

# Board of the Centre

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FOR INFORMATION

## THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

### Independent external evaluation of the ITCILO online training and learning activities - Management response

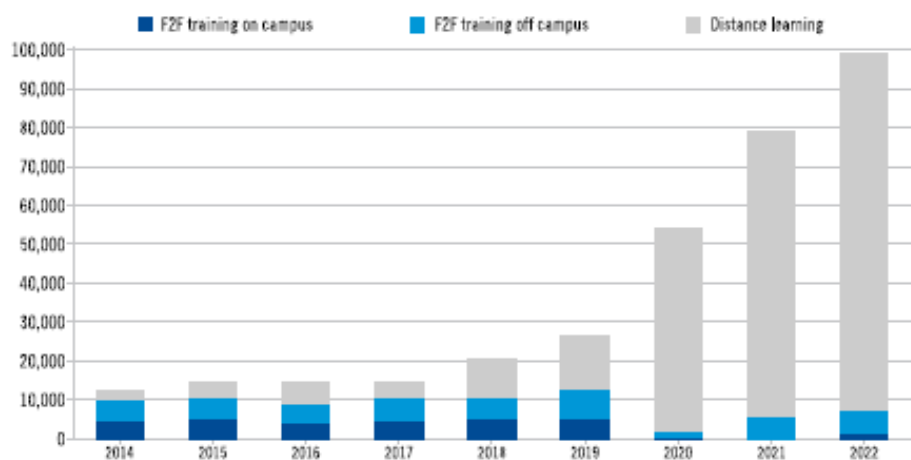
#### I. Introduction

1. **Quality** is a central pillar of the Results-based Management Framework underpinning the 2022-23 Programme and Budget of the International Training Centre of the ILO (the Centre). The Centre continuously monitors the quality of its capacity development services along the service cycle and furthermore commissions **external evaluations** to evaluate positive change in the performance of participants after treatment. The main evaluation is annual and covers the training activities of the Centre; in addition the Centre may commission ad hoc evaluations of both training and non-training capacity development activities<sup>1</sup>. **In 2023, the external evaluation of the Centre's training activities covered both face-to-face training and distance learning activities**, mindful of the shift of the organization towards distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic *and* the resurgence of face-to-face training in 2022. The 2023 evaluation thus allows for benchmarking of different learning modalities to assess their relative strengths and weaknesses.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For copies of all evaluation reports since 2014 go to <https://www.itcilo.org/about/board>. The findings of selected evaluations have been synthesized in digital briefs that are accessible via <https://www.itcilo.org/resources/digital-briefs>

<sup>2</sup> In the first nine months of 2023, the number of online learners has continued growing (.....as of 20 September 2022), a clear indication that distance learning is 'meant to stay and will continue playing an important role in the post-pandemic service mix of the Centre. Refer to the 2023 interim implementation progress report at (<https://www.itcilo.org/about/board>) for more information

### ENROLMENTS IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES (2014-22)



Source: Management of Activities and Participants (MAP), eCampus, Solicomm, external e-learning platforms curated by the Centre. 2022 DL figure includes indirect trainees enrolled in training courses on platforms curated by the Centre

Source: ITCILO 2022 Interim Implementation report, p.10

2. The **purpose of the evaluation** was to provide the leadership and management of the Centre with evidence of the relevance, validity of design, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of both its online and face-to-face training activities, to assess which learning modalities are most effective and efficient, to explore good practices, lessons learnt, and to derive recommendations for the improvement and further development of the Centre's learning service portfolio. Therefore, the focus of this evaluation was not placed on the evaluation of a single type of courses or content areas but compared samples of activities across the spectrum of learning services.
3. The **scope of the evaluation** was to verify whether participants in these learning activities acquired new knowledge and later successfully applied it to contribute to the promotion of Decent Work. Carried out from May to August 2023, the evaluation focused on 50 sampled training activities delivered in the course of 2022. The sample included a variety of paid and free, open and tailor-made, tutor-supported and self-guided courses that took place face-to-face or online, and in the latter case via various platforms using a diverse set of tools, including eCampus, Solicomm, webinars, and virtual reality. The courses were chosen based on their representativeness of the training topics evident in the content and delivery of the training, the mode of delivery (face-to-face, distance learning or blended), languages (English, Spanish, French) and costs of the training activities (from free to tailor-made, sponsored programs, open fee-based courses).
4. The **evaluation criteria** were based on the OECD DAC evaluation principles: relevance and outreach of the activity, validity of activity design, effectiveness, efficiency of use of resources, and impact orientation of the activity. The guiding questions for the evaluators are listed below:

Assessment Criteria	Questions to be addressed
<i>Relevance and outreach of the activity:</i> Relevance refers to the extent to which the objectives of the activity are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, and partners' and donors' policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well did the activity operationalize the 2022-25 strategic plan and the 2022-23 Programme &amp; Budget of the Centre, and the higher level ILO 2022-25 strategy framework and 2022-23 Programme and Budget?</li> </ul>
<i>Validity of the activity design:</i> The extent to which the design of the activity was logical and coherent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the result of online training imply that the design of the activities was logical and realistic?</li> <li>• Did the end of activity evaluation and (where applicable) the follow up activity evaluation effectively measure results and progress?</li> </ul>
<i>Effectiveness:</i> the extent to which the activities' immediate objectives were achieved, taking into account their relative importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What results have been achieved/what progress has been made by learners since the implementation of the activities?</li> <li>• Which gaps remain and how could these be addressed through follow-up activities?</li> <li>• To what extent have the activities and the used tools been an effective instrument to strengthen the capacity of ILO constituents and other ILO development partners?</li> </ul>
<i>Efficiency of use of resources:</i> A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the resources invested into the delivery of the activities been used in the most efficient manner? How economically were resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time etc.) converted to results? Did the results justify the cost?</li> <li>• What time and cost efficiency measures could have been introduced without impeding the achievement of results?</li> </ul>
<i>Effectiveness of management arrangements:</i> The extent to which management capacities and arrangements put in place supported the achievement of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the roles and responsibilities of Centre officials, including programme management, responsible for the implementation of the activities clearly defined and understood?</li> <li>• Were the current arrangements for implementing the activities effective?</li> <li>• Were the activities coordinated across technical programmes?</li> </ul>
<i>Impact orientation of the activity:</i> The strategic orientation of the activity towards making a significant contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable development changes, and whether the changes have been durable/were replicated by beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How likely is it that the results of the activities will be maintained or up-scaled by the participants?</li> <li>• What are the participants' perceived benefits from the activities (differentiated by groups)? What evidence exists of participants benefiting from the activities?</li> <li>• What actions might be required for achieving long-term impact?</li> </ul>

5. The **methodology** for this evaluation included quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to provide conclusions and recommendations from the findings, substantiated with statistical data and case studies documenting good practice. 627 responses were collected from a participant's survey, and in-depth interviews were conducted with 56 Centre's staff, 5 institutional clients and a focus group of 9 participants. The 2023 evaluation used the same analytical framework as previous evaluations commissioned in 2021 and 2022, and thus allows for the cross-comparison of results across calendar years.

## II. Conclusions and recommendations made by the Evaluators

### Conclusions

#### 6. The evaluators drew the following conclusions:<sup>3</sup>

- “In regard to **relevance**, ITC's training offer is closely aligned with the strategic documents of ITC and of ILO, especially in regard to the strategic objectives related to broadening outreach and ensuring that the training activities meet the needs and requirements of the ITC beneficiaries. The training activities conducted by ITC are closely aligned with the needs of participants, which can be attributed to a pervasive culture of stakeholder interaction that exists at Centre combined with robust and standardised processes that programme teams apply to interact with their primary target group(s).
- The **outreach** of ITC has been growing strongly, in large part enabled by the Centre's successful shift towards an online learning modality during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. ITC manages to ensure a high level of diversity in terms of gender, age, socio-economic background, geographical distribution organisation type, and thus successfully provides relevant training opportunities to a broad base of its beneficiaries.
- An area of improvement lies into further alignment with the ITC and ILO strategic documents in terms of inclusion of “cross-cutting strategy drivers” - gender equality, diversity, Internal Labour Standards and social dialogue and tripartism - into the ITC training activities.
- In regard to **coherence** of ITC's training activities, it is clear that the core ILO values are deeply ingrained in ITC's work culture and relations with stakeholders. ITC closely cooperates with beneficiary organisations on designing and delivering tailor-made training activities, which ensures that these meet the specific requirements of the target group in question. ITC also offers open courses that are more widely targeted. These two ways of approaching potential users puts different requirements on the programme teams involved, yet they manage to ensure that the way the training activities are targeted towards their potential users is fit for purpose. There is potential for further alignment of the overarching ILO values and goals with its training offer when it comes to the representation of those who are most disadvantaged and face serious obstacles to taking part in the ITC training activities. The most significant obstacle detected through this evaluation is the cost of participation, and ITC would do well to explore ways of further alleviating this burden for disadvantaged target groups, in particular those from least developed countries (LDCs).
- In regard to the **validity of the training design**, the findings demonstrate that the validity of the activity design is generally at a high level within ITC's work structure and there are no major deficiencies within the process of course design and revision. The ITC course design achieves strong results in terms of teaching, cognitive and social presence, although improvements could be made on the level of social interaction between learners.
- The high level of suitability of course design in relation to course objectives is primarily based on two elements: a reliable internal quality assurance system of ITC and strong engagement of stakeholders in the course design process. The process of course design and revision is decentralised to such degree that there is a significant variety

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the 2023 ITCILO Training Evaluation report: p.4ff

observable between different programme teams, which is a potential area of improvement. There is also much scope for more exchange of best practices and learning from experiences between teams.

- In regard to **effectiveness**, ITC is highly successful in providing its learners with a top-quality training experience which leads to enhanced levels of competences. Stakeholders' perceive ITC as an organisation whose brand guarantees a high level of quality and the confidence in ITC as a training provider is therefore at a very high level. ILO's primary constituents strongly benefit from the outcomes of the ITC training activities. An element of training activities that is highly valued by participants, clients and ITC staff alike but often considered underdeveloped in course planning and delivery is (social) interaction between learners, which adds to effectiveness of the training offer in terms of networking, intercultural competences, comparative reflections, etc.
- When considering the effectiveness of different training modalities (face-to-face, blended or online), it is overwhelmingly acknowledged that the blended modality is the optimal and preferred option in almost all instances and most promising in capturing benefits of both face-to-face and online training.
- In regard to effectiveness of **management arrangements**, ITC has a well-defined internal structure in which different roles and responsibilities are clearly assigned. A marked characteristic of the ITC structure is a high level of decentralisation - the programme teams have strong autonomy and almost full responsibility and ownership over the training activities they deliver. This structure has certain benefits and certain disadvantages. On the one hand, a high level of autonomy and responsibility at the programme team level fosters flexibility, avoids the "one size fits all" model and enables the programme teams to tailor their training activities to the specific needs and requirements of their target groups. On the other hand, this highly decentralised structure has also produced a certain level of fragmentation, with low levels of collaboration and exchange of practices and lessons learned between the programme teams. The central support services of ITC could also have a more thorough facilitating role in relation to individual programme teams: there are transversal areas where pooling of expertise and resources would be beneficial – including, but not limited to, course design and revision process and course marketing.
- In regard to **efficiency**, although the evaluation could not delve deeper into financial indicators of ITC, all findings point to ITC being in a strong financial position with no immediate threats to its financial stability. In terms of participation fees, the general perspective among participants and beneficiaries is that these are relatively high, especially for those from low-income countries, but there is also a widely shared belief that ITC provides good value for invested funds. This leads to the conclusion that ITC uses the resources at its disposal to ensure a high level of human and technical learning resources, facilitating a high-quality learning experience.

A potential area of improvement is related to the decentralised structure of ITC, which has its manifestation on the financial side, as each programme is expected to be financially sustainable. This produces a certain level of redundancy, with different programmes duplicating efforts and repeating processes that have already been successfully undertaken by other programme teams.

- In regard to **impact**, participants rate their learning experience very highly and their feedback points to strong course applicability and practical orientation across different programmes with a significant (self-assessed) increase in job performance and competences. The evaluation team also found an impressive number of practical

examples where the skills and competences developed through ITC training activities have been used in contributing to personal, organisational, or societal goals of course participants and/or beneficiary organisations. However, In order to have a more reliable insight into the long-term impact of its training activities, ITC would do well to establish a more structural mechanism for follow-up monitoring and for keeping in contact with former course participants (alumni).

- In regard to **sustainability**, there is an impressive level of knowledge and competences that participants acquire through the ITC training activities and they seem to be highly motivated to share this with their immediate environment. The dissemination and training of trainers are therefore valued elements that are part of some of the training activities and could potentially be expanded. Participants also appear to be highly motivated to continue their learning journey, with an overwhelming majority interested in future ITC training activities and many of them continuing to use the learning resources even after course completion. In this regard, the provision of additional learning resources is a highly commendable practice of certain programmes that should be implemented across the board.

Based on the findings of this external evaluation the results of the related Key Performance Indicators for the year 2023 are as follows:

DIMENSION	TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE		
High-level indicator of organizational performance	Baseline (2022)	Target 2022-23 (Cumulative figure for the 2022-23 biennium)	Results (2023)
Immediate Outcome 2	The Centre has further increased its service impact		
Outcome indicator 2.A:  Percentage of participants in <b>training</b> activities who agreed or strongly agreed that the courses were <b>relevant</b> to their needs.	95 per cent  ----- Source: External evaluation survey	75 per cent	96,9 per cent  ----- Source: External evaluation survey
Outcome indicator 2.B:  Percentage of participants in <b>training</b> activities who agreed or strongly agreed that the courses that the courses translated <b>theory into practice</b>	90 per cent  ----- Source: External evaluation survey	75 per cent	93,8 per cent  ----- Source: External evaluation survey
Outcome indicator 2.C:  Percentage of participants in <b>training</b> activities who agreed or strongly agreed that they can <b>apply the knowledge</b> in their work setting.	94 per cent  ----- Source: External evaluation survey	75 per cent	93,6 per cent  ----- Source: External evaluation survey
Outcome indicator 2.D:  Percentage of participants in <b>training</b> activities who provided concrete <b>knowledge application</b> examples	52 per cent  ----- Source: External evaluation survey.	50 per cent  ----- The original target of 60% (P&B 2022-23) has been re-adjusted in line with the changes that took place to the assessment method since 2021	75.4 per cent  ----- Source: External evaluation survey.

Table 1: Key performance indicators

## Recommendations

7. The evaluators submitted the following recommendations:<sup>4</sup>

**“Recommendation 1: *Foster stronger communication and collaboration between program teams*”**

ITC would benefit from an institutionalised framework for sharing best practices, lessons learned and knowledge exchange across different programmes of ITC. This approach will enable the Centre to capitalise on existing expertise and past experiences, thereby ensuring consistent quality and fostering continuous improvement, enhancing operational efficiency, optimising resource allocation, and promoting innovation.

Suggestions for achieving this include:

- actively encourage informal exchange between staff of different program teams
- enable small-scale structural integration between the teams, e.g. short exchange periods on the level of (support) G staff
- create institutional databases of reusable learning resources, templates and techniques, backed up by strong discovery tools which allow these learning resources to be easily searched for and accessed by all staff of the institution
- organise periodic dissemination and exchange of best practice events which would be dedicated to proper self-reflection and sharing

In addition to encouraging and facilitating communication between the program teams, ITC should also strengthen and streamline collaboration within delivery of training activities. This will facilitate the delivery of more interdisciplinary training activities that combine diverse areas of expertise, where applicable and congruent with learners' needs. Whilst acknowledging the Centre's internal procedures for allocating financial resource and ensuring accountability, ITC is urged to explore ways for alleviating potential barriers stemming from this system that could hamper collaborations between program teams.

**Recommendation 2: *Implement systematic staff professional development opportunities, especially around teaching/tutoring/facilitation competences***

A more systematic approach to staff professional development, especially when it comes to enhancing the skills necessary for developing training activities and tutoring, would contribute to core functions.

Such staff professional development opportunities should be periodic, needs-based (i.e. developed in close consultation with ITC), accessible, and relevant for different staff profiles. Creation of an internal trainer-skills framework supported by a badging system would be one way to manage this.

In addition, an inclusion of specific questions related to the performance of different resource persons in the end-of-activity participants' survey, would enable easier identification of specific weaknesses and strengths in the training process and the development of evidence-based personalised improvement plans.

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted from the 2023 ITCILO Training Evaluation report: p.7ff



**Recommendation 3: *Develop more comprehensive mechanisms for guiding the process of training activity design and revision***

Quality of the ITC training provision can be enhanced through a streamlined and more in-depth support structure for the process of training activity design and revision. Whilst fully acknowledging the advantages of high levels of autonomy and responsibility at the program level, the facilitating role of ITC's central support services can be expanded by offering comprehensive guidance and assistance at all stages of development, implementation, and enhancement of training activities.

This can be achieved through enhanced availability of ITC-wide templates and guidelines for training activity design, which would standardise:

- a) alignment between learning objectives, training methods and planned workload of participants, based on the learning outcome methodology in line with international educational norms;
- b) inclusion of learning objectives related to fostering interpersonal connection and to "soft" or transversal skills (e.g. intercultural competences, communication skills, teamwork) in all training activities, just as it is already the case with content-specific learning objectives;
- c) operationalise of learning objectives described under point b, through maintaining a sufficient level of learner interaction in all training activities (regardless of the mode of delivery) e.g. by enhancing the utilization of e-Campus forums for active course-related discussions, peer learning, informal tutor-facilitated interactions;
- d) meaningful integration of markers' perspectives and wider adoption of corresponding marker system (ILS, gender or SD/T);
- e) inclusion of training of trainers elements and/or dissemination strategies in training activities whenever this is possible in order to encourage participants to share knowledge, fostering practical skill application.

Revisiting the idea of an institutionalised learning approach, such as the Turin Learning Approach which was used by ITC in previous years, serves as a valuable guard-rail for quality assurance, while creating distinctive quality-branding for the centre.

**Recommendation 4: *Convert all face to face courses to a Blended Modality***

Our evaluation as well as previous evaluations have pointed out the overwhelming advantages of blended methodologies. Given this, as well as the commodification of online technologies, and the main-streaming of ITC's Online Campus throughout the Centre, it is recommended to stop offering pure face-to-face training activities, and to include some element of blended learning in all courses. The ratio of online vs face to face should be different according to the design needs of the course, but we cannot imagine a scenario where the blended dimension does not improve the overall training.

**Recommendation 5: *Establish opportunities for ongoing interaction beyond the course completion among participants and with ITC***

ITC already markets many of its open courses to graduates of other courses. Extending this practice by setting up a platform, such as an alumni network, which would foster continuous engagement post course completion, long-term networking, and knowledge/experience exchange among past participants, would be advantageous to ITC and its beneficiaries. This structure could then be further used in collecting long-term feedback from past participants and collect evidence of longer-term impact on the individual level and in relation to their organisations and wider environmental level.



Ultimately, such an initiative would help maintain a valuable community that contributes to the programs' growth and participants' professional development.

**Recommendation 6: *Improve methods for monitoring inclusion and diversity and increase outreach of the training offer***

ITC currently does not factor access of disadvantaged and under-represented groups into its overall evaluation methodologies. We recommend that this is gradually introduced as a KPI to better help meet the overall social mission of the ILO. In order to increase the level of inclusion and diversity, ITC should firstly implement a more granular data collection process that captures detailed information on its participants – including socio-economic background and various other factors (in addition to gender and country/region) that can potentially contribute to vulnerability or under-representation of certain groups of participants. This will enable ITC to gain deeper insights and identify specific barriers to access. Secondly, ITC should use these insights to develop strategies for eliminating or reducing these barriers to a maximal possible degree, e.g. through setting up a clear, transparent and well targeted policy of fee waivers and scholarships which would strengthen the position of those individuals and organisations that currently face difficulties in accessing the ITC courses due to costs involved.

**Recommendation 7: Accelerate and Mainstream the publication of online open courses and open access learning resources**

A notably valuable instrument for enhancing both inclusivity and outreach is ITC's offering of free online courses, which are excellently received by all ITC stakeholders. Given the success of the programme, it is logical to accelerate its rollout throughout the institution and to make the process by which courses are published more streamlined and transparent. To this end, ITC is recommended to upscale and diversify the range of free online courses. In these (and other) online courses, the asynchronous format should be strengthened, in order to deliver the full range of distance learning benefits to participants and to limit technical barriers.

In addition, it is recommended to consider standardised protocols whereby all newly created content at ITC is evaluated for inclusion into an 'open access' publicly available repository.

### III. Management response

8. **The Centre welcomes the findings of the external evaluation.** The evaluation shows that the Centre has managed to significantly grow its outreach in 2022 without compromising its high quality standards. The evaluation also provides further evidence that distance learning and face-to-face training are complementary learning modalities, best blended to maximize learning outcomes.

Going forward, and inspired by the principles of continuous quality improvement, the Centre will undertake a series of measures to further refine its learning services, building on the recommendations of the evaluators. The following paragraphs set down the **management response to the recommendations** made by the evaluators.

9. In response to the **first recommendation** to foster stronger communication and collaboration between programme teams, the Centre will further expand its existing institutional framework for knowledge sharing. As of mid-2023, the following

mechanisms and institutional databases were already in place: Periodic cluster-level, unit-level, department-level and senior management team level meetings; online Communities of Practices hosted on the e-campus, several service-specific quality management toolkits released by TDIR and accessible via the intranet, data analyses and data visuals, digital briefs, research reports and evaluation documents published on the Centre's website; the publication of a centre-wide quarterly news bulletin; brownbag-lunch info sessions for all staff; share-60 meetings between units in the training department; annual town hall meetings; induction seminars for newly recruited staff; a temporary staff reassignments programme; and team retreats financed through the staff development fund.

The following additional measures will be implemented:

- The functionalities of the staff chatbot (currently limited to internal governance documents) will be expanded to include all quality management guidelines and handbooks and standard operations, for ease of future reference particularly by newly recruited staff (also see output 5.4. of the 2024-25 ITCILO P&B: A consolidated Internal Governance Document System (IGDS))
- The induction training programme for newly recruited staff will be amended (also see below recommendation 2)
- The in-house communication processes and tools will be reviewed to make better use of the intranet and to unlock synergies and scale effects (see output 8.3. of the 2024-25 ITCILO P&B Strengthened Centre-wide communication practices).

**10.** In response to the **second recommendation** to implement systematic staff professional development opportunities especially around teaching/tutoring/facilitation competences, the Centre acknowledges that the initiative to access technical and functional skills training with finance from the staff development fund is currently left mostly to individual staff and their direct supervisors. Going forward, and once the new Performance Management System of the Centre is in place by end 2023, the identification of learning needs will become part of the Beginning of Cycle Appraisals; consequently, staff development needs can be systematically matched by HRS with learning activity offers financed through the staff development fund. It might furthermore be considered to make training in instructional design, training skills and tutoring competencies a mandatory part of the induction training programme for all newly recruited staff lacking requisite expertise.

As regard the end of activity participant survey there is a distinction between mandatory and optional questions. Questions related to the performance of different resource persons are classified as optional, and therefore not centrally registered and results not benchmarked. It will be considered to reclassify feedback on resource persons as mandatory and to systematically rank resource persons by client satisfaction, assessing their performance over time, at unit level and where applicable across units. To protect privacy rights of resource persons (many of them being from ILO and ILO constituents), data will be treated with strict confidentiality.

**11.** In response to the **third recommendation** to develop more comprehensive mechanisms for guiding the process of training activity design and revision, the Centre will implement the following measures

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications will be investigated, piloted and where applicable rolled out to enhance the learning offer on the e-campus, including a chatbot to facilitate more inter-connected search for training activities, AI tagged content, Forum monitoring, Integration of AI tools to allow content creators to leverage these when creating images and text based content, etc.;

- The online learning platforms linked to face-to-face courses advertised in the calendar will be continuously further enhanced to provide a world class blended learning experience including access to pre- and post-event evaluation surveys, quizzes and knowledge tests and where applicable virtual reality interfaces;
- The compliance of all newly produced self-guided distance learning courses with the ITCILO Distance Learning Quality Assurance Framework will be monitored;
- The mobile learning first approach will be rolled out across the service portfolio, mindful of the fact that particularly younger learners often access online learning activities via their mobile phones, a trend confirmed also by the e-Campus survey done in 2023;
- Relying on the Digital Facilitation Toolkit released by ITCILO in collaboration with ETUI in 2023, the Centre will mainstream a participatory and active learning oriented approach for synchronous online learning events such as webinars;
- Tailored face-to-face training activities will be explicitly promoted to always include online learning platforms, for quality management reasons;
- Members of the learning faculty will be offered coaching sessions on the creation of digitally accessible multi-media content for the training courses.

The Centre will furthermore offer marker sensitization training for its newly recruited staff, to raise awareness about the rationale of these instruments and to provide guidance how to mainstream core ILO messages throughout the course curriculum.

**12.** In response to the **fourth recommendation** to convert all face-to-face courses to a Blended Modality, management points out that already since 2019, *all* open face-to-face training courses of the Centre have a default online learning platform (priced into the service package) and consequently by default include elements of online interaction before, during and after training. For tailored face-to-face training activities designed and delivered ad hoc on request by institutional clients (whether on campus or in the field), the case is more complex: Here, the Centre proposes the use of blended learning modalities but the clients make the buying decision and online learning activities might or might not be accepted as part of the proposal. While striving to always promote blended learning, for tailored activities, the current approach will need to be maintained.

**13.** In response to the **fifth recommendation** to *establish opportunities for ongoing interaction beyond the course completion among participants and with ITC*, it needs to be recalled that since its foundation in 1964, the Centre has maintained alumni networks of former participants, to facilitate after-training counselling and peer-to-peer networking support to foster learning outcomes, and where applicable to attract return participation in the Centre's activities. In the past, the effectiveness of these follow-up support services has been sometimes affected by resource constraints and lack of technology to intervene via distance. In the wake of the digital transformation of the organization, some of these internal constraints have in the meantime been overcome thanks to Customer Relationship Management software and social media, but the Centre acknowledges the potential for further improving learning outcomes by way of systematizing follow up activities targeted at former beneficiaries remains significant. To unlock this potential, the Office of the Director of Training will assign resources to **systematically curate the alumni network** and target segments like TSD graduates and diploma level students with customized follow-up services. A special focus of these networking activities will be laid on social media.

- 14.** In response to the **sixth recommendation** to *improve methods for monitoring inclusion and diversity and increase outreach of the training offer*, a decision to recalibrate the social mission or current target group focus of the Centre is out of management scope. The Centre's evaluation methodologies assess the outcomes of its learning activities on beneficiaries *pre-identified* as priority target groups by the Board of the organization, in line with vulnerability criteria specified in the corresponding ILO strategy frameworks and determined by the International Labour Conference.

In the same vein, as regard the idea of segment-specific pricing of the Centre's services, it is important to note that more than 90% of the Centre's beneficiaries access these services free of charge or at highly subsidized rates, thanks to fellowships or other transaction subsidies granted by development partners often via ILO. Consequently, a distinction needs to be made between what beneficiaries want and what sponsors are willing to pay; and it needs to be taken into account that the latter may base their 'buying decision' on social development criteria but also political considerations and other elements. In its quest for social justice, rather than targeting self-paying end users with segment-specific pricing strategies, the Centre therefore targets like-minded development partners with segment-specific resource mobilization activities. These activities are described in output 3.1. of the 2024-25 P&B: More and stronger development partnerships with sponsors

What the Centre can do within the road-planks of its strategy corridor is to more systematically promote its free distance learning services and its existing fellowship programmes for paid courses to target groups within special vulnerabilities that are within current scope, in particular women and beneficiaries from least developed countries.

- 15.** In response to the **seventh recommendation** to accelerate and mainstream the publication of online open courses and open access learning resources, the Centre will undertake the following measures:
- The capacity of the eCampus will be increased to facilitate further growth in numbers of learners concurrently accessing services;
  - The suite of Master Classes - top quality self-guided distance learning courses promoting ILO core messages – will be further expanded and promoted;
  - The effectiveness of the accessibility toolkit integrated during the 2022-23 biennium will be evaluated to inform further refinements. Moreover, learning content of the self-guided courses will be reviewed to improve its digital accessibility;
  - The Centre will further explore in collaboration with the ILO publishing selected flagship learning materials under a Creative Commons license.

***The Board is invited to provide guidance on the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation and on the management response.***