

TAJIKISTAN

ETF COUNTRY INFORMATION NOTE 2010

Summary

The overall objectives of the ETF 2010 Work programme in Tajikistan are to support the European Commission in the development and deployment of external assistance; and to support the continuing development of partner countries capacities in Human Capital Development (HCD).

Emphasis will be put on supporting the development of a comprehensive VET policy integrated into the overall education policy; assisting the education and training reform implementation and qualifications development; developing of thematic reviews (labour market, migration, etc); supporting to the delivery of EU assistance through the DCI.

In 2010 ETF is launching the Torino process (VET reform analysis in the country) that will include an in-depth study on the cooperation between education and business.

ETF activities are in line with the goals of the European Education Initiative for Central Asia endorsed by the European Council in June 2007 and will be complementary to the activities of the donor community.

The Tajik Government declared 2010 the Year of Education.

1. Socioeconomic background

Tajikistan is a low income country, however after the initial economic collapse which followed independence (1991) and the civil war (1992-1997), signs of recovery were seen again in 1998 and since then the country has experienced continuous high growth rates until 2008. GDP growth has been robust at about 9% per year on average from 2004 to 2008 (remittances from labour migrants represent 40% of the GDP). Inflation has dropped from 38.1% in 2001 to 7.1% in 2005, increased to 10.2% in 2006¹ with a 12% in 2008 and 13% for 2009, mainly due to the increasing of food price.

The global financial crisis has had effects on the Tajik economy in 2008 and 2009, first of all in terms of decreasing of remittances due to the phenomenon of returning migrants especially from the Russian Federation. However during 2009 "Tajikistan has shown strong resilience in the face of sizable external shocks. Despite the 31percent decline in remittances, and difficult markets for aluminium and cotton exports, the economy registered real GDP growth of 3.4 percent"².

The main characteristics of economic development in Tajikistan are regional pockets of industry with weak linkages of output to the domestic economy; weak infrastructural capacities for import & export and an over-dependence on cotton and aluminium revenues³. The amount of foreign investment in Tajikistan's economy is growing annually. Over the period from 1998 to 2007 the amount of foreign investment increased by 6.4 times⁴.

¹ Asian Development Bank, Fact Sheet 2007.

² Statement at the Conclusion of an International Monetary Fund Staff Mission to the Republic of Tajikistan, Press Release No. 10/37, February 12, 2010

³ Migration and Poverty Reduction in Tajikistan, Feb. 2007, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation & Poverty.

⁴ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan; Statistical Yearbook 2008, Dushanbe 2008.

However, nowadays the general economic situation is very unfavourable with a labour market that is not capable of absorbing the current working age population. Constantly decreasing activity rates and high unemployment levels led to serious poverty and social exclusion of certain population segments, while the weight of subsistence agriculture and small-scale self-employment activities have expanded as one coping strategy against poverty⁵. Tajikistan is faced by a difficult **demographic** situation. High birth rates during the last decades have led to an increase of the working-age population which increased from about 2.5 million in 1991 to 3.9 million in 2006 (total population 7.2 million in January 2008 with 74% of rural population, with an equal gender distribution)⁶. At the same time official employment has remained virtually unchanged at around 2 million, after having experienced a low of 1.7 million in 1999. The official unemployment in June 2006 was at 2.4%⁷. However, this official figure must be seen in relation to migration and high levels of underemployment in the informal sector. Furthermore, according to the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2006-2015, even now only 20-30% of the existing industrial potential is being utilised, meaning that the industrial sector still does not create enough jobs for the labour force. The general unemployment rate in urban areas is 4 times higher than in rural areas (18%).

The level of general employment in Tajikistan is relatively not high (7.4%) and is gradually declining. This is mainly caused by the impact of labour migration on the labour market condition. At the same time the level of unemployment among urban population (17.85%), the youth at the age of 15-29 years old (19.2%) and among women (8.54%) is much higher. The reason for the high level of unemployment among the young people is the lack of work experience. Young people do not have work experience because the majority of them have no vocational training. Only 25.4% of the unemployed have vocational education, and among women - only 15.8%⁸.

The increase of the working-age population has affected the informal sectors in particular. In the state and collective sectors the decrease of **employment** is generating unemployment and low levels of wages⁹, employment in the informal sector grew by almost 300% over the period 1991-2005. According to the data of the State Labour Inspection, 7,2% of workers had two or more jobs and 19,6% were looking for additional work in 2004. Teachers' salaries for instance cover only 20% of basic expenditure and the remaining 80% must be covered by additional informal income (the main reason why in general education there is a deficit of 8,000 teachers). The development of informal employment, as a rule, does not bring high and stable income. Working rights in the informal sector are not fixed by the appropriate juridical documents and are constantly disrupted. Workers are vulnerable and socially not protected. Informal employment also generates a number of social and economic problems, first of all because it does not contribute to the tax system and this has an impact on the welfare. However, the informal sector has also a socially positive effect because it has an impact on poverty and increases the access of population to social services (education, public health) which require income.

The Tajik labour market lacks qualified people in most branches of industry (medicine, construction, etc), it is not sufficiently structured and 70% is rural. Every year between 18,000 and 20,000 vacancies remain unfilled, mainly because the unemployed do not possess the professional skills and competences for the job. The professional quality of labour resources is not improving¹⁰. Under these conditions, **migration** is a complex phenomenon mostly from rural areas, but it also implies brain-drain and brain-waste with negative consequences on the internal labour market. The economic environment is very difficult, the legislative framework unclear and the access to capital through financial system seem to be very complicated. Consequently Banks do not provide adequate credits/loans for business. The Employers' Union is brand new in Tajikistan: it represents all employers in the private sector (agriculture, food-processing, commerce, energy and water supply and construction being the main

⁵ Tajikistan Labour Market Review, ETF, October 2009.

⁶ Next Census in Tajikistan will be done in 2010.

⁷ Statistical Yearbook "15 years of independence", Dushanbe 2006.

⁸ Tajikistan Labour Market review, cit.

⁹ Data of the State Labour Inspection.

¹⁰ Labour Market assessment and VET in Tajikistan, ILO, April 2009.

economic sectors – aluminium is a public monopoly). Privatisation is still ongoing, while the private sector accounts for 65% of the economy (35% public sector) in 2008. On average, companies have between 20 and 30 employees.

Over the past 10 years, the working migration phenomenon has led to an increase of departures of male (and female) labour workforce to NIS countries (mainly the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan). According to the data of the State Labour Inspection (2004) 13% of the workforces are migrants. According to a survey by the International Organization on Migration of 2003, the migrant workers from Tajikistan in the period 2000-03 were 632,000 people, mostly between 20 to 50 years old¹¹.

Qualified people are likely to emigrate for better opportunities: rates of return from skilled people will in the mid term come back as remittances to the country, but the economic and social situation in Tajikistan remains critical and on a very low level. The remittances sent back are not used to invest in the country, because the money is urgently needed for consumptive issues to sustain the families of the migrant workers¹².

During 2008¹³, Tajikistan has been experiencing multiple stresses, compounded by the global food crisis. The extremely harsh winter of 2007-08, combined with power shortages and high fuel prices, has already imposed great hardship and rising expenses on the population, particularly in rural areas. The sharp rise in prices of imported food has exacerbated the difficulties faced by poor people. In particular, the prices of bread and other major staples are soaring in Tajikistan, reflecting the rapid global rise in food prices. Such a large increase in the price of bread will have particularly negative effects on the living standards of the already poor and disadvantaged population.

After the serious energy crisis, definitive migration is becoming more frequent, replacing the traditional seasonal model. Young educated people (20-25 years old) migrate with their families, which imply a high level of brain drain. Main destinations remain the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. Brain-drain is not the only problem linked to migration, because most people who enter the labour market without qualifications migrate without skills, even without any knowledge of Russian. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Republic of Tajikistan in 2009 created centres for qualifications of labour migrants to train non-skilled migrants and unemployed¹⁴. In order to develop this project, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has involved also other partners such as the government and employers.

Labour migration has also social consequences: women who remain alone when their husbands migrate frequently suffer from health problems (surcharge of work, stress, etc). Sometimes, they lose the contact with their husbands, and remittances are not always sent home. In migrant households there is also an impact on the education of children¹⁵. HIV is also an issue, when migrants return¹⁶. According to Save the Children report 2007, more and more migrants' wives are obliged to bring their children to orphanages, because they are unable to maintain them or because they migrate themselves to join their husband. There are

¹¹ ETF Migration Survey, January 2009.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The extraordinarily long and cold winter 2007-08 initially triggered the crisis. Temperatures of between -8°C and -25°C increased demand for heating while at the same time affecting the supply capacity. The unusually heavy snowfalls and frozen rivers damaged water and electrical supply systems and isolated mountain villages. The extremely cold weather was exacerbated by a dramatic plunge in electricity supply, due to a decline in water levels in the reservoir of the hydro-electric Nurek Power Plant. The shortage led to severe rationing of electricity and sharp increases in the prices for fuel. Power to industry has been tightly rationed, and the Government estimates that the crisis has so far cost the economy \$850 million in damages and lost revenue.

¹⁴ They are called «Education Centres», one is located in Dushanbe and one in Xudjand.

¹⁵ «Children are more likely to succeed at school in those migrant households where mothers have higher level of education, than in those ones where mothers have no or lower level of education», ETF Tajikistan Country report : Overview of the relationships between human capital development and equity in Tajikistan, January 2010.

¹⁶ The Central Asia region is experiencing one of the fastest-growing HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world. Although the countries are currently listed as low-prevalence, conditions are in place for the explosive growth of the epidemic (Save the Children Report, 2007).

already around 10,000 street children, who often go to Dushanbe. There is also an increasing trend of very young people who migrate with their father, abandoning school.

With more than half of the population living below the national **poverty** line, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan developed a Poverty Reduction Strategy in June 2002 that contains a programme of structural reforms towards economic development and pro-poor growth. The main objective is reducing poverty to 32% by 2015 (National Development Strategy Paper of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period to 2015, adopted in August 2006), anticipating the target of the Millennium Development Goals¹⁷. Within this strategy, the government aims to ensure that 99% of children attend primary education and expect an increase in the participation of children from poor families and girls. It describes the country's macroeconomic, structural, and social policies in support of growth and poverty reduction, as well as associated external financing needs and major sources of financing.

In addition, many services in the field of education or public health have to be paid for and this has limited access for most vulnerable people. The position of **women** in the formal labour market is also very weak. Women are mostly engaged in low-wage jobs, in particular in the sectors of education, health-care and agriculture, where the female percentage is higher but the level of professional skills is very low. In general, women's wages are almost 46% less than men's wages¹⁸.

Unemployment, migration, low salaries (education sector), quality of education, lack of preparation for new skills are all factors related to the socio-economic background of Tajikistan that should be linked to a new human capital development policy.

2. Key policy issues and strategies in Human Capital Development sector

In Tajikistan there are different policies related to the human capital development sector in the field of economic development, education, VET and poverty reduction.

The fundamental changes which have occurred in the economy and labour market during the last 10 years with the disappearance of a traditional wage employment in large parts of industry and agriculture has set the new framework for human capital development needs in Tajikistan. The National Development Strategy identifies the most important challenges to reach a long-term economic growth and the poverty reduction as follows:

- Non-efficient public administration; Weak investment climate; Inadequate competitiveness; Inefficient economic structure; Weak infrastructure; Weak human capital development; Weak civil society development; High labour migration; Weak and slow reform implementation; Limited results from international cooperation.

Until now, the education and training system has not been able to meet this challenge and continues, to a large extent, to deliver the same obsolete knowledge, skills and competences as in the past. The education and training system has also experienced a decrease in enrolment and attendance rates, with almost 2,000 students less in two years (from 25,546 in 2005 to 23,549 in 2007). Only 3.3% of GDP is invested in the overall education system.

Strategic reforms in compulsory and upper general secondary education currently concentrate on ensuring equal access, quality knowledge and relevance to the needs of a modern society. This is to be ensured by improving the efficiency of human capital development in terms of education system, including financing, management, planning mechanisms, spending, rationalisation and modernisation of curricula and approaches.

¹⁷ The MDGs are eight goals that all 191 United Nations member States have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The declaration was signed in September 2000 and commits the States to the following 8 goals: 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2. Achieve universal primary education; 3. Promote gender equality and empower woman; 4. Reduce child mortality; 5. Improve maternal health; 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; 7. Ensure environmental sustainability; 8. Develop a global partnership for development.

¹⁸ ILO, April 2009, cit.

Higher education reform includes a rationalisation of the university network, modernisation of curricula and strengthening the autonomy of institutions. Widespread corruption at all levels of higher education remains a major concern for the quality of, and access to higher education.

Vocational education and training was slower at initiating policy reform. With the support of ETF, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection began discussing more fundamental reforms in 2003 with the development of a new concept for initial vocational education and training. This work was followed up in 2006 with the Government National Action Plan for the Reform of the Initial Vocational Education and Training System in Tajikistan. Key policy issues addressed in the Plan include the content and organisation of educational processes, the structure of qualifications, adult education, social partnership, VET system management and quality control, the links between the labour market and migration and international and regional cooperation.

In December 2006 the responsibility for initial VET was transferred from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection remains responsible for Employment and Adult Education, which includes training for unemployed and re-qualification with a particular focus on migrants. The Ministry of Education in January 2010 started to work on a new comprehensive National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) covering general education, vocational, technical and higher education (see chapter 3)¹⁹.

In the framework of human capital development in the country, the Ministry of Labour and Social protection, under the Government's decree from 5 March 2008, has established a National Adult Training Center of Tajikistan (NATCT) in Dushanbe with four regional branches in Kurgantube, Kulyab city of Khatlon region, Konibodom city of Soghd region, and in Tajikabad district. All the 15 adult training centers of the State employment service in the country and a Modular training center in Dushanbe with its branches in Kulyab and Garm region will be attached to the NATCT.

Moreover, at present the MLSP is planning on establishing a mechanism of qualification recognition. This mechanism will be managed by a Department that will be established within the MLSP that very probably will be called department of Qualification Recognition.

The basis of this idea is that a lot of labor migrants, both external and internal gained different skills and qualification in different fields. However, these qualifications are not recognized officially and their mobility is not guaranteed. Therefore, the MLSP is now working on establishing this mechanism, which will be another support for labour migrants and consequently increasing their income and living standards.

There are plans at Governmental level to extend compulsory general secondary education to 11 years. Many stakeholders are sceptical to extend compulsory secondary general education from 9 to 11 years under the present conditions, were the attendance in grade 9 is only about 70%.

The education system at the moment is facing a deficit of places for pupils in schools (around 700,000). Government would like to develop private schools, with incentives like tax exemptions. As a consequence of such a deficit, around 130,000 people every year join the labour market without any qualification. Most of them migrate to the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan without any skill.

The main policy issues and strategy challenges in human capital development for Tajikistan in 2010 are related to the ETF core themes A, B and C and they can be summarised as follows:

1. The development of a new national education strategy with the integration of vocational education into the overall education system;
2. Institutional capacity building for the definition, implementation, monitoring and financing of the VET system in order to improve quality in education and training;

¹⁹ "Without the inclusion of initial VET is not possible to consider the National Education strategy as complete", the Minister of Education said in a meeting with the main international donors on VET on 26 January 2010.

3. The role of social partnership and the enhancement of education and business cooperation;
4. The role of adult education and skills development for employment and entrepreneurship to understand the links with migration and poverty reduction.

3. Overview of EU and other donor interventions

On 5 November 2009, the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) Catalytic Fund has allocated a grant of US\$13.5 million for Tajikistan to support the National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) over an 18-months period in 2010-2011.

The EFA FTI is a global partnership to assist low-income countries in meeting Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education and providing additional funding for the implementation of the Education Strategies. The grant to support Tajikistan's NSED comes from the EFA FTI Catalytic Fund (FTI CF), a multilateral fund sponsored by 18 donors. UNICEF and the World Bank which co-lead donor coordination agencies for FTI in Tajikistan jointly with the Local Education Donor Group provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to develop the National Strategy for Education Development and application package for the FTI CF funding.

European Union

The European Union has provided support to Tajikistan in initial vocational education with a two-year project 2008-2009. Main results and outputs of the Tacis project "Support vocational education and training in Tajikistan" have been presented on 19 November 2009. The project was implemented in 2008-2009 by DVV International following ToRs designed by ETF in 2007. The main results presented are as follows:

- The Ministry of Education integrated the National Action Plan for Reform of Initial VET System in its National Education Development Strategy 2010-2015;
- Support to the Republican Learning Methodological Centre and Institute of Teacher Training of Academy of the Education of Tajikistan was provided in the elaboration of strategic programmes for strengthening development of the IVET system;
- New curricula were designed for four professions: gas and electrical welder; electrician for repairing and maintenance electrical equipment; plumber; carpenter; and implemented in 4 pilot schools.

A 2-year EU project (2009-2010) on "Poverty alleviation in Tajikistan through Education and non-formal training (PATENT)", enhancing individual incomes and improving living standards in Khatlon and Sughd Regions, implemented by DVV int. with the local NGO ASTI (10 pilot schools are involved).

In the framework of bilateral assistance to Tajikistan, a second Financing Agreement valued at €14 million, in support of Government reform of social protection has been signed between the European Commission and the Government of Tajikistan in December 2008. This complements the first financing Agreement signed in January 2008 valued at €9 million. The Social Protection Sector Policy Support Programme assists the Government in improving the design, management and effectiveness of national social protection policies as well as public finance management in this sector. According to the Agreement, within two years €17,500,000 will be delivered in the form of budget support and € 5,500,000 will be provided as technical assistance (call for proposal to be launched in February 2010). The overall objective of the programme is to contribute to the socio-economic development of Tajikistan and support the Government in alleviating the poverty in the country. The aim is to support the most vulnerable groups by focusing on social benefit schemes and services, improvement of residential care institutions and **development of labour market and migration policies**.

In higher education, the EU has provided support through the Tempus programme (since 1995) and will continue to do so within the new Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and also through the Erasmus Mundus programme and its External Cooperation Window (since 2006).

In June 2007, the European Council endorsed the Strategy for a new Partnership with Central Asia called European Education Initiative for Central Asia. Through this Initiative, the European Union intends to further support the modernisation in the education and vocational training sector as part of a more comprehensive strategy to support the efforts of Central Asia countries to consolidate stability and prosperity. In 2008-2009 meetings with Partner Countries in Central Asia have been taken place in order to identify possible fields of activities.

Other donors

Support by other donors in VET has primarily been provided via the United Nations Development programme (UNDP) with Japanese and Swedish funding for the establishment of modular training centres in Dushanbe and Gharm and creating the capacity to prepare and deliver short-term skills training for young people not entering university and disadvantaged adults. Starting from the beginning of 2008, the UNDP renewed its project to support the Modular training centre under the Ministry of Labour and Social protection in organizing training for adults.

The IIZ/DVV (German adult training association) and the DED (German Development Service) carried out a two-year project (2004-2006) to assist in building up the curriculum development capacity for adult education within the Methodological Centre in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Further support has also been provided in teacher training by the GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) and InWent.

Moreover, at present GTZ (in cooperation with DED, and DVV International) is implementing a seven-year project (2008-2014) to support the Ministry of Education in reforming initial vocational education (including infrastructural school interventions), and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in developing adult education and training policy.

The International development and capacity building centre InWEnt on the basis of the protocol of cooperation signed with the MLSP in November 2005, from 2006 started its support in development and professional development for masters of in-service training.

The Aga Khan Foundation has developed new modular short-term courses for adult training, mainly in the fields of agriculture and tourism. In 2000 University of Central Asia (UCA) was founded by the Governments of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the Aga Khan. The University of Central Asia was created to offer an internationally recognized standard of higher education in Central Asia and create knowledgeable, skilled and creative graduates who will contribute leadership, ideas and innovations to the transitioning economies and communities of the region. This institution provides also training courses at primary & secondary vocational education level and for adult education within a LLL perspective through its School of Professional and Continuing Education. The strategic decision to locate the universities in rural areas was to promote the access of the poorer part of the population to education and training facilities.

The Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) has established a strict cooperation with Tajik Government especially in providing equipment and training support for adult education through the Association for Adult Education under the MLSP.

European Training Foundation

The European Training Foundation (ETF) keeps regular exchange of information with the donor community in the country with the objective of sharing expertise, avoiding duplications and finding room to establish synergy. Thus, in 2009 a joint seminar was organised in cooperation with ILO on labour market issues.

ETF started its activities in Tajikistan in 2004, becoming the first international organisation to deal with initial VET at systemic level working with the MLSP. The reform process started slowly: ETF launched a debate in the country on a new concept of vocational education in order to provide to this sector serious perspective of development. The outcomes of the

debate became concrete in 2006 with the strategy drafted by the MLSP of “The National Action Plan for Reform of Primary Vocational Education and Training System in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2006-2015”, document approved by the Government in June 2006. During the same year ETF published a study on “The Reform of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Tajikistan”.

In 2007 ETF was involved in designing the 2-year EU intervention on initial VET modernisation and the following objectives have been included: 1) Provide policy advice to the Ministry of Education to modernise the initial vocational education and training system and support the implementation of the “National Action Plan for the Reform of Initial Vocational Education and Training System in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2006-2015” adopted by the Government in 2006, and 2) Enhance the institutional capacity to design and implement modernised curricula in the field of initial VET through piloting activities and training of key staff of the Ministry of Education, professional institutions at national level and vocational schools.

In line with the main challenges identified and the increasingly recognition of the VET strategic important in the country economic and social development, in the period 2006-2009 ETF implemented two regional projects of three years (involving Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) on National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) and on Skills Development for Poverty Reduction (SDPR). The two projects contributed to the regional debate and lead to the recognition of the need to strengthen the policy frameworks in Central Asian countries, as well as have provided evidence on positive results achieved by improved relationship between the world of education and the world of work

The NQF project had the objective to support national education and training reform debate using national qualifications as a strategic framework for discussion and to facilitate policy learning about the opportunities and risks related to developing national qualification frameworks. The results achieved included awareness of the international debate on qualification frameworks, understanding of the context specifics of the framework design related to national systems of education and training, platforms for regional cooperation and exchange of experience, initial technical and professional capacities for NQF design, and basic consensus among key stakeholders within individual countries about policy to be adapted concerning qualification frameworks.

The SDPR project had the objective to support a more effective use of the potential of public VET schools to create and deliver new forms of skills development adapted for production and employment needs of local communities and local markets. The project consolidated a pilot approach to test new innovative approaches in pilot schools in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with a permanent interaction and dialogue with national sector policy making bodies in an attempt to influence sector policy. The pilot projects built on good local ownership. In general the project outperformed its original planning, and some of the pilot projects exceeded the initial expectations. The pilots demonstrated that public VET schools, even in rural environments have significant potential that can be deployed into innovations with high efficiency and performance. In both projects the centrality of schools as centers for life-long learning and engines of change emerges clearly.

Under this framework, in 2009 ETF started a 3-year initiative on VET school development in order to further strengthen the VET system in each country both at school level and the environment in which schools and training centres operate. The project will build upon positive results achieved at country level under the NQF and SDPR projects, using tools and successful experiences for dissemination and further capacity building to increase the number of beneficiaries of innovative tools and hence respond to national and regional needs.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to increased quality of TVET by developing schools as centres for life-long learning. The specific objective will be achieved through 3 expected results as described below:

- Policy makers and VET schools have identified improvement measures in the governance structure to enable VET schools to develop as life-long learning centers;

- Dialogue among national stakeholders is facilitated and support to social partnership at national and local/school level is provided through pilots;
- Awareness of VET schools is raised and capacity of stakeholders on school development needs and tools is increased.

Other ETF initiatives still under implementation in 2010 are the following:

- Labour market and migration in Tajikistan: The project pursues an evidence based analytical approach in its studies on the selected labour market issues and its links with migration and human capital development. Its activities were carried out in 2008-2009 under two components: **(i)** labour market review; **(ii)** migration and skills survey. The involvement of key stakeholders from the country is ensured from the beginning to the end of the project. Regular consultations are held with key national stakeholders (e.g. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, public employment services, social partners, etc) and other international actors in the field (EC Delegation, ILO, World Bank, Soros Foundation, UNDP and IOM offices). The results of the project will provide input to three policy areas: (i) employment policy, (ii) HRD reforms, and (iii) migration policy, which can be used by the country, ETF and EC services (DG RELEX, Aidco). In 2010 the publication of the report is finalised and disseminated.
- Overview of the relationship between human capital development and equity in Tajikistan. This country report is produced in the framework of the ETF innovation and learning project²⁰ on human capital development reviews. The focus of the project in 2009 and 2010 lies in the testing the methodology developed in 2008. HCD Reviews will represent a diagnostic tool, to appraise where a country is in terms of its HC, and where it can go next. Through such Reviews, ETF will be moving from the mechanics of the VET system to the HCD level. Such a broader level should cover aspects of, for example, labour mobility, new economic and social demands, lifelong dynamics, people's choices, opportunities and constraints, and their effects on the development of human resources and capital. As an analytical framework, reviews will add to ETF policy learning practices, by connecting training, education, employment policies to a country's actual perspectives/goals of socio-economic development. The shift therefore is towards the demand side, and the future (hence, where a country can go next). The Reviews will pay special attention to issues of equity, based on the understanding that fair and open access to opportunities of high quality learning and employment is an important ingredient supporting innovation in the economy and eventually competitiveness, shared growth, countries' development.

4. ETF strategy of intervention

The ETF's intervention in 2010 focuses on the following ETF core themes:

- Theme A: Vocational education and training system development and provision;
- Theme B: Labour market needs and employability;
- Theme C: Enterprises and human capital development: education and business partnership.

This is done through provision of information, analysis, and policy advice on human capital development and stakeholder capacity building as well as support to improve the effectiveness and relevance of Community assistance programmes. This focus will be translated into policy advice on comprehensive VET systems, the link between skills development, poverty reduction and migration, and support EU programmes in Tajikistan. Stakeholder capacity building for both the definition and the implementation of education reform will be key elements of all ETF interventions.

Tajikistan and Central Asia countries in general are increasingly recognizing the strategic importance of VET. The changing socio economic needs, the growth prospective, the need to

²⁰ ETF ILPs (Innovation & Learning projects are part of the ETF's innovation and learning programme to support human capital approaches that are responsive to new models and strategies for economic growth, development and globalisation.

build solid skills and knowledge, but also the lack of jobs, poverty and inequalities still faced by a high percentage of the population especially in rural (remote) areas, have brought the debate on VET at the centre of policies discussions between the world of education and the world of work and a number of international donors appear to show an increased interest in supporting VET policy development and implementation.

In January 2010 the Ministry of Education of Tajikistan started to work on a new comprehensive National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) covering general education, vocational, technical and higher education; the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is actively implemented adult education policy. However, the reform efforts highlight a number of common challenges, including:

- Address a skill and a qualification mismatch to sustain the economic growth and social development;
- Address socio-economic inequalities, especially rural versus urban differences, access to education opportunities and promote business opportunities (entrepreneurial learning);
- Tackle migration issue both in sending and receiving countries by improving skills development for migrants and a regional migration framework which promotes decent jobs and social protection for migrants;

Within this framework, the ETF initiatives in Tajikistan in 2010 will be to support the continued development of comprehensive education and training policies and implementation capacities at different levels of responsibility, as the reform of VET is crucial for the implementation of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) promoted by the EC.

The ETF's objectives in 2010 are the following:

- Support the EU external policy instrument programming cycle;
- Support relevant stakeholders, particularly the social partners, to increase their involvement in vocational training reforms and develop their capacity for becoming key actors in those reforms;
- Build relevant stakeholders' capacity to analyse and interpret trends and challenges and design, implement, evaluate and review evidence based policies in human capital development;
- Improve labour market analysis and support stakeholders in reviewing vocational education and training systems in this light.

These objectives will be pursued within the following ETF core themes:

1. ETF core theme A: Vocational education and training system development and provision – Function 1: Input to Commission sector programming and project cycle.

ETF will in 2010 support the European Commission in the development and deployment of external assistance working in cooperation with the EU Delegation in Tajikistan.

2. ETF core theme A: VET system development and provision – ETF core theme C Enterprises and human capital development: education and business partnerships. Function 2: Support to partner country capacity building – Function 3: Policy analysis, provision of evidence-based analysis on country policy reforms to support informed decision making.

ETF will focus in 2010 supporting the Tajik authorities in the provision of information, analysis, and policy advice on VET reform and identifying VET priorities in the field of human capital development.

The analysis is undertaken within the "Torino process" which aims to provide a concise, documented analysis of vocational education and training reform in ETF partner countries, including the identification of key policy trends, challenges, constraints as well as good practice and opportunities. A variety of stakeholders (policy-makers, practitioners and researchers, from both public and private sector) will be consulted at different stages of the process to collect data, discuss the findings of the review exercise and formulate

recommendations. Information types and sources will be as diversified as possible. The "Torino Process" will build on various and complementary, quantitative and qualitative evidence, such as statistical data and indicators, good practice, qualitative assessments, and existing national and international studies and reports, drawn from different stakeholders. The Torino process is a participatory review of progress in vocational education and training policy carried out every two years. Its objective is to provide a concise, documented analysis of VET reform in each country, including the identification of key policy trends, challenges, constraints, as well as good practice and opportunities. As a preliminary outcome of the Torino process, an initiation meeting is organised (Nov.) on entrepreneurial learning.

An in-depth review on cooperation between education and business will be prepared as a first study under the "Torino Process". It will map policies, mechanisms and processes developed in partner countries, which support or constrain cooperation between education (professionally-oriented higher education and VET) and the economic world. The education and business study is the first study to be prepared under the Torino process umbrella and will cover vocational education and training and professionally-oriented higher education. Its overall objective is to analyse and review cooperation between education and business in the ETF partner countries in order to pave the way for its enhancement. This exercise, which was announced at the ETF conference in Brussels on 3-4 December 2009 on Education and Business, derives from the importance of cooperation between the world of education and the world of business for addressing partners' development plans and related needs in terms of qualified labour force.

ETF's role in the area of education and training policy is complementary and supportive to what will be done by the EC (directly by EU Delegation, by EU Member States, or through the DCI financed technical assistance), by other donors and by the Tajik Government.

A review and redefinition of the overall VET system as an integral part of a comprehensive education policy is necessary. After the completion of the Tacis VET modernisation project, at present the Ministry of Education considers initial VET an integral part of the overall education system and the request to ETF to provide input to the new National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) is evidence of this changed approach. Following the creation of the National Adult Training Centre of Tajikistan (March 2008), under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Social Protection, links between initial VET and adult education are becoming more important, in order to avoid overlaps and duplications.

The initiative on school development has a strong capacity building component; based on the feedback/active input by five stakeholder categories: policy makers, social partners, school directors, teachers and students as well as survey results on VET school quality, collected at 30% of VET schools in each of the participating countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). ETF aims to identify policies and tools to enable VET schools to develop as life-long learning centres, to respond to the growing needs of the society to access learning, and take part in continuous training.

The ILP on human capital development aims at local capacity building in analysis of education systems. The innovative approach consists in the focus given to equity bringing education, training and employment closer together.

3. ETF core theme B: Labour market needs and employability - Function 2: Support to partner country capacity building - Function 3: Policy analysis, provision of evidence-based analysis on country policy reforms to support informed decision making.

The project overall objective is to contribute to the improvement of employment and migration policies in Tajikistan by providing good quality analysis of selected labour market issues and its links with migration trends and education & training systems.

The specific objectives for ETF's work in 2010 will be to contribute to the programming of the DCI support to VET reform in Tajikistan, and to assist this reform by informing the policy development and implementation processes through the ETF policy advice activities.

5. ETF activities in Tajikistan in 2010

ETF Interventions in Tajikistan in 2010						
Title of ETF intervention	Themes & Functions	Expected results	Activities being undertaken	Outputs	Timetable	Duration
Support the EU external policy instrument programming cycle	Theme A Function 1	Relevant advice provided upon request by EU Delegation and other National stakeholders and authorities in the human capital development field Relevant recommendations provided in the field of VET and HCD.	Regular contacts and meetings with EU Delegation staff Dialogue with National authorities and stakeholders and input, recommendations when requested	1 policy feedback	Feb: Input to the National Education Strategy	2010
Torino process	Theme A Function 2 and 3	A concise, documented analysis of VET reform in the country is implemented	Collection of data & information Focus groups' organisation and implementation Validation seminar's organisation and implementation	1 country report 2 focus groups 1 discussion/ validation seminar 1 workshop on entrepreneurial learning, as preliminary outcome of the Torino process	Jan-May: Country report draft June: Validation meeting Sept.: Final country report Nov.: workshop on entrepreneurial learning	2010-2011
Education & business cooperation study	Theme C Function 2 and 3	Cooperation between education & business mapped; Tailored recommendations to local policy makers and donors for future programming initiatives and capacity building measures provided	Collection of data & information Focus groups' organisation and implementation Validation seminar's organisation and implementation	1 country report 2 focus groups 1 discussion/validation seminar	Jan-May: Country report draft June: Validation meeting Sept.: Final country report	2010-2011

Labour market and migration	Theme B Function 2 and 3		Finalisation of labour market and migration report	1 report on labour market and migration in Tajikistan with recommendations	Sept.: Publication report on labour market and migration	2010
HCD review	Theme A-C Function 2-3	Design reviews in human capital development in partner countries is undertaken Methodology to study human capital development and equity developed and tested in Tajikistan	3 Meetings with local contractors Revision of country report Policy options preparation Seminar preparation Report's dissemination	1 Country report on HCD & equity produced and disseminated 1 validation seminar on HCD & equity Policy options delivered and discussed with policy makers 2 dissemination meetings	Jan-April: Country report finalisation May: validation seminar May-Nov: Policy advice actions and report's dissemination	2010
School development towards flexible community learning centres	Theme A Function 2 and 3 Theme C Function 2	Relevance of training towards need of the community including formal education and adult training increased; Regional cooperation on human capital development reform topics supported Dialogue among national stakeholders is facilitated and support to social partnership at national and local/school level is provided Awareness of VET schools is raised and capacity of stakeholders on school development needs and tools is increased	Surveys analysis at school level and discussion of results and options with key stakeholders Study visits' preparation Training design and module' preparation	2 focus groups with policy makers, social partners & school directors 1 study visit for school directors and policy makers 1 study visit for social partners and policy makers 1 training session for policy makers and school directors 1 report on findings from surveys	Jan-April: Survey analysis; March-September: Training design and modules' preparation May & Sept: study/peer learning visits Oct-Dec.: training delivery	2010-2011