



Cluster Independent Project Evaluation of “Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme” in Jordan

QUICK FACTS

Country:	Jordan
Date of the evaluation:	June-July2021
Evaluation Type	Independent cluster evaluation
Evaluation Timing	Final for Phase III and Phase IV; mid-term for Phase V
ILO Administrative Office:	Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS)
ILO Technical Backstopping Office:	Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS), DEVINVEST
Evaluation Manager:	Hideyuki Tsuruoka, Regional M&E Officer, ROAS
Name of consultant(s):	Mr Ty Morrissey, Director, Morrissey Consulting International
ILO TC/SYMBOL:	JOR/17/08/DEU (Phase III), JOR/18/05/DEU (Phase IV) and JOR/19/03/DEU (Phase V)
Donor: country and budget US\$	Germany, KfW Development Bank - JOR/17/08/DEU (Phase III) (USD 5,685,050; 5,000,000 EUR) JOR/18/05/DEU (Phase IV) (USD 22,753,128; 20,000,000 EUR) JOR/19/03/DEU (Phase V) (USD 7,700,770; 6,930,693 EUR)
P&B:	Outcome 4 and 5 (2020-2021)
SDG:	Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
Date project ends:	31 May 2021 JOR/17/08/DEU (Phase III) 09 August 2021 JOR/18/05/DEU (Phase IV) 30 November 2021 JOR/19/03/DEU (Phase V)
Key Words:	Evaluation, Jordan, EIIP, Cash for Work, Vocational Training, Labour Based Resource Technology

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

<p>Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure</p>	<p>This report details the results and findings of a cluster evaluation of Phase III, IV and V of the <i>Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme (EIIP), Jordan</i>. The programme's three phases covering varying implementation periods. The programme is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau Development Bank (KfW) to assist the Jordanian government in ensuring that Syrian refugees and Jordanians can access better living conditions through increased employment and improved infrastructure.</p>
<p>Present situation of the project</p>	<p>In 2015, the ILO commenced implementation of a Labour-Intensive Infrastructure Programme (LIIP) to support the Government of Jordan (GoJ) in creating immediate jobs through employment intensive programmes. The programme started in Irbid and Mafrq and has since expanded to cover locations in other parts of the country (central and southern Governorates). Phases I, II and III (2016-2020) were in Irbid and Mafrq. Phase IV (2018-2021) extended southwards to Amman, Jerash, Ajloun and Zarqa. Phase V (2020-2021) continues southwards to Karak. Phases III and IV focus on the creations of jobs within local municipalities and public works such as environmental clearing, maintenance and minor works in public areas and alongside national roads. Typical activities are waste collection and disposal, grass cutting, kerb and footpath construction, fence painting and drain clearing. Phase V has sought to build upon the focus of Phase III and IV and open opportunities for the participation of workers in labour market oriented vocational training (from Phase IV) for longer-term employment, in partnership with accredited training providers.</p>
<p>Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation</p>	<p>The purpose of the evaluation was two-fold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assess programme progress towards the achievement of key results (outputs and outcomes) and to identify the main difficulties/constraints, • To document key lessons learned and provide practical guidance and recommendations to improve programme implementation for the remainder of the implantation period and into a possible new phase (Phase VI).
<p>Methodology of evaluation</p>	<p>The evaluation undertook a summative assessment of the following criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. The approach sought to assess the level of progress and overall achievement of key outputs and outcomes. The evaluation also applied a formative/forward looking approach to recommend possible corrections in the implementation strategy and associated M&E framework and plan. It also identified good practices and lessons learned to inform a possible Phase VI.</p> <p>The evaluation addressed the questions contained in the ToR (Annex 1). To simplify the process, questions were disaggregated into primary and secondary. The focus was on addressing primary questions, but secondary questions were used to inform and guide questioning and overall analysis. Key findings incorporated a mix of primary and secondary questions.</p> <p>The evaluation was primarily qualitative in nature. Key steps included: (i) a desk review of available documents; (ii) an initial briefing with the EIIP team; (iii) key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders; (iv) focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries and contractors; (v) data analysis and synthesis. The evaluation also had a number of limitations including time and resources; (ii) remote working; (iii) language related challenges; (iv) judgements; and (v) attribution.</p>



MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

The programme remains relevant to address the needs of supporting Syrian refugees. Relevance has also been heightened with the outbreak of COVID-19, which affects not only Syrian refugees but the broader Jordanian population as well. Lockdowns and subsequent economic contraction have left both Jordanian and Syrian populations vulnerable and the importance of Cash for Work (CfW) and other employment initiatives (e.g. EIIP) are more relevant than ever.

The programme aligns to BMZ/KfW's support in Jordan. This support can be traced back to the London Conference and there is strong alignment between the rationale and strategic intent of the EIIP and German government policy. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic risked undermining many of the gains made to support Syrian refugee livelihoods. The pandemic has affected both Syrians and Jordanians in similar ways. Poverty, vulnerability and unemployment have risen in the past 18-months.

The programme aligns to the ILO Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for 2018-2022. Principles identified in the DWCP include (i) employment creation; (ii) decent working conditions; and (iii) the promotion of decent work. Through the DWCP, the ILO seeks to work in close partnership with the government and social partners to address the challenges of low growth and high unemployment, particularly among women and youth.

While the EIIPs' impacts through the asset creation or maintenance activities on incomes and decent work are short-term, they have the potential to extend the impact through the benefits of the improved assets and influencing the policies and approaches of national and international development partners. The programme's objectives and outcomes do remain relevant to the context. However, the short-term nature of work and short phases of implementation to date to make it difficult to focus on longer-term outcomes.

Validity of the Design

Coherence between the development objective, outcomes and outputs is a key condition of overall programme design. The overall objective of the programme is *Syrian refugees and Jordanians have better living conditions because of increased employment and improved Infrastructure*, remains relevant and appropriate. The degree to which outcomes and other associated outputs have been delivered or are in the process of being delivered are dependent on design and implementation arrangements. These are in turn highly influenced and determined by the operating context both within institutions and also in the broader national context. This is particularly apparent during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Results frameworks across implementation phases maintain some similarities but also contain new outputs and indicators for each phase. However, it is evident that similarities remain. This is evidenced by references to "improved access to infrastructure", "jobs created", and "increased income". There does not appear to be a Theory of Change (ToC) to guide implementation and management. A recent Evaluability Assessment (EA) was completed and makes reference to a ToC, but it is unclear if one exists, and the EA did not propose one.

The selection of workers to participate in the programme has always been a contentious issue. In earlier phases the programme, under the direction of KfW, the focus was on having all works completed by Syrian



refugees. Over time, this was relaxed towards a 50-50 split with equal representation between Syrian and Jordanian workers. In Phase IV and V there has been increased pressure from the GoJ to transition to 70-30 split favouring Jordanian workers. It is a challenging context when the programme operates under the laws of Jordan. Merit can be seen in favouring Jordanian workers, particularly in light of COVID-19 restrictions and the associated economic slowdown. However, it is important to recognise the strategic intent of the programme from the outset, which was to support Syrian workers. The report recommends that the 50-50 split is maintained but in cases where Jordanian workers are more apparent, then a case can be made to have a higher proportion of Jordanian workers in these circumstances. In effect, decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis based on opportunity and context.

The implementation of a phased programme approach benefits the donor in terms of its reporting obligations to the German Government, however it is problematic from an implementation and management perspective. The short-term nature of implementation creates a degree of uncertainty, particularly among workers and municipal authorities.

With the focus on job creation, it is clear why the BMZ methodology for the definition of a “job created” is applied. In theory the concept makes sense but in practice it is difficult and not ultimately focused on longer-term outcomes of job creation and employment. The use of labour-intensive methods is a core foundation of the EIIP and ILO’s overall approach. In light of the commentary above, it is still possible to strike a balance between skilling-up workers and promoting labour-based approaches.

Effectiveness

At face value, it is clear that the programme has reached and, in some cases, exceeded targets. This is a significant achievement as demonstrates sound progress in terms of implementation and management. However, the lack of formal outcome statements and associated methodology to assess higher level impacts and change is an area that requires attention.

The work permit issues continue to hamper implementation efforts. The issue has been raised in progress reports and a previous evaluation of Phase I and II. The problem does appear entrenched and is linked to a variety of factors. Anecdotal evidence suggests that delays are due to the breakdown of engagement between Syrian and Jordanian workers (i.e. the 50-50 worker split when a 70-30 model is preferred), institutional inefficiencies, and also due to the type of employment being offered. It is difficult to pinpoint a specific reason for the delays. The programme has sought to engage with the MoL and MoLA to address the issue but it appears far from settled. The introduction of a Project Support Unit (PSU) is an important step to help facilitate the process. In light of previous evidence it is suggested that a different approach be taken. This would involve maintaining the minimum split of 50-50 Syrian and Jordanian workers but also look to prioritise Jordanian workers in selected sites.

Training provision for both government officials and contractors has been welcomed and is appreciated. Evidence from progress reports indicate the numbers of participants and the results frameworks indicate proportions of participants with increased knowledge. However it is unclear as to how this training is leading to better practices for contractors, improved institutional systems and better policy and regulatory frameworks. Vocational Training for workers (and contractors) is the way forward if it opens up



opportunities for long-term employment. Asset creation is important but unemployment does remain a major issue.

Moving forward it is encouraged to maintain the competitive selection process for municipalities and also the open ballot process for workers as it does reduce the potential for interference and the allocation of jobs based on municipal government preferences and social networks. However, it is important in this light to ensure all populations have access to participate. Programme management has been consultative and participatory. The programme maintains strong working relations with MPWH, MoL and MoLA. Strong engagement and participation has underpinned implementation and has been a strong contributor to the achievement of results to date across the three Phases of implementation.

Sustainability

There is evidence of the programme contributing positively to sustainability. Relationships with municipal authorities are robust and all have expressed strong appropriation and gratitude with regards to the support received to date. COVID-19 has severely hampered national and municipal budgets and funds are scarce for on-going service-delivery type programs. The programme has filled an important gap in supporting the CfW program that help maintain employment and income distribution.

In terms of work with MoL, MoLA and MOPWH, relationships remain strong. The proposal of establishing PSU is positive and proactive and leads to a whole range of support and new areas of work to underpin work. The programme have contributed to establishing a foundation for sustainable road maintenance by working with national partners. Engagement with social partners (EO and WOs) is generally weak. The focus to date has been on supporting government and municipal partners and relationships are strong.

At this stage of analysis, there is scope and justification to continuing the programme, however, there does need to be a shift in mindset in a number of key areas. Further analysis is provided in a later section, but the key considerations include:

- A reduced reliance upon short-term employment contracts and a focus on developing a “hybrid “ approach that involves some on-going short-term work coupled with longer-term employment underpinned by in-depth training and vocational training support.
- A shift away from simple municipal works towards work that has higher economic returns and that involve constructing assets. This ideally will be in road maintenance works, which can absorb higher levels of labour but also in agroforestry and tree planting exercises.
- A renewed focus on institutional support to MoL and MOLA to support enhanced capacity in project management and oversight, including financial management and reporting.
- Working with municipalities that demonstrate a commitment to infrastructure enhancement and asset creation.

Efficiency

Overall, the programme has achieved a relatively high degree of efficiency. The number and scope of contracts across the three phases have provided opportunities to improve livelihoods on an on-going manner. In addition, the focus on core areas of work (i.e. work sectors) enables to programme to achieve



a degree of economies of scale in that work is replicated and systems and processes are in place and can be built upon during subsequent phases.

In terms of the delivery of milestones and results, the programme has been able to make significant progress towards to the achievement of planned targets and results. The programme has leveraged opportunities through the CfW working group to harmonise efforts to ensure programmes remain aligned to remove duplication and overlap.

The programme has done well to promote the involvement and engagement of women. The programme has learned from previous experience in earlier phases around the engagement of women and to a lesser degree PwDs. Solid participation rates have been realised through culturally and context specific publicising and influencing activities, through community leaders and the promotion of strategies such as women-only work teams, direct payments to women and training of contractors on gender-specific recruitment and retention.

Effectiveness of Management Arrangements

Overall management functions appear to function well within the team. There has been a recent turnover of CTAs due to retirements and the donor did express concern at not being informed about the changes. However since 2019, there has been a consistent presence.

Technical backstopping and support are present but not entirely effective. Given the long duration of implementation, coupled with the level of expertise on the team, there is limited need to have technical support. COVID-19 travel restrictions also meant that relevant HQ support has not be able the travel to the project sites, however as part of a decentralisation of responsibility, technical support is provided from the region. There is a need to strengthen the technical backstopping support as all ILO projects require some form of technical and specialist support, particularly for quality assurance and ensuring work is aligned to specific DWCP outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation systems are relevant and appropriate. When combined with technical supervision and oversight, there is a good coordination and progress to collect and present data against agreed targets. In terms of evaluation, there is scope to strengthen this element of work.

Impact

The programme has made a tangible contribution to improvements in job creation and broader capacity development support with contractors and government officials. The programme has been constrained somewhat by the work permit issues however the establishment of the Project Support Unit (PSU) in the MOL is a positive and proactive step. The short-term nature of work and contracts makes it difficult to influence long-term changes. The promotion of longer-term work arrangements would contribute positively to possible changes in work permit arrangements and would potentially facilitate more timely approvals and awards.

The programme has made a strong contribution to social cohesion and peace and conflict prevention. Feedback from interviews and focus group discussions reveal that the programme contributes in a positive manner. Workers view each other as “brothers and sisters” in working together. However, some tensions

are evident in some pockets, particularly with the selection of workers, which is not always seen as transparent and fair.

Response to COVID-19

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 and associated restrictions, the programme has continued to meet and serve the needs of workers. A key achievement has been the development and approval of a COVID-19 safety plan. This plan is now applied across the EIIP and has also been recognised and picked-up by other donors and NGOs working in the CfW space.

The programme is committed to supporting safe work environments and safe work practices. The programme has ensured workers are protected while working, this not only includes safety equipment but also COVID-19 responsive approaches including, social distancing, maintenance of hygiene practices and the use of masks and other personal protection equipment (PPE). Funding has been repurposed in an appropriate manner to support this.

Guidance for Potential Phase VI

From the outset, the evaluation recommends an extension phase (Phase VI) of up to three years. This finding is based on the evidence presented regarding the complexity of short and overlapping phases presented above and also the benefits of allowing longer implementation periods for planning and implementation.

The first consideration is to consider the overall strategic intent of the program. The ideal situation is to transition the programme towards the overall intent of the EIIP and to gradually shift away from CfW. To achieve this end the following steps are proposed:

- The programme to liaise with all programme partners regarding an extension into Phase VI. This will include a review of the overall development objective, associated outcomes and the scope of work.
- As part of the consultation process, the programme should develop a detailed ToC which maps out the strategic intent of the programme and provides a more detailed narrative of the rationale and link between longer-term employment prospects and infrastructure enhancements.
- The extended phase should contain a six-month transition/inception period which will enable current work to be completed while planning for the next phase. EIIP will need to complete all activities and expenditure under Phase V before transitioning.
- The scope of work should focus on longer-term employment arrangements involving infrastructure provision/asset creation and maintenance. Work with contractors should be prioritised. However there is a need to transition from the current CfW arrangements. The programme should ideally remove all CfW arrangements over time, however this can occur in a gradual manner. Municipality participation should be contingent upon a willingness to transition to these new arrangements, underpinned by longer-term contract arrangements.
- Training to focus more on detailed vocational training. To achieve this end the programme should undertake a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of needs and priorities. A comprehensive TNA is required to map out longer-term job opportunities aligned to the strategic intent of the EIIP. This

also includes an assessment of national service providers. The focus group discussions highlighted a number of priority areas for support.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The programme should commence immediate planning for an extension into Phase VI. This will involve coordination with KfW and government authorities at the central and municipal level to discuss and agree on the strategic intent and focus and overall mix of work priorities going forward.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/KfW/GoJ	High	Short	High

Recommendation 2: The Phase VI should focus on asset creation and infrastructure enhancements in line with the strategic intent of EIIP while reducing the focus on CfW in a staged and coordinated manner in close consultation with municipal authorities.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/KfW/MoLA	High	Short	High

Recommendation 3: As part of Phase VI, the programme should review the development objective and set clear outcomes with associated outputs. This will also involve developing a detailed ToC that will underpin implementation and management arrangements going forward. Complementing this revised approach should be a review of evaluation studies, particularly on institutional reforms and change as a result of training and advisory support and the impacts of work on household income.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/KfW	High	Short	High

Recommendation 4: Options should be considered to lengthen employment contracts beyond the current 40-days. The 50-50 split between Jordanian and Syrian workers should be maintained but reviewed over time to ensure on-going relevance and appropriateness. However, where possible and appropriate, Jordanian workers can be prioritised, particularly for more skilled labour requirements with contractors.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/KfW/GoJ	High	Short	High

Recommendation 5: The current geographical scope of work and engagement should be maintained. Municipalities should continue to competitively bid for work and for worker selection, open ballots maintained with set criteria to target and support vulnerable workers. Contractor arrangements to remain the same and the focus should be on using skilled workers.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/KfW/MoLA	High	Short	High

Recommendation 6: In light of a focus towards more longer-term employment, the programme should explore further opportunities to support more in-depth vocational training and job placement strategies with external training service providers. This work should be underpinned by a detailed TNA completed in the first six-months of Phase VI.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/KfW/MoL	High	Short	High

Recommendation 7: The current training programme for government officials and contractors should be maintained but targeted to focus on areas of support that address the changes proposed in earlier recommendations. To complement the training programme, a “fit-for purpose” evaluation strategy should be developed and applied to assess longer-term impacts and changes as a result of support.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/KfW/GoJ	High	Short	High

Recommendation 8: Trial a new approach to the worker permits which builds upon the support to be provided by the PSU. The focus should be on raising awareness of the potential strategic shift in structure of work arrangement and the focus on longer term employment involving Jordanian workers. The trial should last for appropriately 12-months during the first year of Phase VI.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/KfW/MoL	High	Short	High

Recommendation 9: Promote the Jordan CO to a fully-fledged country office so as to minimise dependency upon the RAS office. This will support more streamlined, efficient and effective decision-making and overall financial and administrative management.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/ROAS	High	Short	High

Recommendation 10: Promote an existing staff member to a deputy CTA/operations manager to remove the intensive obligations of the CTA. This will help share roles and responsibilities and promote an opportunity for a team member to develop relevant and appropriate management and leadership skills.

Responsible Unit(s)	Priority	Time Implications	Resource Implications
EIIP/ROAS/KfW	High	Short	High

Main lessons learned and good practices

The programme has implemented a series of good practices and has also identified key lessons learned. Good practices include: (i) Institutional capacity and support are integral to effective CfW and LBT; (ii) a focus on asset creation and associated maintenance is critical for longer-term success; (iii) support to facilitate work permits is important; and (iv) application of social safeguards and associated monitoring and follow-up is a good practice that is well embedded. Key lessons include:

- **Key Lesson 1:** Programme phases should be extended to allow time for planning, implementation and longer-term engagement. Longer durations also support opportunities to address new and emerging needs and trends. The strategy also allows for better review and evaluative assessments, particularly as they relate to longer-term outcomes.
- **Key Lesson 2:** To promote active engagement it is important to work within existing municipal plans and to align activities to priority areas of work. It is also important to engage with local partners (WOs and EOs) as part of the process to facilitate employment and to maintain the tripartite model.
- **Key Lesson 3:** To promote longer term sustainability, there is a need to move way from CfW type approaches to adopt a mix of short-term assistance along with longer-term employment efforts aimed at promoting infrastructure enhancements and asset creation potentially in collaboration with EO's and WO's.
- **Key Lesson 4:** To promote the concept of CfW and EIIP, more in-depth monitoring and evaluation should occur (rather than simply counting jobs) to provide an evidence-base to support future planning at municipal and donor levels

The programme has also experienced challenges across the three phases. Key challenges have been identified following a document review of progress reports and reconfirmed during interviews. Significant challenges include: (i) approval and granting of work permits; (ii) short overlapping phases; (iii) the definition of “job creation”; (iv) payment processes particularly with short-term employment, is complex and requires significant investment of time and resources; (v) distinction between basic and more complex works; and (vi) the impact of COVID-19 and associated restrictions.