

WORK PROGRAMME 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EU's new external assistance instruments require a new approach by the ETF in the services it provides to partner countries and the European Commission. Since the mid 1990s, the ETF has supported the impact of the EU's external assistance programmes mainly through the design of technical capacity building measures for vocational education in partner countries.

The new instruments link assistance to nationally defined policy priorities and place education and training in an overall perspective of human resources that integrates education and training and employment. Over the next four years, the ETF will move from technical development activities towards new processes aimed at the human resources sector as a whole based on how assistance projects support overall policy development and implementation and how policy strategies contribute over time to achieving partner country priorities in their relationship with the European Union.

The ETF will work with partner country governments to identify more fully the problems they wish to address, the respective roles that various actors can play, the concrete steps that can be taken, and the timetables for their achievement and how these can be supported through the new instruments.

The ETF's activities will cover dissemination of policy information, lessons and examples to partner countries receiving assistance, help with the design of appropriate strategies targeted at solving their policy challenges, the strengthening of policy making and implementation capacities, and the exchange of experience and between the EU, partner countries and international donors.

The ETF's goals for its 2007 Work Programme comprise three main objectives related equally to the Instrument for Pre-Accession, the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument, and the Development Co-operation Instrument, namely

- Supporting the design and delivery of Community assistance to partner countries in the field of human resources development;
- Increasing capacities in policy formulation and implementation; and
- Identifying and disseminating lessons on the contribution of policies and strategies to modernisation and reform.

The ETF will concentrate on cross cutting themes that contribute to overall reform and strengthen relations with the EU, such as qualification frameworks, financing, decentralisation, migration and skills recognition, the contribution of skills development to poverty reduction, gender participation and the continuing capacity development of stakeholders. The ETF will use a range of tools such as higher level networking in partner countries, policy dialogues, and peer learning and review to maximise the impact of national developments among partner countries through the sharing of expertise between policy makers from different countries.

In the course of 2007, the ETF will establish an international advisory panel to generate links between its policy expertise and the international development community.

A NEW APPROACH

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is a specialised agency of the European Union based in Turin, Italy. It works with transition and developing countries to apply human resource development strategies to socio-economic development. The ETF deploys and recruits experts from multiple disciplines to handle complex and multidimensional topics in a team environment, in order to create new knowledge, insight and solutions. It functions as the EU's centre of expertise supporting education and training reform in the context of the EU's external relations programmes¹ and aims to provide the EU with a focus for international debate, a point of reference for the wider community and to be at the centre of a group of renowned organisations, individuals and networks with related interests.

The ETF provides advice and assistance to the European Commission and 30 partner countries that receive support from the European Union's external relations programmes for the modernisation of human resource development policies. The EU's external assistance programmes help developing and emerging economies achieve sustainable economic and social development through greater integration into the world economy and the reduction of poverty.

Many of the countries with which the ETF works face enormous socio-economic and demographic problems associated with poverty, governance, infrastructure, unemployment and access to investment. The modernisation of education and training systems to improve the quality and level of skills available in their labour markets is part of the solution to these problems. Education and training is also an integral part of social development. It transmits values of solidarity, equal opportunity, and social participation whilst also producing positive effects on health, corruption, democratisation, and general quality of life. Education and training is a determining factor in each country's development potential and relationship with the world economy. Accordingly, it is a key element of the EU's external assistance.

In 2007, the European Commission introduces new instruments to support the EU's external assistance goals. These instruments reflect a major change in the way in which the EU provides assistance to its partner countries. The new instruments:

- Place assistance within a framework of clearer relations between partner countries and the EU;
- Promote mutually agreed bilateral strategies that integrate external assistance within the policy priorities of each country; and
- Support the greater sustainability of the results of assistance by including measures to improve priority setting and reduce fragmentation, e.g. through sector based approaches.

The ETF's work will be guided and shaped by three instruments:

- The Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA)²;
- The European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument(ENPI)³; and
- The Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI)⁴.

For partner countries supported by the IPA, assistance from the EU will be directed towards building capacities that over time may lead to membership of the EU. For countries supported by the ENPI assistance will aim to build capacities to participate in the EU's internal market through the gradual achievement of policy priorities that have been mutually agreed between the partner countries themselves and the EU.

¹ The ETF was established by Council Regulation No. 1360 in 1990 to contribute to the development of education and training systems in EU partner countries.

² The countries and territories included in the IPA are: Serbia; Montenegro; Kosovo (under UN Security Council Resolution 1244); Albania; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatia and Turkey

³ The ENPI covers countries of Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine), the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) and the Mediterranean region (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza Strip and eventually Libya)

⁴ Brussels, 29.9.2004 com(2004) 629 final 2004/0220 (cod) proposal for a regulation of the European parliament and of the council establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation and economic cooperation - http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2004/com2004_0629en01.pdf

The ETF's contribution to the EU's external assistance programmes

Since its inception in the mid 1990's, the ETF has supported the the EU's external assistance programmes mainly through the design of technical capacity building measures for vocational education in partner countries and the dissemination of relevant thematic information.

A key lesson from the ETF's work during the past decade has been that the sustainability of assistance is stronger when assistance projects are placed in an overall policy perspective. In addition, the ETF's experience has been that many of the problems faced by partner countries are interrelated and need to be addressed in an integrated way. Vocational education and training is only a single element in a mix of policies that contribute to a country's human resources. Other features include employment measures, access and inclusion programmes, small business development and links between the business community and the education system more generally.

The EU's new instruments will provide greater support to partner countries to develop policy frameworks that integrate these elements⁵. Government policy for the human resource sector, comprising education, training and the labour market, is expected to contribute to goals that are part of national development strategies. This reflects a mutual concern of the EU and partner country governments to improve the results of assistance expenditure by focussing resources on the priorities stated in national strategies or similar documents.

The new instruments therefore link assistance to nationally defined policy priorities. They also place education and training in an overall perspective of human resources that connects education and training to the contribution that employment policy makes to growth and social development.

These features of the new instruments require a new approach by the ETF in the services it provides to partner countries and the European Commission. It includes a move from technical development activities towards new, more comprehensive processes aimed at policy development in the human resources sector as a whole. This move involves analysis and advice on how assistance projects support overall policy development and implementation and how policy strategies are contributing over time to achieving partner country priorities in their relationship with the European Union. For the ETF this will mean a stronger focus on lifelong learning policies and reform issues in other sectors of education, such as general and higher education.

This change in approach comes as a result of conclusions drawn from many sources: in discussions with the European Commission, the ETF's own assessment of the contribution that education and training could make to the EU's new external assistance instruments, the recommendations from the triennial external evaluation of the ETF undertaken by the European Commission in 2005⁶ and advice provided directly to the ETF from its partner countries⁷.

In responding to these recommendations, during the period 2007-10 the ETF will adapt its work programme to provide partner country governments with support in the formulation of their policies for the HRD sector. Accordingly, annually during this period, the ETF's work programmes will increasingly contain activities to support:

- information, analyses, and policy advice to partner countries on human resource development;
- partner country stakeholder policy development capacities in human resource development;
- the exchange of information and experience among donors engaged in HRD reform in partner countries;
- policy advice and programming analysis to the European Commission to improve the effectiveness and relevance of Community assistance programmes to partner countries in the field of human resource development; and

⁵ Guidelines for European Commission support to sector programmes, February 2003.

⁶ Interim evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF) EAC/06/05

⁷ These have included regional conferences in the Mediterranean region, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, South Eastern Europe in 2005 and 2006 as well as the 2006 plenary meeting of the Advisory Forum 'Skills for Progress' held in Turin in June 2006.

- dissemination and networking activities that transfer relevant policy lessons between EU Member States and partner countries and between partner countries and provide opportunities for engagement with the EU's policies and programmes.

To provide these services, the ETF's activities for the mid-term will involve following countries longer, providing advice at policy making levels, while at the same time facilitating progress at implementation levels.

A major objective will therefore be to work with partner country governments to better identify the problems they wish to address, the respective roles that various actors can play, the concrete steps that can be taken, and the timetables for their achievement and how these can be supported through the new instruments.

Experience suggests that effective reform is not possible without a process of policy learning, comprising inter-ministerial cooperation, information dissemination, strong stakeholder dialogue and the awareness and active involvement of key officials. The suitability of the policies in the local context depends on dialogue between the different stakeholders and the development of shared knowledge about what is likely to work. Dialogue provides a process that draws on knowledge and experience from outside and inside the partner country context. The experience of other countries provides new information to policy makers about alternative policy options, while dialogue between partner country policy makers can highlight the strengths and weaknesses of a particular strategy in their context and the availability of alternative policy solutions. External assistance projects that support such policies are more likely to assist the partner country achieve its strategic goals and be more efficient in terms of the use of resources.

In this respect, in 2007 the ETF will commence the broadening of its networks to include a greater range of contributors and will reinforce its access to decision making in partner countries. Involving all actors concerned will be necessary. The ETF will address this in two main ways. Firstly, through the more intensive engagement of partner country policy makers, influencers and officials and the deployment of ETF expertise to facilitate policy dialogues; secondly, through reviewing the structure of the ETF's Advisory Forum to strengthen the flow of advice to the Commission on priorities and developments in the partner countries.

The ETF's activities will cover the dissemination of policy experiences and examples to partner countries receiving assistance, help with the design of appropriate strategies targeted at solving their policy challenges, the strengthening of policy making and implementation capacities, and the exchange of experience and between the EU, partner countries and international donors.

In doing so, the ETF will concentrate on cross cutting themes that contribute to overall reform, e.g. qualification frameworks, financing, decentralisation, the contribution of skills development to poverty reduction, gender participation and the continuing capacity development of stakeholders. In addition, the ETF will use a range of tools such as peer learning and review, and innovation and learning projects to maximise the impact of national developments among partner countries through the sharing of expertise between policy makers from different countries. Correspondingly, the growing emphasis on broader sector policy approaches means that the exchange of information between bilateral and international donor interventions will also be an increasing part of the ETF's operational work. Wherever relevant, the ETF will exchange information with donors particularly those linked to supporting policy development and the co-ordination of assistance initiatives.

The ETF will give priority to countries that are supported by the IPA and the ENPI while continuing to provide assistance to Central Asian republics under the Development Co-operation Instrument⁸. The ETF will deploy its resources in line with EU priorities and in areas and countries which have identified HRD as a policy priority and are actively strengthening their systems in support of their economic and social development.

The ETF's goals for its 2007 work programme comprise three main objectives that apply equally to the work being undertaken by the ETF in support of each instrument, namely:

⁸ Brussels, 29.9.2004 COM(2004) 629 final 2004/0220 (cod) proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation and economic cooperation - http://europa.eu.int/eurlex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2004/com2004_0629en01.pdf

- supporting the delivery of Community assistance to participating countries in the field of human resources development by providing input to the Commission's project cycle, including relevant information and evidence-based advice on policy strategies and assistance programming;
- increasing the abilities of countries to design, implement and monitor reforms in the area of HRD through capacity building in policy formulation and implementation; and
- identifying and disseminating lessons to the European Commission, partner countries, and international donors on the contribution of policies and strategies to modernisation and reform.

Pillars supporting ETF activities

The ETF's actions are shaped by a series of pillars which describe how and what the ETF does to meet its objectives and statutory obligations. They comprise responses to regional and country based priorities, the requirements of the new external assistance instruments and the general or specific requirements that the ETF must meet as an EU agency to ensure the effective governance of its activities. The following sections describe how the activities will be undertaken. Specific assistance objectives for countries are contained in Tables 1, 2 and 3. The main activities for the ETF are:

(1) Support to education and training reform

- Contributing to the enlargement process by supporting the modernisation and reform of education, labour market and training systems in candidate and potential candidate countries **(Activity 1)**
- Contributing to prosperity and development in the Neighbourhood region through cooperation and partnership in human resource policy development and implementation **(Activity 2)**
- Contributing to economic and development cooperation in human resource development in Central Asia **(Activity 3)**
- Supporting the European Commission and partner country policy development through innovation and learning **(Activity 4)**
- Tempus technical assistance **(Activity 5)**

(2) Corporate communication (Activity 6)

(3) Organisational learning: Strengthening knowledge and systems (Activity 7)

Pillar 1: Support to education and training reform

Activity 1: Contributing to the enlargement process by supporting the modernisation and reform of education, labour market and training systems in candidate and potential candidate countries

Enlargement is a high priority for the EU's external relations policy and for the ETF as an EU agency.

EU assistance related to enlargement is covered by the IPA, which aims to facilitate coherence and improve the consistency of the EU's actions, and achieve better results and a higher impact with available resources.

There are two groups of beneficiary countries under the IPA:

- Candidate countries (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey)
- Potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (under UN Security Council Resolution 1244), Montenegro and Serbia).

Potential candidate countries will receive assistance along the lines currently laid down in the CARDS Regulation: institution building and democratisation, economic and social development, regional and cross-border co-operation and some alignment with the *acquis communautaire*, in particular where this is in the mutual interest of the EU and the beneficiary country. Candidate countries will receive the same assistance, and will additionally receive assistance in preparation for the implementation of structural and rural development funds after accession, as well as concerning the full implementation of the *acquis communautaire*.

Progress and perspectives in modernisation and reform

All the countries covered by the IPA have HRD reform processes underway at different levels of implementation.

For Croatia, a coherent HRD/education strategy still needs to be developed on the basis of the concepts of lifelong learning and the learning society and on the principle of a strategic partnership between public and private actors. In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, assistance will be provided to support the National Strategy for Development of Education 2005-2015. With EU support an important impulse has been given to the reform of the education system in **Turkey**. Labour market analysis, competency-based curricula and teacher training have been key elements in the reforms. From 2007, the ETF will build on these pilot initiatives, deepen them and disseminate them throughout the country, fully taking into account the content of the future operational programme on HRD within the IPA's Component IV.

In **Albania**, the refinement and implementation of the National Education Strategy require the strong political will of all actors involved and further capacity building of newly established institutions (VET Council and VET Agency). Education is considered to be one of the most important challenges facing **Kosovo**, since greater investment is needed to enable effective participation in education and training, especially in compulsory school education. Strategies for decentralisation to municipalities and for adult education have been adopted, but further improvements in governance and the legal framework need to be made.

The last five years has seen **Montenegro** undertake ambitious reforms across its entire education system, including a significant effort in funding. However, more efforts to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness in education delivery and the issue of quality are still the main challenges.

In **Serbia** the Ministry of Education has launched ambitious reforms for the modernisation of the education and training system through the elaboration of policies and piloting activities. However, the reforms envisaged heavily depend on the capacity for implementation and the available funds. Particular attention needs to be devoted to the area of adult training needs. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the EU and other donors have been investing in VET reform and other HRD-related fields for more than 10 years. The bottom-up approach needs to be supported in the coming years by changes at system level, improvement of decision-making mechanisms and further integration with European wide developments.

For the pre-accession area of South Eastern Europe, 2007 brings major regional challenges, as the Kosovo status process goes ahead and other fundamental constitutional issues, such as the independence of Montenegro, come to the forefront of public attention. These developments could have an impact on political stability in the region, becoming a risk for the overall external relations policy towards the region.

The progress of the pre-accession process in chapters beyond HRD-related issues could have an impact on the type of prioritisation that the ETF will give to the work in one or another country.

ETF activities and objectives under the Instrument for Pre-Accession in 2007

All countries covered by the IPA will be supported by policy advice related to the EU's 2010 agenda and its implications for design of partner country strategies, the opportunity to support entrepreneurship learning through involvement in the EU's Charter for small and medium sized enterprises, assistance in the development of social inclusion policies to support minorities and participation in regional networks supported by the EU to access experience and information on policy developments. Activities will aim to maximise the opportunities for partner countries to analyse and use policy solutions within the specific

context of their policy issues. This will enhance the ability of the two groups of countries, candidate and potential candidate, to progressively develop national compatibility with international practices. The activities will tackle problems and issues which reflect cross-cutting national priorities and the capacities to drive reforms, including issues related to HRD governance, such as qualification frameworks, quality assurance, decentralisation, management, finance, transparency and lifelong learning strategies between different sectors of education and training.

The ETF will assist Turkey, Kosovo and Albania specifically in HRD policy formulation by promoting a stronger dialogue between stakeholders to give momentum to the reforms. It will provide capacity building assistance⁹ to all countries of South Eastern Europe as a part of the ETF's ongoing support to the development of expertise in teacher training and the organisation of learning processes. In addition, capacity building initiatives will support Turkey, Croatia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the preparation of their plans for ESF type projects, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Albania, in the design and implementation of active labour market policies.

In addition, the enlargement package related activities being provided to the Commission by the ETF (covering instruments and analyses used in JAP¹⁰, JIM¹¹, SOP¹² and progress reports) and the cooperation with Cedefop¹³ (under the Education and Training 2010 project) only refer to Turkey, Croatia, and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

In 2007, the ETF's contribution to enlargement activities will cover the following major activities:

1. Providing support to the European Commission¹⁴, including
 - developing and maintaining ETF intelligence (political, socio-economic, education and training and labour market issues) on the country, including widening in-country contacts and networks to reach higher levels of policy influencers;
 - providing input into IPA programming, with the aim of building national management capacities, including, in most of the countries, management that also supports local, county and regional structures. The input will focus on the priorities and recommendations identified by the European Commission and by the ETF country analyses; and
 - supporting the enlargement package, including co-operation with Cedefop and candidate countries, and more specifically the instruments and analyses used in this process in the field of HRD, and in particular JAP, JIM, SOP and progress reports.
2. Promoting the EU's Education and Training Agenda (E&T 2010) as a source of information for policymakers in the region¹⁵.
3. Contributing to policy analysis and advice on social inclusion with a specific focus on the access of minorities to education and training and employment and socio-economic development of territories with a high concentration of minorities and lower prosperity¹⁶.
4. Benchmarking and reporting among policy makers in pre-acceding countries on entrepreneurship learning in the framework of the European Charter for SMEs¹⁷.
5. Facilitating policy learning among policymakers in HRD-related areas through policy dialogue, policy reviews and regional cooperation in selected policy issues including financing, decentralisation and quality assurance.

⁹ Supported by the Italian Trust fund;

¹⁰ Joint Assessment process of the European Employment Strategy

¹¹ Joint Inclusion Memoranda

¹² Standard Operating Procedure

¹³ See annex for outline of plan

¹⁴ Direct requests from DG ELARG, DG EMPL and Delegations

¹⁵ Direct DG EAC request

¹⁶ Direct DG ELARG request

¹⁷ Direct DG ENTR request

6. Improving governance and administrative capacity in employment¹⁸. For the candidate countries supporting preparations for the programming, implementation and management of the European Social Fund, in the framework of the European Employment Strategy, taking into account the objectives of the Community in the fields of social inclusion, education and training and equality between men and women. For the potential candidate countries, assistance in developing active labour market policies.
7. Strengthening professional expertise and networking in the organisation of learning processes and teacher training.
8. Engaging stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation through the creation of:
 - An institutional network, comprising people directly appointed by the national authorities, as the main contact point for ETF work in the country and which will periodically participate in regional meetings for cross fertilisation among partner countries on policies and approaches. Candidate countries already participate in the ETF Governing Board as observers.
 - A higher political network of policymakers from partner countries, who could gradually participate together with EU Member States in meetings on EU developments in the field of HRD, either at Council of Education level (ministers) or in DGVT meetings and initiatives. Candidate countries already participate in some of these events as observers.
 - Technical expertise networks articulated through thematic priorities linked to and funded by ETF projects.

Activity 2: Contributing to prosperity and development in the Neighbourhood region through co-operation and partnership in human resource policy development and implementation

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) aims at creating an area of prosperity, stability and security for the EU and its neighbours.

The ENPI is policy driven, partnership based, offers a differentiated approach and emphasises intervention modalities that promote systemic and comprehensive reform on specific priority sectors. This more policy and sector driven approach puts partner countries in the driving seat, i.e. partner countries themselves are expected to identify the priority areas to which assistance should be directed.

For the ETF this implies the need to give a stronger focus to policy advice interventions (e.g. involving design, implementation or monitoring) and deploying resources to improve the capacities of partner countries to drive those reforms. Accompanying the partner countries in the process of policy reform and implementation will require a sustained and medium term investment.

This investment cannot be maintained for all the countries but will require a prioritisation in the level of the bilateral investment that the ETF can make realistically. This will require a high degree of flexibility from the ETF and makes the assumption that there is a minimum level of intelligence and network in each country able to respond effectively to changes in priorities.

The EU policies in the country, the level of importance given to HRD issues in ENP action plans and ENPI programming documents and the perspectives for future interventions in the field, the inclusion of HRD resource development in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or equivalent documents, are key criteria for investment priorities. Additionally, the level of commitment of national stakeholders to the reform processes, the political situation in the country and, in more general terms, the extent to which the national environment can be conducive to reform, are important criteria that need to be taken into consideration.

Priorities and perspectives in modernisation and reform

The ETF will make substantial resource investment in **Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Ukraine, Armenia, and Azerbaijan** to support on-going reform processes, either as part of running or future EU

¹⁸ Direct DG EMPL request

interventions or as part of national reform initiatives. These countries are high on the EU agenda and have a national environment conducive to reform. ETF activities in all countries will be strictly aligned to EU interventions and specific Commission requests. **Moldova** will also become a priority country as a result of its becoming a direct neighbour of the EU. ETF interventions will be deeper, focused on support to policy design and implementation and have a systemic character. In Jordan, the ETF will continue to provide support to build necessary capacities and conditions for policy wide interventions in the field of vocational education and training. In Egypt, the ETF will continue to support the national authorities and the Commission in reviewing the progress of reforms, including taking stock of the contribution of the MEDA VET reform project to system reform and in the development of a sector policy strategy. In Morocco, in particular, the ETF will continue to provide support to national stakeholders in their efforts to evaluate national reforms. In Ukraine, the ETF will support the on-going process of decentralisation and in Armenia it will support Commission services in the sector policy reform programmes.

Russia, although of limited priority in terms of EU assistance in the field of education and training, has a conducive environment and is highly committed to the process of decentralisation that the ETF will continue to support. Russia also offers good opportunities for peer learning in neighbouring countries, particularly Ukraine. In **Syria, Algeria and Tunisia** there are important MEDA projects contributing to overall system reform that the ETF will underpin with limited complementary interventions.

In addition, in Ukraine, Russia, the Caucasus and a number of Mediterranean countries, the ETF will continue to support national debate and awareness on national qualification frameworks.

In the **West Bank and Gaza, Israel, Belarus, and Lebanon**, ETF interventions will be more limited and focused on dissemination of information and in keeping a minimum level of intelligence that would allow the provision of relevant advice to EC services.

The European Neighbourhood region comprising the countries of Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the near Middle East is highly heterogeneous. The speed and intensity of the partnerships between the EU and participating countries vary considerably. In regions that are highly volatile the priorities for EU external relations and related interventions can change rapidly due to changes in the political and/or socio economic climate.

In the Mediterranean region, the ENPI's accent on bilateral objectives will be complemented by the regional approach being promoted by the Barcelona process and the Commission's MEDA ETE project which emphasises regional cooperation. The differentiated, tailor-made approach of the agreements made with each country under the ENP and the high heterogeneity of the countries involved makes regional cooperation if not at risk, at least a significant challenge.

The risk of having limited capacities will require the ETF to focus strongly on policy advice, supporting the whole "policy chain" from policy design, to implementation and monitoring. The ETF will also need to prioritise capacity building measures for national and local administrations and social partners with a stake in the HRD system. The presence of a high number of donors both bilateral and multilateral in the ENPI region underlines the importance of avoiding fragmentation of assistance through the use of sector policy approaches.

ETF activities and objectives under the instrument for neighbourhood countries in 2007

The ENP strategy paper and consequently the action plans and the ENPI programming documents put human resources development as an essential element in increasing competitiveness, social inclusion and active citizenship. This represents the first challenge in the ENPI region, i.e. **moving from the strict boundaries of the education and training system** and looking at the broader economic and social context of the country.

Notwithstanding the high heterogeneity of the ENPI region, all countries need to tackle some key policy issues as part of those structural reforms, including **governance** of systems. All countries of the region face this problem which stems frequently from the absence of effective dialogue between policy makers. Accordingly, the ETF's interventions focus significantly on policy making. Education and training systems are still highly centralised, and government-led. Decentralisation, greater autonomy of education centres, social dialogue, development of social partnerships at all levels in the system (national, regional, local and at school level) are key elements to be addressed in all countries. This has

to go hand in hand with the development of mechanisms to improve the effectiveness and accountability at all levels, as well as to develop the capacities to monitor the progress of reform.

The review of **financing** mechanisms is a further common challenge in the region. In most countries, training systems are mainly funded from government budgets. This has led to high inefficiencies in the system given an absence of links to performance or outcomes. In some cases, particularly in Eastern Europe, it has also led to continuously under funded systems with funding for training being reduced due to other pressing needs.

Another important challenge involves improving links between different education and training “sub-sectors”, continuing training systems, the absence of clear and comprehensive qualifications structures that would allow comparability of data. In the context of countries with high levels of unemployment systems, pathways and opportunities will need to be developed to ensure that individuals can continue their learning throughout their lives.

The need for transparent information on qualifications is also a priority in the context of closer integration and easier access to the EU market. **Transparency of information on education and training systems**, including comparability of qualifications is also an important goal on which the EU and partner countries need to work together. This issue also needs to be looked at in the perspective of closer integration of labour markets and the high priority given to the migration issue in the ENP. Awareness and familiarity with EU policies in relevant fields and its possible application in the context of partner countries is also an important challenge if closer integration is to be achieved.

In 2007, the ETF's contribution to neighbourhood activities will cover the following major areas:

1. Provision of support to the European Commission, including:
 - preparing new ENPI interventions that will require more policy oriented and comprehensive analysis that can support informed decision making on sector policy programmes and identification of key issues to be addressed in preparation of wide initiatives;
 - supporting the start up of Tacis and MEDA projects and in particular taking stock of their contribution to overall reform
 - supporting Commission services in the design, implementation, and monitoring of external policies. The provision of information to monitor the progress of reform will be an important feature under the new external relations instruments. This could also include input to relevant thematic programmes (such as the programmes on migration and investing in people) whenever required.
2. Entrepreneurship learning and skills development. In the context of the Euro-Med Partnership and in response to a direct request from Commission services, the ETF will provide support to DG Enterprise for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprises on issues related to education and training for entrepreneurship and skills improvement. Coordination and synergies will be sought with the MEDA regional project on education and training, particularly its third component to support young unemployed people in self-employment and micro enterprise creation.
3. The MEDA regional project 'Education and Training for Employment' (MEDA-ETE). As in previous years and in agreement with EC services, the ETF will provide complementary support to the preparation of thematic studies particularly to allow more research in the field and to support the sustainability of key networks. Complementary funding will also be provided to reinforce the synergies between MEDA-ETE and other ETF interventions.
4. Policy advice to support VET reform processes. In the context of the drive towards the design of sector policies, the ETF will focus on the provision of policy advice and on building institutional capacities in priority partner countries. This will include the design of specific support packages to accompany their reform efforts. In the case of Ukraine, the focus will be on decentralisation. In Morocco, focus will be on building capacities for reform assessment. In Armenia, Egypt, and Jordan support will be focused on building capacities for overall sector policy design in line with current or future EU interventions.

5. Qualification frameworks. This project started last year in almost all countries in the ENPI region. From a first phase focused on awareness raising, making government ministries, social partners and professional organisations acquainted with NQF developments and debates, the project will move into a second phase of support to the development of national strategies. Based on the national working groups created in earlier phases and on the understanding that the NQF can provide a strategic frame of reference for ongoing or future education and training reforms including general education and higher education reforms, the project will design specific tailor-made country initiatives depending on the state of reform, other EU and ETF interventions and level of understanding. This could include the development of pilot experiences in a specific sector. Where relevant, European developments will be used as a point of reference in the discussions. Peer learning will be a key element. The project will also look at the impacts on financing.
6. HRD observatory function. The project will reinforce national institutional and methodological capacities in particular in MEDA priority countries to support the decision making process on human resource policies for the labour market. Activities will focus on the analysis and assessment of information and provision of recommendations in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone. Emphasis will be on the networking of policy makers to foster overall economic and social reform processes. This will include the ministries of labour, economy and education, national statistical offices, social partners and other decision makers. This ETF activity is complementary to the MEDA-ETE observatory network that concentrates on exchange and developments at a regional level.
7. ENPI networking. Regional cooperation is an important component in most ENP strategic papers. Beyond sub-regional cooperation, i.e. cooperation among Eastern European, Caucasus, and Mediterranean countries, there is an interest in keeping an overall ENPI regional network of policy makers as a forum for sharing experience on methodologies and on the process of policy making and implementation. The network should be an additional instrument for policy learning on strategies for reform and it should also, particularly for countries with low levels of ETF intervention, help to keep a minimum level of intelligence on country developments. Technical expertise networks will be developed through thematic priorities linked to and funded by ETF projects.

Activity 3: Contributing to economic and development cooperation through the Development Co-operation Instrument

For the ETF, 2007 will be a transition year which will see the commencement of the DCI as the instrument through which assistance is provided to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in Central Asia.

This will occur whilst the implementation of already approved projects will continue partly through the Tempus programme for higher education in all five countries and partly through existing Tacis projects, e.g. employment policy assistance in Kyrgyzstan and vocational education and training reform assistance in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In addition, the EU will also continue to support training and skills development for the poor in selected geographical areas through the Tacis track III pilot poverty reduction schemes.

With the DCI, EU support to higher education will continue within a follow up programme to the present Tempus programme. In addition, interventions in support of community development through rural and local development schemes are expected to contain fully integrated training and skills development components.

In Central Asia, impact at policy level is a difficult challenge. Potential geo-political changes and instability in the region, national changes in priorities and some hesitance to enter into international debates on policies and approaches create a demanding context. However, while policy discussions are challenging, they are nevertheless necessary to further develop the education and training systems in the countries. Interventions often risk being seen as external intrusion into national matters. To reduce this risk, interventions will have to be organised around facilitative policy learning approaches and in close cooperation with the key stakeholders of the country.

A further key challenge is that the essential links between poverty reduction strategies, skills development and vocational education and training system reform need to be clarified to ensure

sustainable approaches to skills development within rural and local development schemes and for integrating this issue into the ongoing education and training system reform discussions.

Progress and perspectives in modernisation and reform

Central Asian countries are in the middle of education and training reform and still face major challenges. Initially most of the countries focussed on the reform of general education with an emphasis on elementary education and higher education, apart from Uzbekistan which emphasised the development of a new type of professional education at upper secondary level. Turkmenistan has implemented far-reaching changes to its education and training system which risks compromising educational development for several generations.

Higher education in Central Asia still faces a number of problems in terms of quality, comparability and transparency. The vocational education and training systems face severe challenges in Central Asia. Though Uzbekistan distinguishes itself by having come very far in establishing an extensive network of new professional colleges, all countries still share a number of key challenges. Priority areas for policy development in the region include:

- the mismatch between the supply and demand for skills through the development of comprehensive education and training systems which can respond to emerging qualification needs at all levels;
- the development of post-secondary technical education/non-university higher education;
- the contribution of skills development to poverty reduction;
- including skills development as an intrinsic part of rural and local development processes;
- developing mechanisms to enable and promote adult training and initiate a move towards lifelong learning systems;
- improving the content of vocational education and training including teacher and trainer training;
- institutional capacity development, including reforms in governance and financing.

ETF activities and objectives under the Development Co-operation Instrument in 2007

In 2007, the ETF will intervene in two main areas. One will review the present education and training systems using the concept of a national qualifications framework as a basic reference tool including all levels of vocational and higher technical education and training. The other will further investigate the relationship of skills development for poverty reduction and the contribution of the education and training system to broader social and economic development. These areas have been selected as interventions that address a range of cross cutting policy themes, e.g. relevance, quality assurance, stakeholder participation in an integrated manner within the scope of limited funds.

In 2007, the ETF's contribution to development and cooperation activities will cover the following major areas:

1. Providing support to the Commission as requested.
2. The area of qualifications frameworks as an input to comprehensive education and training reform in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The main activities which will be undertaken to achieve this include the promotion of a common understanding of the concept of national qualification frameworks and the connection between the framework design and the overall characteristics of national education and training systems. Initial technical and professional capacities for national qualification framework design will be developed through experience-based evidence in order to achieve a basic consensus among key stakeholders within individual countries

about the policy to be adapted. The project will also provide a platform for regional cooperation and exchange of experience.

3. The area of policy advice for integrating skills development in rural and local development initiatives and linking it to ongoing VET reform debates in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The main activities to be carried out to achieve this result include a series of policy learning exercises to prepare experience-based policy guidelines for VET system reform to increase the responsiveness of vocational schools to local learner and enterprise skill development needs. Advice will be provided on how to integrate skills development in poverty reduction and rural development schemes with VET system reform.
4. The development of information and intelligence as a preparation for moving towards joint peer reviews in 2008.
5. The ETF's contact network in the region will be enlarged by drawing on the participation of the two regional projects, country specific policy advice as in the case of Kyrgyzstan and through the contacts created when providing services to the Commission. In addition, active participation in international development networks will continue.

Activity 4: Supporting the European Commission and partner country policy development through innovation and learning.

The ETF's Innovation and Learning Programme improves the ongoing development of HRD sector policy strategies in partner countries. It ensures that the ETF is supporting the work of the European Commission by providing a focal point for international debate and a reference point for the analysis and use of experience in HRD in partner countries. It is supported by knowledge management processes that integrate ETF activities across a broad range of functions, including, networking and advice to partner country stakeholders, cooperation with international development agencies, ongoing staff development, and external communication.

The Innovation and Learning programme:

- facilitates international dialogue and debate between the EU and partner countries on policy strategies and innovations in HRD;
- develops evidence based policy advice on key themes being addressed by the EU and partner countries; and
- designs and distributes methodologies and tools that assist partner country stakeholders and policy makers in the development of HRD sector policies that can be supported in the EU's external assistance programmes.

In 2007, the ETF will establish a new International Advisory Panel in response to recommendations from the European Commission that the ETF should revise its existing Advisory Forum. The panel will comprise policy practitioners of high standing drawn from the international community, including both EU Member States and partner countries. The panel will contribute to the ongoing development of ETF as a centre of expertise for the EU by acting as an influential forum for the integration of policy and technical elements of the ETF's work. The panel will start work in 2007 and operate for four years in the first instance. The International Advisory Panel will offer support to the ETF through:

- strategic guidance on HRD policy issues in partner countries; and
- technical contributions to processes of policy facilitation undertaken by the ETF in partner countries.

Contributions from the panel to the ETF will be received in several ways, including participation in an annual symposium, technical participation with the ETF during the formulation of policy strategies with partner countries, and through meetings of committees on specific issues, e.g. an editorial board process to review and provide comments on ETF publications. In addition, panel members will give ongoing comment and advice on ETF activities.

The innovation and learning activity also conducts a series of projects each year to broaden the understanding of how particular issues have an impact in partner countries. The projects generate evidence-based policy advice that can be provided to partner countries and the European Commission.

The objective of this activity is to further develop policy expertise for European assistance on a theme, process or programme. Innovation and Learning projects:

- examine content and strategies that approach a reform issue in a new way, or which is likely to facilitate a new approach to an issue in a partner country context;
- lead to further development for the Commission, the ETF, or partner countries in the understanding or implementation of a theme, process or programme;
- address a theme, programme or policy area that is clearly identifiable as a priority within the range of EU and ETF objectives;
- focus on a country or region or both to maximise experiences likely to yield applications or lessons appropriate to other contexts.

In 2007, the activity will yield four published policy related lessons and dissemination activities based on projects undertaken in 2006 and completed in 2007. These projects cover policy related research actions in the Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood regions in Albania, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Ukraine, Egypt, Moldova, Morocco and Russia. These projects will result in policy and programming advice that will be shared with European institutions and partner countries in 2007. The themes covered by these policy lessons are:

- the teaching of key competencies, including entrepreneurship in lifelong learning for young people and adults;
- the implications of migration for VET policy;
- transition from vocational education and training to work;
- the impact measurement in continuing vocational training (CVT) in the MEDA region and Russia.

Finally, the Innovation and Learning programme clarifies processes in policy design and implementation to make the constraints and strengths of partner country contexts clearer for external assistance. The examination of policy processes is part of a broader dialogue between the ETF, the European Commission, the international development community, and partner countries on the process of policy learning in education modernisation in emerging and developing countries.

A key outcome of the programme will be the design and testing, in collaboration with the partner country stakeholders and the International Advisory Panel, of processes that support policy development and implementation in the HRD sector.

The involvement of different partner countries and ETF experience makes it possible to identify similar problems in different partner countries and assist in the design of policy that is not only responsive to local contexts, but which also facilitates greater learning across contexts about solutions and their limitations. The approach will also provide a stronger basis for transferring know-how between the ETF and the EU institutions and the wider international development community.

Activity 5: TEMPUS

The latest phase of the Tempus Programme, Tempus III, which came into force in 2000 and was intended to run until 2006 will conclude in the period of the mid-term perspective.

Tempus is also a source of information on higher education issues in partner countries. In particular, many projects are interesting examples of the role higher education institutions can play as change agents in the reform process, as well as on general higher education policy development in the countries and at EU level. Many Tempus partner countries are actively involved in the Bologna Process and define elements such as Credit Transfer and Accumulation Systems, Quality Assurance and Accreditation as priorities for Tempus projects. In this context, the ETF will continue to support the Commission in analysing and promoting the achievements and added value of the current Tempus Programme. In addition, three thematic studies carried out on behalf of DG EAC and addressing issues

such as university-enterprise cooperation, sustainability of international cooperation projects in higher education and vocational training programmes, and the impact of the Tempus Programme in the partner countries will be finalised and widely disseminated. The information generated by the variety of different projects and analysed through active desk and field monitoring will help the Commission prepare for future developments in the framework of Tempus and will consolidate the ETF knowledge base at the service of the Community.

The ETF's objective for Tempus technical assistance is to provide support in the implementation of the third phase of the Tempus Programme in full compliance with Commission priorities and standards and within the ETF regulatory framework. In this context, priority will be given to carrying out the activities laid down in the Tempus CARDS, Tacis and MEDA regions to support the Commission in the final years of Tempus III.

The ETF ensures provision of the general overall framework of the programme in terms of infrastructure, human resources and administrative support for the implementation of the different Tempus actions.

The assistance provided by the ETF covers the full project cycle. It therefore comprises selection, contract management and monitoring, information and publications, including general administrative support.

Commission services are currently discussing a successor programme to the third phase of Tempus. The present phase will expire at the end of 2006 and current planning assumptions anticipate that from the end of 2007, the management of Tempus technical assistance will be undertaken by the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture in Brussels. The ETF will provide support to the transfer of technical assistance to the Executive Agency, which is expected to take place in late 2007.

Objectives and expected results for Tempus

Assistance provided for the implementation of the Tempus Programme will be in full compliance with Commission priorities and standards and within the ETF's regulatory framework. In 2007, whereas one would expect a reduction in workload given that the actual phase of the Tempus Programme is coming to an end, recent figures show that, as a result of an ever increasing interest of partner countries to participate in the Tempus Programme, more projects will have to be managed compared to 2006. In the course of the year, the Tempus Department will provide a co-ordinated management of approximately 1,200 running projects. In line with the project cycle, selection activities will comprise the processing of the October 2006 calls for applications for Tempus Structural and Complementary Measures (145 proposals received) and Individual Mobility Grants (394 proposals received). The academic and technical evaluation will be finalised and selection results are expected in January and April 2007. The selection of Joint European Projects (JEP) to be submitted by 15 December 2006 will be organised by the ETF Tempus Department and the results are expected in July 2007. Grant Agreements for the selected projects will be prepared and sent to the grantholders.

Content and finance related contract management, such as preventive monitoring, field monitoring and overall support and guidance will be provided to more than 800 running Tempus projects. A new integrated grading system (desk and field monitoring) will be implemented in 2007. The 2006/07 audit campaign will be carried out in Spring 2007.

To stimulate the visibility of the Tempus Programme, the Impact Studies will be finalised, edited and published in different languages in the first half of 2007. Promotional materials will be produced, and to increase the dissemination of the achievements of Tempus so far, wide distribution of publications and promotional materials will be ensured. The overall provision of relevant IT tools and the upgrading of existing information systems will continue throughout 2007. In terms of general administrative support, the ETF Tempus Department will manage the Tempus Conventions through daily preparation and follow-up of commitments, reporting and monitoring activities, checking and payment of invoices and regular contacts with framework contract suppliers.

Preparatory activities for the future Tempus successor programme and support for the new Tempus Unit at the Executive Agency, if requested by the Commission, will be provided.

Pillar 2: Corporate communication

The ETF will disseminate and publish information and analyses developed in its work in support of the European Commission to other EU institutions involved in HRD in external assistance, to partner country stakeholders and experts, as well as to the broader international development community.

The principle aims of the ETF's communication activities are to support policy development and knowledge-sharing in the ETF's field of competence and responsibility, enhance the impact of the EU external assistance programmes and develop communication with citizens in line with the European Commission's objectives¹⁹ for mainstreaming information and encouraging dialogue and debate.

In 2007, the ETF's main emphasis will be on information and exchanges of expertise, knowledge-sharing and experience through publications, the Internet, the media, meetings and other appropriate means, taking particular account of new technologies and the linguistic diversity of its main audiences. The quality of the ETF's communication activities reflects on the organisation as a centre of expertise and publications and other communication tools are assessed by the criteria of accuracy, reliability, coherence, relevance, effectiveness, pragmatism and innovation. To ensure high quality publications the ETF's publications policy will be revised with support from its Editorial Board, comprising external members as well as ETF staff.

Pillar 3: Organisational learning: Strengthening knowledge and systems

As regards strategic management priorities for 2007, the ETF will work closely with the Commission, Member States and partner countries to implement the strategic objectives included in the Mid-Term Perspective 2007-2010. The ETF will consult with Commission bodies to ensure that the services and expertise provided are in line with EU external relations priorities and with any modifications to the ETF's objectives and functions that may come with a revision to ETF's Council Regulation expected in 2007.

A key concern for the ETF, identified in the triennial external evaluation of 2006 will be to reinforce the links between its mid-term priorities, its annual work programme, its country plans and annual activity report. A critical challenge for the ETF will be to improve the relevance and measurability of the objectives and indicators it sets in environments where the work of the agency is only one contributing factor.

The ETF will continue to work closely with Member States and donor agencies to facilitate the exchange of information and analysis on approaches to assistance in the HRD sector. The liaison with Member States will above all focus on initiatives which help to make experiences from individual Member States available to partner countries through the organisation of study visits or exchanges. As regards cooperation with donor organisations, the ETF will continue to ensure that the outcomes of its innovation and learning, as well as its work in partner countries are made available to the donor community as a support to their activities.

As regards governance, the ETF will continue to work closely with the Commission and Governing Board to ensure that the Board continues to be effective and efficient in fulfilling its duties. The Commission Communication on the External Evaluation of ETF proposes a substantial change in the Governing Board structure and organisation in line with the principles laid down in the Inter-Institutional Agreement. In addition, the External Evaluation recommended the consideration of setting up sub-committees of the Board to deal with specific dossiers. As secretary of the Board, the ETF will follow these developments to ensure that it helps to implement the final structure agreed by the Council and supports any transition process.

In line with the findings of the external evaluation, the ETF expects that the second governance structure, the Advisory Forum, will no longer be a statutory network from 2007. The ETF will however continue to ensure the full involvement of stakeholders from partner countries, Member States, education institutions and experts and donors in its activities. From 2007, this will be managed through regional and expert networks as well as through the Governing Board.

¹⁹ Plan D is the European Commission's Communication Strategy for communicating with Europeans about its activities.

The ETF's regulatory environment is developing in line with the more global changes under way in the major EU institutions. The ETF will continue to make efforts to anticipate and comply with the emerging requirements which stem from these changes. The ETF will put particular emphasis on compliance with Internal Control Standards with particular reference to the consolidation of its internal audit and risk assessment capacity. In addition, the ETF will reinforce its compliance with some elements of EU public service regulations and in particular the Personal Data protection directive as well as adaptation to the update of the public procurement directive. Finally, the ETF intends to complete the change of its accounting standards to accrual accounting and prepare for the adoption of a revised financial management software package developed by the European Commission (the so-called ABAC suite).

Evaluation and impact assessment are receiving increased attention, both for evaluation and assessment of ETF activities and projects, as well as for the development of ETF expertise in the field. The 2005 External Evaluation led to a Commission Communication in 2006. The ETF is drawing on the results of the external evaluation as well as on further reports from the Internal Audit Service and the Court of Auditors to define and implement appropriate action plans to improve corporate performance. These action plans and subsequent implementation reports agreed with the Governing Board are being shared with relevant institutions.

In 2005, the ETF established a more flexible organisational framework for its operational departments and in 2006 commenced a review of its administrative support and coordination activities. This framework has integrated the ETF's previously separated regional departments into a single operational department to enable a stronger distribution of knowledge and expertise across the organisation as a whole. Deployment of expertise in the new department was supported by the creation of a competency mapping exercise to better match the skills of staff with the operational tasks contained in the ETF's work programme. Consolidation of the new organisational model will be supported in 2007 by a new human resources management framework, including a review of staff performance appraisal, personal development plans and the ETF's recruitment policy as well as the provision of specific training measures designed to reinforce the ETF's policy development capacities. In line with the expectations of the European Parliament, the revisions will take particular account of issues of gender and equal opportunities. The changes will also require the further deployment of specific tools to support performance management as well as monitoring and time management tools.

The ETF will also seek increased collaboration with agencies in related policy areas, such as Cedefop, and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working Conditions and at administrative level with bodies active in the same environment namely the European Food Safety Authority in Parma and the Joint Research Centre in Ispra.

2007 projects in support of EU's external assistance in the Enlargement area							
Number	Project		Objective (1)	Expected Results (1-3)	Country Involvement	Project Funds 2007	Expected duration
IPA07-01	Facility to respond to Commission requests	Direct Commission Requests	IPA assistance makes the European perspective more concrete for partner countries in the area of HRD and in contributing to socio-economic development.	Candidate country progress towards accession through an improved contribution of HRD policies to socio-economic development including candidate country cooperation with Cedefop. Improved contribution of HRD policies to socioeconomic development in pre-accession countries.	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, fYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	180 000	MTP
IPA07-02	Education and training 2010		Policymakers and stakeholders in the region have ongoing access to systematic information on the developments and purposes of the European Union's Education and Training 2010 agenda and advice on its possible application to strategies for modernisation.	Advice on the implications of the EU's Education and Training 2010 Agenda for modernisation strategies within the framework of pre-accession is developed with all countries participating in the instrument. Dissemination strategies are prepared with policy makers and stakeholders from all IPA countries to provide information on Education and Training 2010 targeted at national development priorities.	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, fYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	160 000	MTP
IPA07-03	Social Inclusion ²⁰		Analysis and advice on social inclusion issues including urban/rural disparities and, where appropriate, the the access of vulnerable minorities and IDPs to education and training and employment and socioeconomic development to support preparation and implementation of National Action Plans to Inclusion ²¹ .	Analysis and advice on social inclusion policy issues and the facilitation of planning of strategies to be supported by assistance are prepared for all countries covered by the IPA instrument.	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, fYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	80 000	2007-2009
IPA07-04	Entrepreneurship Learning		Policy makers and stakeholders in all countries covered by the IPA have access to information on developments and purposes European Charter for SMEs ²² and produce data for reporting progress on Chapters 1 and 4 of the Charter.	Data on progress and status in line with the objectives of the SME Charter prepared by each country to enable comparisons between countries and against EU progress and assessments of developments in entrepreneurship learning.	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, fYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	80 000	2007-2009

²⁰ This activity will draw on studies undertaken by DG EMPL for Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

²¹ Direct DG ELARG request

²² Direct DG ENTR request

IPA07-05	Policy learning to support VET reform processes	Policy-dialogue and reviews and regional cooperation are undertaken with policy makers in Kosovo, Albania and Turkey on selected policy priorities identified by the countries in line with their framework of relations with the EU.	Strategies and actions based on analysis of policy challenges and international practices are identified with Kosovo, Albania, and Turkey's policy makers for inclusion in assistance plans to address HRD sector priorities. Information and experiences from international developments are shared with policy makers in each country.	Albania, Kosovo, Turkey	180 000	MTP
IPA07-06	Governance and administrative capacity in employment	Capacity building measures are undertaken with stakeholders and policy makers in Candidate and potential candidate countries covered by the IPA instrument to improve administrative capacities and governance in employment policies ²³ .	Candidate country stakeholder and policy maker capacities to prepare for the programming, implementation and management of European Social Funds, in the framework of the European Employment Strategy, are strengthened with respect to the objectives of the Community in the fields of social inclusion, education and training and equality between men and women. Increased administrative capacity in potential candidate countries to develop active labour market policies.	Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, fYR Macedonia, Turkey)	190 000	MTP
IPA07-07	Learning and teaching	Capacity building activities and networking are undertaken in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, fYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo to strengthen professional expertise in policy formulation in teacher training and the organisation of learning processes.	Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia and Kosovo strengthen their capacities to identify the problems to be addressed, the respective roles country stakeholders can play, specific actions to be taken and timetables for their achievement in the area of teacher training and the organisation of learning processes.	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, fYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	60 000 (+100 000 ITF)	2007-2008
	Networking	Stakeholders and policymakers in HRD in all IPA countries are engaged in policy formulation and implementation through the creation of networks.	Networks maximise the flow of advice to the Commission, the ETF and between countries on priorities, problems and developments in HRD within the IPA region. A network of main contact points for ETF work in the country is established through national authority appointments. Cross fertilisation of ideas among partner countries policies and approaches is facilitated through periodic regional meetings.	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, fYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	100 000	MTP
	Total IPA				1 030 000	

²³ Direct DG EMPL request

2007 projects in support of EU's external assistance in the Neighbourhood area

Number	Project	Objective (1)	Expected Results (1-3)	Country Involvement	Project Funds 2007	Expected duration
ENPI07-01	Facility to respond to Commission requests	To support the delivery of Community assistance to partner countries in the HRD field.	<p>Relevant assistance opportunities for education and training are identified and designed in the context of ENPI and national sector policy strategy needs.</p> <p>Contribution of assistance programming to overall reform assessed and recommendations provided to support future Community assistance.</p> <p>Analysis and relevant information provided as input to EU programming and in contribution to definition and monitoring of EU external policies.</p>	All, depending on request	200 000	2007
ENPI07-02	Entrepreneurship learning and skills development	To support the Commission in the implementation of the Euro-Med Charter for SMEs.	<p>Data on progress and status in line with the objectives of Charter prepared by each country to enable comparisons between countries of the MEDA region.</p> <p>Synergies created between developments in the Euro-Med charter MEDA regional project on education and training.</p> <p>Dissemination and exchange of experiences between EuroMed Charter and MEDA regional projects participants on entrepreneurship and skills development.</p>	Mediterranean region	50 000	2007 and 2008
ENPI07-03	Meda regional project on Education and Training for Employment (MEDA-ETE)	To support MEDA partners in the design of relevant technical and vocational education and training policies that can contribute to promote employment through a regional approach.	<p>National capacities on specific issues linked to E&T reform enhanced;</p> <p>A permanent Observatory network consolidated.</p> <p>Relevant information and analysis provided on issues relevant to education and training reform in particular apprenticeship and quality.</p> <p>Dissemination and exchange of experiences on issues related to education and training reform enhanced between EU Member States, partner countries and other donors.</p>	Mediterranean region	130 000 24	2007-2010

Direct Commission Requests

²⁴ The Education and Training Project is funded by the MEDA programme with an overall MEDA project budget of €5 000 000.

ENPI 07-04	Policy learning to support VET reform processes	Specific support packages are developed in cooperation with policy makers and stakeholders to accompany national reform efforts in the field of decentralisation in Ukraine, the development of the capacities to assess reform in Morocco, and the development of capacities in Armenia, Egypt, Jordan for overall policy design in the HRD sector.	Policy formulation and implementation capacities of partner country stakeholders in overall or specific reform issues strengthened. Dissemination and networking activities carried out to expose partner countries to EU policies and Member State and other partner country good practice.	Ukraine, Morocco, Russian Federation, Armenia, (Egypt, Jordan as part of facility to respond to EC requests)	200 000	2007-2009
ENPI07-05	National Qualifications Framework	Specific country tailor-made initiatives are designed in the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia through working groups of policy stakeholders.	National strategies on National Qualification Frameworks development designed for participating countries in the context of their modernisation process. Policy and implementation capacities of participating countries are improved through peer learning activities and use of pilot experiences on sector frameworks carried out in selected countries. Dissemination and networking activities carried out to expose partner countries to EU policies, Member State and other partner country good practice, including the impact of financing in qualifications development and the role of European Qualifications Framework.	Russian Federation, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia	300 000 25	2007-2009
ENPI07-06	HRD Observatory Function	To reinforce national institutional capacities in selected Mediterranean countries to collect, process and analyse relevant information on education, training and employment issues for informed decision making.	Capacity building activities of observatory function networks participants carried out. Strategy for observatory function validated and implemented. Regional exchange of experience increased. Pilot analysis carried out.	Jordan, Syria, Morocco, Egypt, Algeria	50 000 ²⁶	2007-2008
ENPI07-07	Networking	To reinforce regional exchange of experience of sector policy development and implementation.	Countries exposed to peer experiences on education and training sector reform in the region .	All	64 000	2007-2013
	TOTAL ENPI				994 000	

²⁵ Overall project funds are estimated at €450,000, of which €150,000 should be provided by the Italian Trust Fund

²⁶ Overall project budget is estimated at €200,000, of which €150,000 should be provided by the Italian Trust Fund

2007 projects in support of EU's external assistance in the Development Co-operation Instrument

Number	Project	Objective (1)	Expected Results (1-3)	Country Involvement	Project Funds 2007	Expected duration
DCI07-01	Support to Tacis and DCI project cycles	Direct Commission Requests The relevance of HRD components in EU funded interventions in Central Asia is improved through support to the definition, preparation and impact assessment of EU funded interventions.	DCI and Tacis interventions identified and designed. Policy impact of reform interventions reviewed and lessons learned.	All, including Turkmenistan, depending upon requests	20 000	2007
DCI07-02	National Qualification Frameworks in Central Asia	The development of a common policy understanding of concepts of NQF in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, of the relation between framework design and overall characteristics of national systems of education and training achieved through the development of initial technical and professional capacities for national qualification framework design.	Common understanding of concepts of NQF and of relation between framework design and overall characteristics of national systems of education and training achieved. Pilot NQF framework designed for tourism sector. Regional cooperation and exchange of experience enhanced.	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	145 000	2007-2008
DCI07-03	Skills Development for Poverty Reduction	The responsiveness of vocational schools to local learner and enterprise skill development needs are increased in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, including the review and implementation of pilot partnerships for skills development.	Advice, including national policy guidelines, developed provided to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the integration of skills development in poverty reduction and rural development schemes with VET system reform.	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	140 000	2007-2008
	DCI TOTAL				305 000	

2007 projects: Innovation and Learning

Number	Project	Objective (1)	Expected Results (1-3)	Country Involvement	Project Funds 2007	Expected duration
ILP0701	Improving teaching of key competencies, including entrepreneurship in lifelong learning for young people and adults.	To provide evidence based policy advice to partner countries on the implementation of key competencies in curriculum.	Policy advice to partner countries and the EU on incorporation of 'entrepreneurship and learning to learn competencies in the context of curricula reform.	Serbia, Albania, Croatia, Kosovo	60 000	2007
ILP0702	Implications of migration for VET development.	To provide advice to the European Commission on the use of VET policy to support migration.	Policy advice to partner countries and the EU on the acquisition of skills by migrants contribution of vocational skills recognition to supporting development of skills of migrants in EU member states and partner countries.	Egypt, Moldova, Albania, Tunisia	75 000	2007
ILP0703	Transition from vocational education and training to work.	To provide advice to policy makers in partner countries and the European Commission on the process of how young people develop their skills and how they integrate into the labour market.	A policy framework for partner countries with recommendations for programmes to facilitate the transition from school to work and possible inclusion in programming. Recommendations to the European Commission on strategies to address school to work transition in partner countries.	Serbia, Ukraine, Egypt	70 000	2007
ILP0704	Policy learning in partner countries.	To offer advice on integration of strategic and technical elements to support HRD policy development in partner countries in the context of external assistance.	Technical contributions to processes of policy facilitation by undertaken by the ETF in partner countries. Policy tools for development and implementation strategies tested in pilot partner countries.	All regions	460,000	2007-2010
ILP0705	Knowledge management in policy strategy development.	To implement a framework for ETF's support to sector policy development.	Integration of policy strategies and tools in the deployment of ETF's expertise. Establishment of International Advisory Board.	All regions	85 000	2007-2010
TOTAL INNOVATION AND LEARNING					750 000	

2007 projects to support strengthening knowledge and systems

Number	Project	Objective	Expected Results (1-3)	Partner Country Involvement	Project Funds 2007	Expected duration
SKS-07-01	Audit	An effective internal and external audit function across the ETF will contribute significantly to the achievement of the Work Programme and its functions as an EU agency, support the compliance with its regulatory framework and key objectives such as the implementation of modern comptrollership and results-based management.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the instrument of framework contracts for ETF events. 2. Provision of recommendations on how ETF control over its service providers can be enhanced. 3. An assessment of ETF weaknesses and strengths with respect to the planning, organisation, administration and management of its business and resources in different ETF project cycle phases. 4. An assessment of the effectiveness of the arrangements put in place by the ETF to improve its internal control system. 			2007-2010
SKS-07-02	Evaluation	To contribute to the quality of ETF services and projects.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ETF and its main stakeholders are aware of ETF activities contribution (or not) to HRD reforms in some of the PCs. 2. Lessons learnt from evaluations are taken into account in ETF activities and projects. 3. ETF evaluation capacity is increased. 	Selected partner countries		2007-2010
SKS-07-03	Actions to facilitate information exchange among Member States and donors	To reinforce ETF capacity to exchange information and lessons with Member States donors for the benefit of the partner countries.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ETF contributes to the exchange of information and experiences among donors in HRD in partner countries. 2. Partner countries, international and Member State donors are better informed about ETF activities and potential support. 3. ETF has a better understanding about donor approaches to HRD. 			2007-2010
SKS-07-04	Business development	To develop ETF policy strategies within the context of the ETF's Council Regulation	<p>Strategy reviews and policy advice in accordance with Council regulation functions.</p> <p>Identification of key challenges for the ETF's in the implementation of its Council regulation during the mid-term perspective</p>	Selected partner countries		2007-2010
	TOTAL				340 000	

Summary of resources by activity

ACTIVITY	2007	
	Staff allocation*	ABB allocation
Support to Education and Training Reform		
<i>Contributing to the enlargement process by supporting the modernisation and reform of education, labour market and training systems in candidate and potential candidate countries</i>	20.2	4,800,000
<i>Contributing to prosperity and development in the European Neighbourhood through co-operation and partnership in human resource policy development and implementation</i>	19.8	4,700,000
<i>Contributing to economic and development cooperation in human resource development in Central Asia</i>	4.5	1,100,000
<i>Supporting the European Commission and partner country policy development through innovation and learning</i>	10.7	2,500,000
<i>Tempus Technical Assistance</i>	27.8	6,600,000
External Communication	10.1	
Strengthening Knowledge and Systems	39.9	
TOTAL	133	19,700,000

* Staff allocation includes both temporary and contract agents; ** ABB allocation includes staff costs, overheads and project funds

ETF/Cedefop: joint work in 2007

Introduction

1. Cedefop and the ETF have complementary expertise. Although both agencies work²⁷ in vocational education and training, there is no functional overlap between their work. The ETF is a change agent with a direct and operational role in improving human resources capacities in its partner countries. Cedefop contributes to the development and promotion of VET policy in the EU through research, policy analysis, exchange of information, comparison of experience, and by providing expertise to the Commission and the Member States in the appropriate working groups.
2. Building upon the achievements of their cooperation in previous years, in 2007 the priorities and methods of the joint work of the two agencies will reflect the new reality marked by the new priorities of the work programme of the two agencies, by the foreseen accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU and the outcome of the Helsinki study.
3. Cooperation between the two agencies in 2007 will focus on the candidate countries²⁸ in the following priority areas:
 - facilitating their involvement in policy development and related Community VET programmes;
 - supporting their further familiarisation and, where appropriate, preparation for full participation in Cedefop activities and networks by the time of accession.

Further assistance should be provided to Romania and Bulgaria after their accession upon request of the National Authorities.

The two agencies will also strengthen their *general* and *thematic* cooperation by:

- continuing to hold regular knowledge-sharing events between their experts;
- involving ETF experts in the thematic development activities in the EU Member States and EEA countries;
- involving Cedefop experts in the dissemination of the European policy developments in education and training in the candidate countries, the western Balkans and other ETF partner countries.

Facilitating the participation and involvement of candidate countries in the policy development of the Community

4. The candidate countries, Turkey and Croatia, have already been involved in cooperation with Cedefop and they will continue to do so in the framework of the financial pre-accession instruments. The planning of their activities was agreed in full complementarity with the ETF in 2005. The implementation process has been started in early 2006, jointly with the ETF and the national authorities of the two candidate countries.

²⁷ The ETF uses Cedefop as a source of information and best practice in the EU and EEA countries in vocational education and training and labour market for supporting third countries' economic and social reform. Cedefop benefits from the ETF's experience and knowledge both in the candidate and in other partner countries. They join forces where necessary to help the EU technically and scientifically in achieving its objectives.

5. Cedefop and the ETF support the European Commission in implementing and monitoring actions related to the work on the future objectives of Education and Training 2010 agenda and by providing expertise to the Commission as well as to the Member States in the appropriate working groups.
6. When necessary, the two agencies in cooperation with the national authorities will provide additional assistance to the candidate countries to enable them to be aware of the conclusions, the recommendations and the messages of the Helsinki study in terms of the updated framework of priorities for the reform of national VET systems and the development of European labour market.
7. More specifically, both agencies will continue to work together in the following areas:
 - Europass: the ETF and Cedefop will continue to assist candidate countries in their preparations for implementing this single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences and for participating in the European network of Europass correspondents;
 - recognition of competences and qualifications: the ETF and Cedefop will support the participation of the candidate countries in implementing the Council Conclusions on identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning; they will also continue to inform and involve the candidate countries in developing a European credit transfer system for vocational education and training;
 - quality in VET: the ETF, in cooperation with the Commission and Cedefop, will continue to raise awareness and update the countries on the progress and outcomes of work in this field;
 - follow-up to the Helsinki study: cooperation will also be extended to encompass other priority areas emerging from the study;

Social Dialogue

8. Cedefop and the ETF will continue to work together to promote the participation of social partners from the candidate countries in the Cedefop seminars, conferences and study visits that will disseminate the information acquired and, to foster networking and exchange of good practices, in particular, among stakeholders involved in sectoral approaches in lifelong learning. They will also deliver support to the actors in the social dialogue as regards the issues of vocational training, employees' competence and skills development in a lifelong learning perspective at European, national and sectoral level.

Continued support to the candidate countries for participation in Cedefop

9. Cedefop will continue to draw on the ETF's experience for reinforcing participation of the candidate countries in the following activities:

■ reporting

Building on the positive experience in the 12 new Member States, Cedefop and the ETF will continue to provide adequate support for the further familiarisation of the ETF national observatories in the candidate countries with Cedefop's ReferNet. The ultimate goal is to ensure that they will be ready and able to play a role as potential members of the network after accession.

Statistics and indicators: the ETF and Cedefop will continue to be involved in the methodological work of the European Commission, and particularly Eurostat, on indicators (e.g. in LLL, quality of VET, follow-up of the work programme 2010).

²⁸ The candidate countries considered in this paper are: Turkey and Croatia despite the fact that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia obtained the status of a candidate country in late 2005. This cooperation hasn't started yet but is a pending issue.

TTnet: Cedefop and the ETF will continue to facilitate the participation of the candidate countries²⁹ in Cedefop's networks, in particular the Training of Trainers network (TTnet) and in the Skillsnet.

■ **e-learning**

The ETF and Cedefop will focus their cooperation on the VET-related aspects of the Commission's e-learning and eEurope action plan and seek to integrate candidate countries in the implementation of the e-learning action programme as well as in the e-skills field.

■ **participation of the candidate countries in the Leonardo da Vinci study visits programme**

2007 represents for Cedefop, a year of transition to the study visits being a policy tool supporting the transversal actions within the Integrated Lifelong Learning programme 2007–13. In this context, Cedefop with the support of ETF and the NLO from the countries will continue to involve the candidate countries in the study visits programme. The study visits follow the Copenhagen, Maastricht and Leonardo da Vinci programme priorities as well as to the Framework of Actions of the Social Partners. The ETF, drawing on its networks and experience, will propose to Cedefop appropriate contact organisations and persons in candidate countries who could contribute to the visits/seminars.

■ **support for research cooperation**

The ETF as well as the candidate countries will have more opportunities to be involved in Cedefop's research work through their involvement in the European journal vocational training, the Agora meetings, Skillsnet (The international network on early identification of skill needs), and Cedefop's Research Arena (Cedra).

- Cedefop and ETF will continue to support the two countries in those fields where assistance and expertise is most needed, in particular, in those fields where ETF work has been started. This will insure continuity and **complementarity of Cedefop work** with the ETF's activities and research that are of importance for the countries (for example, gender issues).

- Cedefop and the ETF will continue to facilitate the **participation of the candidate countries** in Cedefop's networks events, in particular the Training of Trainers network (TTnet) and in the Skillsnet.

■ **information and knowledge management**

Cooperation aimed at reinforcing the electronic exchange of information will continue, in particular through more systematic links to be developed between the Cedefop European Training Village (ETV), the ETF website and the national authorities from the two countries. The aim is to facilitate their access to relevant and updated information about vocational education and training in the EU, good example of practices in the EU. It is also a means to raise awareness of the cooperation and the complementarity of the two agencies work in the countries. Through the agencies website, users from the candidate countries can also order Cedefop and ETF publications online.

In order to raise awareness of EU VET policies and Cedefop activities in the countries, Cedefop will participate at the international exhibitions organised by DG EAC in the two countries.

Finally, the ETF might also contribute to Cedefop Info, the European Journal and should encourage experts from these countries; to deliver valuable and scientific contributions from the two mentioned publication, jointly with Cedefop.

²⁹ Until further clarifications, only Turkey and Croatia are officially considered candidate countries. However, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia might be progressively involved in Cedefop's activities with the support of the ETF.

Cedefop and the ETF will give specific attention to organising joint events during the German and Portuguese presidencies. The Finish Presidency conference in December 2006, aiming to update the Maastricht communiqué and take forward its practical implementation, is of particular importance as a guiding framework for cooperation between the two agencies in 2007.