

# ▶ Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA)

## ▶ Investing in the RBSA

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### What is the Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA)

Since 2008, RBSA has been the ILO's main channel for **voluntary core contributions**, providing development partners with a trusted way to invest in the Decent Work Agenda. Its flexible design means that resources can be directed where they are **most urgently needed**, with a particular focus on ODA-eligible countries. Through an internal proposal process, RBSA ensures that funding supports initiatives that are both **transformative and high-impact**, addressing priorities identified at country level while aligning with global policy goals.

By sustaining this mechanism, the ILO can **maintain essential expertise**, **innovate** in response to new challenges, and **act swiftly** when opportunities or crises arise. RBSA therefore strengthens the Organization's ability to respond across a wide spectrum of contexts – from countries emerging from conflict to those adapting to the demands of the digital economy – ensuring that support is both timely and strategically targeted.

### Why invest in the RBSA

The strength of RBSA lies in its **flexibility**. When crises unfold, when new opportunities arise, or when innovation requires quick action, RBSA delivers. These funds act as **enablers**, helping to address crucial societal issues with timely, high-impact support.

Even modest contributions to RBSA can deliver **outsized results**. The mechanism allows the ILO to scale successful initiatives, amplify existing investments, and attract additional funding—creating a **multiplier effect** that benefits both donors and recipients.

In a development landscape often shaped by earmarked funding and narrow project goals, RBSA offers something increasingly rare: the **freedom to act on emerging needs** with the speed and coordination that true partnership requires

### How RBSA works

RBSA combines flexibility with strategic focus. Funding is allocated through an internal call for proposals, ensuring that interventions align with the **ILO's biennial Programme and Budget** while responding to specific needs on the ground. This process allows the ILO to act quickly without compromising on coherence or accountability.

Every RBSA-backed intervention is **guided by clear criteria**:

- **relevance** to decent work priorities
- **potential** for broader impact
- **value** for money

Once approved, projects are tracked through robust monitoring systems – including quarterly financial alerts, field visits, periodic fact sheets, and thematic evaluations – ensuring transparency throughout the funding cycle.

It's a model that **enables agility without sacrificing structure**. Strategic where it matters, flexible where it counts.

## Where RBSA leads

RBSA is **forward-looking**. It creates space for the ILO to **test, adapt, and scale solutions** to some of the world's most pressing labour challenges. From gender equality and just transitions to formalization and digital inclusion, RBSA helps the ILO stay ahead of the curve.

Because the funding is unearmarked, RBSA can support **innovative or early-stage initiatives** that may not yet qualify for traditional financing. It gives the ILO **room to explore new approaches**, refine them in real time, and expand what works. The result is a funding mechanism that drives progress.

## A balanced, global footprint

RBSA funding is **strategically distributed** across all ILO regions. In both the 2022-23 and 2024-25 biennia, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean **each accounted for roughly a quarter** of total allocations, ensuring consistent investment where decent work challenges are most acute.

- ▶ **In 2022-23, 47 countries benefited** from RBSA-supported results, representing one-third of all ILO programme countries. In the **first round** of the 2024-25 biennium alone, RBSA funded **46 interventions across 42 countries**. Many of these initiatives also contribute to regional and global efforts, further expanding RBSA's reach and relevance beyond national boundaries.
- ▶ RBSA's flexibility makes it uniquely valuable in volatile situations where traditional funding is often delayed or unavailable. Recent interventions in Ukraine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory highlight RBSA's capacity to deliver timely, high-impact support in crisis and post-crisis settings.

## The RBSA in 2024-25

The RBSA allocations in 2024-25 are distributed as follows:

- **US\$ 21.1 million** for 46 interventions in 42 countries through the Call for Proposal process (regular allocations)
- **US\$ 7.3 million** for 15 professional positions in support of the thematic priority areas of the RBSA
- **US\$ 2 million** for a dedicated capacity building programme for Employers' and Business Membership Organizations and Workers Organizations
- **Ad-hoc allocations in response to emerging needs and crisis**

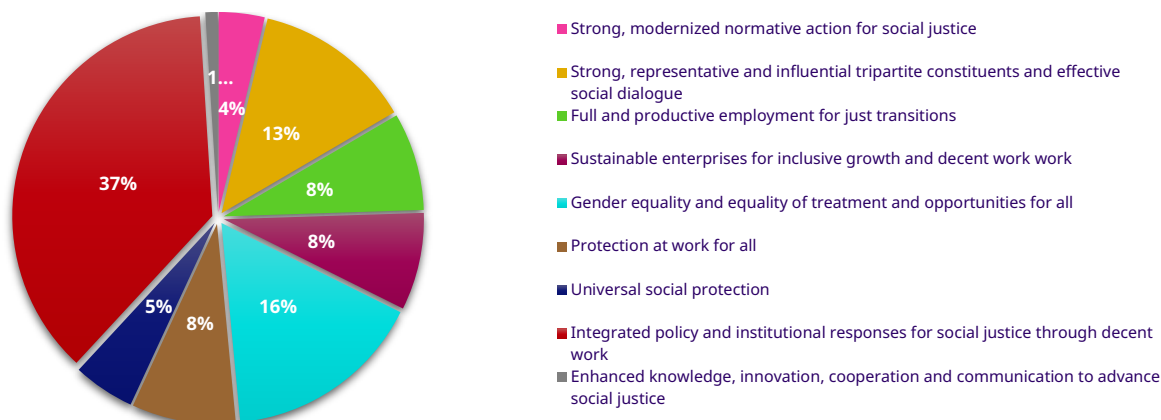
The regular allocations cover all outcomes of the Programme and Budget for 2024-25, with most resources allocated to integrated policy- and institutional responses for social justice through decent work, followed by gender equality and the equality of treatment and opportunity for all and strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents and effective social dialogue. Guided by strategic thematic areas, the allocations are clustered with a focus on:

- ▶ **transitions from the informal to the formal economy**

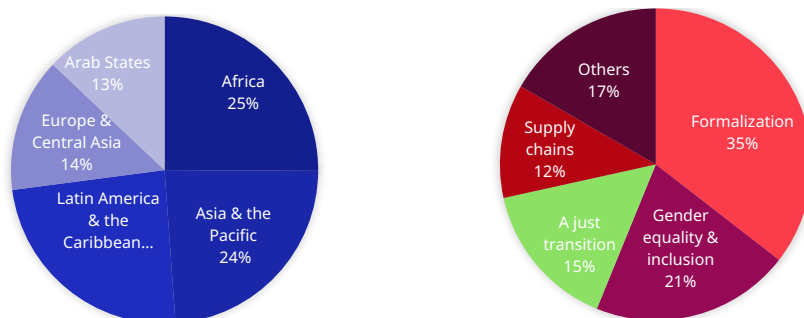
- ▶ **gender equality and inclusion**
- ▶ **a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies and**
- ▶ **decent work in supply chains,**

creating strong linkages between country level results and corporate priorities. A full list of countries that will receive support from the RBSA in 2024-25 is included as Annex I to this report. The Belgium contribution of US\$ 1 million in 2025 will contribute to the financing of these allocations, as well as fund ad-hoc allocations in response to crisis situations.

**Allocations by Programme and Budget Outcomes**



**Division by region and strategic thematic area**



**Looking ahead – the Programme and Budget for 2026-27**

For the biennium 2026–27, anticipated RBSA expenditure is set at **US\$35 million (indicative)**, the same level as in 2024–25. RBSA resources will be used strategically to support the priorities set out in the Programme and Budget and to leverage additional voluntary contributions, ensuring a stronger multiplier effect at the country level

Allocations will take place in two main forms:

- ▶ **Calls for Proposals (CfPs):** These will be launched during 2026–27 and resources will be equally divided across the ILO’s regions. This mechanism ensures equitable access to funds and fosters **innovation** and **demand-driven initiatives** at country level.
- ▶ **Ad-hoc allocations:** A portion of RBSA will be reserved for rapid response to **crises and recovery efforts**, enabling the ILO to address **unforeseen needs** arising from conflicts, disasters, or economic shocks while aligning with decent work principles

By focusing on these two channels, the RBSA remains a flexible instrument to address both long-term development priorities and immediate recovery and resilience needs at country level. The regular RBSA allocations will be allocated in two rounds of Call for Proposals (one in 2026 and one in 2027), both of which will prioritise a

specific selection of Policy Outcomes and priority areas of the Programme and Budget for 2026-27. All allocations will be directed to interventions in **ODA-eligible countries** (unlike programming in 2024-25 which supported several professional positions in headquarters and the field).

The Programme and Budget is the leading document to guide the programming of RBSA resources and sets the focus and priorities for the 2026-27 biennium. The ILO will use RBSA resources strategically to fund the priorities set in the programme and budget and to leverage other resources for achieving more impactful **country results**. The continued focus will be on **cross-cutting areas that demand integrated interventions**, contributing to enhanced synergy, coordination and policy coherence at all levels.

The Programme and Budget for 2026–27 organizes its work around eight policy outcomes, one policy coherence outcome, and three enabling outcomes. Together, these reflect continuity in advancing the Decent Work Agenda while adding new dimensions to tackle pressing global transformations.

### **Outcome 1: Strong, modernized normative action for social justice**

Reinforces international labour standards as the backbone of social justice, helping countries ratify and apply conventions while modernizing the supervisory system. It emphasizes protection against forced labour, child labour, discrimination, and unsafe conditions, while also preparing for new standards on biological hazards and the platform economy.

### **Outcome 2: Strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents and effective social dialogue**

Strengthens the governance of labour markets through social dialogue, freedom of association, and collective bargaining. It focuses on empowering workers' and employers' organizations to influence national policy and participate in development frameworks.

### **Outcome 3: Full and productive employment as a pathway for social justice**

Advances pro-employment policy frameworks, supporting job-rich growth and active labour market policies. It stresses lifelong learning, apprenticeships, and strategies for youth, women, and vulnerable groups to achieve inclusive labour markets.

### **Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises, competitiveness and productivity growth for decent work**

Promotes an enabling environment for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), innovation, and the social and solidarity economy. This outcome emphasizes productivity gains, enterprise resilience, and responsible business practices.

### **Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all**

Reinforces gender-responsive policies, equal pay, non-discrimination, and investment in the care economy. It places special attention on tackling intersecting inequalities affecting women, migrants, and people with disabilities.

### **Outcome 6: Protection at work for all**

Strengthens occupational safety and health (OSH) systems and extends protections to informal, rural, and platform workers. This outcome also addresses violence and harassment in the workplace and ensures adequate labour inspection systems.

### **Outcome 7: Universal social protection**

Expands coverage of social protection systems, including social protection floors, health insurance, pensions, and child benefits. It supports countries in building sustainable financing and governance for inclusive protection.

### **Outcome 8: Digitalization for decent work and social justice (new)**

A major innovation of the 2026–27 programme, this outcome focuses on harnessing digital transformations to promote decent work. It tackles the digital divide, promotes fair regulation of the platform economy, and invests in digital skills and lifelong learning. It also contributes to the implementation of the Global Digital Compact adopted at the UN Summit of the Future in 2024.

### ***Policy Coherence and Enabling Outcomes***

#### **Outcome 9 (Policy coherence)**

Strengthens multilateral and inter-agency coherence, especially through the Global Coalition for Social Justice and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. It promotes shared strategies on inequality, labour rights, just transitions, and inclusive development

**Enabling Outcome A:** Enhances knowledge, research, innovation, and partnerships.

**Enabling Outcome B:** Improves governance, oversight, and accountability mechanisms.

**Enabling Outcome C:** Ensures efficient, agile, and transparent management

In 2026–27, RBSA allocations will continue to build on the cross-cutting priorities identified for 2024–25 and aligned with the Action Programmes, namely: **formalization, just transition, supply chains, and crisis response**. In addition, RBSA resources will maintain a dedicated focus on **gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all**, while also extending support to the **newly established area of digitalization**.

### **A networked funding approach**

The success of the RBSA is built on a **foundation of trusted partners**, from global donors to grassroots actors, united by a shared commitment to decent work and social justice. RBSA is made possible through unearmarked voluntary contributions from a core group of donor countries. These funding partners – including **Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Qatar** – provide critical core support, reflecting high confidence in the ILO's leadership, priorities, and results.

At the country level, RBSA's implementation is guided by the ILO's tripartite structure, engaging **governments, employers' organizations, and workers' organizations** as equal partners. This model ensures that interventions are grounded in national realities, aligned with local priorities, and supported by social dialogue – enhancing both ownership and impact.

RBSA-funded initiatives benefit from **close collaboration with national development agencies**, regional bodies, and other UN organizations. Partnerships with entities such as UN Women and FAO, as well as the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO), strengthen capacity, foster inter-agency coordination, and extend the reach of decent work outcomes.

This networked approach, combining **donor trust, tripartite ownership, and strategic alliances**, is what makes RBSA agile, effective, and globally relevant

### **The contribution of Belgium**

The RBSA operates as a pooled funding mechanism, with resources combined into a single flexible account that can be drawn upon to address the Organization's priorities. From this pool, allocations are made both to finance the Calls for Proposals, which are launched during the biennium and distributed equally across regions, and to respond to ad-hoc requests from the field in situations of crisis or recovery. Within this framework, Belgium is

providing US\$2 million, disbursed in two instalments of US\$1 million in 2025 and US\$1 million in 2027, thereby reinforcing the capacity of the fund to deliver timely and impactful support where it is most needed.

## ▶ Annex I: Full list of countries supported by the RBSA in 2024-25 (crisis/recovery highlighted with \*)

Country	Region
Benin	Africa
Regional	Africa
Togo	Africa
Somalia*	Africa
Comoros	Africa
Tanzania	Africa
Algeria	Africa
Libya*	Africa
Guinea	Africa
Namibia	Africa
South Africa	Africa
Mozambique	Africa
Regional	Africa
Cameroon	Africa
Central African Republic	Africa
Regional	Latin America
Brazil	Latin America
Argentina	Latin America
Mexico	Latin America
Jamaica	Latin America
Paraguay	Latin America
Costa Rica	Latin America

Haiti*	Latin America
Bolivia	Latin America
Regional	Arab States
Syria*	Arab States
Jordan	Arab States
Palestine*	Arab States
Pakistan	Asia
Regional	Asia
Cambodia	Asia
Mongolia	Asia
Philippines	Asia
Indonesia	Asia
Timor-Leste	Asia
India	Asia
Bangladesh	Asia
Nepal	Asia
Sri Lanka	Asia
Afghanistan*	Asia
Regional	Europe
Georgia	Europe
Moldova	Europe
Ukraine*	Europe
Armenia	Europe
Kazakhstan	Europe / Central Asia

Turkmenistan	Europe / Central Asia
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