



Governing Body

310th Session, Geneva, March 2011

GB.310/PFA/4/2(Rev.)

Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee

PFA

FOURTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Evaluations

Independent external evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function

Overview

Issues covered

This paper presents a summary of the findings and recommendations made by the independent external evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function and was previously submitted to the Governing Body for decision in November 2010 (GB.309/PFA/5/5).

Policy implications

The strategy section of the evaluation policy of the Office has been revised for adoption by the Governing Body during its March 2011 session. Amendments to the evaluation policy will be made to reflect the changes suggested in the report of the independent external evaluation.

Legal implications

None.

Financial implications

Implementation of a number of recommendations has financial implications which are not quantified in this paper. Any financial implication will have to be considered in the framework of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2012–13.

Decision required

Paragraph 9.

References to other Governing Body documents and ILO instruments

GB.309/PFA/5/5.

Introduction

1. The Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee discussed a paper summarizing the independent external evaluation (IEE) of the ILO's evaluation function at the 309th Session of the Governing Body.¹
2. The Committee decided to defer the decision concerning this item to March 2011.

Summary of IEE findings

3. Overall, the IEE found that the ILO had made significant improvements to the evaluation function over the past five years and concluded that the evaluation policy itself was sound and needed little modification. However, the IEE identified some issues related to the implementation of the policy that needed to be addressed in both structural and strategic terms.
4. The evaluators reported an improved harmonization of evaluation practices, drawing on the guidance provided by the Evaluation Unit. They also noted that an increased number of staff members, both at headquarters and in the field, had been involved in evaluations.
5. The IEE report noted that there had been an increasing decentralization of the evaluation function to regional offices, thus underscoring the need for strengthening an Office-wide training component for evaluation and for strengthening the current information system to collect evaluations centrally.
6. While the evaluators found no evidence that the existing reporting line of the Evaluation Unit compromised the independence of the evaluation function, they noted that enough ambiguity existed to convey an impression of lack of independence.
7. The report stated that evaluations were of good quality, but that their results were not used. The evaluators found little evidence that the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee used evaluation results in assessing performance and in reviewing proposals for programmes and budgets, or that evaluations results were used much by senior management.

IEE recommendations and follow-up

8. The table in the appendix lists the ten recommendations of the IEE and provides details on specific follow-up actions to be taken and the estimated timelines for their completion.
9. ***The Committee may wish to recommend to the Governing Body that it request the Director-General to implement the IEE recommendations in accordance with the attached table and within available resources.***

Geneva, 17 January 2011

Point for decision: Paragraph 9

¹ GB.309/PFA/5/5.

Appendix

Recommendation	Action by	Action to be taken	Resource implications	Time frame
Recommendation 1: The evaluation policy should be extended for an additional five years with amendments to reflect other recommendations, and at the end of the period, consistent with UN system practice, it should be subject to a further independent external evaluation.	Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) and Evaluation Unit (EVAL)	The Office will prepare a new evaluation strategy which will be presented to the Governing Body in March 2011.	To be determined	March 2011
Recommendation 2: Evaluations to be presented to the Governing Body should be chosen for their strategic use in policy-making, strategy formulation and accountability on the basis of a multi-year plan that could be amended, as necessary, by the Governing Body. It is suggested that: (i) on a five-year planning cycle one evaluation be presented annually with the subject being determined by the Conference review strategy; (ii) on a two-year planning cycle another evaluation with implications for the next programme and budget planned be presented; and (iii) on an annual basis a third evaluation be presented guided by emergent policy and programme needs.	EAC and EVAL	A multi-year rolling workplan for high-level evaluations will be presented to the Governing Body in March 2011.	Yes	Annually
Recommendation 3: (i) The evaluation function should be organizationally consolidated into an entity that would report directly to the Director-General and through this position to the Governing Body, with a director appointed according to UN system best practice for heads of evaluation; (ii) there is a need for secure funding, including for the dedicated regional monitoring and evaluation positions, from the assessed budget of the Office and a fixed share of programme support income and other extra-budgetary resources.	Director-General	(i) The evaluation function will be organizationally consolidated into an entity that reports directly to the Director-General and through this position to the Governing Body. The Director of EVAL will henceforth be appointed according to UN system best practice for heads of evaluation. Any necessary changes to the Staff Regulations will be submitted to the Governing Body for adoption. (ii) Priorities for resources will be considered in the context of programme and budget decisions by the Governing Body.	No	November 2011
Recommendation 4: There should be increased use of self-evaluation at the programme and project level especially for major policy reviews by the Conference, and for programme implementation reporting. Adoption of agency-wide standards and	EVAL and PROGRAM	The Office will review current guidelines and practices related to self-evaluations to streamline requirements and strengthen quality through better oversight.	Yes	March 2011

Recommendation	Action by	Action to be taken	Resource implications	Time frame
guidelines, and an oversight process for self-evaluations, should address concerns about quality and legitimacy.				
Recommendation 5: The mandate of the EAC should be clarified to include clear responsibility for: (i) advising on policies for follow-up to ensure appropriate implementation of evaluation recommendations on strategies and policies, in order to achieve a consistent and coordinated approach to evaluation and its use across the Organization within a results-based management (RBM) framework; and (ii) proposing evaluation topics to the Governing Body on a multiple-year basis.	EAC	EAC's terms of reference will be extended to include these two areas.	Yes	December 2010
Recommendation 6: EVAL should be given a revised mandate, reflecting its three principal roles, which give priority to conducting high-level strategic and policy evaluations as part of the policy decision-making process and the implementation of RBM, as well as supporting evaluation activities throughout the Office and providing general oversight of evaluation quality at all levels of the ILO. The specific priorities and emphasis for any given year would be noted in the multi-year plan.	EVAL and EAC	The evaluation programme of work will have greater focus on high-level evaluations through a multi-year workplan. Decentralized evaluation activities will continue to be strengthened through the ILO evaluation network.	Yes	December 2011
Recommendation 7: The respective expertise of EVAL, PARDEV and PROGRAM should be more closely coordinated to ensure consistent integration of standardized evaluation and RBM practices in programme implementation.	EVAL, PROGRAM and PARDEV	The Office will revise its procedures for evaluation to reflect the new evaluation policy. There will be closer collaboration among the different departments supporting RBM.	No	April 2011 (collaboration ongoing activity)
Recommendation 8: A comprehensive and adaptable training programme in evaluation in the context of RBM, designed on a multi-year basis and tailored to the specific needs of the ILO, should be implemented in cooperation with the Turin Centre for staff and constituents.	EVAL, HRD, PROGRAM, PARDEV, SECTOR, regions and Turin Centre (ongoing practice)	The Office is taking steps to strengthen training programmes on evaluation through better collaboration across departments. New training programmes will be considered in the context of staff development.	Yes	December 2010
Recommendation 9: The current functionality of EVAL should be further developed by improvements to information management and dissemination systems to increase usability, including a substantial overhaul and expansion of i-Track, as well as by the dedication of sustained resources for database management.	EVAL and ITCOM	EVAL will take steps to upgrade the functionality of the i-Track database and management reports. This will be an integral part of enhanced knowledge management in the ILO.	Yes	2011–12

Recommendation	Action by	Action to be taken	Resource implications	Time frame
Recommendation 10: There should be increased use of ex-post evaluations to assess the longer term impact of ILO programmes and projects, and several should be implemented on a pilot basis in priority areas during the 2010–15 period.	Technical sectors and regions	A limited number of ex-post evaluations are being conducted by regions and sectors. New priority areas will be piloted with increased technical support from EVAL.	Yes	2011 (ongoing)