



► Core Voluntary Funding (RBSA) for ILO development cooperation

► April 2024

The Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) has emerged as a key funding modality through which the ILO and its development partners can advance the Decent Work Agenda and the associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the ILO's unearmarked, voluntary core funding modality, RBSA is a critical element of the ILO resource mix.

The flexibility that comes with unearmarked resources allows the Office to respond in areas and countries where opportunities for results emerge and other resources are not readily available.

In this iteration of the RBSA factsheet examples of work underway and completed are detailed in the stories that follow:

Pakistan: Expanding social protection to domestic workers

Lebanon: Supporting women-led care cooperatives to change perceptions and policy in the care sector

Uzbekistan: ILO's Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) Programme launched

Suriname: Environmentally focused value chain development fostering enterprise creation and formalization through just transition

Moldova: Stimulating the green economy to create new and better jobs

Nigeria: Promoting gender equality and formalization through women's entrepreneurship development in Nigeria

► Contributions to ILO Core voluntary funding (RBSA)¹

FUNDING PARTNER	2016-17	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23
Belgium	8 155	6 850	6 976	6 288
Denmark	2 928	2 840	7 880	6 444
France	-	-	588	517
Germany	2 641	1 722	1 161	1 052
Italy	447	455	478	426
Luxembourg	2 140	2 539	3 035	2 175
Netherlands	5 464	5 855	5 862	9 271
Norway	3 307	3 616	3 395	3 855
Sweden	4 215	3 473	5 032	1 585
TOTAL	29 297	27 350	34 407	31 615

¹ Data as of 31 March 2024 in US\$ thousands

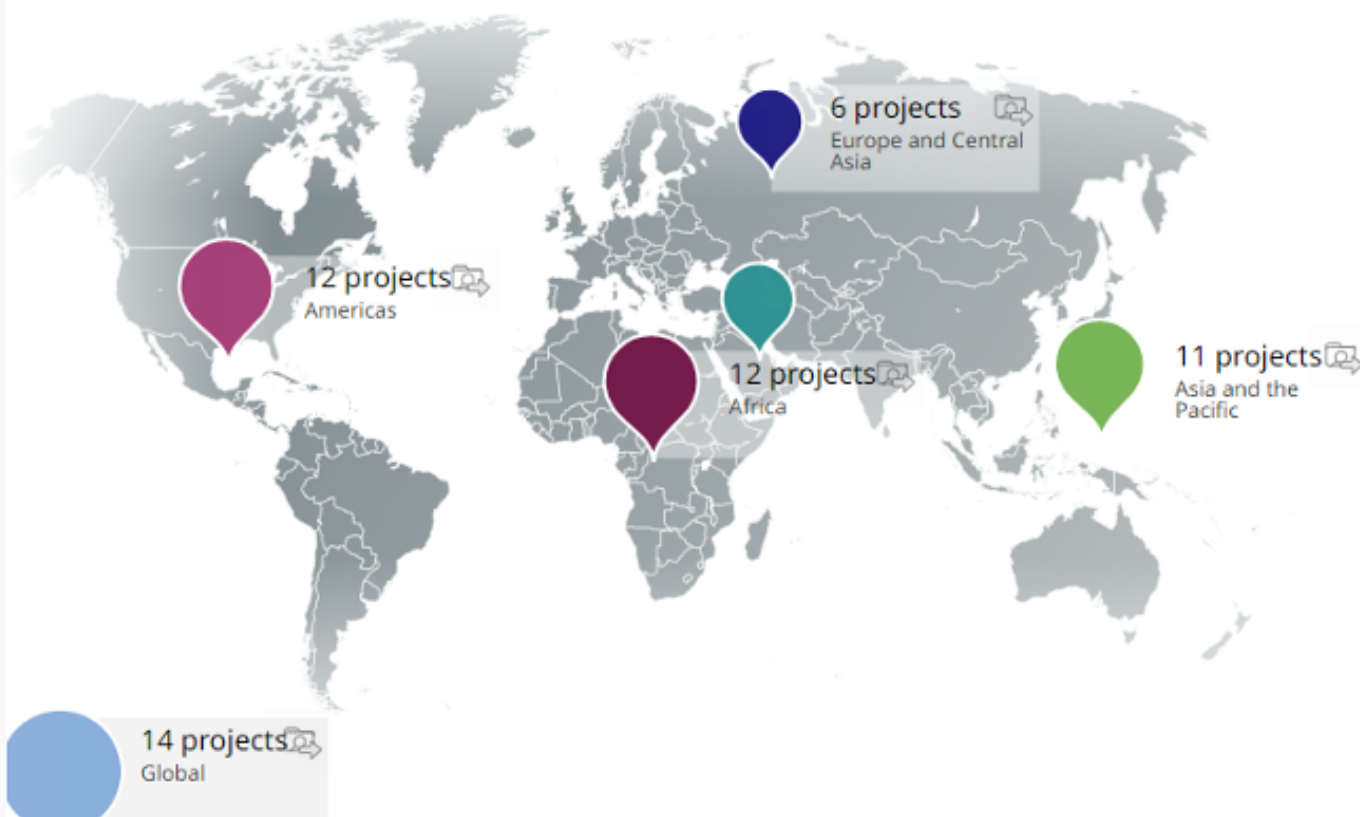
RBSA-funded areas of work

The ILO allocates RBSA resources to boost Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) in a variety of ways, including to:

- Launch innovative initiatives
- Rapidly address emerging needs
- Expand the scope and/or scale of existing programmes
- Mainstream cross-cutting issues in labour policies and programmes
- Leverage greater funding from other sources
- Increase sustainability of ILO assistance through partnerships with UN agencies

RBSA allocations 2021 – 2023²

54
TOTAL PROJECTS



SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS: HOW RBSA IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE ON THE GROUND

Pakistan: Expanding social protection to domestic workers

In 2019, Punjab embarked on a transformative journey to uplift domestic workers, unveiling the Domestic Workers Act—a robust legislation enshrining minimum wages, maternity benefits, and other labour protections. Despite an initial hurdle, where rules of business (RoB) were absent, the Government sought innovative solutions and turned to the International Labour Organization for support. With RBSA support, the Rules of Business (RoB) were drafted, validated, and processed for approval in Punjab. A tripartite plus engagement was ensured for the drafting of the RoB. The RoB will facilitate the implementation of the Domestic Workers Act 2019.

This collaboration delivered a ground-breaking initiative—a gender diagnostic survey spanning January 2022 to March 2023, delving into the challenges faced by domestic workers.

The pilot support provided to the province of Punjab was scaled to Sindh and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) with the RBSA support. As a result, legislative reforms have been initiated and social protection authorities and concerned leadership have come into action to improve the situation of domestic workers but also extending the model to other parts of the informal economy.

▶ Lebanon: Supporting women-led care cooperatives to change perceptions and policy in the care sector

In Lebanon, RBSA funding has been utilized to establish the ILO as the leading agency for providing technical assistance in Care Work at both national and regional levels. The RBSA funding facilitated the launch and monitoring of a Care Digital Platform in Lebanon that promotes decent work conditions for care workers. It also supported a national assessment on the provision of care services through cooperatives, which will be pilot tested in two communities. Furthermore, a mapping of skills in the sector was conducted, comparing them to international competency-based assessments and linking them to skills recognition.

Moreover, the RBSA funding will be used to organize community campaigns to reduce stigma associated with care work, and efforts have been made to leverage the 'paid work' aspect within other UN initiatives and national plans. The intervention assisted the ILO in ensuring that enough attention remains on promoting rights of migrant domestic workers who constitute the majority of care workers especially in private households.



"Given the current marginalization of our rights as migrant domestic workers in Lebanon, I worry about the added risk of further fragmentation unless our contributions are recognized... We are glad that the ILO is keeping this in mind while promoting a new perspective on care work".

-Theresa M. a Migrant Domestic Worker from Lebanon.

▶ Uzbekistan: ILO's Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) Programme launched

One of the key focus areas for the RBSA-funded intervention in Uzbekistan is promoting institutional learning on gender equality and non-discrimination at work. Recently, the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan was tasked with the responsibility of conducting gender audits on Government bodies. Seizing this unique opportunity in promoting the mainstreaming of gender equality in public administration through gender audits, ILO has initiated the Participatory Gender Audit Programme (PGA) for trade union representatives.

This involves capacity building of trade unions in examining policies and activities with a participatory approach, as well as identifying strengths and weaknesses of public administration in terms of promoting gender equality agenda in Uzbekistan. In parallel, RBSA was instrumental in supporting the trade unions in the performance of their first gender audit conducted at the Ministry of Finance and Economy. Specifically, and through this exercise and the capacity building opportunity, the trade unions were familiarised with the concepts, principles, and approaches of the ILO's PGA.

The PGA course was adapted to the national context and translated into Russian in collaboration with ITC-ILO. During the course, the participants had an opportunity to perform a comparative analysis of the national framework, and walk through all the PGA steps and milestones, and develop an action plan for aligning the audit programme to the ILO's principles.

As a result, ten representatives of the trade unions were certified as ILO gender auditors at Government bodies as agents for change in advocating for a transformative gender equality agenda in Uzbekistan.



► Suriname: Environmentally-focused value chain development fostering enterprise creation and formalization through just transition

This crucial RBSA investment focuses on the creation of environmentally focused value chain development in the economy of Suriname, as well as fostering enterprise creation and formalization through just transition. From the onset it has aimed to combine two important challenges for Suriname: a) increase enterprise formalization in a highly informal environment and b) improve the development of a green economy, generate new skills, a new entrepreneurial mindset, and an adequate and holistic policy ecosystem.

This assessment tool has been disseminated internally and externally to influence similar multifocal processes. For Suriname, two economic sectors were chosen namely wood processing and ecotourism. RBSA is a key enabler for effective Social Dialogue in thematic committees, created by and for the constituents on a) Formalization and b) Just Transition.

The ILO will build capacities of the constituents to effectively participate in these committees to enable the development of policy proposals, strategies, and actions on formalization and just transition. The constituents, evidence-based participation will be backed up by studies conducted in both areas.

RBSA has supported the training of new 'green, entrepreneurs, as well as implemented short-term incentives for formalization (as pilot tests), and enabled longer-term interventions related to policy building. RBSA has contributed to leveraging additional external funding through collaboration with the FAO. With this FAO contribution the ILO has supported Suriname, s most important agricultural development programme with an innovative approach on cooperatives, development. It has also strategically positioned the ILO in regional flagship programmes such as FORLAC 2.0 and in FORLAC 2.0 countries.

► Moldova: Stimulating the green economy to create new and better jobs



The RBSA intervention supported the introduction of the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Programme in the country, and played a crucial role in stimulating the green economy in Moldova. This initiative successfully assisted over two hundred start-up entrepreneurs to create new decent jobs by starting green and sustainable businesses and by creating a favourable environment for facilitating a just transition to the green economy, encouraging social dialogue, and supporting green entrepreneurship. Some business ideas and plans to be developed also benefited from financial support.

One of the project beneficiaries is Victoria Mușinschi, who owns a guesthouse in Molovata Nouă village, Dubăsari district. Victoria understood that she had to green her business, so she received support in generating the idea and developing a green business plan.

► Nigeria: Promoting gender equality and formalization through women's entrepreneurship development

Through this RBSA investment, ILO established and strengthened strategic alliances with constituents and other national organisations. This RBSA-funded intervention provided evidence-based insights, recommendations and support to policymakers and stakeholders active in women's entrepreneurship development (WED) and enterprise formalization, in particular the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the SME Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), the Nigeria Employers, Consultative Association (NECA) and its Network of Entrepreneurial Women, the Nigeria Labour Congress, and the Trade Union Congress.

The collaboration with UN Women was strengthened through joint advocacy to the Presidency for affirmative action for women in the new Public Procurement Act. NECA was supported to conduct a [self-assessment](#) and implement a membership strategy to better serve women entrepreneurs. This included the development of a three-year strategic plan for NECA's Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW) and a Guide on Violence and Harassment at Work for Employers. Several capacity building and mentorship sessions were organised for NNEW members. Lastly, direct interventions were deployed to strengthen the ecosystem for women entrepreneurs, including those in the informal sector.

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