ECCOS

Consolidation of the Quality Assurance Processes
for ITCILO Non-Training Capacity Development Services

Prepared by

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Acronyms

AIZ	Academy for International Cooperation
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Customer
CD	Capacity development
EPAP	Employment Policy and Analysis Programme
ETF	European Training Foundation
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
IMS	Integrated Management System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the ILO
KAT	Knowledge Acquisition Test
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MAP	Management of activities and participants
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
O2O	Organization to Organization
O2P	Organization to Participant
PDCA	Plan, Do, Check, Act
QA	Quality Assurance
QM	Quality Management
QMS	Quality Management System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TDIR	Office of the Director of Training
ToR	Terms of Reference
TQM	Total Quality Management

List of Reference Documents

1	ISO 20700 - Guidelines for Management Consultancy Services (2017)
2	ISO 29993 – Learning Services Outside Formal Education – Service Requirements (2017)
3	ISO 21001 - Management Systems for Educational Organizations (2017)
4	ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development (2019)
5	ITCILO Capacity Development Services - We provide digital learning solutions (2020)
6	ILO Programme and budget for the biennium 2020-21 (2020)
7	ITCILO The Evolution of the Service Portfolio of the Centre (2020)
8	ITCILO Strategic Plan of the ITCILO for 2018-21
9	ITCILO Programme and budget proposals of the ITCILO for 2020-21
10	ITCILO Quality Management in the Training Department (2019)

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The **overall objective** of the assignment is to contribute towards full compliance of the Centre with the ISO standard 29993 for learning service providers outside formal education, and where applicable ISO 20700 (for consultancy service providers).

The **immediate objective** is to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Director Training (TDIR) to quality-assure institutional-level and system-level capacity development advisory services of the Centre, by way of introducing processes and tools to collect and analyze relevant quality data along the PDCA cycle.

The **direct outcome** of the assignment is the establishment of a robust quality assurance system for non-training capacity development services.

The **system boundaries** of the assignment are defined by the PDCA cycle for a given institutional-level capacity development service, from Planning and Doing the assignment through to Checking outputs and emerging outcomes and later Analyzing impact.

The **scope** of the assignment is limited to institutional-level capacity development services, or Business-to-Business (B2B) interactions between the Centre and its institutional clients. B2B linkages between the Centre and a donor to fund training activities for a third party are outside the scope of analysis.

The **methodology** for this report was jointly designed by the TDIR and the QA Officer, i.e. a mix of interviews with Programme Managers of ITCILO, in-depth study of primary and secondary sources, as well as benchmarking the QA architecture against comparable training centers and consulting firms.

Recommendations

- Build on existing professional QA architecture for non-training services

- Complement QA architecture with elements of TQM and IMS

- Follow the PDCA cycle for introducing additional concrete tools and instruments for non-training services

- Utilize set of QA tools and instruments on a regular basis (by default instead of ad-hoc basis)

- Introduce one or several KPI for non-training services on the level of outcomes and / or impact

- Create and introduce clear and binding terminology for non-training services

- Revise taxonomy of non-training services in MAP and introduce at least 4 types and clear definitions of services with 2 respective sub-categories for Training Material and Media Development and a separation of advisory services into Technical Advisory Services and Project Management Services

- Introduce a binding standard for entitling non-training services for better and more transparent understanding in MAP, aggregated reports, and potential replication of CD services for new clients. For ease of reference as well as internal and external communication it is recommended to introduce a revised categorization of institutional capacity development services.

The recommendation is to precisely define what services categories ITCILO wants to provide and communicate and introduce at least 4 types and clear definitions with a separation of advisory services into technical advisory services and project management services, possibly based on either accounting requirements and / or on the actual content of provided services:

C - Training material development (print and digital)

D - Media Development (external clients)

E - Technical advisory services

F - Project management services

It is recommended that the responsible Programme (s) for individual services draft transparent definitions for each category. Also, naming an activity should follow a certain prescribed standard to allow for an easier understanding of each title.

1　Background

1.1　Strategic Context

The International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITCILO), commonly called the "Centre") is the training arm of the ILO, the specialized agency of the United Nations which promotes social justice and human rights in the world of work. The Centre delivers training, learning and capacity development services to governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and other national and international partners, in support of decent work and sustainable development.

The Strategic Plan of the ITCILO 2018-21 outlines the strategy of the Centre. It has been framed in the broader context of the ILO's Strategic Plan for the period 2018-21 and the ILO's Programme and Budget for 2018-19.

The plan builds on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Centre's 2012-15 Strategic Plan and the Centre's 2016-17 Transitional Strategic Plan and Programme and Budget.

The plan outlines the strategy framework guiding the Centre over four years. The document should be read in conjunction with the Programme and Budget of the Centre with information about the activities planned for the current biennium.

Accordingly, the plan envisions the Centre to be a sustainable training institution that is effective in the pursuit of its development mandate of promoting Decent Work and Social Justice through capacity-building support while meeting its financial needs and complying with international standards of good governance. The vision is rooted in the idea of an evolutionary organization that continuously adapts to a complex world. The vision explicitly provides room for growth driven by competitive spin along the axis of three interlinked and mutually reinforcing dimensions of organizational performance: technical performance, financial performance and institutional performance.

The outlook for 2021 is that economic, ecological and health concerns will continue to put pressure on institutional partners and individual learners to opt for digital-learning and collaboration solutions. The transformation of the Centre's service portfolio is therefore set to continue and the "new normal" could be a portfolio resting on two equally important pillars: training and advisory services. Through this more diversified service portfolio, the Centre will be in a stronger position to spread operational risk and to unlock further growth potential, particularly in the field of digital learning and collaboration.
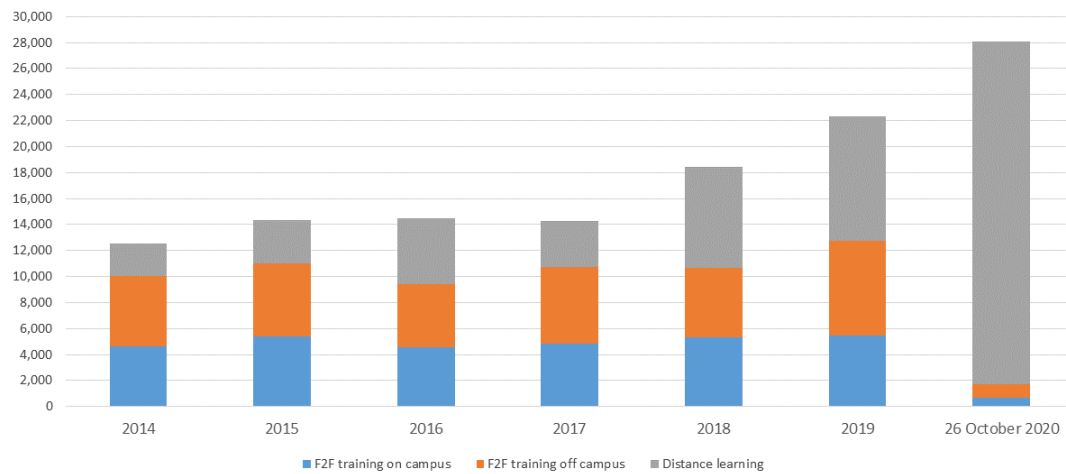
1.2 Operational Context

In line with the 2019 ILO capacity development strategy, the capacity development services of the Centre group into three categories: individual-level capacity development, institutional-level capacity development and system-level capacity development. The principal means of the Centre to build individual-level capacity is training, delivered online or face-to-face. To build institutional-level capacity, the Centre offers technical advisory services, training material development and media development support to ILO constituents and other intermediaries with a mandate to promote Decent Work. To strengthen system-level capacity, the Centre facilitates dialogue activities and knowledge management services.

Typology of the capacity development services of the Centre				
Type	Immediate Objective	Direct beneficiary	Means of action	Immediate outcome
Individual capacity development	To strengthen the delivery capacity of an individual	More likely technical experts	Mostly group training Knowledge dissemination Policy dialogue Advocacy	Increased functional and technical skills, resulting in improved individual performance
Institutional capacity development	To strengthen the delivery capacity of an organization	More likely line managers and senior managers	Mostly advisory services Media development support Some group training IT solutions	Improved institutional capacity to operate in a sustainable manner across the three performance dimensions distinguished in the ITCILO sustainability framework
System-level capacity development	To strengthen the "holding capacity" of the eco-system within which organizations and individuals operate	Mostly policy-level representatives	Policy dialogue Knowledge dissemination Advocacy Sometimes advisory services Rarely group training	A more enabling policy, legal and regulatory environment

The preparation of this report fell in the time when the Centre witnessed a shift from its previous main emphasis in the service portfolio on individual level capacity de-

Number of participants by type of training (2014 - Oct 2020)

Number of participants by type of training (2014 - 26 Oct 2020)

F2F training on campus ■ F2F training off campus ■ Distance learning

Source: MAP and eCampus. For 2014-2017, blended learning participants are included in face-to-face training on/off campus. For 2018 – 2020 the number of distance learners is included.

Activities involving group training ■ Training material development ■ Advisory services ■ Media development

Source: MAP. Media development activities started to be recorded in MAP in early 2016, with the introduction of the new MAP.

The growth and diversification of the service portfolio of the Centre in the field of institutional-level and system-level capacity development services puts the quality assurance system of the organization to the test. The quality assurance system is supposed to build on the architecture for quality management systems proposed by the International Standards Organization, with a series of quality checks performed

along the Plan-Do-Check-Analyze cycle for learning service providers outside formal education systems (ISO 29993).

This report aims to strengthen the operational capacity of the Office of the Director Training (TDIR) to quality-assure institutional-level and system-level capacity development advisory services of the Centre, by way of introducing processes and tools to collect and analyze relevant quality data along the PDCA cycle. The report will show ways towards a more robust quality assurance system for non-training capacity development services. Basis for the recommendations is the PDCA cycle for a given institutional-level capacity development service, from Planning and Doing the assignment through to Checking outputs and emerging outcomes and later Analyzing impact. The report limits suggestions to institutional-level capacity development services, or Business-to-Business (B2B) interactions between the Centre and its institutional clients. B2B linkages between the Centre and a donor to fund training activities for a third party are outside the scope of report.

1.3 Quality and Quality Assurance

Until recently, the purpose of quality assurance was debated along its possibly conflicting functions of accountability versus improvement. It was and sometimes still is argued that accountability and improvement are mutually exclusive since there is a conflict in terms of method between them. However, this report will make the point that accountability and quality improvement may be combined in a balanced way. ITCILO already provides for such a quality assurance architecture which aims at continuously improving upon quality in the field of training services with a set of appropriate procedures, tools, and practice.

In addition, with the Strategic Plan of the ITCILO for 2018-2021, the Centre is in the process to refine its monitoring and evaluation system to verify the outputs, outcomes and impact of its capacity-building efforts. The Centre will continue to track in-house customer satisfaction rates (input level) and new knowledge acquisition rates (output level).

To that end, the Centre regularly commissions annual external and independent evaluations to verify whether the newly acquired knowledge is applied by former training participants (outcome level) and eventually results in a contribution to the promotion of Decent Work (impact level).

Aiming to add to the functional existing systems, this report is hoping to contribute towards consolidating the existing QA system towards full compliance of the Centre with the ISO standard 29993 for learning service providers outside formal education, and where applicable ISO 20700 for consultancy service providers.

The objective is to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Director Training (TDIR) to quality-assure institutional-level and system-level capacity development advisory services of the Centre, by way of introducing processes and tools to collect and analyze relevant quality data along the PDCA cycle. The direct outcome of the

report are recommendations towards a more robust quality assurance system for non-training capacity development services.

The starting point for discussing recommendations is a definition of quality and quality assurance. Defining quality in most institutions seems to be clear and easy to do. Quality management is already harder to define, especially in the case of advisory services as those of ITCILO because services do not have such generally common, more easily measurable, and comparable features like a training products. To make it more challenging, there is no single best way to manage, assess, and evaluate the quality of advisory services.

Quality can be defined in several ways which will then serve as the measuring stick for evaluating service delivery. The 3 most common dimensions for defining quality are:

(1)   compliance with standards

(2)   satisfaction of the demands of clients

(3)   acceptable rate of price and costs

Unpacking the 3 more general dimensions reveals more criteria which help to understand, manage, and assure the quality of services. Research shows that the most important dimension for advisory services is reliability because it will create customer satisfaction the best:

(1)   Reliability involves consistency of performance and dependability

(2)   Responsiveness concerns the willingness of staff to provide service

(3)   Competence means required skills and knowledge to perform the service

(4)   Access involves approachability and ease of contact

(5)   Courtesy involves politeness, respect, consideration, of contact staff

(6)   Communication means keeping customers informed

(7)   Credibility involves trustworthiness, believability, and customer's interests

(8)   Understanding the client's needs

There are many definitions for advisory services but two main approaches are

(a) with a functional view, i.e. any form of providing help on the content, process or structure of a task or series of tasks, where the service provider is not actually responsible for doing the task itself but is helping those who are or

(b) an approach for advisory services as a professional service when any time a professional is trying to change or improve a situation or a system but has no direct control over the implementation.

In both definitions service providers solve problems and help manage the change within an organization. Problems can be "hard" or "soft". Soft problems are typically harder to solve, the system boundaries are harder to define and the process to solve them is typically unknown. Hard problems are much easier to define: these are limited problems with known resources and predefined objectives. Specialists for advisory services have certain roles solving any of these problems.

Clients usually choose their service providers based on the following:

(1)   Integrity and professional ethics the service provider

(2)   Professional competence

(3)   Problem solving approach

(4)   Capacity to deliver on time

(5)   Ability to deploy resources

(6)   Consultant's image and reputation

In the case of ITCILO, the Centre benefits from a comparative advantage as it is part of the UN family with well-known procurement regulations and in addition a defined group of well-known constituents as clients for which ITCILO is expected to deliver services as part of the mandate.

But in any case, managing quality remains important because of the fact that clients of ITCILO can usually not see the effect let alone the impact of provided services immediately. One way for ITCILO to continuously improve quality is to work with the above dimensions of quality in mind but certainly is not a guarantee for achieving the desired effect or impact of an advisory project. One element of quality is the technical side which conforms with technical standards. Most service providers meet the requirements for technical quality but customers may still not be satisfied with the advisory service provided.

Service providers can use several tools and instruments to measure quality of services and customer satisfaction in regard to outcomes and impacts. Most commonly used are customer surveys to measure the satisfaction and identify problematic aspects in the service delivery from planning to implementing. In agile processes, a continuous feedback loop minimizes sub-optimal results of advisory services. But while agility is the current catch phrase for many advisory service providers and customers alike, in market reality very few processes are actually designed let alone executed in a truly agile fashion. Once a client comprehends the underlying logic of an agile design for implementing an advisory service, most will refrain from the seemingly less linear and target-oriented. Most clients still prefer a one-

dimensional traditional process design with pre-defined objectives, milestones, and timelines.

The following graph shows a proto-typical iterative agile process for delivering an advisory service for achieving sustainable outcomes and impacts. When considering the complexity of organizational structure, strategy, existing processes, and culture of the client and the prevailing context, additional stakeholders, and system boundaries it becomes clear that few clients are willing or understanding to proceed with a multi-dimensional process for delivering advisory services. Empirical evidence shows however, that agile processes produce a better sustainability and measurable impact of advisory services.

Sustainable outcomes and impact

Context, Stakeholders, System Boundaries
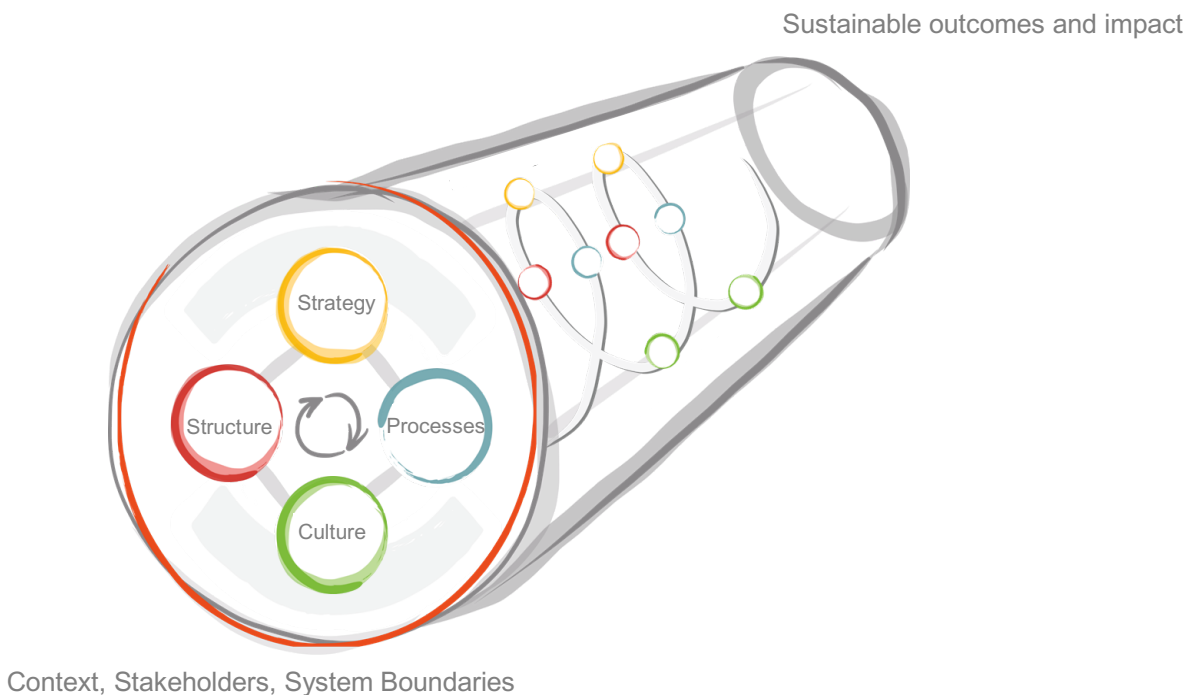
An agile process can produce better sustainability and measurable impact in comparison to linear processes. However, certain aspects would need to be structured, discussed and agreed with the customer of the services, and followed-up throughout the process accordingly. When doing so, the quality of an advisory service can be measured through an agile continuous feedback loop as follows:

Phase 1: Joint discussion with customer to understand and define in writing:

- Strategic and operational context of customer
- Stakeholders, enablers, obstacles, challenges (both internal and external)
- Organizational culture
- Vision, mission, and operational objectives
- Current strategy to achieve objectives
- Current organizational structure and processes to achieve objectives

Phase 2: Definition of objectives of advisory services:

- Desired contribution of services to strategy and operational objectives
- System boundaries of advisory services
- Overall timeframe
- Decision makers
- Task managers
- Other involved specialists

Phase 3: Iterative implementation of advisory services:

- Monthly (at least) project meetings to assess progress of process steps, achievements, and encountered challenges
- Revision of validity of objectives of advisory services
- Revision of process steps and decision of required changes
- Revision of suitability of decision makers, task managers, involved specialists both from customer and provider of advisory services
- Identification of game changing parameters (see Phase 1)

It is obvious that such an agile process is most likely more time consuming during implementation as originally planned process steps might be cancelled, modified, or replaced during Phase 3. However, an open and transparent discussion among stakeholders of the overall process will lead to a slowly evolving way of the advisory services addressing the actually required changes much more adequately. These changes might be different from what the customer originally envisaged.

In addition, a customer would actively have to participate in such a process by contributing additional resources (specialists, decision makers) through the implementation process.

In contrast to the iterative way of an agile process, the more conventional way to assess the quality of the delivery of advisory services can be assured by using a linear "total or integrated quality management system" with a process standard such as ISO 9001.

With the latest modification of ISO 9001:2015 there are seven quality management principles which most QA systems utilize as basis for one of the many modified approaches towards delivering service quality:

(1) Customer focus

(2) Leadership

(3) Engagement of people

(4) Process approach

(5) Improvement

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(6)   Evidence-based decision making

(7)   Relationship management.

Using these basic principles can help to ensure that an organization operates on the basis of available and actual data analysis (but does not guarantee it).

There is no single proposed scenario to make use of these 7 QA principles in a QA approach. But learning from the good practice and experience of other organizations having integrated these principles in their QA might lay the basis for designing a suitable QA process for ITCILO. Accordingly, the advisory service would follow a structured, transparent, linear process approach to:

- Understand the needs of the Customer and align the advisory service accordingly - versus selling readily available standardized services and aligning the customer's needs to the available service (s).

- Define clear roles for the implementation of the advisory services - Versus unclear or frequently changing roles and responsibilities during project implementation.

- Actively involving different levels and target groups of the customer's management and staff during project implementation - versus focusing on the nominated decision maker and / or task manager only.

- Introducing clear and measurable milestones for the overall process – versus delivering results towards the end of the process.

- Introducing quantitative and qualitative indicators to show improvements stemming from the advisory services - versus delivering solely an advisory service without links to the operational objectives of the customer.

- Introducing a system to compile data throughout the process as basis for evidence-based decision making for the customer - versus the tendency to use "pet projects / processes" of either customer or provider of the advisory services as basis for decision making.

- Introducing a relationship management system ("post-sales") with which a continuous communication with previous customers ensures that the provided advisory services (a) continue to produce the originally intended results (b) required modifications can be addressed swiftly (c) additional services can be identified and turned into new business opportunities.

The above process would be documented at the very beginning and verified (in particular achievement of milestones) throughout the implementation process and handed over to the customer. This is typically called a "process documentation handbook", ensuring for the customer that all process steps have been (a) implemented and (b) can be replicated at any time.

2 Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

2.1 Purpose

The overall objective of the assignment is to contribute towards full compliance of the Centre with the ISO standard 29993 for learning service providers outside formal education, and possibly ISO 2070 (for consultancy service providers). The immediate objective is to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Director Training (TDIR) to quality-assure institutional-level and system-level capacity development advisory services of the Centre, by way of introducing processes and tools to collect and analyze relevant quality data along the PDCA cycle. The direct outcome of the assignment is a more robust quality assurance system for non-training capacity development services.

Currently, ITCILO compiles all non-training services together with the training services in a structured data management system called Management of Activities and Participants (MAP) to capture activity code, start and end date of activity, title, responsible Programme, revenue, and profit after cost.

In MAP, non-training services are clustered into 3 categories:

C - Training Material Development

D - Media Development

E - Advisory Services

However, this taxonomy does not fully align with the descriptions in more recent documents of ITCILO. Also, the individual titles of the assignments are not always self-explanatory and sometimes even seem haphazard when compared to the categories C, D, and E. Especially C-type and E-type activities are difficult to distinguish.

2.2 Scope of Evaluation

The scope of the assignment is limited to institutional-level capacity development services, or Business-to-Business (B2B) interactions between the Centre and its institutional clients. B2B linkages between the Centre and a donor to fund training activities for a third party are outside the scope of analysis.

The assignment covers the entire PDCA cycle for a given institutional-level capacity development service, from Planning and Doing the assignment through to Checking outputs and emerging outcomes and later Analyzing impact

In regard to specific activities, this report only covers C, D, and E activities of ITCILO.

2.3 Methodology

The methodology for this report was designed to ensure the main deliverable, i.e. a structured report to provide professional recommendations for the consolidation of the QA processes for ITCILO non-training capacity development services.

The methodology for this report was jointly designed by the TDIR and the QA Officer, i.e. a mix of interviews with Programme Managers of ITCILO, in-depth study of primary and secondary sources, as well as benchmarking the QA architecture against existing systems and approaches as well as comparable training centers and consulting firms.

Due to travel restrictions, the interviews were conducted via Skype with selected key informants from Programmes in the Training Department of the Centre.

Chronologically, the methodology followed 5 concrete steps:

Step 1 - Desk research

Step 2 - Interviews with involved experts in the Centre

Step 3 - Preparation of draft report

Step 4 - Management reply

Step 5 - Preparation of final report

2.4 Review of Implementation

The implementation of the evaluation was effected by the outbreak of COVID-19 and the corresponding travel restrictions imposed. Accordingly, all meetings and interviews planned to be conducted with stakeholders at the Centre had to be carried out with video calls:

- Step 1 - The desk review was carried out as planned, i.e. on the basis of provided and additional documents (see List of Reference Documents).

- Step 2 - The 9 in-depth interviews with the Director of Training, the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Officer, and several Programme Managers, who contributed to or carried out non-training activities were conducted from 2 - 21 December 2020 (see annex: List of Interviewees).

- Step 3 - The first draft report was prepared and submitted to ITCILO in December 2020.

- Step 4 - The draft evaluation report was discussed with the Director of Training and the QA Officer in January 2021.

- Step 5 - The final report was prepared and submitted to ITCILO by the end of January 2021.

3 QA framework for Providers of Institutional CD

This report has been carried out in the context of the provisions of the Strategic Plan of the ITCILO for 2018-21. Accordingly, the following recommendations were referenced and compared to the objectives and aims of the Strategic Plan which "envisions the Centre to be a sustainable training institution that is effective in the pursuit of its development mandate of promoting Decent Work and Social Justice through capacity-building support while meeting its financial needs and complying with international standards of good governance."

The Centre aims at being an "evolutionary organization that continuously adapts to a complex world. The vision explicitly provides room for growth driven by competitive spin along the axis of three interlinked and mutually reinforcing dimensions of organizational performance: technical performance, financial performance and institutional performance."

This chapter is (1) framing the exigencies of quality assurance within the field of institutional capacity development, (2) provides a description of a generic architecture of quality assurance framework for providers of institutional capacity development, leaning back on the corresponding ISO standards or another internationally recognized frameworks, (3) provides examples of global best practice in quality assurance of institutional capacity development services through other service providers with a similar mandate like ITCILO, and finally (4) suggests recommendations for a quality assurance framework for institutional capacity development services tailored to the Centre.

3.1   Architecture of QA framework for providers of institutional CD

The best way to attempt a description of a generic architecture of a quality assurance framework for providers of institutional capacity development is looking at existing ISO standards

ITCILO offers a range of institutional capacity development services modelled on the International Standards for learning service providers (ISO 29993) outside the formal education system. The ISO 29993 standard lists a series of tasks with specific requirements that need to be met at each step of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle in order to comply with international good practice in learning service delivery.

The ISO standard along with the PDCA cycle is an internationally recognized and utilized standard for training services which is being used in several modifications with a variety of wordings by different organizations but follows a rather identical logic.

For the QA process of ITCILO, especially Chapter 12 (assessment of learning) and Chapter 13 (monitoring and evaluation of the learning service) of the standard are

of relevance. ITCILO has integrated the requirements in the PDCA cycle for training services in full. Accordingly, ITCILO is fully in line with the requirements for a QA framework for providers of institutional CD.

The PDCA cycle

PLAN

Define,
Prepare
Document

Inputs   ACT   DO   Outputs

Evaluate,   Execute,
Correct   Record

Requirements   Satisfaction

CHECK

Measure,
Compare
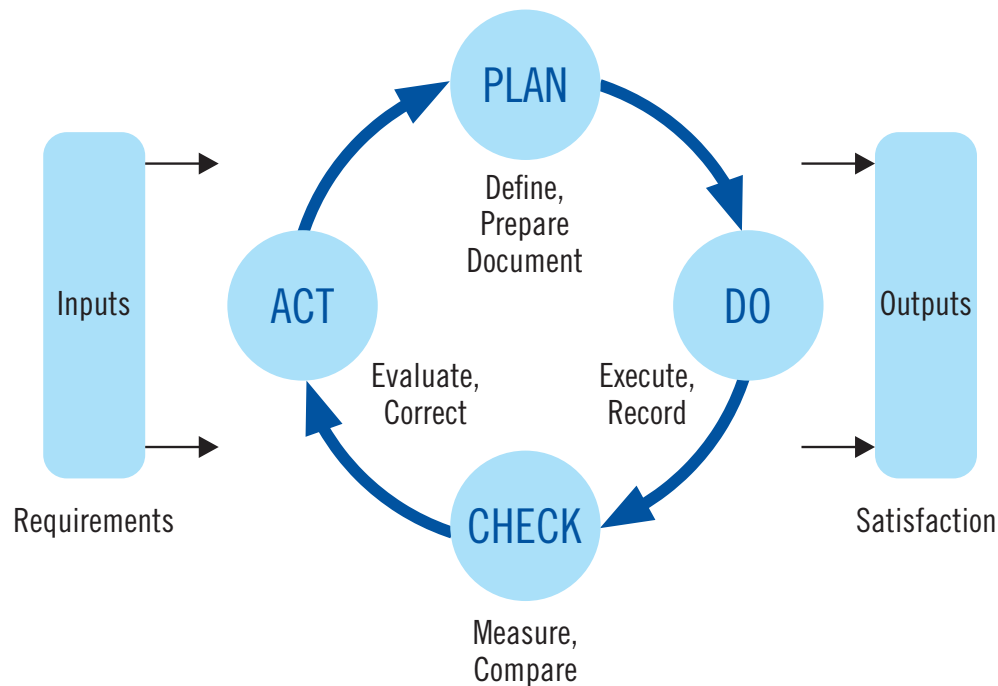
Also contributing to the understanding of quality assurance is ISO 21001 "Educational organizations - Management systems for educational organizations - Requirements with guidance for use" which promotes the adoption of a process approach when developing, implementing and improving the effectiveness of a quality management system, to enhance learner and other beneficiary satisfaction by meeting their requirements. ISO 21001 aims at supporting the understanding and managing of interrelated processes as a system contributes to the organization's effectiveness and efficiency in achieving its intended results. The approach enables the organization to control the interrelationships and interdependencies among the processes of the system, so that the overall performance of the organization can be enhanced. The process approach involves the systematic definition and management of processes, and their interactions, so as to achieve the intended results in accordance with the policy, objectives and strategic plan of the organization.

When it comes to quality assurance for advisory services, another standard of relevance to be taken into consideration is ISO 20700 which is a guideline for management consultancy services. The relevant parts of the 7 chapters of the standard prescribe principles, contracting, execution, and closure.

However, more interesting is what the standard does not prescribe or only touches upon without going into detail, i.e. project management, ethical behavior, risk

management, business continuity, quality management, safety, and sustainability. For the benefit of ITCILO the ISO 20700 can serve as a basis for the delivery of advisory services, but less so for designing a QA architecture.

3.2   Global best practice in QA

Quality management and quality assurance have become the topic of theoretical and practical debate among dozens, if not hundreds, of academics and management service providers alike. Interestingly enough, when looking at the substantial differences of the different schools, architecture, and specific approaches towards QM or QA little strategic or methodological dispute can be identified. Strategically, a QM/QA system can either be re-active or pro-active. Methodologically, it can either be modular or integrated. In practice, a good number of interested parties "sell" little differences in substance as major new developments while they are none.

What can safely be stated is, that many organizations and companies in the sector of management advisory services have developed total quality management (TQM) systems in recent years to provide for a more comprehensive approach which aim at integrating as many quality challenges as possible. A definition of this internationally widely used framework for quality assurance describes TQM as a management approach to long-term success through a focus on customer satisfaction. This framework is defined as an incremental improvement process rather than a fixed system. In a TQM effort, all members of an organization participate in improving processes, services, and the culture in which they work. However, there is no internationally agreed standard for TQM, let alone a uniform name for the framework and the underlying improvement process. Digitization of (selected) processes has become a trend for TQM systems.

Alternatively, a good number of other organizations are developing and adopting Integrated Management Systems (IMS) which aim at combining all aspects of an organization's systems, processes and standards into one holistic system. An IMS allows an organization to address all elements of the management system as a whole by avoiding multiple management systems. IMS would also avoid having several standards in one organization but aim at streamlining processes along the same standards where applicable. An IMS allows these processes to be combined so that they simultaneously cover all standard-specific requirements. IMS would also utilize digital solutions if and when applicable for reasons of efficiency.

Both TQM and IMS are generic in principle and designed individually for the purpose of a specific organization in line with its objectives, values, and organizational challenges. Organizations can get certified for certain process standards for the quality management architecture they apply, e.g. the process standard ISO 9001:2015 which defines a standardized Quality Management System (QMS). ISO 9001 evaluates whether the existing QMS is appropriate and effective, while forcing the organization to continuously identify and implement improvements. These "corrective actions" become mandatory for an organization to maintain its ISO certified process.

All of the above architectures indicate a certain trend, at least when it comes to naming quality frameworks, i.e. moving from the term quality "assurance" and towards the term quality "management". At the same time some proponents push for the term QA which for them indicates a stronger commitment than QM.

In any case, the architectures of TQM and IMS are structurally based on but also go beyond the ISO 20700 standard for providing management consultancy and advisory services. ISO 20700 serves as a basic guideline for the delivery of the services but does not allow for building a comprehensive architecture as such. But without prescribing any specific methodology, the ISO standard does allow for and recommends ongoing evaluations and improvements "to assess and determine the effectiveness of the assignment" to:

- Diagnose the effectiveness of the assignment

- Make recommendations for corrective action

- Implement new processes and methods

- Provide and receive feedback from provider and client

- And evaluate added value.

It is fair to say that the PDCA cycle of ISO 29993 already reflects that general recommendation of ISO 20700 but does not add any more detail or value to the existing QA system at ITCILO with its series of quality checks performed along the PDCA cycle.

Also, when trying to compare international service providers with a similar mandate like ITCILO to establish a best practice it becomes obvious that there are not many. On the one hand several countries maintain government-financed "foreign service schools" with a very narrow individual capacity development mandate, but hardly any other bilateral or multilateral organization features a specialized individual and institutional capacity development organization with a similar mandate like ITCILO. The foreign service schools in place are typically designed to address individual capacity development needs, not institutional ones. On the other hand, there are half a dozen private international management consultancy firms and hundreds of small- to medium-sized management advisory firms which address institutional capacity development needs which they typically call organizational development or organizational re-engineering, but typically not with a view to achieve long term impact on an institution but rather short- and possibly medium-term effects on operational performance improvement to be measured by business development indicators like return on investment. Still, more progressive for profit organizations show a trend of measuring and assessing quality and performance in a more comprehensive way which is then called a "balanced scorecard" but not applicable for ITCILO with a non-for-profit mandate.

Neither of the above two groups can compare with ITCILO with its specific mandate for individual and institutional capacity development services for a specific target

group of defined constituents. The objectives of the two groups above are too narrow or too business-oriented to properly compare with ITCILO's not-for-profit mandate and multi-service approach for CD.

Possibly, one organization with a similar mandate and approach like ITCILO to deserve a closer look is the Academy for International Cooperation (AIZ) of the Germany Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) in Bonn, Germany. The original mandate is clearly identical with ITCILO, i.e. individual capacity development. And, not surprisingly, the quality assurance framework of AIZ follows the same logic as the PDCA cycle even though the organization does not refer to ISO 29993 in its strategic and operational documents. But AIZ does not hold a mandate for institutional or system-level capacity development and, thus, has not matured into an multi-service organization like ITCILO. The approach of AIZ rather aims at only indirectly impacting on institutions and system-level development by training individuals to carry out their work in projects abroad by providing impulses towards CD changes on both levels. As a result, this organization can also not be benchmarked against ITCILO when it comes to institutional capacity development.

3.3 Recommendations for a QA framework tailored to ITCILO

It is recommended to follow the existing and tested QA framework of ITCILO in line with ISO 29993 also for the evaluation process of institutional capacity development services. The corresponding PDCA cycle adequately mirrors the 4 required stages for providing both individual and institutional capacity development services.

Furthermore and in line with the international trend of applying "holistic" or "integrated" management systems to an organization, the question then arises what elements of the QA architecture ITCILO already has in place for individual level **training services** could possibly be utilized for assessing quality and impact of institutional level **non-training** services to avoid parallel or even competing QA systems, tools, and processes.

The following table "List of tools currently in use by ITCILO to quality assure CD services" allows for a structured overview of tools and instruments of the QA architecture for training services which clearly shows how substantial, robust and sound the Centre evaluates individual-level capacity development services.

At the same time, the table shows that ITCILO is up to now missing suitable tools and instruments to do the same for institutional-level capacity development services at least for the stages of planning and checking. Chapter 4 will make recommendations for recommended, suitable tools and instruments to allow for quality assurance for non-training services in line with the PDCA cycle.

List of tools currently in use by ITCILO to quality assure CD services

Evaluation tool	Training services	Non-training services
Stage of PDCA cycle: PLAN		
• Google analytics • Mouseflow • Website fine-tuning	• Monitoring of website traffic, including user behavior metrics (like no of visitors, length of session and no of pages per session, bounce rates), audience metrics (like demographics), level of mobile friendliness etc. • Tuning of search engine functions in response to website traffic	
• Sugar CRM • Official Social Media channels monitoring	• Monitoring outreach of / response rate to CRM campaigns run by Technical Programmes • Monitoring of social media traffic, in response to social media outreach campaigns run in-house or commissioned from external service providers	
Stage of PDCA cycle: DO		
• satisfaction surveys (Eval system) • Survey-monkey	• Online customer satisfaction surveys (end-of-activity questionnaires using the online Eval system)	• Online stakeholder survey on behalf of institutional clientsper
Stage of PDCA cycle: CHECK		
• eCampus	• Online tests and quizzes during training	
	• Progress bars monitoring course implementation rate	
	• End of activity online knowledge assessment tests (Post-KAT)	
• participant panels	• Follow-up participant panels six months after treatment	
• Annual external evaluation	• External evaluations of knowledge application rates and emerging impact at least one year after training, including online surveys, tracer studies and focus group discussions	
Stage of PDCA cycle: ACT		
• Statistics	• Publication of learner statistics in annual reports and website articles	• Assignment-specific assessment reports
	• The Centre has also set up an in-house digital management information dashboard linked to the e-campus and drawing real-time on data about learners to monitor progress against key performance indicators like learner outreach, customer satisfaction rates, knowledge acquisition rates and knowledge application rates. (IBI)	• Annual reports with aggregated data on advisory services

Especially when it comes to measuring impact of individual-level training services, ITCILO features a state-of-the-art, scientifically based, comprehensive evaluation methodology. Based on the "New World Kirkpatrick Model", ITCILO assesses the results of trainings on 4 levels:

- Level 1 - Customer satisfaction
- Level 2 - New knowledge acquisition as a direct result of the training
- Level 3 - Behavioral change following the training
- Level 4 - Performance improvement and impact

Level 1 can be described as a standard post-training questionnaire to measure the quality of organization and content as perceived by participants at the time of the conclusion of the training itself. The questionnaire collects information on the immediate reaction of the participants after the training and provides feedback for future improvement of training design and organization. In turn, the questionnaire is one of the Centre's quality assurance tools at input level.

Level 2 is a true innovation of ITCILO: the Centre's Knowledge Acquisition Tests (KAT). The objective of the KAT is to effectively measure results and progress and the extent of new knowledge acquisition as a direct result of a standard training. The KAT aims to verify the knowledge acquisition rate of participants.

Level 3 is addressing behavioral change of learners by assessing their behavior following the courses, specifically on their application of the knowledge acquired through the training. This level of evaluation provides qualitative information on the immediate learning outcome and impact potential of the Centre's learning services. For standard training activities, the key performance indicator at this level is change in learners' behavior at work, as an immediate outcome of the training. To collect data for the changes, the Centre organizes so-called participant panels for selected activities, between six and nine months following the training. The panel may be organized either in person or via video conference. The participant panels take the format of focus group discussion, with facilitation by an evaluation expert, with or without the presence of the course team, pending on the organization of each activity. The focus group discussions are based on guiding questions like "to what extent have knowledge and skills acquired through the training been applied in your work?". The results obtained from these questions during participant panels are presented in a qualitative format, including examples, stories, content and discourse analysis. The results are analyzed and included in the participant panel report.

In total, the design and implementation of the Training Department's 4-level evaluation methodology with the KAT as center piece is state of the art. In comparison to other training centers this evaluation methodology can even be considered best practice.

Constituents of ILO rightly demand measurable impact towards the decent work agenda. It is clear that the Training Department with its comprehensive and stringent evaluation approach professionally assesses the impact of **training** activities by Level 3 and Level 4 of the Centre's evaluation methodology.

In turn, the QA process for **non-training** services would also need to compile qualitative information on the immediate outcome and impact of the Centre's services.

An adapted version of the "New World Kirkpatrick Model" can very well serve as an evaluation methodology for non-training services.

The Centre can set and aim for achieving a similar key performance indicator (KPI), i.e. the change in the clients institutional performance as an immediate outcome of the delivered service. To measure this, clients should be asked after a 6 to 12 months incubation period for the emerged impacts, for example:

(a) to what extent have systems, materials, tools provided through the service been actually been applied and used in the institution

(b) to what extent has the performance of the institution improved as a result of their application of the service provided.

For the data collection of (a) it is recommended to design an online questionnaire in line with the process steps of the agile or linear process design as basic information. The results of this questionnaire will be more of a quantitative nature as replies can be ticked in a yes / no format. The advantage is that only representatives of the customer are required to reply and they can easily and quickly fill such an online questionnaire. The KPI would be designed in way of e.g. "percentage of provided tools used in (daily) operations of customer".

For the data collection of (b) a wider perspective is required, i.e. because the target group / beneficiaries of the customer will have to be addressed to actually assess the performance improvement thanks to the advisory services of ITCILO. In turn, a more qualitative methodology is required to produce tangible data, e.g. a focus group discussions or bilateral interviews with beneficiaries.

4   Products, Approaches, and Tools for a QA System

4.1   Programmes involved with non-training services

Before analyzing the non-training service products, it is worthwhile to get a basic understanding of the organizational set up of who is providing what services.

The Centre's operational arm is managed by the Director of Training who is over-seeing 9 Programmes with different thematic and operational responsibilities.

In principal, all 9 Programmes are or can be involved in designing and implementing non-training advisory services. But it became clear during the interviews and prep-aration of the report that the design and delivery of non-training services is mostly provided by the Learning Innovation Programme (LIP). Other Programmes with re-peated and direct involvement with non-training services are the Programme for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP), Programme for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), and the Enterprise, Microfinance, and Local Development Programme (EMLDP).

4.2   Definition of capacity development services and target groups

What became apparent during the analysis of documents and when conducting the interviews is a rather interchangeable use of different terms for non-training ser-vices. While some Programme representatives might call them advisory services, others might refer to them as non-training services. Also, different documents of the ILO and ITCILO are using different terms.

Therefore, before taking a closer look at what non-training service products ITCILO is currently providing a clarification of the terms and its context seems justified. Training and non-training services are part of the capacity development approach of ILO. The ILO has adopted capacity development in its particular tripartite context. For the ILO, capacity development is a process through which individuals, organi-zations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities required to set and achieve their development objectives over time.

Generally speaking, capacity development is conceived as a long-term investment whose benefits and impact may only become apparent in the medium and long run. According to the ILO, capacity development can be implemented in several ways. While training is a common approach, capacity development is best achieved through learning-by-doing, fostering relationships and partnerships, supporting re-search and knowledge- sharing, participation in communities of practice, South-South learning initiatives, on-the-job training, and other learning techniques that em-power individuals and institutions to take charge of development challenges.

The ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development from 2019 goes further in distinguishing "three mutually reinforcing and interdependent levels of capacity

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development: individual, organizational, and resulting from the enabling environment which are intertwined in the "triple helix" of ILO's CD initiatives. The first means increasing the skills and abilities of individuals; the second focuses on increasing the capacity of organizations to fulfil their mandates; and the third involves improvements in policies, legislation, regulations, labor-market institutions, and societal systems.

ITCILO's 2018-21 strategy framework and the 2019 ILO capacity development strategy broadened the mandate to organizational-level capacity development, with focus on organizations representing the ILO constituency and explicit reference to national and regional-level training institutions that might act as national and regional partners. The ITCILO Programme and Budget for 2020-21 has further extended the Centre's mandate to encompass system-level capacity development services to facilitate a more enabling environment for the promotion of the Decent Work agenda.

The official typology (see table) of the Centre's capacity development services aims to categorize 3 types of CD services with immediate objectives, direct beneficiaries, corresponding means of action, and immediate outcomes. In practice, training and non-training services often combine in capacity development service packages.

Typology of the capacity development services of the Centre				
Type	Immediate Objective	Direct beneficiary	Means of action	Immediate outcome
Individual capacity development	To strengthen the delivery capacity of an individual	More likely technical experts	Mostly group training Knowledge dissemination Policy dialogue Advocacy	Increased functional and technical skills, resulting in improved individual performance
Institutional capacity development	To strengthen the delivery capacity of an organization	More likely line managers and senior managers	Mostly advisory services Media development support Some group training IT solutions	Improved institutional capacity to operate in a sustainable manner across the three performance dimensions distinguished in the ITCILO sustainability framework
System-level capacity development	To strengthen the "holding capacity" of the eco-system within which organizations and individuals operate	Mostly policy-level representatives	Policy dialogue Knowledge dissemination Advocacy Sometimes advisory services Rarely group training	A more enabling policy, legal and regulatory environment

While the typology aims at clarifying type and level of CD service an alternative suggestion might be discussed, i.e. the (contractual) relationship of ITCILO with the

Going even one step further and selecting the appropriate classification for ITCILO as a non-for-profit organization one could also think of the more adequate terms of Organization to Participant (O2P) and Organization to Organization (O2O). In either case, the notion of ITCILO providing CD services for a "beneficiary" seems a bit outdated carrying the connotation of "handing out a service". Instead it is recommended to discuss the idea of creating the understanding of a professional relationship between two equally interested parties for supplying and demanding CD services.

For internal purposes ITCILO classifies different types of activities as A, B, C, D, or E activities and compiles them in the Management of Activities and Participants (MAP) data bank. ITCILO is also using a "P" type code for coding projects under which a group of "A", "C" and / or "E" activities belonging to the same project can be grouped for easy reference and management in MAP.

ITCILO relies on training for individual capacity development and classifies these activities as A activities (face-to-face training, blended learning, and distance learning). Since 2020 and the outbreak of COVID-19, distance learning activities have skyrocketed in comparison to face-to-face activities.

For institutional and system-level capacity development, ITCILO classifies activities into categories C (training material development), D (media development), and E (advisory services). In close conjunction to the developments for A-type activities in 2020, demand for C, D, and E also exploded. While the peak in 2020 is understandable, it is unlikely that this development will reverse completely. Rather, a new understanding and appreciation of C, D, and E-type activities will most likely remain even after the outbreak of COVID-19 is under control.

In turn, it is justified to take a closer look at the quality assurance system for C, D, E-type activities.

4.3   Activities for institutional-level capacity development

The typology of CD services shows that the Centre's **institutional-level** capacity development services include advisory services, media development support, and training material development. ITCILO further breaks advisory services down into technical advisory services and project management services.

Technical advisory services of comprised advice on organizational sustainability and competitiveness strategies, portfolio management, new product development, training needs analysis, staff training, gender audits, monitoring and evaluation of learning services, learning-service marketing, learning technology and learning applications. In the wake of COVID-19, demand for digital-learning and collaboration solutions increased. Concrete examples of assignments are the provision of Digital Customer Relationship Management solutions or digital learning portfolio management support for regional- level training institutes.

Project management tasks relate to the coordination, facilitation and backstopping of an overarching initiative. Larger examples managed by the Centre are a public-procurement management training initiative, a social economy development project, or a sustainable-business-in-global-supply-chains project.

The media development unit in the Learning Innovation Programme delivers digital media and design services for institutional clients as well as for internal assignments, including the development of promotional materials, layout of online learning platforms and documents, as well as maintaining the Centre's institutional website and social media platforms.

Training material development services for external clients was formerly a niche market for the Centre, but this activity has registered exponential growth in 2020 on the back of fast-growing demand for the digitization of existing training materials and the development of new digital products. In the wake of travel restrictions under COVID-19, the focus has shifted away from the development of materials in print format to the development of e-learning modules or complete multi-module e-learning courses for institutional clients.

4.4 Availability and suitability of QA tools currently used by ITCILO

While ITCILO features a comprehensive, state-of-the-art set of tools to quality assure each of the 4 stages of the PDCA cycle in regard to **training services**, the number of existing tools for **non-training services** only covers 2 of 4 stages with most elements not being available (n.a.).

For easy reference the following table shows all 4 stages and the corresponding actions for each stage as well as the currently used tools by ITCILO. Only 3 of the 9 actions currently feature an evaluation tool for non-training services.

Stage of PDCA cycle	Tools for non-training services
(1) PLAN	
Define	n.a.
Prepare	n.a.
Document	n.a.
(2) DO	
Execute	n.a.
Record	Online institutional capacity self-assessments
(3) CHECK	
Measure	n.a.
Compare	n.a.
(4) ACT	
Evaluate	Assignment-specific assessment reports
Correct	Annual reports with aggregated data on advisory services

When analyzing the suitability and effectiveness of the existing tools 2 of 3 seem to be well placed already:

ITCILO already uses an online institutional capacity self-assessment through a survey-monkey questionnaire to record the satisfaction with outputs towards desired outcomes and impacts.

Similarly the assignment-specific assessment reports are a suitable way to individually assess and evaluate the service delivery.

When it comes to the annual reports with aggregated data on advisory services the question arises if corrective action can derived from aggregated data for rather specific designs for assignments.

But overall, the tools are only utilized on an ad-hoc basis or demand basis for non-training services. This is clearly not enough to match the professional approach and set of tools already in place for assuring the quality of training services.

The challenge for ITCILO therefore is two-fold, i.e. there are currently not enough tools to assess quality and the ones in place are not being used systematically enough to generate reliable data for the two main purposes of a QA architecture: accountability and quality improvement.

4.5   Alignment with proposed QA framework

When considering recommendations for concrete actions to better structure and align existing practices and to introduce additional tools and instruments in line with the quality assurance framework recommended above two paramount objectives are in focus: generating data for accountability and for quality improvement.

Constituents of ILO rightly demand measurable impact towards the decent work agenda. To that end, ITCILO is utilizing a comprehensive and structured QA architecture with tools and instruments to professionally assesses the outcomes and impact of **training services** through Level 3 and Level 4 of the Centre's evaluation methodology.

In turn, the QA process for **non-training services** would also need to compile qualitative information on the outcomes and impact of the Centre's non-training service categories as suggested in the modified taxonomy.

An adapted version of the "New World Kirkpatrick Model" can very well serve as an evaluation methodology for **non-training services** and in turn cover several elements of the PDCA cycle.

The Centre can additionally design and aim for achieving a similar key performance indicator (KPI), i.e. the change in the clients institutional performance as an immediate outcome of the delivered service. To measure this, clients would be asked after a 6 to 12 months incubation period for the emerged impacts, for example:

(a) to what extent have systems, materials, tools provided through the service been actually been applied and used in the institution

(b) to what extent has the performance of the institution improved as a result of their application of the service provided.

In general, it is recommended to design and introduce tools that evaluate perfor-mance more an a qualitative level than on a quantitative level. Reason being that non-training advisory services provided by ITCILO are usually less standardized-They typically address the needs of a specific client with little opportunities to create and benefit from economies of scale.

It is still possible and recommended to introduce standardized tools and instruments to quality check all stages of the PDCA cycle for non-training services.

For easy reference the following table compiles specific recommendations for tools along the full PDCA cycle.

Stage of PDCA cycle	Tools for non-training services
(1) PLAN	
Define	1.1 Standardized check list to clarify client's objectives
Prepare	1.2 Standardized project planning sheet
Document	1.3 Standardized format for inception report
(2) DO	
Execute	2.1 Standardized monitoring sheet
Record	2.2 Online institutional capacity self-assessments
(3) CHECK	
Measure	3.1 Online stakeholder surveys on behalf of institutional clients
Compare	3.2 Appreciative inquiries with clients and stakeholders
(4) ACT	
Evaluate	4.1 Assignment-specific assessment reports
	4.2 Annual reports with aggregated data on advisory services
Correct	4.3 Corrective action reports

(1) PLAN

In regard to the planning stage of the PDCA cycle it is recommended to introduce 3 tools.

1.1 A standardized check list to clarify client's strategic objectives, desired out-comes (1 - 6 months), desired impacts (6 - 12 months) responsible contact persons, desired timelines, expected milestones, possible benchmarks, poten-tial risks, and success indicators.

1.2   A standardized project planning sheet in the form of a 1-page operational plan for major activities towards the client's identified objectives.

1.3   A standardized structure for an inception report comprising of 1.1 and 1.2 which is shared with and confirmed by the client.

(2)   DO

In regard to the implementation stage of the PDCA cycle it is recommended to introduce 2 tools.

2.1   Regular meetings with the client with standardized monitoring sheet to discuss project progress, challenges, and potential modifications.

2.2   Standardized (online) self-assessment for client to record to what extent are systems, materials, tools provided through the service actually being applied and are being used in the client's institution.

(3)   CHECK

In regard to the checking stage of the PDCA cycle it is recommended to introduce 2 tools.

3.1   Online stakeholder surveys on behalf of institutional clients to measure the results against original objectives and activities.

3.2   Appreciative inquiries with clients and stakeholders 6 - 12 months after service delivery to evaluate capacity development in light of strategy, objectives and requirements.

(4)   ACT

In regard to the acting stage of the PDCA cycle it is recommended to introduce 3 tools.

4.1   Continue preparing assignment-specific assessment reports with a standardized format to allow for generating aggregated data, but as a default activity for each advisory service delivery.

4.2   Continue preparing annual reports with aggregated data on advisory services, but segregating data in line with categories of taxonomy in MAP

4.3   Corrective action reports on the basis of results of management meetings at the end of a calendar year to identify necessary and / or recommend performance improvements measures from relevant Programme Managers, external specialists, peers from other advisory service providers.

The results obtained from these tools will feed the suggested additional indicator either / or in a quantitative or a qualitative manner.

If ITCILO decides to select a quantitative indicator, e.g. the percentage of customer satisfaction in regard to professional implementation and suitability of provided services to improve performance results from categories 1 - Plan and 2 – DO will feed into the indicator.

If ITCILO opts to select a qualitative indicator, e.g. impact of improved services on target groups / beneficiaries of customers, results from categories 3 - CHECK and 4 - ACT would feed into the indicator.

ANNEX

A-1 Terms of reference for the report

Terms of Reference for external technical advice on the consolidation of the quality assurance processes for ITCILO non-training capacity development services

Introduction

The International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (the Centre) is the training arm of the ILO, the Specialized Agency of the United Nations which promotes social justice and human rights in the world of work. The Centre delivers training and advisory services to governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other national and international partners in support of decent work and sustainable development. In 2020, the Centre will reach more than 50,000 learners from more than 180 countries with training (under the impression of COVID 19 mostly with online learning services) and more than hundred organizations with advisory services. For more information about the Centre refer to www.itcilo.org.

Under the umbrella of the common UN capacity development approach and in line with the ILO capacity development strategy, the capacity development services portfolio of the Centre distinguhes three system levels of interventions: Individual-level capacity development, institutional-level capacity development and system-level capacity development. The Centre's principal means of building individual-level capacity is training, delivered online or face to face. To build institutional-level capacity, the Centre offers technical advisory services, training-material development and media-development. To strengthen system-level capacity, the Centre facilitates dialogue activities and knowledge-management services.

Typology of the Centre's capacity-development services

Type	Immediate Objective	Typical beneficiary	Means of action	Immediate outcome
Individual capacity development	To strengthen the delivery capacity of an individual	Technical Experts	Training	Increased functional and technical skills, resulting in improved individual performance
Institutional capacity development	To strengthen the delivery capacity of an organization	Managers	Advisory services Media-development support Training material development	Improved institutional capacity to operate in a sustainable manner across the three performance dimensions distinguished in the ITCILO sustainability framework
System-level capacity development	To strengthen the 'holding capacity' of the eco-system within which organizations and individuals operate	Policy-level representatives	Dialogue and networking events Knowledge-management support	A more enabling policy, legal and regulatory environment

Traditionally, the main emphasis of the Centre has been on individual-level capacity development, with focus on face-to-face training. The 2018-21 strategy framework set the stage for the diversification of the service portfolio, to better harness digital learning and collaboration technology and applications in response to the ILO's renewed focus on institutional capacity development. During the 2018-19 biennium, the Centre moved forward in expanding its distance-learning outreach and developing a suite of advisory services to complement its training activities.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020, the pace of transformation of the Centre's service portfolio has accelerated, with a shift in emphasis from face-to-face training to online learning. At the same time the spectrum of institutional-level and system-level capacity-development services in support of digital learning and collaboration has significantly broadened.

Number of participants by type of training (2014 - 26 Oct 2020)
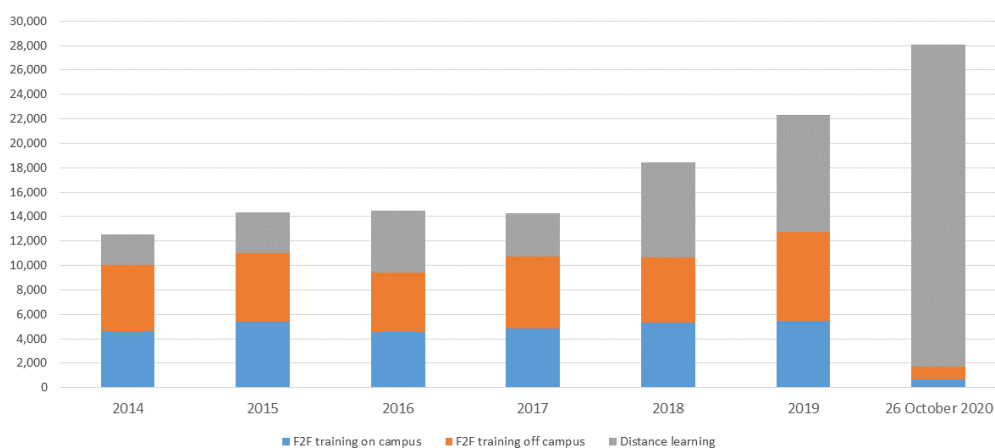
Source: MAP and eCampus. For 2014-2017, blended learning participants are included in face-to-face training on/off campus. For 2018 – 2020 the number of distance learners is included.

Breakdown of activities by category (2014 – 26 Oct 2020)
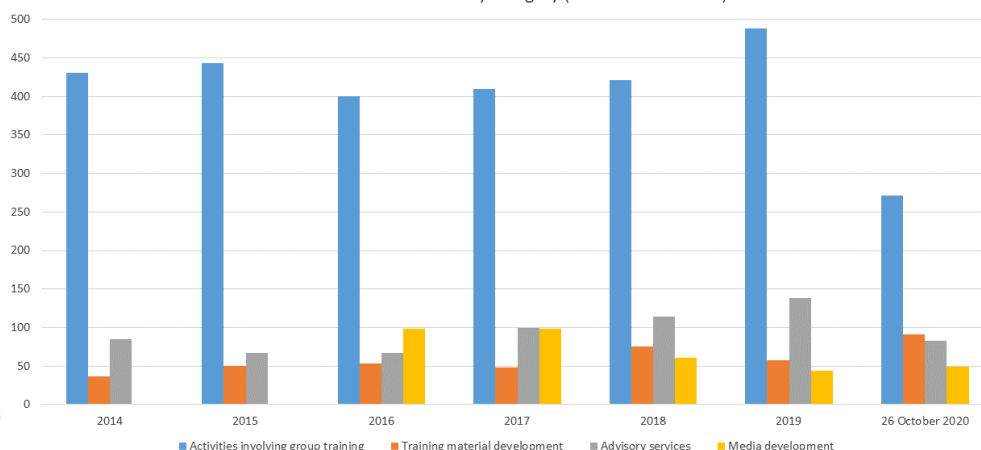
Source: MAP. Media development activities started to be recorded in MAP in early 2016, with the introduction of the new MAP.

The outlook for 2021 is that economic, ecological and health concerns will continue to exert pressure on institutional partners and individual learners to opt for digital-learning and collaboration solutions. The transformation of the Centre's service portfolio is therefore set to continue and the "new normal" could be a portfolio resting on two equally important pillars: training and advisory services. Through this more diversified service portfolio, the Centre will be in a stronger position to spread operational risk and to unlock further growth potential, particularly in the field of digital learning and collaboration.

The growth and diversification of the service portfolio of the Centre in the field of institutional-level and system-level capacity development services puts the quality assurance system of the organization to the test. The quality assurance system builds on architecture for quality management systems proposed by the International Standards Organization, with a series of quality checks performed along the Plan-Do-Check-Analyze cycle for learning service providers outside formal education systems (ISO 29993).

The PDCA cycle illustrated
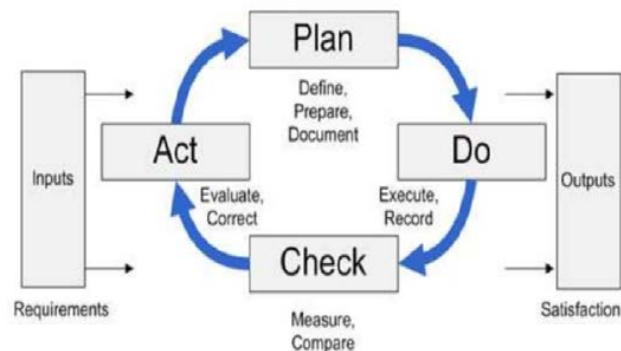
Source: Camilleri 2018, ISO 21001 - Presentation and overview of the standard

As illustrated in the following table, the quality management system is currently geared mostly towards quality assurance for individual capacity development services. The assignment is meant to expand the quality management system by further evolving the quality assurance approaches linked to the institutional capacity development services.

List of tools currently in use by ITCILO to quality assure its capacity development services

Step of the PDCA cycle	Tools to quality assure individual capacity development services (B2C)	Tools to quality assure institutional-level and system-level capacity development services (B2B)
PLAN	• Monitoring of website traffic, including user behaviour metrics (like no of visitors, length of session and no of pages per session, bounce rates), audience metrics (like demographics), level of mobile friendliness etc • Tuning of search engine functions in response to website traffic • Monitoring outreach of/response rate to CRM campaigns run by Technical Programmes • Monitoring of social media traffic, in response to social media outreach campaigns run in-house or commissioned from external service providers	-
DO	• Online customer satisfaction surveys	• Online institutional capacity self-assessments • Online stakeholder surveys on behalf of the institutional clients
CHECK	• Online tests and quizzes during training • Progress bars monitoring course implementation rate • End of activity online knowledge assessment tests • Follow-up participant panels six months after treatment	-

	• External evaluations of knowledge application rates and emerging impact at least one year after training, including online surveys, tracer studies and focus group discussions	
ANALYZE	• Publication of learner statistics in annual reports and website articles • Please also note that the Centre has also set up an in-house digital management information dashboard linked to the e-campus and drawing real-time on data about learners to monitor progress against key performance indicators likes learner outreach, customer satisfaction rates, knowledge acquisition rates and knowledge application rates.	• Assignment-specific assessment reports • Annual reports with aggregated data on advisory services

Purpose of the assignment

The overall objective of the assignment is to contribute towards full compliance of the Centre with the ISO standard 29993 for learning service providers outside formal education, and possibly ISO 2070 (for consultancy service providers). The immediate objective is to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Director Training (TDIR) to quality-assure institutional-level and system-level capacity development advisory services of the Centre, by way of introducing processes and tools to collect and analyze relevant quality data along the PDCA cycle. The direct outcome of the assignment is a more robust quality assurance system for non-training capacity development services.

Scope

The scope of the assignment is limited to institutional-level capacity development services, or Business-to-Business (B2B) interactions between the Centre and its institutional clients. B2B linkages between the Centre and a donor to fund training activities for a third party are outside the scope of analysis.

The assignment covers the entire PDCA cycle for a given institutional-level capacity development service, from Planning and Doing the assignment through to Checking outputs and emerging outcomes and later Analyzing impact

Deliverables

The principal deliverable of the assignment is a report. The document is to cover the following elements:

Table of Contents
Introduction
Executive summary
List of tables and abbreviations

PART I

- An introductory chapter framing the exigencies of quality assurance within the field of institutional capacity development,
- A description of a generic architecture of quality assurance framework for providers of institutional capacity development, leaning back on the corresponding ISO standards or referencing another internationally recognized framework
- Examples of global best practice in quality assurance of institutional capacity development services through other service providers with a similar mandate like ITCILO
- Recommendations for a quality assurance framework for institutional capacity development services tailored to the Centre.

PART II
- A 'taxonomy' of the institutional capacity development service products of the Centre
- A description of the approaches and tools currently used by the Centre to assure quality in each service product category
- An analysis of the effectiveness of these approaches and tools
- Recommendations for concrete actions to better structure and align these practices, and to introduce additional tools and approaches in line with the quality assurance framework proposed in part I.

ANNEX
- Selected bibliography of publications on quality assurance for institutional capacity development services with direct relevance for the work of ITCILO.

The assignment does involve desk research and interviews via skype/ZOOM with selected key informants from TDIR and Technical Programmes in the Training Department of the Centre.

Implementation timelines

The start date of the assignment is Monday 1st December 2020. The end date of the assignment is 31st December 2020.

Other conditions

The consultant is expected to submit a report outline by 9th December and a first draft report by 18th December 2020. The final draft report is due by 30th December 2020. The interview with key informants are tentatively scheduled for the week 9-13 December.

A-2 List of interviewees

No.	**Last Name**	**First Name**	**Title**	**Department**	**Date**	**Time**
**ITCILO**						
1	Klemmer	Andreas	Director of Training	TDIR	2 Dec 2020	14.00
2	Wambeke	Tom	Programme Manager	LIP	16 Dec 2020	14.00
3	Cunningham	Harry	Manager, Worker's Activities	ACTRAV	17 Dec 2020	15.00
4	Deelen	Linda	Programme Manager	EMLD	17 Dec 2020	10.00
5	Klemmer	Andreas	Director of Training	TDIR	17 Dec 2020	09.00
6	Drachsler	Hendrik	Consultant		18 Dec 2020	09.00
7	Kalz	Marco	Consultant		18 Dec 2020	09.00
8	Illingworth Guerrero	Jorge	Manager, Employers' Activities	ACTEMP	21 Dec 2020	13.00
9	Elmasry	Eiman	Quality Assurance Officer	TDIR	21 Dec 2020	11.00

A-3 Bibliography of selected publications on quality assurance

The following bibliography of selected publications on quality assurance for institutional capacity development services is providing insights for specialists for the continued work towards a QA architecture of non-training services of ITCILO.

Mark L. Blazey, Paul L. Grizzell: Insights To Performance Excellence. Using the Baldrige Framework and Other Integrated Management Systems. 2019.

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QA for non-training Capacity Development services

PDCA 1.1 - Define: Standardized check list to clarify client's objectives

1 - Vision of client
2 - Mission of client
3 - Strategic objective (s)
4 - Operational objective (s)
5 - Specific objective (s) for contracted ITC service (s)
6 - Human resources development objective (s) - management
7 - Human resources development objective (s) - professional and admin staff
8 - Organizational development objective (s)
9 - Enabling actors towards achieving above objectives
10 - Enabling factors towards achieving above objectives
11 - Challenging actors towards achieving above objectives
12 - Challenging factors towards achieving above objectives

ITC - Standardized Project Planning and Monitoring Sheet

No	Objectives	Responsible person of	Responsible person of	Milestone	Deadline	Indicator (qualitative)	Indicator (quantitative)	Means of Verification	202x Jan	Feb	Mrc	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	202x Jan	Feb	Mrc	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	202x Jan	Feb	Mrc	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Strategic objective (s) of client																																													
Operational objective (s) of client																																													
Specific objective (s) of ITC service (s)																																													
Human resources development objective (s) - management																																													
Human resources development objective (s) - professional and admin staff																																													
Organizational development objective (s)																																													
Support activities to achieve strategic objective (s)																																													
Support activities to achieve operational objective (s)																																													
Support activities to achieve objective (s) of ITC services (s)																																													
Support activities to achieve HR development objective (s) - management																																													
Support activities to achieve HR development objective (s) - professional and admin staff																																													
Support activities to achieve organizational development objective (s)																																													

QA for non-training Capacity Development services

PDCA 2.2 - Record: (Online) institutional capacity self-assessment

1 - (Discuss), identify and define existing technical capacities
2 - (Discuss), identify and define existing functional capacities
3 - (Discuss), identify and define existing human capacities
4 - Locate these capacities at different levels, i.e. individual, organizational and enabling environment
5 - Identify strengths in terms of organizational and individual capacities
6 - Identify gaps of organizational and individual capacities
7 - Assess existing processes to support client's strategic and operational objectives
8 - Assess existing tools and instruments to support client's processes

10 March 2021