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# ACTEMP Training Needs Assessment 2026 - 2027 Report

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## ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

A concise yet detailed report  
covering EBMOs' training  
activities & advisory services  
future needs.

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International Training Center of the International Labour  
Organization (ITCILO)

**Employers' Activities Programme (ACTEMP)**

# **Training Needs Assessment for ACTEMP's strategic plan 2026 – 2027**

**International Training Centre of the International Labour  
Organisation**

**Employer's Activities Programme (ACTEMP)**

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# Executive summary

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The Employers' Activities Programme (ACTEMP) of the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITCILO) delivers training and advisory services to strengthen Employers' and Business Membership Organisations (EBMOs) worldwide. To ensure its offer remains demand-driven and forward-looking, ACTEMP Turin conducts a biennial Training Needs Assessment (TNA) to inform its strategic planning. The 2025 assessment underpins the design of ACTEMP's 2026–2027 work plan, identifying EBMOs' evolving capacity needs, preferred learning modalities, and demand for advisory services.

The TNA combined an online survey of EBMO executives with structured interviews with ACTEMP Field Specialists to ensure both quantitative and qualitative depth. The survey, conducted between July and September 2025 through Qualtrics, gathered 73 responses from a global pool of 337 organisations, of which 46 were valid (completion rate  $\geq 60\%$ ), representing a 13.7% valid response rate. The instrument included 18 questions across three main areas: (1) training priorities and organisational challenges; (2) learning modalities and co-funding preferences; and (3) advisory service needs. Complementary interviews with ten Field Specialists provided regional perspectives on trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping ACTEMP's future portfolio.

Respondents represent ACTEMP's global constituency: Latin America and Asia and the Pacific each accounted for 28% of valid responses, followed by Africa (20%), Europe and Central Asia (17%), and the Arab States (7%). Twenty-eight per cent of respondents were women, confirming continued underrepresentation in EBMO leadership positions and highlighting the need to monitor gender balance in future cycles. Most participants (46%) were Executive Directors or equivalent senior managers, ensuring that findings reflect institution-wide perspectives rather than individual experiences.

Findings reveal a consistent pattern of **structural challenges** and evolving capacity-building priorities. Internally, EBMOs continue to face constraints in financial sustainability, membership development, and human resource management, challenges that define their institutional resilience. Financial sustainability remains the top concern, driven by a lack of revenue sources diversification and strategic planning. Membership retention and talent attraction are second, reflecting the need to modernise engagement models and strengthen digital systems such as CRMs. Human resource management now stands as a core priority, with many EBMOs struggling to attract and retain skilled staff, maintain institutional memory, and professionalise management systems.

Beyond these, governance and strategic leadership have gained new prominence, particularly in field specialists' views, who identify weak governance as a root cause linking financial fragility, leadership turnover, and low accountability. Compared with the 2023 TNA, the 2025 edition shows a clearer differentiation between internal and external challenges and a shift from operational to strategic capacity gaps.

**Externally**, EBMOs operate in increasingly volatile and uncertain environments marked by political instability, economic fragility, and technological disruption. Directors emphasised the immediate pressures of macroeconomic volatility and regulatory unpredictability, while specialists underlined deeper structural issues such as shrinking civic space, weak tripartite consultation, and limited influence in policymaking. Technological transformation and artificial intelligence are redefining competitiveness, skills, and service delivery, creating both new risks and strategic opportunities.

**Training priorities** mirror these dynamics. Lobbying and advocacy emerged as the top training priority for the 2026–2027 cycle, an upward shift from 2023, reflecting employers' need to enhance their influence and strategic communication in increasingly complex policy environments. Financial sustainability, membership development, and service delivery remain central, while project management, governance and leadership,

and communication and outreach gained significant traction. On the policy side, artificial intelligence and digital transformation now rank first, followed by skills development and talent attraction and wage policies, confirming that EBMOs are aligning their capacity-building agendas with global technological and labour-market transitions.

Preferences for **training modalities** remain stable: blended learning is the most preferred format (55%), followed by face-to-face (34%) and distance-only (11%). Blended approaches are valued for balancing flexibility, peer exchange, and cost efficiency. However, limited co-funding capacity persists, with only a small minority of organisations able to finance travel for in-person training—underscoring the need for continued scholarship support and cost-sharing mechanisms.

For the first time, the assessment systematically explored **advisory service needs**, revealing a strong shift toward practical, tailored institutional support. The most requested services are Digital Transformation Solutions (22%), Membership Plan Development (19%), Policy Advisory (17%), and Institutional Assessment (16%). These reflect EBMOs' intention to modernise operations, diversify revenue, and strengthen governance. Qualitative evidence shows that digitalisation is now viewed not merely as a delivery tool but as an organisational transformation process encompassing CRM, automation, and AI-based systems. Field specialists confirmed these priorities but stressed that advisory interventions must be anchored in governance renewal and leadership development to ensure strategic thinking and organisational sustainability.

Taken together, the findings show that ACTEMP Turin's core offer, training and advisory support in governance, financial sustainability, membership, and advocacy, remains highly relevant and responsive to EBMOs' evolving needs. Therefore, following the analysis, the recommendations are organised around three complementary areas: training, advisory services, and ACTEMP Turin's evolving strategic role.

On the **training** side, priorities focus on modernising EBMOs' institutional foundations through reinforced governance and leadership programmes, embedding modules on strategic foresight and leadership succession. The update of the Strategic Advocacy and Communication course aims to strengthen data-informed lobbying and strategic storytelling, while new offers such as Project Design and Management and Research and Data Literacy address growing demand for practical, results-oriented skills. Digitalisation and artificial intelligence are now integral to this agenda, with high demand for new training on AI integration into daily management and operations, helping EBMOs improve efficiency, decision-making, and service delivery.

In parallel, regarding **advisory services**, the most requested areas include Digital Transformation Solutions, focusing on CRM, workflow automation, and light AI applications; Membership Plan Development, guiding organisations to revitalise recruitment and retention strategies; and Institutional Assessment and Governance Renewal, ensuring clearer mandates, accountability, and leadership continuity. A dedicated stream on financial resilience has been proposed to support EBMOs in diversifying revenue sources, optimising membership dues systems, and strengthening long-term financial strategies.

At the strategic level, ACTEMP Turin is encouraged to act as a knowledge integrator and catalyst, developing modular resources centrally, enabling field specialists to adapt them locally, and ensuring follow-up to sustain results. This model is complemented by operational enablers such as expanding linguistic accessibility, establishing shared digital infrastructure for smaller EBMOs, and fostering peer-learning partnerships between advanced and emerging organisations. Taken together, these measures aim to consolidate ACTEMP Turin's role as a global hub for innovation, institutional renewal, and continuous capacity development within the employers' network.

Overall, the 2025 Training Needs Assessment confirms that persistent constraints are primarily external or structural, rather than content-related, indicating that ACTEMP's core offer remains robust and well aligned with EBMOs' evolving needs. The findings highlight the importance of sustained follow-up, integrated

advisory pathways, and continued investment in digital readiness and financial resilience to deepen impact in future cycles.

# Introduction and context

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## Introduction

The Employers' Activities Programme of the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation (ITCILO) is a dedicated unit that provides training and capacity building activities to Employers' and Business Membership Organisations (EBMOs). To ensure quality, accountability and continued relevance, ACTEMP undertakes an independent Training Needs Assessment (TNA) to inform its training activities work plan for the next two to three years. This new assessment underpins planning for the 2026–2027 cycle.

The operating context for EBMOs is shifting rapidly. Digitalisation and early AI adoption, evolving skills requirements, new regulatory regimes (notably due-diligence and sustainability), demographic change, and greater macro-policy volatility are reshaping agendas and delivery models. In this context, ACTEMP's priority is to pinpoint the capabilities and topics of highest relevance now, and to calibrate delivery modalities that balance reach, cost-effectiveness, networking, and practice-based learning. For the first time, the TNA also assesses demand for tailored advisory services, identifying which services EBMOs expect to need over the next two years and the factors driving that demand, to inform service design. Overall, the assessment examines how training and advisory priorities are evolving, and which learning modalities best match organisations' differing capacities and resource constraints.

This report focuses on EBMOs' training needs, specifically to:

1. Identify priority topics and competencies required by EBMOs for the next two years, across management and policy domains.
2. Define preferred learning modalities: including the balance between face-to-face, online, and blended formats.
3. Assess demand for advisory services that complement training and support institutional strengthening.
4. Gather inputs from ACTEMP specialists to ensure global coverage, regional relevance, and alignment with ILO priorities.

# Methodology

## Data sources

This Training and Management Needs Assessment (TNA) combined quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure both breadth and depth of insights. Information was gathered from EBMO executives through an online survey and from ACTEMP field specialists through structured interviews.

## Evaluation model and survey design

The online survey included 18 multiple-choice and open-ended questions (see Annex 1). It was designed to identify EBMOs' organisational challenges, capacity-development priorities, preferred learning modalities, and advisory needs for the 2026–2027 period.

The questionnaire was administered through Qualtrics between 14 July and 5 September 2025, and made available in English, French, and Spanish to facilitate global participation. Questions were grouped into three main sections: (1) training needs and priorities, covering both internal management and external policy areas; (2) preferred learning formats and durations (face-to-face, blended, or distance learning); and (3) advisory service demand, assessing areas where tailored institutional support would add value.

To complement the survey and contextualise results, 10 ACTEMP field specialists provided inputs through interviews conducted in September 2025. Their perspectives offer an operational view of trends, challenges, and opportunities observed directly through advisory and training engagement in the field. The exchanges followed a structured guide (Annex 2) with 5 thematic blocks: (1) identification of impactful trainings and advisory services delivered in the past two years; (2) assessment of EBMOs' internal and external challenges; (3) mapping of priority capacity-building needs, training topics and policy areas; (4) reflections on delivery tools and modalities, including blended and virtual formats; and (5) suggestions for ACTEMP Turin's future strategic direction and outreach.

Quantitative responses were aggregated and analysed descriptively, while qualitative inputs from open-ended survey fields and specialist interviews were coded thematically. Categories followed ACTEMP's established areas of work and standard terminology to ensure comparability with previous TNAs. Where relevant, findings from specialists were triangulated with survey responses to provide a fuller picture of regional variations and common global trends.

Given the predominance of open responses and the diversity of organisations represented, interpretation privileges patterns of convergence rather than statistical generalisation. The resulting insights are intended to guide ACTEMP's Strategic Plan 2026–2027, ensuring that training and advisory offerings remain demand-driven, future-oriented, and responsive to EBMOs' evolving realities.

# Findings

The analysis of survey and interview findings is presented in four sections. First, an overview of the survey demographics, outlining the characteristics of respondents and regional distribution. Second, an examination of training needs and priorities, including the internal and external challenges shaping EBMOs' capacity requirements. Third, an analysis of preferred learning modalities and delivery formats, highlighting trends in the choice between face-to-face, blended, and distance learning approaches. Fourth, a section on advisory service needs and strategic directions, summarising areas where EBMOs seek tailored institutional support and how these insights can inform ACTEMP Turin's 2026–2027 portfolio.

Each section draws primarily on survey results, complemented by qualitative evidence from field specialists and, where relevant, comparisons with findings from previous training needs assessments.

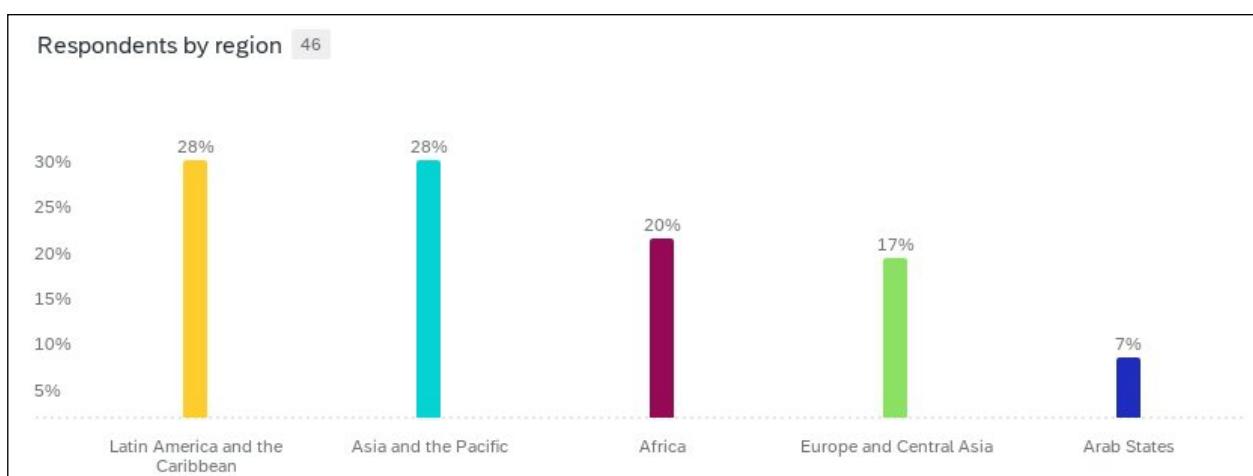
## Survey demographics

The 2026–2027 Training and Management Needs Assessment survey was distributed to 337 Executive Directors and Presidents of EBMOs worldwide. A total of 73 responses were received, corresponding to a 21.7% response rate. Of these, 46 responses met the  $\geq 60\%$  completion threshold and were considered valid for analysis, corresponding to a valid response rate of 13.7%. While the response rate may appear modest, it reflects engagement at the executive level, meaning each response represents organisational, rather than individual, perspectives. Consequently, findings are suitable to inform ACTEMP strategic planning, though cross-cycle comparisons should account for differences in regional composition and sample size.

### Respondents' geographic area

Respondents were drawn from all five ILO regions, showing a broadly balanced geographical representation. The largest shares came from Latin America and the Caribbean (28%) and Asia and the Pacific (28%), followed by Africa (20%), Europe and Central Asia (17%), and the Arab States (7%). This pattern reflects ACTEMP's training outreach in recent years, with particularly strong engagement in Latin America and Asia. Slight underrepresentation from the Arab States and parts of Africa suggests a need for continued outreach in those regions during the next cycle. Overall, the distribution is sufficiently diverse to identify cross-regional training priorities and modality preferences (see Figure 1).

 **Figure 1. Respondents by region**



## Field specialists' geographic area

ACTEMP field posts cover all ILO regions and subregions: Africa (5), Arab States (1), Asia–Pacific (3), Europe (2), and Latin America & the Caribbean (5), for a total of 16 specialist positions. During this TNA cycle, 3 posts were vacant or in transition, leaving 13 specialists available for consultation. Of these, 3 did not respond, and 10 inputs were ultimately collected via videocall interviews conducted in English (4), Spanish (4), and French (2). Annex 2 presents the interview/questionnaire guide used with specialists. Annex 3 compiles their contributions, with Spanish and French content translated into English and minor edits for clarity.

Specialist coverage broadly reflected the ACTEMP's global footprint, but two subregions were not represented in the specialist evidence: North Africa and Eastern Europe & Central Asia. Where subregional gaps exist, the EBMO survey offers partial compensation by providing organisation-level perspectives from those areas.

 **Table 1 – ACTEMP specialists: response status and subregional share of survey**

#	Specialists	Sub-Region	Language and Mode	Share of Survey
1	Farid Hegazy	North Africa	No interview	0%
2	Julie Kazagui	West Africa	FR - Interview	Video/call 9%
3	Vacant	Southern Africa	No interview	7%
4	Vacant	East Africa	No interview	7%
5	Lassina Taoré	Central Africa	FR - Interview	Video/call 9%
6	Wade Bromley	SEA & Pacific	EN - Interview	Video/call 16%
7	Gary Rynhart	East & SEA	EN - Interview	Video/call 4%
↔	Ravindra Peiris	South Asia	EN - Interview	Video/call 4%
↔	Iulia Drumea	Central & Eastern Europe	No interview	7%
10	Vladimir Curovic	Eastern Europe & Central Asia	No interview	0%
11	Vacant	LAC	No interview	Regional = 26%
12	Luis González Gómez	Andean Countries	ES - Interview	Video/call 4%

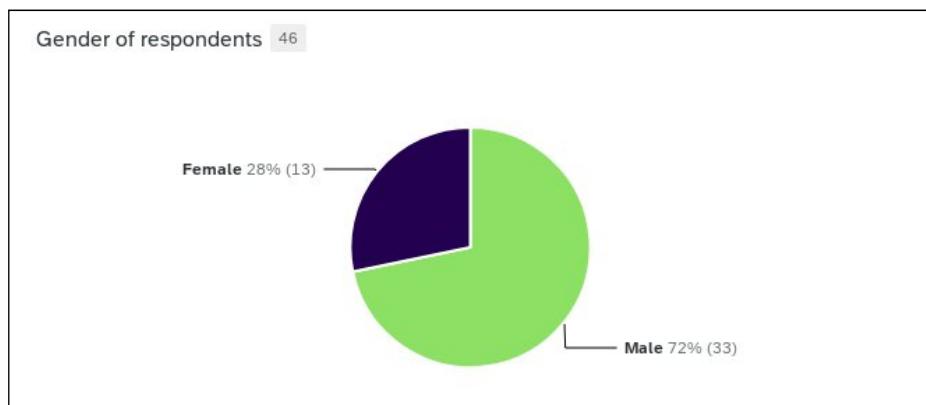
13 María Victoria Giulietti	Caribbean	EN - Interview	Video/call 9%
14 Randall Arias Solano	Central America	ES - Interview	Video/call 7%
15 Karen Rosales	Southern Cone	ES - Interview	Video/call 2%
16 José Manuel Medina Checa	Arab States	ES - Interview	Video/call 4%

| EN – English, ES – Spanish, FR – French

## Gender of respondents

Among the 46 valid responses, 33 were male and 13 were female, indicating that women represented around 28% of the total respondents. This gender imbalance mirrors the broader leadership composition of many EBMOs, where women continue to be underrepresented in executive and managerial positions (see Figure 2). As gender information was not collected in previous TNAs, no comparative trend can be established. Including this question in future cycles will be important to monitor progress and better understand gender representation in EBMO leadership, a crucial contextual factor for future capacity-building and diversity initiatives.

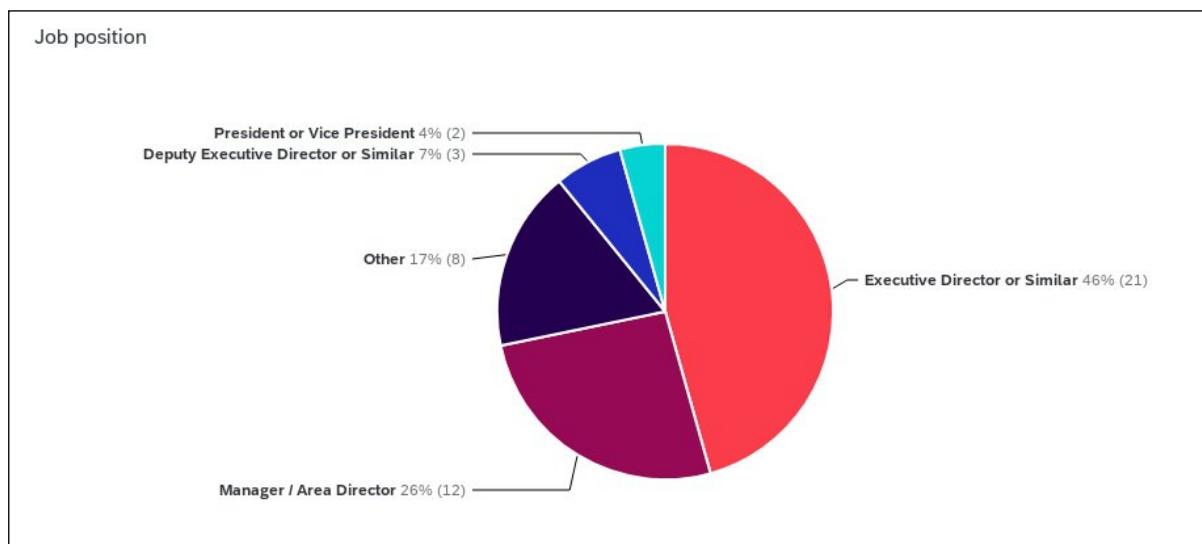
 **Figure 2. Gender of respondents**



## Respondents' place of work

The majority of respondents were Executive Directors or similar senior officers (46%), followed by Managers or Area Directors (26%), Deputy Executive Directors (7%), and Presidents or Vice Presidents (4%). The remaining 17% were categorized as “Other,” open-text entries show that most respondents are in *de facto* executive roles e.g., Secretary General, Director General, General Manager, and Director, alongside one governance role (Board Chairperson) and two specialist roles (Head of Training, Web Developer) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Respondents' place of work



This distribution of roles and responsibilities strengthens the value of the TNA findings, as it captures the perspectives of executive leaders, their deputies, and senior managers, individuals with direct oversight of organisational strategy, operations, and staff development. Their positions ensure that the responses reflect informed, institution-wide views on current and emerging training needs of EBMOs.

# Survey results and field specialists' insights

The following sections summarise the results of the Training Needs Assessment (TNA) survey, focusing on the challenges, skills, training and advisory services priorities identified by Employers' and Business Membership Organisations.

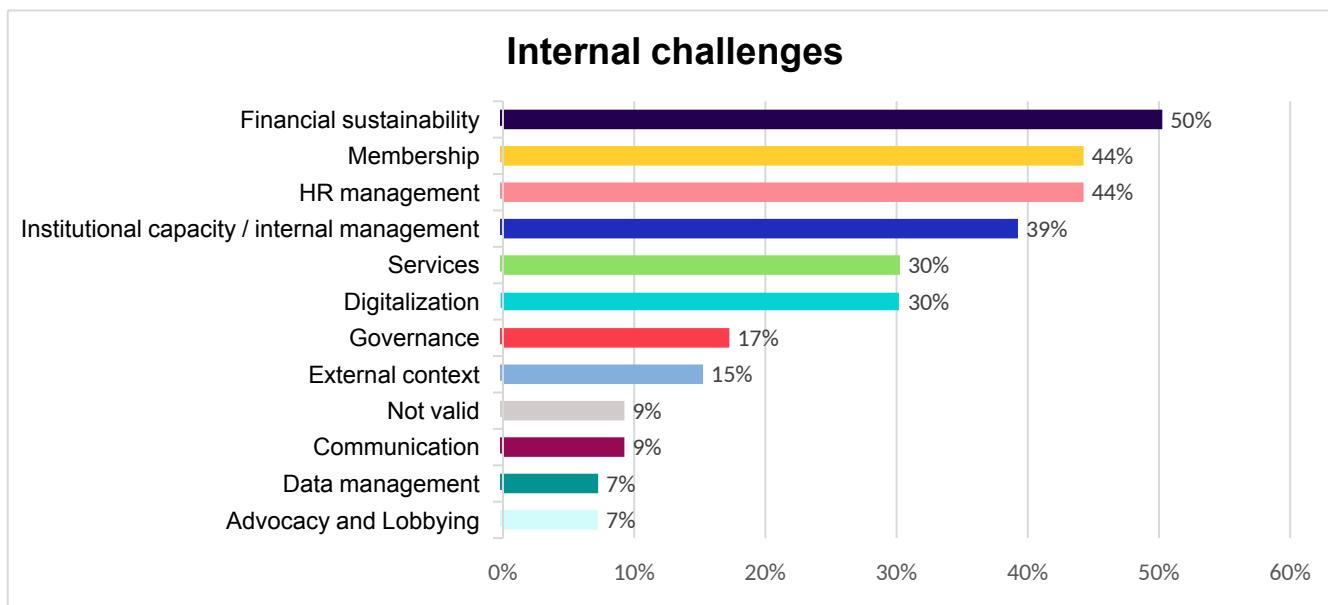
## Challenges

The 2025 TNA survey asked EBMO executives to identify their three most pressing internal managerial and external contextual or policy challenges expected over the next two to three years. The open-ended responses were subsequently coded, grouped by common themes, and aggregated by frequency. The results show a clear pattern: EBMOs continue to grapple with financing, membership, and human resources management issues, while externally they operate in increasingly unstable political and economic environments, marked by technological disruption and limited influence in policymaking.

### Internal challenges

To identify the principal internal challenges that EBMOs expect to face over the next two to three years, the 2025 survey asked respondents to list up to three key internal issues. Open-ended responses were collected and subsequently translated, standardised, and coded according to eleven thematic categories: Financial sustainability, Membership, Institutional Capacity & Internal Management, HR Management, Services, Governance, Digitalisation, Data Management, Advocacy and Lobbying, Communication, and External Context. This coding process enabled the aggregation of responses by frequency and topic. The analysis revealed that **financial sustainability** remains the most pressing concern for EBMOs, followed by **membership management** and **human resource management** (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Internal challenges, aggregated data



**Financial sustainability** emerges as the most frequently cited first-priority challenge. EBMOs consistently reported difficulties in maintaining stable and diversified revenue streams, often relying heavily on member contributions, project-based funding, or ad hoc external support. This dependency exposes them to cyclical funding shocks and financial uncertainty. Several respondents explicitly referred to income instability and limited financial autonomy. One EBMO described the situation as a *"Financial sustainability and operational capacity challenge, as the organization depends heavily on member chambers' contributions and ad hoc support, which threatens continuity of services and staff retention."* Another noted the need to *"diversify income sources and reduce dependency on a single funding stream to ensure institutional autonomy."*

Other organisations emphasised *budget predictability* and *cash flow management* as critical issues. Examples included concerns such as “*having the resources to provide the best possible services to our members*,” highlighting how limited resources directly constrains relevance and member outreach. In short, financial sustainability is not merely an accounting issue but a structural condition that affects strategic planning, staffing, and service innovation. Given its pervasive influence on all other organisational functions, it stands as the top-ranked challenge identified across the survey.

The second most frequent theme concerns **membership management**, including acquisition, recruitment, retention, and engagement of members, as well as the redefinition of the value proposition. Membership is the foundation of EBMOs’ legitimacy and financial base, yet also an area of vulnerability requiring modernisation and new engagement models. Several EBMOs acknowledged challenges in maintaining membership numbers amid changing employer needs and limited perceived value. As one respondent put it, “*Retaining membership and collecting dues remain difficult due to outdated systems and lack of integrated CRM tools.*” Another explained that the organisation “*needs to redefine the member value proposition, including introducing digital membership and creating services that reflect new business trends.*” Engagement also emerged as a central issue. Multiple respondents stressed the difficulty of “*activating members to be involved in activities*,” or “*finding members willing to contribute time and effort.*” Others cited the need to “*ensure that every member benefits from the organisation’s services*,” indicating a recognition that the membership experience must become more tangible and outcome-oriented. A related concern involves data and communication systems supporting member management. Weak or fragmented databases and the absence of automated CRM platforms hinder the ability to track engagement, segment members, or personalise outreach. Thus, membership management ranks as the second most frequently mentioned challenge, reflecting a cluster of interconnected issues related to data management, customer relationship systems (CRM), and member engagement. Strengthening membership systems, therefore, represents a priority area for future ACTEMP support, combining governance, financial, and digital capacity-building dimensions.

The third most frequently cited challenge relates to **human resource management**, encompassing both staff capacity and institutional continuity. Many EBMOs operate with small teams stretched across multiple functions, which limits the organisation’s responsiveness and its ability to sustain complex initiatives. Respondents pointed to talent attraction and retention as a major issue. Typical concerns included “*shortage of qualified personnel*,” “*staff turnover and lack of succession planning*,” and “*difficulty attracting specialised staff with digital or technical skills*.” One organisation summarised this challenge succinctly: “*Talent retention, succession planning, and maintaining institutional memory are our greatest risks.*” Several respondents also stressed the need for structured staff capacity-building, especially in emerging domains such as digital transformation, data management, and service design. As one answer noted, “*We need to strengthen staff competencies in emerging technologies and data handling to keep up with new work forms and hybrid environments.*” The impact of limited HR capacity is systemic: it slows strategic plan implementation, reduces service quality, and strains governance structures, particularly in organisations where leadership transitions are frequent or not accompanied by staff development. For ACTEMP, this points to a growing demand for advisory and training interventions that combine institutional strengthening with individual skills development, helping EBMOs build stable, future-ready teams able to sustain innovation and organisational memory over time.

These three themes: financial sustainability, membership management, and HR management, are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. A financially constrained EBMO cannot invest in skilled personnel or modern membership systems; limited staff capacity reduces member engagement and service quality, which in turn weakens revenue and retention. Respondents’ narratives collectively point to a cycle of constrained capacity, where operational fragility impedes strategic innovation. However, the responses also reveal awareness and intent: organisations increasingly recognise the need for revenue sources diversification, digital tools, and new value propositions. Several mentioned plans to expand fee-based services, professionalise communication, or implement membership databases. These forward-looking

examples demonstrate that despite persistent constraints, many EBMOs are actively pursuing institutional renewal.

Immediately after HR issues, respondents frequently referred to **institutional capacity and internal management constraints**, a broad category that captures weaknesses in organisational structure, strategic planning, and coordination between departments or regional branches. Many EBMOs described operating with fragmented internal systems or “*limited cross-departmental coordination and knowledge sharing*,” which impedes strategic alignment and slows implementation. Several mentioned the absence of long-term planning frameworks, citing “*no strategy*” or “*need for modern strategic plans*.” Others emphasised succession and leadership continuity at both managerial and board levels as crucial elements of institutional capacity. One example noted a “*limited structure and responsiveness in service provision due to lack of dedicated teams and regular needs assessments*.” Field specialists have also underlined similar gaps, particularly the need to reinforce EBMOs’ strategic planning and forward-looking capabilities. This convergence of perspectives suggests that ACTEMP support in strategic management, foresight, and institutional design will be essential to help organisations anticipate change and operate with greater strategic consistency.

Challenges related to **services** rank next, underscoring EBMOs’ ongoing efforts to modernise and diversify their offer to members. Respondents often linked this to the broader question of value creation: “*We need to diversify our service menu and develop new and relevant capacity-building programmes*”, one noted. Others emphasised service quality and structure, citing “*lack of a systematic approach to service design and evaluation*” and “*limited budget and partnerships to co-develop high-quality services*.” Many organisations aspire to move beyond traditional training or advocacy to more market-oriented or digital services, including business advisory, innovation, or sustainability-related products. Taken together, these responses suggest that EBMOs are aware of the need to reposition their service portfolios to match emerging business challenges, but face structural and resource constraints in doing so. For ACTEMP, this indicates growing demand for practical support in service innovation—helping organisations strengthen their design and evaluation systems, integrate digital tools, and develop partnership models that make new services financially and operationally viable.

**Digital transformation** continues to feature prominently across all challenge levels. Respondents acknowledged that the shift towards digital service delivery, online training, and data-driven decision-making is no longer optional. Several EBMOs reported inadequate digital infrastructure, such as “*lack of advanced digital systems for training delivery*” or “*limited digital skills among staff*.” Others mentioned emerging needs such as data protection, confidentiality, and cybersecurity, reflecting an increasing awareness of compliance risks. Digitalisation, however, is viewed less as a standalone issue than as a cross-cutting enabler: it underpins improvements in communication, membership management, and service innovation. The main barrier is not conceptual but practical: limited budgets, technical know-how, and the absence of long-term digital strategies. For ACTEMP, this points to a clear area of opportunity: supporting EBMOs in building not only digital infrastructure but also in-house digital competencies. Strengthening staff capacities to use, adapt, and manage digital tools could become a strategic niche for ACTEMP, ensuring that digital platforms and systems are effectively implemented and sustained over time.

**Governance-related issues** also appear repeatedly, often intertwined with leadership and structural renewal. Some organisations referred to “*limited commitment and contribution of the boards*,” “*lack of effective leadership and clearer accountability mechanisms*,” and “*institutional unity of representation*.” This theme reinforces that governance is not only about compliance or structure; it is about strategic stewardship and maintaining organisational coherence through change. While survey respondents tended to place governance in the lower half of their rankings, field specialists adopted a more strategic, corrective lens and cited governance issues more frequently. This divergence suggests that systemic governance reform may be under-perceived by EBMOs relative to its importance for long-term performance. For ACTEMP, this points to a continued need to strengthen governance advisory services, particularly in board

effectiveness, leadership transition planning, and institutional accountability frameworks, to ensure EBMOs remain credible, coherent, and adaptable.

Although mentioned less frequently, **communication** challenges reveal significant insight into how EBMOs perceive their visibility and outreach effectiveness. Several respondents reported “*lack of strategic visibility and communication plan*” or “*absence of consistent outreach and PR strategies*.” Limited communication capacity constrains advocacy, service promotion, and member recruitment. Respondents often linked weak communication to internal fragmentation or underuse of digital channels. Addressing this challenge involves both professionalising communication functions and integrating them with broader institutional strategies. ACTEMP could play a catalytic role by helping EBMOs design integrated communication strategies, leverage digital tools for outreach, and strengthen the link between communication, advocacy, and member engagement, thus enhancing both influence and value perception.

**Data management** emerged as a newer but increasingly relevant theme. Organisations cited “*strengthening and updating databases*,” “*creation of an internal knowledge base*,” and “*ensuring data protection and confidentiality*.” These comments point to the growing recognition that data is a strategic asset, essential for member management, service design, and communication impact. However, respondents also acknowledged that they often lack the technical infrastructure and expertise to translate this potential into operational efficiency. For ACTEMP, this signals an opportunity to support EBMOs in developing data governance and analytics capacities, ensuring that data is collected, protected, and used strategically to inform decision-making and service development.

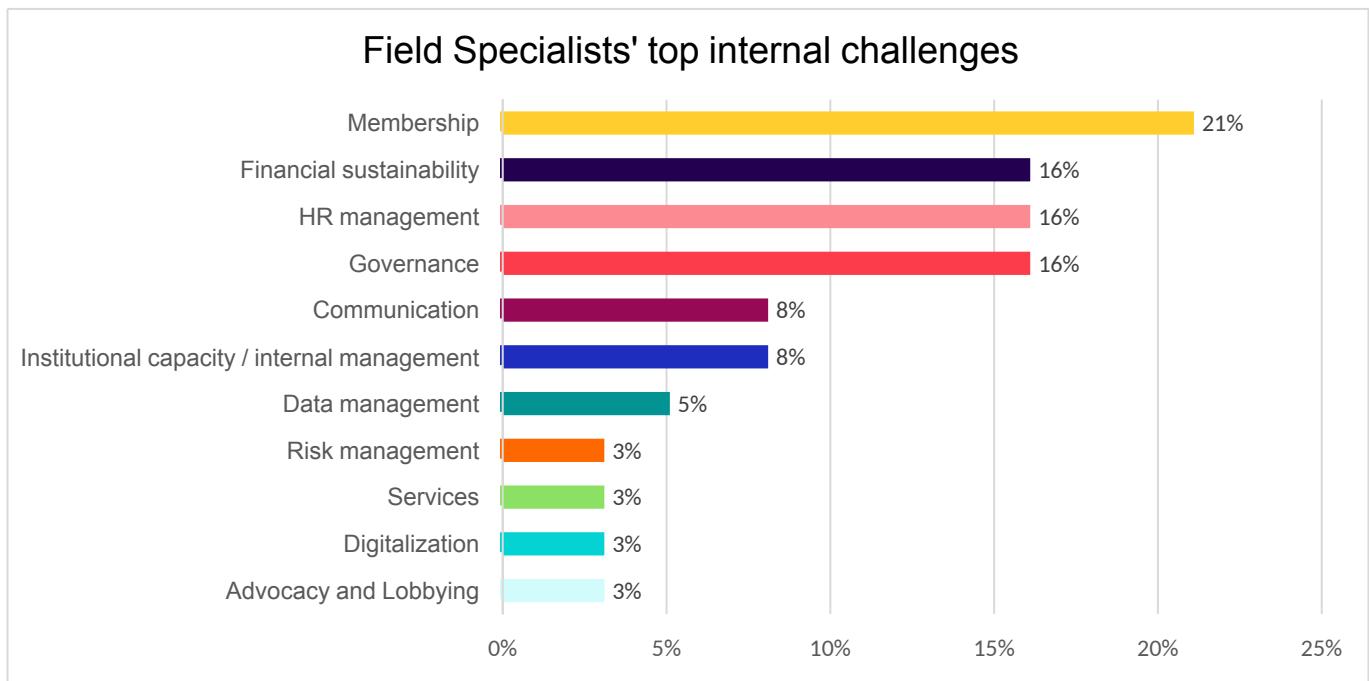
A smaller but notable cluster of responses relates to **advocacy and lobbying**. Respondents mentioned the need to “*strengthen capacity to influence public policy*” and “*improve participation in policy forums such as the Tripartite National Forum*.” Others emphasised a skills gap in lobbying techniques or the need to build partnerships to amplify their policy voice. These insights indicate that while advocacy remains a core EBMO function, maintaining credibility and influence requires continued investment in research, evidence generation, and coalition-building. ACTEMP could reinforce this capacity by offering modular, practice-based support on policy engagement, evidence-informed advocacy, and strategic communication, helping EBMOs position themselves as trusted partners in tripartite dialogue.

Finally, while not an internal management issue per se, several respondents highlighted **external pressures** that directly shape internal functioning. Examples include “*government attacks on employers’ organisations for defending business freedom*,” “*the high and growing level of informality in the economy*,” and “*instability due to political conflict*.” These factors, which will be analysed more in depth in the section on external challenges, serve as an important backdrop for interpreting internal vulnerabilities: many EBMOs operate under continuous external stress, making resilience and adaptability central institutional priorities.

### Field specialists’ view on internal challenges

To complement executives’ responses, we also drew on interviews with ACTEMP Field Specialists, whose regional perspectives help contextualise and validate the survey findings. Across all regions, specialists converged on **membership and value proposition** as the most recurrent internal challenge. Crucially, they also placed **financial sustainability, human resources management**, and **governance** on an equal footing, each cited with similar frequency, elevating governance into the top tier. This is the major departure from directors’ views, for whom governance tended to rank lower, whereas field specialists see it as a core constraint intertwined with financial health and organisational capacity (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Field specialists' internal challenges



**Membership** and value proposition remain the dominant concern for EBMOs worldwide. Specialists highlighted that this challenge is not limited to declining numbers but reflects a deeper issue of relevance and credibility. In Asia and the Pacific, traditional membership models were said to be losing traction with emerging business types such as digital and platform-based companies, start-ups, and informal or hybrid enterprises. The South Asia specialist underlined that EBMOs often lack mechanisms to systematically understand members' evolving needs and to adapt their services accordingly. In Latin America and Africa, weak service delivery, limited policy influence, and low visibility contribute to member disengagement and poor compliance with dues. In Central America, there is an absence of a coherent long-term value proposition as the root cause of weak membership and financial fragility: organisations often focus on short-term recruitment rather than articulating a shared mission or service strategy. In the Caribbean, shrinking markets and ongoing migration reduce the potential membership base, forcing EBMOs to rethink how to remain relevant in smaller economies and more mobile labour markets. Several specialists stressed that innovation in membership models, such as targeting SMEs, start-ups, or sectoral associations, is essential to foster engagement and restore legitimacy.

**Financial sustainability** is another persistent and systemic challenge across nearly all regions. Specialists emphasised that most EBMOs continue to rely heavily on membership dues and project-based funding, leaving them vulnerable to market volatility and external shocks. In Africa and Latin America, where political and economic instability is more pronounced, this fragility is compounded by irregular payments from members and the absence of diversified income sources. Specialists in the Arab States noted that many organisations remain trapped in a cycle of dependency on membership fees without developing alternative revenue streams such as paid services, sponsorships, or consultancy activities. In Asia and the Pacific, financial strain often reflects limited business modelling and insufficient capacity to monetise training or advisory expertise. A few regions also pointed to structural "thinness", particularly among small or island EBMOs, whose budgets barely cover basic operations, preventing investment in professional staff, technology, or new initiatives once external projects end.

**Human resources** and **institutional capacity** were likewise cited by a majority of specialists as a critical bottleneck limiting both operational effectiveness and long-term development. Many EBMOs operate with small teams, limited professionalisation, and weak systems for planning, communication, monitoring, and performance management. In Africa and the Arab States, retention is a chronic problem: once trained,

EBMO staff are often recruited by the private sector or international agencies offering higher salaries, eroding continuity and institutional memory. The West Africa specialist stressed that frequent turnover undermines the impact of training and advisory support, as new staff often start from zero. In Latin America, EBMOs tend to depend on a few key individuals whose departure can paralyse operations. The Caribbean specialist pointed to specific skills gaps in data analysis, digital literacy, and project management, as well as brain drain, which narrows the available talent pool. In South Asia, specialists observed that staff often lack the analytical and strategic skills needed to understand and represent the needs of emerging business models. Several regions identified the need for more structured HR systems, professional development opportunities, and internal performance management as critical to consolidate the results of training and advisory support.

**Governance** stands out as the most significant addition to the top tier of challenges compared with directors' views. While governance ranked lower among EBMO executives, field specialists consistently described it as a root cause of other organisational weaknesses. Across regions, specialists cited outdated statutes, blurred lines between boards and executive secretariats, weak accountability mechanisms, and the absence of ethics, risk-management, or conflict-of-interest policies. In Africa, specialists described "governance fragility," noting cases where board interference, politicisation, or even non-compliance with labour and fiscal laws (such as unpaid social security contributions) had damaged credibility and exposed organisations to legal risk. In Latin America, governance deficits were linked to the absence of strategic planning, short leadership cycles, and limited board renewal, often resulting in institutional inertia and inconsistent decision-making. In Asia and the Pacific, several EBMOs have not updated their governance frameworks for over a decade, leaving them ill-equipped to manage modern partnerships, donor relations, or compliance requirements. In Central America, the lack of clear governance and strategic vision was singled out as the central problem undermining both financial and membership performance. Specialists across the board stressed that improved governance, built on transparent, professional, and accountable leadership structures, is essential for institutional credibility and long-term sustainability.

Beyond the four main challenges, specialists highlighted a set of cross-cutting and emerging issues that compound performance gaps. First, **communication**, both strategic and crisis-related, remains weak in several regions (notably Asia and Latin America). Many EBMOs lack coherent communication strategies, media engagement skills, and clear public positioning. Closely related is **advocacy and public affairs**: organisations often struggle to project a consistent employer voice in policy debates or to translate technical evidence into persuasive messages. In Asia and the Pacific, a recurrent theme was limited **project management** capacity. Specialists observed that many EBMOs lack the systems and skills to design, implement, monitor, and report on initiatives, especially donor-funded projects, making it harder to ensure accountability, sustain funding partnerships, and maintain continuity beyond short training cycles. **Risk management**, raised particularly in East and Southeast Asia, is also underdeveloped, leaving organisations exposed to reputational and financial risks. Several regions reported **fragmentation and coordination** problems (e.g., overlapping mandates or divisions between federations in parts of the Andean and Central African contexts), which dilute representational coherence. In Latin America, **service innovation** is limited: rather than developing new, demand-driven value propositions, some EBMOs rebrand existing activities. In the Caribbean, **AI and data readiness** gaps constrain the use of technology for evidence-based advocacy and decision-making. Finally, specialists in Central America, Africa, and the Pacific pointed to the absence of a **coherent strategic vision** as the missing link connecting governance, finance, and digital capacity: many organisations remain locked in a short-term, project-driven logic tied to funding cycles, rather than articulating a long-term direction that aligns leadership, staff, and members.

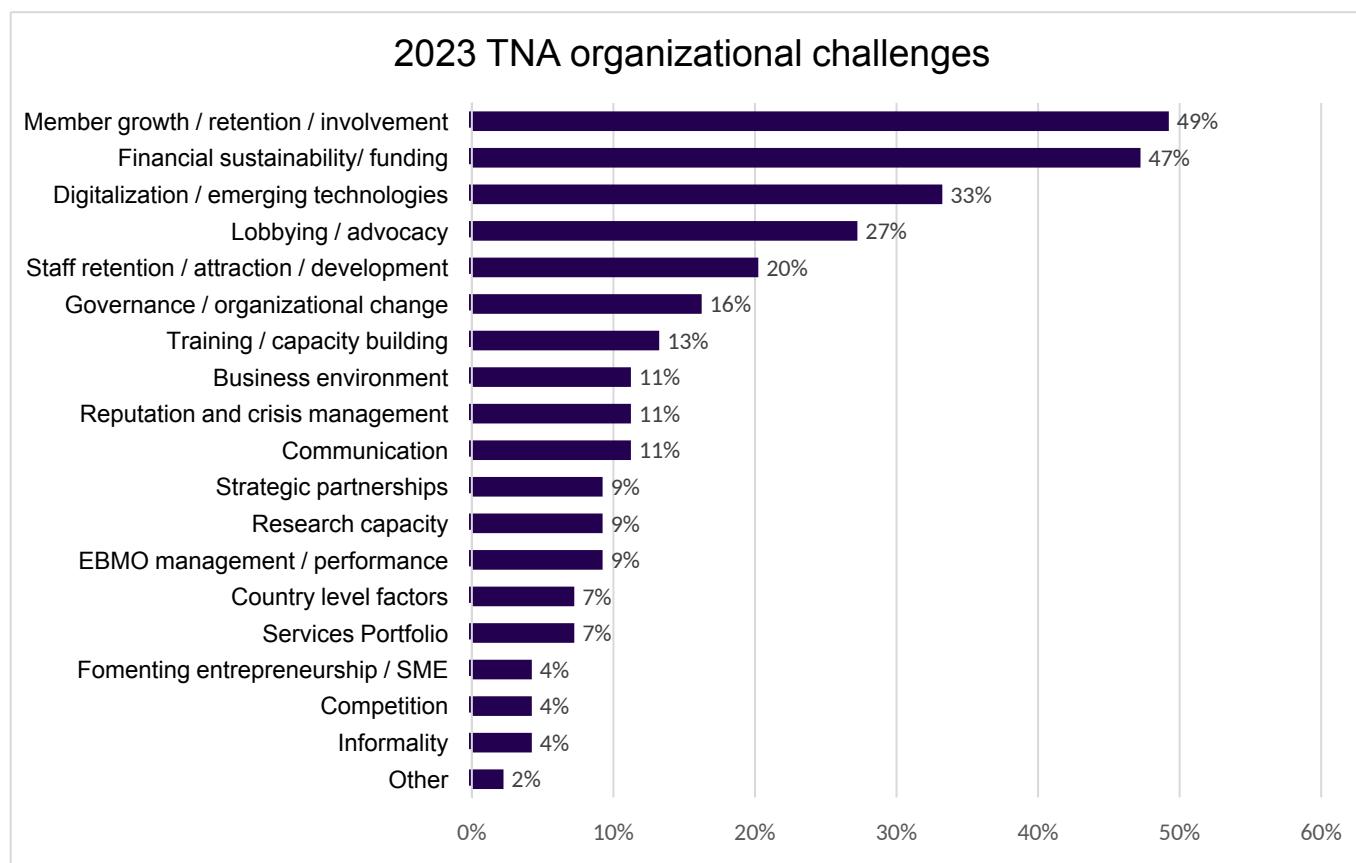
Across all interviews, specialists converged on the view that these internal challenges are deeply interconnected. Weak governance and the absence of strategic vision undermine financial sustainability; limited institutional capacity and HR systems constrain service quality and membership value; and outdated managerial and digital systems reduce agility and innovation. Tackling these challenges in isolation will therefore yield limited results; what EBMOs need, specialists agreed, is an integrated, strategic approach

that simultaneously strengthens governance, financial resilience, and professional capacity to secure their long-term relevance and impact.

### Internal challenges: what changed since 2023

Compared to the 2023 TNA, this assessment adopts a refined analytical distinction between internal and external challenges, allowing for clearer interpretation of their respective drivers and implications. The 2023 report aggregated all challenges under a single category of “organizational challenges,” which limits direct statistical comparison. However, continuity is visible, financial sustainability, membership, and digitalisation remain among the most cited challenges, confirming their persistent relevance for EBMOs. However, the new classification highlights how other internal management aspects, particularly human resource management and institutional capacity, now appear as higher-order concerns (see Figure 6).

 **Figure 6. 2023 Training Needs Assessment organizational challenges**



Precisely, financial sustainability has strengthened its position at the top, followed closely by membership management and the now more prominent human resource management, which has moved up significantly as EBMOs struggle to retain skills and institutional memory. In contrast, areas such as lobbying and advocacy, which featured among the leading challenges in earlier cycles, have declined in relative importance, suggesting that EBMOs are now more focused on consolidating internal systems than expanding outward influence. Digitalisation, which in 2021-2023 TNA emerged as a new and rising theme, is no longer viewed as a separate challenge but rather as an essential enabler underpinning finance, membership, and service modernisation. Finally, governance and institutional capacity have gained greater recognition, particularly among field specialists, who increasingly view them as the root cause linking financial fragility, staff turnover, and weak member engagement.

### External challenges

While internal challenges reflect the organisational capacity and resilience of EBMOs, the external environment defines the conditions under which they must operate. Political stability, regulatory

predictability, and broader economic and social dynamics all shape the extent to which EBMOs can effectively represent their members and sustain their role in national dialogue.

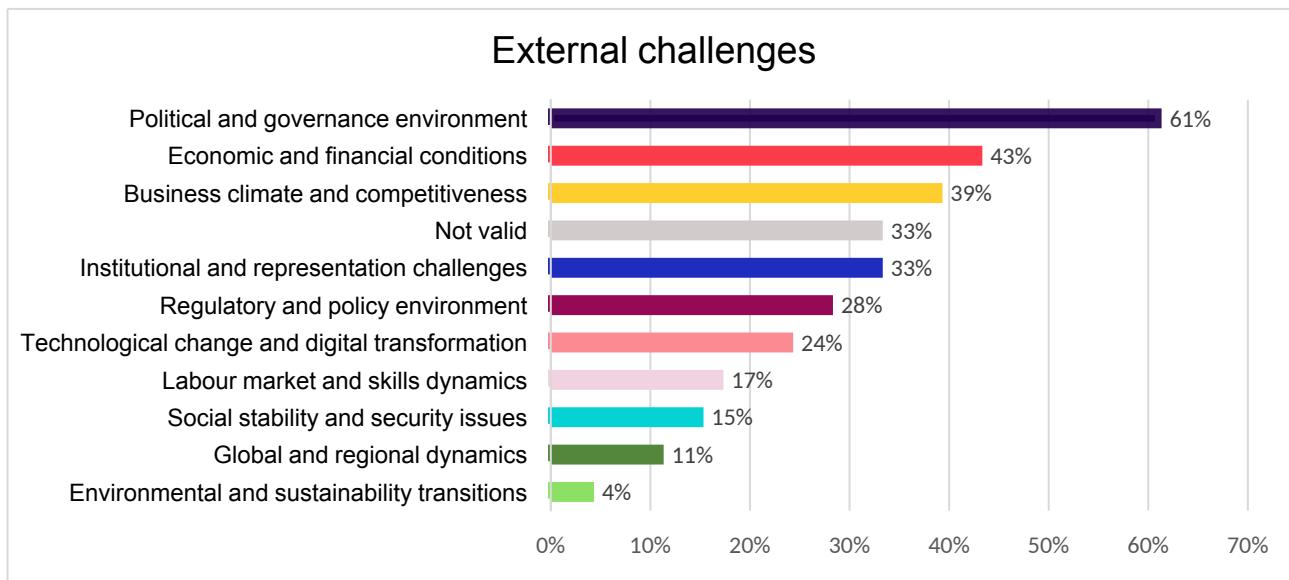
To identify the principal external challenges that EBMOs expect to face over the next two to three years, the 2025 survey asked directors to list up to three key issues from their operating environments. To interpret the findings consistently, specialists' responses were grouped into ten analytical categories reflecting the main dimensions of EBMOs' external operating environment.

- **Political and governance environment:** refers to factors linked to political stability, state–employer relations, civic space, and the overall quality of governance affecting representation and social dialogue. Challenges in this category include government interference, lack of tripartite consultation, political polarisation, and rapid policy turnover.
- **Regulatory and policy environment:** captures the technical and procedural aspects of lawmaking and policy implementation, for example, the design and enforcement of labour laws, tax or social protection reforms, and new regulatory frameworks.
- **Economic and financial conditions:** encompass macroeconomic volatility, inflation, fiscal pressures, exchange-rate instability, and other structural factors shaping business confidence and investment.
- **Business climate and competitiveness:** refer to the microeconomic and institutional conditions for enterprise growth, including access to finance, infrastructure, bureaucracy, and productivity constraints.
- **Institutional and representation challenges:** focus on issues internal to EBMOs' functioning, such as fragmentation, competition among associations, or weak coordination mechanisms, that nonetheless influence their external effectiveness.
- The remaining categories address cross-cutting transitions: **labour market and skills dynamics, social stability and security issues, technological and digital transformation, environmental and sustainability transitions, and global and regional dynamics.**

A relatively large share of entries fell into a “Not valid” bucket because of two issues. First, a significant portion of responses were too vague or poorly formulated to be reliably coded (e.g., statements without a discernible external driver, or mixed items combining internal and external factors). Second, many answers described internal problems (e.g., lack of members, non-payment of dues, staffing gaps), which sit outside the scope of external challenges and were therefore not classifiable under the external taxonomy. For transparency, these entries were retained as “Not valid” rather than reassigned to avoid inflating any external category and to preserve the integrity of the coding.

The analysis reveals that the **political and governance environment** stands out as the most frequently cited challenge, followed by **economic and financial conditions** and the **business climate and competitiveness**. These are closely followed by institutional and representation challenges and the regulatory and policy environment, which together highlight the complex, interdependent pressures shaping EBMOs' external operating contexts (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. External challenges aggregated data



**Political and governance instability** emerged as the most dominant and immediate concern for EBMOs across all regions. Respondents repeatedly referred to volatile political contexts, weak institutions, and governments perceived as unsupportive, or even hostile, to private sector representation. Examples included “*anti-business governments*,” “*political opposition to employer organisations*,” and “*government infiltration attempts*” that undermine organisational autonomy. In several countries, survey respondents noted deteriorating social dialogue structures and the erosion of tripartite mechanisms, resulting in limited consultation on policy reforms directly affecting businesses. Others reported that frequent leadership changes, populist agendas, or upcoming elections create uncertainty, while shifting labour policies threaten to destabilise employer–employee relations. As one EBMO explained, “*A new government with a strong union background will require a complete repositioning of our advocacy strategy.*” These responses underscore that political risk is not abstract: it directly affects EBMOs’ capacity to influence regulation, maintain credibility, and safeguard their members’ interests.

The second most frequently cited challenge concerns **economic and financial conditions**, reflecting the broader macroeconomic turbulence that continues to affect businesses in many regions. Respondents referred to “*economic volatility*,” “*inflation*,” “*foreign currency instability*,” and “*declining member income*.” For several EBMOs, shrinking economic activity and investment translate directly into lower membership dues, reduced service demand, and rising pressure to support struggling enterprises. A number of organisations highlighted the impact of high public debt, limited access to financing, and weak infrastructure as ongoing obstacles to business growth. One respondent summarised this link succinctly: “*Macroeconomic instability and lack of financing limit our members’ capacity to engage and pay, which in turn weakens our own sustainability.*” Economic and financial conditions thus constitute both an environmental risk and a transmission channel through which external shocks quickly translate into internal fragility for EBMOs.

Closely connected to the economic dimension, the **business climate and competitiveness** rank as the third major external challenge. Directors emphasised uncompetitive regulatory environments, rising costs of doing business, and weak support mechanisms for private sector development. Many referred to “*unfavourable business environments*,” “*bureaucratic barriers*,” and “*low competitiveness of national products*,” often compounded by limited dialogue between government and private sector. Respondents particularly underlined the difficulties of engaging SMEs and the informal sector, noting that “*informality and limited institutional support reduce incentives for membership and participation*.” Others highlighted the growing competition among business associations themselves, with some better resourced and therefore able to “*usurp our value proposition*.” Collectively, these responses depict an increasingly

fragmented business ecosystem in which EBMOs must operate under tightening regulatory, financial, and reputational constraints.

A further cluster of challenges relates to **institutional and representation issues** and the **regulatory and policy environment**, which often appear together in respondents' narratives. Many EBMOs reported "*limited influence in policymaking*," "*lack of institutionalised consultation mechanisms*," and "*difficulty ensuring employers' participation in legislative processes*." This perception of exclusion or marginalisation weakens the effectiveness of representation and undermines confidence among members. Several organisations mentioned that despite formal roles in tripartite structures, employers' input is rarely considered early in the policy cycle, leaving them to react rather than shape reform agendas. Similarly, rapid and unpredictable regulatory changes, particularly in labour, taxation, and trade, create uncertainty for both businesses and EBMOs. Respondents stressed the need for "*proactive advocacy and policy monitoring*" and "*capacity to prepare evidence-based positions*," revealing that policy volatility remains a systemic challenge to which many organisations are still adapting.

**Technological change and digital transformation**, though slightly lower in ranking, featured prominently across responses as an emerging structural trend with dual implications, both risk and opportunity. EBMOs mentioned the "*impact of AI in the workplace*," "*technological disruption*," and "*new work forms affecting supply chains and hybrid work models*." For some, the pace of technological change raises concern about skills mismatches and the adequacy of national training systems; for others, it represents an area where EBMOs can play a strategic role in supporting adaptation and digital upskilling. Similar dynamics apply to **labour market and skills challenges**, where respondents cited "*shortages of skilled labour*," "*brain drain*," and "*changing skills requirements*" as factors reshaping employment relations. These themes highlight the need for EBMOs to redefine their policy and service agendas to address the intersection of technology, workforce transitions, and competitiveness.

Finally, a smaller yet significant share of responses pointed to **social stability and security issues** as well as **global and regional dynamics**. In fragile contexts, directors mentioned "*security concerns*," "*migration pressures*," and "*lack of elected governments*" as major external risks that impede economic recovery and dialogue. Others referred to the broader geopolitical environment, trade tensions, regional instability, and shifting global value chains, which increasingly influence national economic prospects and employer interests. **Environmental and sustainability transitions** were among the least-cited challenges in this cycle (2 mentions overall), a notable drop from previous years when climate- and sustainability-related issues featured more prominently, suggesting that immediate political-economic volatility and regulatory churn may be crowding out longer-horizon concerns.

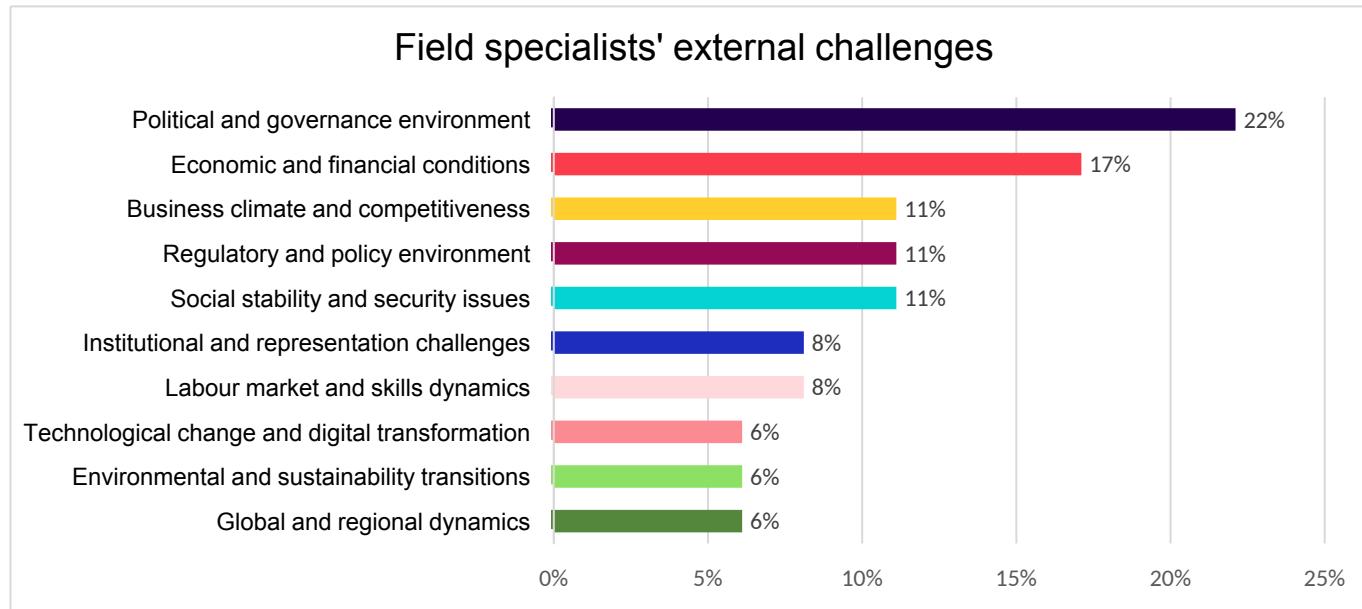
Taken together, the survey results portray a highly volatile and uncertain external environment for EBMOs, shaped by political instability, economic fragility, and technological disruption. These challenges are deeply interlinked: political turbulence weakens economic confidence; economic downturns reduce business competitiveness; and rapid technological shifts transform labour markets faster than institutions can adapt. As a result, EBMOs are compelled not only to advocate for stability and better governance but also to reinvent their own roles as intermediaries capable of helping enterprises navigate these transitions. In this sense, the external context both constrains and defines the strategic direction of employer organisations over the next several years.

### Field specialists' insights on external challenges

To complement executives' perspectives, interviews with ACTEMP Field Specialists provide a grounded view of the contextual factors shaping EBMOs' external environments across regions. When classified according to the analytical framework used in the survey, the 30 challenges reported by specialists were coded under ten thematic categories. A total of 36 coded instances emerged because several challenges were dual-coded, reflecting their overlap between political, economic, and institutional dimensions (for example, "*economic and political uncertainty*" or "*labour and regulatory transitions*").

The most recurrent challenges cluster around the **political and governance environment** and **economic and financial conditions**, followed by issues linked to the business climate, regulatory and policy frameworks, social stability and security, and labour market and skills dynamics. Other themes, such as institutional and representational challenges, technological and digital transformation, environmental and sustainability transitions, and global and regional dynamics, were cited less frequently but still contribute to understanding the evolving external landscape in which EBMOs operate (see Figure 8).

 **Figure 8. Field specialists' external challenges**



The **political and governance environment** emerges as the most recurrent challenge across regions. Specialists in the Arab States and Central America described growing government interference, corporatist tendencies, and shrinking civic space that weaken EBMOs' autonomy and advocacy. In several countries, including Guatemala, Mexico, and Costa Rica, authorities attempt to co-opt or corporatise employers' organisations as state-aligned entities, undermining free representation. Latin America and the Andean countries contend with intense polarisation, short policy cycles, and rapid turnover of administrations, which obliges EBMOs to repeatedly rebuild relationships and recalibrate agendas. Parts of Africa face weak institutional governance and political instability that limit the private sector's ability to participate in policy dialogue or social partnership. Asia and the Pacific are characterised by shifting government priorities and limited, ad hoc consultation, leaving EBMOs uncertain about when and how to influence policy. Across interviews, specialists stressed that such instability complicates advocacy and erodes members' trust in institutions, reinforcing a wider sense of unpredictability.

**Economic and financial conditions** were identified as another major external constraint. Specialists from the Arab States and West Africa described macroeconomic instability, inflation, and weak fiscal systems undermining business confidence. In Central Africa, low commodity prices and the lingering effects of COVID-19 continue to strain enterprise sustainability. Central American economies face protectionist and state-controlled markets that distort competition, while in the Caribbean and Pacific, small and tourism-dependent economies remain highly exposed to global shocks. In South Asia, recovery remains uneven, with informal and low-productivity sectors weighing heavily on growth. Across all regions, specialists agreed that economic fragility limits EBMOs' ability to plan, mobilise resources, and maintain engagement, as organisations are forced to adapt to constant uncertainty.

**Business climate and competitiveness** form a third critical area of challenge, especially in contexts marked by informality, weak infrastructure, and limited access to finance. African specialists stressed the persistent challenge of creating an enabling environment for SMEs, which face high operating costs and insufficient public-private cooperation. In Guinea and Cameroon, the absence of coherent business-

climate policies prompted initiatives such as business environment mapping. In Latin America, productivity decline and heavy taxation were identified as barriers to competitiveness, while in Asia, the challenge lies in integrating local enterprises into global value chains and attracting foreign investment. For EBMOs, these conditions pose direct organisational challenges: when the private sector is weak, fragmented, or struggling to compete, membership engagement and fee compliance fall, eroding representational legitimacy and financial capacity. At the same time, complex or unstable regulatory settings push EBMOs into short-term firefighting, crowding out longer-term policy agendas on productivity and competitiveness. Specialists agreed that breaking this reactive cycle requires not only targeted advocacy but also credible data, systematic policy monitoring, and sustained dialogue with governments and development partners.

The **regulatory and policy environment** emerged as recurrent themes, reflecting both rapid policy evolution and inconsistent implementation. Specialists from Asia, Latin America, and the Arab States highlighted frequent changes in labour and social protection regulations, often introduced with limited consultation. In South Asia, for example, the expansion of ESG and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) regulations has created new compliance demands for enterprises while generating service opportunities for EBMOs. In several African countries, the absence of stable and transparent regulatory frameworks continues to discourage investment and complicate employers' representation. Specialists observed that while regulatory reform can enhance dialogue, ad hoc policymaking without proper tripartite consultation tends to marginalise employers' voices and erode confidence in institutional processes.

**Social stability and security issues** also emerged, particularly in regions facing fragility or unrest. Specialists from Central America pointed to high levels of violence and organised crime that disrupt business operations and deter investment. In parts of Africa and South Asia, social tensions related to inequality and unemployment contribute to an unpredictable environment for employers. Specialists agreed that EBMOs in such contexts must often act as stabilising voices, advocating for the rule of law, social dialogue, and inclusive economic reforms.

**Labour market and skills dynamics** constitute another prominent external concern. In almost all regions, specialists cited skills mismatches, labour migration, and demographic shifts as key constraints to enterprise growth. In the Southern Cone, labour shortages in agroindustry and services are pushing EBMOs to demand greater alignment between training systems and business needs. In Africa and the Arab States, youth unemployment and weak training systems exacerbate informality and limit job creation. The Caribbean specialist also drew attention to the impact of brain drain on small island economies, which lose skilled workers to migration. In Asia, specialists emphasised that the rise of platform work and new forms of employment requires EBMOs to redefine their representational models and policy engagement on skills and employment relations.

**Institutional and representation challenges**, though less frequently cited, continue to shape the external operating context. In Central Africa, competition among employers' organisations, illustrated by the merger of ECAM and GICAM into GECAM in Cameroon, reflects both fragmentation and efforts toward consolidation. Specialists in the Pacific and Andean regions also pointed to weak coordination among national EBMOs, which undermines unified positions in policy dialogue. Strengthening apex structures, improving internal governance, and ensuring financial sustainability were seen as prerequisites for maintaining legitimacy and policy influence.

**Technological change and digital transformation** are increasingly shaping employers' priorities, though with varying intensity across regions. Specialists in South Asia and the Caribbean highlighted the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and data-driven economies, which are altering business models and skill needs. While digitalisation creates new opportunities for productivity and service delivery, most EBMOs remain at an early stage of digital maturity. Specialists in Asia and Africa noted that the challenge lies less in technology itself than in the lack of institutional capacity to integrate digital tools and develop corresponding strategies. Digital transformation, they agreed, is no longer a peripheral issue but a structural driver of competitiveness and advocacy effectiveness.

**Environmental and sustainability transitions** are increasingly on the radar but remain at different stages of maturity. Specialists in West Africa and the Caribbean noted growing awareness of green and blue economy opportunities, though most EBMOs still lack expertise and institutional frameworks to act. In Asia, early work on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standards and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) is expanding, helping EBMOs engage in emerging sustainability debates. Specialists stressed that while environmental topics are less dominant than economic or governance concerns, they represent an unavoidable frontier for future employer engagement.

**Global and regional dynamics** were mentioned in connection with shifting trade patterns, geopolitical tensions, and regional integration processes. Latin American specialists referred to the need for EBMOs to better understand and influence trade and tariff policies, while in Africa, Regional Economic Communities are reshaping market opportunities and policy frameworks. In the Pacific, dependence on international aid and donor projects was identified as a structural vulnerability, exposing smaller economies to external policy agendas and funding fluctuations.

Taken together, these insights portray an external landscape that is increasingly volatile, interconnected, and multidimensional. Political instability, economic uncertainty, and regulatory shifts are compounded by technological disruption, demographic change, and environmental imperatives. Specialists converge on a common conclusion: to remain relevant, EBMOs must strengthen their analytical and adaptive capacity, moving from reactive advocacy to proactive foresight, to anticipate and influence the transformations that will define the future of work and enterprise.

### **External challenges: what changed since 2023**

In contrast to internal challenges, a comparison of external challenges with the 2023 assessment is not fully applicable. The 2023 TNA did not distinguish between internal and external dimensions, classifying all issues under the broad category of “organizational challenges.” Elements that would now be considered external, such as the business environment, strategic partnerships, country-level factors, competition, and informality, were included within that general list and appeared in the lower half of the 2023 ranking (see Figure 6). These themes were therefore acknowledged but not analysed separately. The current assessment refines this approach by explicitly identifying external factors as a distinct analytical dimension, providing a clearer understanding of how contextual pressures influence EBMO performance and resilience.

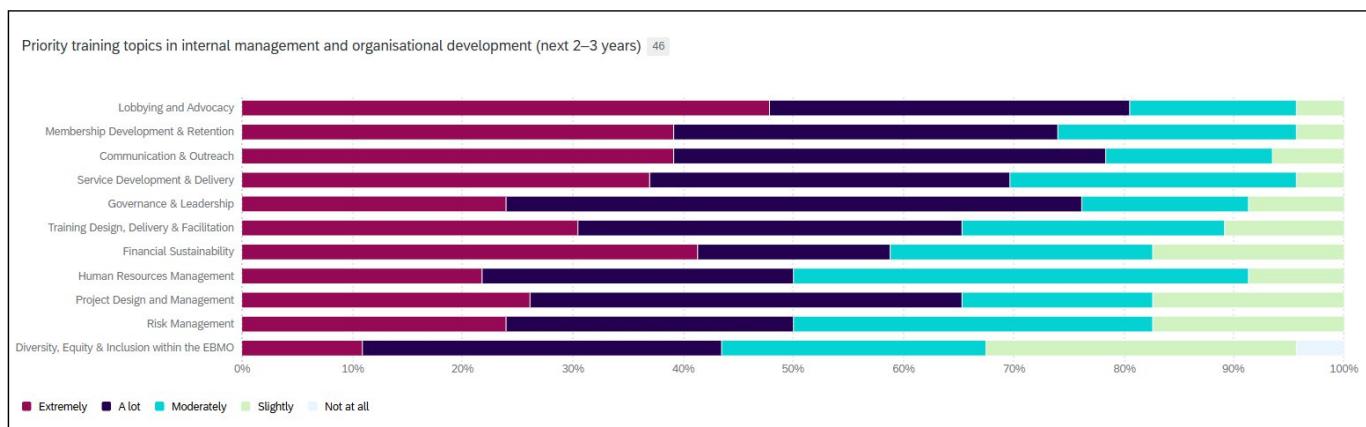
## **Training needs**

To identify priority training areas for the coming years, the 2025 survey invited respondents to assess needs across four dimensions: (a) internal management and organizational development topics, (b) policy areas and global trends, (c) additional needs not covered in previous lists, and (d) existing ACTEMP Turin training activities. These perspectives provide a comprehensive picture of where EBMOs seek to strengthen their capacities and how these priorities have evolved since 2023.

### **Internal management and organizational development**

Training needs in internal management and organizational development (see Figure 9) indicate a heightened focus on strategic representation. Lobbying and advocacy clearly stand out as the top-ranked area, with over four-fifths of respondents rating it as “a lot” or “extremely” needed—an upward shift from 2023, when advocacy and communication were positioned in the mid-range. Notably, this contrasts with the internal-challenges data, where lobbying and advocacy appear near the bottom of the ranking. This divergence likely reflects a capability versus constraint distinction: respondents may not see advocacy as an immediate “problem” but as a strategic skill requiring sustained investment.

Figure 9. Training needs in internal management and organisational development



**Membership development and retention, communication and outreach, and service development and delivery** follow closely, confirming that EBMOs see value creation for members and effective representation as tightly linked. **Governance and leadership** and **training design, delivery, and facilitation** occupy the mid-upper tier, reflecting rising demand for professionalised management, stronger leadership, and higher-quality learning delivery. **Financial sustainability, human resources management, and project design and management** cluster around the middle of the ranking, indicating their continued relevance but also their treatment as longer-term institutional issues rather than immediate training needs.

Compared with 2023, there is a notable diversification of managerial priorities. Topics such as project design and management and governance, and leadership now score significantly higher, suggesting a growing need for professionalised management and accountable leadership structures. Conversely, diversity, equity and inclusion within the EBMO registers as the lowest-rated topic, still emerging but not yet mainstreamed in most organisations. Overall, the 2025 results confirm that EBMOs are moving from a focus on internal administrative improvement toward more outward-facing, strategically oriented capacities.

### Training priority topics for ACTEMP field specialists

The perspectives of ACTEMP field specialists do not replicate executives' rankings. Directors prioritise lobbying & advocacy, membership development & retention, communication & outreach, and service development & delivery as the top training needs. Field specialists, instead, highlight **membership development & retention, financial sustainability, lobbying & advocacy, and governance & leadership**. (see Figure 10). Also, differences emerge in how these priorities are interpreted. While CEOs tend to frame their training needs around functional themes such as advocacy, communication, and service delivery, field specialists emphasise the institutional and operational capacities that enable such functions, strong governance, effective project management, and strategic leadership. This divergence highlights that advocacy is viewed by executives as an aspirational skill to be enhanced, whereas specialists see it as dependent on more foundational organisational systems.

Figure 10. Field specialists' training needs priorities



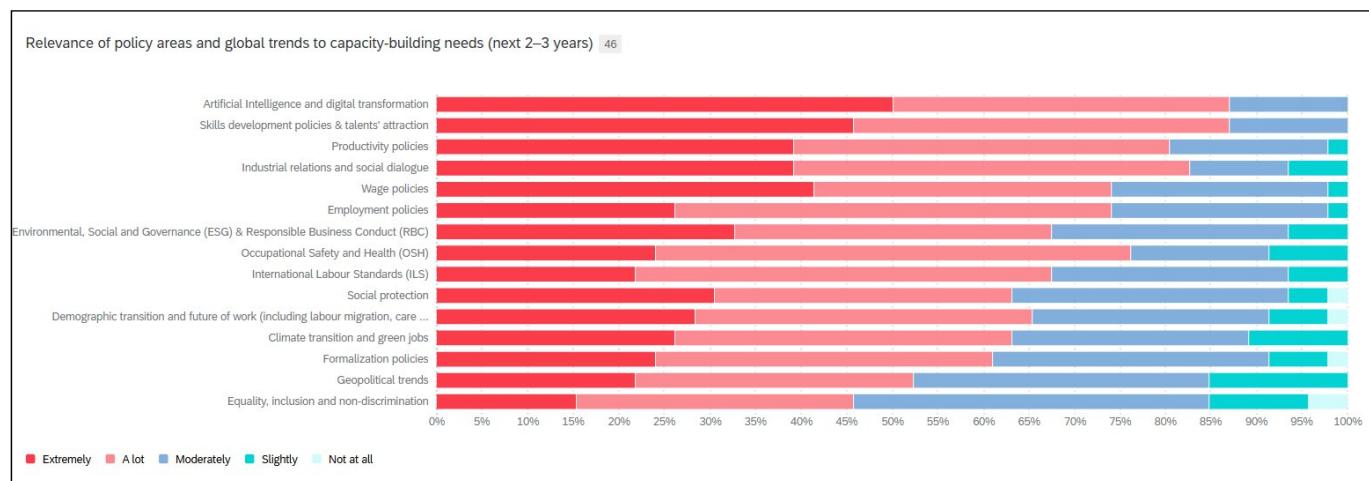
Across regions, field specialists provided detailed insights into how these needs manifest locally. In Asia and the Arab States, training in project design and management was seen as crucial to help EBMOs access international and ILO funding opportunities, diversify income sources, and build long-term sustainability. In Central Africa, specialists pointed to the importance of cross-learning on innovative financial solutions. In the Southern Cone, the need for negotiation and conflict-resolution skills was stressed, particularly for employer representatives engaged in public–private dialogue and tripartite fora. Across multiple regions, strategic planning and leadership development were also identified as key priorities, with requests for practical tools and guides to design and implement sustainable strategies.

Overall, the specialists' perspectives reinforce and deepen the survey findings: while EBMOs' executives highlight the "what" of training: advocacy, communication, and membership services, field specialists shed light on the "how," identifying the organisational systems, governance structures, and digital capabilities needed to make these ambitions achievable. Together, they depict a training landscape where EBMOs are seeking to evolve from administratively focused institutions into strategically managed, digitally enabled, and advocacy-driven organisations capable of responding to complex and fast-changing environments.

## Policy areas and global trends

When asked about policy and global trends most relevant to their capacity-building needs, respondents placed **artificial intelligence and digital transformation** at the top, with nearly nine in ten indicating "a lot" or "extreme" relevance. This represents a major shift from 2023, when digitalisation was acknowledged mainly as an operational issue; in 2025, it is perceived as a strategic policy priority that cuts across competitiveness, productivity, and skills development. **Skills development and talent attraction** rank second, maintaining their long-standing prominence since 2023, when they ranked first, and reflecting employers' sustained concern with labour-market mismatches and the need to anticipate evolving skill demands (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Relevance of policy areas to capacity-building needs



This marks a clear pivot from 2023, when skills led the list and AI/digital was not a headline item. The shift suggests that EBMOs are moving from “skills-first” to “technology-and-skills together,” prioritizing digital readiness, data capability, and the labour-market implications of AI alongside wage and productivity fundamentals.

**Productivity policies** now rank third, followed by **industrial relations and social dialogue, wage** and **employment policies**, which cluster in the upper-middle tier. Together, these reflect a continued focus on competitiveness, fair labour relations, and evidence-based policymaking in volatile economic contexts.

In the middle of the table, ESG/RBC climbs to 7th (up from 14th in 2023), indicating steady maturation rather than a spike, ESG is becoming “must-have” rather than “nice-to-have.” Social Protection drops to 10th (from 4th in 2023), which likely reflects a rebalancing of attention toward competitiveness and technology adoption; it remains important, but less top-of-mind than in the last cycle. **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)** and **International Labour Standards (ILS)** follow in 12th and 14th place respectively, reflecting EBMOs’ enduring engagement with compliance, decent-work standards, and worker protection.

**Social protection** and **demographic transition and the future of work** share the next positions, indicating moderate but sustained relevance. They show that, while demographic shifts, migration, and social-security reforms remain on the radar, they are not yet prioritised as highly as technology and competitiveness themes.

At the lower end of the ranking sit **climate transition and green jobs, formalisation policies, geopolitical trends, and equality, inclusion, and non-discrimination**. These issues continue to register as important emerging agendas but are not yet perceived as central to employers’ immediate capacity-building priorities.

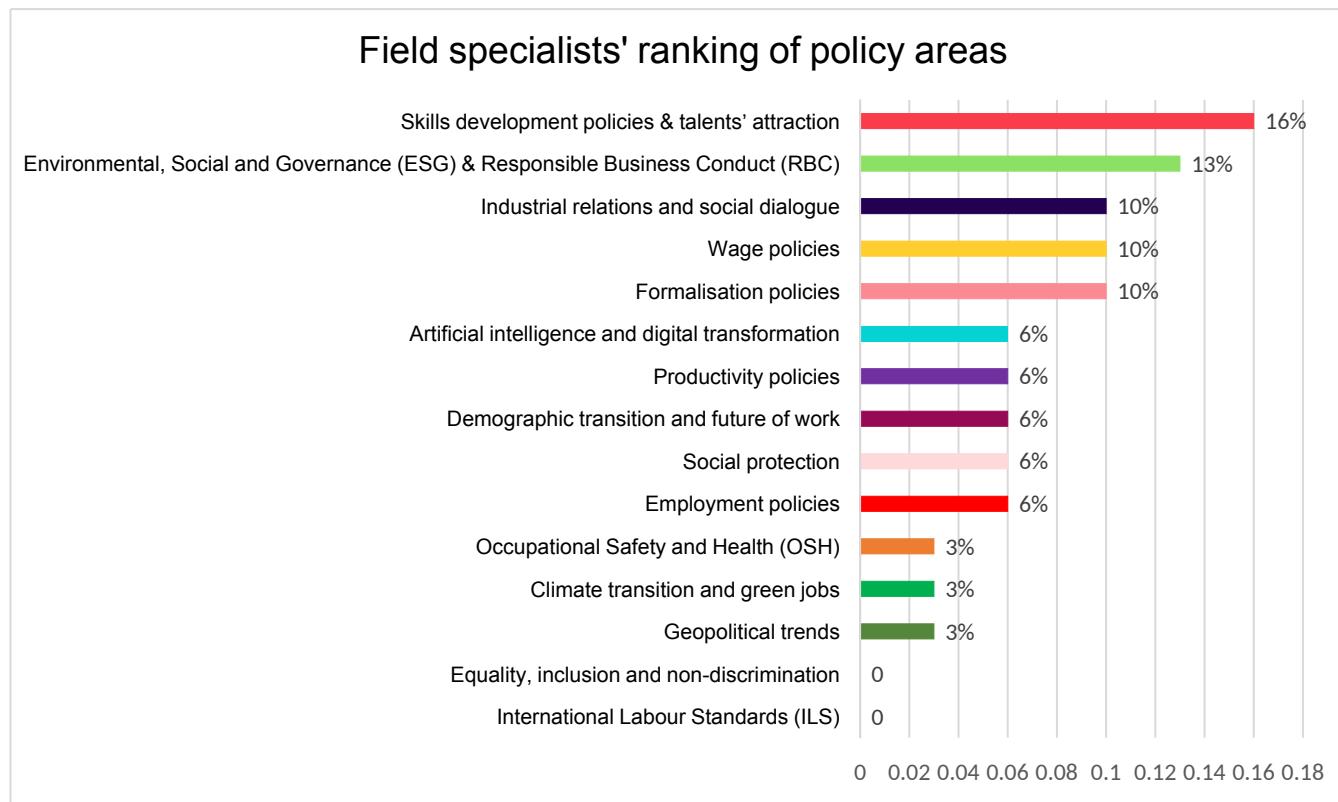
This distribution contrasts sharply with the 2025 external challenges data, where environmental and sustainability transitions were among the least-cited challenges. The difference suggests that EBMOs do not necessarily perceive these topics as immediate external threats but rather as strategic positioning opportunities. In other words, while environmental sustainability, ESG, or demographic change are not viewed as pressing problems, they are increasingly recognised as emerging policy domains where EBMOs need to build expertise to remain relevant in national and international debates. Compared to the 2023 report, this reflects an important shift: in the previous cycle, sustainability and social governance appeared at the margins of the training agenda, whereas in 2025, they have entered mainstream attention as part of a wider transformation of the business policy landscape.

### Field specialists' insights on policy areas and global trends

Field specialists' insights provide additional regional context and highlight emerging themes. The most frequently cited area across regions is **skills development and talent attraction**. This confirms that skills

mismatches and workforce preparedness remain among the most pressing structural issues for employers, especially as economies undergo technological and demographic transitions (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Field Specialists' ranking of policy areas and global trends



Closely following are **ESG and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC)**, which appear prominently, especially in Asia and the Pacific, where specialists reported that ESG is gaining traction as a knowledge and awareness priority, even in regions where it is not yet an established service area for EBMOs. This indicates growing recognition of sustainability and business conduct as central to competitiveness and reputation management.

A second cluster of frequently mentioned areas includes industrial relations and social dialogue, wage policies, and formalisation policies. These remain at the heart of EBMOs' traditional advocacy mandate, but with regional variations. In the Arab States, social dialogue and wage-setting mechanisms are increasingly relevant amid labour market reforms. In West and Central Africa, the focus on formalisation reflects the need to expand representation to informal enterprises and to frame formality as a shared value proposition benefiting both business and labour. In Central America, specialists similarly highlighted formalisation as essential to strengthening the legitimacy and inclusiveness of employers' organisations, arguing that, if EBMOs proactively engage and attract informal enterprises, the result is a win-win: firms formalise to join, while EBMOs broaden their base and stabilise revenues through expanded membership fees.

Several other topics were mentioned by multiple specialists, signalling emerging or region-specific concerns. Employment policies, social protection, demographic transition & the future of work, productivity policies, and artificial intelligence & digital transformation were each referenced twice. These areas together reflect an expanding policy agenda where technology, social protection, and demographic shifts increasingly intersect. For instance, specialists in South Asia emphasised employers' participation in social protection governance and productivity frameworks, while those in the Caribbean underscored demographic change, labour migration, and the rise of green and blue economies.

Finally, less frequently mentioned but noteworthy themes include climate transition and green jobs, occupational safety and health (OSH), and geopolitical trends. Although still peripheral, these topics suggest EBMOs' growing awareness of external dynamics, climate risks, safety standards, and global trade tensions, which could shape future advocacy agendas.

Overall, the specialists' insights show that while executives tend to prioritise AI, skills, and productivity as policy areas, regional specialists capture a broader and more forward-looking policy landscape. They identify the foundational and emerging domains, skills, ESG, and social dialogue, where EBMOs must develop expertise to remain influential in evolving economic and sustainability contexts.

## Additional training needs

Respondents also provided open-ended suggestions for additional training needs not captured by the predefined lists. The 2025 responses reveal both continuity and innovation. Several entries reinforce enduring themes from 2023, such as project management, fundraising, and communication, but others point to newly emerging priorities. These include:

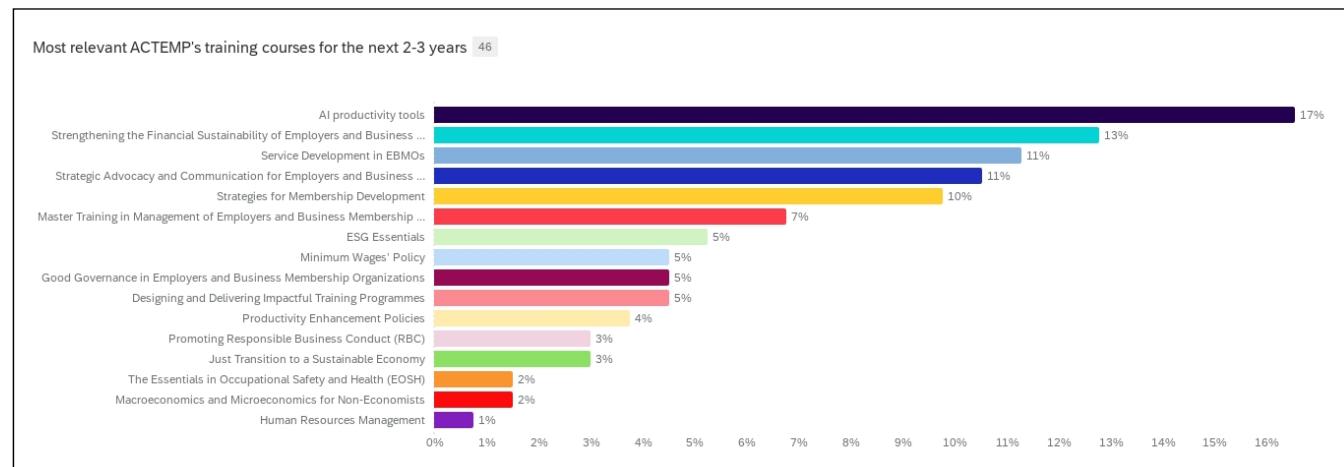
- Leveraging AI and data analytics for service delivery
- Cybersecurity awareness and resilience
- Digital tools for hybrid training management
- Economic diplomacy and international cooperation
- Market intelligence
- ESG metrics
- Green jobs
- Ethical and leadership management
- Strategic partnerships and collaboration
- Storytelling and persuasive communication

Compared with 2023, when most "additional" training suggestions clustered around core management and financial topics, the 2025 list is more outward-looking and future-oriented, underscoring EBMOs' adaptive mindset and growing appetite for innovation.

## Relevance of ACTEMP training activities

In the final stage of the assessment, EBMOs' executives were presented with a list of twelve current ACTEMP Turin training activities and asked to select the three they considered most relevant to their organisational needs.

 **Figure 13. Relevance of training courses for the next 2-3 years**



The choices made provide an opportunity to cross-check how well ACTEMP's current offer aligns with both the challenges EBMOs reported and the training priorities they expressed in earlier sections. Overall, the training activities selected mirror the major areas of need identified in 2025. The most frequently selected option was not a course but ACTEMP Turin's advisory offer on **AI productivity tools** (e.g., chatbot). This preference underscores that demand around digital transformation is not only for training but also for hands-on implementation support, aligning with its top position among policy priorities and its growing relevance across functional domains. Among courses, selections were led by **Strengthening the Financial Sustainability of EBMOs**, followed by **Service Development in EBMOs** and **Strategic Advocacy and Communication**. These choices correspond closely to executives' leading internal challenges, financial sustainability, membership value creation, and the expressed training demand for stronger advocacy skills.

However, some nuances emerge when comparing these selections with the challenges data. While lobbying and advocacy ranked low as an internal challenge, its prominence among selected training activities, through the **Strategic Advocacy and Communication** course, echoes the earlier finding that EBMOs see advocacy not as a current problem but as a strategic capacity to invest in. Likewise, the relatively high interest in AI and digitalisation courses contrasts with their limited appearance among reported challenges, underscoring that digital transformation is perceived as an opportunity for innovation rather than a threat.

At the same time, the modest selection of courses such as **ESG Essentials** and **Just Transition to a Sustainable Economy** reflects the limited salience of sustainability themes among current challenges, even though they are increasingly recognised as policy areas requiring future preparedness. This pattern suggests that EBMOs are aware of these emerging agendas but may still prioritise consolidating managerial and advocacy capacities before engaging more deeply with ESG and green transition topics.

Compared to the 2023 assessment, there is clear evidence of modernisation and diversification in training preferences. In 2023, the focus was primarily on financial management, membership retention, and service delivery. In 2025, digitalisation, AI applications, and sustainability-oriented courses have gained significant ground, illustrating how EBMOs' training priorities are evolving alongside global business and policy transformations.

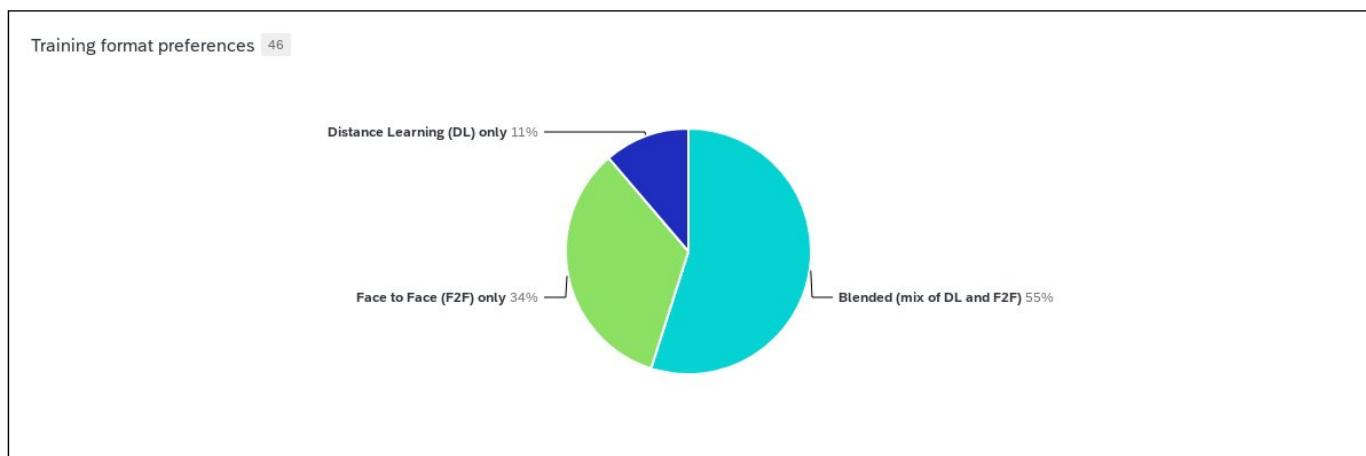
ACTEMP Turin's training portfolio, therefore, appears well aligned with these changing needs, though the findings also highlight new opportunities for course development in areas such as cybersecurity, applied data analytics, leadership management, and strategic partnerships and collaborations, skills that will further equip EBMOs to navigate complex and fast-changing policy environments.

## Training modalities and co-funding preferences

### Training modalities preferences

In the 2025 assessment, the section on training formats and co-funding was simplified to capture only the core preferences of EBMOs regarding delivery modalities and their ability to financially contribute to in-person participation. Results confirm the continued preference for blended learning formats, combining distance and face-to-face (F2F) components, selected by a majority of respondents (55%), followed by F2F only (34%) and distance learning (DL) only (11%). This preference mirrors previous findings and reinforces the added value of hybrid approaches, which balance flexibility, interaction, and networking opportunities (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Training modalities preferences



Respondents' reasons coalesce around three logics: those favouring **face-to-face** emphasised direct interaction, immediate feedback, stronger networking/peer exchange, and an immersive setting that boosts focus and practical learning; supporters of **distance learning** cited time and cost efficiency, flexibility across time zones, reduced time away from work (especially for small teams), suitability for more theoretical content, and the possibility to balance family, work, and the training; advocates of **blended** formats highlighted the "best of both": online modules that prepare participants and save resources, followed by in-person sessions that deepen engagement, practice, and networking, making it the most balanced, inclusive, and sustainable option overall.

### Field specialists' insights on training modalities

Field specialists broadly agree that face-to-face and blended formats are the most effective, especially when courses are certified and delivered in accessible local languages. Fully online learning can also work in some cases but generally requires strong follow-up to maintain participant engagement.

Regarding the preferred level of delivery, views differ depending on the regional context. Regional and subregional formats tend to perform well in areas with shared realities and manageable travel distances, such as in the Caribbean, where organisations face similar challenges, in the Southern Cone, where peer exchange is particularly valued, and in South Asia, where subregional activities facilitate networking and address common needs. Conversely, national-level delivery is preferred in regions where country-specific policies and institutional frameworks dominate, such as in the Andean countries, where regional events are often perceived as less impactful, and in West and Central Africa, where national courses are better suited to targeted themes like wage policy or governance, although they are more costly to organise. In the Pacific, national or subregional training is generally more effective than interregional activities, unless these involve other small island contexts. In the Arab States, preferences vary between the Gulf and the Levant subregions.

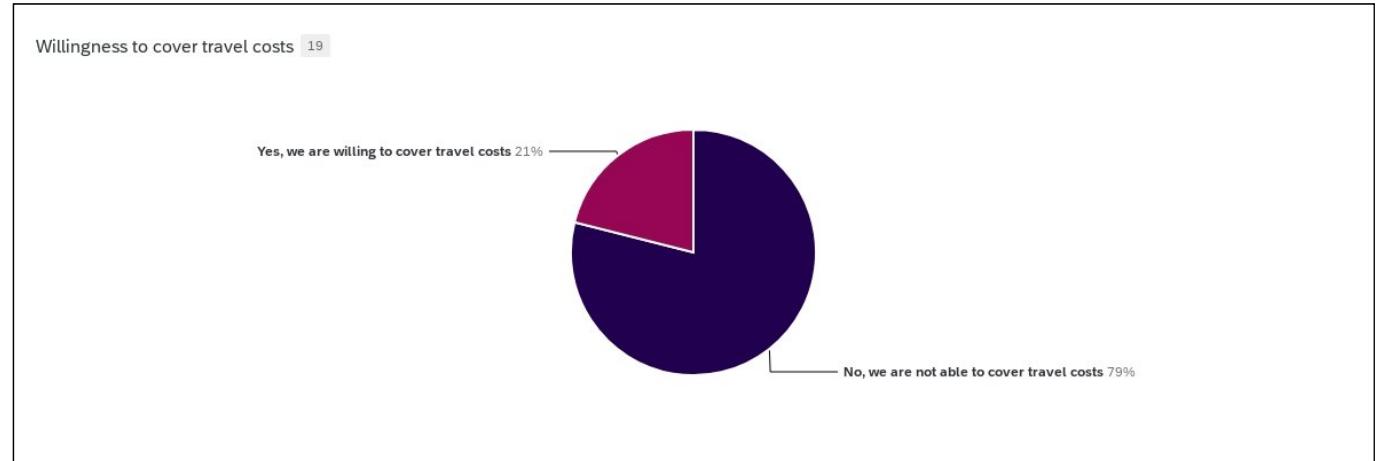
Overall, the insights confirm that contextualisation by region and country is essential, and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to training delivery.

### Co-funding capacities

Regarding co-funding capacity, a short question explored whether organisations could cover travel costs for in-person training. Of the 46 respondents, 19 preferred blended or face-to-face formats; among these, only four organisations indicated they would be able to do so, while the vast majority stated they are not in a position to cover travel costs. This confirms the persistently limited financial capacity of many EBMOs to self-fund participation in international or regional activities. While the question set was simplified compared to previous editions, thus providing less detailed information on cost-sharing options, the overall trend remains consistent: financial constraints continue to limit participation, underscoring the importance of

maintaining scholarship mechanisms and exploring blended formats as cost-effective alternatives (see Figure 15).

 **Figure 15. Willingness to co-fund travel costs**

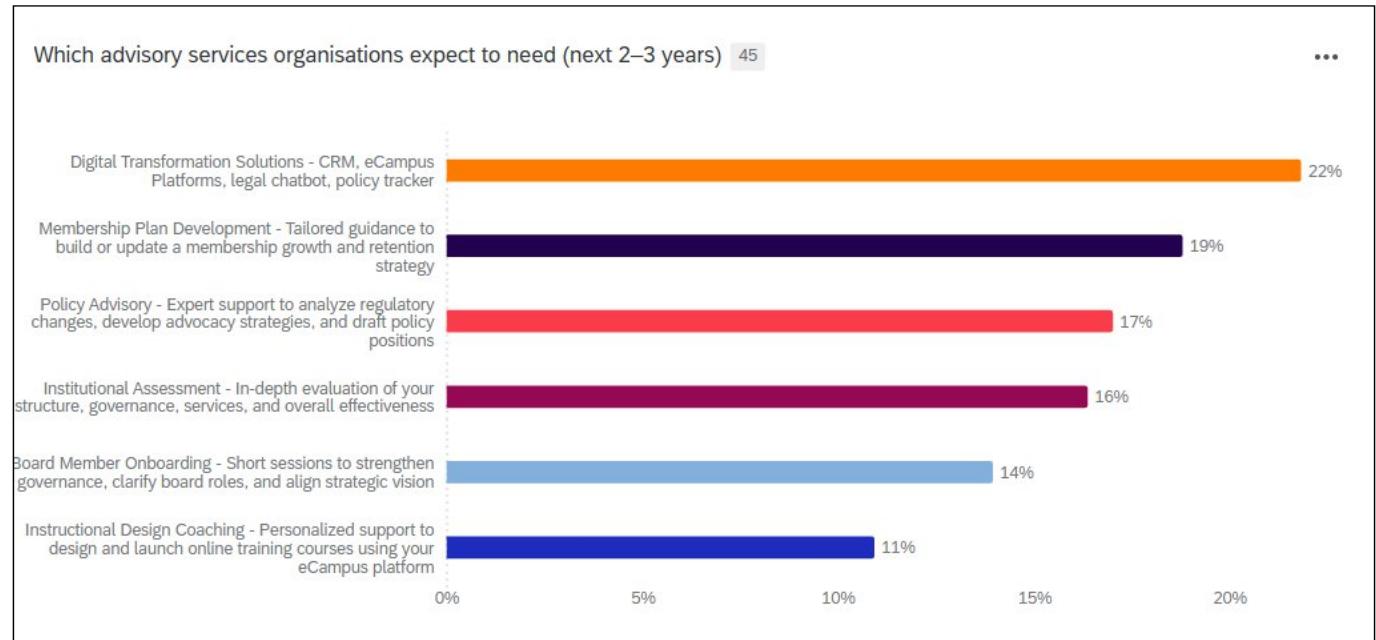


## Advisory services

For the first time, this assessment explored EBMOs' future advisory service needs, complementing the traditional analysis of training demand. Advisory services represent a new and increasingly strategic area of ACTEMP support, reflecting a shift from training-centred capacity building toward more tailored, organisation-specific solutions. Their introduction into the assessment responds to growing requests from EBMOs for hands-on institutional strengthening.

As shown in Figure 16, the most requested advisory services are **Digital Transformation Solutions** (22%), **Membership Plan Development** (19%), **Policy Advisory** (17%), and **Institutional Assessment** (16%). These priorities collectively reveal a strong orientation toward modernisation, membership engagement, and strategic alignment.

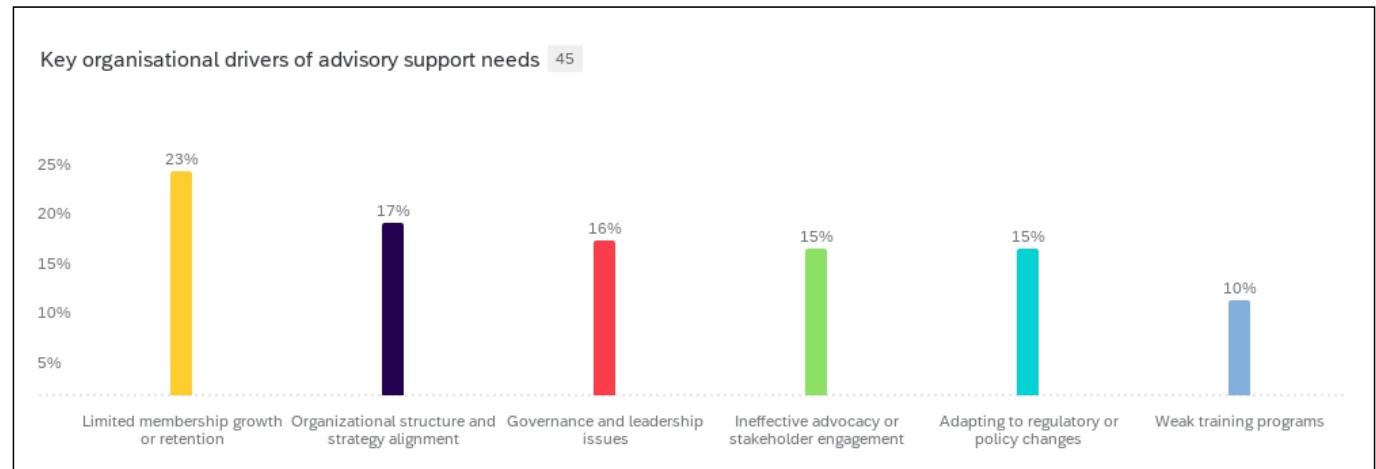
 **Figure 16. EBMOs' expectations on advisory services' needs**



The motivations behind these preferences are reflected in the organisational challenges shown in Figure 17. The main drivers of advisory support needs include limited membership growth or retention (23%), organisational structure and strategy misalignment (17%), governance and leadership issues (16%), and

ineffective advocacy or stakeholder engagement (15%). A comparable proportion also cited difficulties adapting to regulatory or policy changes, while weak training programmes appeared as a secondary constraint.

**Figure 17. Organisational drivers of advisory support needs**



By analysing the qualitative comments accompanying the survey, it emerged that EBMOs would request advisory services to transform long-standing internal practices, modernise their systems, and strengthen their capacity to deliver tangible value to members. Several described themselves as “*old institutions that need to shake up to stay relevant*,” seeing advisory interventions as an opportunity to combine internal reform with innovation. As one EBMO noted, “*By digitalising our training offer and integrating chatbots into our website, we can reach more members and offer real services rather than only advocacy.*”

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that **Digital Transformation Solutions** rank as the most frequently requested advisory service: beyond modernising operations, digital tools are seen as catalysts for change, supporting more effective member engagement through CRM systems, more efficient communication and data management, and the diversification of service portfolios through the digitalisation of training via eCampus platforms. Many organisations also pointed to the potential of AI-driven tools, such as legal or policy chatbots, to provide accessible, real-time support to members; through such innovations, EBMOs aim to enhance both operational efficiency and their visibility as modern institutions.

A comparison between the *Impact Evaluation* and the present assessment further clarifies how EBMOs conceptualise digital transformation over time. In the Impact Evaluation, the most frequent reason for requesting advisory services in the last two years was to develop or improve training service delivery through the eCampus platform. At that stage, digital tools were primarily valued for strengthening the training function and improving service-delivery efficiency. In contrast, in this assessment, Instructional Design Coaching, which directly supports the creation of online courses, appears among the least prioritised future advisory needs, while Digital Transformation Solutions rank first. This inversion suggests a shift in perception: EBMOs increasingly see digitalisation not only as a tool for training delivery but as a broader driver of organisational modernisation. Digital transformation is now associated with CRM, automation, and AI-enabled tools that cut across functions—membership management, communication, policy engagement, and data governance—rather than being confined to learning. The change indicates growing institutional maturity: having already strengthened their e-learning capacity, many EBMOs are now seeking integrated digital strategies that modernise core processes and member-facing services end-to-end.

Secondly, membership growth and retention, identified in the assessment as the main driver of advisory service demand, ranked immediately after digital transformation. Since limited membership expansion remains one of the most persistent internal challenges, EBMOs are seeking **Membership Plan Development** advisory to help design structured strategies for recruitment, retention, and value delivery.

Such services allow organisations to formalise processes that are often fragmented or informal and to redefine their membership value propositions.

A third cluster of advisory needs relates to institutional assessment and governance renewal. Numerous respondents acknowledged that their organisations have not undergone systematic reviews in decades and continue to operate with outdated governance structures, unclear mandates, and reactive decision-making processes. As one EBMO admitted, *“Our structure is not fit for purpose; governance is ad hoc, and we need a full diagnostic to realign strategy with capacity.”* Others pointed to the absence of structured onboarding for leadership, noting that *“new board members often lack understanding of their roles and responsibilities, formal orientation would improve accountability.”* These insights illustrate a growing awareness that governance reform and leadership professionalisation are essential for credibility, sustainability, and effective advocacy.

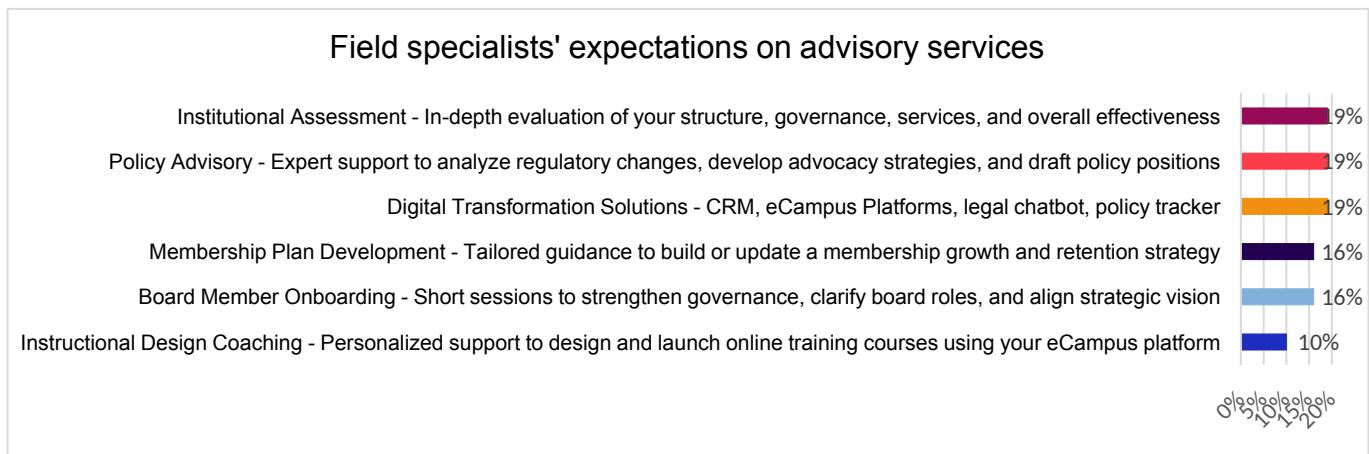
Overall, the findings reveal that digital transformation and membership development have become the twin priorities driving EBMOs’ institutional evolution, complemented by a growing demand for governance and leadership renewal. Therefore, looking ahead, advisory demand is set to cluster around Digital Transformation Solutions: CRM, eCampus, automation, and AI-enabled too, as EBMOs increasingly recognise technology as the fastest lever to strengthen member communication, sharpen value creation, and scale services efficiently. In parallel, Membership Plan Development will continue to grow in prominence, since the persistent challenge of membership growth and retention requires structured strategies for recruitment, retention, segmentation, and engagement. Looking ahead, it is reasonable also to expect rising requests for Institutional Assessment to realign governance, structures, and processes with modern service delivery models, followed by targeted governance renewal and board onboarding to professionalise leadership and embed accountability.

### **Field specialists’ insights on advisory services**

To complement the survey, targeted questions on advisory services were included in the interviews with ACTEMP Field Specialists. Their responses reveal a perspective that differs slightly from that of EBMO directors. While directors focused on short-term priorities such as membership growth and digital transformation, field specialists placed stronger emphasis on governance, strategic direction, and institutional resilience.

The most frequently mentioned advisory areas were **Institutional Assessment, Policy Advisory, and Digital Transformation Solutions**, followed by Membership Plan Development, Board Member Onboarding, and Instructional Design Coaching (see Figure 18). This pattern reflects specialists’ closer awareness of governance gaps within EBMOs, issues already highlighted in their discussion of internal challenges. In their view, effective governance and leadership structures are the foundation for making digital tools and membership strategies work sustainably. Directors, on the other hand, tended to prioritise more immediate or visible improvements, such as expanding membership or adopting new technologies.

Figure 18. Field specialists' expectations on advisory services



Specialists also approached digital transformation from a broader perspective. They stressed that tools such as CRMs, eCampus platforms, or AI chatbots must be properly integrated, maintained, and aligned with organisational processes. Several noted that EBMOs need ongoing technical mentoring to ensure these systems become fully operational rather than remaining pilot initiatives. Similarly, while directors focused on membership expansion, specialists underlined the importance of leadership and board onboarding to secure continuity and strategic alignment in membership strategies.

In addition to the main advisory areas, field specialists highlighted several complementary and emerging priorities that ACTEMP Turin could consider in shaping its future advisory service offer:

- **Communication and crisis-response strategies:** a service to help EBMOs strengthen their visibility, credibility, and agility during periods of political or economic instability.
- **Member engagement programmes:** adaptable products for national delivery through local consultants, aimed at sustaining participation and improving member value.
- **Financial management support:** a tailored service to analyse EBMOs' financial challenges and to reinforce diversification of funding sources.
- **Data management and analytics coaching:** promoting the use of practical, user-friendly tools (e.g., Qualtrics) to monitor membership trends, training performance, and advocacy outcomes.
- **Coaching for negotiation and representation skills:** to enhance employer delegates' effectiveness in policy dialogue and tripartite forums.
- **Peer-learning partnerships:** encouraging collaboration and knowledge exchange between larger and smaller organisations to accelerate institutional learning.

Forward-looking proposals also included policy advisory services on productivity, informality, and workplace violence, support for employer participation in social protection governance, and strategic HR management to strengthen staff motivation and performance systems.

Taken together, these insights indicate that ACTEMP Turin could consolidate its core advisory offer around governance, digital transformation, and membership development, while gradually expanding into new areas such as communication, data use, and financial resilience.

# Conclusions and recommendations

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## Conclusions

Drawing on the survey results and qualitative inputs from ACTEMP field specialists presented in the previous sections, the 2026-27 Training Needs Analysis confirms that Employers' and Business Membership Organisations are operating under a growing double pressure: persistent internal capacity constraints combined with an increasingly complex and volatile external environment.

Inputs from EBMO leaders worldwide, complemented by ACTEMP field specialists' perspectives, provide a coherent picture of organisations that are being asked to do more: advocate more effectively, modernise services, and support members through rapid change, while their organisational foundations remain fragile.

At the **internal level**, three **challenges** continue to dominate and mutually reinforce one another: financial sustainability, membership development and engagement, and human resource management. Financial sustainability has consolidated its position as the foremost concern since 2023, reflecting limited diversification of income sources and continued reliance on membership dues or project-based funding. Membership challenges are no longer only about numbers, but about relevance: EBMOs are increasingly aware that outdated value propositions, weak engagement mechanisms, and limited use of digital tools undermine both legitimacy and revenue. Human resource constraints—particularly difficulties in attracting, retaining, and developing qualified staff—further constrain organisational continuity, innovation, and institutional memory.

Beyond these operational pressures, the assessment highlights a growing recognition of institutional capacity and governance as critical leverage points for organisational strengthening. While governance issues are often underemphasised by executives, field specialists consistently identify weak governance arrangements, unclear mandates, and limited strategic leadership as root causes of financial fragility, staff turnover, and inconsistent member engagement. This convergence of evidence suggests that sustainable improvement depends less on isolated technical fixes and more on reinforcing the organisational arrangements that enable EBMOs to plan, decide, and act coherently over time.

**Externally**, EBMOs face an environment characterised by political and governance instability, economic uncertainty, and accelerated technological transformation. Political volatility and shrinking civic space in several regions weaken employer autonomy and reduce opportunities for meaningful participation in policymaking. Economic fragility, inflationary pressures, and constrained competitiveness directly affect members' capacity to engage and pay dues, transmitting external shocks into internal organisational stress. At the same time, digitalisation and artificial intelligence are reshaping business models, labour markets, and policy debates, compelling EBMOs to update both their advocacy agendas and their service offers. Together, these dynamics require EBMOs to move from reactive representation to more anticipatory, evidence-based, and strategically positioned engagement in policy dialogue and member services.

**Training priorities** expressed in the assessment reflect this reality. Lobbying and advocacy emerge as the top training need, despite ranking lower as an internal challenge. This apparent paradox indicates that EBMOs do not see advocacy as a failing function, but as a strategic capability that must be continuously upgraded to remain effective in more contested and polarised policy environments. Alongside advocacy, high demand persists for training in membership development, communication and outreach, and service development, confirming the centrality of value creation for members. Governance and leadership, project design and management, and data-related skills have also gained prominence, signalling a shift toward more professionalised and results-oriented organisational management.

In terms of **policy areas**, the 2025 assessment marks a clear evolution from a predominantly "skills-first" agenda toward a "technology-and-skills-together" approach. Artificial intelligence and digital transformation

now rank as the most relevant policy area, closely followed by skills development and talent attraction. Productivity, wage policies, and industrial relations remain core areas of engagement, while ESG and Responsible Business Conduct are steadily gaining importance as dimensions of competitiveness, value-chain integration, and reputational management. This broadened agenda underscores EBMOs' need to strengthen analytical capacity and policy literacy across both traditional and emerging domains.

**Learning modality** preferences remain consistent with previous cycles. Blended learning continues to be the most valued format, offering an effective balance between flexibility, interaction, and peer exchange. However, limited co-funding capacity remains a structural constraint, reinforcing the importance of cost-effective delivery models and continued scholarship support.

For the first time, the assessment systematically captures demand for **advisory services**, revealing a decisive shift toward tailored, hands-on institutional support. Digital Transformation Solutions, Membership Plan Development, Policy Advisory, and Institutional Assessment stand out as priority areas. These demands confirm that EBMOs increasingly seek not only knowledge, but practical guidance to modernise operations, strengthen governance, and translate strategy into action. Field specialists' inputs further underline the importance of sequencing and accompaniment: digital tools and membership strategies are most effective when grounded in sound governance, leadership commitment, and sustained follow-up.

Taken together, the findings confirm that ACTEMP Turin's core mandate remains highly relevant. At the same time, they indicate that impact over the next cycle will depend on deepening the integration between training and advisory support, reinforcing organisational foundations, and embedding digital and data capabilities across all areas of work.

## Recommendations

Building on these conclusions, the following recommendations outline priorities for the 2026–2027 period. They are structured around three complementary dimensions: training, advisory services, and operational and strategic positioning.

### Training: reinforcing foundations while modernizing capabilities

ACTEMP Turin should continue to strengthen its flagship programmes on governance and EBMO management, while updating content to reflect emerging strategic demands. Governance and leadership training should more explicitly integrate strategic foresight, leadership succession, and board–secretariat alignment, enabling organisations to anticipate change and maintain continuity beyond individual mandates.

Advocacy and communication training should be modernised to reflect the digital and data-driven policy environment. Updated courses should emphasise evidence-based advocacy, data literacy, and strategic storytelling, helping EBMOs translate research and experience into persuasive messages for policymakers, members, and the public. Practical simulations and case-based learning can strengthen preparedness for advocacy in volatile or polarised contexts.

New and expanded training offers should respond to clearly articulated gaps, notably in project design and management, research and data analysis, and economic and market intelligence. These areas directly support financial sustainability, policy influence, and service innovation. The evidence also highlights wide variation in participants' prior knowledge and organisational maturity, pointing to the value of tiered learning pathways (introductory, intermediate, and advanced) and differentiated tracks for board members and professional staff, so that each group can engage at the appropriate depth and translate learning into practice.

Across all training areas, digitalisation and artificial intelligence should be treated as cross-cutting enablers rather than stand-alone topics, embedded into finance, membership, advocacy, and service-development curricula.

## **Advisory services: from tools to transformation**

ACTEMP Turin should consolidate and expand its advisory offer around three core streams: governance and institutional assessment, digital transformation, and membership and financial sustainability. Institutional assessments can serve as entry points, helping organisations diagnose misalignments between strategy, structure, and capacity before implementing reforms.

To strengthen implementation rates, each advisory engagement should begin with an EBMO commitment and readiness check, confirming leadership buy-in, a designated focal point, and realistic allocation of staff time.

Digital transformation advisory should prioritise practical, scalable solutions, including lighter CRM systems and basic AI-enabled tools, accompanied by technical support and mentoring. The objective should be sustainable adoption rather than one-off installation.

Dedicated advisory support on financial sustainability should assist EBMOs in analysing revenue structures, diversifying income sources, and linking service development to viable business models. Membership plan development should focus on clarifying value propositions, segmentation, and engagement strategies, supported by appropriate data systems.

Finally, advisory services should increasingly incorporate follow-up and peer-learning components, ensuring that organisational change is embedded over time rather than remaining episodic.

## **Operational and strategic positioning: enabling scale and sustainability**

To maximise reach and impact, ACTEMP Turin should further develop a “develop–adapt–accompany” model, whereby centrally developed modular resources are adapted by field specialists to local contexts and reinforced through light follow-up. This approach supports both consistency and relevance and can be scaled further through structured train-the-trainer pathways to enable trusted national partners to replicate core content across sectoral and subnational organisations, supported by mentoring, peer exchanges, and targeted study visits.

Operational priorities include expanding linguistic accessibility, strengthening coordination with field specialists and apex organisations, and systematically involving sectoral EBMOs through endorsed nomination mechanisms. Digital platforms should be leveraged not only for delivery, but also for sharing tools, success stories, and peer experiences.

Strategically, ACTEMP Turin should position itself as a reference point for institutional renewal and innovation within the employers’ network, integrating training, advisory services, and knowledge exchange. By reinforcing organisational foundations while modernising advocacy and service delivery, ACTEMP can support EBMOs in navigating the double pressure they face and in strengthening their long-term resilience and relevance.

# Annexes

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## Annex 1. Survey

# Training Needs Assessment for ACTEMP ITCILO 2026/27 Strategic Plan

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Start of Block: Training Needs Assessment for ACTEMP ITCILO 2026/27 Strategic Plan

Introduction

## **TRAINING & MANAGEMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR ACTEMP ITCILO 2026/2027 STRATEGIC PLAN**

Dear Executive Director,

Greetings from the Employers' Activities Programme (ACTEMP) at the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin.

As you are aware, our Programme's main objective is to build capacities in Employers' and Business Membership Organizations (EBMOs).

To develop our 2026–2027 Strategic Plan and ensure our training and services remain relevant, we are conducting a Training and Management Needs Assessment. This short survey (approx. 10 minutes) will help us better understand your organisation's priorities, preferred learning formats, and suggestions for new topics.

**We kindly ask you to complete the survey by 5 September 2025!!**

Please note:

You can return to the survey if using the same device.

Click "Next" or "Prev" to navigate.

Don't forget to click "Submit" once done.

If you have any questions or need support, feel free to reach out to us at  
**[leonora.gonnelli@gmail.com](mailto:leonora.gonnelli@gmail.com)** (subject line: TNA Survey).

Thank you for your valuable input and continued collaboration.

Warm regards,

*Paolo Salvai - ACTEMP Programme Manager*

*Eleonora Gonnelli - External Collaborator for ACTEMP*

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End of Block: Training Needs Assessment for ACTEMP ITCILO 2026/27 Strategic Plan

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Start of Block: Personal information

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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Q1 Please fill in the following details (Answers will be aggregated anonymously)

- 
- Full name (1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Name of the Organization (2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Email address (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q2 Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

---

Q3 Job position:

- Executive Director or Similar (1)
  - Deputy Executive Director or Similar (2)
  - Manager / Area Director (3)
  - President or Vice President (4)
  - Other (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q4 Select your region

- Africa (19)
- Arab States (20)
- Asia and the Pacific (21)
- Europe and Central Asia (22)
- Latin America and the Caribbean (23)

End of Block: Personal information

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Start of Block: Training Needs:

## TRAINING NEEDS

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Q5 What are the three major **internal** organizational challenges your organization will face over the next 2-3 years?

1. (1) \_\_\_\_\_

2. (2) \_\_\_\_\_

3. (3) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q6 What are the three major **external** challenges your organization will face over the next 2-3 years?

1. (1) \_\_\_\_\_

2. (2) \_\_\_\_\_

3. (3) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q7 To what extent would your staff or organization benefit from training in the following **internal management and organizational development** areas over the next 2-3 years?

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Moderately (3)	A lot (4)	Extremely (5)
Governance & Leadership (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
Membership Development & Retention (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Financial Sustainability (3)	<input type="radio"/>				
Lobbying and Advocacy (4)	<input type="radio"/>				
Service Development & Delivery (5)	<input type="radio"/>				
Human Resources Management (6)	<input type="radio"/>				

Risk Management (7)	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication & Outreach (8)	<input type="radio"/>				
Project Design and Management (9)	<input type="radio"/>				
Training Design, Delivery & Facilitation (10)	<input type="radio"/>				
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion within the EBMO (11)	<input type="radio"/>				

---

Q8 How relevant are the following **policy areas and global trends** to your organization's capacity-building needs over the next 2–3 years?

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Moderately (3)	A lot (4)	Extremely (5)
Employment policies (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
Skills development policies & talents' attraction (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Wage policies (3)	<input type="radio"/>				
Social protection (4)	<input type="radio"/>				
Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) (5)	<input type="radio"/>				
Productivity policies (6)	<input type="radio"/>				
Industrial relations and social dialogue	<input type="radio"/>				

(7)					
International Labour Standards (ILS) (8)	<input type="radio"/>				
Formalization policies (9)	<input type="radio"/>				
Equality, inclusion and non-discrimination (10)	<input type="radio"/>				
Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) & Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) (11)	<input type="radio"/>				
Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation (12)	<input type="radio"/>				
Geopolitical trends (13)	<input type="radio"/>				
Demographic transition and future of work (including labour migration, care economy, unemployment) (14)	<input type="radio"/>				
Climate transition and green jobs (15)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q9 If not listed in the preceding questions, please add a maximum of three additional training needs of your organization today and for the next 2-3 years:

1. (4) \_\_\_\_\_

2. (5) \_\_\_\_\_

3 (6) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q10 Among the ACTEMP training activities listed below, which one would you choose as the most relevant and effective in addressing the needs of your EBMO for the next 2-3 years? (Select up to three choices)

- (1) Master Training in Management of Employers and Business Membership Organizations
- (2) Good Governance in Employers and Business Membership Organizations
- (3) Strengthening the Financial Sustainability of Employers and Business Membership Organizations
- (4) Strategies for Membership Development
- (5) Service Development in EBMOs
- (6) Strategic Advocacy and Communication for Employers and Business Membership Organizations
- (7) Human Resources Management
- (8) ESG Essentials
- (9) Minimum Wages' Policy
- (10) Just Transition to a Sustainable Economy
- (11) Macroeconomics and Microeconomics for Non-Economists
- (12) Productivity Enhancement Policies
- (13) The Essentials in Occupational Safety and Health (EOSH)
- (14) Designing and Delivering Impactful Training Programmes
- (15) Promoting Responsible Business Conduct (RBC)
- (16) AI productivity tools
- (17) None of them

End of Block: Training Needs:

Start of Block: Training modalities

## TRAINING MODALITIES PREFERENCES

Q11 Which of the following training formats would best support your organization's capacity-building needs? (Please, choose up to 2 modalities)

Face to Face (F2F) only (Please specify why) (1)

---

Distance Learning (DL) only (Please specify why) (2)

---

Blended (mix of DL and F2F) (Please specify why) (3)

---

*Display this question:*

*If Which of the following training formats would best support your organization's capacity-building... = Face to Face (F2F) only (Please specify why)*

*And Which of the following training formats would best support your organization's capacity-building... = Blended (mix of DL and F2F) (Please specify why)*

Q12 Would your organization be willing to cover travel costs to attend in-person sessions?

- Yes, we are willing to cover travel costs (1)
- No, we are not able to cover travel costs (2)

End of Block: Training modalities

Start of Block: Advisoryservices

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## **ADVISORY SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

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Q13 Looking ahead to the next 2–3 years, which of the following advisory services do you believe your organization will need? (Please select all that apply)

- Instructional Design Coaching** – Personalized support to design and launch online training courses using your eCampus platform (1)
  - Institutional Assessment** – In-depth evaluation of your structure, governance, services, and overall effectiveness (2)
  - Membership Plan Development** – Tailored guidance to build or update a membership growth and retention strategy (3)
  - Board Member Onboarding** – Short sessions to strengthen governance, clarify board roles, and align strategic vision (4)
  - Policy Advisory** – Expert support to analyze regulatory changes, develop advocacy strategies, and draft policy positions (5)
  - Digital Transformation Solutions** - CRM, eCampus Platforms, legal chatbot, policy tracker (6)
  - Other (please specify) (7) \_\_\_\_\_
  - None (8)
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Q14 Please briefly explain why these services would be relevant for your organization:

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Q15 What are the main organizational challenges driving your need for advisory support? (Select up to 3)

- Governance and leadership issues (1)
- Limited membership growth or retention (2)
- Adapting to regulatory or policy changes (3)
- Weak training programs (4)
- Ineffective advocacy or stakeholder engagement (5)
- Organizational structure and strategy alignment (6)
- Other (please specify): (7) \_\_\_\_\_

End of Block: Advisoryservices

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Start of Block: End of the survey

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Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey! We truly value the information you have provided. Your responses will contribute to our analyses of your personal and organizational needs, in order to keep our offering needs-based and quality-driven. If you have any comments on the survey or our training needs assessment, please leave a comment below. Many thanks, The ITCILO Employers' Activities Programme (ACTEMP)

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Comments

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End of Block: End of the survey

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## Annex 2. Interview questions

### 2025 Training Needs Assessment – Interview questions for ACTEMP Field Specialists

**1. In your view, what has been the most important training and/or advisory service delivered by the ITCILO Employers' Activities Programme in your region over the past two years? Please briefly explain why you consider it particularly impactful for EBMOs.**

**2. What are the three major organizational challenges the EBMOs will face over the next 2-3 years in your region?**

EBMOs mentioned:

- 3 TOP INTERNAL CHALLENGES: financial sustainability, membership issues and value proposition, human resources, talent and internal capacity
- 3 TOP EXTERNAL CHALLENGES: political and regulatory environment, economic instability and financial pressures, competition with other union associations and membership pressures

**3. What are the most important training and management capacity needs you would identify for EBMOs nowadays in your region? (if possible please name 3)**

EBMOs mentioned: Strongest needs (highest demand for "A lot" or "Extremely"):

- Lobbying & Advocacy
- Financial Sustainability
- Membership Development & Retention
- Communication & Outreach
- Service Development & Delivery
- Training Design, Delivery & Facilitation

**4. Looking at the lists below, which training activities, advisory services, and policy areas do you believe are most relevant and effective in addressing the current and future needs of EBMOs in your region?**

**Please highlight max 3 per section.**

#### A. Training Activities

- Master Training in Management of EBMOs
- Good Governance in EBMOs
- Strengthening Financial Sustainability
- Membership Development Strategies
- Strategic Service Development
- Human Resources Management
- Strategic Advocacy and Communication
- ESG Leadership Essentials
- Minimum Wage Policymaking
- Just Transition to a Sustainable Economy
- Macroeconomics & Microeconomics for Non-Economists
- Productivity Enhancement Policies
- AI productivity tools

#### B. Advisory Services

- Instructional Design Coaching
- Institutional Assessment

- Membership Plan Development
- Board Member Onboarding
- Policy Advisory
- Digital transformation tools: Chatbot, CRM, e-campus platform, policy tracker

#### C. Policy Areas

- Employment policies
- Skills development policies & talents' attraction
- Wage policies
- Social protection
- Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)
- Productivity policies
- Industrial relations and social dialogue
- International Labour Standards (ILS)
- Formalization policies
- Equality, inclusion and non-discrimination
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) & Responsible Business Conduct (RBC)
- Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation
- Geopolitical trends
- Demographic transition and future of work (including labour migration, care economy, unemployment)
- Climate transition and green jobs

- 5. Are there any additional types of capacity-building, advisory services, or digital transformation tools that you would like ACTEMP Turin to offer in the future?**
- 6. Looking ahead, what should be the main strategic role of ACTEMP Turin? Are there any specific training topics, policy areas, or experience-sharing formats you think it should develop to better support EBMOs?**
- 7. Which of the following training modalities do you consider most relevant and impactful for EBMOs in your region?**

- Face-to-face (F2F):
  - National
  - Sub-regional
  - Interregional
- Traditional Distance Learning (DL)
- Distance Learning with Virtual Reality (VR)
- Blended (mix of F2F and DL)

- 8. Considering the potentialities of Distance Learning, do you think it would be possible to reach out sectoral and regional organisations through the umbrella organisations, namely the ILO constituents, and promote the distance learning training activities to them?**

## Annex 3. Summary of interviews

### Field Specialist: Gary Rynhart — East and South East Asia

#### 1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years

- Navigate (ECOP) and its related eCampus courses were among the most appreciated and impactful products. The ITCILO branding and certification added strong credibility and motivation for participants.
- Training on wages in the Philippines was highly valued for its practical relevance.
- The early-stage ESG and RBC training addressed an emerging area of demand in a fast-evolving policy environment, positioning EBMOs to engage effectively on sustainability issues.
- Digital and blended tools, particularly the eCampus platform, reinforced visibility, standardisation, and access to continuous learning opportunities across the region.

#### 2. Top three internal organisational challenges

- Governance and institutional capacity: Weak or non-compliant governance structures in some EBMOs have created reputational and legal risks, including cases of non-payment of staff social and health insurance contributions.
- Communication and crisis response: During political or social crises, many organisations struggle with miscommunication and lack of strategic guidance. Training in crisis communication and public positioning is needed.
- Risk management and due diligence: There is a growing need for internal systems to assess and manage organisational and financial risks.

#### 3. Top three external challenges

- Social and political instability: Several countries (e.g. Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia) face deepening social crises that will increasingly affect EBMOs' operating environments.
- Economic uncertainty: Macroeconomic volatility and policy unpredictability are constraining private sector confidence and EBMO planning.
- Labour and regulatory transitions: Shifts in labour policies and government attitudes toward business require EBMOs to adapt their advocacy strategies.

#### 4. Top relevant training areas

- Lobbying and advocacy
- Financial sustainability
- Membership development and retention
- Communication and outreach
- Service development and delivery
- Training design, delivery, and facilitation
- Project design and management (particularly for ILO-funded projects to enhance access to funding opportunities)

#### 5. Top relevant advisory services

- Governance support and board training
- Communication and crisis response strategies
- Member onboarding and engagement programmes (suggested as a new customizable product deliverable at national level with local consultants)
- Support in financial management and institutional compliance

- Digital transformation tools (chatbots, CRM, eCampus, policy tracker) — though adoption remains limited due to usability issues

## 6. Top relevant policy areas

- Skills development and talent attraction
  - Wage policies
  - Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC)
  - Artificial intelligence and digital transformation
  - Demographic transition and the future of work (including migration and care economy)
- Note: Gary emphasized the importance of focusing on core EBMO functions—lobbying, industrial relations, and wages—before expanding to more specialized policy domains.*

## 7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin

- Develop modular, customizable training materials that specialists can adapt and update over time.
- Consolidate fragmented training resources on core labour standards and labour rights into coherent, accessible packages.
- Focus on longer-term accompaniment models rather than short, stand-alone workshops.
- Act as a knowledge integrator by collecting and updating training experiences from specialists to keep content evolving.
- Ensure that materials are effectively delivered through a circular model—ITCILO develops, specialists adapt, and feedback informs continuous improvement.
- De-prioritise generic regional workshops unless part of a comprehensive learning pathway.

## 8. Preferred training modalities

- The choice depends on topic and language accessibility.
- In-person formats remain most engaging and impactful for relationship-building and applied learning.
- Hybrid or fully online courses can be highly effective when certified and offered in local languages.

## 9. How to reach sectoral organisations

- Engage sectoral and regional associations through national apex organisations and ILO constituents.
- Adopt a more proactive approach—move beyond passive coordination with EBMOs.
- Sectoral approaches (e.g., Malaysia's glove industry initiative) demonstrate strong impact even outside formal EBMO membership.
- Sectoral organisations are often willing to invest financially in high-quality, globally recognized training.
- Strengthen the value proposition of apex organisations to ensure they can support and coordinate sectoral members effectively.

## Field Specialist: José Manuel Medina Checa — Arab States

### 1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years

- EBMOs in the region generally do not participate actively in open courses; what has greater impact is institutional support and tailored capacity building.
- The most relevant themes include management, governance, financial sustainability, advocacy, and data research.

- Training that supports organizational development and institutional strengthening is considered more effective than general or open-enrolment courses.

## **2. Top three internal organisational challenges**

- Financial sustainability: Persistent dependence on membership fees and limited diversification of income sources.
- Membership and value proposition: Many EBMOs face difficulties attracting and retaining members, as well as demonstrating tangible value to them.
- Human resources and internal capacity: Limited talent and technical capability. Many EBMOs function primarily as chambers of commerce and lack the units, departments, or even the mandate to handle core labour-related issues that should fall within employers' representation functions.

## **3. Top three external challenges**

- Political and regulatory environment: Increasing government interference limits EBMOs' independence and their ability to engage in advocacy.
- Economic and financial instability: Persistent macroeconomic uncertainty and fiscal pressures constrain business operations and organizational planning.
- Social and political polarization: Rising social tensions, security risks, and ideological divides are shaping the regional operating environment.

## **4. Top relevant training areas**

- Master Training in Management of EBMOs
- Good Governance in EBMOs
- Strengthening Financial Sustainability
- Membership Development Strategies
- Project Design and Management (especially relevant for the Levant subregion)
- Lobbying and Advocacy (prioritized over communication and outreach, which are seen as secondary needs)

## **5. Top relevant advisory services**

- Institutional strengthening and governance improvement
- Support for financial sustainability and diversification of funding sources
- Capacity building in membership development and retention
- Practical training in data collection, management, and analysis (e.g., Qualtrics or similar tools), as existing guides are perceived as complex and difficult to apply

## **6. Top relevant policy areas**

- Employment policies – labour market reforms and social protection
- Wage policies
- Social protection systems
- Industrial relations and social dialogue (particularly relevant in Gulf countries)
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) – not yet an area of service delivery, but a growing knowledge and awareness priority

## **7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin**

- Develop practical, hands-on tools for data use and analysis to help EBMOs generate and leverage evidence for advocacy.
- Collaborate on regional academies or executive programmes focused on labour and industrial relations.
- Design a Master's programme in Industrial or Labour Relations for Gulf countries, ideally in partnership with a business school (e.g. Turin) or a Gulf-based university.
- Position such programmes as premium, high-quality executive courses (e.g. in HR management, labour dispute resolution, and social dialogue) to enhance visibility and perceived value.

## 8. Preferred training modalities

- Face-to-face and blended (hybrid) formats are both relevant, depending on subregional context (Gulf vs. Levant).
- Certified courses are particularly valued for recognition and professional motivation.

## 9. How to reach sectoral organisations

- The feasibility varies greatly by country.
- Field Specialist reports having limited direct contact with sectoral organisations, though acknowledges the potential benefit of reaching them through national coordinators or ILO constituents.
- Distance learning could be a useful channel if supported by strong national-level partnerships.

## Field Specialist: Julie Senghor Kazagui — West Africa

### 1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years

- The EOSH training (Employers' Organizations and Occupational Safety and Health) was particularly appreciated, especially in Togo.
- The Master Training in Management of EBMOs continues to be highly valued.
- Governance-related training remains one of the most consistently appreciated areas across organisations in the region.

### 2. Top three internal organisational challenges

- Financial sustainability: This remains the major concern for most EBMOs.
- Membership and services: Attracting, retaining, and providing value to members continues to be a key challenge.
- Human resources and staff retention: Many organisations have lost trained personnel, weakening institutional continuity.
- Governance: Persistent governance issues, particularly regarding the relationship between boards and executive secretariats, require renewed focus.

### 3. Top three external challenges

- Political and economic environment: Persistent instability limits growth and planning capacity.
- Competition: Increasing competition among associations for members and influence.
- Climate change: A growing issue that remains poorly understood by most EBMOs and requires awareness-building.

### 4. Top relevant training areas

- Lobbying and advocacy
- Financial sustainability

- Membership development and retention
- Communication and outreach
- Service development and delivery
- Training design, facilitation, and delivery
- Governance (including governance of sectoral associations affiliated with national apex organisations)
- Strategic planning – training and practical guides on how to design and implement strategic plans sustainably
- Project design and resource mobilisation (as part of financial sustainability strategies)

## 5. Top relevant advisory services

- Coaching and support in training design and facilitation
- Advisory on board integration and governance improvement
- Support in making digital transformation tools (chatbots, CRM systems, eCampus, policy trackers) fully operational — many organisations still struggle to integrate and maintain these platforms effectively
- Continuous follow-up and accompaniment after training to ensure operationalisation of learning

## 6. Top relevant policy areas

- Employment policies
- Skills development and talent attraction policies
- Wage policies
- Formalisation policies

## 7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin

- Encourage experience-sharing across countries on tools such as chatbots and digital platforms.
- Organise an end-of-biennium session for field specialists to showcase new tools and provide demonstrations, ensuring they can promote and support adoption in their regions.
- Be more proactive in proposing innovative and concrete examples of success stories, rather than repeating the same offer.
- Improve French-language accessibility — many current courses and materials are in English or Spanish, limiting participation; more French content should be made available online even if translation costs are high.

## 8. Preferred training modalities

- Blended (hybrid) formats are preferred as they allow broader reach, although national-level delivery is more expensive.
- National-level courses reach more participants and respond to contextual needs but are costlier.
- Subregional or interregional courses are valuable for peer learning and avoiding repetition of similar national experiences.
- Fully online training remains challenging — many participants lack time to complete assignments due to heavy workloads, requiring frequent follow-up to maintain engagement.

## 9. How to reach sectoral organisations

- It is essential to include sectoral organisations in training invitations alongside national representatives — e.g., one representative from the apex organisation and one from a sectoral body.

- This approach avoids perceptions of exclusivity or competition between organisations (“jealousy” mentioned as a barrier).
- Online formats are more feasible for joint participation, whereas travel-based training (e.g., in Turin) can create tensions over representation.
- ACTEMP Turin should help raise awareness among apex organisations that their membership base includes sectoral and indirect members, and encourage nominations from sectoral associations in future courses.

## **Field Specialist: Karen Rosales — Southern Cone**

### **1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years**

- Institutional strengthening and financial sustainability remain the most impactful and relevant areas of support for employers’ organisations, given the persistent complexity of maintaining stable resources.
- The Lobbying and Advocacy Guide continues to be in high demand and widely used across organisations.
- Training on International Labour Standards has been particularly valuable for organisations involved in advocacy and for orienting newly recruited staff on the employers’ perspective in labour matters.

### **2. Top three internal organisational challenges**

- Financial sustainability: The most recurring concern across the subregion.
- Membership and value proposition: Challenges persist in attracting, retaining, and demonstrating value to members.
- Human resources and institutional capacity: Talent management, skills development, and internal innovation capacities remain limited.
- Service innovation: Organisations must go beyond rebranding existing services and instead generate new value propositions that truly strengthen member engagement.
- Communication strategy: A common need across Cono Sur; three employers’ organisations have already requested specific training in communication planning and strategy.

### **3. Top three external challenges**

- Human resources and migration: Labour migration and skills shortages are causing disruption, especially in sectors such as agroindustry, where there is a scarcity of qualified workers.
- Changing labour market dynamics: Rapid technological and demographic changes are reshaping employment structures and skill needs.
- Economic and political uncertainty: The overall context of instability requires EBMOs to strengthen their analytical and advocacy capacities.

### **4. Top relevant training areas**

- Master Training in Management of EBMOs
- Strategic Lobbying and Communication
- AI Productivity Tools
- Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Skills (particularly for employer representatives engaging in public–private dialogue or tripartite fora)
- Digital Transformation, including AI and process automation for internal organisational improvement

### **5. Top relevant advisory services**

- Membership development and affiliation plan design
- Policy advisory services and advocacy strategy support
- Digital transformation tools (chatbots, CRM systems, eCampus platforms, policy trackers)
- Support in internal negotiation skills development for employer representatives in high-level forums

## 6. Top relevant policy areas

- Skills development and talent attraction policies
- Labour relations and social dialogue
- Artificial intelligence and digital transformation

## 7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin

- Develop due diligence models that link productivity, sustainability, and value-chain management — helping enterprises integrate responsible business conduct into competitiveness strategies.
- Support organisations in designing digital transformation strategies, not just tool adoption, but broader business model innovation.
- Promote a “Just Transition” model oriented toward enterprise and sectoral competitiveness.
- Enhance EBMOs’ capacity for social dialogue, including courses on collective bargaining, tripartite committees, and effective employer participation in dialogue mechanisms.
- Create tools to strengthen understanding of decent wage and living wage concepts, and guidance on how to negotiate these within tripartite frameworks.
- Support EBMOs’ capacity to understand and influence the business ecosystem and democratic governance, encouraging stronger engagement in public policy advocacy.
- Promote economic and geopolitical analysis capacity within employers’ organisations — potentially through economic study centres capable of monitoring trends, policy changes, and global dynamics.
- ACTEMP Turin should provide more strategic, long-term technical assistance, combining economic, labour, and geopolitical analysis to enhance foresight and planning capacities.

## 8. Preferred training modalities

- Face-to-face (national): Ideal for specific, context-based themes such as financial sustainability.
- Subregional training: Works particularly well in Cono Sur, where realities are similar and peer exchange is valuable.
- Interregional courses: Useful for comparative learning on transversal themes.
- Blended (hybrid) formats: Effective for flexibility and continuity of learning.

## 9. How to reach sectoral organisations

- Positive experiences in Chile show that it is feasible to reach sectoral organisations through national apex bodies.
- It is important to motivate and tailor training offers to sector-specific needs, ensuring that messaging and examples reflect each sector’s realities.
- For example, the Financial Sustainability course in Chile successfully included a national chamber and multiple sectoral associations, demonstrating the potential for scaling this approach.
- The key is to ensure clear communication of sectoral relevance and alignment with industry-specific priorities to maximise engagement and impact.

## Field Specialist: Lassina Traoré — Central Africa

### 1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years

- The development and expansion of the eCampus platform was a major achievement, including Training of Trainers (ToT) initiatives in Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cameroon. While results varied, overall engagement from respondents and organisations was strong.
- The implementation of CRM systems and corresponding staff training in employers' organisations (e.g. Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Angola) was highly impactful, improving member attraction and retention, tracking of members' needs, and the ability to design responsive services.
- The Master Training in Management of EBMOs, delivered in Angola, included an organisational audit and management capacity assessment. It successfully built leadership and managerial capacity among both staff and executive members of employers' organisations.

## 2. Top three internal organisational challenges

- Financial fragility: Many EBMOs struggle with non-paying members and insufficient financial resources, creating a vicious cycle of low capacity and weak service delivery.
- Membership engagement: Recruiting and retaining members remains difficult, especially when services are not perceived as directly beneficial.
- Human resources and talent retention: Limited resources mean organisations cannot always pay competitive salaries. As a result, staff trained through ACTEMP programmes are often hired away by private companies.
- Leadership and governance harmony: In some organisations, tensions persist between political leadership and secretariats. Strengthening coordination between governing bodies and executive management is critical.

## 3. Top three external challenges

- Competition among employers' organisations: Fragmentation remains a problem; for example, in Cameroon, multiple groups (ECAM and GICAM) recently merged to create GECAM, highlighting the need for unity.
- Economic downturn: Falling commodity prices and the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis have led to widespread recession, particularly affecting SMEs.
- Business environment advocacy: Strengthening EBMOs' advocacy to improve the business climate is a permanent and pressing challenge. Ongoing research on business climate mapping (e.g., in Guinea and Cameroon) is helping to identify ways for EBMOs to develop more relevant services for enterprises.

## 4. Top relevant training areas

- Good Governance in EBMOs
- Strengthening Financial Sustainability (with opportunities for experience-sharing and cross-learning on innovative solutions)
- Membership Development Strategies
- Strategic Service Development
- Advocacy and policy influence
- Digitalisation and data management within EBMOs

## 5. Top relevant advisory services

- Pedagogical coaching and instructional design support for trainers
- Governance and board integration support
- Digital transformation tools (chatbots, CRM systems, eCampus platform)
- Tailored advisory services differentiated by the maturity level of each EBMO, with partnerships encouraged between larger and smaller organisations to foster peer mentoring

## **6. Top relevant policy areas**

- Skills development and talent attraction – particularly addressing the shortage of qualified labour for SMEs
- Industrial relations and social dialogue – promoting bipartite and tripartite dialogue in countries such as Cameroon and the DRC
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) – emerging themes of growing importance in the region

## **7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin**

- ACTEMP Turin should strengthen its strategic guidance role, adapting support to the different maturity levels of EBMOs — from basic institutional development to more advanced organisations.
- Encourage peer learning and exchange visits (“study tours”) between well-established and emerging EBMOs to accelerate institutional learning.
- Continue reinforcing digital transformation capacity through the consolidation and active use of eCampus, CRM, and other digital tools.
- Provide more customized and differentiated support, recognising that organisational needs vary widely across the region.

## **8. Preferred training modalities**

- Face-to-face and blended (hybrid) formats are both considered relevant, depending on the topic.
- For example, national-level trainings are best for highly specific themes such as wage policies or governance.
- Subregional approaches can work well but must ensure that key messages are effectively conveyed to the right participants in each country.

## **9. How to reach sectoral organisations**

- Sectoral outreach should always be conducted through the national apex organisation, not directly, to avoid undermining national structures.
- Support to sectoral or women entrepreneurs’ organisations (e.g., Cameroon Women Entrepreneurs Association, a GECAM member) should therefore be channelled through their parent employers’ federation.
- This approach preserves institutional coherence, reinforces affiliation links, and strengthens the broader employers’ movement.

## **Field Specialist: Luis González Gómez de Aranda — Andean Countries**

### **1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years**

- The Mini-ILGOs (Institutional Leadership and Governance Seminars) provided tailored, hands-on spaces to strengthen EBMOs’ managerial capacities. These were considered highly relevant because they adapted content to organisational realities.
- The training materials on membership and financial sustainability were also noted as particularly useful and practical for many organisations in the region.

### **2. Top three internal organisational challenges**

- Financial sustainability: Persistent difficulties in ensuring regular payment of membership fees and generating alternative sources of income.

- Membership and value proposition: Many apex organisations (“cúpulas”) represent other associations rather than individual enterprises, which complicates direct member engagement and limits perceived value.
- Human resources and institutional capacity: Limited staff capabilities and high turnover reduce continuity and weaken advocacy impact.
- Fragmentation and coordination: In some countries, such as Ecuador and Colombia, internal divisions and leadership disputes prevent the formation of unified national federations, undermining representation.

### 3. Top three external challenges

- Political instability and changing governments: Sudden policy shifts and political polarisation (especially in Colombia and Ecuador) make it difficult for EBMOs to maintain consistent advocacy agendas.
- Informality: Widespread informality remains a structural challenge for employers' representation and the formal business sector.
- Social and labour issues: Topics such as workplace harassment and violence are increasingly prominent in the policy landscape and require employers' awareness and responses.

### 4. Top relevant training areas

- Strengthening Financial Sustainability
- Membership Development Strategies
- Productivity Enhancement Policies
- AI and Productivity Tools
- Lobbying and Advocacy (including addressing issues of violence, harassment, and informality)

### 5. Top relevant advisory services

- Development of membership and affiliation plans
- Onboarding and integration of board members
- Policy advisory services related to productivity, informality, and workplace violence

### 6. Top relevant policy areas

- Violence and harassment in the workplace
- Informality and formalisation policies
- Trade and tariff policies (potentially relevant for regional competitiveness and business environment)

### 7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin

- Expand the Mini-ILGO model to strengthen the managerial and governance capacities of apex organisations and their affiliated members.
- Provide guidance on AI and emerging technology trends, and support employers' organisations in understanding how trade, tariff, and productivity policies impact enterprises.
- Avoid rigid, centrally designed projects — particularly in emerging areas like ESG — and instead allow flexibility for field specialists to adapt materials and co-develop programmes directly with organisations.
- Support decentralised capacity building where learning materials are created and refined in the field, ensuring practical relevance and ownership.

### 8. Preferred training modalities

- National face-to-face training is the most effective and relevant format, as it allows direct adaptation to local contexts.
- Subregional and interregional formats are generally less effective, often perceived as “training tourism” with limited institutional impact.

## 9. How to reach sectoral organisations

- Current cooperation models make it difficult to allocate training resources to sectoral organisations, as national apex bodies are protective of their relationships with sectors.
- To overcome this, ACTEMP Turin could develop sector-specific programmes that involve sectoral participation as part of the national structure, ensuring that apex organisations remain central.
- Examples from Peru show that when apex bodies such as CONFIEP take a “generous” approach and channel training opportunities to regional chambers and sectoral groups, collaboration works well — but this requires political will and trust.
- Without such mechanisms, centralised training projects are unlikely to reach the intended audience or achieve sustainable engagement.

## Field Specialist: Randall Arias — Central America

### 1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years

- Training on membership development continues to be among the most impactful activities, directly addressing organisational growth and sustainability.
- Work on financial sustainability has had significant impact more recently, as few other actors provide this kind of support to employers’ organisations.
- Both themes — membership and financial sustainability — are closely interlinked, as membership development represents roughly half of an organisation’s overall financial sustainability strategy.

### 2. Top three internal organisational challenges

- Vision and strategic direction: The most critical challenge is the absence of long-term strategic vision and a clearly defined value proposition. Without this, organisations struggle to articulate their purpose or align resources effectively.
- Financial sustainability: Directly linked to weak strategy and low member value perception; the absence of long-term planning undermines financial stability.
- Membership and institutional capacity: Persistent difficulties in attracting and retaining members, combined with limited professional staff capacity and weak governance systems.
- Governance and strategic leadership: A stronger governance framework is needed to support continuity, accountability, and strategic foresight.

### 3. Top three external challenges

- Political environment and authoritarian populism: A growing wave of political interference threatens the independence of employers’ organisations. Governments in several countries (e.g., Guatemala, Mexico, Costa Rica) attempt to co-opt or corporatize EBMOs as state-aligned entities, undermining free representation.
- Economic instability and lack of free markets: Persistent state control and distorted markets create uncertainty and weaken private sector confidence.
- Security and violence: Widespread violence, gang activity, and organised crime disrupt business operations and discourage investment across the region.

### 4. Top relevant training areas

- Master Training in Management of EBMOs (the ILGO format is too limited in scope)

- Good Governance in EBMOs (including value proposition and strategic planning)
- Strengthening Financial Sustainability
- Membership Development Strategies
- Strategic Service Development
- Minimum Wage Policymaking and Living Wage debates (highly demanded in the region, e.g., Costa Rica)
- ESG training was deemed not relevant for the region at this stage.

## 5. Top relevant advisory services

- Institutional assessments and organisational diagnostics
- Development of membership and affiliation plans
- Onboarding and training of board members in governance practices (requested, for example, by COPARMEX in Jalisco)

## 6. Top relevant policy areas

- Formalisation policies – need to expand employers' organisations' understanding and engagement with informality. Many informal enterprises cannot join associations, reducing representativeness.
- Value proposition of formalisation – employers' organisations should frame formalisation as a shared solution that benefits both business and labour, increasing representational strength.

## 7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin

- Develop training and tools on value proposition design and long-term strategic vision for EBMOs.
- Facilitate experience-sharing on good governance practices, particularly board management and institutional accountability.
- Support more tailored governance strengthening programmes (beyond standard ILGOs).
- Refrain from rigid, centralised projects — allow regional and national adaptation of training materials to ensure relevance and responsiveness.
- ACTEMP Turin should act as a strategic enabler, helping EBMOs move from operational survival to proactive, vision-driven organisations.

## 8. Preferred training modalities

- Blended formats (combining face-to-face and distance learning) are considered the most effective overall.
- Regional in-person training (e.g., ILGO) and national-level courses (e.g., COPARMEX on finance) both work well when directly aligned with context.
- Subregional or generic regional programmes are less effective unless highly tailored to local realities.

## 9. How to reach sectoral organisations

- Outreach should be done through territorial and national apex organisations, ensuring endorsement from the top-level federations.
- Invitations to distance-learning activities should explicitly include apex endorsement to legitimise participation.
- Direct engagement with sectoral or regional organisations is limited; cooperation must flow through the national structures to maintain coherence and avoid duplication.

## **1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years**

- The training on governance of social security systems, held in Bangkok in 2023, was cited as one of the most effective regional initiatives.
  - It led to concrete follow-up in Sri Lanka, where the employers' organisation created a network on social security of 11 members and developed a position paper on social security law reform, ensuring employers' representation in national social security funds.
- Membership development and financial sustainability training also received very positive feedback for its practicality and relevance to the region's organisational realities.

## **2. Top three internal organisational challenges**

- Lack of innovation in membership strategies: Many EBMOs struggle to think creatively about how to attract and retain members, especially new types of businesses such as digital and platform-based enterprises.
- Limited understanding of members' needs: Organisations often lack mechanisms to systematically engage and understand emerging business models.
- Traditional value propositions: Existing services and narratives are often outdated and do not resonate with newer forms of enterprises or sectors.

## **3. Top three external challenges**

- Changing business landscape: The rise of the platform and digital economy is transforming traditional employer–employee relations and challenging EBMOs' membership models.
- Regulatory developments in ESG and RBC: New regulations in several countries (e.g., India) require companies to comply with responsible business and sustainability standards, creating both compliance challenges and service opportunities for EBMOs.
- Weak employer voice in social protection governance: Employers contribute financially to social protection schemes but often lack influence in their administration or policy design.

## **4. Top relevant training areas**

- Membership Development Strategies (focusing on innovative approaches to attract new types of members, such as platform companies and freelancers)
- Minimum Wage Policymaking (including discussions on living wages)
- Productivity Enhancement Policies
- Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues
- Professional staff development and application of AI tools for EBMOs

## **5. Top relevant advisory services**

- Digital transformation tools: Chatbots, CRM systems, eCampus platform, policy tracker
- Advisory support for membership innovation and value proposition development
- Guidance on social protection governance and employers' participation in social security administration

## **6. Top relevant policy areas**

- Skills development and talent attraction policies
- Governance of social protection systems – strengthening employers' voice and participation
- Productivity and competitiveness policies
- Industrial relations and social dialogue frameworks

## **7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin**

- Adopt a more strategic, focused approach to membership development, helping EBMOs tailor their services and communication to diverse member profiles.
- Enhance coordination and needs assessment mechanisms — ACTEMP Turin should engage more directly with EBMOs, going beyond annual surveys to systematically gather input from secretariats and technical staff.
- Support professional development for EBMO staff, including training in AI, data analysis, and responsible business conduct.
- Recognise that EBMOs have different priority areas; ACTEMP Turin should provide flexible, demand-driven responses aligned with both local needs and regional trends.
- Encourage closer collaboration between Turin, ACTEMP regional offices, and IOE to align activities and improve outreach.

## **8. Preferred training modalities**

- Blended learning (combining face-to-face and distance learning) is considered the most effective model.
- Subregional training is valuable for addressing South Asia-specific needs and facilitating peer exchange.
- Distance learning provides flexibility and allows participants to control their learning pace, especially when assignments and follow-ups are included.

## **9. How to reach sectoral organisations**

- Apex organisations often control nominations and are reluctant to open participation to other sectoral or regional bodies.
- To improve inclusion, ACTEMP Turin and IOE should coordinate to ensure that sectoral and regional organisations are nominated through apex structures where possible.
- IOE has previously played a helpful role in facilitating this broader outreach, allowing ACTEMP to penetrate beyond apex levels and reach relevant regional and sectoral actors.

## **Field Specialist: Maria Victoria Giulietti — Caribbean**

### **1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years**

- Minimum Wage and Living Wage training – particularly relevant given the regional discussions around wage setting and collective bargaining.
- Advocacy and Lobbying – identified as a highly impactful area, helping EBMOs strengthen their representational and negotiation capacities.
- Good Governance – continues to be a fundamental training topic with consistently high relevance across the region's organisations.

### **2. Top three internal organisational challenges**

- Artificial intelligence (AI) and data readiness: Organisations need tools and capacities to manage, analyse, and use data effectively. For example, the Barbados Employers' Confederation expressed interest in developing a digital tool to monitor and analyse wage levels for use in collective bargaining.
- Limited institutional capacity: Many EBMOs require stronger internal systems to adapt to technological and economic change.
- Retention of skilled staff and knowledge transfer: Maintaining continuity in small organisations remains a challenge due to limited resources.

### **3. Top three external challenges**

- Technological transformation: The rapid evolution of AI and digital technologies is reshaping labour markets and business models, and EBMOs must adapt their policy focus and services.
- Demographic transition and migration: The region faces significant brain drain, with skilled workers leaving for other regions, creating labour shortages and weakening institutional capacity.
- Climate and environmental transitions: Issues linked to green and blue economies are emerging, but EBMOs have limited expertise to engage meaningfully in these policy areas.

### **4. Top relevant training areas**

- Good Governance in EBMOs
- Strengthening Financial Sustainability
- Membership Development Strategies
- Strategic Lobbying and Communication
- Productivity Enhancement Policies (noting a lack of reliable data in the region)
- AI Productivity Tools

### **5. Top relevant advisory services**

- Instructional design and facilitation support – to increase the use of online learning platforms.
- Institutional assessments and organisational evaluations.
- Policy advisory support to strengthen advocacy and influence.
- Digital transformation tools (e.g., chatbot solutions for communication and service delivery).

### **6. Top relevant policy areas**

- Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation
- Demographic Transition and the Future of Work (including labour migration, care economy, and unemployment)
- Climate Transition and the Development of Green and Blue Economies

### **7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin**

- Develop training on artificial intelligence — practical knowledge on available tools and how to use them for productivity and service delivery.
- Provide advisory support for institutional development, particularly through frameworks such as ECATT's Executive Planning Tool.
- Contribute to skills gap assessments in countries such as Barbados, Belize, and Jamaica, aligning with ongoing Decent Work Country Programmes.
- Organise experience-sharing formats to facilitate peer learning across Caribbean EBMOs.
- Support small and resource-constrained organisations in strengthening planning, leadership, and project implementation capacities.

### **8. Preferred training modalities**

- Face-to-face training remains the most effective and preferred format; however, economic and logistical constraints often limit feasibility.
- Blended (hybrid) learning is a practical and valuable alternative.
- Regional-level training works particularly well in the Caribbean, where organisational contexts and challenges are similar.

### **9. How to reach sectoral organisations**

- Training invitations and distance learning opportunities are typically disseminated through national apex organisations.
- It would be beneficial to explicitly request a sectoral representative in the invitation, to ensure broader inclusion and representation of different industries.
- This approach maintains coordination with apex bodies while improving sectoral outreach and diversity among participants.

## **Field Specialist: Wade Bromely — South East Asia and the Pacific**

### **1. Most impactful activities delivered in the past two years**

- MALKIA training initiative – widely appreciated and in high demand across the region. There have been repeated requests to scale it up and expand its reach.
- The Master's Programme in Management of EBMOs continues to receive strong positive feedback and high satisfaction rates from participants.

### **2. Top three internal organisational challenges**

- Institutional capacity and governance: Many EBMOs in the Pacific face legacy issues—outdated structures, entrenched leadership practices, and siloed operations. This makes it difficult to articulate and communicate a clear value proposition to members.
- Membership engagement and retention: Maintaining active member participation remains challenging; organisations often focus on symptoms (low engagement) without addressing root causes (weak value delivery).
- Strategic communication and influence: EBMOs need stronger positioning to manage partnerships, funding relationships, and donor engagement effectively.

### **3. Top three external challenges**

- Limited competitive pressures: Unlike other regions, competition among EBMOs is not a major issue, though there are isolated cases (e.g., a new chamber emerging in Mongolia creating overlap).
- Shifting partnership landscape: Donor relationships are increasingly being managed through bilateral government–EBMO agreements without ILO involvement, requiring EBMOs to develop stronger advocacy and negotiation skills with development partners.
- Visibility and influence: Organisations must better communicate their relevance and strengthen their external partnerships to remain influential in national and regional policy dialogues.

### **4. Top relevant training areas**

- Master Training in Management of EBMOs
- Membership Development and Engagement Strategies (focusing not only on recruitment and retention but also on improving response rates and participation)
- Productivity Enhancement Policies
- Risk management and governance frameworks (including conflict-of-interest policies)
- Project design, management, and communication of results

### **5. Top relevant advisory services**

- Policy advisory support to enhance EBMOs' influence in national policy and donor dialogues.
- Digital transformation tools: Chatbots, CRM systems, eCampus platform, and policy tracker.
- Strategic Human Resource Management (HRM): Helping EBMOs design job descriptions, implement onboarding processes, and use HR systems to improve internal performance and staff motivation.

## **6. Top relevant policy areas**

- Skills development and talent attraction policies
- Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) – becoming increasingly relevant, even more so than ESG in some contexts
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) – important for export-oriented countries, though less relevant for purely domestic markets
- Productivity and competitiveness policies

## **7. Future capacity-building, advisory and digital transformation priorities / Strategic role of ACTEMP Turin**

- Develop shared digital infrastructure models, such as hosting shared website platforms or CRM systems for multiple EBMOs, following the Business New Zealand model where a single provider manages the backend for multiple organisations.
- Promote light, low-cost CRM tools for small EBMOs (e.g., Excel-based solutions or simple apps costing under USD 150 per year) to encourage early adoption and scalability.
- Position ACTEMP Turin as the communication and branding arm of ACTEMP globally, helping to market its training, stories, and outcomes for greater visibility.
- Support relationship-building with sectoral organisations—there are more than 600 industrial associations in the region that EBMOs need to engage with systematically.
- Enhance coordination with large-scale MAP projects (e.g., Future of Work programmes funded in New Zealand, USD 4–5 million for the next two years) to integrate EBMO capacity building into broader development initiatives.

## **8. Preferred training modalities**

- Face-to-face training is the most impactful, allowing stronger interaction and engagement.
- Blended learning is effective when online participation serves as a prerequisite for in-person components.
- National and subregional training formats are most suitable for the Pacific context; interregional programmes with Asia are less relevant, except when involving other small island developing states.
- A Pacific-specific Master's programme would add significant value, given the region's shared context and needs.

## **9. How to reach sectoral organisations**

- Develop a directory of business associations across Asia-Pacific to map existing structures and facilitate direct outreach without relying entirely on apex gatekeepers.
- Strengthen collaboration with sectoral and industrial associations to ensure that capacity-building efforts reach the broader business ecosystem.
- Align with national apex bodies while creating mechanisms for sectoral participation in training and policy dialogues.