



Secretaria de Estado da  
Formação Profissional e Emprego  
(SEFOPE)



## Fact Sheet

# Employment-Intensive Infrastructure Works

### Timor-Leste's Development Challenges

As Timor-Leste is embarking on a process of sustainable economic and social development, the lack of a national transport network is a key impediment to any efforts to deliver basic and development services. Roads linking communities to social, economic, and administrative centers must be built. This will require high budget investments. But roads are not the only urgent need of the country. Timorese people are living in poverty and their need for income is not negligible. A sensible approach to reduce community isolation and widespread poverty is to make employment central in any infrastructure investments.

The Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment (SEFOPE) has demonstrated its ability to administer a labour-based infrastructure works approach in various cash-for-work programmes. In the post-conflict periods in 2006 and 2007 District Employment Centers were instrumental in worker recruitment and placement in these programmes. In May 2008, the Short-Term Employment Creation Department (STEC) was created within SEFOPE's Division of Employment and since that time has been coordinating the National Workfare Programme Phase I. Areas of responsibility of the STEC Department include coordination with district government authorities and Public Works in community mobilization, planning, road selection, procurement of goods and services for road works, and administration of labour wages at the rate of US\$2/day. The wage rate was determined as per the recommendations of the ILO Wage Rate in the Construction Survey carried out in mid 2008.

Considering the vast need for infrastructure in Timor-Leste, a gradual progression of labour-based infrastructure work approach in road rehabilitation and maintenance will have to be made. Local small scale contractors are to be identified and strengthened in their technical and business management ability. District Public Works are yet to install a road contract system featuring a transparent contract bidding and award process. Local government officials in both Public Works and SEFOPE need to be skilled in work supervision in terms of technical engineering and labour protection, respectively.

### Employment-intensive infrastructure works

International experience shows that an employment-intensive infrastructure works approach can make direct,



positive contributions to poverty alleviation efforts. The on-the-job coaching system with Public Works and labour officials, contractors and workers helps improve the skills of the participating individuals and their respective organizations. Roads and irrigation works are suitable for the employment-intensive approach. Work quality is not compromised. Local economies are regenerated as works activities stimulate local trade and generate income for household spending.

Building local capacity to implement employment-intensive works programmes takes time. Areas for technical assistance cover integrated rural accessibility planning, techniques in road rehabilitation and maintenance, and contractors' training programmes. The ILO's technical expertise in these areas has been widely recognized. Through its partnership with national governments and international banks such as the World Bank and the ADB, and bilateral governments, the ILO has provided critical inputs to national infrastructure rehabilitation plans. In many countries, contractors' training centers are now fully operational and locally managed after completion of ILO's technical assistance programmes.

### Timor-Leste's Way Forward

The current TIM Works Programme is a partnership programme that receives financial contributions from the Government of Timor-Leste, the European Commission, and the Governments of Ireland and Norway. By using the labour-based infrastructure works approach, the Programme aims at

rehabilitating 300kms and maintaining 1,536kms of rural roads and thereby generating over 1 million work days, 30% of which targets women and 50%, youth in 13 districts. The Short-Term Employment Creation Department, with technical assistance from the ILO, manages the TIM Works Programme at both the national and district levels.

At the national level, the TIM Works Central Unit is created within STEC to take charge of management, technical support, and coordination of programme activities. The STEC District Technical Team comprises national engineers, maintenance supervisors, field officers and logistics support. The District Technical Teams work closely with the District Administration and community leaders and with the Public Works Regional Engineers and District Supervisors. This multi-level coordination is to facilitate the identification of priority works on the road networks and coordination with other on-going or planned activities, including harmonization and institutionalization of standards and procedures for labour-based infrastructure works.

Community consultation is of central importance in the TIM Works Programme. Rehabilitation and



maintenance activities and their corresponding labour requirements are explained to community leaders. Care is taken to ensure that women's views and daily travel needs are integrated in selection of roads for rehabilitation and maintenance as women in rural areas carry a heavy burden of domestic and productive activities. Since construction activities are

not deemed as traditional work for women in Timor-Leste, participation of women in infrastructure works is monitored through a sex-disaggregated data, which will, in turn, support gender analysis and design of specific interventions, as required.

The implementation of the TIM Works Programme is coordinated closely with the SEFOPE-managed Youth Employment Promotion Programme. Ensuring 50% youth participation in TIM Works activities is not an easy feat within the context of Timor-Leste. Timorese youth have a high rate of rural-urban migration. In some locations, youth constitute less than 50% of local population. More works in rural employment promotion will need to be done to create incentives for youth to remain and/or return to rural areas.

## Contact Information

SEFOPE  
Department of Short-Term Employment Creation  
**Mr. Lúcio Berataci**  
Mobile: 725 7762  
Email: [lucio\\_bt\\_13juli1970@yahoo.com](mailto:lucio_bt_13juli1970@yahoo.com)

ILO  
Mr. Tomas Stenstrom  
Mobile: 730.4055  
Email: [stenstrom@ilo.org](mailto:stenstrom@ilo.org)

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