

# Integration of Environmental Concerns in Development Cooperation

PRESENTATION



## ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION TOOL APPROACH

*Vincent Henin, LOUVAIN COOPÉRATION - February 2019 (updated February 2022)*

# 1. PRESENTATION

Louvain Cooperation (LC) is the non-governmental organizations (NGO) of the **Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)**. It is active in four areas of expertise (Global citizenship education, Healthcare, Access to Healthcare, and Food and Economic Security) that are implemented in Belgium, and in a dozen of African, Latin American and Asian countries.

In the context of the **Food and Economic Security programme (FES)**, Louvain Cooperation supports entrepreneurs (individuals and organisations, agriculture and non-agriculture-related) to better produce, consume and market. For several years, it wondered about how to fulfil this mission while integrating, in a systematic and pragmatic way, productivity and competitiveness constraints while respecting the environment.

Technical, financial, administrative, and commercial control are in fact key assets to develop a business, and thus foster employment and prosperity in Louvain Cooperation's areas of intervention. It is the primary objective of its economic support programme. However, pursuing this objective without taking into account environmental sustainability where these activities develop (especially because most of them are agriculture-related) would be to take the risk of depleting key resources for business development, partners, and their families.

To address this issue, Louvain Cooperation has developed a specific approach associated to two tools: **Environmental integration (EIT) Programme and EIT Producer**.

## EIT-PROGRAMME

- The EIT Programme has been designed to pay a structured attention to environmental issues related to a productive programme. It aims at strengthening positive impacts and/or mitigating negative impacts of the environment on the programme on the one hand and of the programme on the environment on the other one.
- The EIT Programme is implemented through four steps:



- Ideally, these steps should be applied along the four phases of the Project Cycle Management (PCM), but it is not mandatory.
- At step 1, 3 and 4, the analysis is structured into five themes:
  - **Environmental context of the programme**
  - **Environmental coherence of the programme**
  - **Effects of the environment on the programme**
  - **Effects of the programme on the environment**
  - **Capacities for environmental management and adaptation to environmental issues**
- For step 2, the analysis is structured into three questions to make sure that the activities identified in step 1 are integrated into programme's Technical and Financial File (TFF):
  - **Additional analysis**
  - **Retrospective analysis**
  - **Integration into the Technical and Financial File (TFF)**

## EIT-PRODUCER

- EIT-PRODUCER has been designed to structure a dialogue, a reflection of an economic agent (individual, family, organisation, cooperative, etc.) at the environmental level.
- It is intended to be implemented through three steps:

STEP  
01

### ENVIRONMENTAL DIAGNOSIS

highlighting mutual effects between economic/productive activity and environment, the willingness of the economic agent to better take environmental issues into account, and his/her capacities and needs to commit to.

STEP  
02

### SELF-DETERMINED COMMITMENTS (of the economic agent)

STEP  
03

### IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS

- The environmental diagnosis is intended to be achieved through a semi-structured questionnaire composed of four themes:
  - **Effects of the environment on the activity**
  - **Effects of the activity on the environment**
  - **Willingness to commit of the economic agent**
  - **Capacities and needs to commit**

## 2. DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Environmental Integration Approach

**In 2011**, Louvain Cooperation requested support for an assessment tool of the environmental impact of its intervention in the Andean highlands.

**In 2012**, after six months of training in Bolivia, a volunteer, Salima Kempenaer, suggested an Environmental Integration Tool-EIT including five main questions and twenty sub-questions about the mutual impact of a development project and the natural environment where it evolves. The dynamic of an Environmental Tool was launched and has not stopped ever since.

### 2. Methodological consolidation

**Between 2014 and 2015**, Louvain Cooperation benefited from the support of a Junior Assistant of the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC), Jeanne Chatelle, to implement the EIT. The questions and sub-questions were restructured and allocated to the different phases of the project cycle (identification, formulation, implementation and evaluation) and a methodological guideline was added. The tool and its methodological guideline were later translated into English and Spanish.

Therefore, the EIT became part of the Toolbox of Louvain Cooperation and the first tests with partners were carried out in Andean America (Bolivia and Peru), the original area of this institutional experience, but also in Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Madagascar.

### 3. From macro to micro

**In 2016**, the improvement of the EIT was entrusted to a new Junior Assistant of BTC, Delphine Latinis, also based in La Paz, who implemented two complementary evolutions:

- On the basis of the experiences and feedback from the first EIT trials, some questions were revised and a new version was finalised. This new version was more widely applied among Louvain Cooperation's partners and made it possible to take some actions to be implemented at the institutional level. It was applicable at the macro level of a development programme.
- Thanks to an EIT experience exchange workshop in West Africa with colleagues and partners from Benin and Togo, a new version of the EIT applicable at the micro level of an economic/productive agent, individual or organisation has been defined along with its methodological guideline.

### 4. Diffusion, final improvements and stabilisation

**In 2017**, Louvain Cooperation estimated that its experimentation, confronted with external perspectives and nourished by other experiences, was ready to be disseminated. The EIT Approach and the two tools developed are thus shared to different interlocutors (different academic/university trainings or others, platforms, NGO networks, the forum of Belgian actors in different countries, partners of the Belgian Cooperation, international symposiums, BTC...), and registered under a Creative Commons Licence largely disseminated.

The findings from these different exchanges, the lessons learned from our own application of the EIT Approach at Louvain Cooperation as well as the experiences and feedback from other organisations that have experimented with it, led to the following final corrections:

- The additional methodological guideline has been removed since the recommendations are now integrated in both tools.
- A Glossary of specific terms, lists of environmental indicators, and a risk analysis table were included.
- The tools have been rewritten in inclusive language.
- Institutional and beneficiary tools were respectively renamed EIT-Programme and EIT-Producer.

The final versions of EIT-Programme and EIT-Producer have been validated in January 2019. They are available at <https://www.louvaincooperation.org/en/environment>

## **5. Capitalization and academic valorization**

In 2020, Louvain Coopération initiated, with the help of Paula Uglione, a doctor in environmental psychology, a capitalization of the construction, dissemination, appropriation and impact of the EIT Approach. This report was published and distributed in 2022. It served as raw material for various publications, including contributions to the collective work of the French F3E network «Inclusion for transformation» and to the UCLouvain conference «Transition and Sustainable Development» in November 2021.

### 3. ASSESSMENT, RECOGNITION AND COMMENTS

#### FIRST ASSESSMENT

**In June 2018** Louvain Cooperation delivered an initial assessment of the EIT Approach implementation. The major conclusions were as follows:

- About twenty of its partners (Benin, Bolivia, Cambodia, Madagascar, DRC, Peru and Togo) integrated the tools into their intervention methodologies as well as other NGOs in the North and their partners in Burkina-Faso and Senegal.
- Nine of Louvain Cooperation programmes in the South have been strengthened with an EIT-Programme while nearly 350 producers benefited from the EIT-Producer that resulted in more than 750 environmental self-determined commitments (average of 2.2 per producer).
- **The main advantages of that Approach:**
  - The EIT Approach makes it possible to anticipate risks and adapt strategies (e.g. support the local community in establishing a tax to regulate excessive cutting in community forests in Madagascar);
  - The EIT Approach provides local partners with means to address, reflect upon and get involved in the environmental impact of their intervention strategy (innovation of Local Economy Offices-South Benin-(GEL-SB) with a database of EIT-Producer allowing a structured follow-up).
  - The EIT-Programme leads to a common reflection of the project teams on the environmental dimension of their intervention strategy but also generates an analysis that allows a more objective debate (or even lobbying actions), with other partners and/or public or community authorities.
  - The EIT-Producer allows an analysis by sector which enables problem identification and sectoral interventions (e.g. accumulation of cassava peelings waste and their transformation into compost or animal feed in Benin).
  - The EIT-Producer raises awareness about some environmental dimensions among entrepreneurs (e.g. waste and sewage management), which is an important step to the action.

#### RECOGNITION

- The EIT Approach has been integrated by **ARES** (Academy of Research and Higher Education) as reference methodology for environmental integration.
- The inter-university research platform **KLIMOS** (Climate and Development Cooperation) emphasises the contribution of the EIT Approach in the development of its own environmental integration methodology, the KLIMOS Toolkit: « *The KLIMOS-team appreciated the inputs from CEBios (Capacities for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (CeBios) regarding sustainability assessment of biodiversity and from Louvain Cooperation in the 2016 update of the toolkit* » (<http://ees.kuleuven.be/klimos/toolkit/index.html>).
- A common workshop KLIMOS – Louvain Cooperation at the **Directorate-General for Development Cooperation** in June 2018 has permitted the legitimatisation of the EIT Approach.
- The EIT Approach is among of reworked methodologies included in the publication of the Environment Working Group of **ACODEV**: « *Agir sur l'impact environnemental de son organisation et de ses projets. Inventaire des outils et opportunités* ».
- **Educaid**, the Belgian Platform for Education and Training, has developed a tool for integrating the environment into training programs based on the EIT Approach.

## COMMENTS

This recognition is also reflected in the four comments below, two of which are from other organisations than Louvain Cooperation or its partners.

**« The interviews revealed great enthusiasm... regarding the care for the environment... once they have highlighted all the impacts of their past actions and the future consequences that this could have on their children and grandchildren. »**

(Ousmane Touré, Am Be Koun–Solidarité, Sénégal)

**« The five (5) interviewed micro entrepreneurs all made firm commitments... for example:**

- **use of 8-10 cm mesh nets by July 2018 to reduce the prohibited fishing for fry in spawning areas;**
- **collection and incineration of plastic bags to reduce lacustrine pollution;**
- **use of improved stoves to reduce overuse of coal and firewood;**
- **planting trees to reduce water erosion and climate change;**
- **installation of infiltration ditches and planting of living hedges to reduce erosion;**
- **waste recycling into compost, etc. »**

(Chance Bahati Itongwa, LC, RDC)

**« LC's experience in environmental integration through its EITs is worth sharing... The approach is innovative, based on a participative dialogue leading to commitment, and adapts to any form of activity in rural areas. »**

(Particip GmbH/Pierre Grega...)

**« In conclusion, this tool really brings added value as a self-assessment tool even for a well-informed organisation. »**

(Els Lemeire, TRIAS, Belgique)

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