



GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCED COHERENCE WITH DECENT WORK

DECENT WORK COORDINATION PLATFORM
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COLOPHON

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FOREWORD



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 8 promotes strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. It is broadly aligned with the objective set out in the Decent Work Agenda of the International Labour Organization (ILO). It confirms decent work as an important lever for sustainable development, equality and poverty reduction.

Decent Work can thus be summed up as follows:

Decent Work:

Productive and freely chosen employment;
Which provides an income sufficient to cover family needs;
Which includes social protection;
Which respects fundamental rights at work, including freedom of association and the right to participate in collective bargaining agreements (CBAs);
Which includes equal treatment of all workers without making any distinctions based on sex, age, origin, political or religious beliefs;
Which includes health and safety provisions in the workplace.

The Decent Work Agenda is based on four pillars, some of which overlap, with gender and environment being cross-cutting themes:

1. Creating decent and productive jobs,
2. Guaranteeing rights at work,
3. Extending social protection,
4. Promoting social dialogue.

There is still a long way to go to realise SDG 8 (ILO, 2018):

- 172 million people are unemployed, a third of whom are under 25 years of age;
- 780 million men and women are living on less than two dollars a day;
- more than 70% of people have no access to social protection;

- two billion people work in the informal economy; this represents more than 61% of the economically active population, of which 93% are working in developing countries or in an emerging economy.

Decent work is therefore high on the global agenda. The Belgian government also promotes the importance of decent work worldwide, making it a priority issue in the 19 March 2013 Development Cooperation Act.

Decent work requires an approach on many fronts, in different areas and with a number of different partners. In 2016, we - seven non-state actors and two mutual health organisations from Belgian civil society - developed the **Joint Strategic Framework (JSF) on Decent Work**, which emphasises the importance of decent work on an international scale. We have chosen a transnational thematic JSF based on our historical collaborations and expertise in the field of decent work and social protection.

In addition, we have organised ourselves into a Decent Work Coordination Platform (DWCP) for the centralised monitoring of mutual synergies, and cooperation with other actors.

Decent work should be everyone's concern. Through this publication, the DWCP aims to provide **guidance** to Belgian development policy actors in their quest for enhanced coherence with decent work. Embedding the relevant initiatives into their own actions and those of their partner organisations worldwide makes this possible.

1 July 2019, DWCP (WSM/ANMC, FOS, Solsoc/UNMS, Oxfam Solidarité, IFSI/ISVI, IIWE/IIAV/IEOI, BIS/MSI)

INTRODUCTION

The guidelines consist of an overview of initiatives that can be set up by Belgian actors and their partners in order to contribute to decent work for all. The initiatives are classified according to the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. They apply to all working people: men and women active in informal or formal economic activities.

The guidelines can be a source of **inspiration** for actors to examine good practice and challenges within the own or partners' organisations in terms of coherence with decent work.

It can be **a reference** for a participatory learning process in which improvement plans can be developed for one's own organisation or for partner organisations. As opportunities (for improvement) in partner countries are very contextually bound, it is recommended to seek advice from specialised actors in the partner countries themselves - trade union organisations, mutual health organisations, employers' organisations, local ILO representatives, lawyers, etc..

Similarly, a number of elements which are considered essential can be included in the partner organisations' selection criteria, i.e. those that partner organisations must meet in order to be eligible as such. For example, these criteria may require partners to commit themselves to a (joint or individual) development and implementation of progressive improvement plans around decent work - with results to be achieved within one multi-annual programme or across several programmes.

The aim is not to use the guidelines as a binding framework. Not all initiatives are equally relevant to the various actors, partner organisations and their specific contexts. Therefore, Belgian actors and their partner organisations can make their own choices, in line with their possibilities and opportunities.

The above shows that the ILO thinks, speaks and writes in terms of the 'formal and informal economy' and in terms of 'employees' jobs' provided by 'employers'. Those who disagree with the jargon and ILO vocabulary and with the Decent Work Agenda should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The guidelines are phrased so that programme officers who do not categorise their own employees and (final) target groups in terms of the Decent Work Agenda can appreciate the value of the initiatives and make good use of the instrument proposed below.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, despite the effort made to list the main initiatives in a comprehensive manner, this goal has probably not been achieved. During the CSO sector training in Belgium on 5 June 2018, non-state actors' representatives already identified a number of gaps. The relevant information has already been integrated in the overview below, and the DWCP kindly asks users to contact the JSF Decent Work contact person (Katrien.Beirinckx@wsm.be) with further suggestions, the aim being to systematically assess and improve this instrument.

FIRST PILLAR: THE CREATION OF DECENT JOBS

Definition	The creation of productive jobs, with an income sufficient to cover family needs, that comply with labour rights, as defined by ILO conventions and recommendations as well as national labour laws and regulations
Non-exhaustive list of relevant initiatives that could be developed by Belgian actors and their partners	<p>For the benefit of workers (target groups and own staff):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to, or develop, strategies focusing on the employability of economically active target groups, with attention being given to labour rights and environmental and social sustainability; for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - integrate a focus on labour rights into vocational training, - support or organise training initiatives coupled with occupational integration schemes, - promote social entrepreneurship job-creating schemes focusing on labour rights, - contribute to the creation of green jobs and decent work; • Raise awareness among entrepreneurs/investors in target groups about workers' rights; • Raise awareness among workers, defend them and provide support for them, so that they join a trade union, a mutual health organisation, a pension fund and an employment injury insurance scheme in order to realise the enforcement and extension of their rights; • Collaborate with specialised actors (such as trade unions, mutual health organisations and NGOs) to achieve the above points.
Note	<p>Regarding employability strategies [such as the development of (social) entrepreneurship, as well as the promotion of vocational training and occupational integration], the key idea is that contributing to job creation in itself is not enough. We can only talk about contributing to the creation of decent jobs when the spotlight is properly placed on workers' rights.</p> <p>It is equally important to support and promote demands for the observance of the rights of target groups such as workers (a) through unionisation and membership of a mutual health organisation, a pension fund, an employment injury insurance scheme and (b) by exerting pressure on companies, organisations, authorities and other actors with whom we collaborate.</p> <p>Above all, nobody should have to achieve this on their own. In each country, it should be possible to identify specialised actors (even outside the Decent Work JSF actors) who can provide guidance based on domestic legislation, as well as on local opportunities and possibilities. Also, some of them could certainly provide training on workers' rights for target groups.</p> <p>Finally, employability strategies for sustainable jobs are also about the development of dignified green jobs, i.e. sustainable and quality jobs that respect, preserve and potentially restore the environment. Green jobs are a component of a climate policy that reduces industrial pollution and environmental dumping.</p>

SECOND PILLAR: RIGHTS AT WORK

Definition	The implementation and extension of labour rights as defined by ILO conventions and recommendations as well as national labour laws and regulations
Non-exhaustive list of relevant initiatives that could be developed by Belgian actors and their partners	<p>As employers, for the benefit of workers (target groups and own staff):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply national labour legislation – including written contracts, decent wages, safe and healthy conditions, holiday rights, working hours, rest, social protection; • Develop and implement a staff policy that complies with labour laws and national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements (CBAs); • Develop and enforce internal labour regulations that comply with labour legislation and national and sectoral CBAs; • Respect employees' right to freedom of association; • Promote non-discrimination in recruitment; • Take action against discrimination and violence in the workplace (such as the development of an internal policy or an internal complaints mechanism); • Raise awareness among employees about filing complaints to the labour inspectorate or a trade union in the event of discrimination and violence in the workplace; • Promote occupational health and safety (as well as environmental protection); • Support target groups active in the formal, informal and social economy when claiming their rights; • Facilitate training on workers' rights for target groups; • Respect employees' right to strike; • Raise awareness among employees about joining a trade union, a mutual health organisation, a pension fund, or an employment injury insurance scheme in order to realise the observance and extension of their rights; • Encourage employees to participate in campaigns and demonstrations for the respect of workers' rights; • Collaborate with specialised actors (such as trade unions, mutual health organisations and NGOs) to achieve the above points.
Note	<p>Advocacy, lobbying and social dialogue – by specialised actors such as those within the Decent Work JSF – are the main tools to extend labour rights. However, all employers (including the above-mentioned specialised actors) can and should contribute to the enforcement of labour rights for the benefit of their employees.</p> <p>In light of the differences in laws and regulations among countries and in national and sectoral conventions and local opportunities, it is recommended that Belgian actors and their partners in the South consult local specialised bodies when drawing up staff policies and internal labour regulations (including in relation to gender, discrimination, health and safety, environmental protection issues, etc.).</p>

THIRD PILLAR: SOCIAL PROTECTION

Definition	The application and extension of the right to social protection for all workers
Non-exhaustive list of relevant initiatives that could be developed by Belgian actors and their partners	<p>As employers, for the benefit of workers (target groups and own staff):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply national labour legislation in relation to employees' social protection – pensions, health, maternity leave, rest, etc.; • Raise awareness and help employees to join a trade union, a mutual health organisation, a pension fund and an employment injury insurance scheme in order to realise the enforcement and extension of their rights; • Encourage employees to create solidarity funds (with, for example, provision for financial assistance for funeral expenses); • Encourage employees to participate in campaigns and demonstrations for the observance or extension of their rights to social protection – including for social protection that integrates environmental risks (earthquakes, floods,); • Collaborate with specialised actors (such as trade unions, mutual health organisations and NGOs) to achieve the above points.
Note	<p>Advocacy, lobbying and social dialogue – by specialised actors such as those within the Decent Work JSF are the main tools to extend the right to social protection. However, all employers (including the above-mentioned specialised actors) can and should contribute to the implementation of the right to social protection for the benefit of their employees.</p> <p>In light of differences in legislation and regulations among countries, as well as current national and sectoral conventions and local opportunities, Belgian actors and their partners in the South should consult local specialised bodies on issues relating to the implementation of social protection rights.</p>

FOURTH PILLAR: SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Definition	All negotiations and conflict settlement between workers and employers at local, regional, company and sectoral levels, at tripartite national level (with government involvement) and at global level (within the ILO). Social dialogue is an instrument for the defence and extension of workers' rights (including the right to social protection). By social dialogue, only trade unions are mandated to represent workers in collective bargaining at company, sectoral, tripartite national and tripartite global levels.
Non-exhaustive list of relevant initiatives that could be developed by Belgian actors and their partners	<p>As employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the bargaining rights of individual or collective employees at their request; • Encourage employees to serve as trade union representatives in order to participate in social dialogue at company level (or within the organisation); • Respect employees' right to freedom of association within social movements; • Encourage employees to join the trade union of their choice in order to realise the protection and extension of their rights to social protection through social dialogue.
	<p>For the benefit of workers (target groups and internal staff):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage target groups to participate in citizen dialogue; • Encourage target groups to join the trade union of their choice in order to realise the protection and extension of their rights to social protection through social dialogue; • Facilitate linkages between non-unionised workers' umbrella organisations and trade unions concerning issues requiring negotiation with public authorities; • Promote networking among workers' organisations; • Work with trade unions to achieve the above points.
Nota:	<p>Social dialogue is not only an instrument for the defence and extension of labour rights; the ILO Decent Work Agenda also considers it a goal, since its implementation and extension are key factors in the democratisation of a country. Therefore, trade unions also set out to extend social dialogue.</p> <p>Other organisations specialised in the field of decent work (such as non-union actors that are part of the Decent Work JSF) complement social dialogue by facilitating networking among workers' organisations outside trade unions, for the benefit of citizen dialogue, lobbying, and advocacy with local, regional, national and international authorities.</p>