

# Board of the Centre

85th Session, October 2021

CC 85/2/1

FOR DECISION

## SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

### The Centre's Strategic Plan for 2022-25

#### Introduction

This Strategic Plan is a high-level, visionary document that presents a strategic vision of the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (the Centre) for the period 2022–25 and sets out the substantive and organizational steps towards its realization. The Strategic Plan of the Centre takes inspiration from the higher-level ILO Strategic Plan 2022-25.<sup>1</sup> The first part of the document describes the changes in the market for capacity development services and the implications for the Centre. The second part of the document outlines the strategy of the Centre for the next five years and the third part of the document specifies the architecture of the performance measurement framework. For further information on how the strategy will be made actionable in the next biennium refer to the Programme and Budget (P&B of the Centre for 2022-23).<sup>2</sup>

#### I. NEW CONTEXT

##### Shifts in global demand for capacity development services

1. The environment within which the Centre operates is **undergoing fundamental change**, driven by long-term trends and accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of the social, technological, economic, environmental and political forces shaping the marketplace for capacity development services indicates that: learners are increasingly technology-savvy, want to access learning services 24/7, and co-create their own learning experience; advances in digital technology open new opportunities for learning service providers to upscale outreach, enjoy a fully immersive experience and to reduce unit costs; economic measures post-COVID 19 will likely negatively impact official development assistance resulting in reductions in development budgets, putting further pressure on training activities requiring financial support; and environmental concerns will depress demand for capacity development services involving global travel and on-campus activities.

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<sup>1</sup> The plan synthesizes the discussions had at consecutive Board meetings in October 2020 and May 2021 and extensively references Board papers CC83/2 and CC84/1

<sup>2</sup> CC85/2/2

2. These changes in the environment present both opportunities and risks for the Centre:
  - **Opportunities:** The fast pace of new knowledge generation and rapid technological change increase the demand of ILO constituents for lifelong learning about human-centred approaches to successfully facilitate Future of Work Transitions. The Centre can readily leverage global alliances and partnerships with ILO constituents to respond to this demand; as an ILO entity, it stands alone as a centre of excellence to deliver training on fundamental labour and employment themes such as International Labour Standards, Social Dialogue and Tripartism. The Centre is acknowledged as a learning innovation leader, enjoys fast growing in-house capabilities in digital learning and collaboration and has highly qualified staff with knowledge and expertise of the key policy areas covered by the ILO mandate, developed in close collaboration with ILO Policy Departments. The Centre has strong support from social partners and is integrated within the United Nations System.
  - **Risks:** The economic recession will likely negatively affect staff development budgets and investment decisions including voluntary contributions of ILO constituents and other development partners, requiring the Centre to revise its operational model and to place even stronger focus on digital learning and collaboration solutions. The global health risks and efforts to combat climate change could also lead individual learners and institutional clients to opt for online learning or alternatively local training rather than traveling to Turin and attending training on campus.

### The response of the Centre

3. Before 2018, the main emphasis of the Centre used to be 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 expanded its distance-learning outreach and developed a suite of advisory services to complement its training activities. The Centre also invested heavily in learning innovation, introduced digital credentials relying on block chain technology, piloted Augmented and Virtual Reality (AVR) applications and launched new training products on future foresight techniques, big data mining, and artificial intelligence. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, **the pace of transformation of the Centre's service portfolio accelerated in 2020**, characterized by a shift in emphasis from face-to-face training to online learning, a stronger focus on institutional-level and system-level capacity development services and the rollout of AVR technologies. The strategy presented in the following builds on these achievements.

## II. STRATEGY OUTLINE

### Building blocks

4. The changes in the operating environment discussed above imply that social, technological, economic, environmental and political forces will continue to exert pressure on the Centre to progress along this digital transformation path. To grasp this opportunity, **the strategy of the Centre needs to further evolve**, by reinforcing the underlying vision, mission and principles, by adjusting the service mix, by focusing more strongly on capacity-development related aspects of the Centenary Declaration, and by positioning the Centre as an ILO learning innovation hub in the UN System.
  
5. **The vision and mission of the Centre, while** firmly rooted in its founding documents and building on the past achievements of the organization, is guided in the coming years by the provisions of the 2019 Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the 2021 Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. With this in mind, *the vision of the Centre* is to be the global centre of excellence for ILO constituents to source capacity development services on social justice for decent work. *The mission of the Centre* is to provide people across the world of work directly and via ILO constituents with access to digitally enhanced capacity development services to successfully manage their Future Work transitions.

**The ILO Centenary Declaration** calls upon all Members, taking into account national circumstances, to work individually and collectively, on the basis of tripartism and social dialogue, and with the support of the ILO, to further develop its human-centred approach to the future of work by:

- A. Strengthening the capacities of all people to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work through: (i) the effective realization of gender equality in opportunities and treatment; (ii) effective lifelong learning and quality education for all; (iii) universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection; and (iv) effective measures to support people through the transitions they will face throughout their working lives.
- B. Strengthening the institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers, and reaffirming the continued relevance of the employment relationship as a means of providing certainty and legal protection to workers, while recognizing the extent of informality and the need to ensure effective action to achieve transition to formality. All workers should enjoy adequate protection in accordance with the Decent Work Agenda, taking into account: (i) respect for their fundamental rights; (ii) an adequate minimum wage, statutory or negotiated; (iii) maximum limits on working time; and (iv) safety and health at work.
- C. Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all through: (i) macroeconomic policies that have those aims as their central objective; (ii) trade, industrial and sectoral policies that promote decent work, and enhance productivity; (iii) investment in infrastructure and in strategic sectors to address the drivers of transformative change in the world of work; (iv) policies and incentives that promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the creation and development of sustainable enterprises, innovation, and the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and that promote the alignment of business practices with the objectives of this Declaration; and (v) policies and measures that ensure appropriate privacy and personal data protection, and respond to challenges and opportunities in the world of work relating to the digital transformation of work, including platform work.

The 2021 **Call to Action for human centred recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic** references the Centenary Declaration as the foundation for a recovery from the crisis that is fully inclusive, sustainable and resilient and supports a just transition. It calls for the ILO., with its mandate for social justice and decent work, to play a leadership role with its constituents and in the international system in advancing a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. Through focused and accelerated implementation of the ILO Centenary Declaration, ILO is to strengthen its support of Member States' recovery efforts and leverage the support of other multilateral organizations and international institutions while contributing actively to the efforts of the United Nations system to expedite delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

In order to help governments and employers' and workers' organizations build forward better from the crisis, the ILO is to use all its means of action to support the design and implementation of recovery strategies that leave no one behind. To this end, the ILO is to strengthen its support of Member States' efforts to:

- a) create inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and social development, increasing support for the development of policies and approaches that: i. generate employment-intensive investment; ii. strengthen active labour market policies; iii. promote an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises; iv. boost productivity through diversification and innovation; v. harness the fullest potential of technological progress and digitalization, including platform work, to create decent jobs and sustainable enterprises, enable broad social participation in its benefits and address its risks and challenges, including by reducing the digital divide between people and countries; vi. promote skills development opportunities that are responsive to labour market needs and support effective transitions for young people from education and training to work; and vii. promote guidance, training and employment services that provide older workers with the facilities, advice and assistance they may need to expand their choices, optimize their opportunities to work in good-quality, productive and healthy conditions until their retirement, and to enable active ageing;
- b) protect all workers, including by strengthening policy advice, capacity- building and technical assistance in support of sound labour relations and the promotion of legal and institutional frameworks based on international labour standards, including fundamental principles and rights at work, and a particular emphasis on occupational safety and health in the light of the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic; ii. prioritizing and mainstreaming strategies to address the informal economy and insecure forms of work, which have been particularly affected by the crisis, including through research, development cooperation and policy interventions and guidance; and iii. preserving jobs and increasing the resilience of labour markets to crises and pandemics;
- c) achieve universal access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection, including floors, that ensures income security and health protection and enables people, including the self-employed and workers in the informal economy, to cope with challenges in life and work such as those precipitated by the COVID-19 crisis;
- d) strengthen the capacity of labour administrations, labour inspectorates and other relevant authorities to ensure implementation of rules and regulations, especially regarding social protection and occupational safety and health;
- e) use social dialogue to design and implement recovery strategies, strengthening the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to engage in national recovery strategies and to support their members in the recovery, including through the International Training Centre of the ILO and its training partners.

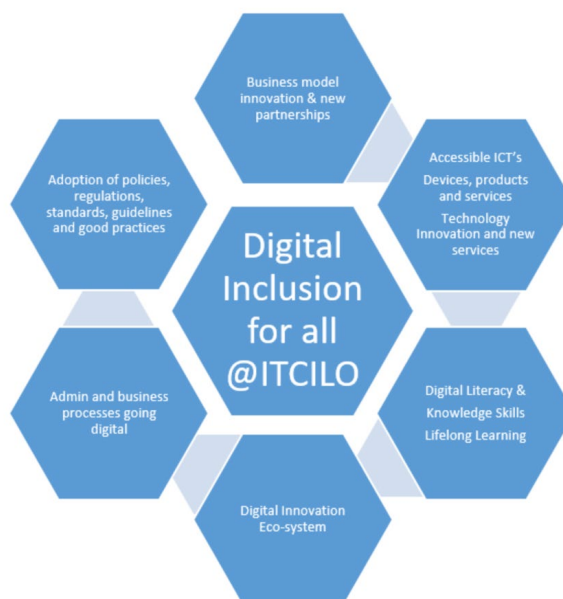
6. The following **principles** will guide the work of the Centre in coming years:

- Human-centred: Putting people first in the transition towards the Future of Work and promoting International Labour Standards, Social Dialogue and Tripartism, sustainable business practices, social inclusion, non-discrimination and digital inclusion
- Emphasizing employment-rich growth: The Centre will advocate for employment intensive investment approaches that maximize the job creation impact of these Future of Work transition processes, including the transition towards a Green Economy.
- Embracing diversity: Embracing diversity among participants in learning activities offered by the Centre, among staff of the Centre, and among resource persons and partner organizations co-delivering capacity development services
- Connected: Working in partnership and blending the expertise of the Centre with the expertise of partners, including employers and workers organizations, universities and research institutions.
- Quality focused: A more data-driven approach to monitoring and evaluation, and on widely sharing results for evidence-based decision making.
- Participant-centred: Co-creating learning services with the participant.
- IT-enhanced: Harnessing digital technology to achieve pedagogical aims, scale up outreach and reduce the financial burden on contributors and participants.
- Innovative: Continuously adapting learning applications and technology.
- Safety First: Health and safety of learners and staff are overarching concerns.
- Sustainability: Empowering local partners to independently and effectively provide capacity development services to their membership.

## Digital inclusion

Accessibility is a key to inclusive digital learning, communication and collaboration services. The Centre will ensure that its services are digitally inclusive, i.e. leave no one behind, whether staff or participant, digital learning and collaboration technologies and -applications that have low barriers for learners with vulnerabilities: Examples for such services are mobile learning, bite-size learning, video and coaching via social media applications like WhatsApp and WeChat. The Centre will offer tailored capacity development services to institutional intermediaries to in turn support their digital inclusion efforts. Furthermore, all new public-facing web sites and platforms will go through accessibility testing. The procurement process around IT services, especially development, will also include accessibility requirements.

### Digital inclusion for all @ ITCILO



7. The ultimate beneficiaries of the Centre are the people in the world of work. The Centre reaches its ultimate beneficiaries directly or indirectly via ILO constituents and other institutional intermediaries that effectively multiply and sustain local outreach. The Centre will continue to provide learning services for ILO staff and to other ILO partners with a mandate for the implementation of the Centenary Declaration and to promote Future of Work Transitions.
8. The traditional focus of the Centre on face-to-face (F2F) training will shift towards a more diversified **portfolio** of training activities, blending face-to-face training and online learning, and complementing it with non-training services for institutional clients. The main implications of this shift in the service portfolio will be: less F2F training on the Turin campus and more F2F training delivered in partnership with local organizations in the field; more online training and more training using Augmented and Virtual Reality; and more institutional capacity development services for ILO constituents and other ILO partners with a mandate to promote Decent Work and Social Justice. Refer to paragraphs 11-13 for more information on the service mix.
9. The **areas of expertise** of the Centre are shaped by the vectors of the ILO 2022-25 strategic plan and the thematic priorities specified in the ILO 2022-23 P&B that in turn are guided by the 2019 Centenary Declaration and the 2020 UN system wide COVID recovery plan. Within this strategy framework, there is room to leverage the core expertise of the Centre in the field of capacity development on human-centred approaches to Future of Work transitions and on strategies for promoting employment-rich growth post COVID 19.

In this context, the Centre will systematically promote its core expertise in innovation, digital learning and digital collaboration and seek to position itself as a provider of systemic capacity development solutions that bundle training for individuals with management advice, knowledge management support and product development support for organizations. It will furthermore be explored whether the Centre's services could be more visibly embedded in the ILO's resource mobilization strategy and be incorporated as an essential element in the design of ILO capacity development projects in order to more clearly differentiate the ILO human centred approach from other development cooperation solutions. Two specific areas where the Centre may be called upon to develop targeted activities are: increasing the knowledge of UN country teams and their local partners about the Decent Work Agenda and the Centenary Declaration, and training local ILO constituents on advocating Decent Work when programming UN Development Assistance Frameworks and national COVID 19 recovery strategies.

10. The Centre is already widely used by ILO offices and departments to operate online knowledge management systems and to deliver online learning and collaboration solutions including online fairs and AVR conferences. The Centre has also achieved recognition as a **learning innovation** champion across the UN system, developing inter alia, on-line training courses and VR training simulation platforms. To consolidate this role as innovation hub, the Centre, with financial assistance from the Italian Government, is currently building a learning innovation laboratory that will expose participants from the second half of 2022 onwards to next generation learning innovation technology such as deep learning with the help of holography. Synergies will be derived through engagement with units at ILO Headquarters responsible for innovation and business improvement to bundle and more systematically leverage this in-house capacity to support ILO constituents in their own learning innovation transitions and to add value to the capacity development interventions of other UN agencies. The work of the Centre will be imbedded into the wider United Nations Innovations Network and draw more systematically on partnerships with other UN agencies. Through the Turin School of Development, the Centre will further strengthen the partnership with learning service providers worldwide, building the global expertise of the Centre with local expertise of partners, including universities and research institutes with the final aim of enhancing learning innovation in higher education.

### Implications for the service mix offered by the Centre

11. The primary function of the Centre – the provision of capacity development services - is modelled on the UN common capacity development approach and takes guidance from the ILO capacity development strategy released in 2019. Where in the past the sole focus was on individual learners, a distinction is drawn in the future between individual capacity development services meant to improve the performance of individual learners and institutional capacity development services meant to strengthen the capacity of organizations –two sides of the same coin but calling for distinct interventions. The emphasis of individual capacity development services lies on training while the institutional capacity development services encompass advisory services, product development support, knowledge management solutions, the design of communication and advocacy campaigns and the facilitation of dialogue events and meetings for ILO constituents and other institutional intermediaries. The new service mix meets the demands of constituents for **a combination of individual capacity development and institutional capacity development services**, blending face-to-face training and online training, and complementing it with advisory services. Face-to-face training will continue to be an important element of the service mix, but the main growth will be in on-line training and digital learning, and collaboration solutions for institutional beneficiaries.



**12. The new service mix puts the Centre on a sustainable growth path:**

- For individual beneficiaries, the Centre will be able to take full advantage of the scalability and instant replicability of online learning services to reach out to participants worldwide; the 2020-21 outreach figures show that with the new portfolio structure, the Centre can **reach more than 50,000 learners per year with training** – twice the number achieved before the 2020 crisis. Also, by shifting focus away from smaller group training events on campus towards large-scale academies and global retreats, dialogue events and conferences, the Centre can unlock scale effects even in F2F training and promote blended learning on a global scale. In line with a long-standing request from constituents, smaller group-based training activities will move to the field although not exclusively and be co-delivered in partnership with local training institutions. Digital technology facilitates the delivery of online learning activities in partnership with national and regional training institutions, combining global and local expertise and making it accessible at low cost to participants. By way of blending online learning and face-to-face training, the Centre empowers participants to embark on multi-step learning journeys better synchronized with their own work schedules, easily spread across calendar years and with stackable credentials that might lead to executive education certificates.
- For institutional beneficiaries, the Centre will be in a position to expand the depth and breadth of its institutional-level capacity development services in line with the role and functions assigned to it by the ILO 2019 institutional capacity development strategy. One area where the Centre faces particularly high demand is for **digital learning and collaboration solutions for constituents**. These demands include online conferences and fairs, and the development of online learning platforms through which the Centre has shown in the 2020-21 biennium to have indirectly reached via its partners out to at least 30,000 more people in the world of work. Starting in 2022, the Centre will systematically track and report to the Board its indirect beneficiaries in close collaboration with its institutional partners.

**13. The new service mix will also further improve the impact of the capacity development services** of the Centre due to the additional focus on institutional capacity development support for ILO constituents. By combining training and technical advisory services, the Centre puts local partners in a stronger position to independently and effectively provide capacity development services to their own membership, to make their voice heard in national policy dialogue and to effectively advocate for decent work and social justice in programming at local level.

For more detailed information on each asset in the service portfolio of the Centre refer to the P&B document.



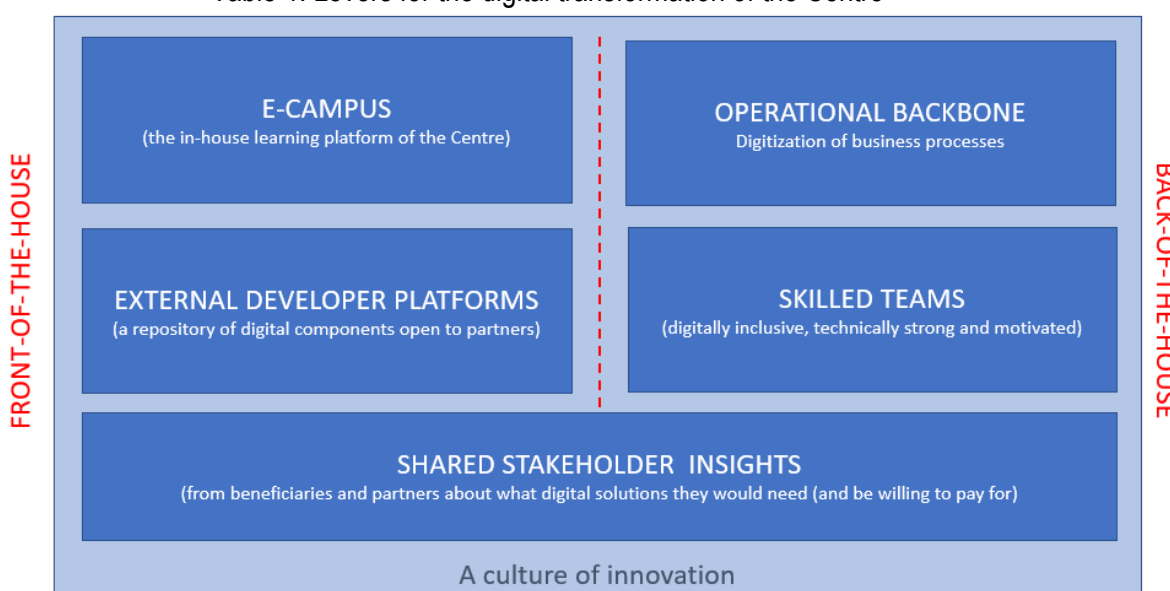
## Implications for the support functions in the Centre

14. The success of the new model relies on the further **empowerment of staff** by exploring new ways of working and changes in the structure, job profiling and the skills set of the Centre's work force. The changes in skills, profiles and structure will be achieved through a phased approach avoiding forced redundancies. The total number of full-time equivalent staff remain at a similar level although there will be changes in the staffing profile and in the distribution of staff between support functions and training delivery roles. Generally, the changes will involve a redefinition of roles and responsibilities rather than a fundamental change to any job description with an increased focus on digital competencies and the new delivery modalities. As necessary, professional expertise will be retained to ensure that all the Centre's technical programmes are appropriately equipped. These changes will be implemented by Centre Management in consultation with staff representatives and in accordance with the ILO Guidelines on Managing Change and Restructuring processes and the Centre's Staff Regulations, HR policies and procedures.
15. The Centre will also need to right-size its campus facilities and continue investing in the accommodation and training infrastructure in order to **provide a world-class but affordable service experience**. For example, the new model results in a different need for classrooms on campus and reduced hotel occupancy for the Centre's activities: It is estimated that once the pandemic is over, operating under the new model will require an average annual hotel-bed-night capacity of some 27,000 compared with 50,000 in 2019. In anticipation of this shift, and following renovation, the Centre will engage with partner organisations to utilise redundant office and accommodation space.
16. Another example is the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure of the Campus: in the past, this infrastructure was mainly geared towards face-to-face training on campus while in future it needs to support a more diversified service portfolio including online training and digital learning and collaboration solutions. **ICT services of the Centre need to be digitally inclusive**, accessible worldwide in a fast, reliable and secure manner, calling for further investments into:
  - The Centre's Digital Learning Ecosystem, especially the eCampus, making sure that it is extensible and flexible, with the possibility to plug and play learning and communication technologies as needed;
  - Analytics and data management for better insights, stronger decision-making, greater data accessibility with robust data protection and privacy ;
  - Cloud solutions to further extend the Centre's digital infrastructure beyond the closed wall of the Campus and to better reach out to beneficiaries;
  - Digital workplace technologies to facilitate communication, connection and collaboration among staff and with external partners.
17. Institutional agility and empowered staff necessitate the devolution of decision-making authority and call for a shift in management approach away from controlling processes towards exercising **effective oversight**: Line managers will act with more autonomy and be held accountable against results rather than actions, and they will be entrusted to facilitate regulatory compliance at unit-level ;senior management, in turn, will focus more on managing risk at system-level, feeding the lessons learned from the pandemic into the design of better early warning systems. Next to the heightened sensitivity for public health, other threats that need to be better reflected in the risk register of the Centre are digital exclusion of participants, internet disruption and data safety breaches.

## Levers for digital transformation

18. To successfully deliver participant benefit– both for individual learners and constituent organizations – the Centre will accelerate its **digital transformation with a focus on six 'levers'**:
- expand the digital platform of the Centre (called the **eCampus**) through which individual learners can access online learning and collaboration offers;
  - build **external developer platforms** set up under commission from, and sometimes managed on behalf of institutional clients; via these external platforms, selected digital assets are made accessible by partners to their own beneficiaries;
  - strengthen the operational backbone, where the aim is to **digitalize internal processes** linked to the Centre's support services (Human Resources, Finance, IT and Facilities management) in order to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness;
  - implement measures to upskill **the staff** of Centre and to ensure that they are motivated to embrace, change, become technically skilled, digitally inclusive and information-literate;
  - scale up the use of digital learning analytics and artificial intelligence to systematically collect and analyze **stakeholder insights**, prototype minimum viable products and crowdsourcing views of participants and institutional clients; and,
  - nurture **a culture of innovation** and quality that embraces digital learning technology and applications and harnesses artificial intelligence to evaluate service quality. This culture of innovation is to transcend the boundaries of the Centre and to connect the Centre with other training organizations and academic bodies in the global learning innovation eco-system.

Table 1: Levers for the digital transformation of the Centre

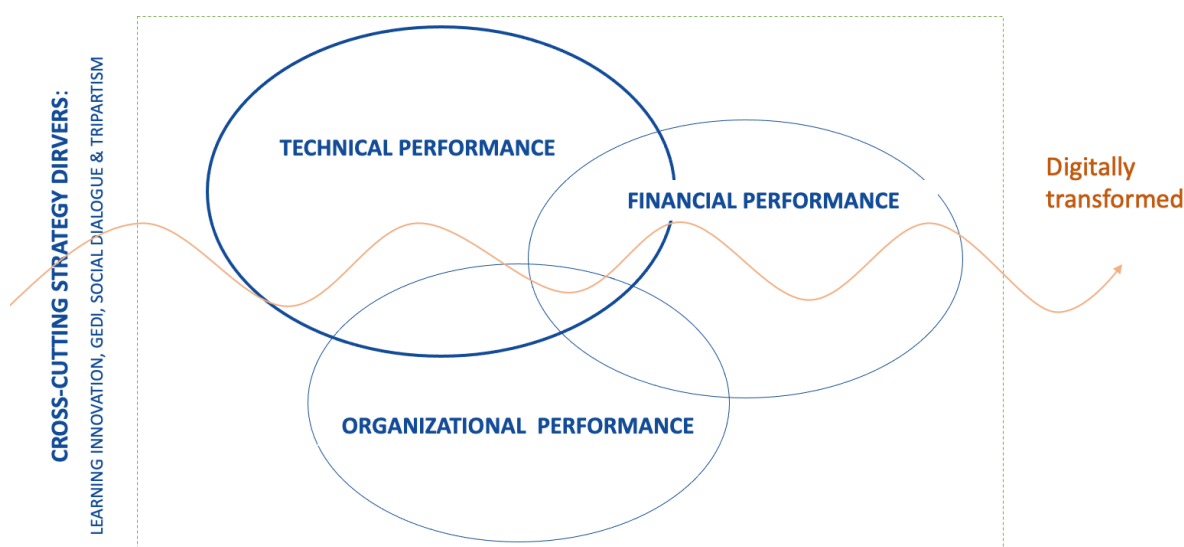


### III. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

#### Performance dimensions

19. The strategy of the Centre rests on **three pillars or dimensions for sustainable institutional performance**, namely a technical dimension, a financial dimension and an organizational dimension. The technical dimension captures the performance of the Centre against its mission; the financial dimension refers to the financial performance of the organization and the organizational dimension captures the quality of the internal and external oversight processes guiding the organization. The three dimensions of sustainable performance are **interdependent and mutually reinforcing**; while the technical performance of the Centre is clearly central, any weaknesses in the financial performance or governance performance could affect the overall sustainability of the organization.

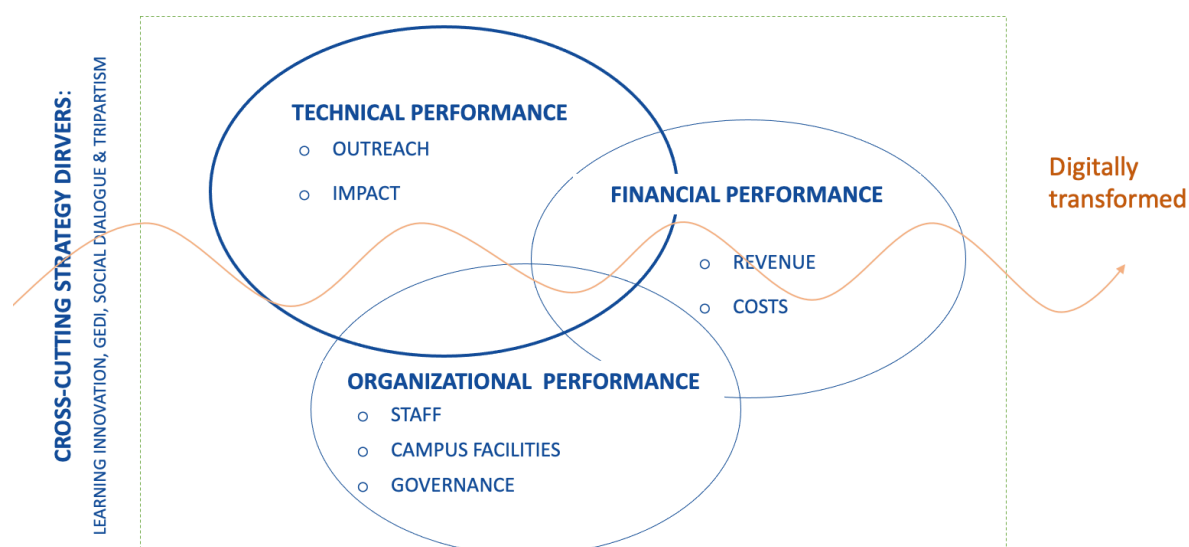
#### The three pillars of the sustainability strategy of the Centre



20. In each performance dimension and for each cross-cutting strategy driver, a number of critically important result areas have been determined. In the technical performance dimension, the Centre is expected to further grow service outreach and to further improve service impact. In the financial performance dimension, the Centre will strive for a more diversified finance mix and a leaner cost structure, to provide sufficient funding to cover all fixed expenditure including institutional investments, and to ensure the Centre's financial sustainability in the long term.
21. In the organizational performance dimension, renewed emphasis will be laid on empowering staff, providing a world-class but affordable learning experience, assuring digitally inclusive Information Communication and Learning Technologies to leave no one behind in the digitation transformation process and to maintain effective oversight.

22. With regards to the cross-cutting strategy drivers, three result areas have been identified, namely the promotion of **International Labour Standards, Tripartism and Social Dialogue, Gender Equality and Diversity** and a culture of learning **innovation**.
23. Each result area will be captured with an outcome statement and outcome-specific Key Performance Indicators. Refer to the 2022-23 P&B of the Centre for more information on these KPI and the performance thresholds for the next biennium.

### Result areas during the 2022-25 reporting period



### Concluding remarks

24. The strategy framework provides room for further growth to go hand in hand with higher service quality. The framework also allows for improved financial performance on the back of gains in operational efficiency while carefully balancing the need for strong oversight with the goal of institutional agility in the governance dimension. As further detailed in the P&B of the Centre, these outcomes are predicated on a zero-growth but also zero-reduction expenditure budget, meaning that the staff envelope – the principal cost driver in the budget - remains with a size seen during the 2020-21 biennium. To ensure the longer term sustainability of the Centre, it is assumed that resources will be systematically invested back into the organization to maintain those components of the infrastructure that are the responsibility of the Centre; to fund innovation in training delivery, new course development and other initiatives; invest in information technology hardware, software and development costs; to support fellowships; and to adequately finance accumulating long-term liabilities. Thus equipped, the Centre will be in a strong position to maintain dynamic balance between its non-financial and financial objectives during the 2022-25 period and to pursue its mission in a sustainable manner.