International Labour Organization
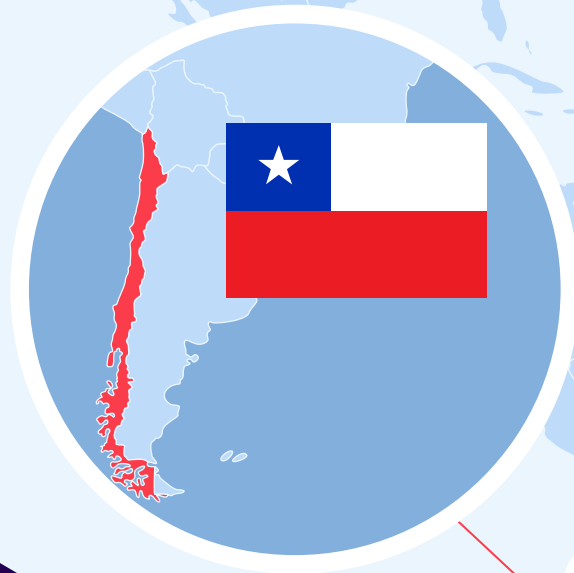
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From research to action

▶ Chile: National Research Agenda

Building the evidence base for informed policy action against child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking

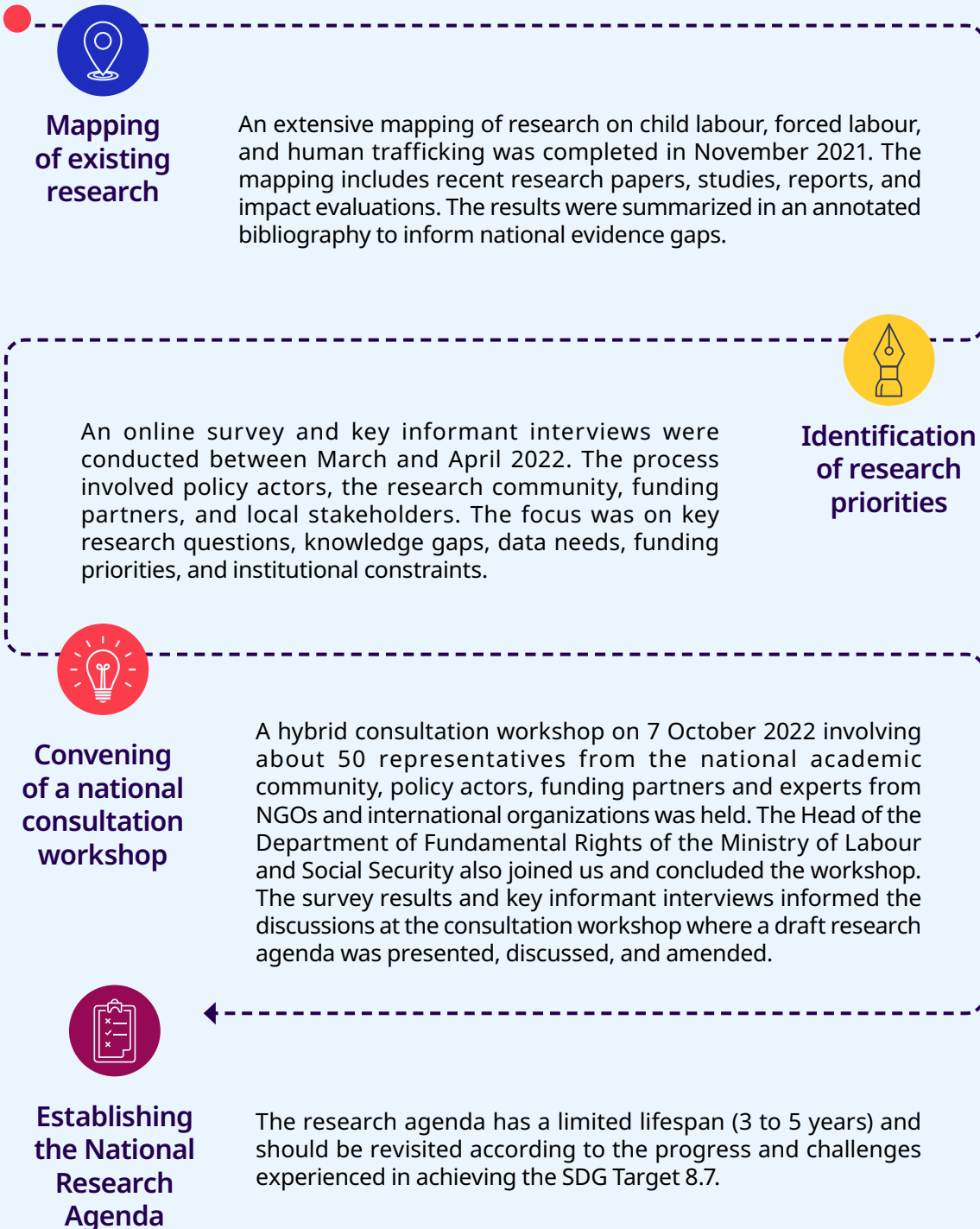# ▶ Why do we need a National Research Agenda?

Chile is the first country in Latin America to be an Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder country, showing its commitment in eliminating child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking. The latest 2012 Survey of Activities of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents (EANNA) recorded that 0.22 million children were in child labour, accounting for 6.6 per cent of the children population (5-17 years old). Chile is a "Tier-I" country in its effort in combatting human trafficking – meaning the country follows internationally established methodologies and standards, and data are regularly collected for at least half of the population for the relevant indicators. Chile ratified Protocol to ILO Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour in 2021. However, Chile lacks nationally representative data on forced labour.

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community committed to ending child labour in all its forms by 2025 and to eradicating forced labour by 2030 (SDG Target 8.7). The headline figures emerging in Chile make clear that a substantial acceleration of progress will be needed to achieve SDG Target 8.7. Moreover, the economic impact of COVID-19 are placing unprecedented strain on governments and families, the results of which may stall country efforts to address child labour and forced labour.
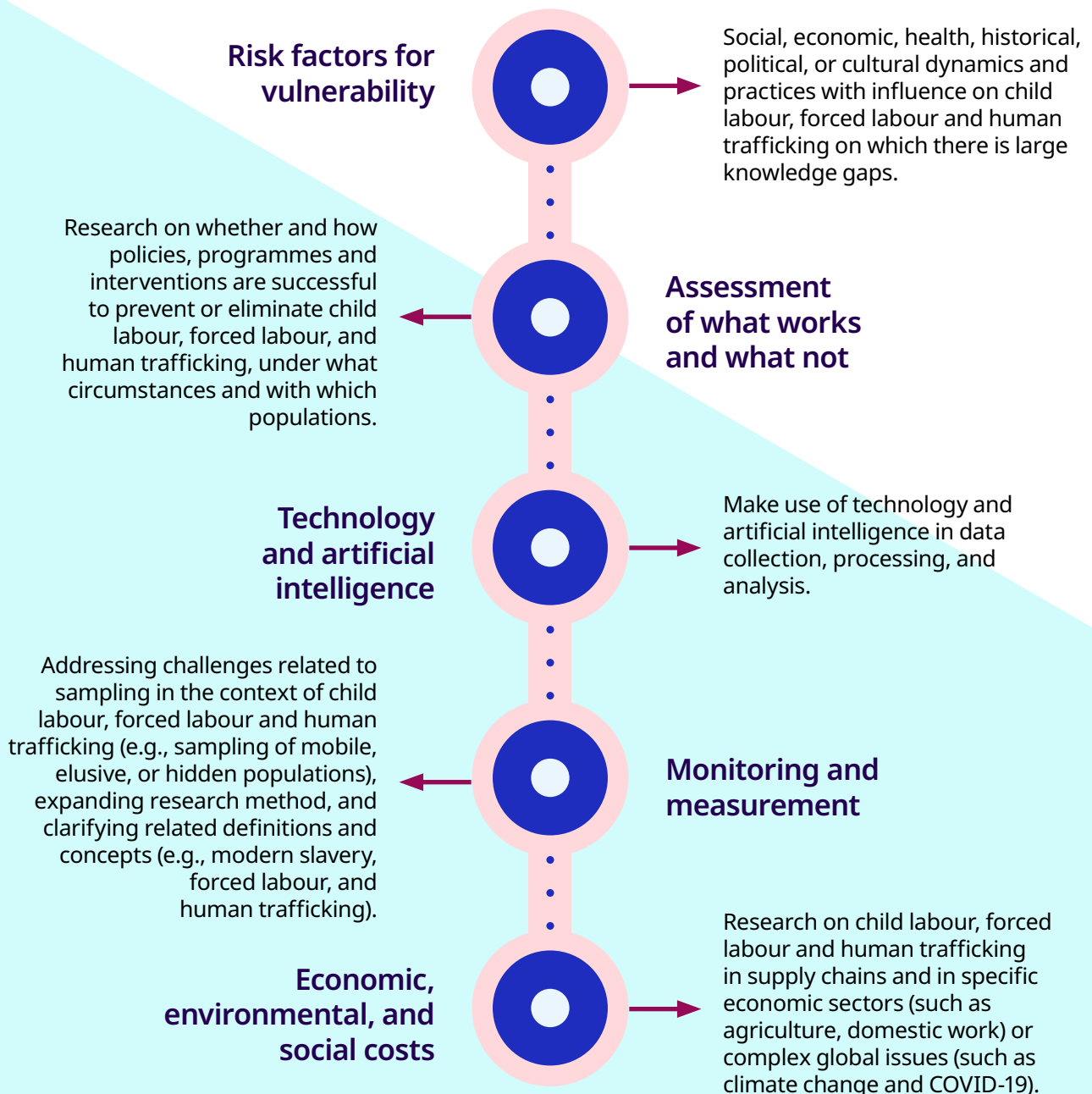
Policy choices will be critical to achieve SDG Target 8.7, and ready access to reliable evidence will be essential to informing these choices. A growing body of evidence available at international and country level, has helped increasing a better understanding of the policy mix that should be implemented to achieve real progress in tackling child labour and its root causes. However, significant gaps still exist and hamper policy development.

The identification of priority areas of research will be essential to support the policy efforts of Chile to eliminate child labour and forced labour. It was in this light that in 2020 the ILO's "Research to Action" (RTA) project launched a process towards the development of a national research agenda. Through this participatory process, involving the academic community and experts from international organizations, policy actors, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society organizations, and donors, the Chile National Research Agenda was established.

▶ The process in Chile

Mapping of existing research

An extensive mapping of research on child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking was completed in November 2021. The mapping includes recent research papers, studies, reports, and impact evaluations. The results were summarized in an annotated bibliography to inform national evidence gaps.

Identification of research priorities

An online survey and key informant interviews were conducted between March and April 2022. The process involved policy actors, the research community, funding partners, and local stakeholders. The focus was on key research questions, knowledge gaps, data needs, funding priorities, and institutional constraints.

Convening of a national consultation workshop

A hybrid consultation workshop on 7 October 2022 involving about 50 representatives from the national academic community, policy actors, funding partners and experts from NGOs and international organizations was held. The Head of the Department of Fundamental Rights of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security also joined us and concluded the workshop. The survey results and key informant interviews informed the discussions at the consultation workshop where a draft research agenda was presented, discussed, and amended.

Establishing the National Research Agenda

The research agenda has a limited lifespan (3 to 5 years) and should be revisited according to the progress and challenges experienced in achieving the SDG Target 8.7.

▶ Five broad thematic areas

Risk factors for vulnerability

Social, economic, health, historical, political, or cultural dynamics and practices with influence on child labour, forced labour and human trafficking on which there is large knowledge gaps.

Research on whether and how policies, programmes and interventions are successful to prevent or eliminate child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking, under what circumstances and with which populations.

Assessment of what works and what not

Technology and artificial intelligence

Make use of technology and artificial intelligence in data collection, processing, and analysis.

Addressing challenges related to sampling in the context of child labour, forced labour and human trafficking (e.g., sampling of mobile, elusive, or hidden populations), expanding research method, and clarifying related definitions and concepts (e.g., modern slavery, forced labour, and human trafficking).

Monitoring and measurement

Economic, environmental, and social costs

Research on child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in supply chains and in specific economic sectors (such as agriculture, domestic work) or complex global issues (such as climate change and COVID-19).

Above all, training on data collection, ethical data sharing, and data analysis are needed. Consideration should be given to the use of existing administrative and survey data to inform our understanding of these issues, especially on forced labour and human trafficking. A repository with centralised data and research, as well as the design of statistical indicators, will benefit all stakeholders by monitoring progress in policy and programmatic efforts. Moreover, multi-stakeholder discussions should be held regularly to collaborate and share experiences in combatting child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking.

▶ Main agenda

Theme	Key topics/ dimensions	Related research questions	Related policy/ programme response
Risk factors for vulnerability	Migration	What is the prevalence of child labour, forced labour and human trafficking among migrants by gender?	• Decent work conditions/ related programmes (including targeting of specific services) • Social protection policies
	Informality	How does informality and poverty (multidimensional and absolute) act as a driver for child labour and forced labour?	
	Demographics	What are the characteristics of forced labour, including bonded labour?	
	Child marriage	What is the relationship between child marriage and child labour?	
	Education	What is the prevalence of child labour among children at school?	
	Household chores	What is the impact of household chores on children's health and education outcomes (including drop-out rates and grades)?	
	Physical and mental health	What are the long-term consequences of children working in potentially hazardous (specific) forms of work?	
Assessment of what works and what not	Skill development (early childhood)	What is the effectiveness of skill development/early childhood programme in reducing child labour and forced labour?	• Legal commitment • Labour recruitment practices • Education policies • Social protection and livelihood programmes
	Awareness raising and information campaigns	What is the effect of awareness raising campaigns on policy action?	
	Vocational training	What is the role of technical and vocational education and training in small and medium enterprises in reducing child labour?	
	Monitoring and law enforcement	What are the challenges in programme implementation and service delivery in the elimination of child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking? What type of data on forced labour can better support the implementation of the ILO Forced Labour Convention No. 29 and the Palermo Protocol?	
	Survivors of forced labour and human trafficking	What strategies are effective at mitigating trauma from forced labour and human trafficking experiences?	
	Social protection and livelihood programmes	How do different social protection and livelihood programmes (e.g., cash transfers, credit, parental work) support the elimination of child labour and forced labour?	
Technology and artificial intelligence	Ethical data collection	What is the impact of technology and artificial intelligence in data collection in small communities and rural areas?	• Identification and referral mechanisms • Community monitoring systems
Monitoring and measurement	Sampling	What is the prevalence of child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking among the under-represented population?	• Identification and referral mechanisms • Community monitoring systems
	Methods	What type of sampling design for national estimates can be adopted in scenarios with low child labour prevalence?	
	Definitions and concepts (e.g., modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking)	How to compare findings and data collection procedures given different definitions and concepts?	

Theme	Key topics/ dimensions	Related research questions	Related policy/ programme response
Economic, environmental, and social costs	Climate change	How do natural disasters influence the risk of child labour and forced labour?	• Labour recruitment • Due diligence • Freedom of association and collective bargaining
	Supply chains, workers' organizations and trade unions	What is the role of global supply chains on child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking? What is the role of workers' organizations and trade unions in combatting child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking?	
	Specific economic sectors	What is the influence of governance mechanisms on specific sectors?	
	COVID-19	How has COVID-19 impacted the determinants of child labour and forced labour?	

▶ Chile as a Pathfinder country

Chile has officially expressed interest in September 2018 to become a Pathfinder country of the Alliance 8.7 to eliminate child labour and forced labour. The country identified four priorities to achieve the SDG Target 8.7. The priorities and process are outlined in the latest Pathfinder Annual Progress Report and listed below:

1. Promote research and knowledge-sharing around SDG Target 8.7.

2. Sensitize, raise awareness, and inform the general public about the challenges of the SDG Target 8.7.

3. Create and modify procedural instruments to improve the prevention, detection, and management of cases of the violation of rights associated with SDG Target 8.7.

4. Evaluate and promote legal and regulatory modifications that strengthen the prevention and protection of rights associated with SDG Target 8.7.

Chile is currently developing on a new roadmap (2022–2025) to accelerate efforts, try new approaches, and collaborate amongst stakeholders to achieve SDG Target 8.7.

▶ Call to action
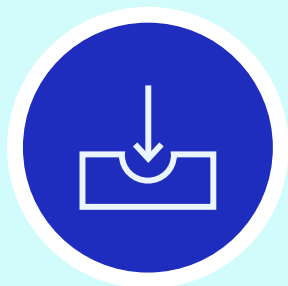
Collaborate

Innovate

Accelerate

During the consultation workshop in October 2022, the stakeholders emphasised the importance of collecting data and disseminating research in formats that are useful and accessible to policy actors. For example, the stakeholders are in favour of a central repository of data and research.

The Chile National Research Agenda offers opportunities to all stakeholders to initiate and support research addressing the identified priority areas. More coordination and dialogue between the governmental and research communities will help accelerate policy actions. Existing tripartite-plus policy coordination committees, such as the *Comité Nacional sobre Trabajo Infantil* (National Committee on Child Labour) or the *Mesa Intersectorial sobre Trata de Personas* (Intersectoral Roundtable on Human Trafficking) have potential to support this dialogue.

To this end, all stakeholders will contribute to deepening the understanding of the root causes of child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking and inform the policies needed to move towards the achievement of SDG Target 8.7.

Within each thematic area, there are only a few core research questions with the objective of encouraging researchers, including junior researchers, to build on to address evidence gaps. The openness also allows flexibility for practitioners and researchers to fine tune research questions to meet specific priorities and needs in their fields of specialization.

We invite and encourage new collaborations and innovative approaches to implement the Chile National Research Agenda. We also count on further financial and technical commitments to translating research into policy action and solutions to sustainable development.

We welcome your comments and feedback! If you have any suggestions and questions on the Chile National Research Agenda, please write to us at rtaproject@ilo.org with the subject title "Chile National Research Agenda".
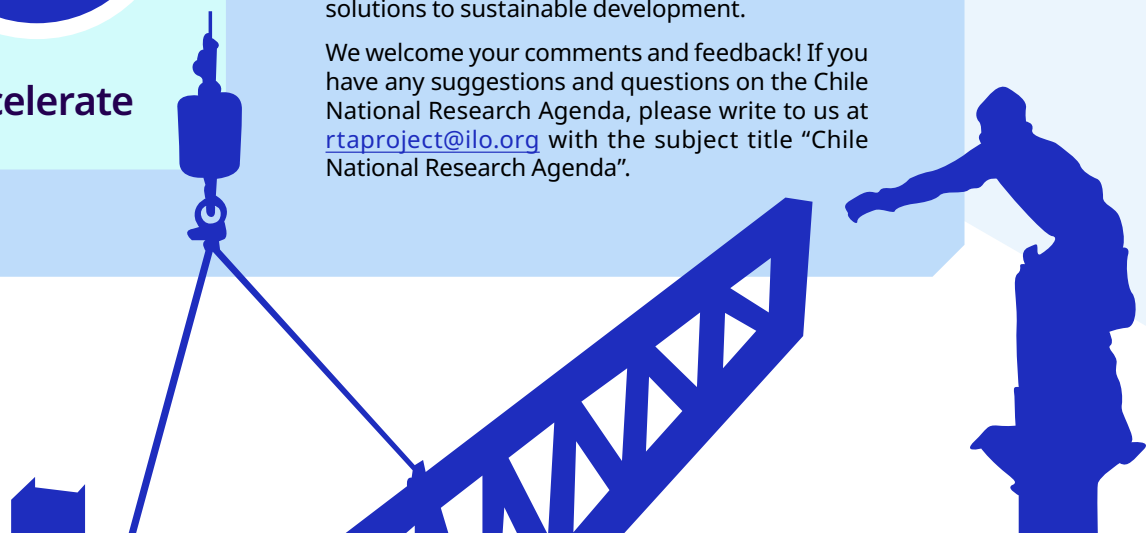
▸ The "Research to Action" (RTA) project

Using Knowledge to Accelerate Progress in the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour

The ILO's "Research to Action" (RTA) project centers on bridging the divide between policy research and policy action to tackle issues of child labour, forced labour and human trafficking. The primary objectives of the project are to increase access to evidence, facilitate understanding of available research and gaps, enhance capacity to provide evidence and fill gaps and promote new interest and engagement in the subject area. The RTA project collaborates closely with the International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Protection Division. The RTA project is funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL).

▸ Acknowledgements

The RTA project thanks the Government of Chile for the contribution to this activity. The project also thanks the International Advisory Board (IAB) for their valuable guidance through multiple consultation workshops. The IAB consists of technical experts from the ILO, international organizations, employers' and workers' organizations, United States Department of Labor (USDOL), Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder countries, national statistical offices, INGOs and the research community.

▸ rtaproject.org