

Ex-post evaluation

Reintegration of ex-combatants II, DR Congo

Title	Support for the reintegration of ex-combatants and refugees II				
Sector and CRS code	Civil Peace Development, Crisis Prevention and Conflict Resolution (15220)				
BMZ number	2007 65 107				
Commissioned by	BMZ				
Recipient and executing agency	Ministry of Planning, Democratic Republic of Congo				
FC financing volume and instrument	EUR 16.6 million budgetary grant				
Project duration	2010-2016	Reporting year	2025	Sample year	2024

Project objectives and implementation

The objective at the outcome level was to strengthen local economic cycles and social cohesion in the area adjacent to the Obokote-Punia road. At the impact level, the objective was to improve the socio-economic living conditions of the local population in Maniéma Province. The project financed the labour-intensive rehabilitation of the Obokote-Punia road (72 km), the commissioning of two ferries and various accompanying measures (including the construction of water points and markets, the distribution of seeds and support for victims of gender-based violence).

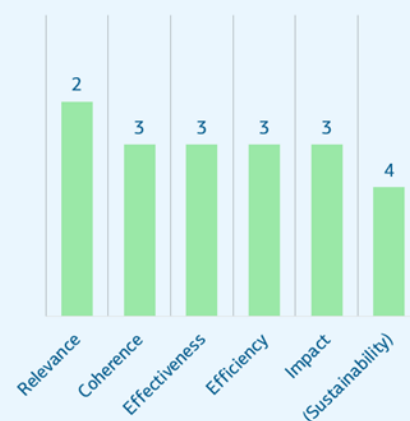
Key findings

Due to its limited requirements for sustainability, which was also confirmed ex post, the project, which was implemented in an extremely fragile context, is appraised as having been moderately successful overall. The decisive factors for the evaluation are:

- The project had high relevance. It addressed the needs of the target group and pursued a participatory approach.
- Despite difficult external circumstances, transport links were established between the Punia region and the major cities of Kisangani and Goma. The road led to a revival of economic activity and improved access to schools and health centres in the region.
- Accompanying measures such as the distribution of seeds, agricultural advice, cash for work and the construction of markets and water points led to immediate improvements in the living conditions of the local population in the short term and increased acceptance of the road.
- There were considerable delays and cost increases, but the impact-level objective was at least partially achieved.
- As expected, the sustainability of the project is not achieved. Maintenance and thus sustainable operation of the road could not be ensured, with the result that its use is again severely restricted after 3-4 years.
- The measures to prevent gender-based violence led to a more open dialogue on the issue and the gradual destigmatisation of those affected.

Overall rating

moderately successful



1: very successful – 6: completely unsuccessful

Conclusions

- The financing of infrastructure measures contributes indirectly to peace processes. A detailed examination of local conflict factors and a corresponding conceptual orientation are necessary to achieve long-term peace effects.
- The combination of labour-intensive road construction, rehabilitation of social infrastructure and promotion of local agriculture in an integrative approach is a suitable for generating a high level of acceptance among the local population.
- Even with limited sustainability requirements, viable concepts for sustainable financing of maintenance are indispensable

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List of abbreviations

ACF	Action Against Hunger
BMZ:	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
DAC:	Development Assistance Committee
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo
EPE	Ex-post evaluation
EUR	Euro
FONER	Fond national d'entretien des routes (National Road Maintenance Fund)
FC E	FC Evaluation
FC	Financial cooperation
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
IPC III	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (Severe food insecurity)
ISSSS	International Strategy for Security and Stabilisation in Eastern DRC
MITR	Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works and Reconstruction (Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works and Reconstruction)
MONUSCO	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MV	Module proposal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OPA	Organisations paysannes d'agriculteurs (agricultural producer groups)
OPERMA	Provincial Office for Road Maintenance in Maniema Province (Provincial Road Maintenance Office in Maniema)
PADRIR	Programme to Support Inclusive and Resilient Rural Development (Programmes to Support Inclusive and Resilient Rural Development)
PA	Project appraisal
PAR	Project appraisal report
PCR	Project completion report
PV	Project proposal
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STAREC	Programme for the stabilisation and reconstruction of areas emerging from armed conflict (Programmes for the stabilisation and reconstruction of former conflict zones)
TEUR	Thousand euros
TC	Technical cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	US dollar
WHH	Welthungerhilfe

Overview

General conditions and classification of the project

The province of Maniéma in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) is characterised by rich mineral resources, tropical rainforests and subsistence-oriented agriculture. The majority of the province's 2.8 million inhabitants (2020) live in poverty. The road infrastructure, which dates back to the colonial era, has only been maintained sporadically for decades and is largely dilapidated. This cuts off the population from access to markets and social services. During the Congolese wars (1996-1997, 1998-2003), Rwandan troops and allied militias occupied large parts of the province in order to exploit it economically. Clashes between these forces and the Congolese army and local self-defence groups led to widespread human rights violations against the local population and their temporary displacement. The total number of victims of the Congolese wars is estimated at six million. Since 2004, Maniéma has been affected by the war in the neighbouring provinces of North and South Kivu and has itself been struggling with violent clashes between local militias. In October 2025, the province was home to around 146,700 internally displaced persons, mainly from the Kivu region, and 86,000 returnees.¹

Since 2006, the BMZ has been supporting various reconstruction and peacebuilding measures in eastern DR Congo as part of a comprehensive "peace fund". Between 2005 and 2009, Welthungerhilfe (WHH) carried out labour-intensive rehabilitation measures on the important road between Goma and Kisangani (Walikale–Obokote section) as part of the first phase of the project (BMZ No. 2004 66 045). The follow-up project under consideration here was intended to connect the province of Maniéma to this road via the Obokote–Punia section.

Brief description

The project "Reintegration of Refugees and Ex-Combatants II" was designed on the basis of the experience gained in the first phase. Its objective was to create short-term employment and income opportunities for disadvantaged population groups, including ex-combatants and returning displaced persons, by implementing labour-intensive rehabilitation measures on the Obokote–Punia section of Route Nationale 31 to the provincial capital Kindu. In the medium term, the rehabilitation of the road was intended to stimulate the movement of goods between the north of Maniéma Province and the economic centres of Goma and Kisangani, thereby promoting the economic development of the region. This was also supported by accompanying measures such as the distribution of seeds, agricultural advisory services, the rehabilitation of water points and markets along the road, and the purchase of two car ferries to cross the Lowa and Lubutu rivers. In order to ensure the long-term maintenance of the road, extensive training and advisory measures were carried out for the responsible road construction authority (Office des Routes) as part of the project. Nevertheless, the project was subject to limited sustainability requirements. In addition, local committees were set up for minor road maintenance measures. The project also financed measures to support victims of gender-based violence.

¹ IOM (2025): Democratic Republic of Congo. Internal Displacement Overview. October 2005. Geneva

Breakdown of total costs

The total costs of the project are broken down as follows:

	Phase (Plan MV 2010)	Phase (Plan increase 2013)	Phase (Actual EPE 2025)
Investment costs (total) in million EUR	10.30	19.69	17.40
Own contribution in EUR million	0.00	0.00	0.00
External financing in EUR million	10.30	19.69	17.40
of which BMZ funds in EUR million	5.00	13.90	16.61
Of which WHH funds in EUR million	0.30	0.79	0.79

Table 1: Breakdown of costs.

Map of the project region

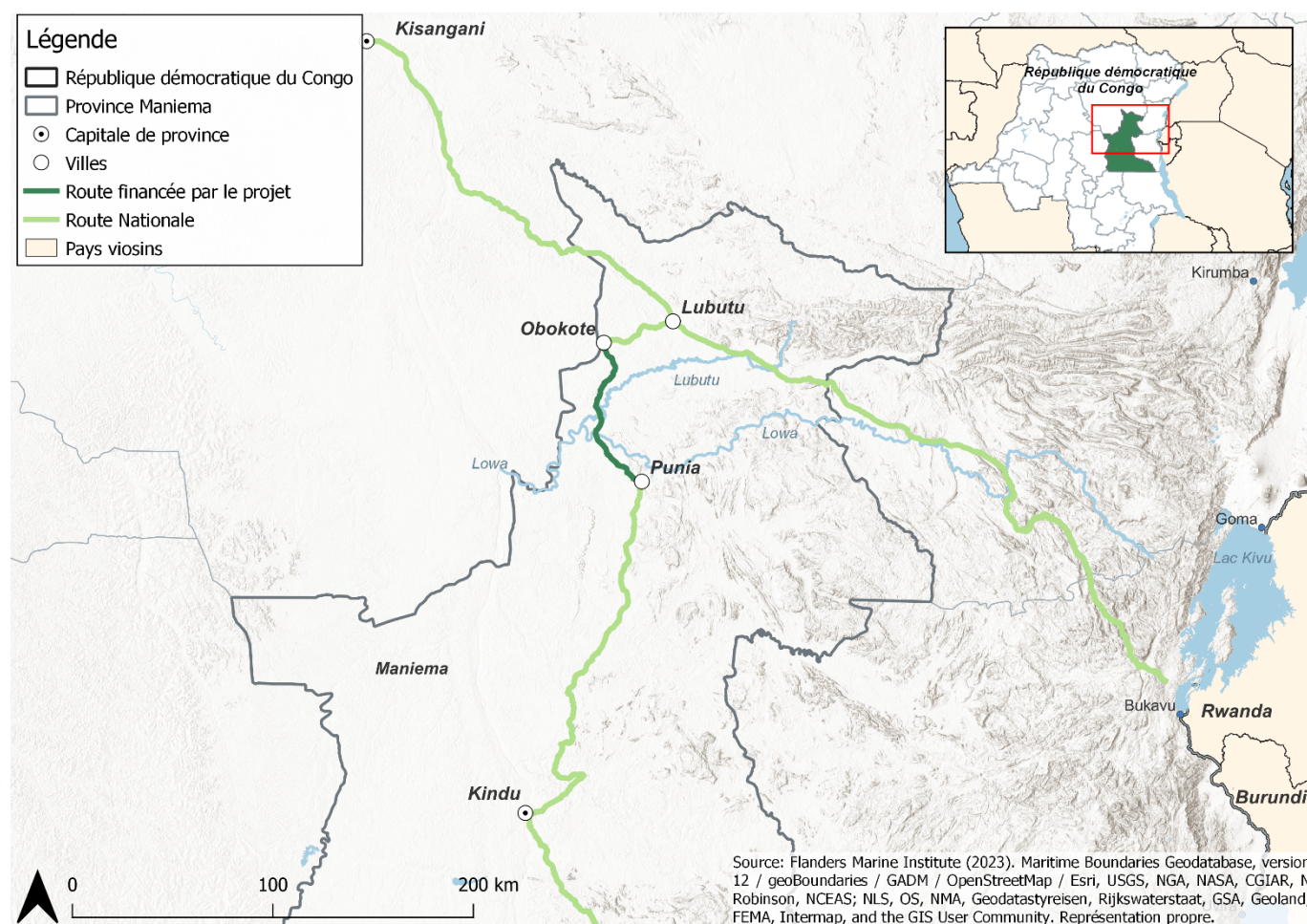


Figure 1: Map of the project region.

Source: Own illustration.

Project-specific strengths and weaknesses of the project

The strengths include in particular:

- The road from Obokote to Punia was rehabilitated in an extremely fragile context. In particular, two ferries were successfully put into operation and are still in use today.
- With its combination of labour-intensive road construction, rehabilitation of social infrastructure and promotion of local agriculture, the project pursued an integrative approach, which generated acceptance among the local population. The approach continues to be practised by other international organisations and private sector structures (e.g. mining companies).
- The improved transport links between the territories of Punia and Lubutu enabled a – albeit short-lived – economic revival of the region, better access to schools and health centres, and a greater presence of the state administration.
- Women benefited from the project as road workers, traders, users of social infrastructure and farmers. It is positive that the project addressed the prevention of gender-based violence and support for victims, even though these measures only accounted for a fraction of the overall project.
- In line with the Do No Harm approach, the project took an inclusive approach to supporting local people, ex-combatants and returning displaced persons. However, there was room for improvement in terms of the project design.

The weaknesses include in particular:

- The commissioning of the project took place in an expedited procedure with limited sustainability requirements. There was no comprehensive technical detailed planning of the road ex ante, which led to significant delays and cost increases during implementation. In addition, the planning was based on overly optimistic assumptions about the connection and subsequent use of the road in the sparsely populated region.
- Despite the title and overarching objective of the project, its design was not geared towards promoting longer-term peace processes and the reintegration of ex-combatants. The project focused on road construction and short-term support for the peace process. This was important for many reasons, but as already laid-out in the design phase, it was not suitable for achieving long-term peace effects. The accompanying measures also did not specifically address specific causes of conflict. The project did not sufficiently address the possible military use of the road by armed groups and its impact on deforestation.
- The project was commissioned despite the known short lifespan of roads in the DR Congo and the limited maintenance capacities of the responsible authorities. This meant that the limited effectiveness and sustainability of the measures was consciously accepted.
- The local authorities were not sufficiently involved in the selection, planning and implementation of the measures, which may have had a negative impact on their sustainability.

General conclusions/lessons learned

- Poverty reduction and economic development through the financing of infrastructure measures contribute indirectly to peace processes. A detailed examination of local conflict factors and a corresponding conceptual orientation are necessary to achieve long-term peace effects. Similarly, the reintegration of returning displaced persons and ex-combatants should be closely monitored.
- The use of locally available resources should be promoted for the sustainable expansion and operation of the road network in the DR Congo. This includes the efficient and transparent use of locally collected tolls and legally prescribed levies on mining companies, as is already being practised to some extent in Maniéma. This can be achieved by strengthening local and regional government structures and their transparency and accountability to the population.
- Even with limited sustainability requirements, viable concepts for sustainable maintenance financing are essential.
- Even in emergency aid contexts, care should be taken to ensure that large infrastructure measures are planned in sufficient detail. The initial time savings achieved through rapid preparation processes can be lost later due to delays and cost increases.

Assessment according to OECD DAC criteria

Relevance

1. Alignment with policies and priorities

With its objective of promoting post-conflict economic development and the reintegration of ex-combatants and displaced persons, the project was in line with the strategic guidelines of the BMZ and the Congolese government that were valid during the project period. For the BMZ, these were the "Cross-sectoral Concept for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Management and Peace Promotion" (2005) and the development concept "Development for Peace and Security: Development Policy Engagement in the Context of Conflict, Fragility and Violence" (2013).² A key expression of the BMZ's commitment to peace development in the DR Congo was the establishment of the Peace Fund, which partially financed the project under review here and which had been repeatedly increased up to the time of the evaluation. The Peace Fund's commitment (BMZ 2017 67 573) currently falls under the BMZ's core strategy of "Peace and Social Cohesion" (2024) and the draft BMZ country strategy for the DR Congo (2024). The labour-intensive infrastructure measures (cash for work) already used in this project were formalised to a greater extent by the BMZ from 2017 onwards as part of the Middle East Employment Initiative and became an important instrument of its transitional assistance.

The project met some of the quality criteria formulated by the BMZ. With a planned 20 per cent share of women in the road construction workforce, the project was intended to make a limited contribution to gender equality. The labour-intensive employment measures and the accompanying promotion of agricultural production were intended to contribute to poverty reduction. During the preparation of the project, attention was paid in part to the possible environmental risks of road rehabilitation, including the possible consequences for deforestation and the spread of artisanal mining, and these risks were incorporated into the planning. Based on the experience gained in the first phase of the project and in line with the do-no-harm concept, the plan was to offer the labour-intensive employment measures to all people at risk of poverty, not just former combatants and displaced persons. This was to avoid any possible preferential treatment of these groups and thus prevent local conflicts.

On the Congolese side, the project fell under the 2009 government programme for the stabilisation and reconstruction of former conflict areas (Programme de stabilisation et de reconstruction des zones sortant des conflits armés – STAREC)³ and its successor programme STAREC II (2013–2017). Among other things, these programmes aimed to restore security in the affected eastern provinces, including Maniéma Province, support the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons, promote post-conflict reconstruction, including the rehabilitation of roads, revive the economy, and support victims of gender-based violence. Under the umbrella of the UN peacekeeping mission MONUSCO, the implementation of STAREC was supported by the programme "International Strategy for Security and Stabilisation in Eastern DR Congo" (Stratégie internationale de soutien à la sécurité et la stabilisation our l'est de la RDC - ISSSS)⁴, which was supported by many international partners. Among other things, ISSSS provided for the return and reintegration of displaced persons and ex-combatants, the economic development of conflict areas and the prevention of gender-based violence. The project's objectives were thus in line with key Congolese and international strategic objectives.

2. Alignment with the needs and capacities of stakeholders and beneficiaries

The direct target group of the project was the population along the road axis to be rehabilitated, in particular the approximately 22,400 people in the 22 villages located directly on the road and in its adjacent area, as well as the town of Punia (48,000 inhabitants), including ex-combatants and returning displaced persons. The indirect target group was the entire population of the Punia territory (approx. 200,000 people). The overarching objectives of the project – economic recovery and peace promotion – and the objectives of its individual measures – transport links for the region, employment promotion, poverty reduction, strengthening agricultural production, improving drinking water supply, prevention of gender-based violence – corresponded to the development policy needs of these target groups. In interviews conducted during the evaluation, representatives of the target groups confirmed that the restoration of transport links, agricultural advice and the distribution of equipment and seeds, as well as the construction of protected water points, met their needs at the time.

A socio-economic study for the area adjacent to the Obokote–Punia road conducted in 2010 found that the population had largely returned to their areas of origin after the turmoil of war. Around 90 % of the population lived on subsistence farming in the Obokote–Punia area, with 45 % of all households eating only one meal a day. Around 70 % of the households surveyed lived

² https://www.engagement-weltweit.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/ENGAGEMENT_WELTWEIT/Publik_13/Frieden/BMZ_FriedenSicherheit.pdf

³ Democratic Republic of Congo, 2009: Programme for Stabilisation and Reconstruction of Areas Emerging from Armed Conflict (STAREC). Kinshasa.

⁴ MONUSCO, 2013: International Strategy for Security and Stabilisation in Eastern DRC. Kinshasa.

below the poverty line of USD 1.2 per person per day, and around 40 % of heads of households had no formal education. During the same period, the UNDP determined a poverty rate of 58 % in Maniéma province, which was low in comparison to the national average.⁵ Households produced an average of around 344 kg of rice, 1,122 kg of manioc, 304 kg of maize and 83 litres of palm oil per year, which roughly met their needs. Agricultural production was carried out without chemical inputs, with the main problem being the genetic depletion of seeds. There were ten health stations and eleven primary schools in the 22 villages along the road. Eight villages had only one unprotected water source and three villages consumed only river water.

Since 1996, the main road (RN 31) from Lubutu via Punia to the provincial capital Kindu had been impassable to cars. The section from Obokote to Punia could only be used by motorcycles and bicycles, which took one or three days to cover the approximately 70 km route. Alternative means of transport by plane, train or ship were unreliable or unaffordable. They were mainly used by the government, mining companies and NGOs. This cut off the north of Maniéma province from the important transport artery from Bukavu via Walikalie and Lubutu to Kisangani (N3). While the products of artisanal mining (gold, diamonds, cassiterite, tungsten) were exported by plane from Punia, other goods had to be laboriously transported to the region by truck and bicycle, which led to high prices. In 2009, there were around 37 artisanal mines in area adjacent to the Lubutu-Punia route, employing approximately 20,000 workers.⁶ Mining companies and international donors had already rehabilitated other sections of road in the project area. However, this had only improved the condition of the roads in the short term, as the Road Authority (Office des Routes) and the National Road Maintenance Fund (Fond national d'entretien des routes – FONER), set up by various donors specifically for the maintenance of the Congolese road network, were not fulfilling their responsibilities.⁷

The above-mentioned socio-economic study also found that social cohesion between the various socio-linguistic groups in the region was high, but that there was a marked distrust of external actors (government, NGOs, mining companies), which manifested itself, among other things, in threats of physical violence. Gender-based and sexual violence, both in the domestic context and as a weapon of war, was and is widespread in eastern Congo, although reliable figures are difficult to obtain. In 2010, a study estimated that one in three women and one in five men in eastern Congo had experienced sexual violence.⁸ Survivors of sexual violence were stigmatised in their communities and often had to leave them.⁹ More than 120 armed groups have been active in eastern Congo for years, mobilising tens of thousands of fighters. The government and its international partners have repeatedly attempted to demobilise these fighters. Between 2003 and 2022, more than 150,000 ex-combatants in the region were demobilised through various government programmes. These individuals are often stigmatised and excluded by local communities.¹⁰ This often leads to a revolving door effect, with demobilised fighters taking up arms again due to a lack of economic prospects.¹¹ As a result, many ex-combatants in the project area work as security guards in the mines.

The road from Obokote to Punia was selected in consultation with the relevant government agencies. The Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works and Reconstruction designated the route from Lubutu to Punia as a priority route for the government.¹² At the same time, a further connection to the route seemed to be secured by the European Union's expansion of the RN 3 from Lubutu to Kinsangani and the connection to Goma through road construction measures by DfID. Against this background, it was negative for the project ex post that the rehabilitated section was deprioritised by the Congolese Ministry of Roads in 2016, which also meant the loss of maintenance funds.

The participants in the labour-intensive measures were selected by Welthungerhilfe in consultation with the local communities. The communities defined vulnerability criteria and appointed the members of the local selection committees, which were to be composed of representatives from various social groups (including the village chief, dignitaries, at least one woman and one young person). The committees selected beneficiaries on the basis of broad poverty criteria, although it is unclear whether this approach actually identified the most vulnerable households. Welthungerhilfe used a participatory process to select specific support measures in the area of agriculture in order to ensure that the measures were needs-oriented.

The target of 20 % female participation in labour-intensive measures was achieved. From today's perspective, a female participation rate of 50 % would have been appropriate and achievable. No gender-disaggregated data is available on the beneficiaries of the agricultural measures. Given the important role women play in agriculture in the region, from today's perspective a target of 50 % or more women should have been set and could have been achieved by recruiting women for labour-intensive measures and enrolling them in farmer field schools.

⁵ UNDP, 2009: Maniema Province. Summary Profile. Poverty and Living Conditions of Households. Kinshasa.

⁶ Sthonda, Jean Omasombo et al., 2009: Democratic Republic of Congo. Maniéma. Space and lives. Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa.

⁷ Van den Eynde, *ibid.*

⁸ Johnson, Kirsten et al., 2010: Association of Sexual Violence and Human Rights Violations With Physical and Mental Health in Territories of the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 304(5): 553–562.

⁹ Dolan, Chris, 2010: 'The war is not yet over.' Community perceptions of sexual violence and its causes in eastern DRC. London: International Alert.

¹⁰ Ntanyoma, Delphin, 2025: Disappointment and Ex-Combatant Choices in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Civil War Paths*. <https://www.civilwarpaths.org/disappointment-and-ex-combatant-choices-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo/>

¹¹ Musamba, Josaphat et al, 2022: It Takes (More Than) Two to Tango. Armed Politics, Combatant Agency and the Half-Life of DDR programmes in the Congo; Ghent: University of Ghent.

¹² Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works and Reconstruction, 2009: Transport corridors and financing on the DRC's priority road network as at 31 August 2009. Kinshasa.

3. Appropriateness of design

The project was based on the following theory of change, which was updated during the evaluation:

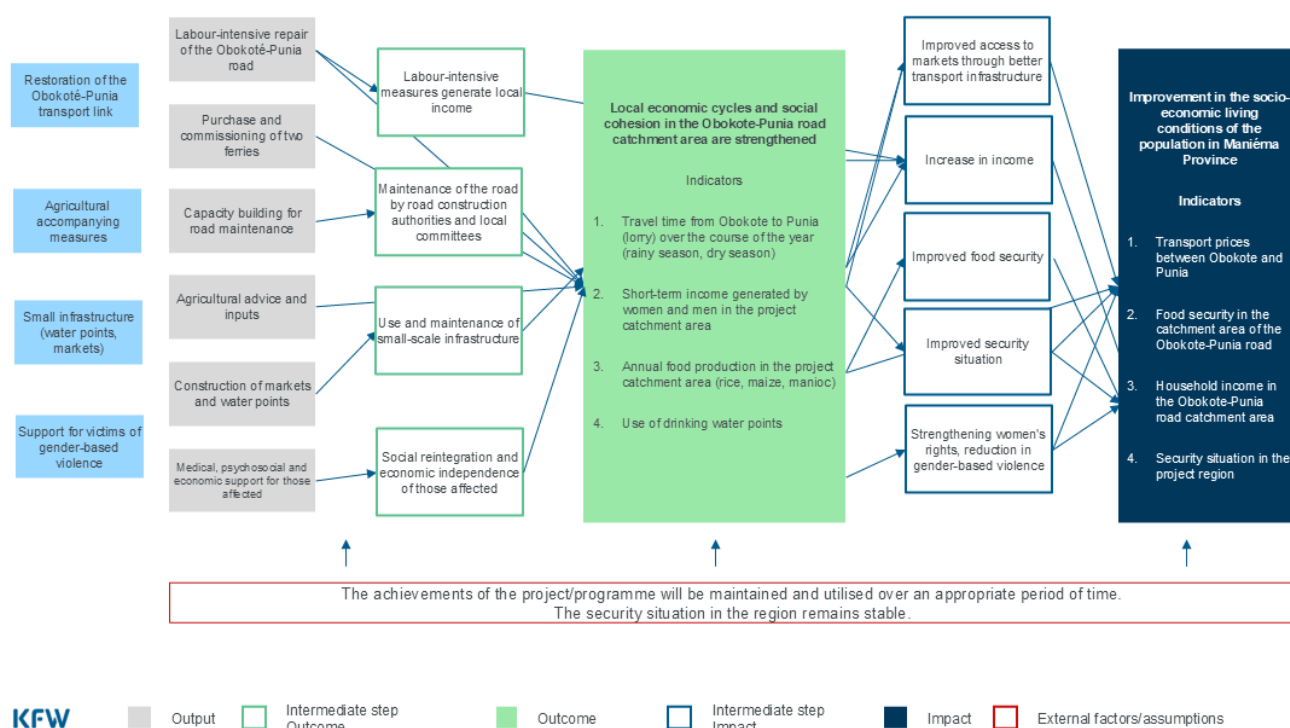


Figure 2: Theory of Change.

Source: own illustration.

The project provided planning, management and advisory services, funds for cash-for-work payments, machinery, equipment, building materials and agricultural inputs, as well as resources to support victims of gender-based violence (inputs). This enabled the road from Obokote to Punia (72 km) to be rehabilitated using labour-intensive methods, the crossing of two rivers to be ensured through the purchase and commissioning of two ferries, small-scale infrastructure (including water points and markets) to be built, agricultural advisory services and inputs (farmer field schools, seeds, small animals) and support provided for victims of gender-based violence (outputs).

The labour-intensive rehabilitation of the Obokote-Punia road, the establishment of ferry connections across two rivers, and the preparation of the road construction authority and local structures for the operation and maintenance of the road were intended to rehabilitate the road for truck traffic and increase its use for commercial purposes. The improved transport links in the region were intended to facilitate the marketing of local products. At the same time, the living conditions of the population were to be improved through the construction or rehabilitation of markets and water points, and agricultural production was to be increased through the distribution of seeds, agricultural equipment and agricultural training. In this way, the income, access to clean drinking water and food security of the population were to be improved. Together with the injection of financial resources into the local economy through labour-intensive measures, these factors should strengthen local economic cycles in the Punia territory in Maniéma province. This should create improved employment and income opportunities in the region, which in turn will facilitate the social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants and returning displaced persons. At the same time, victims of gender-based violence should receive psychosocial, medical, legal and economic support. Social reintegration and greater economic independence should improve the living conditions of victims of gender-based violence. Strengthening women's rights should in turn lead to a decline in gender-based violence. Together with the reintegration of ex-combatants and returning displaced persons and an improved security situation, this should strengthen social cohesion between the target groups in the project region (outcome). Overall, this should improve the socio-economic living conditions of the local population in the north of Maniéma Province (impact).

The design of the measure was fundamentally appropriate and realistic, although it should be noted that the budget allocated for accompanying measures was only around 10 % of the total budget. Some of the wording in the target system no longer met current formal requirements, but it was fundamentally plausible. The labour-intensive rehabilitation of the road from Obokote to

Punia was a suitable instrument for creating a large number of short-term job opportunities for the local population and thus injecting money into the local economy, due to the high demand for labour and the possibility of employing unskilled workers. Aspects of the social reintegration of returning ex-combatants and displaced persons, as well as issues of transitional justice, were largely ignored. Measures to prevent gender-based violence and support survivors were designed and implemented without reference to the other measures. The potential for mainstreaming this issue into labour-intensive and agricultural measures was not sufficiently exploited. In retrospect, it can be said that the short-term nature of the peace-building effect described in the project appraisal document could have been emphasised even more strongly.

The indicators were measured in socio-economic studies at the start of the project (2010) and at the end of the project (2016), providing a reliable data basis. Overall, the indicators and their values were appropriate. A specific indicator on gender-based violence is missing. In view of the challenging logistics and natural conditions, as well as the difficult security situation, the original 30-month schedule for implementing the measures proved unrealistic. In retrospect, it must also be noted that the concept overestimated the willingness and capacity of the neighbouring communities and the road construction authority to maintain the road in the long term, despite considerable concerns. The extensive capacity development measures provided for in the concept were implemented, but were not sufficient to ensure adequate maintenance of the road. Overall, the concept for the measure only partially corresponded to a holistic approach that takes into account the social, economic and ecological dimensions of sustainability. The economic dimension was also intended to achieve social reintegration, but this dimension was not sufficiently taken into account. Ecological aspects of road rehabilitation and the promotion of agricultural production were not appraised in detail.

4. Adaptability – response to change

The measure had to be adapted several times during its implementation to reflect changes in the operating environment. For example, it became apparent that not only was a ferry needed to cross the Lowa River, but also another ferry to cross the Lubutu River, based on a comprehensive bridge study with critical structural findings. In addition, the difficult security situation in North Kivu province and logistical challenges led to considerable delays and cost increases, which made it necessary to extend the measure. To this end, a request for additional funding was submitted in 2013.

Rating summary of relevance: **successful (2)**

At least initially, the project's objectives were consistent with the priorities and strategies of the German and Congolese governments. The design was well aligned with the needs of the population in a highly fragile context and responded appropriately to the need for change during implementation. Despite formal weaknesses in the project design, the overall relevance of the project is appraised as successful.

Coherence

5. Internal coherence

The project built on the experiences of phase I (BMZ No. 2004 66 045) of the project. During the project period, the Peace Fund (Fonds pour la Consolidation de la Paix, FCP) (BMZ No. 2007 65 537, 2008 65 402, 2008 66 145, 2009 65 343), which had been running since 2007, served as the programmatic and institutional framework for German financial cooperation in eastern Congo. The Peace Fund aimed to strengthen the stabilisation process in the DR Congo by rapidly providing a "peace dividend" for the local population. Between 2008 and 2015, 61 participatively selected, labour-intensive infrastructure measures (including the construction or rehabilitation of schools, health stations, water points, bridges, roads and markets) and several measures to increase agricultural productivity were implemented in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniéma. The measures pursued the dual objectives of economic stabilisation and poverty reduction on the one hand and peace promotion on the other. The project evaluated followed the same impact logic and methodological approach as the Peace Fund (see chapter on relevance), but focused on road construction and accompanying measures. Geographically, there was an overlap, as the Peace Fund was active in the territories of Kasongo and Kabambare in the south of Maniéma. The Peace Fund's administrative unit was responsible for the technical and financial monitoring of the project examined here, which was intended to lead to efficiency gains and synergies.

As part of German-Congolese technical cooperation (TC), a project was carried out during the project period to promote the economic reintegration of disadvantaged young people in Maniéma Province, focusing on the promotion of river transport. In this

context, agreements were reached on the rehabilitation of the Kowe-Ferikene road and the connection of Punia to the shipping route to Kindu. German TC also planned to support the rehabilitation of schools along the Obokote-Punia axis. No information is available on the implementation of these plans. Welthungerhilfe (WHH) was active for various clients in eastern Congo before and during the project period and had gained experience with road rehabilitation and agricultural production promotion projects in this context. Among other things, WHH had already rehabilitated the Goma-Walikalé-Lubutu-Obokote section of the road in the previous project phase and, on behalf of the World Food Programme, the Lubutu airstrip. This project was to build on this preliminary work and the expertise and technical equipment acquired in the process. In 2013, Welthungerhilfe also provided agricultural support measures in the Punia-Kasese region on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office, which created synergies with this project.

Overall, it can be said that the project under consideration here was conceptually well integrated into the German development cooperation portfolio in eastern Congo. At the operational level, there were selective synergies, particularly through the various activities of the implementing partner Welthungerhilfe. More synergies would have been possible with a stronger geographical concentration of the German contribution, but this would have reduced the coverage of the vast province of Maniéma, which is the size of England.

With its participatory and inclusive approach and its focus on the involvement of women, the measure was largely consistent with the international norms and standards to which German development cooperation committed itself during the project period.

6. External coherence

When selecting the Obokote-Punia section, the project took into account the plans of other international actors in the road construction sector. A map from the Congolese Ministry of Roads suggests that there was an informal division of labour among the international partners with regard to the rehabilitation of the most important sections of the Congolese road network. In the case of the Obokote-Punia section, it was particularly important to ensure connections to the provincial capitals of Kisangani and Kindu. The plans assumed that this would be done by the EU (Kisangani) and the World Bank (Kindu) respectively, but this did not ultimately come to pass due to the withdrawal of these donors. More binding agreements would have been necessary here. No information is available on any thematic exchange between the individual donors.

The measure was designed in such a way that the Ministry of Public Works (Ministère des travaux publics) and its subordinate national road maintenance fund FONER, which was set up with international support, and the Congolese road construction authority (Office des routes) would assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the rehabilitated road section. To this end, extensive capacity development measures were carried out for the road construction authority. Tolls were to be collected from road users to finance road maintenance. In reality, however, it turned out that the Congolese authorities were unwilling or unable to maintain the road and deprioritised the section.

Rating summary of coherence: **moderately successful (3)**

The project was well integrated into the German FC portfolio in eastern Congo and into the plans of the Congolese road construction authority and international donors at the start of the project. Due to the de-prioritisation of the rehabilitated road by the Congolese side, the withdrawal of other donors and unclear actual synergies with local TC, the coherence of the project is assessed as moderately successful.

Effectiveness

7. Achievement of objectives

The objective adjusted during the evaluation was: "Local economic cycles and social cohesion in the area adjacent to the Obokote-Punia road are strengthened." The following indicators, which were adjusted qualitatively and quantitatively compared to the design of the project, were used to measure the outcome objective:

Indicator	Status at time of review	Target value at EPE (review)	Actual value at PCR	Actual value at EPE
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(1) Travel time from Obokote to Punia (lorry) over the course of the year (rainy season, dry season)	3 days (bicycle), 1 day (motorcycle), no truck traffic possible	Reduction in travel time, year-round accessibility Target value EPE: 3-4 hours	3 hours, year-round	Value: 7-8 hours, year-round Target value achieved
(2) Short-term income generated by women and men in the project area	24 USD/working person/month (2005) ¹³	130,000 working days (including 26,000 days by women) (200,000 working days with contract increase in 2013)	204,625 working days (49,900 of which were worked by women) at approx. 2.15 USD/day	Target value achieved
(3) Annual food production in the project area (rice, maize, manioc)	Agricultural land: 12,650 ha Vegetable cultivation: 1,590 ha Fish farming: 360 ha	30 % increase	150 % increase Agricultural land: 34,500 ha Vegetable cultivation: 3,800 ha	Value: Decline in agricultural production after project completion Target value not achieved
(4) Use of drinking water points	11 of 22 villages do not have a protected drinking water source	No target level formulated in PA 11 new/rehabilitated drinking water points are in use	15 rehabilitated drinking water points in 13 villages	Value: some rehabilitated drinking water points are in use Target value partially achieved

Table 2: Outcome target achievement.

Source: Own illustration.

8. Contribution to the achievement of objectives

By 2016, the project had delivered the following outputs as planned to restore the road link between Lubutu and Punia: (i) labour-intensive rehabilitation of a 72 km section of laterite road between the towns of Lubutu and Punia, including four ferry landings, nine bridges and 272 hydraulic engineering measures (culverts), (ii) procurement and commissioning of two ferries across the Lubutu and Lowa rivers, including the development and implementation of a financing and maintenance concept, and (iii) training of 133 road maintenance workers (cantonniers), who are each responsible for maintaining a specific section of road on behalf of the road construction authority, and handover of a fully equipped road construction camp in Ugandula (offices, electricity and water connections, road construction machinery, tools, building materials) to the road construction authority. As part of accompanying measures to increase the project's contribution to local economic development, the project built two market halls on both sides of the Yumbi ferry landing stage, rehabilitated 15 water points in the villages along the road, procured 16 machines for communal use for the processing of agricultural products (mills, husking machines, oil presses) and distributed livestock (goats, pigs, poultry) to 693 households and seeds and agricultural equipment to 16,000 households. A livestock pharmacy was also opened. In addition, training measures were carried out as part of the project for 61 farmers' groups (organisations paysannes d'agriculteurs, OPA) with a total of around 2,575 members from 18 villages based on the "Farmer Field School" concept. In addition, 14 programmes on agricultural topics were produced and broadcast via two local radio stations. In addition, an NGO carried out measures to prevent gender-based violence and to support 759 victims of gender-based violence in the health stations of Lubutu, Obokote and Punia. To this end, 20 psychosocial counsellors were trained and various discussion groups, village meetings and radio programmes were initiated. To accompany the infrastructure measures, Welthungerhilfe set up complaint mechanisms (e.g. complaint boxes) in 18 villages. The diversity of the outputs achieved, particularly in the context of the accompanying measures, corresponded to local needs and can therefore be considered appropriate for appraisal.

Indicator 1

The services provided by the project were used by the target groups and led to temporary improvements in their living conditions. A study commissioned by Welthungerhilfe in 2016 found that the rehabilitated 72 km road was passable all year round, with a significant reduction in the travel time from Obokote to Punia from one to three days to around three hours. This increased the average speed from 4 km/h to 60 km/h. Vehicle traffic between Lubutu and Punia increased tenfold between 2010 and 2016, and the road was passable all year round. The number of transport service providers and passengers multiplied. In the years following the end of the project, the road gradually deteriorated due to heavy rainfall and lack of maintenance. This is in line with the usual three to four-year service life of laterite roads in the DR Congo. As was the case before the rehabilitation, after a few years it could only be used all year round by motorcycles and bicycles, and during the dry season by four-wheel drive vehicles.

¹³ UNDP, 2009: Maniéma Province. Summary profile of poverty and living conditions of households. Kinshasa.

In January 2025, the road from Lubutu to Yumbi was rehabilitated by a mining company in cooperation with the regional road maintenance authority (Office pour l'entretien des routes dans la province du Maniema, OPERMA). Around 1,000 people were employed in the labour-intensive work, while the mining company provided the necessary machinery.¹⁴ Since the rehabilitation, the section from Obokote to the ferry terminal in Yumbi (approx. 42 km) is once again in passable condition, while the section from Yumbi to Punia (approx. 30 km), which runs through a swamp area, has been neglected and is now barely passable. The rehabilitation reduced the travel time from Obokote to Punia from one to three days to seven to eight hours in 2025. According to local observers, the road is currently used by around three small trucks per day in the rainy season and five small trucks per day in the dry season. Heavy trucks cannot use the road. There are still problems with erosion, swamping, potholes and difficult fords.

The ferries and landing stages on the Lubutu and Lowa rivers are still in operation but are little used. Due to the small number of travellers, the ferries rarely cross, resulting in waiting times of several hours at the landing stages. Another problem is the high price of using the ferries (Lowa: EUR 4/motorcycle, EUR 100/truck). Alternatively, bicycles and motorcycles use the almost dilapidated bridge over the Lubutu River or motorised canoes (pirogues), which are unsafe in strong currents. The personnel trained by the project are still available. However, strikes often occur when salaries are not paid. The operation and maintenance of the ferries is the responsibility of the road construction authority, which ensures minimal maintenance. This is financed by transport fees, but these are not sufficient to cover major spare parts and repair work. The poor condition of the ferries exposes travellers to considerable risks.

Welthungerhilfe ended its maintenance work when the contract extension expired in March 2017. This was accompanied by the handover of the fully equipped construction camp (Camp Ugandula with electricity and water connections) as well as the office containers, construction machinery, vehicles, a boat and operating materials to the road construction authority, which was to use them for road maintenance. To ensure the maintenance of the road, five small businesses with 15-40 employees each, all former beneficiaries of the labour-intensive measures, were established with the support of the project. These were to take over the maintenance of certain sections of the road and be paid for this by the road construction authority Office des Routes from the road maintenance fund FONER. However, difficulties with subcontracting and paying these small businesses by the road construction authority were already apparent in 2016, jeopardising the continuity of maintenance work (see also the chapter on sustainability). In 2025, the structures established by the project for road maintenance (local road maintenance committees, local construction companies) no longer existed. The road construction camp in Ugandula, which was handed over to the road construction authority, still exists and is guarded by a security guard. According to local sources, the road construction authority stopped using the camp around two years after the end of the project. Some of the road construction machinery is no longer available, while the offices, warehouses and remaining vehicles are only of limited use. Road construction authority employees who received training at the time have since retired or can no longer be located.

Indicator 2

The road rehabilitation project created 204,625 working days for unskilled workers, 49,900 (24 %) of which were worked by women. No specific information is available on the number of people who participated in the labour-intensive road construction measures, the average duration of their employment or their daily wages. Based on the project budget, a maximum daily wage of USD 2.15 can be reconstructed. In addition, 17 new permanent jobs were created for ferry personnel. In interviews, some villagers and traditional authorities expressed general satisfaction with the implementation of the labour-intensive measures at the time. Wages were low, but they were paid reliably. In some cases, work could not be carried out due to a lack of materials (e.g. shovels). Some observers believe that there were minor irregularities in the selection of beneficiaries (e.g. favouritism towards relatives).

Indicator 3

At the time of the final control, many farmer groups were active and benefiting from higher yields, better organisation of rural producers and the joint sale of crops. Most of these groups no longer exist. No reliable figures are available on the development of food production in the project area. At the time of the final review, it was found that the agricultural area had expanded by a factor of 2.5. According to villagers, the improved seeds and agricultural tools (e.g. hoes) provided by the project were used. While cassava developed well and continues to be cultivated, the cultivation of maize and rice has largely been discontinued. Among other things, the seeds distributed lost their germination capacity after a few harvests, so that farmers are now using traditional varieties again. The small animal breeding (e.g. pigs, goats, fish) promoted by the project was discontinued everywhere because the animals died quickly due to difficult climatic conditions and inadequate veterinary care. Some farmers still use agricultural techniques introduced by the project, such as composting.

¹⁴ Radio Okapi, 2025: Road works in Maniema: CKM working on 72 km from Punia to Lubutu. 21 January 2025.

Indicator 4

At the time of the final inspection, the 15 newly built or rehabilitated water points in the villages along the road were functional and provided urgently needed clean drinking water throughout the year. This led to a decline in waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea and reduced the workload of women and children, who are usually responsible for fetching water. At the time of the evaluation, the water points still existed and were still in use. However, they were in poor hygienic and structural condition, so many families had reverted to using river water. In theory, the village chiefs are responsible for maintaining the water points, but they are unable to do so adequately due to a lack of funds. There are now many cases of diarrhoea and cholera in the region, especially among children. The market halls built at the ferry stations in Yumbi are now hardly used and are falling into disrepair. The reason given for this is the high fees charged by the local authorities for using the market. Instead, traders are using informal marketplaces.

In summary, it can be said that by the end of the project in 2016, when the road was still in good condition, the outcome target of reviving the local economy had been achieved and in some cases far exceeded, as measured by the originally defined indicators. At the time of the evaluation in 2025, the positive changes induced by the project have largely been lost again, which is attributable to the lack of maintenance of the infrastructure created and the instability of the institutions supported (e.g. farmers' groups, maintenance committees) (see chapter on sustainability).

The project's contribution to social cohesion in the project areas is not measurable. A target group-specific impact analysis of the project is not available and could not be carried out within the framework of the rapid appraisal approach of this evaluation (see chapter Evaluation approach and methods). It is plausible to assume that economically stronger households in particular benefited from the local economic upturn, while households with many elderly, disabled or sick members or female-headed households were probably less able to expand their agricultural production and thus benefit from the new opportunities. The selection of beneficiaries was controlled by village chiefs and notables, who may have given preference to their own, possibly less vulnerable relatives. Agricultural advisory measures were mainly aimed at male heads of households, although women play an important role in local agriculture. Women-specific measures were mainly perceived by women in their role as victims of gender-based violence. However, women and girls benefited indirectly from faster and safer access to schools and health stations, clean drinking water, mills and husking machines, increased demand for vegetables (which are mainly grown by women) and, as small traders, from the new market halls and intensified economic exchange in the region. At the time of the evaluation, the region was marked by tensions between returning internally displaced persons and the local population, as well as land conflicts between local communities and mine operators. Although the region is under the control of the Congolese army, isolated rebel groups are present there.

9. Quality of implementation

The information available on the management and implementation of the project is incomplete. It was agreed that the Peace Fund's steering unit in Kinshasa would be responsible for the technical management of the project and ongoing coordination with the partner, the Infrastructure Department of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works and Reconstruction (Cellule Infrastructure du Ministère des infrastructures, travaux publics et reconstruction -CI-MITR). To this end, a representative of this ministry was to participate in the Peace Fund's steering committee. As Welthungerhilfe was only one of the Peace Fund's implementing organisations, no direct contact between Welthungerhilfe and the authorities, in particular the Ministry of Infrastructure and its structures in Maniéma Province, was envisaged. Instead, the Peace Fund's steering unit was to negotiate the conditions for the sustainability of the operation of the road with the MITR. It is unclear to what extent this concept was actually implemented. The reports indicate that the state authorities were not significantly involved in either the road construction work or the agricultural activities of the project. This was perceived as a risk to the sustainability of the measures, but on the other hand, reference was also made to the inertia and susceptibility to corruption of these structures. Ex post, the management of the project by a third-party structure based in Kinshasa appears to have been unfavourable. A management unit based in eastern Congo (e.g. Goma) might have enabled closer involvement of the authorities and thus more long-term results.

The implementation of the specific measures took place under extremely difficult external conditions. In some cases, the project region could not be reached due to armed conflicts and the poor condition of the roads from Goma, so that complex alternative logistics had to be organised from Kisangani. On site, it became apparent that the bridge over the Lubutu River could not be repaired and, based on a comprehensive bridge study with critical structural findings, a second ferry had to be purchased. Until this solution was found, construction work could not continue, which led to considerable delays, as a result of which important personnel had to be laid off (see chapter on efficiency). The population living along the road was informed about the planned construction measures through awareness-raising activities and benefited from the labour-intensive measures and the rehabilitation of small-scale infrastructure. This led to a high level of acceptance of the project.

Welthungerhilfe reported twice a year to the Peace Fund on the progress of the work. These reports, as well as the reports of the NGO commissioned to implement the gender-based violence component, were not available for the evaluation. At the end of the project, Welthungerhilfe commissioned a socio-economic impact study, which provided helpful insights into the use of the road and agricultural measures in 2016, but did not address the issue of gender-based violence.

10. Unintended effects (positive or negative)

According to the final socio-economic study commissioned by Welthungerhilfe, no negative ecological consequences of the road rehabilitation were apparent in 2016. As the rehabilitation involved an existing road, no primary forest was cleared. The road rehabilitation led to the repopulation of almost abandoned villages along the road, but did not fundamentally increase the population density in the region. Nor did the road have a negative impact on hydrology and erosion; on the contrary, water drainage was improved by the construction of bridges and culverts. Shifting cultivation with fallow periods of 7-20 years had already been practised along the road, so that the area was characterised by secondary forest. However, the study points to an increase in charcoal production along the road. Possible negative ecological consequences also result from the expansion of agricultural land and livestock farming (as envisaged by the project) and the improved transport links to the numerous artisanal mines in the region.

No quantitative information is available on the possible negative socio-economic consequences of road rehabilitation. In the project region, there is a general risk that road construction work will lead to an increase in prostitution and gender-based violence in the neighbouring communities. This problem has not been actively addressed by the project. Roads are an important source of income for authorities and armed groups in the project region, which operate various roadblocks to collect money from travellers.¹⁵ At the time of the evaluation, there were several formal and informal road checkpoints along the road where travellers were required to make various payments to the road construction authority, local authorities and informal groups, ostensibly to finance road maintenance. This was described as negative by several interviewees and, given the poor condition of the road, led to considerable discontent among travellers. Many cannot afford to use the road due to the high official and unofficial road tolls. There were also complaints that, even towards the end of the project, there were repeated forced violations of operating time requirements and thus of safety during ferry operations.

Rating summary of effectiveness: **moderately successful (3)**

The outcome-level objective of reviving the local economy, as measured by the defined indicators, was not fully achieved. The indicators were achieved or not achieved to varying degrees. The quality of implementation of the project measures was good, despite difficult external circumstances and thanks to an appropriately participatory approach. The management of the project could have been more decentralised. No significant unintended effects were observed. Overall, the effectiveness of the project is therefore appraised as moderately successful.

Efficiency

11. Production efficiency

In 2010, the financing agreement for the project was concluded with a volume of EUR 10 million. In 2013, it became clear that by the end of the planned 30-month term, 85 % of the funds had already been spent, but only just under 50 % of the planned work had been carried out. In consultation with the BMZ, the project was then increased by EUR 8.9 million and extended to a total of 78 months. Welthungerhilfe contributed EUR 790,000 of its own funds to the project budget. Following the final accounting of the project on 30 June 2016, a budget line for unforeseen events enabled follow-up maintenance of the road until March 2017 at a cost of EUR 1.96 million in order to carry out important repair work. The additional amount was not fully utilised, so that a total of EUR 2.29 million in residual funds was transferred to the special component of the Peace Fund "Violence Prevention for Young People in Kinshasa" (BMZ No. 2012 65 388).

There were many reasons for these significant cost increases and delays. On the one hand, due to the emergency nature of the project in an extremely fragile context and the desire to start the measures quickly, a detailed feasibility study was not carried out. The cost estimate was therefore based on rough assumptions, e.g. about the topography of the region, which later had to be revised at great expense. In retrospect, it became apparent that the cost estimate had been set too low and the difficult external circumstances had been underestimated. Significant external factors that hampered the work were the inaccessibility of the

¹⁵ Muziala, Godefroid et al., 2021: Roadblocks 'in tune with the country'. Beyond predation in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. University of Ghent.

project region, particularly due to insecurity and disruptions on the road from Goma to Lubutu, the need to cross two rivers, for which ferries had to be built and put into operation in a complex process, and multiple security-related evacuations of project staff. The delays repeatedly brought work on the road construction sites to a standstill, which meant that Welthungerhilfe had to lay off non-essential staff to reduce costs and then recruit them again later. Given the difficult conditions, the cost increases and delays appear reasonable. Nevertheless, the total cost of the road is exceptionally high. The original plan had assumed costs of EUR 75,000 per kilometre of rehabilitated road, which proved to be unrealistic. The actual costs per kilometre amounted to EUR 190,135, taking into account the two ferries.

By June 2016, i.e. excluding the nine-month extension until March 2017, Welthungerhilfe had spent around EUR 15.2 million on the project. This amount was broken down as follows (Figure 3):

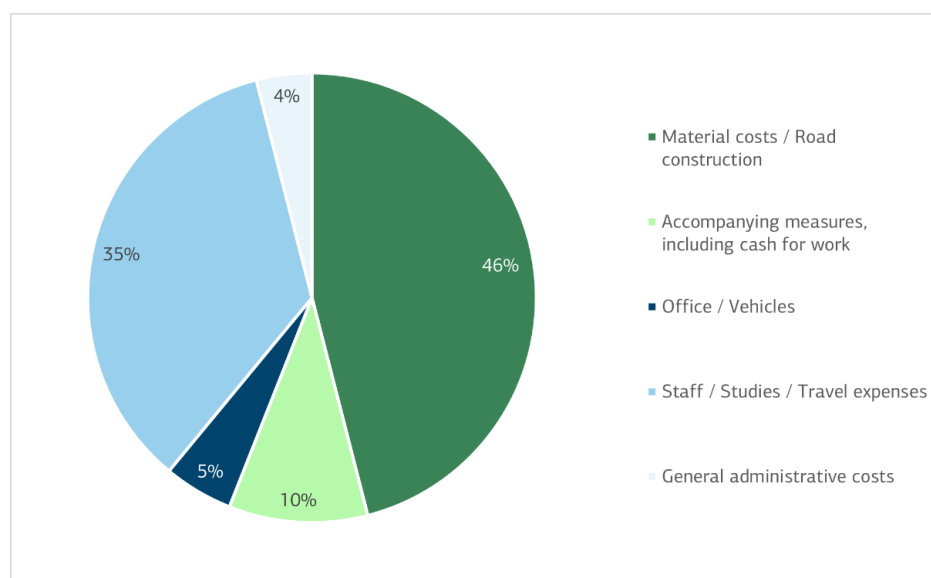


Figure 3: Share of expenditure of the project. **Source:** Own illustration.

Around 46 % was spent on material costs for road construction, 35 % of the project costs on personnel, studies and travel expenses, 10 % on accompanying measures (see Figure 4 for a detailed illustration of these expenditures), 5 % on office costs and vehicles, and 4 % on general administrative costs. This means that just under half of the budget was spent on personnel and administrative costs. Only four national staff members were assigned to support the communities and implement the supplementary social measures, which indicates the low priority given to accompanying measures and community involvement in road construction. Overall, the project's staffing levels appear generous. From today's perspective, a higher proportion of national staff, including at expert level, would also be conceivable.

At around EUR 1.5 million, expenditure on accompanying measures accounted for approximately 10 % of total expenditure and was broken down as follows (Figure 4):

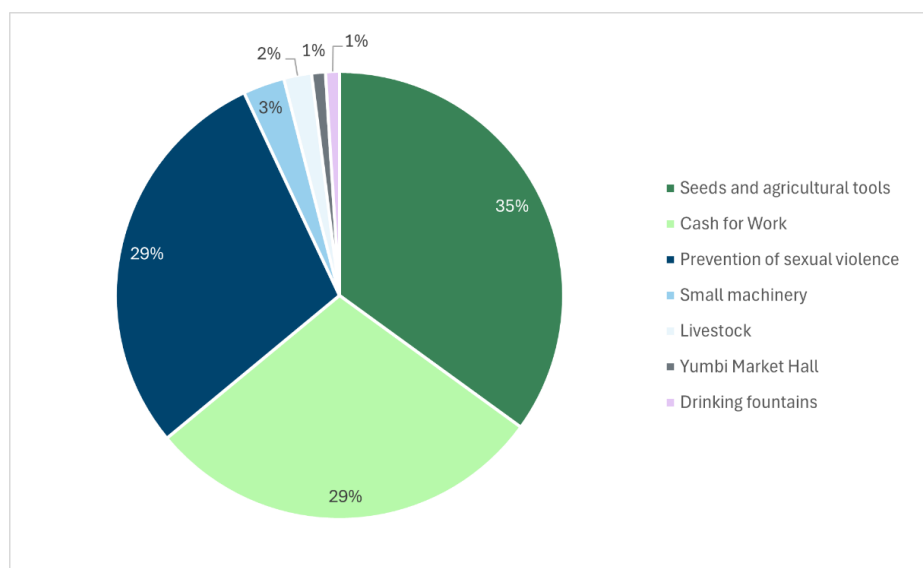


Figure 4: Proportion of expenditure on accompanying measures.
Source: Own illustration.

The largest items among the accompanying measures were the distribution of seeds and agricultural equipment (e.g. hoes) worth around EUR 525,000 (35 %), the wages of road workers worth EUR 436,000 (29 %), and "other accompanying measures" worth EUR 433,000 (29 %), which presumably consist partly or exclusively of expenditure on measures to prevent gender-based violence and support victims. The remaining measures, such as the rehabilitation of drinking water points, the construction of market halls in Yumbi, and the provision of small agricultural equipment (e.g. oil mills) and livestock, each account for only 1-3 % of the costs of the accompanying measures.

The low proportion of expenditure on accompanying measures, which accounts for only 10 % of the total expenditure is striking. Although the creation of short-term income opportunities for vulnerable households was a central concern of the project, only 3 % of total expenditure was spent on wages for people employed in road construction (cash for work). This amount was less than the per diem paid for project staff travel (EUR 496,000). With a total of 204,625 working days, the daily wage was around EUR 2.15 (see chapter on effectiveness). This corresponded approximately to the minimum wage of 43,680 Congolese francs (EUR 2.18/day) applicable from 2011 to 2017. The annual distribution of seeds and agricultural equipment – with 16,000 households each receiving an aid package worth EUR 32 – is in line with humanitarian logic and may increase dependence on hybrid seeds at the expense of adapted local varieties.

Overall, analysis of the budget suggests that, despite its (short-term) peace-related objectives (reintegration of ex-combatants and displaced persons, support for vulnerable households), the project was planned and implemented like a road construction project. Only around 9 % of the total budget was allocated to cash-for-work payments to the local population, agricultural advice, social infrastructure and the prevention of gender-based violence. Similarly, only limited human resources were earmarked for community awareness-raising and training measures, which limited the project's peace-promoting impact.

12. Allocation efficiency

A key problem for the effectiveness of the measure is the lack of maintenance of the road by the responsible road construction authority (*Office des Routes*) and the inadequate connection of this section of the road to other interregional transport routes (see chapter on sustainability). This problem was already well known at the time of the project review. In addition, traffic on the road was lower than expected, because traffic on the main access roads from Kisangani and Goma to Lubutu/Obokote came to a virtual standstill in some places due to the security situation and the deterioration of important sections of the road. As a result, the ferries were also underutilised, which had a negative impact on their operating concept. Despite these largely known circumstances, the decision was made to rehabilitate the road in order to connect the Maniéma region to the supra-regional exchange of goods and thus provide it with a short-term "peace dividend". From today's perspective, the question arises as to whether the considerable funds involved in the project could not have been used more effectively elsewhere, given the short service life and poor connectivity of the road: it would have been conceivable to select another section of road, possibly with simpler logistics and greater economic potential. Similarly, greater investment in local and regional road maintenance capacities would have been a viable option. To a certain extent, this was achieved through the project's training of local road maintenance workers

(*cantonniers*) and other donors (EU, DfID) through the establishment of the FONER road maintenance fund and capacity development measures for the *Office des Routes*. Other alternatives would have been to rehabilitate the railway connection to Maniéma province or shipping, the latter of which was already partially covered by the TC programme. Without road and market connections, exclusive investment in agriculture would probably have been of little effect. This meant that, with regard to the outcome-level objective – reviving the local economy in Maniéma province as a short-term peace dividend – there were few alternatives to the chosen concept. With regard to the quality of road rehabilitation, the question arises as to whether greater use of machinery instead of manual approaches would have led to better and more sustainable results. This question could not be conclusively answered in the evaluation.

Rating summary of efficiency: e.g. moderately successful (3)

In view of the considerable delays and cost increases associated with the measure, which are not unusual in a fragile context, as well as the relatively short service life and low utilisation of the rehabilitated road combined with high construction costs per kilometre, the efficiency of the measure is assessed as only moderately successful.

Impact

13. Overarching developmental changes

The objective adjusted during the evaluation was to improve the socio-economic living conditions of the local population in Maniéma Province.

The following indicators were used to measure the impact objective/no indicators were specified.

Indicator	Status at time of review	Target value at EPE (review)	Actual value at PCR	Actual value at EPE
(1) Transport prices between Obokote and Punia (adjusted for inflation)	8.80 USD/kg of goods traded from Kisangani to Punia	25 % reduction	0.30 USD/kg of goods from Kisangani to Punia	Value: 0.3–0.4 USD/kg of goods Target value achieved
(2) Food security in the Obokote and Punia road catchment area	Chronic malnutrition among children under 5: 44 % (2007) Acute malnutrition among children under 5: 11 % (2007) ¹⁶	Improvement in food security	Chronic malnutrition among children under 5: 44 % (2021) Acute malnutrition among children under 5: 4 % (2021) ¹⁷	Value: no data on malnutrition in children Punia: 40 % (09-12/2025) and 15 % (01-06/2025) of the population is in a crisis or emergency food situation Lubutu: 25 % (09-12/2025) and 20 % (01-06/2025) of the population is in a crisis or emergency food situation Target value partially achieved
(3) Household income in the Obokote-Punia road catchment area	Around 70 % of the households surveyed along the road live below the poverty line of USD 1.2 per person per day (household size: 5.4 persons) (2010) 37 USD/household/month (2005) ¹⁸	Increase in household income	Income of 2.15 USD per day during road works (204,000 working days) Income of market women selling food and other items during road works	Value: no data available PCR: Partially fulfilled (short-term employment in road construction, stimulation of trade and agriculture) Data insufficient

¹⁶ UNDP, 2009: Maniema Province. Summary profile of poverty and living conditions of households. Kinshasa.

¹⁷ UNICEF, 2021: Child poverty and deprivation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Maniéma Province. Kinshasa.

¹⁸ UNDP, 2009: Maniéma Province. Summary profile of poverty and living conditions of households. Kinshasa.

(4) Security situation in the project region	Low presence of government officials and police in the region	Improvement in the security situation	Improved sense of security through stronger police presence, better accessibility of schools and health stations in neighbouring villages	Security-critical incidents/attacks; presence of Wazalendo militias, illegal mines Target value not achieved
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Table 3: Impact target achievement.

Source: Own illustration.

Indicator 1

At the time of the final control, the cost of transporting goods on the Kisangani–Punia route had fallen by 97 per cent and the cost of passenger transport by 50 per cent. Improved transport options enabled better marketing of local agricultural products, while at the same time more traders came to the region to offer their products. The road also enabled faster transport of patients to health centres, which was particularly beneficial for women in labour. Girls found it easier to attend a nearby secondary school and did not have to move to the city, where they were exposed to an increased risk of gender-based violence.

Transport costs on the route are extremely high. In 2025, after the mining company partially rehabilitated the road, the cost of transporting one tonne of goods by truck from Kisangani to Punia is 800,000 – 1,000,000 Congolese francs (317 – 396 EUR) and the cost of transporting one person on a motorbike is 300,000 Congolese francs (119 EUR). These costs are comparable to the 2016 price of 300 USD per tonne of freight from Kisangani to Punia, taking inflation into account, but are lower than the prices charged in 2010 before the road was rehabilitated. In addition, there are tolls at the six toll stations on the Kisangani–Punia route (three toll stations between Obokote and Punia), which amount to 1,000–5,000 Congolese francs (0.40 EUR – EUR 2.00) per motorbike and 100,000 – 500,000 Congolese francs (EUR 400 – 2,000) per lorry for the entire journey. The toll stations are operated by employees of the road maintenance fund FONER, but also by local authorities, road committees and informal structures. It is not clear to the local population to what extent these funds are invested in road maintenance. Despite the high costs, the Punia – Obokote – Lubutu route is regularly used for the transport of goods. The trucks of the mining companies pose a particular problem, as their weight contributes to the rapid deterioration of the road. The connecting roads to the south towards Kindu and to the north towards Kisangani and Goma remain in very poor condition and are now rarely used.

The inaccessibility of the Punia territory therefore remains a key development problem. As in the past, poor road connections lead to high consumer prices and difficulties in marketing local products.¹⁹ This prevents the region from developing its agricultural potential.

Indicator 2

Before the road was rehabilitated, the agricultural population in the project region mainly produced for their own consumption, as it was not possible to market their products. Between 2010 and 2016, the amount of cultivated agricultural land (arable farming, vegetable growing, fish farming) almost tripled. The number of fruit trees and farm animals (e.g. goats, poultry) also increased significantly, which was attributed to improved marketing opportunities and a resulting greater interest in agriculture. It is reasonable to assume that the agricultural advisory measures of the project also contributed to this. At the time of the final control, no deterioration in chronic malnutrition among children under the age of 5 had been observed, and the percentage of acute malnutrition had been reduced to 4 % compared to 2007. At the time of the evaluation, no current comparable figures were available. In the Punia region, around 15 % of the population was in a crisis or emergency food situation in the first half of 2025, and around 40 % in the fourth quarter of 2025. In the Lubutu region, these figures are 20 % and 25 % respectively.²⁰ This shows that food security is highly volatile and improvements can change rapidly.

The repair of 15 drinking water points initially reduced the incidence of waterborne diseases by 38 % (diarrhoea) and 28 % (amoebiasis). However, due to the poor hygienic and structural condition of the water points, many families are once again using river water. As a result, there have been many cases of diarrhoea and cholera, especially among children, throughout the region. The NGO Action Contre la Faim (ACF) treated 2,096 malnourished children at the Punia health centre within twelve months (2023/2024), 307 of whom could not be saved.²¹

Indicator 3

The rehabilitation of the road using labour-intensive methods and the stimulation of the local economy through improved transport links led to an intensification of economic activity and presumably also to rising incomes in the region. With the deterioration of the

¹⁹ Radio Okapi, 2025: The isolation of northern Maniema penalises local farmers. 22 September 2025.

²⁰ Data from IPC 2025: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/>.

²¹ Radio Okapi, 2024: Punia: more than 2,000 malnourished children cared for in one year thanks to the NGO ACF.

road, economic activity in the Obokote-Punia region has declined again. No data is available on the current income development of the population in the region.

Indicator 4

No information is available on the use of the services of the project in the area of gender-based violence. There is also a lack of data on the development of social cohesion. The 2016 study merely points to an increased police presence and thus an improved security situation along the road. At the same time, however, police officers repeatedly demand high tolls from travellers. Due to the improved income opportunities, young men have refrained from working seasonally in illegal mines. No information is available on the status of reintegration of ex-combatants and returning displaced persons in the project region at that time.

A World Bank analysis of 192 road construction projects in the DR Congo between 2003 and 2024 found that road rehabilitation was associated with a slight decrease in violence against the civilian population, possibly due to improved accessibility for security forces. An exception to this were roads in gold mining areas, where rehabilitation led to an increase in gold mining and the associated structures of violence. The World Bank also notes that the rehabilitated roads had generally lost more than half of their structural integrity after just three years. This meant that their usefulness to the local population declined again and the level of violence rose once more.²² A similar development can be assumed for the road from Obokote to Punia.

The security situation in the Punia and Lubutu territories is now determined by the activities of the Wazalendo.²³ These are local militias that were set up and armed by the government to support the Congolese armed forces in their fight against the Rwandan-backed M23 militia in the east of the country.²⁴ The government has largely lost control of the Wazalendo, who are fighting among themselves and with the army, among other things for control of lucrative roadblocks.

As already identified as a risk in the design phase of the project, legal and illegal mining in Maniéma Province has continued to grow in importance. Mining companies create jobs and are required by the mining code (code minier) to invest part of their revenues in local development. Mining is now the most important employer in the region. However, the human rights situation in mining is considered difficult, compounded by negative environmental impacts such as deforestation and the use of harmful chemicals in the mines. Local civil society criticises mining companies for often disregarding the provisions of the mining law, while military personnel accompany and protect mine operators who frequently operate illegally. This increases insecurity in the region.²⁵

According to figures from the Provincial Department for Gender, Family and Children (Division provinciale du genre, famille et enfant), the number of acts of violence against women and girls in Maniéma province has risen steadily in recent years. Between 2019 and 2021, the authority recorded 24,000 cases, in 2023 there were 29,059 cases and in 2024 there were 33,069 cases.²⁶ The territories of Lubutu and Punia are particularly affected due to the presence of armed groups and mining activities. In 2021, only around 9 % of all affected women received medical or psychosocial support.²⁷ This means that the activities of the project to prevent gender-based violence probably only had a limited impact. However, people in the project region say that sexual violence is now being discussed more openly and that those affected are less stigmatised.

14. Contribution to overarching intended developmental changes

In the first few years after the rehabilitation of the road and social infrastructure, positive development policy changes were observed in the Punia and Lubutu territories. These included the revival of trade, the expansion of agricultural production, improved access to schools and health stations, a decline in waterborne diseases and a stronger presence of public administration. These changes can be attributed to the project. It is reasonable to assume that this had positive effects on the food security, education and health of the local population. In retrospect, it is not possible to determine the extent to which particularly disadvantaged groups (e.g. people with disabilities, women and girls, minorities, older people) benefited from these changes. However, these positive changes were only temporary. Due to a lack of maintenance work, much of the infrastructure fell into disrepair in the following years, and the agricultural production groups disbanded after a while. This reduced the positive development policy effects of the project.

With its combination of labour-intensive road construction, rehabilitation of social infrastructure and promotion of local agriculture, the project pursued an approach that other international organisations and private-sector structures (e.g. mining companies) continue to practise. At the same time, it should be noted that the budget for accompanying measures amounted to only around 9 % of the total funding volume, meaning that the project did not pursue the objectives of a comprehensive regional development programme. Due to its emergency aid nature, the project did not pursue any structural changes on the partner side,

²² Lebrand, Mathilde, et al., 2024: Road Investment and Violence in DRC: Perishable Effects. Washington, DC: World Bank.

²³ Radio Okapi, 2025: Five dead and several wounded in two Wazalendo ambushes against the FARDC in Maniema. 29 September 2025.

²⁴ United Nations Human Rights Council, 2025: Report of the OHCHR Fact-Finding Mission on the situation in North and South Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo. A/HRC/60/80. Geneva.

²⁵ Radio Okapi, 2025: More than 300 participants at the 2nd conference on mining, energy and infrastructure in Maniema. 4 November 2025.

²⁶ Agence Congolaise de Presse, 2025: Maniema: more than 33,000 cases of GBV recorded in 2024 (a humanitarian NGO). 3 January 2025.

²⁷ Radio Okapi, 2022: Maniema: more than 24,000 cases of gender-based violence recorded from 2019 to 2021, 17 March 2022.

e.g. in the road construction authority. However, the operating concept developed for the ferries still appears to be in use. With regard to the development policy additionality of the project, it should be noted that the Punia–Yumbi section had already been manually rehabilitated in 2013 as part of a United Nations cash-for-work project and an internal ‘service road’ had been built, which had led to an increase in traffic volume. Later, the authorities used the obligations of the mining companies under the Mining Act to persuade them to rehabilitate the Punia–Lubutu road. However, these rehabilitation measures did not include structural civil engineering works or the ferries. The establishment of the important ferry connections across the Lubutu and Loma rivers would probably not have taken place without the project.

15. Contribution to overarching unintended developmental changes

No reliable data or information on unintended overarching (intended) developmental changes resulting from the project measures could be collected within the framework of the rapid appraisal approach used in the evaluation. There were risks associated with an increase in population density along the road, linked to the expansion of shifting cultivation into previously untouched rainforest areas and their further deforestation. Another risk was the expansion of legal and illegal mining in the road's catchment area, triggered by improved transport links to the mines. It is reasonable to assume that the increase in traffic and the influx of new population groups has led to an increase in sexual violence against women and girls and the spread of new diseases (see above). Similarly, it cannot be ruled out that the expansion of commercial agriculture will lead to the neglect of production for personal consumption, while producers become dependent on fluctuating market prices. The distribution of seeds can lead to dependence on hybrid varieties, while adapted local varieties are lost. This can have a negative impact on food security. The increased presence of public administration and security forces can increase the intensity of corruption and human rights violations, ultimately having a negative impact on people's lives. However, it seems plausible to assume that the project has achieved a marginal improvement in social cohesion or peace.

Rating summary of impact: e.g. moderately successful (3)

Due to the short-term positive effects on the socio-economic living conditions of the population in the project region, in particular improved transport links, increased agricultural production, revitalisation of economic activity and stabilisation of the security situation, but given the short duration of these improvements, the effectiveness of the project is appraised as only moderately successful.

Sustainability

Even at the project design stage, limited sustainability requirements were applied to the project. Accordingly, the sustainability of the project was to lie less in the durability of the infrastructure than in the durability of the peace process, which was to be supported in the short term by the peace dividend generated by the project. The limited sustainability requirement also proves to be justified ex post, as conflict or crisis-related factors mean that (i) the capacity of state partner institutions is limited, including corruption risks, limited ability to properly maintain and service infrastructure and to finance running costs, etc., (ii) the limited self-help capacity of the target groups due to widespread poverty, and (iii) highly volatile political conditions.

16. Capacities of beneficiaries and stakeholders

At the end of the project period, it was already apparent that the road construction authority *Offices des Routes* did not have the necessary resources and capacity to operate and maintain the road and ferries on a sustainable basis. The original plan was for the road construction authority to set up its own brigade to take over the road construction camp in Ugandula and operate and maintain the road from there. The routine mechanical maintenance work (e.g. cutting back vegetation along the road, cleaning rainwater channels and culverts, filling erosion gullies at an early stage) was to be carried out by specially trained road maintenance workers (*cantonniers*), who were to be employed for this purpose directly by the road construction authority or through NGOs or small businesses commissioned by it. The maintenance measures should be financed by the road maintenance fund FONER, which was recently set up by the DfID and the World Bank, but this was not achieved despite intervention within the framework of FC activities. Ferry operations were to be carried out by personnel trained by the project on the basis of an operating concept set out in a user guide. Social infrastructure (markets, water points, mills) was to be operated by local committees set up and trained by the project. The project also established numerous agricultural production groups for the joint production and marketing of agricultural goods.

As explained in the section on effectiveness, the infrastructure built as part of the project was in poor condition at the time of the evaluation. After years of neglect, the Obokote–Yumbi section of road was superficially rehabilitated by a mining company in 2025, while the Yumbi–Punia section is barely passable. The ferries are still in operation, but due to the low volume of traffic, they are not being used to capacity, meaning that the original operating and financing concept no longer works. Nevertheless, they perform an important function by maintaining minimal transport links between Punia and the urban centres of Kisangani and Goma. However, the Punia territory is once again largely cut off from road traffic, as it was at the start of the project. The road construction authority and the road construction fund FONER continue to collect - regarded as high - road usage fees from travellers, but do not use these funds for road maintenance. The high road usage and ferry fees increase the prices of goods offered on local markets. All this causes considerable disappointment and discontent among the local population. The agricultural production groups disbanded after the end of the project, and farmers are now using local seeds again or waiting for seeds to be distributed by the state and international organisations. The NGO commissioned to implement the component on prevention and support for victims of gender-based violence continues to exist and has been able to expand its activities in eastern Congo. It has become an important health service provider with 565 employees.²⁸ The security situation in the project region has remained fragile since the end of the project. The area adjacent to the road is affected by the activities of armed groups (Wazalendo), who are fighting among themselves and with the security forces for control of important natural resources.

17. Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities

In view of the well-known maintenance problems, intensive efforts were made within the framework of the project to ensure the sustainability of the road and the infrastructure created. To this end, 133 road maintenance workers (30 % of whom were women) were trained in 2013. These were people who live in the vicinity of the road and were to be responsible for maintaining one kilometre of the road each. This was to be done under contract to the road construction authority. In addition, the ferry personnel were given further training and a technical and financial operating concept was developed. The sustainable introduction of improved agricultural production techniques was to be ensured by the 61 agricultural production groups established by the project, but these groups received only limited training in the organisational aspects of a production group. Local committees were established and trained to operate and maintain the social infrastructure. Ultimately, these measures were not sufficient to ensure the sustainability of the project's impact. The contribution of economic development to the peace process in eastern Congo has proven to be minimal. It has since become clear that peace development in the region is decisively influenced by external actors over whom such a project has no influence.

²⁸ HEAL Africa, 2022: Tertiary Hospital – Community Projects – Training and Research. Annual Report 2021. Goma.

18. Durability of impacts over time

The positive effects of the project were short-lived. No information is available on possible long-term negative effects (e.g. deforestation, expansion of illegal mining, prostitution, violence against women).

Since the end of the project, other (international) actors have supported similar measures, with some approaches being further developed. The current governor of Maniéma Province appears to be giving new priority to the local transport infrastructure. In December 2024, during the presentation of the new regional development plan (2024-2028), he promised to rehabilitate 1,500 kilometres of roads in the short term.²⁹ The *Office provincial pour l'entretien routier* (OPERMA) is now responsible for maintaining the roads in Maniéma Province. At the governor's behest, around 350 kilometres of roads in the south of the province were rehabilitated using simple means by October 2025. In the medium term, the connection between Kisangani and Kindu is to be re-stored. The work is being financed by a locally levied tax (*taxe conventionnelle*), which is intended to reduce dependence on the central government for road construction.³⁰ In addition, OPERMA is working with mining companies that, as part of their obligations, are participating in road rehabilitation with their machinery and promising funds for the construction of social infrastructure, the promotion of local agriculture and scholarships for students in the Punia territory.³¹ However, these promises are not always fulfilled.

Currently, the PADRIR programme, funded by the Arab Development Bank and the OPEC Fund for International Development with (*Programme d'Appui au Développement Rural Inclusif et Résilient*), with a budget of USD 130 million, is continuing the work of the project under consideration here in some respects, but without any connection to the FC project.³² However, PADRIR seems to be repeating some of the problematic approaches of the project under consideration here. These include the transfer of road construction machinery to an authority whose functionality has not yet been ensured. The almost annual distribution of seeds to local farmers increases their dependence on imported varieties. Instead, agricultural producers should be supported in obtaining seeds from adapted local varieties themselves, or local businesses specialising in seed production should be promoted.

Rating summary of sustainability: moderately unsuccessful (4)

Due to the inadequate maintenance of the infrastructure created by the project (roads, markets, water points) and the resulting short service life, as well as the short-term effectiveness of the accompanying agricultural measures, the sustainability of the project is appraised as moderately unsuccessful. From the outset, the project was subject to limited sustainability requirements, which proved to be justified ex post. Against this background, the appraisal of sustainability does not affect the overall rating of the project (see methodology for assessing success).

Overall assessment: moderately successful (3)

Text In the context of rebuilding the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo after the devastating Congo Wars (1996-2003), the project aimed to connect the north of Maniéma Province to interregional transport routes by rehabilitating the road from Obokote to Punia, thereby reviving the local economy. The project achieved this by carrying out labour-intensive repairs to the road and purchasing two ferries to cross the Lubutu and Lowa rivers. The road construction was accompanied by measures to promote local agriculture, prevent gender-based violence and rehabilitate social infrastructure, which also had a positive impact on the local population. The delivery of services was associated with considerable delays and cost increases, partly due to the lack of ex-ante planning in the context of the urgent procedure and the extremely fragile context. Despite various efforts, the project did not succeed in ensuring regular maintenance of the road, a well-known problem in the DR Congo. As the road gradually deteriorated, road traffic and thus its positive economic effects declined again. The development policy impacts of the project and its sustainability remained limited, although the latter was deliberately accepted from the outset and is therefore not included in the appraisal. Overall, the project is therefore assessed as having been only moderately successful.

²⁹ Akonda, 2024: Maniema: Adoption of the 2025 budget with 30 % growth to boost development, 18 December 2024. akondanews.net

³⁰ Radio Okapi, 2025: Inspection and acceptance of new roads to open up Maniema. 7 October 2025.

³¹ Radio Okapi, 2025: Maniema: Kalima Mining on a mission in Punia to restore trust with the local community. 11 July 2025; Radio Okapi, 2024: Maniema: mining company PKM commits to building health, education and road infrastructure. 18 January 2025.

³² PADRIR, 2025: PADRIR embarks on large-scale works in Maniema province. 29 September 2025. <https://padrir.cd/le-padrir-se-lance-dans-les-travaux-de-grande-envergure-dans-la-province-de-maniema/>

Contribution to Agenda 2030

The project contributed to the following goals of the 2030 Agenda:

Sustainability Development Goal 1 (Poverty Reduction): The employment of short-term workers temporarily increased their income. Poverty was also to be reduced by promoting agriculture and stimulating local economic cycles.

Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger): By promoting agriculture and economic exchange, the project aimed to contribute to reducing food insecurity.

Sustainability Development Goal 5 (gender equality): By employing women in over 20 per cent of short-term jobs, promoting the transformation of agricultural products and implementing measures to support victims of gender-based violence, the project aimed to improve the situation of women.

Sustainable Development Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure): Through short-term employment measures, the project rehabilitated public infrastructure (roads) as well as water points and markets.

Sustainability Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions): By reviving local economic cycles, the project aimed to contribute to the reintegration of ex-combatants and returning internally displaced persons.

The project implemented the principle of shared responsibility and accountability by focusing on empowering the road construction authority to maintain the rehabilitated road independently in the long term. The road section to be rehabilitated was selected in consultation with the Ministry of Construction and other international partners. The project took social, economic and environmental aspects of road rehabilitation into account in the preliminary studies and impact assessment. Accompanying measures were designed to increase social acceptance of the road. The opportunities associated with road construction outweighed the potential risks. The risks of a possible increase in illegal mining activity, the increased presence of armed groups, increased deforestation of the rainforest for agriculture and mining, and an increase in gender-based violence in the context of road rehabilitation were partially recognised but could not be addressed. There was no systematic involvement of particularly disadvantaged groups, nor was there any impact monitoring disaggregated by vulnerability. No positive impact of the project measures on the long-term resilience of particularly disadvantaged groups can be identified.

Methodology

Evaluation methodology

The ex-post evaluation follows the methodology of a rapid appraisal, i.e. a data-based, qualitative contribution analysis, and represents an expert opinion. The project is attributed effects based on plausibility considerations, which are based on a careful analysis of documents, data, facts and impressions. Where possible, this also includes the use of digital data sources and modern techniques (e.g. satellite data, online surveys, geocoding). The causes of any contradictory information are investigated, attempts are made to resolve them, and the assessment is based on statements that are confirmed by several sources of information (triangulation), where possible.

The analysis of the effects is based on assumed causal relationships, documented in the impact matrix developed during the project appraisal and updated during the ex-post evaluation, if necessary. The evaluation report sets out arguments as to why certain influencing factors were identified for the effects observed and why the project under review probably made a certain contribution (contribution analysis). The context of the development measure is taken into account in terms of its influence on the results. The conclusions are put into relation to the availability and quality of the data basis. An evaluation concept serves as the reference framework for the evaluation.

The method offers a balanced cost-benefit ratio for project evaluations, on average, with a balance between knowledge gain and evaluation effort, and allows for a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of DFG projects across all project evaluations. Individual ex-post evaluations cannot therefore meet the requirements of a scientific assessment in the sense of a clear causal analysis.

The main objective of the evaluations (knowledge interest) is to measure impacts, provide accountability, promote transparency and enable institutional learning.

Type of evaluation:

Remote with national experts.

Key questions of the evaluation according to the evaluation concept:

- Phase II continues the measures of Phase I with some expanded components. The evaluation will examine the extent to which the adjustments were appropriate and relevant to success.
- In addition to poverty reduction, the measure also served to promote peace. The evaluation will examine the extent to which the measures were geared towards this goal and the extent to which possible unintended negative effects were identified and mitigated (Do No Harm).
- The measures were implemented in coordination with the Congolese road construction authority (Office des Routes). To what extent was this able to ensure the sustainability of the project measures?
- Welthungerhilfe acted as a road construction company within the framework of the project. To what extent was it suited to this task? Did Welthungerhilfe succeed in building up the necessary technical and management capacities?
- Differentiated analysis of the short-term effects of cash-for-work measures and the medium-term effects of infrastructure components.
- What contribution did the accompanying measures in the areas of agriculture and gender-based violence make to the programme objectives at impact level of poverty reduction and the promotion of social peace/social cohesion?
- To what extent was the focus of the infrastructure measures on simple rehabilitation measures with a high labour intensity but limited long-term impact appropriate from the perspective of both then and now?

Non-public (internal) documents

Internal project documents, context, country and sector analyses.

Directory of public sources

- Agence Congolaise de Presse** (2025): Maniema: more than 33,000 cases of GBV recorded in 2024 (a humanitarian NGO). 3 January 2025.
- Akonda** (2024): Maniéma: Adoption of the 2025 budget with 30 % growth to boost development, 18 December 2024. akondanews.net
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- Ministry of Infrastructure, Public Works and Reconstruction** (2009): Transport corridors and financing on the priority road network of the DRC as of 31 August 2009. Kinshasa.
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- Musamba, Josaphat et al.** (2022): It Takes (More Than) Two to Tango. Armed Politics, Combatant Agency and the Half-Life of DDR programmes in the Congo. Ghent: University of Ghent.
- Muziala, Godefroid et al.** (2021): Roadblocks 'in tune with the country'. Beyond predation in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. University of Ghent.
- Ntanyoma, Delphin** (2025): Disappointment and Ex-Combatant Choices in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Civil War Paths*. <https://www.civilwarpaths.org/disappointment-and-ex-combatant-choices-in-the-democratic-republic-of-congo/>
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- UNDP** (2009): Maniema Province. Maniema Province. Summary profile of poverty and living conditions of households in Kinshasa.
- Radio Okapi** (2022): Maniema: more than 24,000 cases of gender-based violence recorded between 2019 and 2021, 17 March 2022.
- Radio Okapi** (2024): Punia: more than 2,000 malnourished children cared for in one year thanks to the NGO ACF.
- Radio Okapi** (2025a): Five dead and several wounded in two Wazalendo ambushes against the FARDC in Maniema. 29 September 2025.
- Radio Okapi** (2025b): Inspection and acceptance of new roads to open up Maniema. 7 October 2025.
- Radio Okapi** (2025c): The isolation of northern Maniema penalises local farmers. 22 September 2025.
- Radio Okapi** (2025d): Maniema: Kalima Mining on a mission to Punia to restore trust with the local community. 11 July 2025; Radio Okapi, 2024: Maniema: PKM mining company commits to building health, education and road infrastructure. 18 January 2025.
- Radio Okapi** (2025e): More than 300 participants at the 2nd conference on mining, energy and infrastructure in Maniema. 4 November 2025.
- Radio Okapi** (2025f): Road works in Maniema: CKM is working on 72 km from Punia to Lubutu. 21 January 2025.
- Sthonda, Jean Omasombo et al.** (2009): Democratic Republic of Congo. Maniema. Space and lives. Tervuren: Royal Museum for Central Africa.
- United Nations Human Rights Council** (2025): Report of the OHCHR Fact-Finding Mission on the situation in North and South Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo. A/HRC/60/80. Geneva.
- UNICEF** (2021): Poverty and deprivation among children in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Maniéma Province. Kinshasa.

Data sources and analysis tools

On-site data collection, partner monitoring data, surveys.

Project sites visited

selective inspection of road sections and villages between Obokote and Punia.

Interview partners and modality (in person, virtual/by telephone, in writing)

KfW project management (by telephone/virtually); consultants (by telephone/virtually); implementation partner Welthungerhilfe (by telephone/virtually); road construction authority (in person); Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock of Maniéma Province (in person); Local administrations of Punia and Obokote (in person); traditional chiefs and villagers of 12 villages in the area adjacent to the road Obokote–Punia (in person); chairpersons of three agricultural producer groups (in person).

The following aspects limited the evaluation

E The project was implemented in eastern Congo, an extremely fragile region. The road rehabilitation measures and accompanying measures were essentially completed in 2016, which was one of the reasons why the data available was unsatisfactory.

Assessment methodology

A six-point scale is used to assess the project according to OECD DAC criteria, with the exception of the sustainability criterion. The scale values are as follows:

- Level 1** Very successful: results significantly above expectations
- Level 2** Successful: results fully in line with expectations, without significant shortcomings
- Level 3** Moderately successful: results below expectations, but positive results predominate
- Level 4** Moderately unsuccessful: significantly below expectations and negative results dominate despite recognisable positive results
- Level 5** Unsuccessful: despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
- Level 6** Highly unsuccessful: the project is useless or the situation has deteriorated

The overall rating on the six-point scale is based on a project-specific weighting of the six individual criteria. Levels 1–3 of the overall rating indicate a ‘successful’ project, while levels 4–6 indicate an ‘unsuccessful’ project. It should be noted that a project can generally only be classified as "successful" in terms of development policy if both the achievement of objectives at the outcome level (effectiveness) and impact level, as well as sustainability, are rated at least as "moderately successful " (level 3).

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Responsible: Evaluation Department of KfW Development Bank

FZ-Evaluierung@kfw.de

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KfW Bankengruppe
 Palmengartenstraße 5-9
 60325 Frankfurt am Main, Germany