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Evaluation Office

Annual evaluation report 2020-21

OCTOBER 2021

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INTRODUCTION

The ILO's annual evaluation report typically spans two calendar years, covering the last quarter of the previous year (in this case, 2020) and the first three quarters of the ongoing year (in this case, 2021). Stating that the reporting period has been distressing and challenging is almost certainly an understatement. The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected everyone around the world, without exception, and has required people to adjust, innovate and adapt, including by applying new and mostly virtual work methods. As reported in the annual evaluation report 2019–20,[1] the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) quickly responded to the pandemic by issuing a detailed COVID-19 risk-based guidance note in March 2020, and regularly updating it,[2] with practical tips on how to adapt and continue evaluations during the pandemic. This proactive response allowed EVAL to honour its commitment to the evaluation schedule. Challenges posed by the pandemic did not diminish the need for evaluation, but rather amplified the importance of evaluative evidence to ensure continued accountability and real-time learning.

While the implementation of the ILO's results-based Evaluation Strategy 2018–21[3] was only partly affected by the crisis during the reporting period, the good progress that was being made in respect of the more transformative elements (such as the structural adjustments to the decentralized evaluation process, the development of pooled funding modalities for ex ante and ex post evaluations, and measures to adopt a more strategic approach towards thematic and geographic evaluation coverage) were delayed or had to be put on hold to allow for crisis adjustments. Shifting evaluation priorities, anticipated or new, also required a redirection of staff time and other resources to support preparatory work related to the demand for comprehensive evaluations of the ILO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic (to be conducted and completed in 2022) and the 2022 independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function (2022 IEE) and the request by constituents to further institutionalize EVAL's annual assessment of the ILO's development effectiveness in order to monitor, inter alia, whether the pandemic has affected the ILO's overall performance.

Part I of this report details the progress made, by outcome, towards achieving the biennial milestones identified in the Evaluation Strategy 2018–21. As the end of the strategy's implementation period is approaching, the report provides an assessment of the results for the 19 biennial milestones and identifies areas where further work is required. The report calls for an extension of the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period by one year, until the end of 2022, to allow for the consolidation of the progress made so far and for the new Evaluation Strategy 2023–25 to be informed by the results of the 2022 IEE. A total of 18 biennial milestones have been fully or partially achieved, while 1 has registered modest progress and was therefore not achieved. Overall, EVAL managed to meet its operational targets and maintain quality standards despite the pandemic, but came up short of fully completing the ambitious longer-term transformational process that it had embarked on following the 2016 IEE.

PartII of the report provides EVAL's annual rating-based assessment of the ILO's development effectiveness against the background of the pandemic. This reporting period shows that, while the ILO performed remarkably well despite the pandemic during 2020, its performance dropped slightly during the first half of 2021. This year, the report also includes findings from synthesis reviews, with more qualitative findings on what is being learned in terms of the ILO's response to the COVID-19 crisis and its contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In October 2020, EVAL issued a protocol on collecting evaluative evidence related to the ILO's COVID-19 response[4] and, since then, all evaluations have been required to systemicallyassess this response. A review of information shows that credible evaluations conducted in the midst of the crisis are an important input into ongoing and future decisions by the ILO and its development partners. While information on actual results and impact will take more time to materialize, interesting lessons have already emerged, and it is becoming clear that adaptive approaches will need to be maintained to sustain the high strategic alignment of the ILO's work with new emerging priorities in the wake of the pandemic. Increased efforts to ensure a higher level of constituent involvement and to strengthen strategic relationships with other actors (including United Nations (UN) agencies and the development community) will be required to advance progress towards the goals set in the global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.[5]

With less than ten years to go, Part II also touches upon emerging lessons from the ILO's contribution to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs. The crushing pandemic has not only put progress towards their achievement at risk, but has likely also eroded some of the progress that had been made.

Guy Thijs | Director, ILO Evaluation Office

1. GB.340/PFA/6.
2. ILO, *Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO: Practical tips on adapting to the situation*, 24 April 2020.
3. GB.332/PFA/8.
4. ILO, *Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations*, 9 October 2020.
5. ILO, Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

PART 1 Progress made towards achieving key milestones

Part I of this report is organized by strategic outcome as identified in the Evaluation Strategy 2018–21. For each sub-outcome, the status with respect to meeting the biennial milestone (2020–21) of the relevant indicator is provided ("achieved"; "partially achieved"; or "not yet achieved"). Details are also provided on the linkages and assumptions that are identified in the Evaluation Strategy as being essential to achieving the end targets. Of the 19 biennial milestones and targets, 18 were "fully achieved" (13) or "partially achieved" (5); and 1 registered modest progress and was therefore considered "not achieved". While the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period officially ends in 2021, the report recommends an extension until 2022 – with a proposed additional 2022 target for each sub-outcome indicator provided at the end of the status update. This will allow for the consolidation of progress made so far and for the Evaluation Strategy 2023–25 to be informed by the results of the forthcoming 2022 IEE. To ensure independence, the 2022 IEE will be implemented using a similar approach to that used in 2016,[6] the report of which will be presented to the Governing Body at its 346th Session (October–November 2022), together with the proposed new Evaluation Strategy.

6. As for the 2016 IEE, a technical committee under the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) will be established to oversee the process. This will ensure that the IEE is conducted in a manner that enhances the utility of its findings for the ILO, while also maintaining the independence of the process. During its 37th Session, the EAC recommended (based on the model followed in 2016) that the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight head this committee, supported by the ILO Procurement Bureau and technical advisors not associated with EVAL, including an external senior evaluation expert.

OUTCOME 1. Enhanced capacities and systems of evaluation for better practice and use

SUB-OUTCOME 1.1.

Evaluation activities conducted in a timely fashion and in accordance with Evaluation Policy requirements

INDICATOR 1.1

All mandatory evaluations are completed in a timely manner for use by management, constituents and donors.

BASELINE

[illegible] coverage for independent evaluations and [illegible] coverage for internal evaluations.

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of [illegible] of independent evaluations and [illegible] of internal evaluations are completed in a timely [illegible]

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

a. Capacity to ensure independence of evaluations within regions through strengthened capacity and independence of regional evaluation [illegible]

b. Creation of regional evaluation [illegible]

c. Quality control and assessment of evaluations.

STATUS

Partially achieved.

Project evaluations describe the extent to which ILO interventions support decent work outcomes and contribute to organizational learning. Evaluation planning is consistently managed through EVAL's publicly accessible system, *i*-eval Discovery, which provides data on planned evaluations, in addition to completed evaluation reports and their related recommendations, lessons learned, good practices and management responses (see sub-outcome 3.1).

The biennial milestone (2018–19) was achieved for independent evaluations, with a completion rate of 99 per cent. A total of 48 independent project evaluations were completed in the current reporting period,[7] representing a decrease of 10 independent evaluations from the previous reporting period (figure 1). An additional six independent evaluations that were scheduled to be completed in 2020 had to be postponed, largely because of project extensions – representing a delay of 13 per cent of scheduled independent evaluations and a completion rate of 87 per cent. Combined with the completion rate for independent evaluations in the previous reporting period (90 per cent), a total of 89 per cent were completed in a timely manner – falling slightly short of the biennial target (2020–21) of 95 per cent. While these delayed evaluations will eventually be completed, these results nevertheless point to capacity challenges in regions with already high workloads that are further compounded by the effects of the pandemic.

Submission rates for internal project evaluations have substantially improved over the reporting period, but challenges continue nonetheless. In the current reporting period, 31 of the scheduled 45 internal evaluations were completed, indicating a 69 per cent completion rate – an increase of 25 per cent from the previous reporting period.[8] Despite these improvements, the average biennial submission rate still falls below the target of 75 per cent. Lower completion rates for internal evaluations are largely caused by a lack of self-discipline combined with a risk-assessed approach by EVAL to focus its scarce resources on the completion of independent evaluations of larger projects.

Proposed end target (2022): [illegible] per cent of independent evaluations and [illegible] per cent of internal evaluations are completed in a timely manner to [illegible]

FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF COMPLETED EVALUATIONS BY TYPE, 2016–20

7. This includes ten clustered evaluations, three Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) evaluations, two external evaluations, one joint evaluation and one review. Two evaluability assessments were also completed in 2020, but are not included in the overall total of independent evaluations completed that year.

8. The outstanding internal evaluations are both decentralized (Africa, Arab States, and Europe and Central Asia) and centralized (Enterprises Department and Research Department).

?181/@5:3˜453 4„81B18˜1B-8A-@5;:˜@;<5/?˜2;>˜?@>-@135/˜A?1

The selection of topics for high-level evaluations is determined through a consultative process that culminates in a rolling work plan. The process includes providing constituents with an opportunity to comment on the draft work plan; obtaining feedback from the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC); and reviewing ILO Governing Body documents that refer to the need for evaluation. EVAL balances the inputs with the need to ensure that topics which have not been evaluated for a lengthy period receive due attention (table 1).

TABLE 1. ROLLING WORK PLAN OF HIGH-LEVEL EVALUATION TOPICS, 2021–25

Year	Institutional or outcome level	Outcome level	Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP)	Remarks
2025	Skills	Social protection	Latin America and the Caribbean	Evaluation could feed into recurrent discussion on social protection tentatively scheduled for 2026 Selection of topics considered premature by one constituent group
2024	Development and use of labour statistics	Social dialogue	Africa	Evaluation could feed into recurrent discussion on social dialogue tentatively scheduled for 2025 Selection of topics considered too early by one constituent group. One constituent group made a suggestion to conduct the delayed evaluation of the application of international labour standards in 2024[1]
2023	Rural employment	Fundamental principles and rights at work	Arab States	Evaluation could feed into recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work tentatively scheduled for 2024
2022	The ILO's response to the implications of COVID-19	Independent evaluation of evaluation function[2]	Europe and Central Asia	Preparatory work is ongoing
2021	Gender equality and mainstreaming	Migration	Asia and the Pacific (South-Asia)	Ongoing

1. This evaluation was initially scheduled for 2022, but has been moved a number of times based on earlier feedback received, and to allow for other pressing topics to be evaluated.

2 The five-yearly independent evaluation of the evaluation function is due in 2022. While the evaluation will be managed externally to EVAL, it will nevertheless place heavy demands on EVAL, which will be called on to provide all required inputs to the external evaluation team.Accordingly, only one large institutional-level evaluation (on COVID-19) is proposed for 2022.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Endorse the topics for high-level evaluations for 2022 and 2023 identified in the rolling work plan and the extension of the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period by one year, to allow for the completion of the five-yearly independent evaluation of the evaluation function in 2022.

SUB-OUTCOME 1.2.

Strengthened evaluation capacity of staff in regions and departments

INDICATOR 1.2.1

ILO staff evaluation capacities are upgraded

BASELINE

By the end of [illegible] staff members [illegible] Programme (IECP)

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of [illegible] at least [illegible] ILO staff [illegible] managers or internal evaluators

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Interest in and use and availability of [illegible] Programme (EMCP) and the IECP

STATUS

Achieved

The 2018–19 biennial milestone called for 30 additional staff members to be certified as evaluation managers and internal evaluators. At the end of that reporting period, EVAL had trained 42 staff members. The current (2020–21) biennium's milestone requires that a cumulative number of at least 120 ILO staff members will have been certified as evaluation managers or internal evaluators. So far, 133 ILO staff members have been certified as evaluation managers and 27 have been certified as internal evaluators – exceeding the milestone.

With regard to the quality of training, in a 2020 survey, close to 70 per cent of evaluation managers said that the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP) had well prepared them to manage evaluations. The most common reason given by respondents was that the training provided a comprehensive introduction to evaluation management at the ILO, as well as tools and skills.

The 2021 training numbers (table 2) have decreased from previous years, due to the pandemic, causing EVAL to postpone its training programmes.The EMCP was reconceptualized to be delivered online in March 2021. Feedback was satisfactory – however, the need for further revisions came to light.

Because of a low demand for internal evaluators, the decision was made to phase out the Internal Evaluation Certification Programme (IECP). In its place, EVAL will develop an Advanced Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP+), incorporating many of the advanced concepts that were taught in the IECP. Such a programme would respond to a demand for more in-depth knowledge about the evaluation process, and motivate certified evaluation managers to manage additional independent evaluations.

Proposed end target (2022): The EMCP [illegible] incorporating elements of the IECP and the online version of the EMCP with further revisions have been developed and tested

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF ILO OFFICIALS WHO RECEIVED EVALUATION TRAINING, 2021 (CALENDAR YEAR)

Type of training	Africa	Latin America and the Caribbean	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and Central Asia	Headquarters	Total
General monitoring and evaluation			10	83			**93**
Evaluation management certification	20[1]			25	4		**49**
Total	**20**		**10**	**108**	**4**	**TBC**	**142**

Notes: Any activity that has a duration of less than one day is counted as awareness-raising rather than training, and is not included in this table.[1] Projected figure, as additional training will take place in the fourth quarter of 2021.

INDICATOR 1.2.2

@PM˜58 ; ˜M^IT] I\QWV˜VM_WZS˜Q[˜ functioning□based□on□clearly□established□ roles□and□job□descriptions□

BASELINE

Currently, evaluation network functions (departmental level and evaluation managers) are performed on a voluntary basis, resulting in limited availability of evaluation capacity.

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By□the□end□of□□□□□□a□fully□functioning□ M^IT] I\QWV˜VM_WZS˜Q[˜¥ZUTa˜MUJMLLML˜QV˜ the□relevant□regional□and□departmental□ functions□and□appropriate□resources□and□ incentives□are□allocated□

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Independence□of□regional□evaluation□ Wu¸KMZ[˜IVL˜LMXIZ\UMV\IT˜M^IT] I\QWV˜ focal□points□is□strengthened□□and□ KIXIK\a¸J]QTLQVO˜NWZ˜M^IT] I\QWV˜ activities□is□established□in□regions□and□ departments□

STATUS

Partially□achieved□

A fully functioning evaluation network for independent and credible evaluations requires clearly established roles, job descriptions and appropriate incentives. In the previous biennium (2018–19), the milestone of ensuring that certified evaluation managers and departmental evaluation focal points receive standardized assessments in their performance appraisals was accomplished. Progress was made during the current reporting period on establishing a dedicated job family and tailored job descriptions for evaluation staff in the ILO. The job descriptions are under review for priority approval by a working group set up by the Office. The recommendation of the 2016 IEE to reconfigure the reporting lines of regional evaluation officers (to establish direct reporting to EVAL) has been discussed twice at Global Management Team meetings, but remains unresolved.

The other structural issue that requires a solution is the lack of adequate incentives for certified evaluation managers to perform evaluation-related tasks, in addition to their existing work. Providing them with skills, certification and recognition through their performance evaluation has not always been sufficient to motivate them and their supervisors to take on this extra workload. To enhance incentives, EVAL will review cost-recovery options to compensate managers for the time their staff devotes to these tasks that benefit the Organization in respect of its overall evaluation responsibilities.

Proposed end target (2022):˜-˜KW[\¸ZMKW^MZa˜[KMVIZQW˜ to□compensate□for□staff□time□devoted□by□evaluation□ UIVIOMZ[˜\W˜M^IT] I\QWV¸ZMTI\ML˜\I[S[˜PI[˜JMMV˜ developed□and□proposed□to□senior□management□□

SUB-OUTCOME 1.3.

Constituents engaged in monitoring and evaluation of DWCPs and development cooperation activities in an SDG-responsive manner

INDICATOR 1.3

Relevant monitoring and evaluation training is mainstreamed into training IVL˜KIXIK◊\a‚J]◊TL◊VO˜XZWOZIUUM[˜NWZ˜ constituents in order to enhance their participation in evaluations

BASELINE

During [illegible] constituents were trained [illegible] of them in [illegible]

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of [illegible] at least [illegible] constituents in equal proportions from the three groups given tailored M^IT]I\◊WV˜\ZI◊V◊VO„˜I[˜XIZ\˜WN˜IZOMZ˜1B-8˜ IVL˜58;‚_◊LM˜\ZI◊V◊VO˜XZWOZIUUM[˝

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Collaboration within the ILO and with external institutions with a view to including evaluation training modules ◊V˜W\PMZ˜\ZI◊V◊VO˜IVL˜KIXIK◊\a‚J]◊TL◊VO˜ programmes

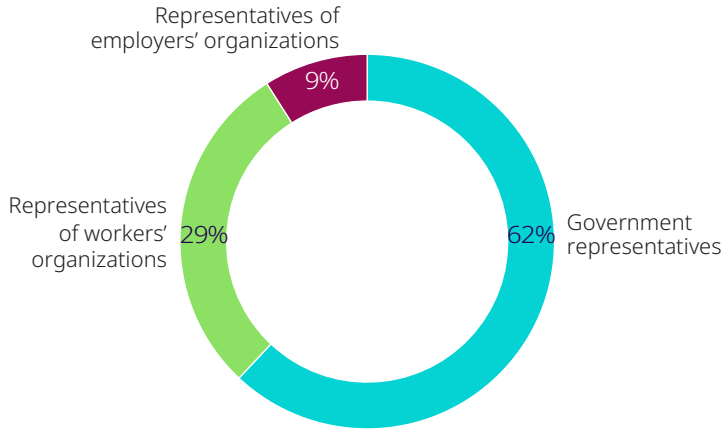
STATUS

Achieved

During the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period, EVAL has successfully mainstreamed evaluation into training initiatives for all three constituent groups, to maximize their contributions to evaluation processes at the country, regional and global levels (figure 2). Building on achievements made in respect of the previous biennial milestone, a total of 297 representatives of governments and of employers' and workers' organizations were trained on evaluation, notably in the context of the SDGs, exceeding the target set for the current biennium. Synergies with other departments, regions and the International Training Centre of the ILO ensured optimal delivery. Since early 2021, the training programme for ILO constituents on evaluation, the Decent Work Agenda and its link to the SDGs is available on EVAL's website,[9] to provide continuity of learning services to constituents in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tailored evaluation training initiatives with under-represented constituent groups will be enhanced, in collaboration with other entities during the Evaluation Strategy's extended implementation period.

Proposed end target (2022): At least one joint initiative is conducted to provide tailored evaluation training to employers' organizations as part of larger 1B-8˜IVL˜58;‚_◊LM˜\ZI◊V◊VO˜XZWOZIUUM[˝

FIGURE 2. ILO CONSTITUENTS TRAINED IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION, 2018–21



9. ILO, "Evaluating the Decent Work Agenda in the SDG era: A training programme for ILO Constituents".

SUB-OUTCOME 1.4.

Evaluations integrated in DWCPs and development cooperation activities, including a focus on SDGs

INDICATOR 1.4

Number of DWCPs and development KWWXMZI\QWV˜XZW[MK\[˜\PI\˜PI^M˜_MTT established evaluation processes and mechanisms in place and that regularly engage with constituents in meeting monitoring and evaluation requirements

BASELINE

No baseline yet established

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of [illegible] of DWCPs and development cooperation projects have mechanisms in place to assess their M^IT] IJQTQ\a˜IVL˜?03ZM[XWV[Q^MVM[[˜IVL˜ the level of participation of constituents in monitoring and evaluation

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Collaboration within the ILO enhances \PM˜M^IT] IJQTQ\a˜?03ZM[XWV[Q^MVM[[˜IVL˜ level of participation of constituents in monitoring and evaluation of DWCPs

STATUS

Partially achieved

In the previous biennium (2018–19), EVAL updated its guidance, with the publication of the fourth edition of its policy guidelines on evaluation[10] and a specific guidance note on evaluability,[11] and piloted new tools to enhance the evaluability of development cooperation initiatives and Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), thus leading to the achievement of the biennial milestone for the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period.

During the current biennium (2020–21), work continued to strengthen the institutionalization of these mechanisms, in close coordination with key departments. Of strategic importance was the joint work conducted by EVAL and the Strategic Programming and Management Department on revisiting the ILO's guidance on DWCPs to integrate it into EVAL's evaluability diagnostic instrument. This will ensure that newly designed DWCPs have the monitoring means to demonstrate the ILO's contribution to national development goals, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and the SDGs. EVAL also worked with the regions to integrate targeted evaluability assessments into reviews of DWCPs[12] to improve monitoring and evaluation and reporting. Since 2020, a slow but positive trend has been observed in the number of new DWCPs that have conducted evaluability assessments, following the recommendation set out in the new guidance on DWCPs.[13]

At the system-wide level, EVAL co-led the development of new United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines on the evaluation of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. The aim is to ensure consistency and alignment of monitoring and evaluation requirements among UN agencies in an SDG-responsive manner.

At the project level, despite the establishment of evaluability mechanisms for development cooperation initiatives, only 19 per cent[14] of the assessments due in 2020 and 2021 have been completed by management and submitted to EVAL. To date, results from the ex post quality assessment of decentralized project-level evaluations show that in 66 per cent of cases, constituents were involved in evaluation activities in 2020, highlighting the need for continued effort in this area.

Proposed end target (2022): 2WZ˜[˜XMZ˜KMV\˜WN˜ DWCPs [illegible] the institutionalized evaluability mechanisms that engage constituents in meeting monitoring and evaluation requirements are applied

10. ILO, ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations (4th edition)., November 2020.
11. ILO, Guidance Note 1.3: Procedure and Tools for Evaluability, June 2020.
12. See ILO, Country Programme Review of DWCP China (2016–20); ILO, Decent Work Country Programme for Lao People's Democratic Republic 2017–2021; and ILO, Pakistan Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP III) Progress Report 2017–2018, 2018.
13. To date, a third of DWCPs developed since 2020 have conducted an evaluability assessment at the design stage.
14. This figure is based on the number of evaluability assessments that have been conducted as a compulsory requirement for high-value projects, following the endorsement by the Governing Body at its 331st Session of Recommendation 2 in the annual evaluation report 2016–17 .

SUB-OUTCOME 1.5.

Established capacity of regions and departments to mainstream and use evaluation

INDICATOR 1.5

1^IT] I\QWV‡ZMT I\ML˜QV\QI\Q^M[˜\ISMV˜Ja˜ZMOQWV[˜IVL˜LMXIZ\UMV\[˜ other than mandatory requirements are systematized

BASELINE

Examples of such initiatives and their use have not been systematically documented since the annual evaluation report

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of a systematic process for quantitative and qualitative documentation of initiatives by departments and regions will be in place to show progressive increase and added value

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

a Development of guidelines within ILO Evaluation Policy O]QLMTQVM[°

b 1B-8˜XZW^QLM[˜UQVQUIT˜NIKQTQ\I\QWV˜IVL˜[]XXWZ\°˜

c -L^WKIKa˜ZWTM˜WN˜M^IT]I\QWV˜VM_WZS°˜

d Decentralized monitoring and evaluation of capacity in regions and departments

STATUS

Achieved

There continues to be strong potential in the regions and departments to integrate initiatives other than mandatory evaluations. These initiatives include comprehensive monitoring and evaluation frameworks; the application of EVAL's evaluability diagnostic instrument (see sub-outcome 1.4); thematic evaluations; capacity-building on monitoring and evaluation (for example, a workshop for programme and monitoring and evaluation officers in Asia); knowledge management and communications related to evaluation; and impact assessments and evaluation of national policies and plans.[15] Some of these initiatives are the result of required follow-up to recommendations presented in high-level and other evaluations. A recent trend is the more noticeable focus on baseline surveys, pre- and post-surveys in preparation for impact assessments, and tools to support the development of indicators and measurement for enhanced evaluability. Regional evaluation officers are also active participants in UN system initiatives. During the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period, there has been growing investment in monitoring and evaluation staff in projects managed by regions and departments, with numbers increasing from close to 30 in 2019 to 40 in 2020 and over 45 in 2021.

Proposed end target (2021–22): A systematic online documentation process of evaluation initiatives to facilitate the coordination, sharing and mutual use of evaluation initiatives across regions and departments

Proposed end target (2021-22): A systematic online documentation process of evaluation initiatives to facilitate the coordination, sharing and mutual use of evaluation initiatives across regions and departments Q[˜MUJMLLML˜QV˜1B-8‡[˜[]Q\M˜WN˜SVW_˜TMLOM˜ management tools

15. See table 3 in the annual evaluation report 2018–19 (GB.337/PFA/6) and table 2 in the annual evaluation report 2019–20 (GB.340/PFA/6) for a selective overview of non-mandatory evaluation initiatives by type, region and department.

OUTCOME 2. Enhanced value of evaluation through the use of more credible and higher-quality evaluations independence, credibility, usefulness)

SUB-OUTCOME 2.1.

Use of strategic cluster evaluations to gather evaluative information more e ectively

INDICATOR 2.1

Strategic clustered evaluations established as a modality in a substantial proportion of programmes and projects

BASELINE

Currently no documented processes or procedures are in place to conduct strategic clustered evaluations for development cooperation projects

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of a procedure for strategic clustered evaluations approved by a critical number of donors will be in place

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

0M VML U MKP I V [U NWZ XWWT VO W resources including establishment of trust fund for pooling resources

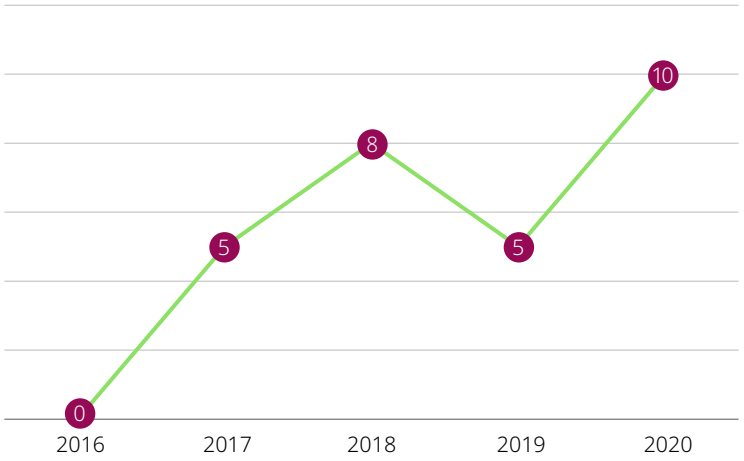
STATUS

Achieved

As part of the work to reach the previous biennial milestone (2018–19), a procedure and guidance note on strategic clustered evaluations[16] was developed. During the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period, 21 independent clustered evaluations have been conducted, covering the evaluation requirements for close to 80 projects (figure 3). These clustered evaluations included projects funded by a critical number (50 per cent) of donors from the ILO's 20 largest contributors. Clustering as a procedure often emerges as an opportunity from EVAL's evaluation planning process. As the number of large programmes with integrated logical frameworks and multiple-donor funding increases, clustered evaluations are expected to become the default option. Strategic discussions with donors to illustrate the advantages of such evaluations early on, as part of the negotiations, could accelerate this process.

A recent survey of evaluation managers (2020) further supports EVAL's experience that clustered evaluations improve cost and time efficiencies, reduce evaluation fatigue and enhance understanding among the tripartite constituents of the advantages of looking at the bigger picture of aggregated results at the country or thematic levels. While challenges remain (such as insufficient evaluative details for each project within the clustered evaluation, and lack of experience by many evaluators with the approach) and transaction costs can be high (reconciling different stages of project implementation and ensuring donor agreement), programme designs that embed a clustered approach to monitoring, reporting and evaluation from the start would substantially lessen those challenges.

FIGURE 3. NUMBER OF CLUSTERED EVALUATIONS, 2016–20



Proposed end target (2022): A document detailing the experience and strategic value of the clustered evaluation approach has been developed so as to further enhance the use of the modality

16. ILO, Guidance Note 3.3: Strategic clustered evaluations to gather evaluative information more effectively, June 2020.

SUB-OUTCOME 2.2.

Improved quality of internal, decentralized and centralized evaluations

INDICATOR 2.2.1

All evaluations of development cooperation projects comply with ILO norms and standards and are tailored to learning needs

BASELINE

Ex post quality assessment for [illegible] shows that about [illegible] of development cooperation project evaluations meet the required quality standards

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of [illegible] quality assessment of development cooperation project evaluations meet ILO requirements

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Highest level of independence and impartiality of evaluations further strengthened [illegible] requirements for evaluability reviews

STATUS

Achieved

The 2018–19 biennial milestone called for updated guidelines to incorporate new evaluation models that reflect the ILO's specific mandate. This milestone was achieved in 2020, with the publication of the fourth edition of EVAL's policy guidelines for evaluation.

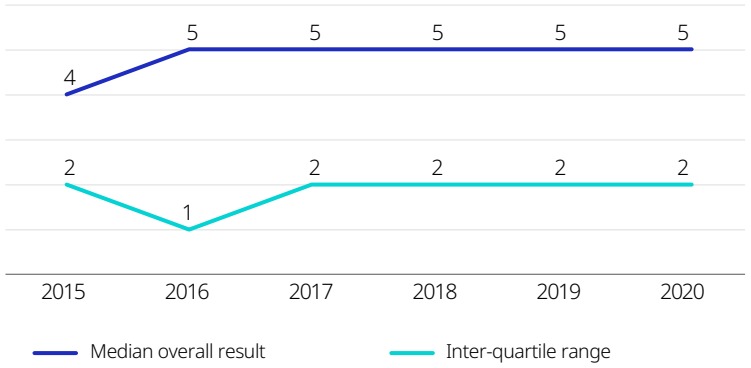
The 2020–21 biennial milestone is more ambitious. Analysis shows that 100 per cent of reports completed in 2019 (assessed in 2020) received a rating equal to or above "somewhat satisfactory". For reports completed in 2020 (assessed in 2021), despite the pandemic, the number of reports that received the same rating was 98 per cent. Together, the average quality assessment rating is 99 per cent – exceeding the target.

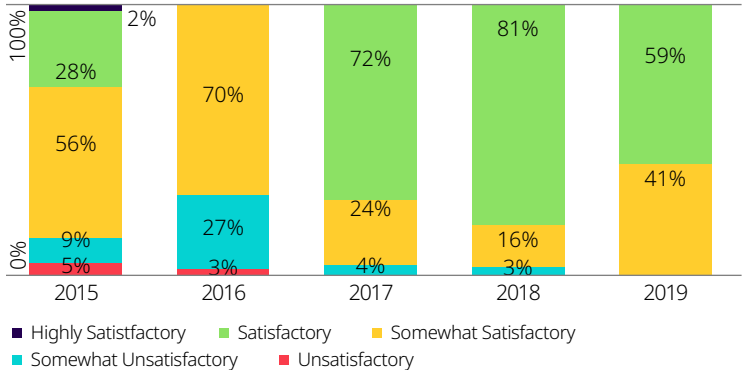
In the reporting period, the external appraisers updated the protocols that they use to conduct appraisals to reflect whether evaluations address the impact of the pandemic and environmental issues. The contribution to the SDGs, gender equality and disability issues have been included in the protocol for many years.

Proposed end target (2022):

By the end of [illegible] quality assessment of development cooperation project evaluations meet OECD [illegible]

FIGURE 4. PROJECT EVALUATION REPORTS: OVERALL RATINGS AND ANNUAL TREND



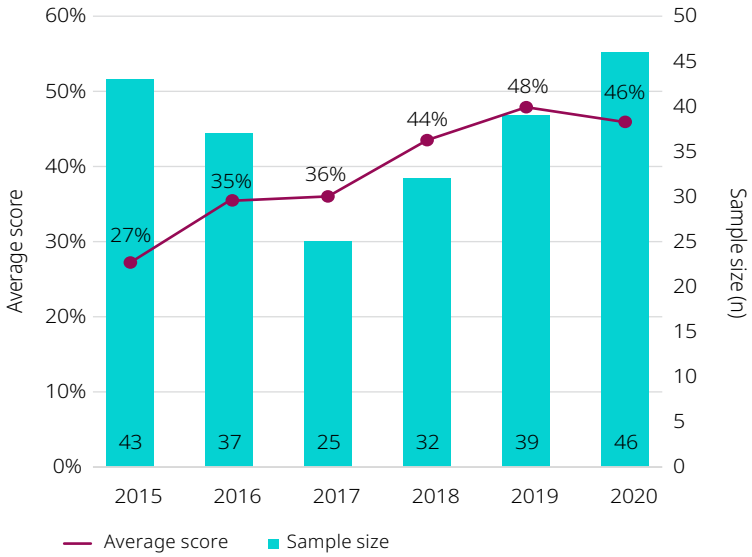


The assessment of 46 evaluation reports showed that they contained an average of 91 per cent of the components that are essential for an evaluation report. The quality of the reports was measured on a scale of 1 to 6 (1 being "highly unsatisfactory" and 6 being "highly satisfactory"). The median score was 5 ("satisfactory").[17] The quality of appraised reports has received a rating of "satisfactory" over the last six years (figure 4).[18]

Analysis undertaken each year of how gender is reflected in evaluation reports shows that the positive trend since 2015 has been retained, but is under pressure (figure 5). While the evaluations conducted in 2020 continued to be close to meeting requirements, a slight decrease on the average rating is found, from 4.31 (2019) to 4.13 (2020). A disaggregated overview of results shows that, whereas evaluations increasingly reflected a gender analysis in their findings, conclusions and recommendations between 2019 and 2020, they seemed to be lagging in terms of ensuring gender-responsive methodology, methods and data analysis techniques.

17. The overall scores are calculated by aggregating the ratings obtained for all items pertaining to the "quality" dimension of the quality assessment, thus excluding the comprehensiveness and United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) dimensions. The results of the UN-SWAP assessment are presented separately.
18. The scores were clustered quite tightly around the median. Overall, the dispersion of ratings around the median remains low, suggesting a certain homogeneity in the quality of reports over the years.
19. According to the 2018 UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Technical Note, the threshold to "meet requirements" is established at 6.50. It should be noted that comparing the ILO's scores with those of other UN agencies can only realistically be done with those that also use external assessments, as the ILO does for its evaluations.

FIGURE 5. ADJUSTED META-SCORES FOR GENDER ISSUES MAINSTREAMED IN REPORTS, 2015–20 (PERCENTAGE)



INDICATOR 2.2.2

-LL\QWVIT KIXIK\a~ZMTMI[ML~QV~1B-8~I\~ headquarters to focus on new evaluation models by reducing oversight of regional evaluations of development cooperation projects

BASELINE

@PM~ ˙ ˛~511QLMV\QYML~\PM~Q[[]M~W~ independence at the regional level as a priority and recommended the QV\MOZI\QWV~W~ZMOQWVIT~M^IT]I\QWV~WuKMZ[~ I[~N]TT~[\INN~UMUJMZ[~W~1B-8=

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of all evaluations in the regions are conducted to the highest standard of independence ZMY]QZQVO~UQVQUIT~W^MZ[QOP\~Ja~1B-8~I\~ headquarters

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

58;+[XMKQYK~M^IT]I\QWV~UWLMT[~IVL~ IXXZWIKPM[~\PI\~ZMeMK\~\PM~58;u[~[XMKQYK~ mandate and context

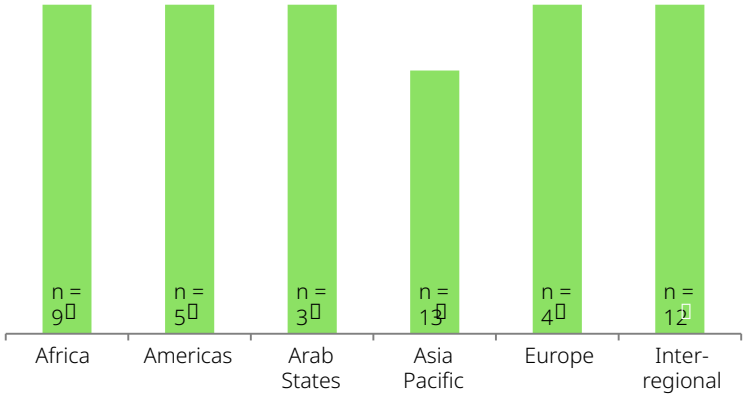
STATUS

Partially achieved

The preparation of a detailed report, analysing the reporting lines of regional evaluation officers for review by senior management, was achieved in the last biennium (2018–19). In the current biennium (2020–21), progress on reducing oversight by EVAL at headquarters of regional evaluations through changed reporting lines has stalled, leading to a status of "partially achieved" (see indicator 1.2.2).

Nevertheless, evaluations in the regions were conducted to the highest standard, as demonstrated by the results of the quality assessments (figure 6). These results have come at a high opportunity cost. To ensure independence and quality, staff at headquarters provide substantial oversight, sometimes even managing project evaluations, which contributes to the heavy workload. This oversight has been provided in parallel with work to develop new evaluation models (see sub-outcome 2.4).

FIGURE 6. MEDIAN SCORES OF THE QUALITY ASSESSMENTS BY REGION, 2020



Proposed end target (2022): The reporting models NWZ~ZMOQWVIT~M^IT]I\QWV~WuKMZ[~PI^M~JMMV~ZM^QM_ML~W~ reach an acceptable format that complies with the IEE recommendation

INDICATOR 2.2.3

/WZXWZI\M˜OW^MZVIVKM▲TM^MT˜M^IT]I\QWV[˜QVKWZXWZI\M˜A:13˜VWZU[˜IVL˜[\IVLIZL[▲˜IVL˜IZM˜\IQTWZML˜\W˜\PM˜58;ᵤ[˜[XMKQ◆K˜mandate and learning needs

BASELINE

5VLMXMVLMV\˜ZM^QM_˜QV˜▲ᵖ◣˜˜KWV◆ZUML˜quality met required standards has ZMKWV◆ZUML˜Ja˜\PM˜▲ᵖ◣˜˜511˜

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

The independent evaluation of the 58;ᵤ[˜M^IT]I\QWV˜N]VK\QWV˜KWV◆ZU[˜\PI\˜KWZXWZI\M˜OW^MZVIVKM▲TM^MT˜M^IT]I\QWV[˜IZM˜\IQTWZML˜\W˜\PM˜58;ᵤ[˜[XMKQ◆K˜mandate and continued to be of good Y]IQ\a▲˜I[˜JMVKPUIZSML˜IOIQV[\˜[QUQTIZ˜M^IT]I\QWV[˜QV˜KWUXIZIJTM˜A:˜IOMVKQM[˜

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

A[M˜WN˜M^IT]I\QWV˜UWLMT[˜IVL˜IXXZWIKPM[˜\PI\˜ZMeMK\˜\PM˜58;ᵤ[˜[XMKQ◆K˜mandate and context

STATUS

-KPQM^ML˜ᵣXMVLQVO˜511˜KWV◆ZUI\QWV▲˜

Previous independent reviews (2013 and 2016) confirmed the quality of high-level corporate evaluation reports. In 2021, in anticipation of the 2022 IEE to confirm achievement of this target, EVAL commissioned an external ex post quality assessment of a sample of ten high-level evaluations undertaken since 2015. A stratified approach to sampling was adopted to ensure that the selected evaluations were representative of their types: institutional, DWCP and programme and budget outcome evaluations. Of the assessed evaluations, 90 per cent received a rating equal to or above "somewhat satisfactory". Since the start of the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period in 2018, high-level evaluations have satisfactorily incorporated specific approaches to addressing social dialogue, tripartism and the SDGs. Results suggest some improvements are still required to ensure a better systematic reflection of international labour standards.

Preliminary findings from the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network 2020 assessment provide some external assurances of good quality, by stating that "the ILO has a robust and quality-focused evaluation function that has the necessary policies and mechanisms in place". [20]

Proposed end target (2022): The ▲ᵖ◣˜˜511˜KWV◆ZU[˜Y]IQ\a˜IVL˜ provides a solid update on the baseline

SUB-OUTCOME 2.3.

Credible impact evaluations conducted to build knowledge for e⇊ective policy interventions

INDICATOR 2.3.

Impact evaluations are considered credible and used for documenting effective policy interventions

BASELINE

Quality of impact evaluations not WX\QUIWZ˜]VQNWZU▲˜I[˜QVLQKI\ML˜V˜1B-8˜[\WKS\ISQVO˜ZMXWZ\˜WN˜▲ᵖ◣˜˜-˜VM_˜M`˜XW[\˜quality analysis of a sample of impact evaluations to be carried out in will establish a new baseline

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

By the end of of impact evaluations at the ILO will be considered credible and will meet required quality and relevance standards

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

Impact evaluations are within the responsibility of regions and LMXIZ\UMV\[▲˜_QP˜1B-8˜XZW^QLQVO˜technical support though guidance and a methodological review facility

STATUS

Not achieved

A total of 17 impact evaluations and studies were completed in the past five years. The biennial milestone was not achieved, as the quality of these evaluations and studies was not assessed; however, the updated impact evaluation inventory will be used in the upcoming ex post quality control exercise to establish a baseline for credible impact evaluation. The impact evaluation review facility continues to offer support to help ensure the quality and credibility of impact evaluations but is largely underused. Increased efforts to improve the facility's visibility and use will be launched by the end of 2021.

A desire for more ex post evaluations has gained momentum. For instance, follow-up actions to the high-level evaluation on sustainable enterprises[21] (2020) have resulted in collaboration with an upcoming ex post evaluation of the ILO's global programme on Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (the SCORE programme). In addition, EVAL issued internal guidance on the subject matter in response to a request from the EAC.

Proposed end target (2022): An ex post quality review of impact evaluations has been completed IVL˜QVWZU[˜I˜VM_˜NZIUM_WZS˜NWZ˜assessment

20. The assessment report will be made available on the website of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network.

21. ILO, High-level evaluation of ILO's strategy and action for promoting sustainable enterprises 2014–19, 29 September 2020.

SUB-OUTCOME 2.4.

Evaluation framework further aligned with ILO mandate and context, including SDGs

INDICATOR 2.4

58 ; ±[XMK◊ɣK˜M^IT] I\◊WV˜IXXZWIKPM[¿˜ models and methods used for evaluations at various levels

BASELINE

/]ZZMV\Ta¸˜U◊V◊U IT˜58 ; ±[XMK◊ɣK˜ approaches and models are used in ILO evaluations

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

AXLI\ML˜M^IT] I\◊WV˜NZIUM_WZS˜IXXT◊ML˜ in or more of evaluations and ¸˚ ¿ ˜WN˜M^IT] I\◊WV[˜PI^M˜?03±[XMK◊ɣK˜ indicators

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

8◊VSML˜\W˜Z◊[S[˜IVL˜I[[] UX\◊WV[˜]VLMZ˜ sub outcomes and

STATUS

Achieved

The 2018–19 biennial milestone called for work to pilot an evaluation framework specific to the ILO's mandate. In response, EVAL developed a guidance note on adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate.[22] Key evaluation protocols, templates and checklists for high-level and decentralized evaluations were revisited to further mainstream ILO-specific approaches (including the SDGs) and to ensure their application.

Consultants interested in working with the ILO continue to be requested to undertake the online self-induction programme that EVAL developed to increase their familiarity with the unique aspects of the ILO's mandate, its Evaluation Policy (2017)[23] and Evaluation Strategy 2018–21. To date, 142 consultants have obtained their attestations of completion (a desirable requirement for consultants to engage in ILO evaluation assignments).

As of the biennium 2020–21,it is requested that EVAL's updated framework is used for all mandatory evaluations in order to better capture the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, and its contributions to the SDGs. A 2021 survey of evaluation managers shows that 67 per cent considered the guidance developed on this subject to be relevant to their tasks. The ex post quality assessments of evaluation reports (2020) concludes that 50 per cent of project evaluations satisfactorily included questions relevant to international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, and 67 per cent satisfactorily included SDG considerations as part of the evaluation questions.

EVAL's meta-analysis on the ILO's overall effectiveness (see Part II) confirms that evaluations increasingly provide performance information that is relevant to the ILO's specific mandate. In 2020, 95 per cent of project evaluations yielded evidence on normative work and standards promotion, and 100 per cent did so with respect to tripartism, social dialogue and the SDGs.

In October 2020, EVAL issued a protocol[24] to better inform evaluations conducted during the pandemic and bring real-time learning for future action. The first phase of a synthesis review on the performance and emerging lessons of the Office's immediate crisis response in 2020–21 has been completed (see Part II).[25] The second phaseof the review will follow in late 2021, to bring learning on the overall effectiveness of the ILO's actions that will inform the high-level evaluation on the ILO's response to the implications of COVID-19 in 2022.

Proposed end target (2022): The updated evaluation NZIUM_WZS˜◊[˜IXXT◊ML˜◊V˜¸˚˜XMZ˜KMV\˜WZ˜UWZM˜WN˜ evaluations and per cent of evaluations provide relevant evidence on contributions to the SDGs

22. ILO, Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, June 2020.
23. GB.331/PFA/8.
24. ILO, Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence.
25. ILO, ILO's response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work: Evaluative lessons on how to build a better future of work after the pandemic, August 2021.

OUTCOME 3. Stronger knowledge base of evaluation findings and recommendations

SUB-OUTCOME 3.1.

Strengthened accessibility and visibility of evaluation information through *i*-eval Discovery

INDICATOR 3.1

[illegible] including recommendations, lessons learned and good [illegible] users and is considered the gateway to ILO evaluation information.

BASELINE

Based on data provided by the Information and Technology Management Department, the average use was in the range of [illegible] during [illegible].

BIENNIAL MILESTONE 2020–21

[illegible] internally and externally as the gateway to reliable ILO evaluation information. Biennial milestone [illegible] increase over baseline level.

LINKAGES AND ASSUMPTIONS

a. [illegible]

b. [illegible]

c. Awareness and support activities of a communication campaign.

STATUS

Achieved.

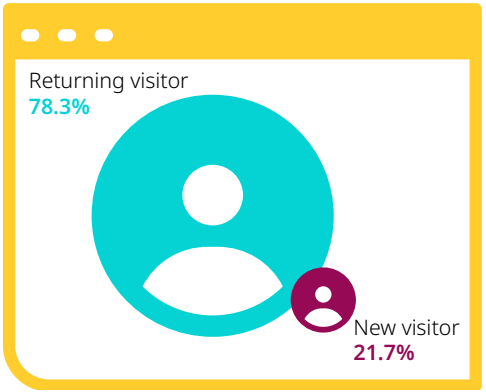
The i-eval Discovery dashboard publicly displays all planned evaluations and completed evaluations along with their related recommendations, lessons learned, good practices and management responses. It was launched in 2016 for transparency, accountability and accessibility purposes for constituents, donors and ILO staff. To date, i-eval Discovery currently holds over 1,300 evaluation reports, 3,000 lessons learned and good practices, and nearly 2,000 recommendations.

A total of 2,972 users accessed i-eval Discovery during the reporting period, just over 78 per cent of whom were new users (figure 7).[26] This represents a substantial increase from last year's figure (1,471 users), indicating the increased visibility and usefulness of the dashboard to constituents, ILO staff and the public since its launch. A grand total of 4,443 users accessed i-eval Discovery during the course of the biennium, representing an increase of 45 per cent over the baseline level. If this trend continues for the remainder of 2021, the biennial target will be easily achieved.

Since 2020, EVAL has been working closely with the Information and Technology Management Department to modernize the database that underpins i-eval Discovery.

Proposed end target (2022): There has been a [illegible] per cent increase over the baseline level in the number of [illegible] art dashboard to store and display integrated evaluation information has been developed.

FIGURE 7. TYPE OF USER ACCESSING I-EVAL DISCOVERY, 2020–21



26. As at 27 July 2021.