



In-depth analysis of selected EPWP projects and case studies through the EPWP phases





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Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AGSA	Auditor-General of South Africa
CBD	Central Business District
CBO	Community-based Organisation
COIDA	Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act
CWP	Community Works Programme
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DEFF	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
DPW	Department of Public Works
DPWI	Department of Public Works and Infrastructure
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FTE	Full time equivalent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	Growth and Development Summit
HCBC	Home and Community Based Care
HoD	Head of Department
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
IGP	Infrastructure Grant to Provinces
ILO	International Labour Organisation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
MIS	Management information system
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework

MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NEF	National Economic Forum
NFSD	National Framework for Sustainable Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation
NPWP	National Public Works Programme
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSS	Non-state sector
NYS	National Youth Service
PEP	Public Employment Programme
PEP-IMC	Public Employment Programme Inter-Ministerial Committee
PWD	Person living with disability
PWP	Public Works Programme
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RG	Reference group
RS	Reporting system
SACN	South African Cities Network
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SMME	Small, medium or micro enterprise
SOE	State-owned enterprise
TVET	Technical and vocational education training
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
WO	Work opportunity

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The purpose of this report is to give the results of an assessment of selected EPWP programmes implemented since 2004.



FIGURE 1: An EPWP project being implemented

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the EPWP

Before South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the National Economic Forum (NEF) carried out a study of public works programmes (PWP). The study included a focus on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the National Public Works Programme (NPWP) as vital for job creation in the country. The NPWP, a key implementation strategy of the RDP, had two elements: a community-based public works programme; and reorientation of public expenditure towards labour-intensive infrastructure development.

By 1999, with approximately 40% of the working-age population without work, unemployment particularly among young people was identified as one of the country's most significant threats. Challenges facing the government included reducing unemployment, alleviating poverty, strengthening the skills base and improving social services. In his State of the Nation Address in February 2003, former President Thabo Mbeki announced that the government was launching an expanded public works programme. The purpose was to draw the largest possible number of unemployed people into productive work, increase their skills and reduce their marginalisation; and to increase economic growth so that the number of jobs exceeded the number of entrants into the labour market. Aligned with this was the need to improve the education system, resulting in an increasingly skilled workforce.

A nation-wide programme covering all state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was launched in 2004. The expectation was that, in the first five-year phase, beginning in April of that year, the programme would provide temporary work and skills training to one million unskilled, unemployed people. Under the Ministerial Conditions of Employment for the EPWP, workers were to be employed on a short to medium term basis by government, contractors or non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

1.2 Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to give the results of an assessment of selected EPWP programmes implemented since 2004. The programmes described in the report were extracted from the EPWP annual reports (State of Expanded Public Works Programme in South African Cities) for the years 2004 to 2018. The assessment focused on a range of themes including best practices in planning, implementing and monitoring EPWP programmes. Through an analysis of the EPWP annual reports, this report identifies challenges and gaps faced by the cities in implementing the programmes and is the foundation on which the "How-to Guide on Running Effective Expanded Public Works Programmes", a major goal of the study, has been developed.

1.3 Methodology

The study assessed each of the four EPWP phases, analysing them on the basis of their set targets. The first step was to carry out an in-depth analysis of each phase, identifying its successes and the difficulties it faced. Material reviewed included previous case studies, project reports and annual performance reports as well as literature from the participating member cities, South African Cities Network (SACN) and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI). The aim was to understand how to improve the EPWP's effectiveness in creating work opportunities (WOs) and alleviating poverty through skills development. Projects were selected for review based on their scale and the availability of consistent data.

The sections of this report dealing with the programmes reviewed give the reasons why they succeeded or failed and conclude with recommendations based on these findings.

2

Background to the EPWP

This chapter describes the background to the EPWP. It highlights the various phases of the EPWP and the sectors in which it works and explains key EPWP terminology.



2.1 Phases of the EPWP

The EPWP has been implemented in four phases with job creation targets of one million for Phase 1, two million for Phase 2, six million for Phase 3 and five million for Phase 4.

2.2 EPWP sectors

The EPWP creates WOs in four sectors (Infrastructure; Environment and Culture; Economic; and Social) by:

- Increasing the labour intensity of specific government-funded infrastructure projects.
- Creating WOs in public environmental programmes.
- Creating WOs by using general government expenditure on goods and services for small enterprise learnerships and incubation programmes, particularly through learnerships¹.
- Creating WOs in public social programmes.

Participants in the programme are employed on a temporary basis under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Code of Good Practice for employment and conditions of work for Expanded Public Works Programmes), with public sector bodies making a deliberate attempt to use expenditure on goods and services to create WOs for unemployed and unskilled people.

2.3 Programme indicators

A number of indicators for monitoring and reporting on the performance of the programmes were developed:

- Person-days of Employment Created: The number of people who worked on a project multiplied by the number of days each person worked.
- Job Opportunities: One job opportunity equals paid work created for an individual on an EPWP project for any period. Learnerships also constitute job opportunities in the case of Social sector projects. One person can be employed on different projects and each period of employment will be recorded as a job opportunity.
- Project Wage: The minimum daily wage rate equals the daily wage per project. The EPWP Guidelines state that this wage rate must be included in the project tender documentation.
- Training Person-Days: The number of person-days is calculated by multiplying the number of people who attended training by the days of training.
- Training Funding: Some EPWP training was and continues to be funded through the National Skills Fund (NSF) of the Department of Higher Education and Training; this training is accredited. Training funded through a project's budget is not necessarily accredited.
- Project Budget: The project budget is equal to the price tendered by the contractor plus the professional fees for the professional service provider appointed to design and supervise the project. Government's management and administration costs are not included in the project budget.
- Actual Expenditure: The expenditure by the appointed professional service provider on designing and supervising the project plus the expenditure on the project by the contractor.
- Demographic Characteristics of Workers: The number of workers in each of the following categories: youth (people aged 18 to 35); women; and people living with disabilities (PWDs).

¹Programmes that aim to provide unemployed people with occupation-based skills and to build a capable and competent workforce.



3 EPWP Phase 1 (2004–2009)

3.1 Introduction to EPWP Phase 1

The Growth and Development Summit (GDS) in June 2003 determined that the EPWP would ensure that R100 billion of planned government expenditure targeted employment-intensive programmes. The GDS emphasised that relevant and targeted training must form the main component of the EPWP so that participants acquired relevant and marketable skills. The focus included the following:

- Adult basic education and training (ABET)
- HIV/Aids awareness
- Health and safety
- Social entrepreneurship
- Industrial relations
- Vocational skills
- Life skills
- Entrepreneurship
- Project management
- Community development
- Project-specific skills
- Co-operatives training.

It was decided from the outset that the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) would provide funding for the EPWP to ensure resources for:

- Labour-intensive programmes, including road construction, environmental projects, water and sanitation and other social and economic services.
- Permanent capacity for maintenance of infrastructure.
- Providing community services in the spheres of health and welfare.
- Launching a large-scale programme for Early Childhood Development (ECD).

The EPWP was also aligned with and supported the growth and development objectives of the 2004-2009 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).



FIGURE 2: An example of an EPWP

3.2 Aims and objectives of EPWP Phase 1

In May 2004, following reviews of the framework devised in December 2003, the aims and objectives of the EPWP were articulated. The main goal, over the period 2004 to 2009, was to take a minimum of one million people in the country out of unemployment. 40% were to be women, 30% youth and 2% PWDs. To achieve this, government was to:

- Over the five years, create temporary WOs and income for one million people.
- Use mainly public sector resources, public and private sector implementation capacity and labour-intensive methods to generate public goods and services of acceptable standards.
- Provide work experience, training and information related to WOs to increase participants' potential to earn future income.

The programme would target the following categories of people:

- Unemployed people able to work
- Unskilled people
- People not receiving social grants
- People living in poverty
- Women
- PWDs
- Young people.

A priority at the start of the phase was to establish the programme within the labour, legislative and economic contexts. It initially operated under the Code of Good Practice for employment and conditions of work for Expanded Public Works Programmes. The Code allowed for wage negotiations below the statutory minimum and limited the duration of employment under these special conditions but ensured that all workers employed under these conditions were entitled to training. The conceptualisation and preparation stages were completed in November 2003 and implementation of the programme began in April 2004.

The Department of Public Works identified two mechanisms that would complement the growth of the Infrastructure sector in particular:

- Placing special conditions on National Treasury infrastructure grants to provinces and municipalities
- Implementing a labour-intensive contractor learnership programme in partnership with willing provinces and municipalities.



FIGURE 3: An example of an EPWP skills development programme at work

3.3 Targets of EPWP Phase 1

The targets for the EPWP were set from the R45 billion allocated to the MIG for the period 2004 to 2009, in terms of which R15 billion was reserved for employment-intensive construction under the EPWP.

Within the EPWP, the Infrastructure sector was identified as having the greatest potential for generating employment, estimated at 900 000 jobs over the next five years. This included development of 37 000 km of roads, 31 000 km of pipelines, 1 500 km of storm water drains and 150 km of sidewalks.

Government committed to increase the budget from R58 billion in 2002/3 to R74 billion in 2003/4. Approximately R28 billion would be spent over the three years 2002/4 to 2005/6, an increase of 30% on the years 2000/1 to 2002/3. A significant portion of this was allocated to civil construction, which is capital-intensive.

Through targeted maintenance of public buildings, it was estimated that 150 000 jobs would be created over the next five years.

Environmental programmes included eliminating one million hectares of alien plant species and improving 1200 km of coastline. Economic programmes aimed to create 400 small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs). The other anticipated outcomes for the first phase of the EPWP included:

- WOs created: one million person-years
- Accredited training for 2100 people
- Training for 250 contractors and 15 000 professionals in the private sector on employment-intensive approaches
- Training for 1000 public sector officials on employment-intensive approaches.

3.4 Implementation of EPWP Phase 1

Phase 1 of the EPWP was implemented from 2004 to 2009 with the aim of injecting the maximum amount of new labour into new job opportunities to speed up economic recovery and growth amongst the less privileged. The major emphasis was on expanding existing public works programmes in which work had already started and the groundwork laid down rather than on implementing new ideas. Existing services and projects also had the advantage of being familiar to the communities in which they were located and it was therefore easy to absorb and inject labour into the projects, thereby creating employment. In addition, using existing budgets reduced project costs and the time needed to carry them out. To avoid displacing those working in the sectors and to take advantage of existing capacity to absorb labour, a key focus was on already-growing sectors of the economy. The EPWP was to be sustainable, efficient and cost-efficient.

3.5 Key programmes implemented

The programmes implemented in the various sectors are summarised below. Consistent with the research methodology of this report, only programmes implemented by SACN member cities are listed.

3.5.1 Infrastructure sector

By the end of Phase 1 of the EPWP, five programmes had been implemented in the Infrastructure sector.

- The Technical Support Programme: This provided technical support to municipalities and provincial departments to facilitate implementation of infrastructure development.
- The Vuk'uphile Contractor Learnership Programme: This programme, which continued through subsequent phases of the EPWP, provided training in labour-intensive methods of construction and in becoming contractors at NQF level 2 and for supervisors at NQF level 4.
- The National Youth Service (NYS) Programme: This was a year-long skills development and training programme that aimed to provide unemployed South African young people with technical and life skills training, opportunities for future employment, access to practical work experience and mentoring or support for continued studies upon completion of their year in the NYS programme.
- The Large Projects Programme: The large projects in this programme were defined as projects with a minimum budget of R 30 million which should have appropriate contract conditions, including labour-based methods, and allow workers of different backgrounds to undergo training.
- The Provincial Roads Programme: This programme focused on providing technical support to departments responsible for transport and for provincial roads in maintaining and constructing access roads using labour-intensive methods. More than 64 programmes created 88 000 WOs.

The success of the Infrastructure sector programme was based on two factors: the ability of the construction industry to make use of labour-intensive construction techniques; and the capacity of provincial and local governments to implement the Infrastructure Grant to Provinces (IGP) and the MIG.

3.5.2 Environment and Culture sector

In the Environment and Culture sector, Phase 1 of the EPWP employed people to work on projects to improve the local environment, heritage, biodiversity and land care. The phase had the following objectives:

- Creating land-based livelihoods
- Promoting tourism
- Protecting biodiversity and rehabilitating natural resources
- Integrating urban renewal and sustainable rural development
- Facilitating long-term employment by providing training
- Promoting community-based natural resources management
- Enabling marginalised people to participate in the mainstream economy by linking them to opportunities and resources.

Through flagship programmes that included “Working on Fire”, “Working for Wetlands” and “Working for Water”, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) created more than 450 000 WOs (SMEC South Africa, 2014).

3.5.3 Social sector

During Phase 1, in the Social sector beneficiaries were trained through skills programmes, learnerships and WOs in the following social development and community protection programmes:

- Kha Ri Gude (Tshivenda for ‘Let us learn’): This was a mass literacy campaign for adults who had missed out on their schooling.
- School Mass Participation: WOs were provided to sports coaches and members of the public to promote good health, self-realisation, social cohesion and community development.
- Community Crime Prevention: Members of the community were encouraged to volunteer in EPWP projects to be active in helping to identify community safety priorities for their neighbourhoods.
- School Nutrition Programme: Members of the community were employed as food handlers to provide food to needy families and children, thus addressing malnutrition.
- Home/Community-Based Care: Formal and informal caregivers were employed in EPWP projects to provide basic health services to people in their own homes or within the community close to their homes.
- Early Childhood Development: This was and continues to be a comprehensive approach to programmes and policies for children with the active participation of their parents and caregivers to protect children’s rights.

One of the key focus areas of the EPWP’s Social sector programmes in this phase was to train pre-school teachers and support staff (cooks, gardeners and administrators) so that they could pass on their knowledge to benefit the country’s children in the long term.

3.5.4 Economic sector

Programmes in the Economic sector during Phase 1 of the EPWP focused on entrepreneurial and cooperative income-generating activities. The sector used general government expenditure on goods and services to provide WOs for small enterprise learnerships and incubation programmes. This was done particularly through learnerships such as the New Venture Creation Leadership Programme and the Co-operative Development Programme. Through such programmes, the EPWP in the Economic sector achieved its targets (Shisaka Development Management Services, 2008). However, EPWP activity in the sector was relatively small compared to the other sectors (Shisaka Development Management Services, 2008).

3.6 Challenges faced in EPWP Phase 1

- The phase had limited objectives and thus a limited effect on reducing unemployment and alleviating poverty.
- According to the 2013/14 Annual Report that covers the years 2009 to 2012, out of the one million WOs created, by 2008 towards the end of the first phase only 11% of unemployed people had been reached.
- The WOs were short and had a limited effect on poverty reduction.
- The duration of the projects varied considerably across sectors, provinces and municipalities with shorter durations reported in areas with higher rates of unemployment implying that work was shared amongst people in the community.
- Levels of performance by public bodies ranged from good to poor.
- Wage rates varied between sectors. In some instances, wages did not increase to keep up with inflation; in others, wages were so low that they did not contribute meaningfully to poverty reduction (SMEC South Africa, 2014).

The review of Phase 1 made a number of recommendations: to include targets and measures for increasing the average duration of each work opportunity; to improve the training framework; and to increase the scale of the programme by mobilising non-state capacity, with programmes managed by NGOs and local communities through the Community Work Programme (SMEC South Africa, 2014).

3.7 Conclusion to EPWP Phase 1 review

By 2008, a year earlier than had been planned, Phase 1 of the EPWP had achieved its objective of creating one million jobs and had exceeded its targets for young people and women. A review of the programme found that the rate of unemployment declined during Phase 1 but that the scale of the programme would have to be expanded if it was to contribute substantially to the government's goal of halving unemployment by 2014 (Shisaka Development Management Services, 2008).

Recommendations based on the review of the phase included increasing the scale of the programme so that it could meaningfully decrease unemployment and alleviate poverty. A minimum specified level of performance would be required for the programme to be scaled up and a minimum wage for all participants in the programme would need to be clearly defined and adjusted annually (Shisaka Development Management Services, 2008).

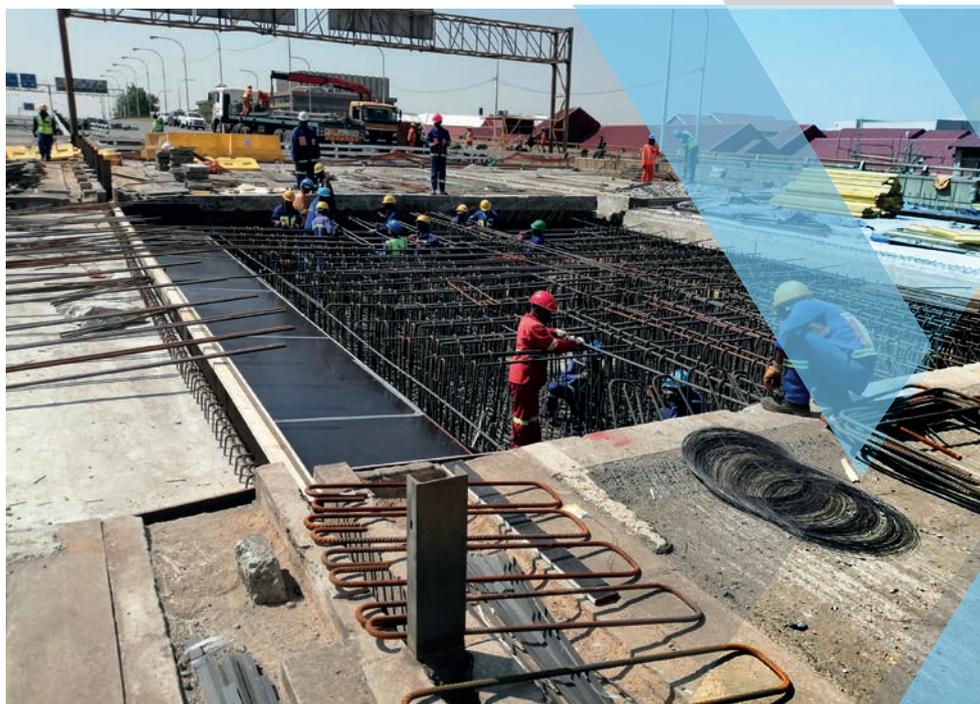


FIGURE 4: An example of an EPWP

4 EPWP Phase 2 (2009–2014)

4.1 Introduction to EPWP Phase 2

Planning for Phase 2 began in 2008. Lessons learned, and data and information derived, from Phase 1 were used to improve the planning and organisation of the phase. City-specific data was available and comparing data was simplified. The review of Phase 1 had shown the lack of uniformity and standardisation in how works were regulated and carried out (SMEC South Africa, 2014). Larger cities such as Johannesburg tended to perform well and smaller ones, such as Buffalo City, poorly; this widely varying performance was a concern. Unemployment was still a massive problem and the need for solutions at city level was clear. Cities' role in the EPWP was critical as projects needed to incorporate ideas that could increase employment opportunities, grow the economy and reduce unemployment. To achieve the goal of halving unemployment by 2014, Phase 2 would have to create two million employment opportunities (Shisaka Development Management Services, 2008).

Taking note of how using the Phase 1 indicators led to understanding the successes and failures of the phase, the Phase 2 indicators remained person-days of employment created, job opportunities, project wages, training person days, project budget, actual expenditure and participants' demographic characteristics.

The four EPWP sectors in this phase were:

- Infrastructure sector
- Environment and Culture sector
- Social sector
- Non-state sector.

Because of the range of opportunities identified by the 2010 Green Economy Summit, sustainable development was an important concept in Phase 2. This did not change the goals of the EPWP but encouraged a sustainable approach to the programme's activities.

4.2 Aims and objectives of EPWP Phase 2

Phase 2 was expected to grow the EPWP to approximately four and a half times its size at the end of Phase 1. This would enable it to make a significant contribution to the Millennium Development Goal of halving unemployment by 2014 (SMEC South Africa, 2014). A wage-incentive grant was introduced in this phase. The aim was, by reimbursing a portion of the wage costs, to assist the cities to increase the number of WOs created. Funds not used for employing labour, particularly using labour-intensive methods, would go towards increasing the scope of the work. For public bodies to access the funds, information about prior work had to be submitted to the Department of Public Works (DPW) using the EPWP Management Information System which showed their contribution to creating employment. Urban municipalities and provincial departments were expected to meet the minimum level for creation of full time equivalent (FTE) jobs from the allocated infrastructure grant. For public bodies to receive the grant, they were required to enter into a standard agreement with the DPW. Monitoring and evaluation of the EPWP was to be through a web-based central database enabling quick and efficient management of the EPWP Wage Incentive Grant.

To ensure that the EPWP was sustainable and implementable within the cities, a priority was to have in place a policy framework. The policies included informing all of a city's departments of their roles, through their involvement with the EPWP, in promoting socio-economic development through job creation and poverty reduction; ensuring integration across sectors; and maximising the potential for realising the programme's goals through planning for job creation. By 2012, four cities (Johannesburg, Tshwane, eThekweni and Nelson Mandela Bay) had in place policies intended to meet the targets set by the DPW as well as the cities' own goals and institutional arrangements. Overarching committees and

departmental representatives, supported by political champions, were to coordinate implementation within the various cities. Adjustments made included a shift in focus by the City of Johannesburg from the Infrastructure sector as the only focus; such adjustments required adjusted strategies.

Despite its similarities to Phase 1, in Phase 2 there was to be a particular emphasis by all public bodies on creating opportunities through delivery of community services and through temporary, income-providing WOs. Phase 2 had the following objectives:

- A higher percentage of WOs was to be allocated to women and young people, seeing that the initially set targets for these groups had been met and exceeded.
- Given the budget limitations when implementing the EPWP, an increased portion of the allocated budget would be spent on WOs and on training.
- Targets for each of the four sectors were to be individually specified.

4.3 Targets of EPWP Phase 2

The equivalent of 2 million FTEs or 4.5 million short ongoing WOs.

4.3.1 Infrastructure sector

As was the case with Phase 1, in Phase 2 across all cities the main focus was on Infrastructure sector projects. As it was the largest generator of employment within the EPWP, the goal for this sector was to create 900 000 FTEs and 2 374 000 WOs (SMEC South Africa, 2013/2014.). This was to be done using the following four strategies:

- Using labour intensive methods
- Providing training and development programmes
- Building cost effective infrastructure
- Ensuring good quality infrastructure.

4.3.2 Environment sector

The Environment sector was the second largest regarding the number of WOs created. The goals within this sector were to create 350 000 FTEs and 1 156 000 WOs; enhance the country's natural and cultural heritage through medium- and long-term employment; provide training and long-term employment linking marginalised people to the economy; rural development; urban renewal land-based livelihoods; community-based resource management; protecting biodiversity; and promoting tourism (SMEC South Africa, 2013/2014.). Professionals such as engineers were expected to play a role in developing programmes related to rural support, tourism, water, wetlands and fire management.

4.4 Implementation of EPWP Phase 2

Phase 2 of the EPWP had a positive impact within communities. As a result of the income that they received, many of the programme's participants were able to sustain themselves.

However, there were areas of concern about the phase. These included its limited objectives and limited effect on reducing unemployment. As was the case with Phase 1, the duration of WOs was found to be shorter than ideal.

The following indicators were used to assess each city's progress in meeting its EPWP objectives:

- Number of WOs created
- Overall budget and expenditure
- Training duration
- Average employment duration
- Minimum wage rate.

A 2014 review by SMEC South Africa found that the EPWP management information system (MIS) showed that, in the first three years of Phase 2, SACN member cities produced 24 407 WOs and 4 841 FTEs, with 2 726 EPWP projects implemented. The cities creating the most employment in the first three years of the phase were Johannesburg, eThekweni and Cape Town. There was a clear relationship between the number of projects implemented and the cities' institutional arrangements and organisational capacity. With their well-established and dedicated EPWP units, larger cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg had a greater number of successful projects although findings from both Phase 1 and

Phase 2 indicated that having a dedicated EPWP did not guarantee effective management and coordination of a city's or municipality's EPWP. However, the knowledge gained in Phase 1 about the importance of cities' institutional arrangements and organisational ability to manage EPWP projects was usefully drawn on in Phase 2. The number of jobs created by the nine cities over this period accounted for 51% of jobs created by all municipalities; R10.9 billion was spent on creating these jobs.

During the phase, skills were developed through technical support programmes, learnership programmes, National Youth Service programmes, Large Projects Programmes and provincial road programmes. The aim was to provide NQF Level 2 training to labourers and NQF Level 4 training to supervisors (for example: through the Vuk'uphile Contractor Learnership Programme) (SMEC South Africa, 2014). Poor quality reporting of project data was an issue in many areas. An example was under-reporting by the City of Tshwane during Phase 2; this resulted in its being overlooked as one of the cities implementing the most projects. Poor quality reporting also meant that data about the extent to which the EPWP was meeting its targets was not wholly correct.

4.4.1 Employment trends

Most of the WOs were created in the larger cities where the majority of the projects were implemented and where institutional capacity existed. During the phase, with the exception of Cape Town and Tshwane, the participating cities showed a decrease in annual numbers of WOs. This may have been due to under-reporting, projects not starting on time and/or longer duration of projects. As not all of these factors were negative, the number of FTEs and the duration of employment had to be considered when analysing these trends.

Of the nine cities, more than half did not meet their Phase 2 employment targets. Particularly in Johannesburg, the number of WOs created decreased annually. This may have been due to lower targets rather than to what the city was capable of achieving. These lower targets depicted a city that was doing well in terms of achieving its goals. However, this was a misrepresentation of the overall success of the EPWP's progress.

The SACN 2012-13 State of Expanded Public Works Programmes report showed that in some cities the number of FTEs increased during Phase 2 but the number of WOs decreased; this may have been due to the duration of the projects. As an example, Cape Town produced significantly more WOs but the City of Johannesburg produced the most FTEs in 2012/13.

The decrease in the number of WOs reported may have been due to:

- Under-reporting
- Cities not maximising labour-intensive construction opportunities
- Inefficient management of EPWP projects
- Projects not starting on schedule
- Projects lasting longer than anticipated or planned for, leading to an increase in the period of employment and thus reducing the annual WOs generated.

4.4.2 Training

One of the core aims of the EPWP is to provide unskilled people with training. In Phase 2, sufficiently emphasising the provision of training was a widespread issue (Mohlala, 2015; SMEC South Africa, 2013/2014). This could have been due to:

- The lack of available budget to fund training initiatives
- Expenditure on generating more WOs rather than on training
- Difficulties in securing accredited training providers
- The cost and time implications of training days on project deliverables.

4.4.3 Sectors

The Infrastructure sector, in which most projects were located across all cities, focused on the following four objectives:

- Using labour intensive methods
- Providing training and development programmes
- Building cost-effective infrastructure
- Ensuring good quality infrastructure.

Poor quality data reporting was an issue in many areas. As a result, in some instances this incorrectly suggested that national targets were not being met.

The Environment and Culture sector, the second largest sector, also contributed to achieving the goals of Phase 2.

The Social sector was another area of focus but was not used to its maximum potential as indicated by the low number of projects implemented.

The SACN *The State of Expanded Public Works Programmes in South African Cities* report covering the years 2009 to 2012 indicated that, in the non-state sector, there was little implementation (SMEC South Africa, 2014). Community initiatives and programmes formed the majority of projects in this category.

4.5 Key projects implemented

Key projects implemented in the sectors are summarised below.

4.5.1 City of Tshwane: Vat Alles Project

This Environment sector project was launched in 2012. Its main aim was to clean up areas such as taxi ranks, cemeteries, sports fields and rivers. The initial phase was expected to benefit at least 3 000 people. The beneficiaries were chosen from very poor households for contracts lasting six months; the programme also targeted disadvantaged demographic groups including women, young people and people living with disabilities. The process included general litter picking on roads and fields and clearing up illegal dump sites. There was also community environmental awareness outreach about the importance of cleaning up and sorting litter.

4.5.2 City of Cape Town: Alcohol and Drug Recovery Treatment Sites

According to the SACN EPWP 2013/2014 Annual Report, the Western Cape had the highest numbers of users of methamphetamine and similar substances. This Social sector project was launched in 2008 to combat drug abuse and to provide drug rehabilitation services. To ensure that the project reached the most vulnerable, it was provided at sites where drug abuse was most rife. To save costs, no new clinics were built but sites were created at existing clinics in the metro. Part of the rehabilitation effort was a community outreach programme that provided information about drug abuse and about skills acquisition and other practical support. A first of its kind in Africa, the programme was intensive with at least three weekly sessions to ensure that patients were followed up frequently to help avoid regression. The programme also provided home sessions to ensure that the patients had systems at home to help monitor and support them. The programme was considered to have made a considerable impact through its provision of free and good quality healthcare to those vulnerable to drug abuse.

4.5.3 Community Works Programme (CWP)

Initially piloted in 2007, the CWP was officially launched during Phase 2 of the EPWP and was the first Non-state sector (NSS) project in the country. Its purpose was to provide work experience while giving the participants a sense of social inclusion and increased dignity. All CWP programmes followed the guidelines set down by the Department of Cooperative Governance. The CWP had a main objective of creating regular work for those who needed it; through this, a range of other outcomes were achieved which contributed to strengthening community participation.

4.5.4 Nelson Mandela Bay: Community Works Programme (CWP)

This CWP was launched in 2012 and implemented in 18 out of the municipality's 65 wards; these wards already had EPWP programmes in operation. The role played by the municipality was very important to the success of this programme, with plans developed to increase the number of beneficiaries in the following phase. The CPW was successful in boosting community assets and creating income generating employment partly because of the existence of industries in the area.



FIGURE 5: Expanded Public Works Programme

4.6 Challenges faced in EPWP Phase 2

A review of the phase (SMEC South Africa, 2014) showed that it faced the following challenges:

- Poor quality reporting and under-reporting
- Weak monitoring
- Difficulty in accessing grants
- No common audit criteria
- Lack of branding for the projects
- Changes of champions
- People living with disabilities were not effectively included in the infrastructure projects
- Insufficient funds for training.

4.7 Conclusion to EPWP Phase 2 review

Phase 2 of the EPWP was a five-year plan aimed at developing temporary jobs for unskilled people. The participating cities provided opportunities in the areas of infrastructure development, environmental development, social development and economic development. Training was encouraged so that the value of skills learned could be maximised. This phase had strengths and weaknesses. Solutions therefore had to be developed to overcome these shortcomings whilst addressing the EPWP's infrastructural, environmental, social and economic growth targets.

5 EPWP Phase 3 (2014–2019)

5.1 Introduction to EPWP Phase 3

The beginning of Phase 3 of the EPWP was marked by changes to the reporting requirements from the DPWI's Monitoring and Evaluation unit. The department provided technical support to help with making these changes. During Phase 3, the programme reported over 4.5 million WOs against a target of 6 million. The success of the first two phases of the programme prompted a 33% increase in the targets for the phase (Mohlala, 2015). Phase 3 placed a greater emphasis on the quality of projects, with training and skills-development remaining important elements (The State of Expanded Public Works Programmes in South African Cities annual reports, SACN, 2014-2019).

5.2 Aims and objectives of EPWP Phase 3

As with the previous phases, the main objective was to provide WOs and income support to poor and unemployed people through labour-intensive delivery of public and community assets and services, thereby contributing to development.

Six indicators were used to assess the cities' progress in meeting their objectives during the phase:

- Number of WOs created
- Number of person-days of work created
- Minimum day-task wage rate
- Number of person-days of training provided
- Overall budget and expenditure
- Demographics of workers.



FIGURE 6: Expanded Public Works Programme

5.3 Targets of EPWP Phase 3

Phase 3 of the EPWP (2014-2019) had a target of 6 million WOs. However, the focus was not only on increasing the numbers of jobs created but improving the quality of projects by:

- Providing project- and sector-based training aimed at capacitating the participants so that they could exit their projects with skills that would help them to become more employable.
- Providing and creating good quality services and assets in communities.
- Strengthening community participation not only through public sector funding but by including the Non-state sector.
- Implementing the universal principles that guide all EPWP programmes.
- Formalising the EPWP coordinating structures.

During the phase, six cities achieved just under 50% of their WO targets. Three achieved more than 50%; these were eThekweni (68%), Cape Town (63%) and Johannesburg (58%). In eThekweni, 6 113 out of the 14 949 WOs created were in the Zibambele programme (see section 5.5.5 below). This maintenance-based programme was in the Infrastructure sector and provided good opportunities to maximise WOs and FTEs. Mangaung, however, only achieved 15% of its WO target because of changes in the city's administration following municipal elections. The City of Cape Town distributed projects evenly across the Infrastructure, Environment and Culture and Social sectors, implementing the highest number of Social sector projects. In Phase 3, Msunduzi and Buffalo City did not implement any Social sector projects.

5.4 Implementation of EPWP Phase 3

In 2016/17, 1217 EPWP projects were implemented (EPWP Annual Reports, 2014-2018). Over half (56%) were in the Infrastructure sector followed by the Environment and Culture sector (28%) and the Social sector (16%). The number of projects implemented in Phase 3 was 72% higher than the number indicated in the 2015/16 Annual Report (Mohlala, 2015). New reporting system requirements contributed to the decrease in the number of projects implemented in 2015/16. After the DPW provided cities with technical assistance with data collection, capturing and reporting, the percentage increased in 2016/17.

With the exception of Mangaung, where the EPWP structure and HoDs changed resulting in new personnel without background knowledge of the programme, cities increased the number of EPWP projects implemented. Between 2016 and 2017, the City of Cape Town implemented the largest number of projects (469) followed by the City of Johannesburg (208). Msunduzi implemented the lowest number (17) followed by Mangaung (27).

In Msunduzi, a dedicated EPWP management team, with one acting manager and three EPWP administrative assistants, was responsible for capturing and reporting on all EPWP-related projects. The beneficiaries in Msunduzi were sourced from a municipal unemployment database. On contracts of three days a week for twelve months, they performed general maintenance duties including grass cutting, scuffing gutters, street sweeping and clearing illegal dumping and were paid on a monthly basis at a rate of R120 per day.

5.5 Key projects and programmes implemented

The following key projects and programmes were implemented during Phase 3 at member city level.

5.5.1 Administrative Data Capture: Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality

The project consisted of 18 participants who provided technical and administrative support to all PWP's implemented by the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The purpose of the project was to ensure that all EPWP projects and WOs were registered and reported on the DPWI-EPWP reporting system.

5.5.2 Johannesburg Water Vuk'uphile Learner Contractors Programme

This programme involved replacing water pipes at Greenside and Emmarentia in Region B. The programme was compliant with the DPWI's requirements (Vaughan et al., 2016).

5.5.3 Economic Development Infrastructure Maintenance

Much economic development infrastructure in the townships had not been maintained. As a result, its value had declined and some services were not operational. Participants in the Economic Development Infrastructure Maintenance Programme were responsible for checking operations every day and reporting on any malfunctioning services such as leaking taps or blocked sewer lines.

5.5.4 Urban Management Zone (UMZ)

This was a multifaceted programme designed to support assets, create urban infrastructure and ensure operational and maintenance resources so that assets were properly maintained and the built environment well managed. The objectives of the projects were to:

- Improve the quality of life overall for stakeholders thus contributing to a city's investment quality and creating employment.
- Uplift and sustain the area identified as the urban management zone.
- Provide a clean and safe environment.
- Contribute to sustainable urban management through facilitating the integration and management of municipal services.
- Ensure that assets were maintained, especially in respect of capital upgrades and new investment in infrastructure in the area.
- In association with the line departments, develop extensions to existing service levels taking into account the requirements of the UMZ (Muzondo, 2019).

5.5.5 Zibambele Poverty Alleviation Project

This programme targeted destitute women-headed households, employing them to carry out essential road maintenance and other labour-intensive activities. To facilitate continuity of employment for the household, households rather than individuals were contracted. The work carried out included cleaning road surfaces and clearing drains, channels and verges (Vaughan et al., 2016).

5.5.6 Ginsberg Cleaning and Beautification, Eastern Cape

The project provided support to the Solid Waste and Parks and Cemeteries departments. The services provided through the programme were particularly needed during the festive seasons (Muzondo, 2019).

5.5.7 Maintenance of Settlers Park, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality hired EPWP workers to work on the maintenance of Settlers Park, a "green lung" of the city, rich in bird and animal life and an important ecotourism attraction. The work included eradicating invasive alien plants that contribute to fires in the area. Valuable skills learned included being able to identify alien species, knowledge which could assist participants in the programme to find work in other fields (Mavovana, 2017).

5.5.8 Duncan Village Revitalization Programme, Buffalo City

This novel and unique programme, targeting in-school and out-of-school youth, not only created WOs for unemployed young people but provided much-needed support to schools in areas including curriculum support and sports coaching.

5.5.9 EPWP Database of Job Seekers, City of Tshwane

The city's initiative to develop a database of jobseekers provided equitable opportunities for residents to participate in EPWP projects. The database registered 120 683 job seekers. Participants were recruited randomly from the database in a fair and transparent manner. A total of 3000 participants were recruited from the database initially. By the end Phase 3, about 20 500 had been recruited from the database and 13 000 had signed contracts with various projects.

5.6 Challenges faced in EPWP Phase 3

Each city had its own challenges with implementing and ensuring sustainability of the EPWP, with the majority of the problems experienced by more than one city. It was therefore important for SACN cities to devise potential solutions to these problems. Below are listed the main challenges experienced during Phase 3.

- Data reports did not meet stipulated compliance levels, leading to inaccurate reports and under-reporting.
- Participants and labour unions expected full-time employment.
- There were many disputes regarding wage rates among SACN cities and sometimes among projects in the same city.
- There were instances of lack of compliance with the Code of Good Practice and the Ministerial Determination.
- There was a lack of buy-in and commitment from all of a city's departments and entities.
- There was a lack of organisational capacity in cities to manage and coordinate the EPWP.

The following solutions were proposed after the review of Phase 3:

- Cities must ensure that contractors collect and keep accurate records of information while following data requirements. The DPWI must assign data collectors and trainers to cities to ensure that data collection is done correctly and is quality checked before it is reported to the national level.
- Cities and EPWP implementers must ensure that all beneficiaries and contractors understand the conditions of EPWP employment before starting work.
- The DPWI needs to introduce standard wages across the EPWP and ensure that cities use allocated budgets effectively.
- Cities' policies relating to the EPWP, along with targets and codes of practice, must be updated to ensure that they follow DPWI determinations.
- To ensure accountability and commitment to EPWP initiatives and targets, EPWP performance indicators must be included in the scorecards of all HoDs.
- Incentives to ensure that city departments are motivated to implement the EPWP effectively must be introduced.
- To avoid backlogs due to lack of capacity, there must be no empty technical or management positions within cities' institutional structures

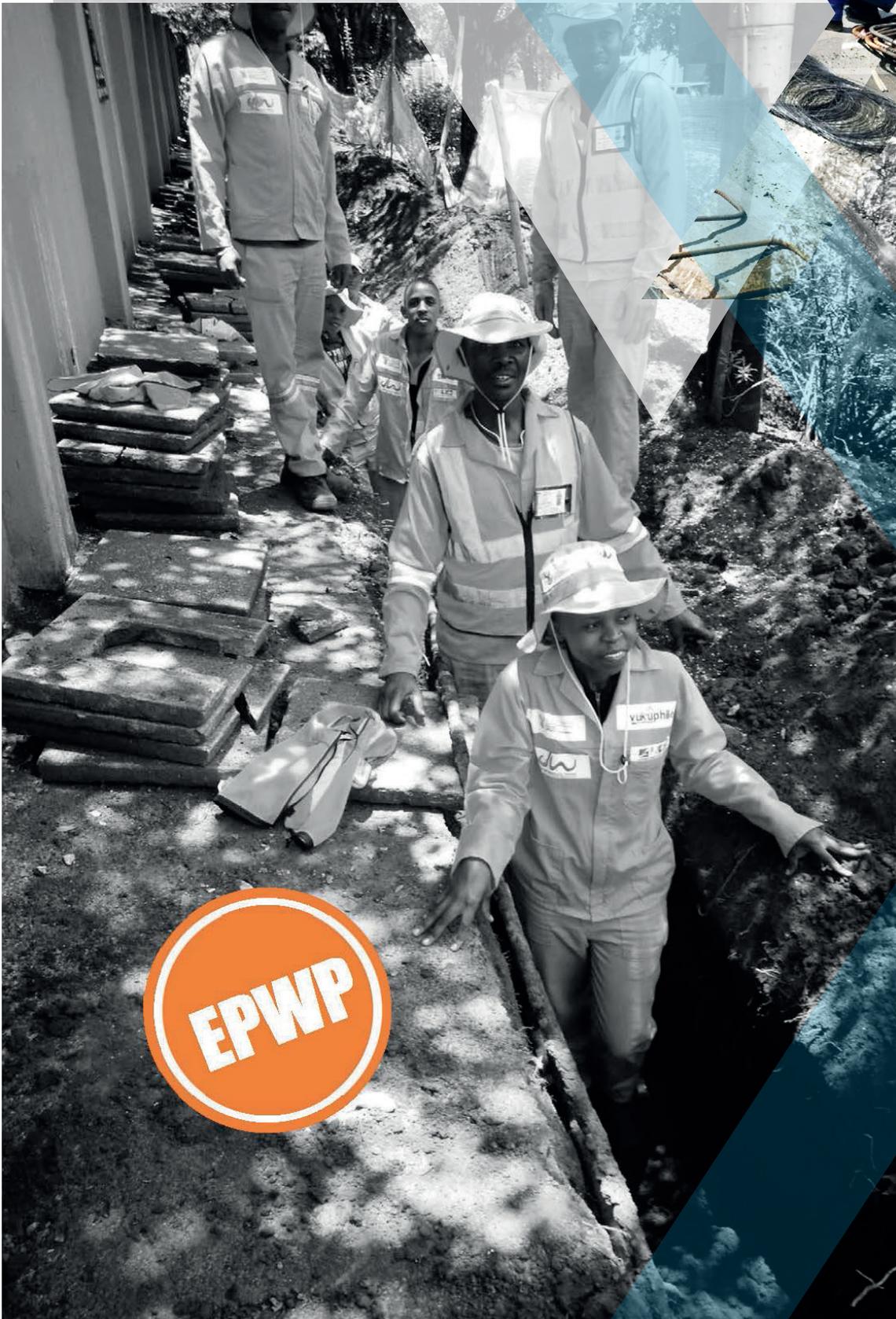
5.7 Conclusion to EPWP Phase 3 review

According to the SACN 2017/18 annual report on the EPWP, Phase 3 made progress in addressing the country's unemployment challenges. Municipalities slowly started embracing the duties assigned to them and the expected targets they had to meet. They began to increase capacity and take advantage of incentives by the government to ensure implementation of the programme. While most cities were able to meet the minimum targets in implementing the EPWP, some struggled to meet their set targets. This hampered the development of the whole programme. To address the problem, communication, sharing of knowledge and information and mutual assistance between the cities implementing the EPWP was deemed important.

While Phase 3 sought to address the challenges experienced in Phases 1 and 2, it had challenges of its own. Some were new while others remained from the previous phases. There was a recurring problem of non-compliance with the EPWP guidelines. There was also a lack of organisational capacity within municipalities to fully implement the EPWP. The number of people living with disabilities employed was still far below the targets; it was thus clear that more needed to be done to recruit more people living with disabilities and to create work suitable for them.

Planning for Phase 4 involved checking that these concerns could be addressed. There was also a need for better communication between SACN cities to ensure uniform implementation of projects. To assist SACN members with these issues, the DPWI introduced mitigation methods. The majority of Phase 3 projects were still in urban areas, indicating an ongoing neglect of rural communities; and, despite their employment in EPWP projects, most participants did not find formal employment as the programme did not give them all the skills required. The contractor development programme was seen as the most successful contributing programme within the EPWP at the end of Phase 3, with many of the beneficiaries obtaining work on their own as contractors after completing the learnership.

Phase 3 showed that it was important for cities to incorporate training as a key factor in the exit strategies of their programmes and to provide skills development programmes that empower participants to transition to formal employment or to establish their own enterprises. Municipalities must collaborate with organisations such as the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to provide accredited training to ensure that participants have transferable and marketable skills when they exit the EPWP. Given the country's high youth unemployment figures, young people are priorities as are women, with structural poverty continuing to hinder their participation in the economy. By the end of 2018, in six of the cities over 50% of the workforce in their programmes were youth, suggesting that the 55% target for Phase 3 was feasible.



EPWP

6

EPWP Phase 4 (2019–2024)



6.1 Introduction to EPWP Phase 4

The preceding phases of the EPWP, with a total of 15 years of experience, provided plenty of lessons to be learned and solutions to be developed. For Phase 4, therefore, new and/or effective solutions to challenges were available. The nine cities involved in the previous phases are addressing these challenges in a range of ways. Based on findings from the previous phases, the main issues to be taken in to account in Phase 4 are:

- The importance of practical targets and goals.
- The limited amount of cities' own funding for implementing projects.
- The lack of comprehensive legislation and policies.
- Insufficient technical and managerial capacity.
- Instances of failure by cities to conform to EPWP principles.
- The importance of providing training.
- The need for private sector participation.

Phase 4 began in 2019 and is scheduled to continue to 2024. When the phase began, its goals appeared realistic and achievable. However, the impact of the COVID-19 virus will make it difficult to achieve these goals, with cities changing the ways in which they are implementing their strategies to address their needs.

6.2 Aims and objectives of EPWP Phase 4

As was the case with the previous phases, the aim of Phase 4 is to provide WOs and access to income for the poor and unemployed and at the same time to contribute to development. During this phase, it is expected that at least 5 million WOs will be created.

Phase 4 emphasises the objective of taking public employment to new levels, with a focus at local government level on social protection, convergence and capitalising on development opportunities and with more uniformity, feasibility, standardisation and compliance with legislation. This should lead to greater efficiency in implementing the phase and achieving its objectives. Based on reviews of the previous phases, doing this will involve some notable changes:

- Improving compliance with EPWP guidelines.
- Developing the programme by duplicating and improving projects.
- Monitoring the quality of projects.
- Improving EPWP coordination.
- Implementing projects suitable for and more appealing to young people not in education, training or employment.
- Ensuring accountability and the use of evidence to guide the programme.
- Introducing social audits.
- Developing partnerships with the private sector.
- Using technical and vocational education training (TVET) colleges.

The EPWP is part of the long-term strategy of using labour-intensive methods to create employment opportunities, services and assets. In contributing to the country's development, Phase 4 aims to build on the achievements of Phase 3 as well as taking into consideration inflation and modest steady growth in the economy.

6.3 Targets of EPWP Phase 4

The two major targets of Phase 4, in progress when this report was being prepared, are:

- At least 5 million WOs across the various sectors.
- The Infrastructure sector creating the largest number of WOs followed by the Non-state sector.

The four sectors of the EPWP's focus remain the same for Phase 4. A significant change in the phase is the interlinking of sectors based on specific projects; this may involve overlapping sectors in projects. The Infrastructure sector aims to create about 1.7 million WOs over the five-year period. Youth training is to be expanded and emphasised. The number of contractors available to deliver the tasks is also to be increased. Labour-intensive projects of over R30 million are to be considered large projects. Road construction is to play a pivotal role in the Infrastructure sector.

Home and community-based care, ECD, national school nutrition programmes, community safety programmes, mass participation programmes and expansion of programmes are all expected to form part of Social sector activity during Phase 4. The aim is to create over 875 000 WOs during the phase. The Environment and Culture sector is also important, focusing on sustainable land-based livelihoods, coastal management, tourism, waste management, beautification and sustainable energy. In this sector, at least 940 000 WOs are anticipated.

The Non-state sector, a greater priority than in previous phases when its impact was not felt in all cities, is expected to create about 1.5 million jobs in this phase. It is expected that national government will create the largest number of WOs (over 2 million) in Phase 4, followed by provincial government (over 800 000) and municipal governments (over 400 000). These figures suggest the distribution of job opportunities planned among the spheres of government in achieving the target. Demographic targeting of women at 60%, youth at 55% and people living with disabilities at 2% is still a major focus.

An important change in Phase 4 is involvement of the private sector: for example, through public-private partnerships, which can help to ensure accountability. There is a need for sustainable methods of bringing additional income into public employment programmes (PEPs). Using the EPWP to assist with the development of tourism may include, among other points, ensuring safe and well-paved roads. TVET colleges, along with labour-intensive WOs, must be used to provide young people with the skills they need. Training for skills development through the EPWP can assist with developing patriotism and responsible citizens.

6.4 Implementation of EPWP Phase 4

Implementation of Phase 4 began in 2019. The business plan defined the way forward in terms of issues such as legislation and accountability; these play a vital role in determining how projects are to be implemented. Phase 4 still needs to achieve the primary goals of the EPWP: employment creation, income support, development of community assets and provision of community services through the projects implemented. Focus areas for Phase 4 include improving the EPWP guidelines (based on strengthening core values), expanding programmes across all sectors, improving EPWP coordination, ensuring greater transparency and responsibility, providing training and involving the private sector as partners.

In implementing Phase 4, legislation has a crucial role to play in creating a fair system and in relation to protecting workers, working conditions, contributions to the UIF, ensuring health and safety, compensation for occupational injury, minimum wages, impartiality in selection and protection during the COVID-19 pandemic. The four universal EPWP principles, aimed at protecting workers from unfair treatment, must also be adhered to. Accountability, an issue identified in previous phases, must also be in place and is the responsibility of the DPWI. Social audits and a strengthened evaluation process must also form part of Phase 4, involving role-players at national, provincial and municipal levels.

Key stakeholder roles and responsibilities continue to rest with three main groups: the DPWI, lead sector departments and provincial coordinating departments, with the DPWI developing the overall policy framework, implementing the strategy, supporting and facilitating expansion, planning and publishing documentation. The lead sector departments liaise between national, provincial and municipal governments in planning EPWP implementation; they also document quarterly progress indicators. Similarly to the lead sector departments, the provincial coordinating departments coordinate, campaign, facilitate, monitor and document the EPWP,

Also critical for implementation is funding, with all sectors of government (including municipalities) given a budget. In implementing the EPWP, public bodies are expected to use line function budgets. Extra funding may be available if expansion of projects and thus increased labour are required. Sector-specific conditional grants are allocated in each financial year to public bodies based on compliance with stipulations and agreements. Monthly expenditure reports must also be provided for quarterly grants. Reporting, monitoring, and evaluation are critical for indicating progress in the EPWP and there will be greater emphasis on these in Phase 4; the DPWI is responsible for this. Process evaluations involve a two to four year period, with compliance at difference stages of the project cycle and the effectiveness of its implementation monitored. Surveys, including baseline, cross-sectional and longitudinal can be done in every second year, with year 1 being the first.

6.5 Key projects implemented

As Phase 4 is currently in progress, the success of the projects implemented will only be known as the years progress. The four sectors remain the same as in the previous phases:

- Infrastructure sector. Example: the Provincial Roads Programme
- Social sector. Example: ECD
- Environment and Culture sector. Example: Sustainable Land-based Livelihoods
- Non-state sector. Example: NPO programmes. This sector is being encouraged in Phase 4.

6.6 Challenges faced in EPWP Phase 4

The challenges identified at the end of Phase 3 together with the solutions proposed still need to be addressed in Phase 4. Issues include noncompliance of data reports leading to incorrect reporting, expectations about full-time work, disputes and lack of organisational capacity. The solutions to overcoming these challenges were recommended in Phase 4.



7

Impact of COVID-19 on the EPWP

It was planned that Phase 4 (2019-2024) would build on the successes and lessons learned from the past 15 years. This, however, could not materialise because of the COVID-19 global pandemic which affected the country from early 2020. Following the President's decision on 23 March 2020 to lock down the country, Phase 4 which was still in its early stages and on which work had started in 2019 was forced to come to a halt. The phase has therefore suffered significant setbacks which have required innovative solutions at all levels of government (Activities of the Employment Intensive Investment Programme in South Africa, 2020).

7.1 Progress on Phase 4 of the EPWP before COVID-19

At the time of the lockdown, the programme provided work and income to approximately 800 000 vulnerable South Africans. In line with the government's emergency response provision, the EPWP:

- Instructed all government departments, municipalities and contractors to continue to pay all workers who were under contract on EPWP projects at the time of the national three-week lockdown period to ensure that they were not left without income.
- Made provision for projects and programmes providing essential services, such as home and community-based care and waste collection, to continue operations but with increased safety measures in place.
- Launched an initiative through its NPO programme to work with health NGOs to hire 20 000 young people to assist with the distribution of sanitisers and soap, educate people on proper hygiene to prevent the spread of the virus, disinfect high risk areas and conduct clean-up campaigns.

At the same time, the EPWP was also preparing to resume operations once the lockdown levels were relaxed. As the risk of contagion may still have been present, the International Labour Organization (ILO) was supporting the government with developing guidelines on appropriate mitigation measures to allow projects and activities to restart without putting workers and communities at undue risk.

7.2 Understanding the EPWP's role in the COVID-19 response strategy

In response to COVID-19's effects on social protection, the EPWP needs to strengthen its role in supporting government's long-term strategic goals by strengthening its health care capacity as well as assisting those who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic. The ILO's Michael Samson said that the EPWP would have to adapt some of its existing projects to respond to the COVID-19 risks and expand some EPWP projects to deliver more opportunities (Samson, M., 2020). Although COVID-19 had a negative impact on labour intensive industries, the EPWP could do a considerable amount to provide WOs for unemployed people. Dr Miriam Altman, a Commissioner in the National Planning Commission in the Department of the Presidency, said that during and after COVID-19 the number of people working in public and social employment could be increased through government support: for instance, through government purchase of COVID-19-related goods such as face masks from community-based organisations providing WOs to the unemployed. She said that the EPWP, as a public employment programme, must deepen service delivery but warned against using it to displace formal employment (EPWP's role in COVID-19 response strategy, 2020).

7.3 Response to the impact of COVID-19 on Phase 4 of the EPWP at national and provincial level

On 26 August 2020, the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure received an update from the DPWI on the role of the Independent Development Trust (IDT) during the lockdown period in the Social sector of the EPWP. The Deputy Minister of the department, Ms Noxolo Kiviet, reminded the committee that the EPWP is a means for addressing the challenges that the country is facing and is aimed at providing people from indigent households with skills so that they can enter formal employment. Ms Kiviet told the committee that the programme is not a mere job creation scheme but a poverty alleviation measure that acts as an initial steppingstone for poor households to improve their lives.

She added that, by providing EPWP workers across the country, the DPWI was supporting the Department of Health to combat the virus. On 12 April 2020, through the IDT the Department of Health contracted qualifying NPOs on the Central Supplier Database to appoint 25 000 people, predominantly aged 16 to 35, to participate in the department's EPWP COVID-19 response measures (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020). The IDT is the primary social infrastructure agency responsible for providing project management and social facilitation services across the country. The committee was informed that the agency had contracted about 189 NPOs in all nine provinces and district municipalities to participate in the EPWP COVID-19 response; 149 had started work, with 19 794 participants contracted by 31 July 2020 and deployed to various sites under the supervision of environmental health practitioners and facility managers from provincial Departments of Health. The department provided technical training on COVID-19 to all the participants and stated that they were paid a daily wage of R101; this was guided by the EPWP Determination of the Minister of Labour (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020). In line with its functions, the IDT was to ensure payments to the NPOs. To date, a total of R31 million had been paid. The committee heard that the project was being audited by the Office of the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) and that challenges encountered included delays in payments due to late submission of required documents (such as attendance registers, contracts and copies of IDs) by NPOs, and the risk of COVID-19 infection. However, the department had ensured that the EPWP participants were covered through the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) in case of infection by the virus. The committee appreciated the value of the IDT in upskilling young people in the country. However, it said the EPWP reporting systems and the department's other ICT systems must be updated speedily. This would enable the department's EPWP branch to properly capture, verify, monitor and evaluate the information on its supplier database. The committee asked for a list of all the NPOs, with a breakdown of beneficiaries per province, region and municipality.

7.4 Restructuring public employment programmes (PEPs) in the era of COVID-19 and the economic downturn

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted PEPs. However, this has given the government the opportunity to rethink the EPWP delivery methods. According to the ILO's Michael Samson (Samson, M., 2020), approaches to restructuring PEPs that have emerged from this process of reflection include:

- Adapting existing programmes to respond to COVID-19 risks.
- Addressing contagion challenges in existing programmes.
- Expanding employment opportunities to address cascading and interacting shocks adversely affecting employment.
- Addressing immediate employment needs.
- Expanding the EPWP to deliver more opportunities.
- Contributing to macro-economic stabilisation and demand stimulus.
- In the short term, providing accessible benefits to EPWP workers unable to engage in traditional opportunities.

8 Conclusion

The EPWP set out to reduce unemployment by giving unskilled people the opportunity to train and to find employment. It particularly targeted women, young people and people living with disabilities who have historically found it difficult to enter the formal workforce. At the end of the programme, the participants could either seek full time employment or set up enterprises drawing on the skills that they had learnt, with the EPWP providing a stepping stone.

Despite some criticism and challenges, the EPWP has helped numerous households across the country while delivering infrastructure projects such as removing waste from cities and beautifying parks, neighbourhoods and communities. COVID-19 has required changes and has given planners, engineers, researchers and sociologists the opportunity to step back and rethink the status quo. With people increasingly working from home, there is less need to travel to work and the need for large office spaces in CBDs or business districts has declined. Online shopping and door-step delivery has changed the retail and warehousing arena, resulting in less demand for infrastructure, especially in business districts, and has redefined how communities live and interact. The need for green open spaces, green energy, recycling and reducing

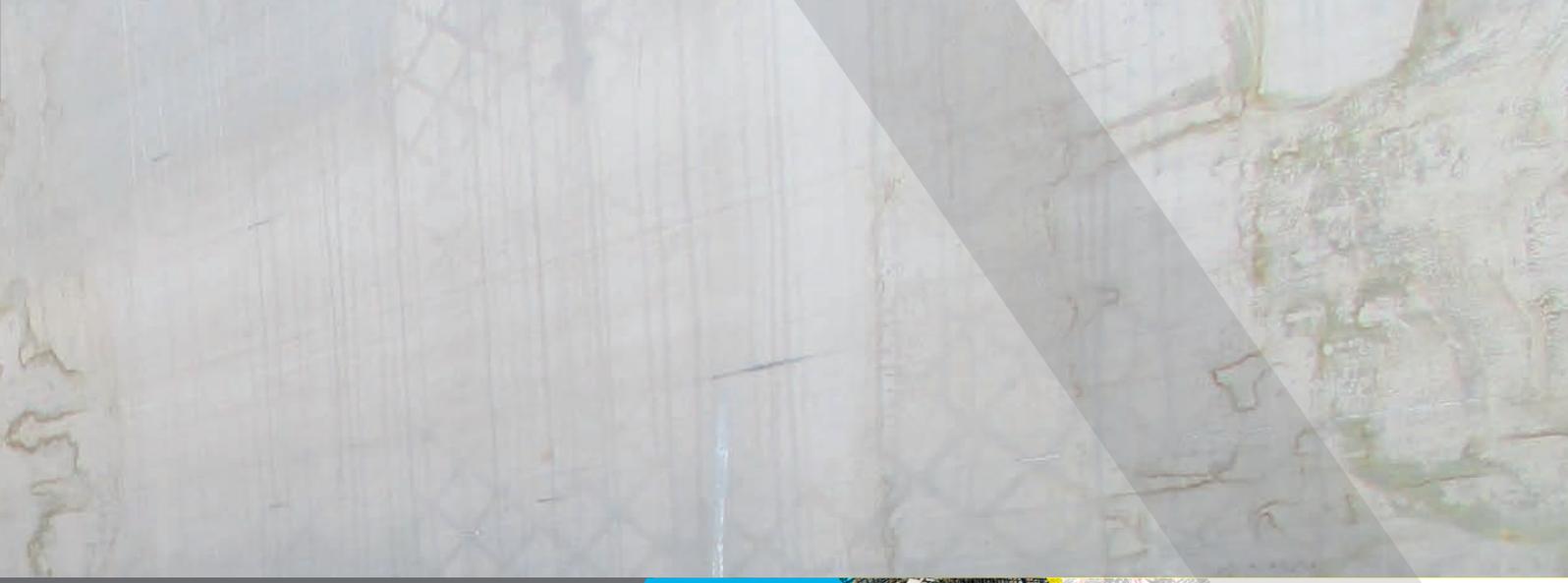
Green jobs are going to be more prevalent in the coming decades, along with the aim of preserving and restoring the environment.

the carbon footprint has come to the forefront. Green jobs are going to be more prevalent in the coming decades, along with the aim of preserving and restoring the environment. There will be jobs in the manufacturing, construction, energy, electronics and waste management sectors.

Technology has expedited globalisation and COVID-19 has helped organisations to leapfrog into the remote working environment. Working remotely and online has opened up a new world of opportunities. It has changed the permanent

single employer-employee relationship to a freelance model, with multiple streams of income. It has also enabled employers to easily find talent across the world through various technological platforms. Workers who were previously excluded from the labour market due to disability or illness now have access to new opportunities at their fingertips. Technology has also allowed rural economies to enter the labour market. Tourism, agriculture, the recreational economy and healthcare are among the sectors that will directly impact rural economies.

What the future will look like is uncertain. What is certain is that the EPWP has to embrace this future and the technological and other changes that it will bring.



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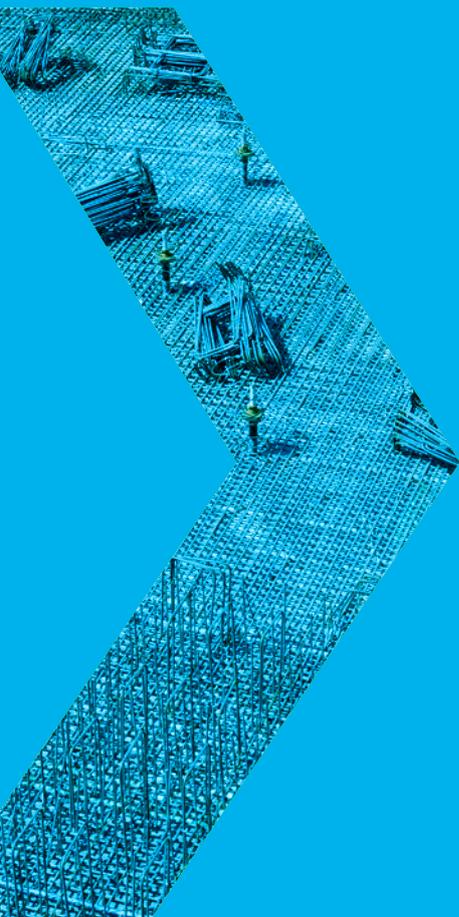
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