



## Technical Assistance on the Implementation of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) – Independent Midterm evaluation

### QUICK FACTS

**Countries:** South Africa

**Evaluation date:** 06 November 2023

**Evaluation type:** Ex-post

**Evaluation timing:** Mid-term

**Administrative Office:** ILO DWT & Country Office Pretoria

**Technical Office:** DWT & Country office Pretoria EMP/INVEST, Geneva

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**DC Symbol:** SAF/04/01/SAF covering sub-projects SAF/04/53/SAF and SAF/04/54/SAF

**Donor(s) & budget:** South African Government (NDPWI) and Limpopo Provincial Government (LDPWRI). Project 1 (National): USD 8.47 million; Project 2 (Limpopo): USD 6.95 million; Total: USD 15,42 million

**Key Words:** [Use themes as provided in i-eval Discovery](#)

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is implemented in phases of five-years each and is currently in its fourth phase. Within the framework of the EPWP, and the South Africa Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), the project’s objective is to strengthen the capacity of National and Limpopo Provincial Government in the implementation and coordination of the EPWP through mainstreaming pro-employment and climate resilient development approaches aligned to the future of work.

The project has two components, National and Limpopo Province, each with its Technical Advisory team and type of support rendered. Furthermore, the two projects are funded by different Government of South Africa sources: NDPWI for the National Component and LDPWRI for the Limpopo Component.

### Present situation of the project

EPWP is implemented in phases of five-years each and is currently in its fourth phase (1 April 2019 – 31 December 2024). The current phase’s objective is to provide 5 million work opportunities. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is providing the Technical Assistance (TA) to the Government of the South Africa, through the Department of Public works and Infrastructure (NDPWI) in the coordination and implementation of the EPWP at the national and provincial levels.

### Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the independent evaluation is to promote accountability and strengthen learning and project management among the ILO and key stakeholders.

Regarding its scope, the evaluation focussed on Phase IV of the projects, namely from January 2020 to the end of December 2024, and the geographical scope will be in line with the Limpopo province and the national components of the project.

The evaluation integrates equality and as cross-cutting concerns throughout its deliverables and process. Key evaluation dimensions also include Human rights, the SDGs and the principle of ‘no one left behind’, and ILO’s cross-cutting themes such Gender and non-discrimination, social dialogue and tripartism, Just transition to environmental sustainability and International Labour Standards.

The primary users of the evaluation are the Government of South Africa in its three roles – as funder, implementer, and recipient country –, the project implementing partners namely NDPWI,



	LDPWRI as well as ILO tripartite constituents, the ILO project technical unit, the ILO CO-Pretoria, the ILO DWT in Pretoria, the ILO Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), and the EIIP technical unit in Headquarters (DEV/INVEST).
<b>Methodology of evaluation</b>	<p>The evaluation covered the following evaluation criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact orientation, Sustainability, and Gender equality and non-discrimination.</p> <p>The evaluation adopted a Theory-Based Evaluation approach and was implemented through a consultative and transparent approach. A purposive non-random sampling was employed to select the interviewees. Interviews conducted during the field mission in-country (9-20 October) and online were 24, including with ILO staff, DPWI and LDPWRI and other stakeholders. The evaluation team undertook visits to agreed sites (Polokwane and the EPWP offices) to interview implementing partners and key stakeholders. A validation workshop (31 October) was held to discuss preliminary findings after the field missions.</p> <p>There are some methodological and logistical limitations to the mid-term evaluation: the small sample size of the key informants interviewed, the slow response rate during the time of fieldwork, unavailability of ILO’s offices in Pretoria and the access to all the documentation requested before the start of the mission.</p>
<b>MAIN FINDINGS &amp; CONCLUSIONS</b>	<p><i>Relevance, sustainability, and gender equality and non-discrimination</i></p> <p>Conclusion 1 – The support to Limpopo and National EPWP was found to be relevant, and the technical assistance of the ILO has contributed to achievements of the outputs as set in the PRODOCs, as well as captured by the bi-annual reports.</p> <p><i>Coherence and impact orientation and gender equality and non-discrimination</i></p> <p>Conclusion 2 – While addressing the same broad national-level issues, the ToCs and Logframes have been built differently and Outcomes and Outputs stated differently. This will somehow condition the expansion of the TA to other provinces and lead to increased unalignment in the future and less comparability of results across regions.</p> <p><i>Effectiveness and impact orientation</i></p>

Conclusion 3 – Outputs are on track and some overachieved. The last reports clearly show good performance for the national project (average 84% of results achieved in September 2023), while the latest reports for the Limpopo project (of end of 2022) describe lower rates of achievements (30%) at that stage. Financially, both projects have reached high execution rates (+87%) at the end of September 2023. However, the results of the projects are not widely communicated and assessing the use of resources for each activity (and effectiveness of execution) is not possible.

*Efficiency*

Conclusion 4 – Bureaucratic procedures, unalignment of calendars and reporting systems; and high staff turnover and changing demands to the ILO TA have conditioned efficiency and output delivery. The COVID-19 pandemic affected delivery of the outputs especially those that required face-to-face engagements.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### Main findings & Conclusions

*Relevance and sustainability*

Recommendation 1 – Continue to follow recommendations for improvement and use updated knowledge and information, as well as partner feedback for better and continuous adaptation to changing contexts and needs.

*Coherence and impact orientation*

Recommendation 2 – Despite the challenges posed by the different donors and priorities of both projects, a single ToC should be prepared for the national and province levels in Phase V. Also, logical frameworks, outcomes and outputs should be harmonised for improved alignment between the national and province level activities and for reporting.

*Sustainability and impact orientation*

Recommendation 3 – Communicate and make more visible the positive results achieved with the help of ILO's TA. Also, include in the communication strategy ILO's in-kind contributions to the project and make them visible to partners and relevant stakeholders.

*Efficiency*

Recommendation 4 – Administrative processes like disbursements and reporting need to be revised or at least prepared in advance for



increased efficiency. Acknowledging calendars’ discrepancies and preparing in advance the needed adjustments can be more efficient and lead to better results. In terms of human resources, a re-assessment of the needs must be made very rapidly, taking into consideration the remaining 12 months of the TA and especially in the context of the preparation of Phase V and if the expansion of the programme/of the TA is to be made.

*Effectiveness*

Recommendation 5 – Reporting of results by Outcome needs to be done alongside a financial reporting by Outcome. This will not only allow identifying where more resources need to be allocated for better performances but also more clearly assess what is working and not, in which areas and towards which results.

*Gender equality and non-discrimination*

Recommendation 6 – The results of a strengthened gender-sensitive approach should expand to a more robust vulnerability and discrimination-sensitive approach. The Gender Impact Study should be used as an entry point for increased relevance for gender equality. The identification of vulnerable cohorts to be more actively integrated in the programmes needs to proceed more effectively for increased relevance of the programme that has its focus on the poor and those left behind.

**Main lessons learned and good practices**

LL1. The model of bringing in institutions like NYDA and SEDA to create appetite for youths to start their own enterprises has potential, as part of an exit strategy. Where such enterprises flourish, there is a trickle effect of creating employment opportunities.

LL2. The ILO has room to sharpen its focus on creating and disseminating knowledge goods. Bi-annual reports indicate few to no knowledge products disseminated for wide usage, indicating the limited optimal learning from what is working and not working.

GP 1. The EPWP online reporting system is increasingly integrating gender and vulnerability disaggregated data, which can be explored and potentialized for ILO’s communication and visibility purposes.