

ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION TOOL (EIT) APPROACH

Construction, Dissemination, Ownership and Impact

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Executive summary

The **Environmental Integration Tool (EIT) Approach** is a methodology with broad applicability within projects committed to sustainable development. It consists of two tools: EIT-Programme and EIT-Producer, registered under a Creative Commons Licence, available on the Louvain Coopération website (<https://www.louvaincooperation.org/en/environment>) in French (original), English and Spanish.

The EIT Approach was created by Louvain Coopération in order to better meet the needs and objectives of its Food and Economic Security-FES projects by systematically considering their relationship to the environment.

The EIT Approach was built from a single variant proposed and tested in 2012 (EIT version 1) passing by the EIT version 2/2015, the EIT version 3/2017, the EIT version 4/2018 and arriving to the final version validated in 2019 (EIT version 5) that has **two differentiated and complex variants**. This intense work of progressive improvements has been based on a process of field experimentation where Louvain Coopération operates: in Africa (Benin, Burundi, DRC, Madagascar and Togo), in Andean America (Bolivia and Peru) and in Asia (Cambodia); in addition to internal and external exchanges with multiple actors, especially those from the Belgian development cooperation sector.

The EIT Approach is **based on the principle of sustainable development**, according to which economic, social and environmental aspects are inseparable and interdependent. It is a pragmatic approach, of practical intervention within the framework of the FES Programmes/economic activities promoted by these Programmes, which offers a systematised transversality of the environmental theme **in all the stages of the Project Cycle** (identification - formulation - implementation - evaluation) or of the process of promotion of economic activities (diagnosis - reinforcement plan - implementation).

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By the time the mid-term evaluations of the 2017-2021 FES programmes were finalised, the EIT Approach had been disseminated in all ongoing FES programmes over the period 2017-2020. The reports of these evaluations show that there has been a significant team training effort, that the Approach was being implemented in all countries where Louvain Coopération operates and that it has also been taken up in other regions, **adopted by partner institutions** of Louvain Coopération, including in the **Belgian development cooperation sector**.

Between 2016 and 2020, 1026 EIT applications (11 EIT-Programme and 1015 IOE-Producer) have been carried out in the FES Louvain Coopération Programmes, and about ten by other institutions. This large-scale implementation was fundamental for the continuous improvement of the Approach, but also for the training of the teams, which have appropriated EIT Approach and its tools in a creative way.

For the FES Louvain Coopération Programmes, the application of the EIT-Producer resulted in 1,466 environmental commitments by local producers, demonstrating the strong impact of the EIT Approach on the environmental behaviour of these actors.

It should also be noted that, in the process of building and consolidating the EIT Approach, its dissemination has benefited from a well-planned and effective strategy. High quality information material was presented and discussed at major events in the development cooperation sector, in universities and in other fora.

As a result of this dissemination and dialogue effort, the EIT Approach has gained **significant recognition**. Throughout this process, institutions have shown a constant interest in better understanding and/or adapting the EIT Approach to their own contexts and objectives.

For example, the DGD (Directorate General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid/Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of Belgium), in its Format for submitting programmes 2022-2026 for Non-Governmental Cooperation, published in November 2020, mentions the Environmental Integration Tool Approach in the general guidelines and recommendations for programmes and projects to be submitted. This mention underlines the credibility that the Approach has acquired in the European development cooperation sector, particularly in Belgium. ACODEV (French and German-speaking Federation of Development Cooperation Associations), ARES (Research and Higher Education Academy), VLIR-UOS (Flemish Inter-University Council-University Development Cooperation) and APEFE (Association for the Promotion of Education and Training Abroad) and others have also adopted it.

In a global context where the search for solutions to environmental problems is a requirement that challenges everyone, the Environmental Integration Tool Approach is an important contribution of Louvain Coopération to society, particularly in the countries where it operates and with which the NGO is committed to real social and economic change.

In conclusion, this **capitalization report** highlights :

- i) **the existence of a systematic and pragmatic methodology for considering the relationship of a development programme (food and economic) or productive activity with its environment ;**
- ii) **the inclusive and participatory dynamics on which the construction of this methodology is based ;**
- iii) **the impact of this methodology**, not in terms of changes to the environment (even if there are indications of this), but in terms of **changes to the way in which actors** (of development programmes - food and economic - or productive activities, or even other actors inspired by them) **take into account and consider their relationship with their environment** and
- iv) **the potential use of this methodology in terms of awareness raising, training and advocacy.**