

► ILO's Employment-Intensive Investments in Mali



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Project Brief: Enhancing resilience and social cohesion- inclusive livelihoods and jobs through roads, soil conservation in peri-urban Bamako
(Implementation period: 24 March 2025 – 23 March 2026)

Key points

- With funding from the Government of Japan, the ILO implemented an Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) project in peri-urban Bamako to, demonstrate its approach for creating decent jobs, improving access to essential services through road rehabilitation, and strengthening social cohesion between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities.
- A total of 350 meters of roads were paved and 135 meters reinforced using a Japanese STEIN soil-stabilization technology, which enhances durability and can be mixed with local resources, demonstrating EIIP approaches and benefiting approximately 5,000 indirect beneficiaries from surrounding communities.
- The project generated 5,764 workdays and employed 120 unskilled workers (32% women, 68% men) from IDPs and host communities through labour-intensive road works combined with technical training delivered by the Senou Vocational Training Centre and awareness sessions on occupational safety and health (OSH), conflict prevention and resolution, gender equality, and decent work principles.
- To support long-term resilience, institutional capacity was strengthened through training for local authorities, social partners, and local enterprises on EIIP approaches, labour standards, and technical supervision, enabling quality employment.

Context

The peri-urban areas of Bamako face increasing social and economic pressure due to displacement, unemployment, and limited access to basic infrastructure. IDPs and host communities often compete for scarce livelihood opportunities, increasing the risk of tension and instability. Poor road conditions, soil erosion, and limited municipal maintenance capacity restrict access to markets, schools, and health services while limiting job opportunities for vulnerable groups, particularly youth and women. The project demonstrated an approach for addressing these challenges through integrating employment-intensive infrastructure works using Japanese STEIN soil-stabilization technology, skills development, and institutional capacity strengthening. The intervention aligned with long-term national employment and urban development priorities and enhanced social cohesion between IDPs and host communities and presented a model that can/will/should be adopted by the Ministry of Employment as a basis for expanding EIIP approaches at national level.

Impact on the world of work

Employment, income and local economies

The EIIP intervention generated short-term employment opportunities for vulnerable youth and women from both IDP and host communities, thereby injecting income directly into the local economy. A total of 120 young unskilled people and women—comprising 60 IDPs and 60 members of host communities including 2 people with disabilities—gained paid professional experience combined with skills-development opportunities. In all, the works created 5,764 workdays, resulting in 13,03 million XOF being distributed directly to vulnerable households. In addition, nearly 100 million XOF was injected into the local economy through contracts awarded to small and medium-sized enterprises, which also generated indirect employment. The improved roads have further enhanced access to markets, services and transport for thousands of residents in Commune VI of Bamako.



Women carrying out road works, ZNRY, Bamako, Mali, EIIP Project, March 2026. © ILO



Road improvement works, ZNRY, Bamako, Mali, EIIP Project, March 2026. © ILO

Skills, employability and enterprise development

A comprehensive skills development component was integrated into the project for workers, local authorities, and enterprises. All workers received training in stone extraction, cutting, and paving at the Senou Vocational Training Centre, combining theoretical and practical sessions (220 hours per participant). Additional modules



Practical training as part of the chantier école, CFP Sénou, Bamako, Mali, EIIP Project, December 2025. © ILO

addressed income management, gender equality, hygiene, worksite safety, and related topics. Training also strengthened the capacity of public institutions, municipal authorities and local communities to ensure ownership, sustainability, and the long-term impact of the project. Training modules were developed in collaboration with 8 TVET institutions, with the Senou Vocational Training Centre playing a leading role.

A total of 30 tripartite representatives received training on EIIP approaches, while 10 SMEs and 6 consulting firms were trained on technical standards, procurement, safety, and the use of STEIN technology. 14 municipal agents also received training on infrastructure planning, maintenance, and EIIP principles.



Theoretical training as part of the chantier école, CFP Sénou, Bamako, Mali, EIIP Project, November 2025. © ILO

Impact on ILO constituents

Government and public institutions

The project successfully demonstrated the feasibility of EIIP approaches in peri-urban areas of Bamako. Building on these positive results, the Ministry of Employment expressed its commitment to replicate the initiative at the national level, under the concept *Mon Quartier, Mon HIMO* ("My Neighbourhood, My EIIP"), formalize a National EIIP Programme, and expand EIIP approaches to urban areas demonstrating strong national ownership. Furthermore, by developing the capacity of 12 national and 8 local institutions to plan, implement, and supervise employment-intensive infrastructure works that ensure compliance with technical and labour standards, the project contributed to stronger governance of public investment and employment policies. A joint mission was conducted on the worksite to assess the operationalization of decent work principles. Both national and local institutions are represented in the project's National Technical Committee. Coordination between national and municipal authorities was also reinforced, and institutional conditions were established for the sustainable maintenance of rehabilitated roads.

Employers and local enterprises

The project strengthened the capacity of local enterprises (10 SMEs and 6 consulting firms) to participate in labour-intensive infrastructure works, supporting the development of a more inclusive and competitive local construction sector in the long term. In addition, 9 enterprises that received on-site coaching improved their readiness to participate in future infrastructure projects using labour-based methods. The adoption of a national EIIP programme would create further opportunities for local enterprises around Bamako and other urban areas. The project also invited eight local companies to receive training on road maintenance using the Japanese STEIN technology

Workers' organizations and communities

The project promoted inclusion, social dialogue, and community participation, ensuring that both IDPs and host communities benefited from the intervention. Workers were selected through transparent criteria developed with local authorities, social services, and community representatives. Communities participated in identifying roads to be rehabilitated and in developing maintenance arrangements, strengthening local ownership. The community-level maintenance mechanisms established under the project facilitates continued cooperation between residents, local authorities, and technical services.

Through these actions, the project created short-term employment while strengthening the participation of workers, communities, and social partners in local decision-making, in line with the principles of social dialogue and decent work.



Final workshop to present the results of the EIIP Project, Bamako, Mali, March 2026. © ILO



Workshop on promoting decent work for municipalities and vocational training centres (CFPs), Bamako, Mali, March 2026. © ILO

ILO support

ILO support to Mali under this project combined institutional capacity-building to promote job creation, social cohesion, and sustainable urban development, technical support on the implementation of employment-intensive works, skills development, in vulnerable peri-urban areas of Bamako. This strengthened both local and national capacity to develop and implement inclusive public works programmes in the future.

At the core of the intervention was demonstrating how quality employment opportunities for vulnerable groups can be created through road rehabilitation and soil erosion control using local resources. The rehabilitated road sections improved access to markets and essential services, contributing to the long-term economic and social development



Workers carrying out urban road improvement works using STEIN in Bamako, Mali, EIIP Project, March 2026. © ILO

of communities. A second pillar focused on skills development through close cooperation with TVET institutions, which delivered certified training modules on labour-intensive construction methods. New training modules were developed to integrate practical skills into the TVET system, laying the ground for future EIIP interventions. The project also placed strong emphasis on institutional capacity building, thereby strengthening the capacity of ministries, municipal authorities, enterprises, and community actors to design, implement, and sustain labour-based infrastructure works. Technical support contributed to coordination mechanisms, feasibility studies, and supervision of works in line with EIIP approaches, technical standards, and decent work principles.

The use of appropriate technology was promoted through the introduction of Japanese STEIN soil-stabilization technology, chosen for its strong durability and recycling-based approach that lowers costs and reduces waste by using existing materials and local resources. It was applied to a pilot road section and combined with training for workers, engineers, and local enterprises. This experience can be replicated in future projects as a climate-resilient and cost-effective solution. In addition to technical training, the project delivered awareness sessions on OSH, gender equality, gender-based violence, conflict prevention and resolution, and income management, supporting decent work conditions, social inclusion, and peaceful coexistence between IDPs and host communities. Through this integrated package, the ILO support contributed not only to the successful completion of the intervention, but also to the longer-term objective of establishing EIIP approaches as a sustainable tool for decent job creation and local development in Mali.

International Labour Standards Considerations

All project activities were implemented in line with international labour standards, ensuring safe, fair, and inclusive employment opportunities. Throughout the implementation, workers and partners were sensitised on decent work principles through awareness raising and tailored trainings. Continuous technical supervision and the involvement of public authorities helped ensure that labour standards were respected throughout implementation, demonstrating how EIIP approaches can promote both infrastructure development and decent work.

Resource strategy and needs

The project showcased that EIIP approaches can effectively improve critical public assets while creating employment and strengthening local capacity in vulnerable communities. The combination of labour-based works, vocational training, and institutional support provided a model that can be replicated in other communes and regions. Further investment is needed to expand these approaches, continue strengthening institutional capacity, and integrate the training modules developed under the project into wider vocational training system. Additional investment would also allow the continued use of appropriate technologies and ensure sustainable maintenance of rehabilitated roads. The positive results have encouraged national authorities to consider scaling up employment-intensive programmes in future public works initiatives, contributing to socio-economic development through decent work.

Partnerships and coordination

The project was funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by the ILO, with the Ministry of Employment providing overall leadership and chairing the project's multi-stakeholder technical committee. Close cooperation with government institutions, including the Ministry of Health and Social Development, TVET institutions, the National Youth Employment Agency, local authorities, UNHCR, as well as local enterprises enabled the effective and coordinated implementation. The Senou Vocational Training Centre delivered technical training, while local authorities and communities participated in the identification of sites and contributed to their implementation and maintenance. The contribution of the Government and people of Japan was highlighted throughout implementation through official events, communication materials, and site signage, including the participation of the Ambassador of Japan in official project events.



Visit to the EIIP project site by the Minister of Employment, the Ambassador of Japan to Mali, and the ILO Country Director for Abidjan, Bamako, Mali, 5 March 2026. © ILO

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