW and OSH can have flow-on effects to other sectors and GSCs. Some examples were found in the case of the project on forestry and charcoal production in Brazil, whose training element engaged with participants who *“prepared work plans to intervene also in the value chains of biodiesel, nuts and horticultural-based family farming”* (report 34, p.3). Evaluative evidence is found on the example set by the tobacco-focused PPP project in Zambia *“which is being used by the Zambian Federation of Employers (ZFE) to promote new ways of designing and implementing Programs of Corporate Social Responsibility in the country”* (report 20, p.38). Examples were given by the ZFE of companies who had applied the project’s lessons to take action in the sugar and cotton sector.

3.2.5. Capacity building and systems development projects (Type E)

3.2.5.1. Reported results of capacity building and systems development projects

This group of projects tended to focus on building capacity of key government institutions to develop policies and legislation, to monitor and enforce national regulations, and to enhance their industrial relations and development systems. In practice, there were many overlaps with other projects covered in this review which often combined elements of these activities in their project design. Projects have sometimes been included in this section based more on their overall emphasis than on clear delineation criteria that separates them from the other types.

Like the previous project type, the “upstream” nature of many of these projects meant that they were focused on building capacity to achieve an impact on results in the future. Capacities and systems targeted by these projects were diverse and included labour inspection, wage-fixing and collective bargaining systems, sectoral and trade policy development as they affect GSCs, and social compliance of investments. Sectoral coverage was also diverse and included agriculture, fisheries, textiles and garments, electronics, construction, manufacturing and mining.

Evidence from the reviewed reports on the extent *“improved capacity is leading to more effective inspections and detection of labour violations remains to be demonstrated”* (report 22, p.44), and whereas efforts to form trade unions were similarly progressing, their impact as a means of “raising the voice of workers” was not yet evident. In this respect, Cambodia was described as a particular success story, where the project’s capacity building among the constituents led to a **“first-of-its-kind sector-wide collective**

bargaining agreement in the garment sector” (report 26, p.15). Progress was more modest in Indonesia and Pakistan, but the capacity building methodology used by the project influenced factory-level bipartite Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations and in Indonesia especially has potential for scaling-up.

The very large (USD 29.7 million), multi-donor investment in improving working conditions in Bangladesh following the Rana Plaza disaster (Report 27), covered a multitude of activities designed to **enhance building and fire safety assessment, labour inspection, and OSH capacity and systems** (as well as support for Better Work and rehabilitation and skills training for workers who sustained injuries or lost their jobs). The mid-term evaluation report indicated that the major focus at that stage was on the completion of safety assessments and the improvement of national legislation (p.13). In this respect, the report highlighted the **amendments to the Labour Law and its Implementation Rules** (bringing those more in line with International Labour Standards) and the adoption of harmonized safety assessment standards. Many actors and projects were involved in this effort which overall led to over **3,000 factories being assessed and agreeing on a remediation protocol**.

The evaluation of the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact (report 28) highlighted the fact that budget **allocations for labour inspection had augmented**, the number of inspectors had increased three-fold and that virtually all GSC-oriented factories had been inspected and 39 closed due to safety concerns. Work had also been done by the ILO to explain changes that were needed to legislation governing **Export Processing Zones** to bring them into line with International Labour Standards.

Evidence on the impact of projects aimed to improve the **OSH of young workers** (SafeYouth@Work project, report 38) through the improvement of national legislation, regulations and policies and through capacity building for the enforcement of these, was somewhat pessimistic about the project’s impact orientation at that time, concluding that, with one year until its completion, *“it is unlikely that SY@W will yield significant improvement in the safety and health of young workers or establishing a culture of prevention in any of the eight selected countries”* (p.70). Reasons for this assessment included project delays, lack of progress in effecting policy and legal reforms, limited results in enhancing national monitoring and enforcement capabilities, and no progress in strengthening the collection and use of OSH data (p.3).

3.2.5.2. Factors/conditions influencing results for this group of projects

As was pointed out in relation to other GSC project types, the time available through relatively short-term projects to build capacity and improve systems is insufficient. Again, the need for the ILO and donors to commit to work in a country over a longer period if they want to ensure an enduring impact was concluded in the evaluations of these projects – *“ILO needs to put staff in the field for extended periods to work hand-in-hand with counterparts in government and civil society, particularly in countries with limited capacity and/or entrenched bureaucracies. Efforts to effect major changes in policy, institutions, and culture are likely to take more than four years”* (report 38, p.68).

This time issue was linked to the pressures placed on project staff on timeframes and the stretched capacity – *“Project designers need to be more cognizant of time and resource limitations when designing projects intended to address labour rights along entire supply chains”* (report 22, p.46).

Securing the support and involvement of ministries other than the Ministry of Labour was found as important in this type of ILO work in GSCs. Ultimately, ministries responsible for particular sectors or trade policy have important roles to play. This was particularly important in the “SafeYouth@Work” project as it tried to forge ties with various ministries to advance its OSH goals in GSCs: *“While the ministry of labour often serves as the focal point for ILO projects, it is important to note that the support of other ministries may be needed, particularly ministries of agriculture or public works in countries where those sectors are targeted”* (report 38, p.67)

Promoting the assessment of social and environmental considerations in financing systems may help drive reforms at key points in the supply chain. This is relatively new ground for the ILO and its full impact is

yet to be measured, but the “hip pocket” seems a logical point to leverage results, including in respect of working conditions and environmental corporate social responsibility. For instance, the evaluation of the Africa Agriculture and Trade Investment Fund (AATIF) project has since inspired further work by the ILO in the area of social finance, including two studies examining 19 development finance institutions in Africa and Asia and the Pacific on how these institutions manage social and environmental risks and impact (report 40).

3.3. SCALING UP RESULTS

An important item included in the programme of action was the assessment of the scalability of the ILO’s existing interventions in GSCs to extend the reach and scope of their impact “through up-scaling, adaptations or complementary interventions” including “how to implement interventions based on geography and sector” (Deliverable 4.1). The current review was commissioned as a contribution to this deliverable.

Better Work projects

Already reaching 2 million workers and 1500 factories in 7 countries, Better Work is a good example of achieving the type or reach and scale that has often eluded the ILO in its development cooperation work. Project-based interventions are often justified as pilots which are intended to demonstrate an approach that will ultimately be adopted (and paid for) by local institutions. In practice, many such pilots are not sustained.

The sustainability of Better Work’s core services of compliance assessment, training and advice flows from the factories that use and pay for these services. As the reports described different phases of the programme’s implementation in different countries, the reported level of cost recovery for these services varied, but it was not clear from the reports how close any country had come to being fully autonomous. Some local programme governance mechanisms were described, including a national Better Work “foundation” established in Indonesia (Report 24) which, as at June 2017, was recovering 69% of its operating costs. In the three countries covered by Report 32 (Lesotho, Nicaragua and Haiti), the conclusion was that the small size of the garment industry in these locations meant it was unlikely that any would reach “a significant level of financial sustainability (cost recovery) even if the programme were mandatory, as it is in Haiti” (p.54). By the time of this report, Better Work had ceased operating in Lesotho.

Better Work also invests considerable energy into improving each country’s “enabling environment” for the programme – that is, by helping to shape national policies and by building institutional capacities. Some reports indicated that this work can take a long time to achieve results – as Report 32 put it “strengthening national capacities needs long-term processes (at least 10 years)” (p.54). Recovering the cost of these activities through service fees from users was not considered to be feasible. As Report 31 concludes, it is assumed that these activities “will not be able to continue after the external funding is withdrawn, unless those lines of action are merged into other ILO programmes” (p.44).

The ILO has high expectations for Better Work as a way of extending the reach and scope of its impact in the garment and footwear GSCs. According to its information brochure on the Flagship Programmes³⁵, there is a plan to quadruple its reach to 8 million workers and 21 million families “over the next few years”. Details of this plan were not discussed in any of the reports, but achieving such a target in such a short time frame would require significant investments of resources and perhaps a different business model. More fully harnessing the reach that international brands have in their supply chains was identified as a promising approach (Report 31) – especially through the “Better Work Academy”³⁶ initiative (p.77).

³⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_628674.pdf

³⁶ “Aimed at brands and other actors committed to driving change and transforming behaviour in the apparel industry, the Better Work Academy will provide training and advisory services to your global staff, building their capacity to implement our tried-and-tested methodologies across your supply chain.” <https://betterwork.org/the-better-work-academy/>

Better Work is described in Report 31 as *“a very reflective and self-critical intervention that has put in place various mechanisms to improve [its] effectiveness” and has systematized and documented the different elements and phases of its evolution (p.45). While its overall assessment was positive, it pointed out that it remains to be seen if its model “can thrive as part of an autonomous dynamic” (p.45).*

Social dialogue projects

As described earlier, this was a very small group of projects that focused on improving social dialogue as a pathway to improved wages and conditions. The application of one of the ILO’s productivity tools (SYMAPRO) was a notable feature of one of the projects (Report 5) which described the multiplier effect that can be achieved by such interventions if they can build the capability of local training institutions to promote and implement the tool. While the impact of this small project were somewhat patchy, at its end it had successfully transferred the methodology to training centres in El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic with the aim of implementing it in various sectors (p.26). The extent to which this happened in practice was not covered by the report.

The reports on the other two projects in this group were both mid-term evaluations (Reports 18 and 21) and were therefore more focused on improvements to existing implementation arrangements than on the potential for expansion and scaling up the approach. More broadly, Report 21 did suggest that *“in the future, rather than developing separate projects or programmes, the ILO should adopt a ‘programmatic approach’”* that uses *“a long-term and strategic array of specific yet interconnected interventions that contribute to higher objectives (DWCP and P&B), with separate projects explicitly supporting the overall programme objectives”* (p.58). Such a “programmatic approach” has in subsequently been applied in Ethiopia through the “One-ILO” initiative mentioned earlier.

SMEs/small-scale producer’s projects

Projects in this category focused less on reducing the work quality deficits of GSCs and more on harnessing the opportunities they offer for more work and income. Various models were used, addressing a variety of barriers seen as preventing SME participation in GSCs relating to both SME capacity as potential suppliers and accessibility to potential buyers/markets. As described earlier, the impact of many of these projects was uncertain. **None stood out as a shining example for replication and upscaling**, although the broad theory of change is valid and the goal of linking enterprise development to the GSC economic engine is clearly something that needs to be maintained.

The SCORE model looms large in this respect, but the evaluation reports were not very instructive, mainly covering the teething problems you would expect in the early years of a programme. At this point of the programme’s evolution, the evaluator cautioned against rapid expansion – *“While there is always a trade-off between depth and breadth, and it is always appealing to donors to increase the number of countries covered, SCORE should be very cautious and set as a priority the consolidation of the work in progress before thinking of any additions. Any expansion may run into capacity limitations”* (p.26).

FPRW/OSH in sectors projects

Projects in this category demonstrated a more targeted approach to eliminating specific deficits in respect of FPRW and/or OSH in a sector or sectors, including child labour, forced labour and OSH deficits. In terms of scaling up interventions of this type, it should be noted that this type of work has long been the highest of priorities for the ILO. Two Flagship programmes directly address these deficits and prioritise GSCs – the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour (IPEC+) and Occupational Safety and Health – Global Action for Prevention (OSH-GAP).

Report 33, which covered a global project that worked with social partners to develop action plans and to develop capacity to tackle child labour, highlighted that addressing sectors, rather than national entities,

was an approach that enabled a higher-level engagement with MNEs that had multiplier effects across their supply chains. It could be that such sectoral approaches are now more mainstream, but if not they should be reviewed.

Capacity building and systems improvement projects

These projects all had a strong focus on addressing decent work deficits in GSCs by enhancing local capability – often through enhanced labour inspection, but also by providing technical support to improve industrial relations systems. Labour inspection is clearly a critical mechanism to maintain standards at the enterprise level and the ILO’s work in some countries (e.g. Bangladesh following the disaster there) has had significant and widespread impact. But in terms of increasing their reach and scope, expanding the work of labour inspectorates can demand a high level of resourcing from (sometimes unwilling) governments and developing the individual capacities of inspectors is sometimes hindered by high staff turnover (e.g. Report 18, p.8).

Report 29 described an approach used in Vietnam to link capacity development of the labour inspectorate with MNEs operating in the electronics sector. The Business Coalition for Corporate Social Responsibility in the electronics sector provided a tripartite-plus mechanism for joint action addressing the challenges faced by the sector. Feedback from the ILO indicated that the model has since been applied in other industries including garment/textiles, seafood and wood processing.³⁷

As for development work in industrial relations systems, this can be underestimated as means of addressing decent work deficits in GSCs and of achieving scale. Report 26, for example, highlighted a landmark, sector-wide collective bargaining agreement in the garment sector in Cambodia. It pointed out that “*project interventions...demonstrated, in the right circumstances, changes in minimum wage setting practices can affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of workers*” (p.40).

³⁷ Following the review of the ILO MNE Declaration in 2017, there has been an increase in the number of decentralized projects aimed at capacitating the constituents in engaging with multinational enterprises. The Multinational Enterprises is providing technical backstopping for these projects.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The scope of this review had two components: i) a review of a sample of development cooperation project evaluations (many of which developed in the years prior to the programme of action); and ii) a small number of interviews with ILO staff in Geneva to assess cooperation and coherence amongst activities and actors. A deeper analysis of the ILO's current work in GSCs would require an examination of the work it does outside development cooperation projects (including activities funded through its regular budget) and a broader consultation with constituents, other stakeholders and partners, and ILO staff in the field. The following conclusions therefore need to be considered in the light of these limitations.

The review found that the ILO's work within the context of GSCs was far-reaching and embraced a multitude of technical inputs from across the organization. The sample of projects examined by the review included work in areas as diverse as industrial relations, fundamental principles and rights at work, employment promotion, skills for trade and economic diversification, enterprise development, social dialogue, wage setting systems, capacity development of the social partners and much more. This work often aimed at reducing decent work deficits in GSCs, but also included many projects that aimed to harness the power of GSCs to generate jobs, enhance livelihoods and lift people out of poverty.

This diversity of activity seems to offer considerable scope for the ILO to work holistically within GSCs, maximising operational synergies across the organization and advancing multiple strategic objectives in the process. However, the review of evaluation reports and the interviews suggest that, with a few notable exceptions, fragmentation of effort persists and the overall approach to GSC-related project design has not significantly changed since the 2016 ILC discussion. Different parts of the ILO touch different parts of GSCs and different issues within them. Tackling the challenges and opportunities in different GSCs in a more comprehensive and integrated way has not so far been the norm and “the big picture” has been obscured.

The information gathered during the interviews suggest that there are many contributing reasons for this fragmentation and these are by no means limited to ILO work in GSCs – including donor preferences and ILO culture and programming idiosyncrasies – but the lack of an overall strategy for the ILO's GSC work might also be a factor. The programme of action does not seem to have pulled all of the various strands of this work together into a coherent theory of change. It is more a “to do list” than an integrative framework. Clarity is needed about what the ILO is trying to achieve in GSCs. The evaluation reports reflected this – there was no overarching GSC theory of change evident that connected the diverse range of activities to an overall strategic objective.

Of course, to have a theory of change, the organization needs to first have a clear understanding of what it is trying to change – it needs baseline data at a global, regional, national and sectoral level. The interviews suggested that such data is often missing or, reflecting the fragmentation of activity, dispersed across different departments and not easily accessible, not least because projects do not use a uniform

approach for data collection. There is also no expectation that data collected be useful beyond the immediate project.

The lack of monitoring and reporting systems including baseline data may also partly explain another important finding of this review – that, with the exception of Better Work, the impact of many of the GSC-related projects over the last nine years has not been (and possibly cannot be) fully determined. The end of project evaluation reports detailed many examples of good work in the GSC space, validated reported project outputs, and made their “best guesses” about the future impact of what were often short-term interventions. Insufficient attention in the project design phase for the measurement of results beyond short-term performance and the absence of robust baseline data is an issue. Without these data projects’ monitoring and evaluation systems are bound to measuring outputs rather than outcomes. In many cases, this meant that for the key question “what lasting difference has the project made?” the honest answer would be “we don’t know.”

The following recommendations are put forward for further consideration:

Recommendation 1. To provide more coherence to the very broad range of GSC-related activities that the ILO undertakes, **develop a high-level strategy document** that provides a clearer definition of GSCs, articulates the various outcomes being pursued, how they are interrelated, how progress is to be measured, and what mechanisms or business processes might be put in place to maximize organizational synergy. This would complement the programme of action, helping to contextualize its interventions within a broader outcomes-based framework, and help staff see where their work might fit in the broader picture.

Recommendation 2. **Strengthen GSC project design and monitoring** to enable the measurement of outcomes. Evaluability assessments should also be considered.

Recommendation 3. **Document and assess the “One-ILO” approach currently being implemented in Ethiopia** for its effectiveness as a model for future GSC work, the conditions/circumstances needed for its replication (if successful), and any implications this might have on other ILO processes including funding (both projects and regular budget).

Recommendation 4. Consider whether **a more in-depth and comprehensive evaluation of all of the ILO’s work in GSCs is needed.** This would go beyond development cooperation projects and include all of the work undertaken on GSCs by the ILO, including in the field.

ANNEX 1: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of the synthesis review, ILO's EVAL methodology for synthesis review was followed, which ensured a rigorous and systematic analysis and appraisal of existing evaluations. Key elements of this approach are:

- The development of clearly defined research questions, based on the key questions outlined in the TOR and in consultation with the DDG/P GSC team and further stakeholders;
- The definition of a search strategy (including the definition of key sources) and protocol, defining parameters for inclusion, such as publication date, geographical scope, language, evaluation type, research question;
- The screening of reports according to a set of defined parameters relating to the quality of the evidence. Criteria included the degree of relevance of the study to the questions and the robustness of research methods used (including considerations of sample sizes, experimental and quasi-experimental methods);
- A detailed appraisal, analysis and synthesis of information, using a detailed recording grid, before summarizing the consolidated evidence base.

The initial screening of reports was carried out by extracting evaluation reports from i-eval Discovery using the following themes: timeframe (2010–2019); tagged theme of the report; and language. A request was sent to the technical departments for the submission of relevant evaluation reports complementing this search. A total of 439 reports were identified, including final, interim, independent and internal evaluations.

An initial content analysis was undertaken to identify the occurrence of key terms (applied in the three ILO official languages). The relevant technical departments were requested to provide key terms to allow for a more comprehensive search. Documents were coded with a corresponding degree of occurrence (high, medium and low). A total number of 80 reports were retained to which inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to obtain a stratified sample that guaranteed an equal representation of GSC interventions. To exclude any potential risk of losing rich-content reports in terms of GSCs, the consultant applied the exclusion and inclusion criteria to a sample of 10 reports categorized with a low occurrence. Details on the selection of this sample were part of the inception report and approved by EVAL as per the terms of reference (ToR).

The ToR required the review consultant to develop and apply inclusion/exclusion criteria to identify a final stratified sample of 40 evaluation reports that was representative of the ILO's work in GSCs. These criteria would tentatively include:

- timeframe (all 80 were within the period 2010–2019, although some were also operating prior to this period);

- language (78 of the 80 shortlisted reports were in English, and two were in Spanish);
- area of focus (i.e. by GSC-related intervention and ILO policy outcome area);
- mid-term or final evaluation (50 of the 80 shortlisted reports were final evaluations);
- location (of the shortlisted reports, 39 were in Asia-Pacific, 23 in Africa, six in Americas, two in the Arab States, two in Europe, and eight were global or multi-region);
- quality appraisal (QA) results (20 shortlisted reports were appraised of which four were considered to be unsatisfactory).

An initial scan of the 80 shortlisted reports revealed that a number of projects could be excluded because they had either little to do with GSCs or had not articulated any links with GSCs in their descriptions of project implementation or results. For example, search terms like “value chain” unearthed some projects that were related to very base-level activities in generating local economic activity and livelihoods. These often focused on entrepreneurship in rural communities which were (at least at the time of the projects) too far removed from the type of “cross-border organization of activities to produce goods and services” associated with GSCs.

At the other end of the spectrum, 32 shortlisted documents (related to 28 projects or project phases) were identified as likely candidates for inclusion in the review, i.e. projects with clear links, in one form or another, to GSCs. These included projects where GSCs were at the heart of their programme logic, where multinational buyers were engaged in some way with project implementation, and where project documents expressed an intention to support connections with GSCs, international buyers and markets. The remaining shortlisted projects could be characterized as being somewhere in-between these two groups, i.e. they include projects that address issues that are of relevance to the ILO’s GSC work (e.g. OSH, the elimination of child labour, labour law compliance) but may not be explicitly linked with GSCs. While the ToR anticipated that the review would consider activities where “GSC was not targeted but had a strong global value chain component” this remains open to interpretation.

Based on both the tentative criteria set out in the ToR and the preliminary scan, the following inclusion/exclusion criteria were proposed:

Group A – Direct targeting of GSCs – 32 evaluations

- Include in this group shortlisted evaluations that:
 - A. Relate to ILO global programmes and strategies known to focus on decent work deficits in GSCs – including Better Work and SCORE; and/or
 - B. Involve private sector multinational buyers, either through public-private partnerships or through some other role in project implementation; and/or
 - C. Explicitly target decent work deficits in GSCs in specific sectors; and/or
 - D. Seek to connect project beneficiaries (including SMEs) to international buyers in GSCs.

Group B – Synergies with other ILO work – 8 evaluations

- Include in this group shortlisted evaluations that:
 - E. Do not specifically target GSCs but may illustrate positive synergies between the ILO’s GSC interventions and other ILO areas of work; and/or
 - F. May provide additional insights for the review into any sectors and/or locations that are not well represented in Group A.

Group C – Excluded group – 40 evaluations

- Exclude shortlisted evaluations that:
 - Failed EVAL’s QA assessment; and/or

- Focus on interventions that are primarily concerned with supporting individuals to earn livelihoods from local economic activity; and/or
- Have only a tenuous connection to GSCs or offer limited or no insights into the ILO's work in this field.

Note that only one inclusion or exclusion is highlighted for each evaluation, although more than one may apply. The final list of projects based on these criteria and covered by this review is included at **Annex 2**.

ANNEX 2: SAMPLE OF EVALUATION REPORTS SCREENED AND ANALYSED FOR REVIEW

GROUP A (32 Evaluations)

GROUP A (32 Evaluations)					Region	Criteria																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																					
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CRITERIA LEGEND

A	ILO global GSC programmes/strategies
B	Involve multinational buyers
C	Targets DW deficits in specific GSCs
D	Connects to international buyers in GSCs
E	Illustrate synergies with other ILO work
F	Additional insights into sectors/locations
G	Failed QA assessment
H	Local market/livelihood focus only
I	Tenuous GSC connections/limited insights

GROUP B (8 Evaluations)

Peri #	Code	Type	Title	Region	Criteria									
					Include					Exclude				
					A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
2010-14	33	INT/08/72/IRL	Final	Social partnership and advocacy to tackle child labour: IPEC, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP Social Dialogue and Child Labour project - Final Evaluation	GLOBAL									
	34	BRA/11/51/FLA	Final	Ending forced labour, generating green jobs: An approach for the promotion of social inclusiveness and sustainable development in Brazil	AMERICAS									
	35	MEX/09/50/USA	Interim	Stop child labour in agriculture: With special focus on indigenous children and migrant workers - Midterm Evaluation	AMERICAS									
	36	RAF/08/57/NAD	Final	NORAD Contribution: Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) Regional Africa (Phase III) - Final Evaluation	AFRICA									
2015-19	37	GLO/14/37/EEC	Interim	Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies	GLOBAL									
	38	GLO/14/20/USA	Interim	Building a generation of safe and healthy workers: Safe & Healthy Youth - Midterm Evaluation	GLOBAL									
	39	GLO/12/08/AAT	Interim	Building capacity for social compliance of investments in agriculture in Africa - Midterm Internal Evaluation 2015	AFRICA									
	40	GLO/12/08/AAT	Interim	Building capacity for social compliance of investments in agriculture in Africa - Midterm Internal evaluation 2019	AFRICA									

GROUP C (40 Evaluations)

Peri #	Code	Type	Title	Region	Criteria									
					Include					Exclude				
					A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
2010-14	181	MOZ/08/56/UND	Interim	Strengthening cultural and creative industries and inclusive policies in Mozambique - Mid Term Joint Evaluation	AFRICA									
	61	URT/08/50/OUF	Final	Wealth creation, employment and economic empowerment in Tanzania (Delivering as One, Tanzania) - Final Joint Evaluation	AFRICA									
	221	PER/10/50/UND	Final	Industrias creativas inclusivas: Una herramienta innovadora para el alivio de la pobreza en el Peru (Spanish language)	AMERICAS									
	101	VIE/10/01/LUX	Final	Strengthening of inland tourism in Quang Nam - Final Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	215	INS/12/07/UND	Final	Green livelihood access for Central Kalimantan's inclusive environmental response to climate change - Final Joint Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	292	PAK/10/03/OUF	Final	Empowering Vulnerable Groups through Education, Employment and Training (EET) A- Final Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	220	PHI/12/04/IBR	Interim	Programme for local economic development (LED) through enhanced governance - Midterm internal review	ASIA PAC									
	4	NEP/06/51/NET	Final	Employment creation and peace building based on local economic development - Final Internal Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	199	CMB/08/50/UND	Final	Creative industries support programme in Cambodia - Final Joint Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	124	SRL/10/04/AUS	Interim	Community-based confidence building among different ethnic and religious groups for SME Development for the most vulnerable in Sri Lanka	ASIA PAC									
	280	LAO/10/02/UND	Interim	Enhancing sustainable tourism, clean production and report capacity in Lao People's Democratic Republic - Midterm Internal Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	66	PHI/08/03/HSF	Final	Inter-agency programme to nurture peace, security and decent work through local development in conflict areas of the Philippines (Bondoc Peninsula)	ASIA PAC									
	200	CPR/08/51/UND	Final	ILO component of the culture and development partnership framework (CDPF) - Final Joint Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	239	PHI/08/50/UND	Final	Alternatives to Migration: Decent jobs for Filipino youth - Final Joint Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	125	TIM/10/02/IRL	Interim	Business opportunities and support services (BOSS - Irish Aid) - Midterm Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	312	RAS/13/51/MUPN	Interim	Way out of informality: Facilitating formalization of informal economy in South Asia - Midterm Internal Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	74	ETH/10/50/UND	Interim	Edible oil value chain enhancement in Ethiopia (Umbrella: INT/10/01/UND) - Mid Term Joint Evaluation	AFRICA									
	222	ETH/10/50/UND	Final	Edible oil value chain enhancement in Ethiopia (Umbrella: INT/10/01/UND) - Final Joint Evaluation	AFRICA									
	144	ZAM/07/01/FIN	Final	Broad-based wealth and job creation in Zambia economic empowerment through MSME development - Final Evaluation	AFRICA									
	189	SAF/11/01/FCA	Final	Public procurement and social economy (PPSE) - Final evaluation	AFRICA									
2015-19	138	THA/10/50/USA	Interim	Broad-based wealth and job creation in Zambia economic empowerment through MSME development - Final Evaluation	AFRICA									
	139	THA/10/50/USA	Final	Combating the worst forms of child labour in shrimp and seafood processing areas in Thailand - Final Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	203	RAS/13/51/MUPN	Final	Way out of informality: Facilitating formalization of informal economy in South Asia - Final Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	374	TIM/10/02/IRL	Final	Business opportunities and support services (BOSS) - Final evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	386	SAF/13/05/FCA	Interim	The Sustainable Enterprise Development Facility for Job Creation in South Africa - Midterm evaluation	AFRICA									
	79	ZIM/10/01/DAN	Final	Skills for youth employment and rural development in western and southern Africa (Umbrella: INT/09/05/DAN) Zimbabwe - Final Evaluation	AFRICA									
	326	ZAM/13/04/SID	Final	Decent jobs for youth and improved food security through the development of sustainable rural enterprises - Final Evaluation	AFRICA									
	387	ZAM/13/04/SID	Interim	Decent jobs for youth and improved food security through the development of sustainable rural enterprises - Mid Term Evaluation	AFRICA									
	391	EGY/12/02/DAN	Final	Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People: Tackling the Challenge in Qalyoubia and Menoufia - Final evaluation	AFRICA									
	358	YEM/15/01/UND	Interim	Enhance the resilience and self-reliance of crisis-affected rural communities (...) - Midterm evaluation	ARAB									
	389	INS/13/50/LUX	Final	Decent work for food security and sustainable rural development in Nusa Tenggara (NTT), Indonesia	ASIA PAC									
	348	MMR/13/14/DAN	Final	Programme on responsible business in Myanmar - Final evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	289	PHI/14/01/UKM	Final	Emergency and recovery support to restart livelihoods in Leyte province - Final Evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	375	PAK/13/01/HSF	Final	Livelihood restoration and protection and sustainable empowerment of vulnerable peasant communities in Sindh Province - Final joint evaluation	ASIA PAC									
	287	MMR/13/13/NAD	Final	Entrepreneurship development and SME support in Myanmar and Supporting Tourism in Myanmar through Business Management Training	ASIA PAC									
	264	BGO/13/01/BGO	Final	Improving labour law compliance and building sound labour practices in the export oriented shrimp sector in Bangladesh - Final Evaluation	ASIA PACIFIC									
	319	AFG/14/01/SID	Interim	Road to Jobs: Bringing decent work to rural households of the Northern Provinces in Afghanistan - Midterm Evaluation	ASIA PACIFIC									
	65	RAF/10/51/DAN	Final	Africa Commission: Youth entrepreneurship facility (YEF and YEN): ILO Component - Final Evaluation	AFRICA									
	345	SOM/10/03/EEC	Final	Improvements of livelihoods of vulnerable households in urban and peri-urban areas of Galkayo - Final evaluation	AFRICA									

ANNEX 3:

LIST OF ADDITIONAL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- ILO, Sectoral activities programme 2012-13. The biennium in review
- ILO, Promoting fundamental principles and rights at work in global supply chains, 2015
- ILO, Sectoral Studies on Decent Work in Global Supply Chains, Comparative Analysis of Good Practices by Multinational Enterprises in Promoting Decent Work in Global Supply Chains, Geneva, 2015
- ILO, Decent Work in Global Supply Chains, Report IV, International Labour Conference, 105th session, Geneva, 2016
- ILO, Sectoral policies department highlights, 2014-15, Geneva, 2016
- ILO, Sectoral studies on decent work in global supply chains: Comparative analysis of opportunities and challenges for social and economic upgrading, Geneva, 2016.
- ILO, Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) Phase II, Independent Mid-Term Evaluation, 2016
- ILO, Wages and productivity in the garment sector in Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States, 2016
- ILO, Workplace compliance in global supply chains, Sectoral Policies Department, Geneva, 2016
- ILO, Fundamental principles and rights at work: from challenges to opportunities, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 106th session, Geneva, 2017
- ILO, Sectoral Policies Department: 2016-17 Highlights, 2017.
- ILO, Flagship Programmes brochure, 2018
- ILO, Reports of the General Discussion Committee: Effective development cooperation: Resolution and conclusions submitted for adoption by the Conference, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, Geneva, 2018
- ILO, Reports of the General Discussion Committee: Effective development cooperation: Summary of proceedings, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, Geneva, 2018
- ILO, BetterWork portal, 2019
- ILO, The future of work in textiles, clothing, leather and footwear / International Labour Office, Sectoral Policies Department, Geneva, 2019.
- Tufts University, The Impact of Better Work A Joint Program of the International Labour Organization and the International Finance Corporation, 2016

ANNEX 4: LIST OF INTERVIEWED STAKEHOLDERS

#	ILO Officials	Department
1	Mr. Wael ISSA	Sr. Technical adviser on GSC, DDG/P
2	Ms. Caitlin HELFRICH	Spec. GSCs, DDG/P
3	Mr. John RITCHOTTE	Labour relations and collective bargaining specialist, INWORK, WORKQUALIY
4	Mr. Andrea MARINUCCI	Technical officer: Ind. Relations in GSCs, INWORK, WORKQUALIY
5	Mr. Merten SIEVERS	Global coordinator, value chains and entrepreneurship, SME Enterprises
6	Mr. Michael ELKIN	CTA, SME Enterprises
7	Ms. Kassiyet TULEGENOVA	Technical officer, FUNDAMENTALS – GOVERNANCE
8	Ms. Valkyrie HANSON	Technical Specialist for Strategic Compliance, LABADMIN/OSH – GOVERNANCE
9	Ms. Maria MUNARETTO	Technical officer, LABADMIN/OSH – GOVERNANCE
10	Ms. Deborah SCHMIDIGER	Sr Programme Partnership Officer, BETTERWORK – GOVERNANCE
11	Ns. Tara RANGARAJAN	Global Operations Manager, BETTERWORK – GOVERNANCE
12	Ms. Rie VEJS-KJELDGAARD	Department Director, PARDEV
13	Ms. Carlien VAN EMPEL	Unit Head, Development Cooperation Support, PARDEV
14	Ms. Aida LINDMEIER	Sr Resource Mobilization Officer, PARDEV
15	Mr. Enrico CAIROLA	Sr Programme and Operations Spec, ACTRAV
16	Mr. David CHEONG	Spec, Trade and Employment, DEVINVEST – EMPLOYMENT
17	Mr. Jean-François KLEIN	Sr Administrator, EMPLOYMENT
18	Ms. Githa ROELANS	Unit Head, MNE and Enterprise Engagement, MULTI – ENTERPRISES
19	Ms. Maria Beatriz Mello da CUNHA	Spec, Sectoral and Programme Issues, SECTOR
20	Mr. Adam GREEN	Sr Relations/Technical Specialist, ACT/EMP
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