

Mauritania: Pro-employment Urban Infrastructure Programme I and II

Ex-post Evaluation

OECD sector	Employment policy and administrative management/16020	
BMZ project number	1994 66 673 (Phase I) and 1996 65 571 (Phase II)	
Project executing agency	AMEXTIPE (Agence Mauritanienne d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Public pour l'Emploi)	
Consultant	Hydroplan, Worms	
Year of ex-post evaluation	2008	
	Project appraisal (planned)	Ex-post evaluation (actual)
Start of implementation	4th quarter 1995	4th quarter 1995
Period of implementation	2 (I) and 1.5 years (II)	7 years (Phases I & II)
Investment costs	EUR 4.06 million	EUR 3.81 million
Counterpart contribution	EUR 0.46 million	EUR 0.54 million
Finance, of which FC funds	EUR 3.6 million	EUR 3.27 million
Other institutions/donors involved	-	-
Performance rating	3	
• Significance/Relevance	3	
• Effectiveness	3	
• Efficiency	4	
• Impact	3	
• Sustainability	3	

Brief Description, Overall Objective and Programme Objectives with Indicators

The two FC programmes formed part of the *Projet de Développement de l'Industrie de la Construction et de l'Emploi (DICE)* prepared and largely cofinanced by the World Bank and aimed at helping to reduce the high unemployment and underemployment in urban areas of Mauritania – in the short term at least - and flanking ongoing structural adjustment measures by financing many small individual projects in public facilities and infrastructure.

Programme I comprised the construction and rehabilitation of public facilities and infrastructure in the towns Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Rosso, Aleg and Kiffa, Programme II, the construction and rehabilitation of public facilities and infrastructure in the towns of the region of Hodh el Gharbi (Aioun-el-Atrouss, Tintane, Ain Farba, Tamchakett, Kobeni). The target group were the poor urban population in the four towns of Phase I and in the region of Hodh el Gharbi (Phase II), small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, craftsmen from the informal sector, local engineering firms and those worst affected by underemployment and unemployment.

The overall objective was to contribute to reducing unemployment and underemployment in urban centres and to mobilize local know-how and labour potential by contracting small and medium-sized enterprises and, with that, promote private-sector development. The overall goal

of the programme was redefined at ex-post evaluation as support for urban areas in expanding public services to stem the swelling rural exodus. In the face of the rapid settlement of nomads and urbanization, the programme's explicit intention was to make a contribution to meeting the key need for building up public infrastructure in larger municipalities ('towns'). The new overall goal definition therefore reflects needs and the impact alignment of the programme better than the original one. The programme objective was to create additional limited-term jobs in urban areas and repair public infrastructure facilities. Objective achievement was measured by average individual project costs, the labour cost ratio, proper implementation and use.

Programme Design/Major Deviations from Original Planning and Main Causes

Under the two FC programmes, 41 construction or rehabilitation projects were carried out in municipal infrastructure. In particular, basic buildings such as classrooms, marketplaces, bus stations, slaughterhouses and health stations were financed and brief advisory assignments funded to support AMEXTIPE. To a lesser extent than provided for at appraisal, urban roads and urban sewage systems were extended or rehabilitated. Apart from this, there were no deviations from the original programme planning.

Programme implementation was entrusted to AMEXTIPE, a private, non-profit company largely independent of government and political influence that executes investments in building infrastructure and service capacity on behalf of public institutions and donors. The project applications submitted by the municipalities were vetted by AMEXTIPE applying set criteria and carried out under delegated responsibility. The municipalities undertook to remit a counterpart contribution of 10% or 20% before commencement of building works. They participated to a small extent only in contract award decisions and works supervision in the individual projects and future users were hardly involved at all.

Key Results of Impact Analysis and Performance Rating

Altogether, the programme objective can be deemed to have been achieved, despite some reservations. We classify the overall developmental performance of the programmes as sufficient (Rating 3). The overall rating is based on the following subratings:

- **Relevance** (Subrating 3): The creation of short-term jobs to support the structural adjustment measures was of limited relevance only for reducing poverty and promoting growth in Mauritania as the posited results chain was only plausible to a certain extent: Demand-side finance cannot make any substantial contribution to lowering the prevailing structural unemployment and developing the private sector in Mauritania. Building municipal infrastructure, in contrast, was highly relevant, because it addressed a key development constraint in connection with the massive settlement and urbanisation processes. The programme was in the line with the decentralization policy of the Mauritanian government and other donors. As a precursor of the subsequent decentralization programmes, it still conforms with the priority of German FC with Mauritania. To meet today's developmental standards, the programme design would have had to be aligned more closely with the use of the facilities and participation and embedded in a more coherent overall strategy.
- **Effectiveness** (Subrating 3): The programme objectives of creating short-term employment and the installation and repair of public infrastructure in towns via contracts to SMEs were attained, though after a delay. Key to measuring the effectiveness of the measures is the new indicator on facility use added at ex-post evaluation, especially as KfW, unlike the World Bank, deliberately refrained from labour-intensive public works projects at that time for reasons of sustainability. Use and proper operation amount to 76% in numerical terms and 84% as to volume, so they remain in the positive range. Designing the programme with more emphasis on building infrastructure would have improved effectiveness.

- **Efficiency** (Subrating 4): The efficiency of the programmes was impaired by the prolonged implementation period totalling 7 instead of 3.5 years as planned, which also diluted the employment effects during this time. The buildings are of medium constructional quality. The frequent need to cancel construction contracts resulted in delays and higher costs. Allocative efficiency as indicated by target group facility use is generally acceptable, but there are deficits on account of unused buildings due to mistaken site selection or design shortcomings.
- **Impact** (Subrating 3): The overall objective was to contribute to the temporary reduction of unemployment in urban centres and to mobilizing local know-how and labour as a way of promoting the local private sector. A provisional contribution was made to the original overall objectives, but not to structural adjustment. As to the redefined overall objective - support to urban areas in expanding public services to stem rapid rural exodus - the project made an important contribution, with inputs also made in basic capacity building for orderly municipal administration and hence to decentralization. The markets and other economic infrastructure contribute to generate revenue for the municipalities and their financial independence. Furthermore, the schools and health stations make an important contribution to improving the conditions of life. The high ratio of girls in the schools, which would not be possible without a sufficient infrastructure, advances gender equality.
- **Sustainability** (Subrating 3): The conceptual design of the programmes was not, however, suitable for the sustainable reduction of structural unemployment typical of the urban sector in Mauritania. On account of the lasting contribution the programmes have made to removing key developmental bottlenecks in the provision of municipal infrastructure, sustainability can be gauged as sufficient altogether. Delays in infrastructure works and in part constructional defects occurred, but thanks to the plain and robust building design the useful technical lifetime can rate as adequate by Mauritanian standards. Based on experience so far with target group acceptance of the facilities and their operation by the municipalities, the positive impacts can be expected to continue during the period of technical use, although the programme approach and its implementation with little target group involvement and the scant attention paid to enabling the municipality to operate the facilities properly do not comply with current state-of-the-art standards in social funding programmes. As mentioned, though, the programme made an important and thus sustainable contribution to building municipal authority capacity and decentralization.

General Conclusions

In terms of conceptual design, the programme belongs to the first generation of social funding programmes. Since this type of programme has now been upgraded in large measure and mostly assimilated into decentralization and municipal development approaches in Africa, as is also the case in the sequel projects in Mauritania, many of the lessons learnt cited have already been implemented:

- Owing to their limited impact, short-term job creation schemes should only be carried out in acute economic or crisis emergencies as a provisional bridge to structural and sustainable strategies or as a part of these. Infrastructure programmes with several years of prior planning would seem unsuitable for alleviating an acute crisis through short-term income generation, while public works are more appropriate.
- More suitable for obtaining employment effects and promoting the private sector in the long run are structural measures based on a coherent development strategy, such as training or assistance to productive sectors like agriculture, fishery and forestry or the financial sector.
- Operational aspects should be taken into account in programme design. This also includes participatory individual project planning that caters for the needs of future users and operators as well as their training if necessary. Appropriate procedures need to be established in the project handbook and compliance with these should be documented and checked.
- To improve the transparency and efficiency of social funds, there is a need for regular analytical audits of the procedures, administrative operations/practice and data process-

ing in head office, in local offices and on construction sites. The findings should be consistently applied by the donors in follow-up or through external advisory, training and supervisory inputs.