



# Evaluation Summary



International  
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## *Implementation of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in South Africa through the National Department of Public Works, at the national level and in the Limpopo Province – Final evaluation*

### Quick Facts

- Countries:** *South Africa*
- Final Evaluation:** *June 2019*
- Evaluation Mode:** *Independent*
- Administrative Office:** *CO Pretoria, South Africa*
- o **Technical Office:** *ILO Country office Pretoria;  
EMP/INVEST, Geneva*

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**Project Code:** *SAF/04/01/SAF*

**Donor(s) & Budget:** *South Africa (US\$ 10.3  
Million)*

**Keywords:** *Unemployment, Public  
Employment Programmes, Labour Intensive  
Approaches, Capacity development, Decent Work,  
South Africa*

### Background & Context

**Present Situation of the Project.** EPWP is a nationwide programme which makes systematic use of public expenditure to boost productive employment and to develop marketable skills among the historically disadvantaged communities thereby contributing towards the national goal of alleviating poverty. The programme covers all spheres of government (National, Provincial and Local) as well as state-owned enterprises. EPWP is implemented in phases of five-years each and is currently in its third phase that commenced on 1 April 2014 with a target of 6 million work opportunities and will run to the end of March 2019 and is the one under evaluation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is providing the technical assistance to the government of the

South Africa, through the Department of Public works, in the coordination and implementation of the EPWP at the national and provincial levels. Part the ILO's responsibilities include training and capacity development of implementing agencies in the public and private sectors on the use of LIC. The ILO also provides technical support through the production of manuals, guidelines and intellectual tools for various stakeholders of EPWP including policy and decision makers, programme and project managers, consultants, trainers, mentors and contractors

### Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the independent evaluation outlined in terms of Reference (ToR annexe 1) is to promote accountability and strengthen learning between the ILO and critical stakeholders. The evaluation also aims: to assess the extent to which the two projects have achieved or are on track of achieving their stated goal and expected results regarding men and women; to assess the extent to which the projects' outcomes will be sustainable; to establish the relevance of the projects' design and implementation strategies with South Africa and ILO and UN ones such as national development frameworks, DWCP, SDGs and UNDAF; and, to assess the implementation efficiency. The evaluation will focus on phase III of the project, namely from April 2014 to the end of March 2019.

### Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation methodology is a combination of results-based approaches with an analysis of the theory of change. A consultative and transparent approach has been adopted to ensure triangulation of evidence. The evaluation matrix is presented in Annex 2b. The main sources of the evaluation are describes in the evaluation matrix that includes: 45 individual interviews during the evaluation mission in South

Africa, revision of projects' and EPWP's documents, online survey (annex 6) and literature

## Main Findings & Conclusions

### Relevance:

- The project works on a demand-driven basis, which gives it great adaptability and flexibility. The ILO project is appreciated for its high and rapid responsiveness and reaction. People are satisfied with ILO support despite their unawareness of the projects' scope
- The formulation process is very close with quite limited participation of most of the stakeholders, however most of the interviewees are satisfied with the ILO project capacity to answer their needs.
- The projects' intervention logic (Theory of Change) underpinning the implementation is shows coherence and suggested that the results-chain leads to a common goal: Support the implementation in very different ways. The goal of the project is a process itself, not a specific and establish target goal.
- Pro-docs mark the guidelines and strategies for action, but without defined objectives
- The finding regarding the adequacy of the projects' resources remains a qualitative and subjective data based on testimonials. There are neither plans nor outputs linked to a budget.
- Institutional arrangements prove to be relevant for initial Phase III of the projects, however in the last years there is a claim for change to be taking into consideration
- Projects supports national priorities and are aligned with SDG 8 and some key focus areas of the past UNSCF.
- There is a constructive interaction with other ILO's projects in the country and also with other programs or projects supporting EPWP or related to it.

### Efficiency: Overall, the projects' use of resources has been improved in each phase of the projects

- According to the sources the projects resources are adequate to achieve the expected results. However, there is quantitative data to support this statement as there are not activities, outputs or outcomes linked to a budget.
- According to the donor, which in this case is also the recipient, the quality-price ratio of the projects is very high, despite being an expensive project,

especially taking into account the dollar-rand exchange rate; the price-quality ratio is very high.

- Thanks to the efforts and availability of the ILO country office, no interviewee has been able to identify any bottlenecks in the implementation of the projects
- The rapid response capacity of ILO and its efficiency is one of the elements best appreciated by stakeholders. This is partly due to the integration of the project teams in the Department of Public Works and the lack of knowledge of the counterparts on the ILO's administrative procedures: In such a way that in order for the projects to be able to respond as expected, The ILO country office needs to lighten administrative procedures and boost efficiency.

### Effectiveness:

- The direct outcome identified in the reconstructed ToC has been achieved, as have the result indicators of the national PRODOC.
- The political and strategic support is the component that has obtained important and recognized results, which are expected to be consolidated in the next phase of the projects
- The online training, developed and customized for EPWP is underused and should be scaled-up, as an affordable and accessible tool.
- ILO has trained more than 4000 people in national and international training, defined as a high quality, however the skills transfer is very weak. The lack of a defined training strategy is the main internal factor to that weakness, but there are elements outside of the project teams' control that are the decisive factors in the stagnation of the skills transfer.
- The two projects are promoting two Labour Intensive Training Centre in the country, one at national level in Free State Province and other at provincial level in Limpopo.
- ILO embedded under the infrastructure sector has limited the effectiveness of the ILO support to the EPWP other sectors besides infrastructure
- There are significant advantages but also surmountable disadvantages in the fact that the projects donor and recipient is the DPW/LDPWRI.
- Effective demand-driven backstopping from DWT in Pretoria.
- The recommendations of previous 2014's evaluation were mostly taken into account with different level of implementation in the third phase of the project.
- The constant and open communication with the donor promotes effectiveness to achieve the result explained by the ToC.

## **Sustainability:**

- The degree of ownership of the DPW/ LDPWRI enhance monitoring and SA- ILO communication.
- The pro-doc included the risks assessed, and since then, the projects' report on them. It seems that the risks continue five years later, without any new upcoming threat and without losing any either. Which makes us wonder to what extent risk analysis is a deep and consensual exercise
- There are sustainable outputs of the project that will remain, and as far as they are applied, they will ensure its sustainability: these are the manual, guidelines, papers and training material elaborated or customized for the EPWP. However, ownership of these materials by EPWP coordinating and implementing bodies needs to be enhanced.
- EPWP started as a temporary initiative to tackle unemployment, but 15 years later, unemployment has increased, and EPWP is now an established and consolidated program, with no exit strategy. It is a common perception that ILO support projects are running with EPWP and last as much as the government program, that's is why there is not an exit strategy.

## **Gender and international labour standards**

- The degree of commitment of the projects with gender mainstreaming couldn't be established by this evaluation. No adequate resources are included in the budget nor in the logical framework to address gender issues or promote gender equality.
- These projects are supporting the EPWP and SA government to further develop the Labour International Standards already ratified, and ensuring that these principles are respected and promoted

## **Conclusions**

1. Projects are still relevant, even after 15 years of implementation. They are working on a demand-driven approach and, therefore, they are continually evolving. This approach is also reflected in the project documents with a light and very soft set up of outcomes and indicators and by the lack of a Theory of Change.
2. The institutional arrangement of the national component is very controversial and could

limit the scope to the EPWP assistance, affecting the relevance, the efficiency and the effectiveness of the project results.

3. The lack of results and objectives linked to a budget makes it difficult to analyse the suitability of the projects' resources to achieve the expected goals. In the short term this will be mitigated with the present deployment of the new IRIS budgeting system. However, the relation value-money, even though difficult to calculate, seems to be more than acceptable according to the different components of the projects.
4. The projects are efficient, having a high response capacity, which could be compromised in the future with the incorporation of the new ILO management system (IRIS). It would be necessary to inform the main counterparts to avoid bottlenecks or "disappointing situations".
5. In general, ILO projects have been very effective reaching expectations of stakeholders and other national counterparts, especially regarding the political and strategic support component, which has been critical to EPWP support and it is expected to continue growing in the next phase.
6. Projects have successfully realized the training demanded and expected, in spite of this the outcome of enhancing capacities and transferring skills has remained very low.
7. Both project are working in a Labour Intensive Training Centre (LITC), but as the projects work closely and in close collaboration, it is questionable and not relevant, neither for the projects nor for the country, to work in parallel in the establishment of two LITC in South Africa. It would be better to collaborate in a LITC pilot experience, and according to the results in the medium term to replicate it in other provinces.
8. The institutional arrangement of the national component could limit the scope to the EPWP assistance, affecting the relevance, the efficiency and the effectiveness of the project results. Nevertheless the constant and open communication with the donor that is also the main stakeholder, has boosted effectiveness.
9. The sustainability of projects results is ensure regarding mostly all the EPWP materials, documents and guidelines produces. However, despite all the people trained the

enhancement of institutional capacities remains a challenge.

10. Despite the awareness and acknowledgment of the importance of the integration of the gender approach by the project team, this approach is not reflected either in the PRODOCs or in the materials produced by it. Additional support in the area of gender would be more than desirable.

## Recommendations

**R1: Open-up the formulation process:** A more consultative, participative and transparent exercise needs to be implemented to allow stakeholders from other sectors outside infrastructure to understand the scope of the project and contribute financially to obtain the support required.

*Addressed to: ILO project team and DPW/ LDPWRI; Prioritization: High; Resource: Low; Timing: Short-term.*

**R2: Develop a coherent a comprehensive Theory of Change of the project:** clearly define goals, objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities and the causal relationship among them. ToC must be realistic considering the five years' time-frame and the resources available, including Outcome indicators.

*Addressed to: To the projects team at the ILO and DPW; Prioritization: High; Resource: Low; Timing: Short-term.*

**R3. Move the location of the ILO's national project** from under the CD of Infrastructure to under the DDG of the EPWP, who will appointed a focal point, to ensure proper, timely and adequate support to other EPWP sectors besides infrastructure.

*Addressed to: DPW; Prioritization: High; Resource: None; Timing: Short-term.*

**R4. Establish SMART outcomes and outputs:** Include outputs and outcomes in the PRODOCs and in the annual plan, with an associated budget, to facilitate monitoring and future evaluations, in addition to having adequate information when making decisions.

*Addressed to: ILO project teams; Prioritization: High; Resource: Low; Timing: Short-term*

**R5. Establish a skill transfer and training strategy with a realistic time objective of 5 years;** in order to understand what the project intend to do and what it should be the level of capacity that will remain within the institutions, in other words: the final outcome of the training, It is recommended that the project develop and strategy with an achievable goal, maybe with a structured and continuous training.

*Addressed to: ILO and DPW/LDPWRI; Prioritization: High; Resource: Low; Timing: short-term.*

**R6. Establish the technical human resources** to ensure the conditions needed for the skills transfer.

*Addressed to: DPW/ LDPWRI and to provincial department; Prioritization: High; Resource: Medium; Timing: Short-term.*

**R7. Develop a unique LITC pilot jointly by the two projects:** For efficiency and effectiveness purposes, both projects should join efforts and collaboration to develop a South African pilot Labour-Intensive Training Centre, before replicating the experience in other parts of the country.

*Addressed to: ILO project team Steering Committees; Prioritization: Medium; Resource: Low; Timing: Short-term.*

**R8.** Appoint skilled technical counterparts to work directly with the ILO, to enhance and ensure sustainability of projects' results and the continuity of interventions.

*Addressed to: DPW/ LDPWRI and provincial departments hosting TAs of the national project; Prioritization: High; Resource: Medium; Timing: Short-term.*

**R9.** Develop an exit strategy for the next phase, involving different stakeholders with objectives within a short and long-term time frame.

*Addressed to: ILO project team and DPW/ LDPWRI; Prioritization: Medium; Resource: Low; Timing: Short-term.*

**R10. To ILO and DPW:** Include gender approach in the ILO project and support gender mainstreaming into EPWP. Include budgets to include gender expertise ad-hoc.

*Addressed to: ILO project team and DPW/ LDPWRI;  
Prioritization: Medium; Resource: Medium; Timing: Short-term.*

## Lessons learned And Good practices

### Lessons learnt

**Lesson 1:** The donor relies on ILO's quick response even if the request is out of the scope of the project. The ability of ILO projects, supported by the Country Office, to quickly respond to the Government needs and last minute requests has enhanced legitimacy and credibility to this technical assistance.

**Lesson 2:** The ILO international experience and expertise on EPWP is requested by South African national institutions on labour intensive methods and other subjects related to EPWP. National institutions rely on ILO support to rapidly identify at international level the expertise and experiences for EPWP implementation

### Good practices

**Good practice 1:** Actively participating in the formulation process of the National Program places the ILO project in a privileged place to support the subsequent implementation of the aforementioned program.

**Good practice 2:** The projects have the ability and capacity to put on the table and lobby to introduce issues that were not addressed by the EPWP but whose need is real, thanks to their independence as an international organization. As an example, it could be mentioned the elaboration of the national policy, or the problem on the ground around the country of the lack of mechanism to enforce the compliance with the LI requirements.