



International
Labour
Organization

South African National Construction Health and Safety Conference

The Future of Decent Work in Construction *“An ILO based Perspective and Approach”* 15 October 2024

By
Naomi Kanyemba Lintini

Project Manager and Technical Adviser
Decent Work in Southern Africa's Construction Sector
International Labour Organization





International
Labour
Organization

A specialized agency of the **UNITED NATIONS** with a mandate to advance social justice and promote **Decent Work**, built on **foundations** of tripartism and social dialogue.

The ILO brings together governments, employers' and workers' organizations globally to:-

- ☐ Address world of work challenges,
- ☐ Set and monitor international labour standards,
- ☐ Collaborate with partners on programmes to help realize the **Decent Work Agenda**



The Foundation

International Labour Standards

▶ ILO Legal instruments which set out basic principles and rights at work. They are either

- a) **Conventions**, which are legally binding international treaties that may be ratified by member states, or
- b) **Commendations**, which serve as accompanying non-binding guidelines.

Members States in consultation with organized business and organized labour, ratify the conventions and formulate national laws and policies.

C155, 2003: OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH CONVENTION
concerning Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment

**R164, 2006: OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
RECOMMENDATION**

Recommendation concerning Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment

Ratification

- Formal registration
- Comes into force 1 year later
- Obligations to report:
 - 1st report one year after a Convention comes into force
 - Periodic report every 1 to 5 years

The ILO supervisory system

- Systematic mechanisms for examining the implementation of ratified ILO Conventions
- Ongoing dialogue between Governments and the ILO
- Can be complemented by technical cooperation

The “Decent Work” Agenda

ILO Defines Decent Work as the opportunity for work that

Is productive and delivers a fair income,

Has security in the workplace and social protection for all,

Offers prospects for personal development

Allows for Social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in decisions that affect their lives

Offers equality and equity of opportunity and treatment for all women and men



The Foundation

A Social Contract with a Human-Centred Agenda



A vision that seeks transformations towards **a future of work** that affords dignity, security and equal opportunity, whilst expanding human freedoms.

A vision that supports people through transitions, and leverages demographic opportunities to contribute to a lifelong active society

The Foundation

Responsible Business Conduct (RBC)

A set of principles addressed to multinational and national enterprises, governments of home and host countries, employers' and workers' organizations to provide guidance in areas of

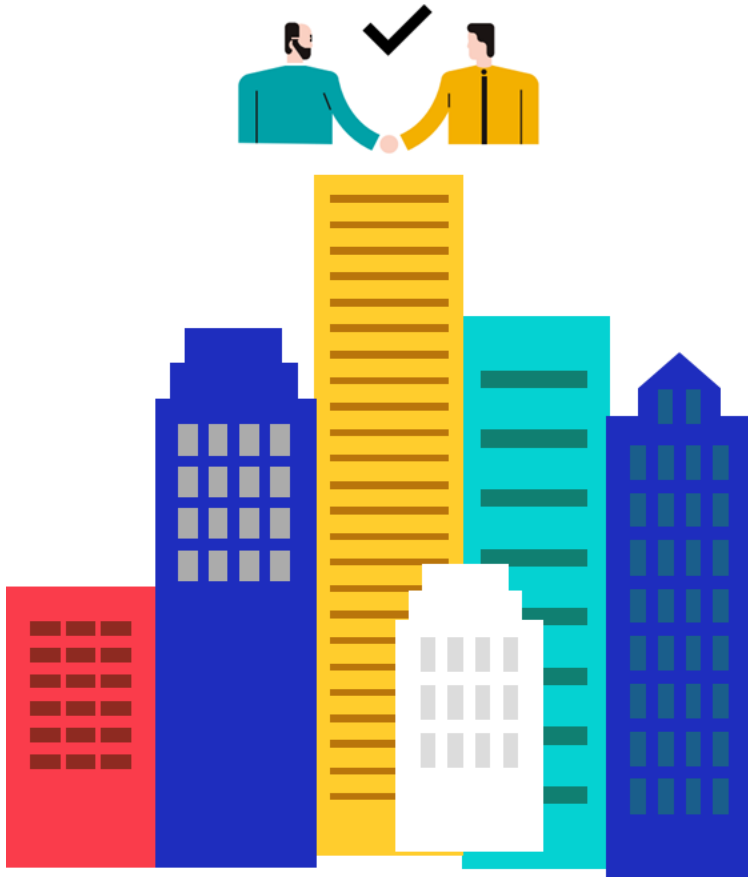
employment, training, conditions of work and life, industrial relations as well as general/business policies

This guidance is founded substantially on principles contained in international labour standards

The principles are contained in “**“The MNE Declaration”**”
An ILO instrument that provides guidance on **social policy, inclusive, responsible, and sustainable workplace practices**

The Foundations

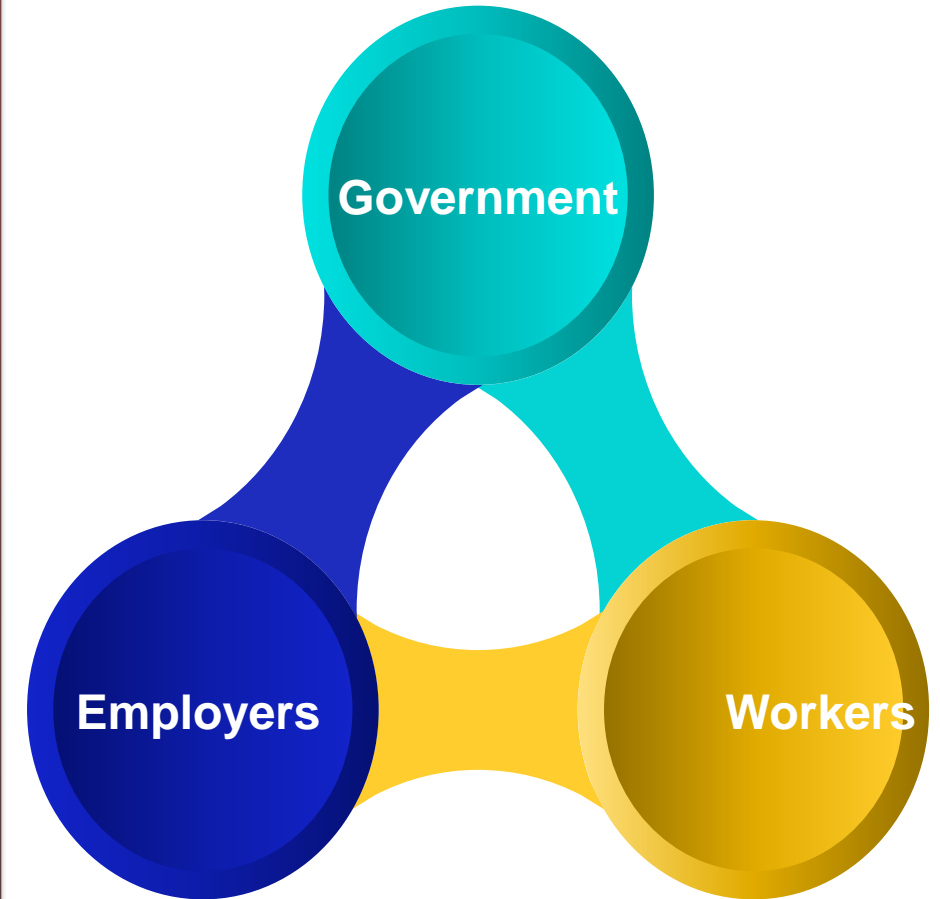
“Responsible Business Conduct” (RBC)



- ☐ Enterprises typically contribute to economic and social development through job creation, development of skills and technology, and provision of goods and services
- ☐ However, sometimes business practices can have negative repercussions on people, the environment and society, and ultimately on the business itself
- ☐ Integrating RBC principles beyond CSR can significantly improve enterprise performance, increase contribution to a Country's economic and social progression and the realization of decent work for all

Decent Work creates win–win and mutually beneficial outcomes for involved Players

- ❑ For Workers, that provide labour: An improved, rewarding and productive work experience
- ❑ For Enterprises, that provide capital: Increased productivity and enterprise competitiveness
- ❑ For Government, that regulates business practice and the main duty bearer: Expanding inclusiveness of economic growth and its benefits

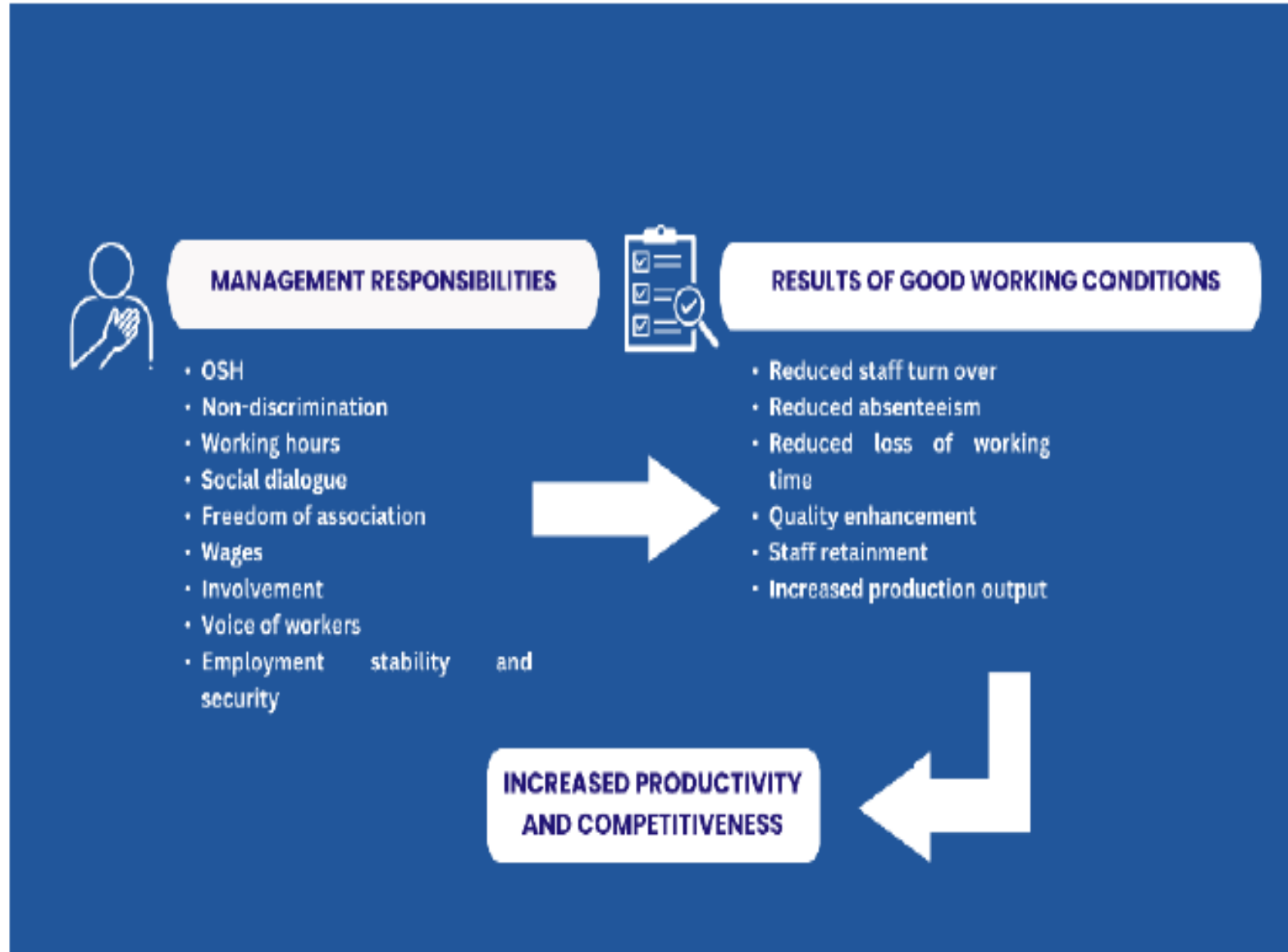


Why application of Decent Work principles makes business sense.....

The way people are treated and managed, and the way they communicate and cooperate with each other

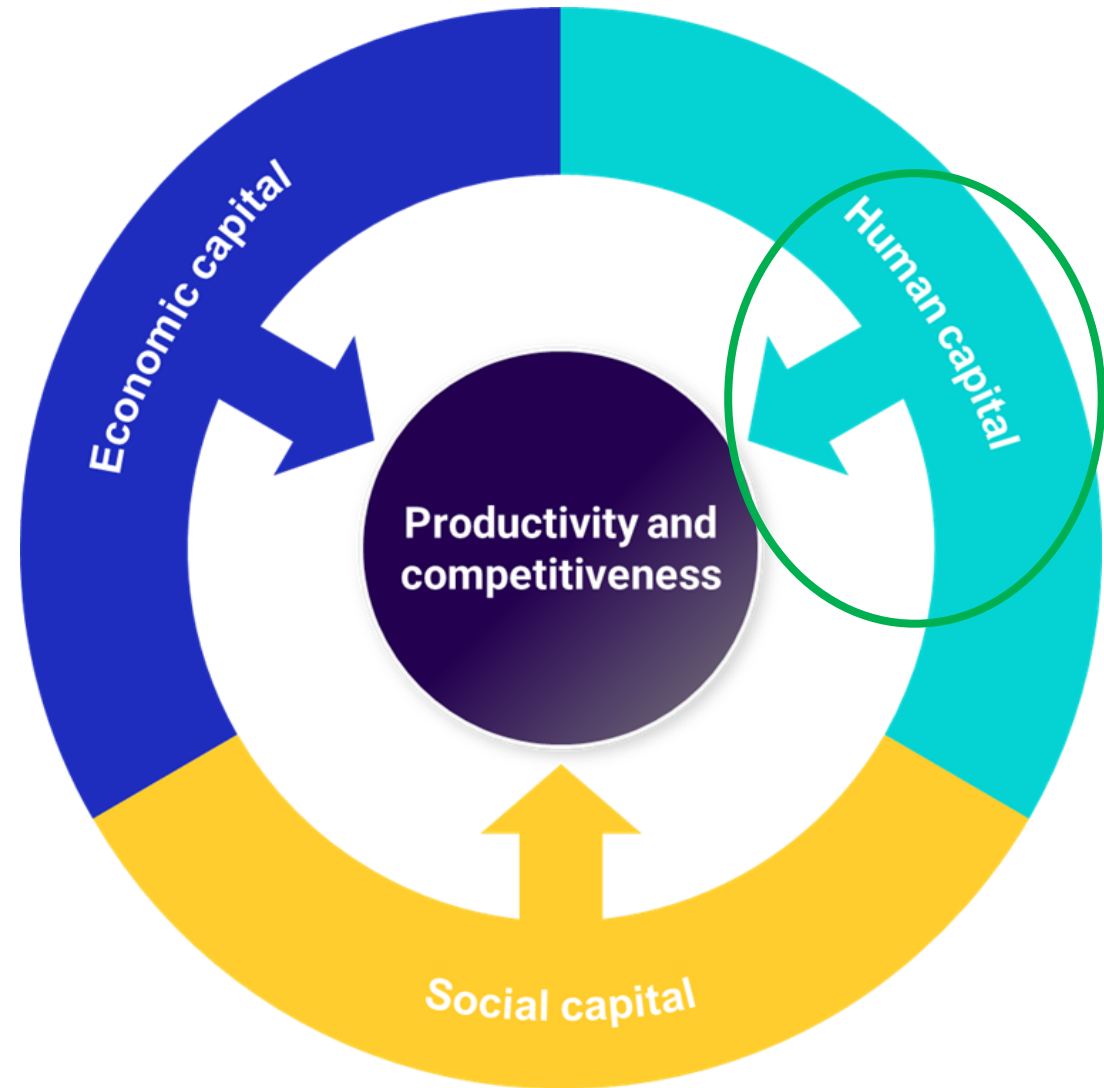
is central the productivity, competitiveness of the enterprise

and to maintaining good working relations



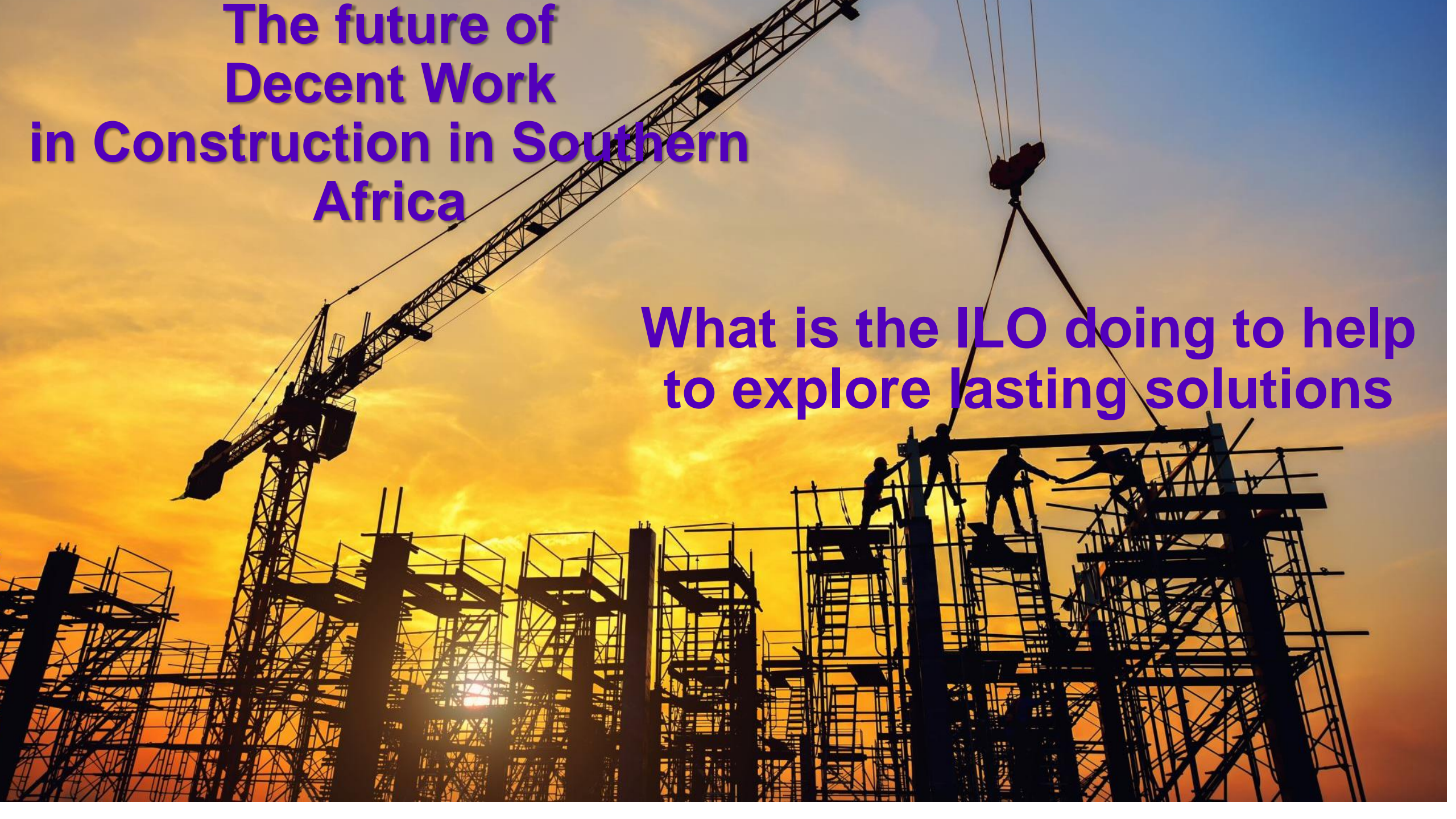
The Human Factor in Business Success

The knowledge, creativity, and drive embodied in employees, is what enables enterprises to make the best use of **physical capital** and **technologies** to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of customers and therefore remain competitive and relevant in the market



The future of Decent Work in Construction in Southern Africa

What is the ILO doing to help
to explore lasting solutions



A Partnership with SADC Secretariat and Member States to

Explore opportunities that can drive lasting improvements in productivity of enterprises in construction sector and in management of its human capital



Raising awareness among member states and sector players on factors limiting compliance with labour rights and that impact on workers productivity

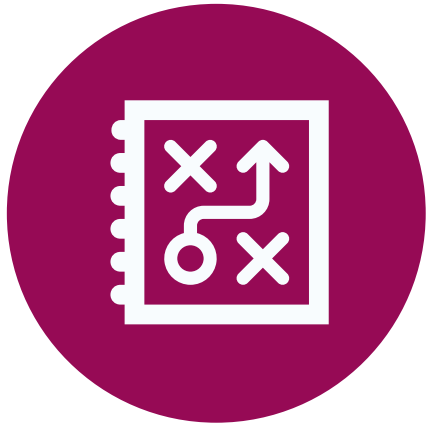


Document and share lessons and good practices to inform policy regulatory and strategy adjustments among member states



Through SADC structures facilitating debate and advocacy for corrective actions to compliance with labour rights and productivity in the construction sector

Using a systemic approach and evidence-based interventions



What are the main challenges to decent work and productivity, and what are their root causes?

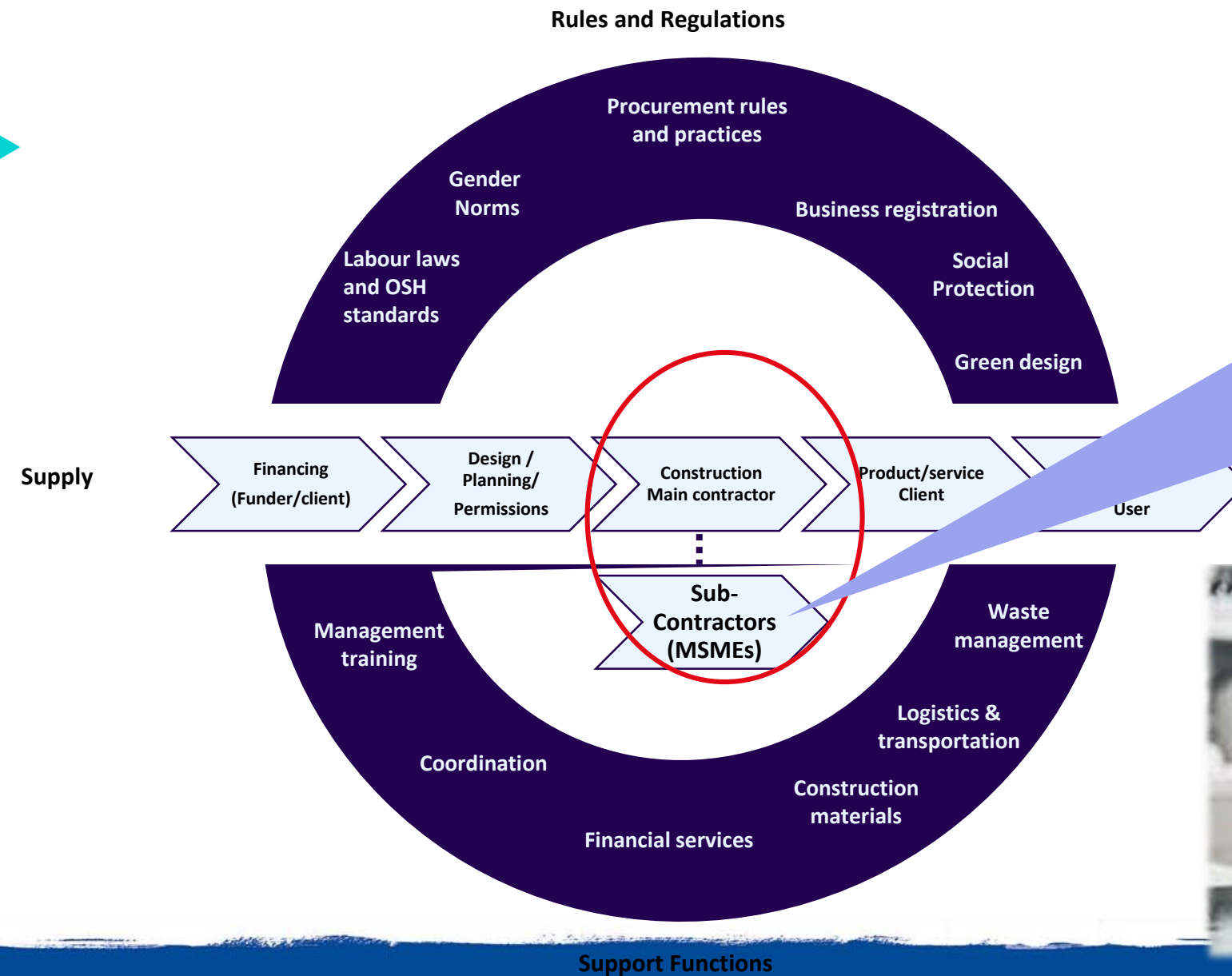


Who are the actors in the value chain and what incentives and capacities do they need to help address the challenges?



Where are the opportunities for catalytic interventions that can address root causes of decent work and low productivity?

The Construction sector under the microscope



- ❑ *Where are the main decent work and productivity challenges??*
- ❑ *And who is affected & -involved*
- ❑ *Mostly vulnerable workers, and the SMMEs that employ them?*



The South Africa Construction Sector Statistical Context

Number of people employed in South Africa in Q2 2024,
(in 1,000s)

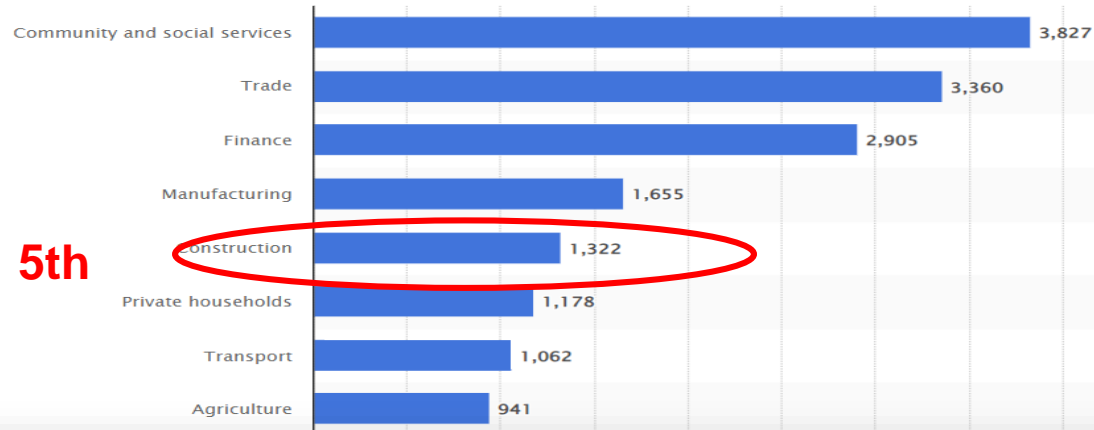
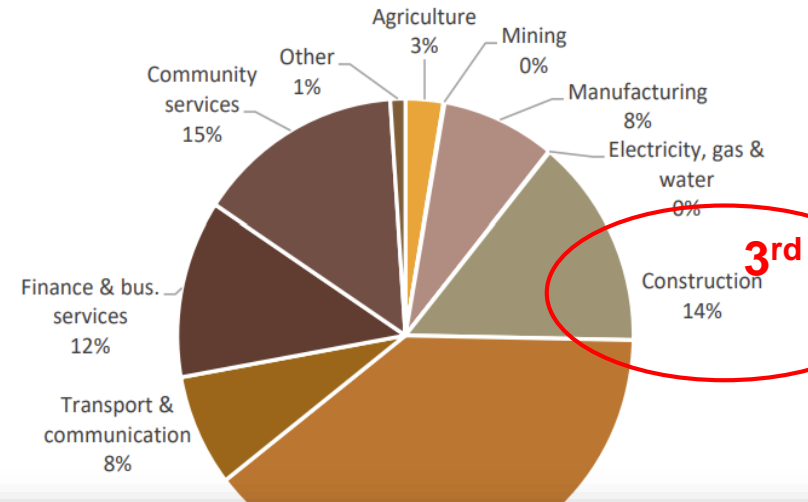


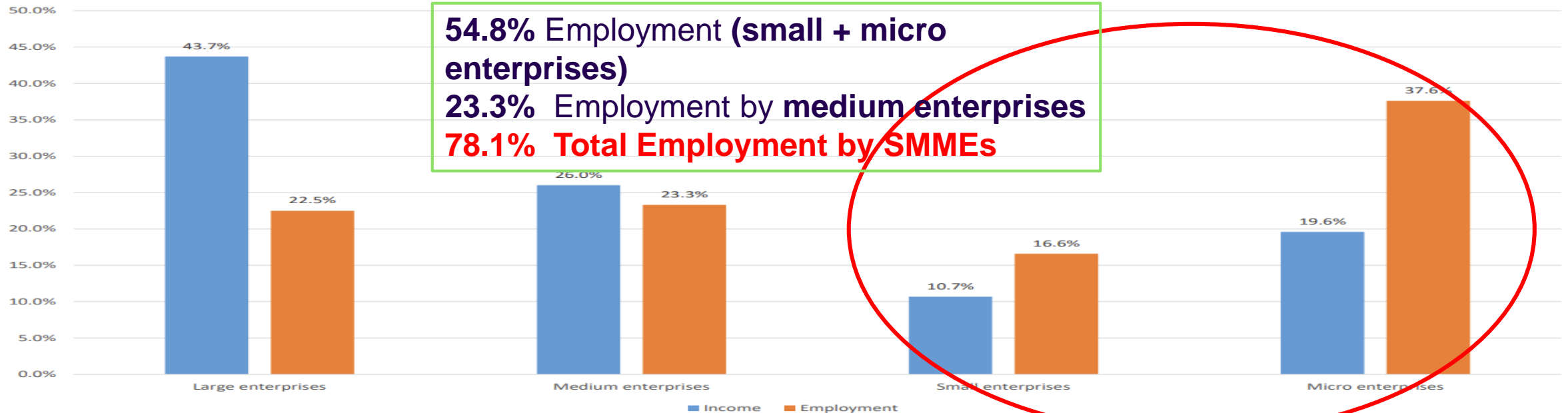
Figure 11: SMMEs by industry in 2022Q3



STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA

9

Figure 2 – Income and employment by enterprise size (% contribution) in the construction industry, 2020



The Construction Sector Under the Microscope

Applying A Systemic Development Approach

Which sub-set of the sector is an issue for majority of workers



How is the system not working?



Why is the system not working?



Root causes



2. Rules and Regulations: What are the issues at **Macro level**, where guidelines that govern how market actors should operate and behave are made?

1. **Core Market:** What are the issues at **micro level** at the core market where the exchange of goods and/or services happens?

3. **Supporting functions:** What are the issues at **Meso level** where the sector is supposed to receive support to operate effectively and efficiently?

The Findings

Low entry barriers
Creating business and
job opportunities for all
(Competent and non competent)

Partly why Sector is
characterised by
decent work deficits and
low labour productivity

Thus
keeping

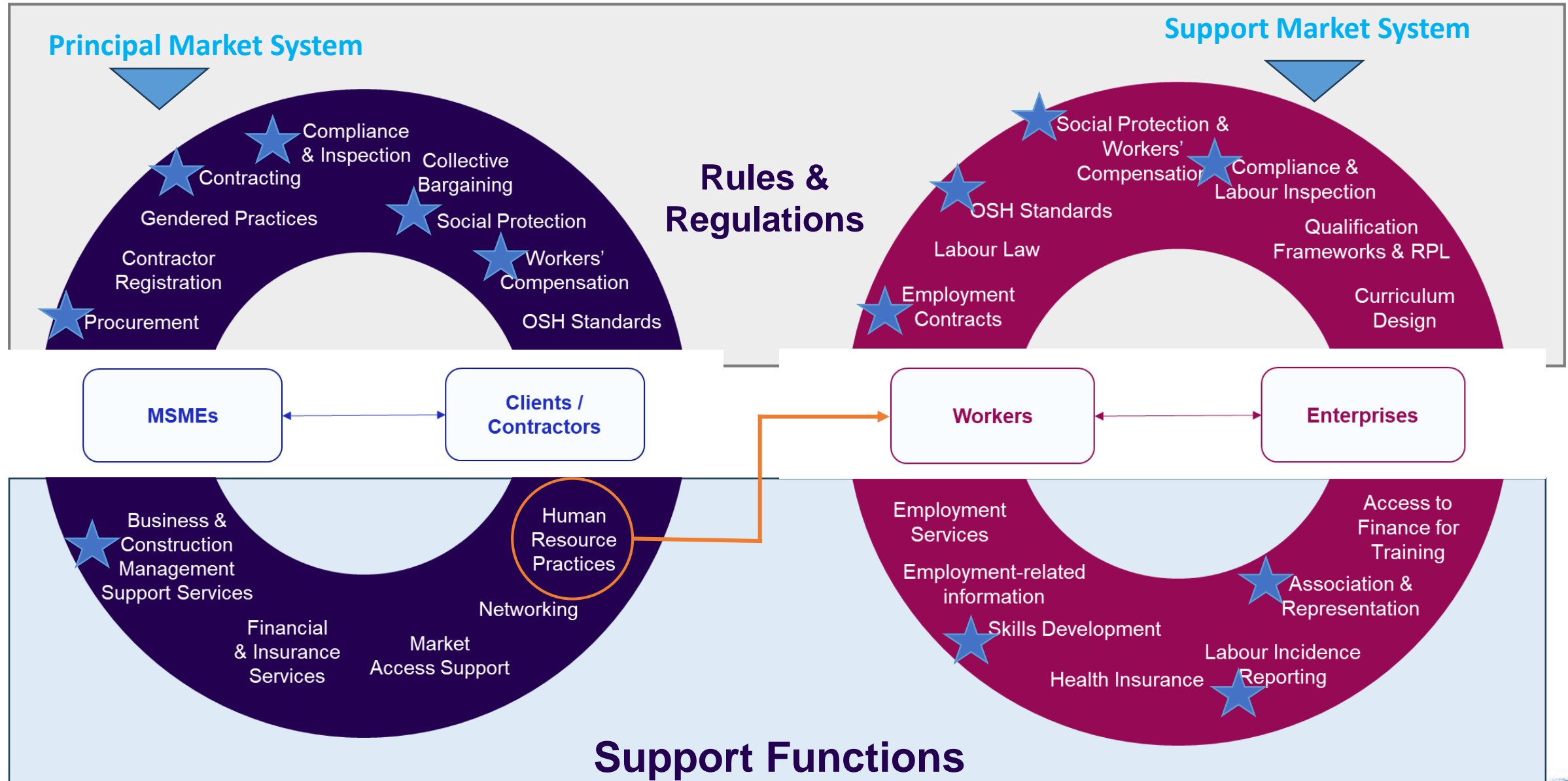


Many workers
locked in unsafe,
precarious work
often in informal
environments



Many SMMEs locked
in low productivity
business operations
at the bottom of the
sector's growth
trajectory

The Findings on the Core Market and the Support Employment Market



Findings - Some Root Causes

Why Small businesses have challenges with Productivity & Working Conditions



Procurement: Price based procurement with no clear incentives for providing decent working conditions – leading to inability by SMEs to meet decent work requirements



Limited information and incentives: on benefits of providing decent work



Limited access to relevant Business Development services (decent work and productivity focused)



Informal business operations: Informality of enterprises and limited access to resources

Gender and age-based barriers: hindering effective participation of women and youth

Why Workers face Decent Work Deficits



Procurement: No provision for comprehensive costing for decent work elements in bids



Limited knowledge and representation : on labour right and worker obligations, Union membership and reporting channels



Limited access: to skills development, recognition, and certification of informally acquired competencies



Informality of employment: leaves Workers in informal and precarious working environments with not enough employment protections



Limited access to formal and regularized labour inspection and protection systems

The Theory of Change

Goal : Improved adherence with labour rights, and productive workers with improved livelihoods and wellbeing

Outcomes: Enhanced enterprise productivity, **competitiveness**, and better working environment for workers

Outputs : **Changed/improved business practice** and **enhanced business relationships** among market players to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for all

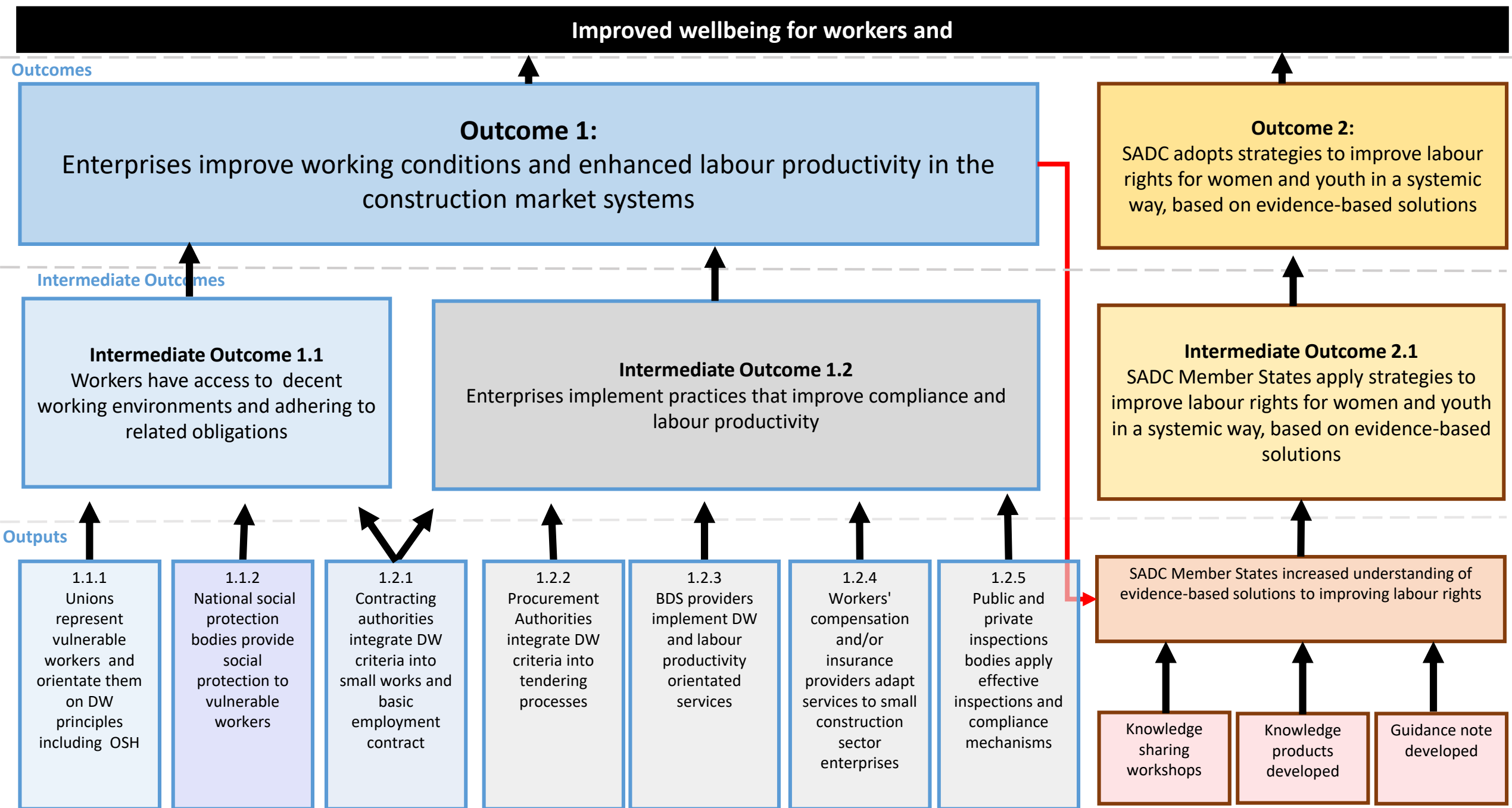
Project Activities targeting systemic constraints/failures by addressing **capacity & incentive gaps** of key players to develop new operating models & strengthened mutually beneficial relationships

Target group/worker-level change
(e.g. income/employment status and mor productive workers)

Employer/Enterprise-level change
(e.g. changed business practices)

Sector/System-level change
(e.g. sustained improvement to supporting functions/rules/norms)

INTERVENTION



What Does Pilot Project aim to Achieve

- Understand the drivers (interests/ motivations), then build and communicate value for actors to take on **new mutually beneficial practices**



- Promote early penetration of innovations or behaviour change across the market system
- Promote **continued adapting and crowding-in** by other market actors

- Promote non-competing actors to or respond to the innovations and **changed behaviours** so that new practices become the market “norm”



International
Labour
Organization



Decent Work in
Construction

Thank you