



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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Evaluation
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Fourth Rural Development Programme (RDP IV), Enhancing Rural Access (ERA) Project - Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Country:	Timor Leste
Final Evaluation:	February 2016
Evaluation Mode:	Independent
Administrative Office:	ILO Country Office for Indonesia and Timor Leste
Technical Office:	DEV / INVEST
Evaluation Manager:	Miaw Tiang Tang
Evaluation Consultants:	Ian Teese, Team Leader (International Consultant) Fernando da Encarnação (National Consultant)
Project End Date	21 February 2016
Project Code:	TIM/11/01/EEC
Donor(s) & Budget:	EU (USD 15,482,292)
Keywords:	Labour intensive employment, infrastructure, transport, construction industry, engineering

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has implemented the Enhancing Road Access project (ERA) as part of the European Union (EU) funded 4th Rural Development Programme (RDP IV) from 2011 to 2016. The ERA project purpose was: ‘The access of rural communities to services and to income opportunities is improved through the rehabilitation and maintenance of rural roads’. The expected results were: R1. Labour-based rural road rehabilitation contracts effectively executed; R.2. Local civil works

contractors and supervisors competent in contract management; and, R.3. Local civil works contractors and supervisors competent in labour-based rural road rehabilitation and maintenance.

The project undertook rural road rehabilitation and maintenance in selected western districts (Aileu, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Covalima, Ermera and Liquica) by capacitating (training, coaching and access to trial contracts) small construction contractors to carry out construction and maintenance works using labour-based technologies (LBT). The ILO Country Office for Indonesia and Timor Leste administered the project through the ILO Programme office for Timor Leste. Working under the State Ministry for the Coordination of Economic Affairs (MECAE), the implementation management team of five international engineers and specialists with locally employed engineers and support staff worked with two Timor-Leste national training institutions – the Don Bosco Foundation Training Centre (Don Bosco) and the Instituto de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento (IADE). The organisation’s capacity to deliver and support comprehensive training courses and ongoing coaching of ERA trained company directors, engineers and supervisors was developed.

The initial budget allocation of Euro 10 million was increased to Euro 11.6 million (USD 15,482,292).

Present Situation of the Project

The project was designed in 2010, implemented from late 2011 and closed in late February 2016 with no significant implementation or resourcing issues.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation assessed the relevance, performance and success of project activities. It identified achievements, impacts, good practices and lessons learned from the project that the ILO, MECAE, the Government of Timor Leste (GoTL), the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications

(MPWTC) and its Directorate of Roads, Bridges and Flood Control (DRBFC), Don Bosco, IADE and other relevant technical ministries could replicate and the necessary conditions for sustainability. The evaluation assessed all implementation activities.

Knowledge and information from the evaluation will be used as the basis for better design and management for results of potential next phase of the project, future ILO activities in Timor Leste and the and other rural infrastructure projects, including the Australian Government supported Roads for Development (R4D) project. The evaluation supports public accountability of the Government of Timor Leste and the ILO.

Clients and users of the evaluation are:

- The ILO Programme office in Timor Leste and ILO Country office for Indonesia and Timor Leste
- The Government of Timor Leste as main beneficiary
- MECAE, MPWTC, DRBFC, IADE and Don Bosco
- Communities and contractors who were involved and benefited from the project
- ILO headquarters and Decent Work Team Bangkok
- EU as the funding agency
- The Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI-Timor-Leste) and the labour union organisation (KSTL).

The evaluation assessed project activities from November 2011 to the closing in February 2016, and included the six districts and all organisations participating in the project.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation used ILO and OECD DAC evaluation criteria. The evaluation combined document and database information reviews with key informant interviews, focus group discussions and field visits to rehabilitated roads and benefiting communities. Five project districts were visited. Impact and outcome data has been sourced from both the ERA M&E system information and from monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities undertaken by the parallel R4D project which has used ERA developed training and coaching systems.

A final stakeholder workshop provided feedback on initial findings and conclusions and recommendations.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The ERA goal was: *'The access of rural communities to services and to income opportunities is improved through the rehabilitation and maintenance of rural*

roads'. Pre and post project data from ERA Community Snapshots of participating sucos shows there has been a marked increase (more than doubled) in the communities assessment of market access with smaller improvements in access to education and health services. Traffic count information complemented this data and showed a large increase in vehicle traffic through the participating sucos after the road rehabilitation work. R4D surveys showed significant (33 % to 40 %) decreases in transit times along the similar R4D rehabilitated rural roads.

Other community benefits included: New businesses; improved transport services; and, improved access to markets through easier access to suco and district markets; more traders coming into the villages; the ability to reliably move much larger volumes of often perishable product; and easier access to improved production technologies (seed and agrochemicals).

The project has achieved its revised outcome and outputs results contributing to the improved access.

R.1 Road contracts implemented

- 140 km of rehabilitated road (Target 140 km). The ERA roads are generally well constructed using an appropriate level of technology and meet the proposed national rural road pavement standards set out in the new Rural Road Strategy.
- 7,300 households have improved access to rural roads (Target 5,600)
- 500,000 worker-days for 8,000 beneficiaries (Target 430,000 worker days for 7,200 villagers)

R.2 Local contractors and supervisors implement construction contract management

- 552 contract managers complete accredited training (Target: 500)

R.3 Local contractors and supervisors competent in labour-based rural road works

- 206 contracting companies completed rehabilitation training and 67 companies trained in routine maintenance (Targets: 45 and 15 companies certified respectively)
- 100 % of trained contractors engaged in competitive bidding and/or implementing small LBT rehabilitation and maintenance contracts (Target 70 %)
- 89 % completed trial contract to specifications (Target >65%)
- 550 contractor staff, 34 MPWTC supervisors and 23 others trained (Target: 415)

Rural road contractor capacity

ERA has increased the pool of experienced and trained local contractors, particularly in the use and management of LBT which reduces the amount of specialised equipment required. 150 local small contracting companies have implemented small rural road contracts. However, the capacity and experience of the participating contractors is still limited.

The ERA training and support provided practical technical and management skills to entrepreneurs (contractors) and their engineering staff (graduate engineers) and supervisors.

Linking classroom training to trial road rehabilitation contracts supported by coaching strengthens the learning processes, and has developed additional rural roads cost-effectively.

The road rehabilitation and maintenance courses prepared and delivered by Don Bosco and IADE have received certification through the national qualifications systems overseen by INDMO.

Don Bosco, with strong support from ERA resources, has developed a strong cadre of skilled trainers. Ongoing funding through training contracts and / or incremental funding is required to ensure the Don Bosco rural roads training team is retained.

The developing road contractors value the ERA / R4D contract design and competitive tendering processes which reduce tendering risks.

ERA, with R4D, have developed LBT maintenance systems and techniques for rural roads which are now being used by the MPWTC with GoTL funding.

Currently the training providers are dependent on GoTL or donors funding rural road rehabilitation to fund training, coaching and refresher training of R4D rural road contractors. If Don Bosco and IADE can retain their ERA trained contractor trainers, with limited further guidance and technical inputs, the organisations are capable of delivering the current well-documented training material

The current training packages are not well enough developed to meet all the needs of the developing small road contractors to reach a level where they can implement rural road rehabilitation and maintenance activities with limited supervision.

Factors influencing implementation

ERA has delivered the planned outputs and outcomes (with some agreed revisions) within budget and agreed timeframes. Capacity building activities were implemented as planned and have strengthened the ERA and R4D rural road rehabilitation programs. The EU and ILO have resourced the activities as planned allowing the capacity building and road rehabilitation

activities to complement each other. The R4D road construction program, using ERA trained and supported contractors, was delayed by reduced budgets in 2014/15.

Conclusions

1. The ERA model of integrated training, trial contracts and, initial coaching and mentoring support has been a cost-effective model for upgrading the skills of the local small construction contractors.
2. The small contractors trained through ERA will require further training and coaching to consolidate their acquired skills. Most will also need further technical and business management training at a higher level to become sustainable road construction businesses. If additional donor or GoTL support (on a fee for service basis) is not available to continue the existing training and coaching, the ERA work will be largely; wasted. There is currently no national certification process for road contracting companies.
3. Other GoTL agencies (SEPFOPE, PDID and PNDS) which implement rural roads activities are not using the improved capacity of ERA trained contractors to improve their rural roads activities.
4. The ERA integrated training model is not sustainable without strong institutional linkages to and support from the GoTL and private sector, through the CCI-Timor-Leste.
5. The high level ERA coordination group, the PSC, did not include the major ERA and, rural road rehabilitation and maintenance stakeholders, such as the DRBFC, SEPFOPE and district governments but included service providers. This is not an appropriate governance structure.
6. Linkages to district administrations. As the Disconcentration / Decentralization processes proceed, rural road rehabilitation and maintenance activities need to more closely link with district administrations to share information and develop capacity.
7. ***Tripartite issues.*** ERA has developed a strong working relationship with the GoTL and the private sector construction contractors and their representative organisation, the CCI-TL, which has been developed with ILO assistance. ERA has developed the capacity of and used both GoTL (IADE) and private (Don Bosco) training organisations. All these organisations participated in the PSC. KSTL had very limited involvement in the project activities.

8. **Gender.** ERA almost achieved the target of 30 % of construction labourers being women with 25 % being achieved. Contractors restricted women's work inputs to lighter manual work activities which limited their potential inputs and earnings. Interviewed women indicated they could have undertaken heavier manual labouring work. The lower women's inputs were also due to more skilled labourers, usually men, being used for to build more than planned road structures. The project did not include a skills upgrading activity targeting women. About 30 % of construction contracts were won and implemented successfully by women owned construction companies.

9. Project signage. The project awareness signage used on the project roads provided limited information to inform communities or users of the project activities or provide information that would improve the transparency of contracting and implementation arrangements. The project site signs used by R4D were much more informative and are a good example of Best Practice.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The ERA integrated rural road contractor capacity development model should be continued. (High priority) In the short term this can be partially achieved through ongoing R4D funding of R4D contractor training and support. This training/ support should make use of the existing capacity and resources that have been developed within Don Bosco and the IADE.

2. New higher level technical and management training modules and support. (High priority but requires significant donor and /or GoTL funding) This is to ensure the participating road contractors have the necessary skills and experience to independently implement rural road contracts that meet DRBFC construction and maintenance standards.

3. Recognised certification of rural road contractors. (Low priority) If Recommendation 2 can be implemented, certification of rural road contractors should be included as a second priority activity.

4. Rural road activities implemented by contractors with ERA trained staff. (Medium priority) The MPWTC, as the GoTL technical agency responsible for rural roads, should encourage other GoTL non-technical agencies implementing rural road activities to use ERA / R4D trained road contractors and apply the appropriate road and construction standards using these contractors

5. GoTL and the CCI-TL lead development of a sustainable rural roads skills development model. (Low Priority) GoTL and the CCI-TL, with its member contractors, be encouraged to lead development of a sustainable funding and organisation model to support the two ERA developed road contractor training organisations.

6. Project coordination groups. (High priority for new donor funded projects) Coordination bodies for future projects such as ERA which should distinguish between policy / strategic level participation at the PSC with implementation partners (service providers, service users and clients) becoming part of a lower working group structure which provides requested inputs to the PSC and addresses technical and implementation issues.

Lessons Learned

1. Participants in ERA training courses need to meet a minimum standard of knowledge and skills or they will have great difficulties completing the classroom and practical training. Pre-testing of knowledge in the technical area at the start of a course will both assist in screening out participants with limited potential.

2. Despite many new contractors being entrepreneurs who are motivated to run a contracting business, they do not have the business management knowledge and skills, such as director capacity, cash flow management, preparation of tenders and managing contracts, to profitably manage their businesses and, possibly, expand the businesses.

3. Changes in traffic loads after upgrading a rural road which provides an alternative to a low quality district road for through traffic need to be assessed at the design stage to ensure the planned rehabilitation is appropriate to the probable traffic load.