



Evaluation Summaries

Evaluation: Increased Application of Labour-Based Methods through Appropriate Engineering Standards

Quick Facts

Countries: Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Ethiopia

Final Evaluation: September 2006

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Employment-Intensive Investment

Evaluation Management:

Evaluation Team: Eddy Bynens

Project Start: January 2000

Project End: October 2006

Project Code: INT/01/M03/UKM;
ZIM/02/M01/DAN; LES/03/M01/LES

Donor: DFID, Danida and Ireland Aid (4,448,068 US\$)

Keywords: Labour-Based Methods, Appropriate Engineering Standards, Employment creation

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project being evaluated is a regional research project on low volume earth and gravel roads in Africa. The project has been jointly implemented by the ILO Advisory Support, Information Services and Training programme (ASIST) in Harare for the overall management and dissemination, with the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) for research work, and different country road authorities for collecting the field data which will ensure better long-term sustainability.

Several countries have participated in the project: in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe the work has been completed, while in Lesotho, Mozambique, and Ethiopia - who joined later -, the work is still ongoing. Namibia and Kenya are expected to join in the research as soon as funding arrangements are finalised.

The goal of the project is “to promote sustainable livelihoods and contribute to the socio-economic development of disadvantaged rural populations through improved road access provision”; and the purpose is “to reduce the life-time cost of unpaved rural roads by promoting appropriate engineering standards, planning tools and works procedures for labour-based construction and maintenance”. The three outputs are (a) research results (planning and management tools) that promote the increased application of labour-based methods; (b) engineering standards; and, (c) dissemination, training and capacity building.

Present situation of project

Since the purpose was to reduce the life-time cost of unpaved rural roads including those constructed using labour-based methods, it was necessary to find out the different factors influencing road deterioration, their relationships and overall life cycle cost including maintenance costs. The evolution of road deterioration was measured on a total of 63 test sections in three countries. Over a two year period the test sites were regularly monitored regarding gravel loss, roughness and visual condition. All the data was

collected by the country teams and sent to the regional team for analysis.

Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess how well the research, planning tools, work procedures, and engineering standards have been developed, implemented, documented and disseminated. The scope of the evaluation involves a review of its effectiveness and relevance, efficiency, and impact.

Methodology of evaluation

The present evaluation includes a desk-based review that analyzed the initial project document, project progress reports and other project documentation, key performance criteria and indicators, compared and assessed the issues mentioned under scope of the evaluation and the coherence and continuity of project work over time. Attention has been given to main means of action, implementation performance, target groups and their perceptions of major progress and significant achievements, as well as notable products and outputs in the main means of action.

Main Findings & Conclusions

An important conclusion of the analysis was that road materials that had been categorised traditionally as “good materials”, where in fact the cause of rapid deterioration through gravel loss and therefore required high maintenance costs. This showed that it was necessary to redefine quality criteria for road materials of low volume roads in order to take the maintenance aspect into account.

The intended outputs of the project were achieved and can be expected to contribute to the stated purpose “a reduction of life-time cost of unpaved roads constructed using labour-based methods”, and the reduction of the cost of these roads over their life will, through a better use of funds, in turn lead to the stated goal “improved rural road access” of the project.

Relevance

The project was relevant at the time of its formulation and is relevant today at the end of the project. The nature of some of the findings

has even increased its relevance because of its important potential economic impact and because of its possible impact well beyond the intended target of low-volume labour-based roads.

Efficiency

The project has set up an efficient management organisation combining the ILO ASIST offices in Harare for management and dissemination, with the TRL for research work, and the different country road authorities for collecting the field data. The research methodology was efficient and the project was efficiently managed and used the data collected by three countries so far to produce significant findings and recommendations leading to the production of the “Guideline for Labour-Based Quality Assurance”.

Effectiveness

It is still early to measure effectiveness because the target dates of some of the indicators lie in the future, and the target dates of other indicators were given too optimistically a target date of project end. But it appears from discussions with the beneficiaries that the project is well on its way to achieve its purpose. However all the responsibility for carrying on the necessary activities now lies with the participating countries and some continued assistance may be useful in order to reach the indicators earlier and to a fuller extent.

Impact

It is far too early at the end of the project and especially for a research project to measure verifiable indication of its impact. However the attainment of a very significant economic impact is rather likely.

Sustainability

Because of the early and continued involvement of the participating countries the sustainability of the project is rather likely. However the likeliness would be much increased by some further limited assistance.

research to other related areas such as gravel roads with a higher volume of traffic.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Relevance

It is recommended for the ILO to continue its support to research projects such as this that improve quality and feasibility of labour-based road construction and maintenance and that are therefore very relevant to the socio-economic development of rural areas in Africa.

It is recommended for the ILO to extend these research activities to francophone countries in Africa. These countries face the same problems and could benefit from the same recommendations. A first activity could be the translation of the regional report and the guidelines into French, and the dissemination of these documents in French-speaking countries of Africa.

Efficiency

It is recommended to examine the possible inclusion of a regional research partner alongside with the TRL for future projects.

It is recommended to expand the regional report by including the data sets of the three other countries (Mozambique, Lesotho and Ethiopia), when the results become available. This would require limited additional funding.

It is recommended to assist African countries to carry out further field measurements producing additional data allowing to expand the findings. This would require limited additional funding since countries can be expected to contribute a significant amount.

Effectiveness

It is recommended for the donors to make funds available for limited further assistance to help the participating countries implement the “Guidelines for Labour-Based Quality Assurance”. This would require helping the engineers to convince the decision makers, coaching and consultancy, and regional exchange.

Impact

It may be very useful to undertake further research expanding the findings of this