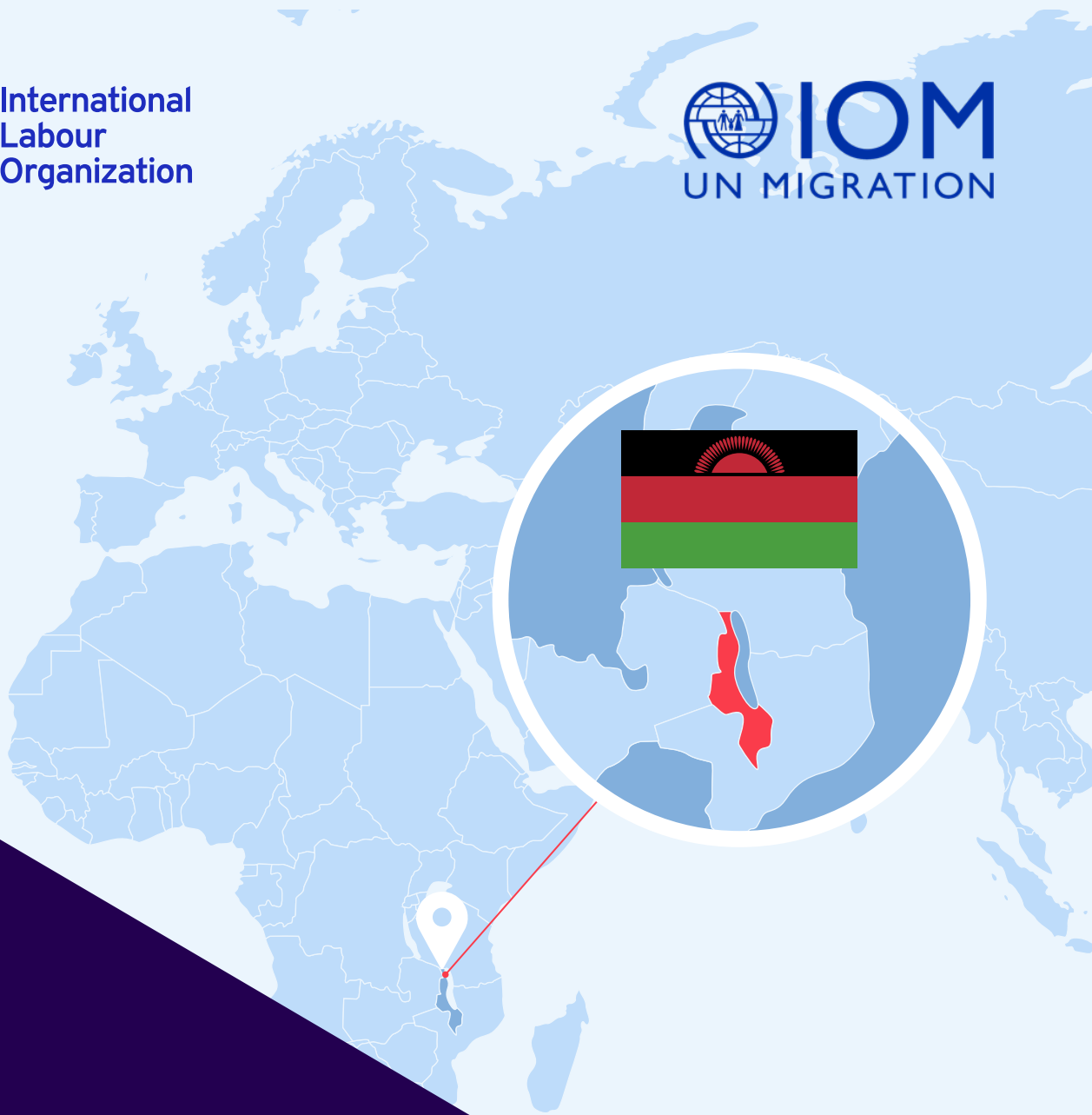




International
Labour
Organization



From research to action

▶ **Malawi: 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?

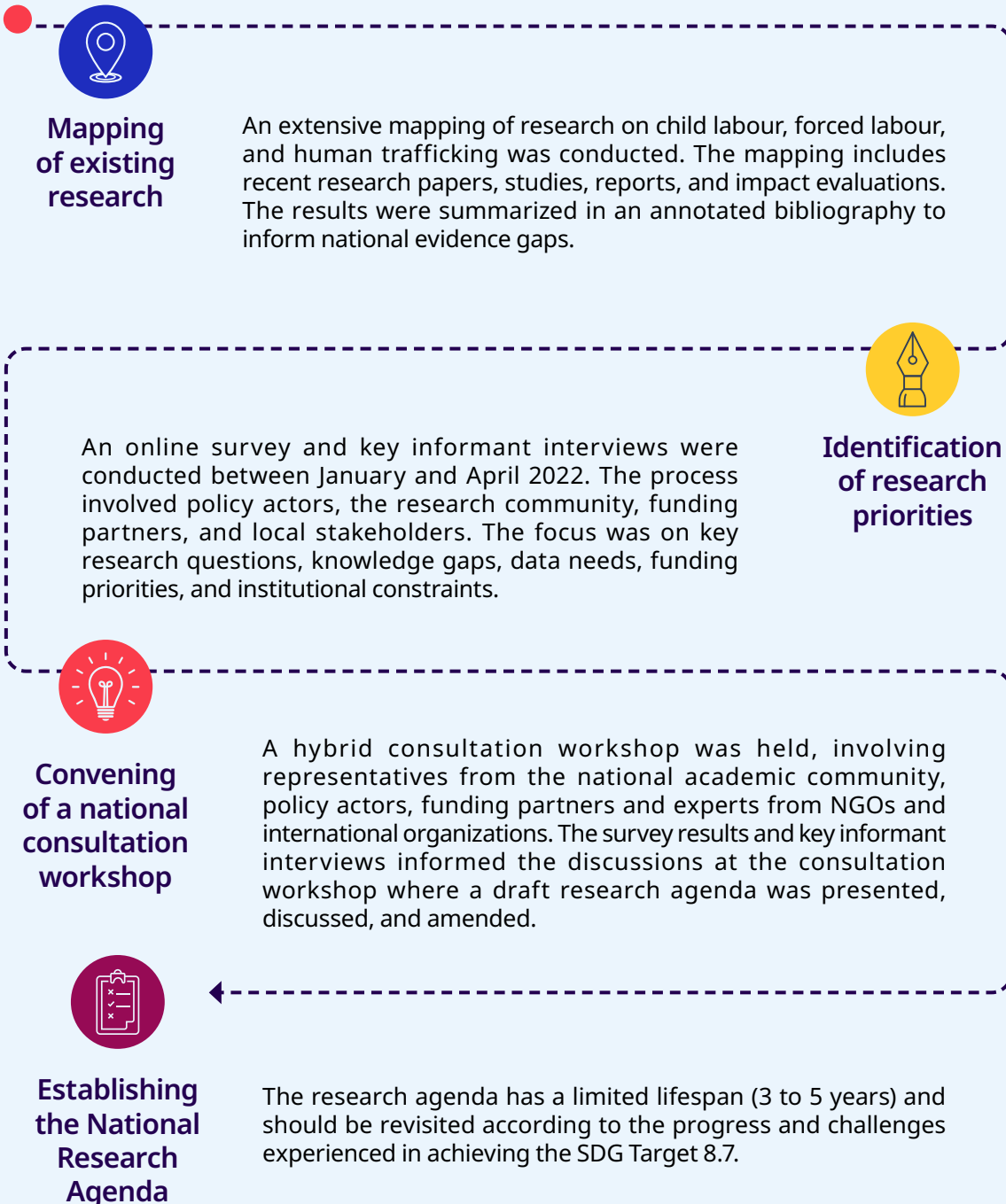
Although Malawi has made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst form of child labour, the latest National Child Labour Survey in 2015 showed that 38 per cent of children aged from 5 to 17 years old were in child labour. There is no nationally representative data available on forced labour and human trafficking although the problem persists in Malawi.

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 Malawi 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.

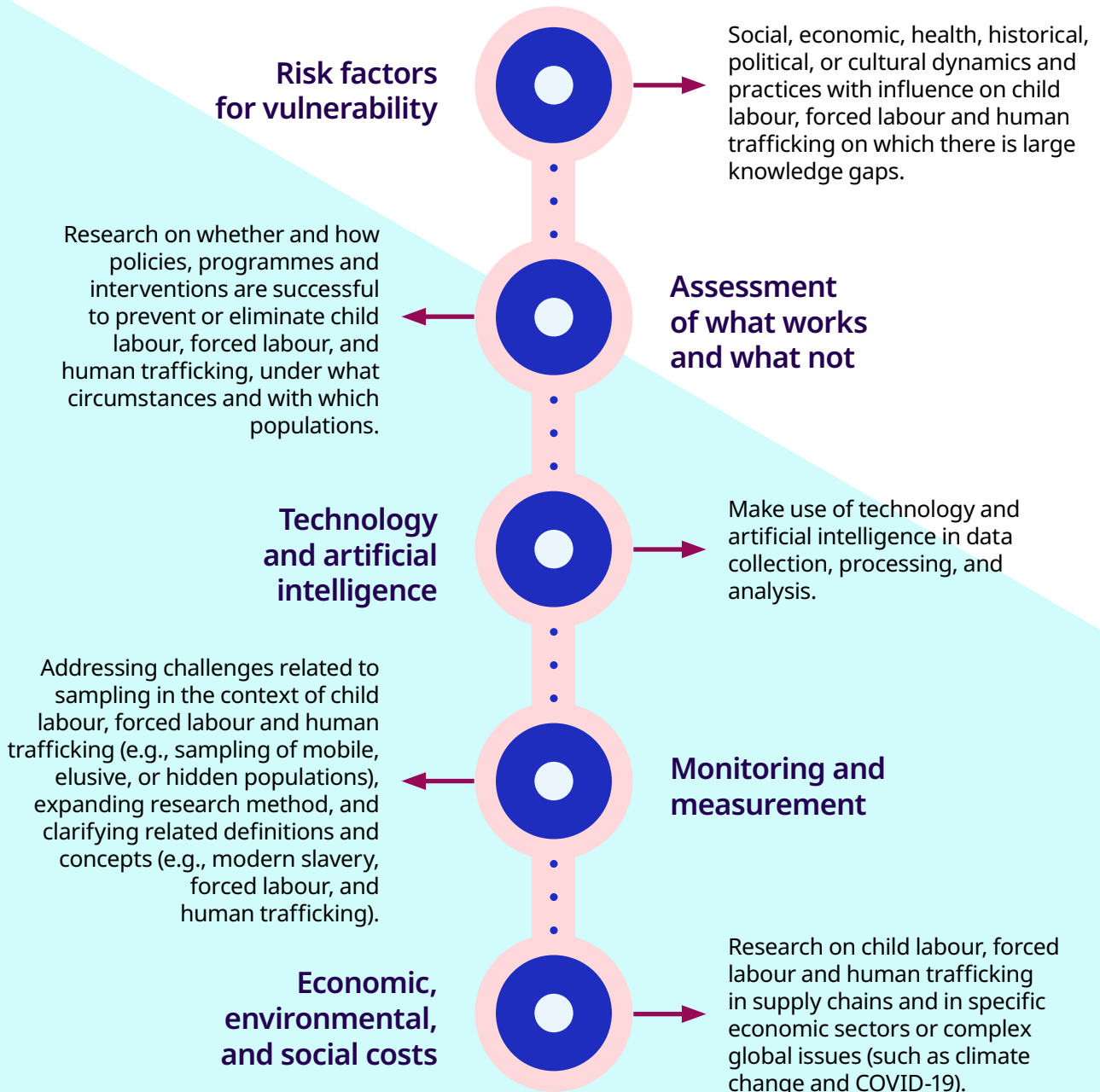
Policy choices will be critical to achieve SDG Target 8.7, and ready access to reliable evidence will be essential to informing these choices. A growing body of evidence available at international and country level, has helped increasing a better understanding of the policy mix that should be implemented 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 Malawi 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, NGOs, and donors, the Malawi National Research Agenda was established.

► The process in Malawi








► Five broad thematic areas



Above all, more and ethical data collection is needed. Consideration should be given to the use of existing administrative and other data to inform our understanding of these issues.

► Main agenda

Theme	Key topics/ dimensions	Related research questions	Related policy/ programme response
Risk factors for vulnerability 	Migration	What are the vulnerability factors for child labour and forced labour migrants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decent work conditions/ related programmes (including targeting of specific services) Social protection policies
	Informality	How does informality act as a driver for child labour and forced labour?	
	Demographics	How to improve prevalence studies on forced labour?	
	Child marriage	What is the relationship between child marriage and child labour?	
	Ethnicity	What role does race, ethnicity or other minority status play in vulnerability to child labour and forced labour?	
	Gender-focused policies	How can child labour policies better address the gender-related vulnerabilities to child labour and forced labour?	
	Deceptive recruitment practices	What is the prevalence of deceptive recruitment using technology?	
	Physical and mental health	What are the long term impacts of children working in (specific) potentially hazardous types of work?	
Assessment of what works and what not 	Skill development (early childhood)	What is the effect of early childhood development programmes on child labour and schooling? What works in increasing education or reducing poverty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? What (technology) works to reduce the risk of labour exploitation and unethical practices?	
	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	How effective are labour inspectorate and other law enforcement services in reducing child labour and forced labour?	
	Survivors of forced labour and human trafficking	What strategies are effective at mitigating trauma from these experiences?	
	Social protection and livelihood programmes	What kind of programmes are (the most) sustainable and effective at preventing child and families from child labour and forced labour? What aspects of social protection and livelihood programmes (e.g., cash transfers, credit, parental work) affect child labour and forced labour and how?	
Technology and artificial intelligence 	Ethical data collection	What is the impact of technology and artificial intelligence in data collection in a given context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and referral mechanisms Community monitoring systems
Monitoring and measurement 	Sampling	How can be the range of sampling methods be improved in forced labour research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and referral mechanisms Community monitoring systems
	Methods	How can different research methods address the interlinkages between child labour and forced labour? How can research better involve and benefit local communities?	
	Definitions and concepts (e.g., modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking)	How to compare findings and data collection procedures given different definitions and concepts?	

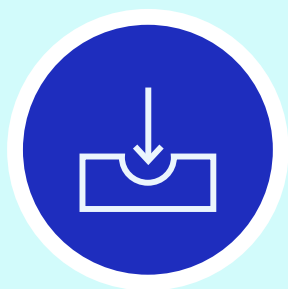
Theme	Key topics/ dimensions	Related research questions	Related policy/ programme response
Economic, environmental, and social costs 	Climate change	How does climate change influence the risk of child labour and forced labour? How does climate change modify the vulnerability factors of child labour and forced labour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour recruitment • Due diligence • Freedom of association and collective bargaining
	Supply chains	What is the role of global supply chains on child labour and/or forced labour (taking into account broader economic structures and especially third-party goods/suppliers)?	
	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? How has COVID-19 impacted the push/pull factors leading to child labour and forced labour?	

► Malawi as a Pathfinder country

In March 2020, Malawi became a pathfinder country. In response to the Durban Call to Action, the Government of Malawi is scaling up action to:

1. Accelerate multi-stakeholder efforts to prevent and eliminate child labour, with priority given to the worst forms of child labour, by making decent work a reality for adults and youth above the minimum age for work.
2. End child labour in agriculture.
3. Strengthen the prevention and elimination of child labour, including its worst forms, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, and the protection of survivors through data driven and survivor-informed policy and programmatic responses.
4. Realize children's right to education and ensure universal access to free, compulsory, quality, equitable and inclusive education and training.
5. Achieve universal access to social protection.
6. Increase financing and international cooperation for the elimination of child labour and forced labour.

► Call to action



Collaborate



Innovate



Accelerate

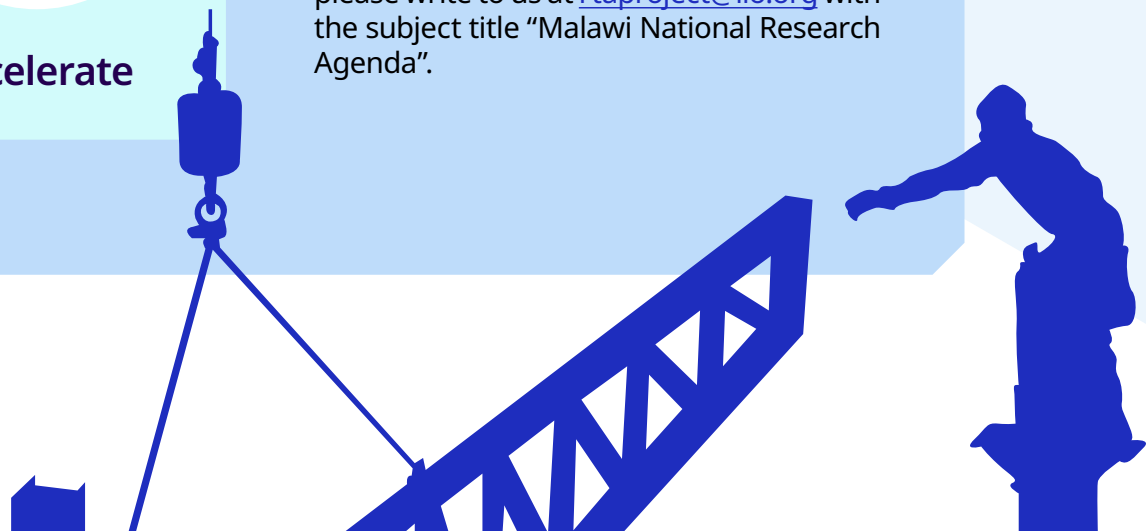
The Malawi National Research Agenda offers opportunities to all stakeholders to initiate and support research addressing the identified priority areas.

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 Malawi 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 Malawi National Research Agenda, please write to us at rtaproject@ilo.org with the subject title "Malawi 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 Malawi. The project also thanks the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, which contributed to this activity through the project, “Accelerating action for the elimination of child labor in supply chains in Africa” (ACCEL Africa); as well as 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

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