

TOOLKIT FOR MAINSTREAMING EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK

GUIDELINES FOR SELF ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), at its April 2007 session, fully endorsed the *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work* and agreed to proceed with its application. The Toolkit, which was developed in response to the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration of July 2006, “strives to be a lens that the agencies could look through to see how their strategies, policies, programmes and activities are interlinked with employment and decent work outcomes and how they can enhance these outcomes by taking full account of the implications of their strategies, policies, programmes and activities for employment and decent work” (page iii of the Toolkit). The Toolkit in English, French and Spanish is posted at:

<https://hlcp.unsystemceb.org/reference/07/>

http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dgo/selected_documents.htm

On 17 July 2007, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted a Resolution which calls upon all United Nations Funds, Programmes, Agencies, Functional and Regional Commissions and International Financial Institutions to collaborate in using, adapting and evaluating the application of the Toolkit and to implement a three-phased approach in action plans to promote the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, and requesting the ILO to provide support and assistance to the agencies to do so.

The three-phased approach in action plans called for in the ECOSOC Resolution involves: (i) each organization formulating in close collaboration with the ILO, its own action plan by end 2007/beginning 2008; (ii) follow-up on the action plan by end 2008/beginning 2009 by promoting ownership by the organization and enhancing the decent work elements of its policies, programmes and activities, including consolidating decent work elements in larger clusters of the organization’s mandate; and (iii) establishing by the end of 2009 a system-wide action plan for the period 2010-2015.

The first and most urgent step towards the preparation of action plans is for each organization to carry out a self assessment of the employment and decent work outcomes of its own policies, programmes and activities, as agreed in the Toolkit and

endorsed by the CEB. As such, the Toolkit is an awareness raising tool and a diagnostic questionnaire on which to establish a baseline to mark progress in 2010 and 2015, as requested by ECOSOC. The self assessment exercise will further help each organization in identifying and selecting its own policies, operational tools and good practices that can contribute to improve employment and decent work outcomes in its own fields of competence.

The guidelines presented below are intended to help ensure that the self assessment is an opportunity for each organization to determine how it could better deliver the outcomes under its own mandate by integrating employment and decent work outcomes and to be able to use the results of its self assessment to develop its own action plan. The guidelines are organized as follows:

1. Questions and answers: Those conducting the self-assessment may have some basic questions on why and how the exercise should be carried out;
2. The criteria for responding to the diagnostic checklist in the Toolkit: Answers to the checklist should be based on a list of objective criteria, so that each organization is clear about how it established its own baselines and has tangible means/indicators to monitor its own future progress;
3. Suggestions for reporting on the results of the self assessment: The report should provide useful information that can serve as inputs for the preparation of the organization's action plan and for subsequent monitoring;
4. Clarification and examples of tools: There are different kinds of tools and resources that an agency could identify and contribute to the knowledge base in the interactive website.

1. Q & A ON THE SELF ASSESSMENT

Why conduct a self assessment? So that each organization can systematically determine for itself how it can optimize the outcomes under its own mandate by optimizing the employment and decent work outcomes of its policies, programmes and activities. The self assessment is an essential first step for each organization to prepare its own action plan, as called for in the 2006 ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration and 2007 ECOSOC Resolution. It is not an external audit and should not be an administrative burden to the organization.

The aim is to have a truly useful internal exercise to establish baselines against which progress can be monitored in 2010 and 2015; identify critical gaps and challenges; and also provide a basis for the formulation of the organization's action plan to improve employment and decent work outcomes and thereby more effectively deliver the outcomes under its own mandate. A lesson learned from participatory assessments of how institutions have been mainstreaming gender is worth noting – such self assessments often serve as useful entry points for an institution to discuss its own wider substantive and operational concerns.

What does the self assessment entail? The Toolkit contains a diagnostic checklist of questions that an organization may ask itself to assess and maximize the employment and decent work outcomes of its strategies, policies, programmes and activities. To use the Toolkit for self assessment, an organization may carry out the following steps:

- i. Start by reading the entire Toolkit. Given the integrated nature of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda and the wide range of policy areas under each pillar that affect or are affected by employment and decent work, it would be useful to be familiar with all chapters, sections and questions;
- ii. Answer the questions in the diagnostic checklist. When ticking Yes or No in the checklist boxes, the answers should be based on objective criteria – so that the bases on which the assessment is made are clear and can be used to develop the organization’s action plan and to monitor subsequent progress. A list of objective criteria is provided in Section 2 below;
- iii. Identify the various types of tools (explanations and examples of tools are provided in Section 4 below) the organization already has, and select those that can be posted on an interactive website and shared with all CEB members;
- iv. Prepare a report of the self assessment – that should not only compile the answers to the checklist but also provide useful information for the organization’s action plan. Suggestions for the reporting format are provided in Section 3 below.

Do all questions in the Toolkit checklist need to be answered? The diagnostic checklist in the Toolkit is broadly organized according to the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda, as defined and approved globally and by all countries and regions (employment, social protection, rights and standards at work, and governance and social dialogue). Since these pillars are not separate but integral parts of a coherent approach the checklist is not intended to be a “pick and choose” option. To achieve the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, all four pillars are strategic and need to be considered. Under each pillar (corresponding to each chapter in the Toolkit) are a number of sections to reflect the multifaceted, complex and interlinked nature of employment and decent work goals and the wide range of policy areas that affect or are affected by employment and decent work. Therefore, all questions should be answered. But, of course, each organization has its own mandate and understandably may find some sections of the checklist more relevant than others. However, answering all the questions would enable the organization to realistically identify: the areas where it has no mandate or capacity to act; the areas where it has limited activities or different approaches than perhaps what is indicated in the checklist; and, importantly, the areas where it is already engaged or may be engaged or where it sees opportunities to enrich its policies, programmes or activities by integrating employment and decent work. This should result in a full picture under all the strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda, and should help to identify both opportunities for partnerships and synergies between different organizations and where division of work is a more efficient and natural approach.

Who should conduct the self assessment? A self assessment at institutional level ideally should involve a mix of personnel – those responsible for key policy decisions of the agency and technical staff covering different technical areas and, as appropriate, geographical areas. An organization may decide to form a team for the exercise, which could then continue to spearhead its efforts to maximize employment and decent work outcomes. Importantly, the representative of the organization to the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the CEB should play a lead role. Also, it is necessary that all those involved in conducting the self assessment should be well acquainted with the Decent Work Agenda and the Toolkit itself. Before carrying out the self assessment, an awareness raising/advocacy session could be organized with support from the ILO.

What is the time-frame for the self assessment? The self assessments should be launched in the months of August and September, so that HLCP in its September session and CEB in its October 2007 session, can discuss the on-going work and provide further guidance on the implementation of the ECOSOC 2007 Resolution. The actual amount of time required for the self assessment would depend very much on how the agency organizes itself for the exercise and how much in-depth it delves into the exercise.

How can the ILO assist? In response to the CEB and the ECOSOC Resolution, an ILO team has been set up to provide support and assistance to agencies for the exercise. In addition to these guidelines, the ILO team proposes to pay a visit to the organization to meet with the responsible staff, introduce the Toolkit, explain and clarify the self assessment steps and discuss appropriate forms of collaboration. It would be very useful if agency staff could read through the Toolkit and these guidelines before the ILO team visits the agency. The different forms of collaboration could be, for example: (i) the agency then conducts the self assessment on its own but has access to an assigned ILO team member(s) who can be contacted by phone or email for clarifications, assistance, advice; or (ii) the agency identifies which component of the self assessment it would like direct assistance for, and an ILO team member(s) could undertake a mission to work directly with the responsible colleagues in the agency.

2. CRITERIA FOR THE SELF ASSESSMENT

The self-assessment checklist has a series of questions with Yes/No boxes for answers. To meaningfully respond to these questions is not a simple matter of someone just ticking the boxes. The criteria or bases for answering have to be clearly identified, so that there are objective data or indicators for establishing baselines, identifying key gaps and challenges, having realistic information to prepare action plans, and being able to monitor subsequent progress. The suggestion is that for each section of the checklist, the basis/criterion for answering “Yes” to a particular question is specified and explained, and appropriate references (websites, reports, project names or codes) are provided. An organization may also indicate the reasons behind the “No” responses – these may indicate areas outside its mandate or may identify areas for future action to improve employment and decent work outcomes and thereby optimize outcomes under its own mandate.

Possible objective criteria are listed below and brief explanations are provided to help illustrate how an organization may determine, justify and explain its answers for each particular subsection of the checklist. Examples are provided of how these criteria could be used to define baselines and indicators for monitoring progress. It is important to emphasize that these criteria are not ILO or externally imposed; they are only suggestions of how an organization may meaningfully apply the Toolkit checklist:

- **The agency’s mandate:** The baseline may show that the organization’s constitution, mission statement, standards, declarations, key policy goals make(s) specific reference to employment and decent work outcomes. The organization already may have assigned specific responsibility to a unit within its own institutional structure for spearheading efforts to promote employment and labour issues. An indicator for measuring progress may be that the organization spells out a clear strategy and implementation plan for achieving the relevant mandate;

- ***The programme and budget allocation:*** An organization may have made a specific allocation in its Programme and Budget to promote employment and decent work or it may have allocated resources for following-up on the Toolkit. It may be providing direct funding (loans, grants, microfinance) or it may be using donor/extra-budgetary resources for projects or activities explicitly to promote employment and decent work. An indicator of progress could be an increase in the percentage of regular and/or extra-budgetary resources devoted to employment and decent work outcomes;
- ***Directives or guidelines for the formulation, implementation, monitoring or evaluation of policies, programmes or activities:*** An organization may, for example, have a compulsory directive concerning employment and decent work outcomes in its own strategies - for example, that proposals for infrastructure development projects must include an assessment of the likely impact on job creation and job destruction or that agricultural development programmes must guarantee non-use of child labour. An organization may also have its own checklist for integrating core labour standards in country poverty analysis, or operational manual/guidelines for using labour-intensive techniques in crisis response or post-conflict situations. Or an organization could specify employment and decent work outcomes as conditionality in a bidding process for projects, or include the impact on employment as part of the evaluation of a policy, programme or activity. It could also have included employment and decent work indicators in its reporting on its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (Note that such directives or guidelines would be part of the tools an agency has for mainstreaming employment and decent work outcomes);
- ***Directly targeted policies, programmes or activities:*** An organization may have, for example, a training programme for staff or constituents on employment and labour issues as reflected in the decent work agenda, a project specifically aimed at eliminating child labour, promoting the establishment of micro and small enterprises, promoting the rights of migrant workers or implementing the code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work;
- ***Research and knowledge management:*** An organization may have conducted studies, surveys, desk reviews, community of practice or held workshops, etc., to improve its knowledge base of the links between its policies, programmes and activities and employment and decent work issues;
- ***Data and statistics:*** An organization may regularly (specify how often) collect quantitative and qualitative information on the labour market and employment and decent work situation. An indicator of progress would be that data are collected for an increasingly detailed list of decent work aspects and that such data are systematically used to inform policies, programmes and activities of the agency;
- ***Awareness raising and advocacy:*** An organization may have activities devoted to raising awareness of employment and decent work concerns, for example through flagship publications, media events, seminars, etc.

In applying these criteria for the self-assessment, there are also a number of important cross-cutting considerations:

- ***The time frame:*** It is obviously necessary to establish a cut-off time frame. Policies, programmes or activities carried out more than five years ago may no longer be relevant or useful. A time frame no more than the preceding three years and especially activities that are still ongoing would be more appropriate. If an activity is planned for the future, the expected starting date should also be stated;
- ***The type and level of application:*** It would be important to note the type of policy, programme or activity (e.g. advisory services, loans, grants, training, research, infrastructure development, etc.); whether the policy, programme or

activity is institution-wide or applicable only to certain units or departments of the organization; and whether the application is at global, regional, country, sectoral or local levels. It would also be important to indicate the aspects of employment and decent work affected (e.g. income earned, gender equality promoted, security of employment, occupational safety and health, right to organize and bargain collectively, social security coverage, etc.);

- **The gender dimensions:** Policies, programmes and activities may differentially affect women and men, girls and boys. Whether and how an organization takes into account the gender dimensions in considering employment and labour issues would be useful to clarify;
- **The target groups:** The direct and indirect beneficiaries of an organization's policies, programmes and activities should be noted. For example, does an agency target workers in the informal economy or other vulnerable groups such as migrant workers, workers with disabilities, youth or the elderly, minorities, etc.;
- **Consultation and cooperation:** Is the policy, programme or activity formulated, implemented, monitored or evaluated by the organization in an individual capacity or in consultation and collaboration with, for example, other CEB member organizations, government agencies, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society organizations, etc. The collaboration may be at global, regional, country, sectoral or local level.

3. REPORTING ON THE SELF ASSESSMENT

The report on the self assessment should be not only a document for the CEB but, importantly, a reference for the organization to develop an action plan and monitor its own progress in improving the impact under its own mandate through improving employment and decent work outcomes. The format for reporting on the self assessment could, therefore, comprise a shorter document that goes to the CEB and a number of annexes for internal use by the organization to develop its action plan. Some guidelines for reporting are:

- **Background information:** It would be useful to briefly explain how the self assessment was conducted – how did the agency organize itself; who (level of responsibility) was involved; the time frame; problems encountered and lessons learned;
- **The completed self-assessment checklist:** Report by sections for each of the four chapters reflecting the four strategic pillars of the Decent Work Agenda, following the structure in the Toolkit. For each section, analyze and summarize the results:
 - Where the Yes boxes have been ticked, indicate the objective criteria used for determining that the organization has, for example, promoted employment-rich and pro-poor employment growth. A number of criteria may be relevant and should all be explained, including indicating the type of policy, programme or activity and the aspects of employment and decent work affected;
 - In highlighting the criteria used, make sure to include the cross-cutting information; for example, was the policy, programme or activity carried out at the global or country level; did it mainstream gender considerations; or did it involve collaboration with other agencies;
 - Where the No boxes have been ticked, identify the reasons why the organization's policies, programmes or activities have not, for example, promoted safety at the workplace. It is as important to identify problems, gaps

and challenges as it is to report successes – since these should be the focus of action to improve employment and decent work outcomes. Similarly it is important to identify areas outside the mandate or capacity of the organization – since these could help to define the division of work and possible collaboration with other organizations;

- With the baseline established for each section (how effective or not effective its policies, programmes or activities currently are), the organization may then wish to define quantitative or qualitative indicators for monitoring progress in the future. For example, it might state that by end 2008 it would have developed and applied a section in all project proposals on how they have taken into account fundamental principles and rights at work;
- **Follow-up:** The organization may wish to also indicate briefly the main steps planned (and the tentative time table) for follow-up to the self assessment, including, for example, briefing of its staff on the results of the self assessment and discussion on how best to address emerging challenges and concern, and preparation of the action plan. The organization may also wish to make suggestions for improving the Toolkit, including identifying tools that need to be developed to meet specific application needs;
- **Potential for partnerships and synergy:** The report may include some assessment of the potential of the employment and decent work related elements of the organization's activities to be integrated into a system-wide action plan, as called for in the ECOSOC Resolution. Such information would also highlight the potential for promoting policy coherence and partnerships/collaboration with the ILO and other organizations.
- **Annexes/additional information:** Whether as annexes to the report to the CEB or as information that the organization should record as part of the self assessment, the following would be useful:
 - The completed checklist with all Yes/No boxes ticked;
 - List of tools the organization already has and that can be posted on the interactive website ;
 - Documentation, website addresses, project codes and details, etc. to support the criteria used in completing the self-assessment checklist.

4. TOOLS FOR MAINSTREAMING EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK

As a component of the self assessment, the organization should identify and evaluate the tools it has for improving the employment and decent work outcomes in its own fields of competence, and to post these on an interactive website in order to share with all other agencies. The knowledge base will keep expanding over time, with inputs from across the multilateral system. All agencies are encouraged to participate in the community of practice - to contribute tools and resources they currently have; to suggest improvements so as to make the employment and decent work outcomes more effective and to promote policy coherence; and to expand, deepen and tailor the “toolbox” to specific fields of intended application.

There can be several different kinds of tools:

- **“How-to” tools:** operational manuals, institutional directives, discretionary guidelines, conventions, recommendations, codes of conduct, training materials, etc. on how to integrate employment and decent work concerns into policies, programmes and activities, how to optimise the quantity and quality of employment, how to promote the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, how to conduct a gender audit, etc.;
- **Knowledge-based tools:** policy briefs and research findings such as on the relationship between specific mandate areas and employment and decent work; data and statistics; evaluation reports of programmes, projects, etc.;
- **Good practices and lessons learned:** from policy and practical experience of what works, what does not work, the factors that make for success or non-success, the scope for replication or adaptation. “Good” practices can be assessed in terms of their innovation or creativity and their impact in terms of effectiveness, relevance or sustainability in mainstreaming employment and decent work;
- **Advocacy tools:** media messages, pamphlets, educational and awareness raising materials such as on why mainstreaming employment and decent work can be a win-win strategy;
- **Roster of experts/specialists/consultants:** by thematic and geographic specialization;
- **References and websites** for additional and more detailed information.