# 5

# Employment-Intensive Investment Programmes (EIIP)

Employment intensive investment programme (EIIP) focus on the creation of short- and medium-term employment opportunities in infrastructure development, while supporting improved community assets and quality of life. Such programmes (EIIPs) provide a source of immediate income, alongside an opportunity to learn and apply skills. In contexts of forced displacement, a large inflow of displaced people can place stress on infrastructure and stimulate a demand for jobs that outpaces the labour market's capacity to supply them. In such instances, labour-intensive methods can be introduced as a means to maximize job creation at the local level. The method relies on local resources, including building materials, workers, contractors and suppliers, thus providing an injection of finance into the local economy. Ultimately, the methodology aims to build the capacity of national and local stakeholders to employ an EIIP approach, serve as a tool to stimulate immediate job creation and promote local economic development.

Under PROSPECTS, programme teams operationalized EIIP to address local challenges, including environmental resilience, skills gaps and weak value chains. EIIPs provided tangible outputs in the forms of improved infrastructure, employment opportunities and income. Refugees were engaged as EIIP workers but also as worker representatives and contractors. Local contractors in refugee-hosting areas were trained in the EIIP approach and invited to participate in competitive bidding processes, which also helped the contractors grow as local businesses. Interventions were coordinated with other areas of programming that supported EIIP workers on the path to longer-term employment, including business development and employment services.

## 5.1 Description and key approaches

An analysis of EIIP interventions in Iraq, Kenya, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Uganda and Sudan revealed several common approaches. The first was the use of EIIP as a mechanism to address local infrastructure needs in refugee-hosting areas. This was the case for green-works programmes developed in Iraq and the reconstruction of health and water facilities in Sudan. PROSPECTS teams worked to raise awareness among local officials, contractors and workers of the EIIP approach, and set up consultative mechanisms to identify local infrastructure needs and the related job-creation potential. A second common approach was to position EIIP interventions as opportunities for the practical application of skills gained under Pillar 1 programming.[35] This was done as part of a work-based learning intervention in Iraq, integrated skills and employment services for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) clients in Uganda, and work to expand technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in refugee-hosting areas in Kenya and Ethiopia, which helped improve the physical infrastructure of TVET training facilities, while also incorporating market-relevant skills training. In some cases, EIIP was also incorporated as part of wider value-chain development work. This helped bolster equipment and facilities needed for production and sales, while also supporting the development of skills to construct and maintain the infrastructure.

As case studies, the use of EIIP in Ethiopia's dairy value chain offers insight into how EIIP fits within a larger ecosystem of employment support and can add value in local markets. In Iraq, digital methods of monitoring EIIP activities with young engineers demonstrates how technology can be used to provide real-time monitoring data, while also helping young people learn and apply digital skills in the context of EIIP.

### 1. EIIP as a means to build community resilience

In the cases described as a means to build community resilience, EIIP was used to address infrastructure needs and linked to short- and medium-term job creation for both refugees and members of the host community. While these objectives were apparent in other EIIP approaches too, these examples are highlighted because they were not designed to link to other programme areas. This reflects the evolution of PROSPECTS programming and EIIP, where, in the first two years of PROSPECTS, individual areas of work, such as business development, skills and EIIP, were still developing and not yet integrated as part

35 PROSPECTS Pillar 1 refers to quality education and training.

of a wider ecosystem of support. The approaches covered later in this chapter illustrate how EIIP provided a foundation for such an ecosystem, creating physical infrastructure for employment, skills development and business development services. All the cases presented in this chapter started with a needs analysis and involved engaging local communities in identifying work sites, recruiting workers, training contractors and monitoring project sites.

In Sudan, an EIIP approach was applied in 2021 and 2022 to construct and rehabilitate water and health facilities. From the outset, the objective of the EIIP was that the work would be taken over by the local communities. PROSPECTS engaged district level representatives from the Ministries of Infrastructure and Health, the State Water Provision Authority and the Humanitarian Affairs Committee. It also assembled Local Economic Development Committees (LEDCs), which were responsible for oversight and guidance across the wider PROSPECTS programme and played a role in monitoring EIIP project sites. Because local contractors lacked experience in implementing EIIPs, efforts were also made to build their capacities. The PROSPECTS team used pilot contracts with ten local contractors, which gave the latter experience in preparing and implementing a labour-intensive approach, overseen and guided by the ILO's EIIP technical officer. The programme also created an occupational safety and health (OSH) facilitator position on project sites, intended to reinforce the application of decent-work principles.

The EIIP intervention targeted localities in East Darfur and West Kordofan and responded to the lack of nearby health and water facilities for the communities there. In the case of West Kordofan, people were using the same water source for both livestock and domestic needs, introducing cross-contamination and health risks. The interventions constructed water points for livestock and household use, while also installing a solar system to pump water, thereby reducing the time and effort required to obtain water. A separate livestock water point was added in light of the communities' reliance on livestock-rearing as a main source of income in an otherwise arid landscape. The needs analysis also informed the rehabilitation of two health facilities in the El Nimir refugee camp to address increased patient intake during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional rooms were added to accommodate patients who needed to be isolated. Plans to repurpose the rooms as storage and laboratory space were also made but interrupted by the conflict that erupted in 2023.[36]

The aim of the approach in Sudan was primarily to address infrastructure and employment needs but also to build up local capacity to adopt an EIIP approach in the future. It developed the skills of workers, contractors and district-level representatives through the pilot, with the intention of using these to implement bigger infrastructure projects. However, this was interrupted by conflict linked to the civil war in 2023.[37]

In Iraq, based on consultations with governorate representatives and communities, PROSPECTS identified green works as a focus for EIIP, targeting the improvement of irrigation systems for local farmers, solid-waste and recycling mechanisms, and afforestation interventions in the Dohuk governorate. This was the first time leaders from the municipality in Dohuk had been exposed to EIIP. Dohuk is known as the breadbasket of Iraq and serves as one of the main refugee-hosting areas in the country. Given the area's large supply of unskilled and semi-skilled labour and moderately sized agriculture sector, the PROSPECTS team used EIIP to create jobs close to where refugees and IDPs were located, while building local capacity to adopt an EIIP approach in the future. This introduced cost-effective solutions to create and maintain green works that were close to refugee camps. These included fixing damaged irrigation channels and constructing new ones to increase local farmers' access to irrigation water, sorting waste at source for compost production and planting trees that did not require significant water to thrive. The composting method also led to higher-quality fertilizers. As a knock-on effect, the project supported the governorate and partners to package, market and sell the compost, introducing a revenue source associated with EIIP. This constituted an early link to another area of programming, business development, which was exploited in subsequent EIIP interventions in the country.

36 In April 2023, civil conflict began, leading to the displacement of more than 8.2 million Sudanese. The project sites where the ILO was engaged were no longer accessible, and the programme was forced to relocate to Port Sudan.

37 As a result of the conflict, the ILO office in Khartoum was closed and project staff were temporarily relocated to Cairo and Addis Ababa. The ILO subsequently opened an office in Port Sudan.

### ▶ Engaging trades unions in EIIPs in Iraq

The approach taken in Iraq also involved trades-union participation, through the creation of a technical committee to oversee and guide the EIIPs. The direct involvement of the trades unions saw them take on the role of solving issues to do with decent work, in partnership with the government. The leadership role of the unions positioned the ILO as a convenor, enhancing the authority of the social partners. The unions also played a role in advising EIIP workers themselves and supported the election of worker representatives on project sites. The elected representatives pushed for the development of a recommended wages list for 20 occupations in the construction sector. A recommended wages list was drawn up jointly by the construction workers' union and contractors' association in Dohuk, providing a positive example of local partners taking on responsibility and ownership. It also shows the potential for EIIP workers to take on greater responsibility as worker representatives and build cohesion by advocating collectively for a shared benefit, such as standardized wages. ■

## 2. EIIP as a means to address needs in crisis contexts

EIIP can serve as an immediate response mechanism in the aftermath of crisis. Experience in PROSPECTS countries shows how the method can be quickly operationalized, with built-in mechanisms to be able to adapt to and mitigate interruptions introduced by instability.

In Lebanon, EIIP was introduced as a rapid response mechanism to address the immediate aftermath of the Beirut blast in 2020.[38] While EIIP was not initially included in the PROSPECTS workplan in the country, the team was able to repurpose funds and support an existing ILO EIIP programme[39] in Lebanon to operationalize rubble removal and street-clearing in the days following the blast. Workers were largely refugee and host community youth, who channelled their energy into helping the community recover from the unforeseen crisis. It was particularly advantageous to be able to use the footprint of the other ILO programme, including staff who were already in place with the necessary technical expertise to carry out the EIIP work at community level. In implementation, Syrian refugee youth were particularly eager to contribute as a sign of solidarity with their host community. In this case, the repurposing of funds to support the EIIP response also demonstrated the agility of both the ILO and the donor (the Netherlands), who were both willing to expedite approval processes to serve a clear and immediate need.

In Sudan and Iraq, the volatile contexts in both countries prompted PROSPECTS to introduce innovative means to monitor the EIIPs from a distance, when physical access to sites was interrupted because of security and environmental factors. In Sudan, state-led LEDCs were established in East Darfur and West Kordofan as part of the wider PROSPECTS programme advisory structure. These committees helped engage state-level representatives in the prioritization and design of EIIP interventions. They also helped navigate and speed up government approval processes. This was particularly useful in terms of obtaining building permissions in more remote areas. During the rainy season, when project sites became inaccessible, LEDCs also enabled PROSPECTS to monitor progress of EIIP worksites and adherence to regulations stipulated by the Ministry of Infrastructure. The LEDC members continued their support for PROSPECTS during the subsequent outbreak of conflict and the closure of roads in 2023. Even during the conflict, they continued to engage teams at each site to ensure the continuation of essential water and health services that PROSPECTS had helped rehabilitate.

38 On 4 August 2020, a large explosion at the Port of Beirut devastated the capital, leaving more than 200 dead and 7,000 injured. The cost of the infrastructure damage amounted to more than US$15 billion.

39 Employment-Intensive Infrastructure in Lebanon, financed by the German Government through the KfW Development Bank (2017–2025).

### ▶ The role of Local Economic Development Committees (LEDCs) in localizing EIIP in Sudan

As a mechanism to localize its approach to EIIP in Sudan, the PROSPECTS team set up LEDCs at state level in East Darfur (Assalaya) and West Kordofan (Keilak and Muglad). These included representatives from state-level ministries, employers' and workers' organizations, local financial institutions and vocational training centres. The main objective of the LEDCs was to transfer relevant knowledge and skills for ensuring coordinated and locally appropriate interventions to support rural livelihoods under PROSPECTS. Three LEDCs were formed and underwent a period of training. They convened on a quarterly basis and submitted action plans for coordinated information-sharing and exchange. The action plans commonly involved access to remote field locations, monitoring and providing feedback on work progress, and developing evidence-based recommendations to strengthen programming. These were reviewed by the PROSPECTS team and used to determine support costs that the LEDCs would require. The plans, and associated capacity-building for LEDC members, helped the programme localize its operations. In terms of EIIP, this served to support the identification of relevant infrastructure work and localized monitoring and oversight functions. The LEDCs continued to meet in the early phases of the resurgent conflict, and helped the ILO maintain PROSPECTS even as access to project sites was interrupted for PROSPECTS staff. ■

In Iraq, young people played a role in carrying out and monitoring EIIPs in Mosul, which had experienced infrastructure damage as a result of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Da'esh, invasion in 2018. Together with UNICEF, PROSPECTS identified vocational training and youth centres in need of rehabilitation, for which an EIIP approach could be adopted. Because of security restrictions that made travel for UN staff more complicated, the PROSPECTS team had to come up with innovative ways to monitor and report on progress remotely using digital monitoring tools. Once developed, these tools supported EIIP oversight functions. The EIIP project sites in Mosul decided to replicate the model employed by the ILO in Dohuk of using young engineers who had received technical training in EIIP approaches as EIIP site monitors. Young engineers from refugee and host community backgrounds participated in introductory life-skills training provided by UNICEF, then moved on to classroom training on EIIP, comprising modules on labour-based approaches, project management, OSH, contracting and decent work. The young engineers then conducted regular inspection visits to EIIP worksites and reported on infrastructure development and working conditions using the digital monitoring tool (see box below).

### ▶ Digital methods of monitoring EIIP activities in Iraq

In Iraq, a simplified digital monitoring tool was introduced and used by young engineers to carry out monitoring and reporting on EIIP sites. The tool was designed to ensure adherence to quality-of-work standards, alignment with environmental and social safeguards, and compliance with safety standards across project sites, while also introducing a technology that would allow young people to gain work experience using digital skills. Both project sites in Dohuk and Mosul had large universities with engineering departments, which produced a large pool of graduates seeking practical work experience. To capitalize on the talent pool and introduce monitoring tools that captured information in real time, survey information was uploaded to KoboToolbox – a data collection, management and visualization platform used globally for research and social good, which was already being used by other humanitarian and development actors in the area. This included technical aspects to measure the project's implementation, as well as social and environmental elements. The tool was first introduced on green work sites in the Kurdistan region, with young engineers from the University of Dohuk. After a successful rollout on project sites in Dohuk, it was rolled out in Mosul. Here, it proved particularly useful for continuous monitoring when PROSPECTS staff could not access project sites, owing to security requirements that made travel more costly and time-intensive. The tool is now used for all EIIPs across Iraq and PROSPECTS is looking at ways to institutionalize it in governmental public works programmes. ■

## 3. EIIP as a means to develop skills

EIIP was also positioned as an opportunity for refugee and host community members to develop and apply skills. While EIIPs provide workers with skills to carry out infrastructure and construction-related work on project sites, under PROSPECTS, they were additionally linked to more extended skills development programmes, such as those on masonry, paving, cobblestone production and maintenance. EIIPs served as a practical component of theoretical, classroom-based training in Iraq, and as part of work to expand TVET training in refugee-hosting areas in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya.

In both Kenya and Ethiopia, cobblestone technology was introduced to install and repair roads, using an EIIP approach. In both cases, this was linked to work to develop TVET courses in cobblestone paving, maintenance and related works as part of efforts to expand vocational training in refugee-hosting areas. In Kenya, the PROSPECTS team partnered with the government of Turkana County to produce and install cobblestones. The paving technology was introduced as a means to improve the durability of local roads and stimulate demand for the production of cobblestones that could be used at county level and for export. The team partnered with the Lodwar Vocational Training Centre and Department of Public Works to establish a cobblestone production training course, targeting youth in the county. This focused on the development of skills in paving and chiselling and helped develop local capacity to continue to install and maintain the labour-intensive technology. Working with the public vocational training centre at county level helped ensure the training would remain accessible in the long term.

In the first rollout of the programme, 50 young people were trained in paving. These same trainees were also supported in forming a workers' cooperative, so that they could collectively manage the work. In addition, 150 young people were trained in chiselling cobblestone, so that they could produce cobblestone to repave the local Lodwar fresh produce market.[40] This demonstrates how public TVET courses supported the development of a local skill base for infrastructure development and maintenance.

In Ethiopia, the PROSPECTS team supported an initiative to establish a satellite TVET training centre in the district of Kebribeyah, in Somali Regional State. The satellite centre was the country's first public TVET training facility in a refugee-hosting area. As a result, it was able to create jobs for refugees and host community members during the construction of the centre itself, while also providing vocational training to refugee and host community students who would otherwise have to travel long distances for TVET training (the closest public vocational training college was 55 kilometres away, in the regional capital, Jigjiga).

Consultations were organized with local stakeholders in Kebribeyah to promote buy-in and ownership, and to provide guidance on relevant, in-demand occupations, including finishing works in construction, general metal fabrication and aluminium works, electrical installation, plumbing and sanitary installation, irrigation technology and cobblestone laying. Trainers from Jigjiga Polytechnic College were then trained as trainers to deliver courses in the satellite centre. As a component of the cobblestone course, graduates were awarded a trial contract to construct a 500-metre cobblestone road as a demonstration site for EIIP in Kebribeyah. Similar to the case in Kenya, this supported the upskilling of local refugee and host community labour, using a labour-based approach.

In Iraq, PROSPECTS also focused on EIIP to improve the physical infrastructure of TVET centres, while working to incorporate work-based learning approaches within the centres themselves. The programme team introduced an EIIP approach to rehabilitate Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs TVET centres in Dohuk and Nineveh. EIIP work provided an opportunity for the practical application of skills for TVET students on solar panel installation, painting, plastering, gardening and masonry. Selected candidates first underwent life-skills training facilitated by UNICEF and EIIP theoretical training supported by the ILO, followed by practical rehabilitation of the TVET centres themselves. Vocational trainers from the Ministry played a supervisory role and accompanied the students during the practical EIIP work.

40 A total of 2,400 square metres of road was paved at the Lodwar fresh produce market, contributing to the development of local infrastructure. Private premises across Lodwar town were also paved.

In Uganda, the ILO and UNHCR joined forces to address the limited community services, including vocational training and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), available inside the Nakivale and Rhino refugee settlements. The two organizations used the EIIP approach to construct three community centres, thereby generating work and income for refugees living in the settlements. They also incorporated MHPSS counselling, employment and skills development services within the centres themselves. As part of the construction work,13 local contractors – including two refugee-run construction businesses – from Isingiro, Arua, Madi-Okollo and Terego were trained in an EIIP approach, as a first step in building a pool of locally qualified contractors. In partnership with the Omugo Vocational Institute and Nakivale Vocational Institute, PROSPECTS used the community centres to facilitate, on a trial basis, skills recognition processes for 114 former MHPSS clients.

## 4. EIIP as a means to support the value chain

EIIP was used in Kenya and Ethiopia to support the development of value chains in rural refugee-hosting areas, targeting infrastructure development to enhance productivity and value-chain efficiency. The capacities of local contractors along the value chains were also built to enable them to adopt an EIIP approach. In Kenya, EIIP was used to strengthen infrastructure in the camel-milk value chain by restoring water systems. In Ethiopia, detention ponds for cattle were built as part of the dairy value chain.

Both interventions addressed infrastructure weaknesses around water sources for households and livestock. Livestock-rearing serves as an important livelihood option for both refugees and members of the host communities in the two countries. In arid regions, a reliable source of water is a key determinant of milk production. Both interventions stemmed from an integrated market-systems analysis, which tried to understand how and why markets operated the way they did, and why they might not serve the needs of refugees and members of the host community equally. Based on the analysis in Kenya, non-functional water pumps and dams were identified as bottlenecks impacting both refugee and host community camel-herders.[41] The EIIPs were designed to rehabilitate existing water sources and to help the communities build the necessary knowledge and skills to maintain the infrastructure. This included training in basic maintenance of community water infrastructure and management of community water points, including dams, boreholes and pumping systems. In Ethiopia, the assessment identified access to water during the dry season as one of the critical bottlenecks in milk production. Provision of a sustainable water supply would help overcome the effects of prolonged drought in the region. The programme involved the construction of two detention ponds, featuring cattle troughs and fencing, by 40 local workers and a trained mason. One officer from the Bureau of Pastoralist Development was appointed to provide technical and logistical support at each pond, and to serve as a community resource for the ongoing maintenance of the ponds after the EIIP work was complete. PROSPECTS collaborated with the Bureau of Pastoralist Development and local administrators on these appointments, to gain buy-in and support for the role in the long term.

PROSPECTS in Kenya also mobilized local actors to oversee and lead the EIIP work. Village committees were established to manage the rehabilitated water sources – primarily to coordinate community use and avoid over-use of the shared water resources. The committees introduced a small fee per animal that used the water source, with the monies received used to pay for maintenance. The committees were also responsible for overseeing the rehabilitated dams – which were cleared of vegetation during this intervention in partnership with the county government. The committees led follow-up work to fence off the dams for more effective management and to prevent damage to the banks by grazing animals.

41 The camel-milk value chain was prioritized in the Garissa County Integrated Development Plan and is the biggest employer of women in Garissa and a contributor to good nutrition and food security in the county.


## ▶The dairy value chain in Ethiopia

In 2019, in the Fanfan Zone of the Somali Regional State and Jigjiga, PROSPECTS extended the EIIP approach followed as part of a wider value-chain development programme. This extended approach focused on enhancing the livelihoods and added value of livestock-rearing and milk production. After assessing challenges and bottlenecks in the value chain, animal health and milk productivity were identified as areas of focus. A key issue within that was water access during dry seasons, which is a key determinant of both the quality and quantity of milk produced.

Because the EIIP approach was new in these areas, the intervention included a period of capacity-building and awareness-raising around the EIIP approach, involving district-level officials, private sector contractors and workers. PROSPECTS collaborated with the Bureau of Pastoralist Development and local administrators on such issues as land acquisition, community mobilization and handover to the local community at the end of the EIIP. The Bureau was also overseeing work as part of the wider value-chain development programme and so could advise based on a wider objective to develop the market.

To address the issue of water scarcity in dry seasons, two detention ponds were constructed using *do-nou* technology, a Japanese method that uses gunny bags filled with sand or soil and compacted manually to level and reinforce dirt roads. This is a durable, yet simple technology, the materials for which can be sourced locally. Additional facilities included water points and cattle troughs. Two technicians were also trained as community resource personnel, to provide support and maintenance after the construction ended.

To address productivity bottlenecks the PROSPECTS team and the Bureau of Pastoralist Development jointly prioritized cooperative development, the construction and enhancement of milk-storage facilities, and improvements to road infrastructure. A milk collection and cooling facility was constructed so that milk would have a longer shelf life and be preserved during transport to nearby markets. Water sources were constructed so that livestock would have water all year round in the arid climate,[a] while the pooling and storage facilities prolonged the shelf life and hygiene of the milk.

The cooling facility was designed according to national standards and requirements set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. It was constructed by local contractors from the Somali Regional State, who, in turn, employed refugee and host community members from the surrounding area. In all, 134 community members worked on the EIIP construction, while approximately 585 individuals and approximately 5,080 animals had access to the improved facilities. ■

a ILO PROSPECTS, 2022, Progress report, 1 March 2021 - 28 February 2022. From ILO internal PROSPECTS progress reports. ILO: Geneva.

# 5.2 Narrative and lessons learned

## Operational lessons learned

Insight gathered from EIIP in PROSPECTS countries highlights the complex contexts in which these programmes took place but also the opportunity to use EIIP as part of a larger intervention model. Lessons were learned in terms of navigating access to project sites, communicating with workers from different communities and promoting social cohesion. In addition, better understanding was developed of institutionalizing EIIP approaches and mechanisms to support long-term employment for EIIP workers.

### Access to project sites

Because EIIP addresses infrastructure needs, it is relevant to crisis response situations and in locations where there is instability. In Sudan and Iraq, EIIPs were implemented in areas that had been impacted by both climate change and conflict. In Sudan, work was conducted in remote areas that were difficult to reach during rainy season and, later, because of travel complications due to the reignition of civil war. In Iraq, EIIP was carried out in an area that experienced conflict during the 2018 Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) invasion. As a result, the EIIP project sites entailed restrictions on access for security reasons. This meant that ILO staff had to adhere to security protocol when travelling, which took time and coordination with other UN partners (UNAMI, UNHCR, etc.). Being able to access project sites consistently was important to monitor progress and compliance with building standards. In the case of Iraq, digital monitoring tools were used by local university students to collect real-time data (see case study on page 69). In Sudan, Local Economic Development Committees were able to take on the role of monitoring and reporting when climate variables and conflict interrupted access. These examples illustrate the importance of creating local partnerships and building capacity to localize monitoring and reporting functions.

### Building the capacity of refugee and host community contractors

Local contractors are both workers and business owners. PROSPECTS teams invested in building the capacity of contractors to be able to serve as local business leaders and points of contact for current and future EIIP and related contracting. While contractors were generally members of the host community, in Uganda, the project team engaged refugee-owned construction companies, as part of EIIP plans to construct community centres to serve MHPSS clients in the Rhino and Nakivale refugee settlements. The refugee-owned businesses participated in training alongside host community contractors, and all participants were involved in the subsequent competitive bidding process for the EIIP contract. While the refugee-run businesses were ultimately not successful in this process, the engagement of refugee businesses in EIIP training and bidding processes shows the potential to work with refugees not only as workers but also as contractors. In Ethiopia, at the time of drafting this document, 16 graduates from a technical vocational course on cobblestone paving were in the process of forming a cooperative with a view to being issued a trial contract to complete a 500-metre cobblestone road in Kebribeyah. Contracting through cooperatives, rather than private businesses, it connected the cooperative to the Reginal Cooperative Bureau, supported their capacity to serve as a subcontractor for EIIP and public works. More targeted and intensive capacity-building may allow refugees to participate in EIIPs as contractors on a regular basis. The feasibility of doing so will depend on the national frameworks and processes in place for business registration and ownership.

## Distinguishing EIIPs from traditional cash-for-work programmes

Cash-for-work programmes are common in the countries in which PROSPECTS operates. The idea of short-term work on infrastructure projects in exchange for cash is therefore likely to be familiar to both refugees and host community members. Clearly communicating what EIIP is, and how it differs from traditional cash-for-work approaches, is important to differentiate aspects related to decent work, local economic development and community participation. EIIPs are a form of short-term, formal work, for which a work permit and compliance with social-security and formal-work conditions are required. Hence, project teams had to explain these processes and procedures. For refugee workers, EIIP work may be the first time they have participated in the formal labour market. Experience in various countries has shown that if workers are not duly informed of the requirements that come with an EIIP work contract, they are not able to meaningfully participate in formal employment after the EIIP ends. On an EIIP in Jordan, for example, there was a substantial number of inactive refugee social-security subscribers who were registered in the social security system as part of a cash-for-work project but did not realize this, so they failed to earn sufficient income to make contributions after the EIIP ended. In PROSPECTS countries, explanations of such issues were provided as part of wider efforts to raise the awareness of EIIP workers regarding labour rights and decent-work principles, including OSH. Establishing communication channels with the relevant government ministry and social security institutions can also help direct questions and follow-up.

## Integrating an EIIP approach into the operations of PROSPECTS partners

In working with PROSPECTS partners on programming that involved an EIIP component, the ILO invested in building awareness among those partners about EIIP. In Ethiopia, an awareness-raising session with UNICEF was organized to include the EIIP strategy in UNICEF school construction and expansion projects. The session involved contractors employed by UNICEF. Even though these projects had not yet started, it was recognized that the consultation was encouraging and laid a path for collaboration and implementation on future school construction projects. In Uganda, the PROSPECTS team trained UNHCR personnel on an EIIP approach and promoted the mainstreaming of EIIP principles in the UNHCR's procurement from local building contractors. Although differences between the organizations' procurement processes ultimately made this mainstreaming difficult, a common understanding of the approach and benefits was established.

Establishing common understanding with partners is essential to joint work. In Iraq, UNICEF had to understand what EIIP entailed, so that it could make informed referrals of young people to EIIP work, particularly young engineers, and avoid raising the expectations of those who did not meet the required profile (capacity to perform manual labour, consistent availability during working hours). Both the ILO and UNICEF had to be clear in communicating with young people that the work was short-term in nature and not akin to long-term employment.

## Standardizing procedures

As noted above, in PROSPECTS countries, cash-for-work programmes are run by various humanitarian and development actors, each of whom have their own specific terms and conditions for the work, regarding the likes of daily pay, number of working hours and duration of the work. When different programmes are implemented in the same locality, this can introduce competition between projects, with workers looking for opportunities that provide the best value to them. When government-run public works programmes are added to the mix, this can serve to disincentivize participation in national, government-run programmes that are not be able to offer the same pay or duration of work. There are also the questions of fair compensation and alignment with national labour legislation and international standards on working age, working hours and OSH. In Iraq, in order to facilitate some level of standardization and alignment, the PROSPECTS team created Standard Operating Procedures for EIIP. As an outcome of dialogue with UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, trades unions, industry associations and government representatives the Standard Operating Procedures drew up general guidelines on fair compensation and contracts. The dialogue and drafting processes were both led by the PROSPECTS country team, with additional support from other ILO EIIP programmes in Iraq.[42]

42 Including the project Support to Livelihoods Through Cultural Heritage Development, implemented by the ILO and UNESCO, with funding from the European Union.


## Social cohesion on project sites

EIIP brings members of communities together to work on shared infrastructure. Because the work is physical and requires collective effort to perform, the level of interaction between workers of different backgrounds working on the same project site is higher. In Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda and Iraq, all contracts required workers to be recruited from the nearby area, where there were both refugee and host community populations. In all contracts, the project teams specified that the EIIP workforce had to comprise a certain percentage of refugees and displaced people. In most instances, the host community already had some level of interaction with the refugee population they were working alongside, as they lived in proximity to one another. It is also noteworthy that, in PROSPECTS countries, the displacement situations were largely protracted, so working and interacting with members of different communities may have become normalized. Nevertheless, there were measures in place to facilitate a more cohesive working environment. Pay rates were set based on occupation and efforts were made to ensure both groups were represented at different levels. On EIIP project sites in Iraq, worker committees were mobilized to organize daily work and oversee the well-being of the workers. These committees featured representatives of both the refugee and host communities. Having such participatory platforms in place is a positive example of structures that can foster a greater sense of cohesion and encourage greater and more meaningful interactions.

## Facilitating long-term employment

One of the criticisms of EIIP is that the work it provides is short term. Hence, efforts have increased to situate participation in EIIP within a wider employment pathway, whether this be connected to relevant skills training, job referrals through employment services, or business development services. In Iraq, EIIP was a practical opportunity for trainees to apply their skills. EIIP workers were also registered in government employment services and had the opportunity to take part in the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training to support their ideas for business start-ups in construction and related industries. This approach goes beyond support through short-term employment, accompanying workers as they progress towards longer-term employment. Because EIIP is a localized process, supporting cohorts of EIIP workers through registration in employment services and other follow-up services is likely more feasible than it would be for larger cash-for-work or public works programmes.

## 5.3 Sustainability

The sustainability of EIIP can be determined according to two key variables. The first is the durability and ease of maintenance in the long term of the infrastructure provided. To this end, programmes invest in building the necessary knowledge, capacity and resources at community level to maintain the infrastructure independently and in the long term. The second is the positioning of the EIIP approach as part of national active labour market programmes, whether public works programmes or national employment programmes more generally. This can be facilitated by engaging relevant government departments in EIIP planning and implementation. The use of EIIP in public procurement processes, and the capacity of local contractors to bid in these, are part of this.

The work on rural roads with the Ethiopian Roads Administration (ERA) in Ethiopia and with the Garissa and Turkana county governments in Kenya is an example of how simple technologies were used to improve the durability and quality of public infrastructures. The simple technologies were also easier to maintain in the long term. The techniques that were applied, whether cobblestone or *do-nou*, relied on readily available and inexpensive inputs, in this case stones from riverbeds and gunny bags filled with sand. Regional bureaus of the ERA were trained in the labour-based approach, alongside road engineers from five of the main refugee-hosting regions, so that they were in a position to adopt the technology and labour-based approach independently. In addition, a consultative workshop involving policy-makers and directors was held in collaboration with the ERA to raise awareness among the relevant national institutions and line ministries of mainstreaming EIIP approaches in the public works implemented by the government, as well as to review/reflect on past performance and lessons learned regarding the adoption of EIIP. The workshop allowed key stakeholders to discuss how to improve the implementation capacities of federal and regional infrastructure institutions (by tailoring local practice to the ILO's EIIP strategies and approaches), thereby contributing to the creation of decent jobs for the urban and rural poor through the provision of priority infrastructure. In Kenya, a workshop was convened with technical staff of both county governments, including representatives of the Department of Roads and Public Works. This led to the subsequent adoption of an EIIP approach in national roads projects and reliance on local knowledge and capacity to oversee and implement them.

The infrastructure that is developed by EIIP projects requires government or local resources to maintain it over time. Budget can be set aside by government departments or local authorities for this purpose, but this would require the project to have planned for this and costed it out in advance. It is also worth noting that, in PROSPECTS countries, volatile political and financial systems may make the continuous provision of government resources less reliable. In Sudan, for instance, the water and health facilities constructed or rehabilitated were handed over to line departments, so that they could continue providing the services and technical support for maintenance. However, the reignition of the conflict in the country makes it unlikely that the provision of national resources would be made. Regarding ongoing maintenance through local resources, a good example is where the village committees in Kenya that manage water sources in the camel-milk value chain started collecting a small fee from users that went towards maintenance costs.

In terms of building capacities to be able to use the EIIP approach, workers, government departments and local contractors have all benefited. Contractors are also local business owners and, in this respect, can contribute to job creation. In Uganda, 18 contractors and construction business owners from both refugee and host communities were trained in an EIIP approach and invited to bid for a contract. In Ethiopia, two rounds of courses were introduced for contractors through the Jigjiga Polytechnic College, focusing on water, sanitation and building construction, as well as road rehabilitation and maintenance. This was also linked to work with the ERA, allowing contractors to understand the related public procurement processes. In Kenya, TVET training in the construction sector was tied to awarding graduates a certificate from the National Construction Authority, which meant they could be registered as contractors in the construction industry and thus be able to bid for tenders. In Sudan, small contracts were awarded to contractors who had participated in EIIP training. These contractors also received additional technical support and guidance.

In line with ILO's EIIP approach, PROSPECTS also tried, as a sustainability measure, to have EIIP included in public procurement processes and linked to public employment programmes or development plans. Unlike training for technical staff and contractors, this training focused on employment priorities set in national and local development plans. For example, in Kenya, in the Garissa County Integrated Development Plan, the camel-milk value chain was prioritized and provided an entry point for using EIIP to address related infrastructure weaknesses. In Ethiopia, PROSPECTS reviewed the draft National Roads Policy and recommended the inclusion of labour-based methods. In other instances, demonstration projects helped serve as proof of concept for including the EIIP approach in national and local strategies. In Iraq, in Dohuk, an EIIP approach was incorporated into public tenders for waste-sorting put out by the Directorate of Municipalities, after pilot green-works projects concluded.

## 5.4 Integration with other areas of work

The examples presented throughout this chapter point to several relevant links to other thematic areas. The most prominent link is to skills, as demonstrated by the work with the training arms of road and public works authorities. EIIP was also positioned to provide newly skilled trainees with additional work experience. In addition, programme teams used referral networks between activities to help EIIP workers and contractors start and expand their businesses. In work with other PROSPECTS partners, EIIP was applied to rehabilitate and construct community centres, youth centres and health services, while, in parallel, partners strengthened services provided within these, such as MHPSS and life-skills training.

Construction and environmental projects require contractors, engineers, artisans and unskilled labourers to have a wide range of skills. Therefore, the skills base within the local community needs to be determined, so that the necessary skills development programmes can be introduced to build the skills required for the project. For instance, in Ethiopia, there were enough road engineers and contractors in general but none specialized in bridge maintenance. Subsequent training was provided through the ERA to regional road bureaus and local authorities to improve their technical knowledge and experience in this area. In Iraq, a work-based learning model was developed, which featured a period of classroom training in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs TVET centres, accompanied by practical application in the rehabilitation of those same centres, using an EIIP approach. Similarly, in Ethiopia, skills training at Jigjiga Polytechnic College was followed by the awarding of a small trial contract to the trainees to install a 500-metre cobblestone road in Kebribeyah. In this instance, the trainees took steps to form a contractors' cooperative with support from the programme.

In Iraq, the EIIP intervention was also linked to work on business development. In this case, some EIIP workers were interested in starting their own construction or contracting business after completing the public work. PROSPECTS set up a referral process so that after the EIIP, participants could get information about different employment and enterprise opportunities, and how to avail of them. Indeed, one of the livelihood strategies that is enhanced through participation in EIIP is self-employment, whereby EIIP participants use the technical and vocational skills they learned to start small businesses in home repair and the like. Thus, a referral pathway to BDS tools such as SIYB training can be a valuable add-on, ensuring that skills acquired during the EIIP continue to be used to good effect and are not lost.

Integration with other aspects of ILO PROSPECTS work evident, notably skills, business development services (BDS) and TVET. In terms of skills, EIIP can be used as a continuation of training, providing practical experience to TVET graduates. This was the case in Iraq in Mosul, where engineers trained on UNICEF life skills were employed in the rehabilitation of youth centres. Young engineers - refugees and host community members - were trained in the EIIP approach and worked on the EIIP sites, providing engineering expertise and learning from the experience. In an innovative method to monitor work sites, the digital monitoring tool was used by those engineers on sites, but that was also a learning tool. Some of these young people stayed on to become supervisors of EIIP projects.

Finally, the work of PROSPECTS partners also had links to EIIP. In Iraq, UNICEF referred young engineers who had participated in its life-skills training to opportunities to serve as EIIP site monitors. UNICEF also worked to identify youth centres in need of rehabilitation for which an EIIP approach could be adopted. In Uganda, the project partnered with UNHCR to construct community centres, which also served as centres for MHPSS and employment services. PROSPECTS led on the construction side, using an EIIP approach, while UNHCR helped identify and refer refugee workers to work on the sites. At the same time, PROSPECTS worked to strengthen the employment services run out of the rehabilitated centres, while UNHCR did so for the MHPSS services.

## 5.5 Challenges

Challenges in EIIP projects relate to time and efficiency, cost and the localization approach, as well as the roles played by partners. An EIIP approach takes time, as it has a dual objective, that is, to improve local infrastructure and create jobs. While mechanized processes can save time, the aim of using a labour-based approach is to provide a maximum number of work days for members of the local community. Moreover, locally recruited workers are often new to the area of work, so they might not be highly efficient, particularly at the outset of the work. This is even more evident when EIIP sites are used to allow training-course participants to apply their skills in practice, as was the case in Iraq.

When EIIP work is performed in a sector or location where seasonality is a factor, time considerations and accounting for delays are also necessary. For instance, in Ethiopia, the construction of a storage facility for milk was completed after the milk production season had ended. This meant that the productivity gains of the storage facility could not be realized until the following season.

Delays in implementation are not solely due to worker efficiency. Because contracts are awarded locally, it can take time for contractors and local partners to submit technical and financial proposals that align with ILO requirements. The contracts may also have to go through government processes, which introduce further delays.

Delays allow time for the value of local currency and the price of construction materials to change. This has happened in Sudan and Ethiopia, which both experienced hyperinflation and devaluation of their currency. As a result, financial proposals had to be renegotiated. In Sudan, it took 12 months for the contract with the implementing partner to be approved. By that time, the price of building materials had skyrocketed, highlighting the importance of agility and speed when contracting locally.

The availability and quality of local materials can also introduce challenges. In more remote areas, local suppliers may not have the cash flow to provide the volume of building materials required by an EIIP. Sourcing materials from the closest urban or peri-urban area will increase costs. This could also cause delays or compromise build quality. While, sometimes, materials can be sourced locally without having to go through a supplier – such as the *do-nou* gunny bags in Ethiopia and cobblestone production in Ethiopia and Kenya – in other instances, materials will have to be brought into the locality and may also have to meet certain standards set by the government.

# Key takeaways

- EIIP stimulates local economic development in refugee-hosting areas by creating short-term work opportunities, hiring local contractors and providing/strengthening infrastructure, which then leads to enhanced productivity.
- EIIPs offer graduates of skills development courses an opportunity to apply and refine their skills on EIIP work sites. There can, however, be a trade-off in terms of efficiency when using new graduates to complete the work.
- TVET and related training institutions at the local level can be relevant and useful partners in institutionalizing skill sets needed to construct and maintain systems and infrastructure built/rehabilitated by EIIP work in the long term. To this end, training courses can be developed in local TVET training institutes that are accessible to both refugees and members of the host community.
- In complex contexts, continual access to EIIP work sites may not be possible owing to security and safety measures. Using local actors to monitor and report on the EIIP's progress is valuable when ILO staff face mobility restrictions. The capacities of local actors therefore need to be built to enable them to carry out this function independently.
- Refugees can serve as construction contractors where legislative frameworks and processes allow them to run formal businesses in the construction sector. Additional support may be needed to build their capacities so that they can be competitive in bidding processes. Awarding trial contracts to refugee-owned businesses can give them an opportunity to learn by doing.
- The availability and quality of local materials can be challenging in refugee contexts, particularly when in remote areas. Local suppliers may not have the cash flow to provide the volume of building materials required by an EIIP. In such contexts, it is best to use simple technologies and avoid goods that need to be imported or transported over long distances.
- PROSPECTS countries are more likely to suffer from volatile economic and political conditions that can quickly increase the price of inputs and disrupt supply chains. Relying on local resources can help mitigate the impact of these.
- Trades unions can play a relevant and useful role in supporting the organization of worker committees on EIIP sites. This includes raising awareness of labour rights and OSH, and helping EIIP workers form committees and elect their own representatives. Such efforts can also encourage EIIP workers to be active in trades unions and other representative organizations after the EIIP work concludes.
- Because EIIP projects adhere to local labour legislation and international standards, the processes and procedures to access formal work need to be carefully and clearly explained to workers – particularly those who have not engaged in formal work prior to their participation in the EIIP. For refugees, topics such as work permits and social security will also need to be covered.
- EIIP can be leveraged as a response mechanism in the immediate aftermath of crisis. Having multi-year funding with built-in flexibility can support the repurposing of funds to contribute to EIIP in the case of unanticipated natural disasters, industrial accidents, economic collapse and conflict.


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