

WORK PROGRAMME 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 is the EU's centre of expertise on vocational education and training reform in the context of the EU's external relations programmes. It provides the EU with a focus for international debate, a point of reference for the wider community and is at the centre of a group of renowned organisations, individuals and networks with related interests.

The ETF provides advice and assistance on the modernisation of human resource development policies to the European Commission and 29 partner countries that receive support from the EU's external relations programmes. 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.

The overall objectives of the ETF's 2008 Work Programme are to:

- support the European Commission in the development and deployment of external assistance in the area of human resources development; and
- support the continuing development of partner country capacities in human resources development.

The ETF's 2008 Work Programme consolidates the country emphasis outlined in the Mid-Term Perspective for the period 2007-10. The ETF's priorities and distribution of effort across the countries it works with will remain largely unchanged from 2007. The focus remains on facilitating policy learning in vocational education and training within a lifelong learning framework. In 2008, the ETF will support qualifications frameworks, lifelong learning, capacities for improving labour market functioning and the management of quality of vocational education training systems. The contribution of skills development to achieving equity and poverty reduction and the capacities of stakeholders involved in human resource development, including social partners and policy makers are key elements of the ETF's work.

In 2008, the ETF will focus its support on countries covered by the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) i.e. the candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (as defined by UNSCR 1244), Montenegro, and Serbia). Following indications from DG External Relations and in continuity with 2006 support to countries under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, the ETF will give particular attention to Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Ukraine, and the Caucasus. For 2008 the EC Delegation in Syria has made a number of requests for support (see activity 2 below) to capitalise on actions already under way. Regional cooperation will continue to play a strong role in the ETF's support to the republics of Central Asia. The Work Programme continues the ETF's adaptation to the new external assistance instruments and in accordance with the Communication from the Commission on the ETF in December 2006¹, the ETF will strengthen its corporate and human resource management strategies and reinforce its dissemination of ideas and materials on thematic areas relating to vocational education and training.

In 2008, the ETF will launch a new cycle of Innovation and Learning Projects. The ETF innovation and learning projects facilitate international dialogue and debate between the EU and partner countries on policy strategies and innovations in human resources development and distribute methodologies and tools that assist partner country stakeholders and policy makers in the development of human resources development sector policies that can be supported in the EU's external assistance programmes.

Other initiatives in the neighbourhood region relate to employment and the Black Sea Synergy Initiative², and the Central Asia area. The Work Programme continues the ETF's cooperation with

¹ COM (2006) 832 final

² **The Black Sea Synergy is a regional cooperation strategy** that complements the broad EU policy towards the region set out in the pre-accession strategy with Turkey, the ENP and the Strategic Partnership with Russia. Its primary task is the

Cedefop and the sharing of analyses with the World Bank. The ETF will also collaborate with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), mainly by sharing complementary experiences and analyses in areas of common interest, including the use of scenarios in identifying policy options, approaches to social partnership, and the methodologies and results of the ETF surveys on human resource development and migration. The ETF will also support the involvement of candidate and potential candidate countries in relevant human resources development activities under the Slovenian Presidency.

Introduction

The ETF helps transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human resources through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU's external relations policy.

The ETF works with the European Commission and 29³ countries and territories that receive support from the European Union's external assistance programmes. These EU programmes help developing and emerging economies achieve sustainable economic and social development. The ETF provides support to the modernisation of vocational education and training systems in a lifelong learning perspective, and related labour market issues under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)⁴, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)⁵ and the Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI)⁶. The EU's external assistance instruments:

- place external assistance within a framework of relations between partner countries and the European Union;
- promote mutually agreed bilateral strategies that integrate external assistance within the policy priorities of each country, including the perspective of further accession and closer integration in the EU's internal market; and
- support greater sustainability of the results of assistance, by including measures to improve priority setting and reduce the fragmentation of assistance.

The ETF's role is to help improve the quality and level of skills available in each partner country through the definition and implementation of reform strategies for education and training and the functioning of related labour market systems. The ETF's support for these strategies and reforms contribute to achieving the EU's enlargement objectives and the development of more stable and prosperous economies in the countries of the EU neighbourhood region.

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 with different timescales for candidate and potential candidate countries. For countries supported by the ENPI, assistance will aim to build capacity 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.

ETF support is provided to a range of stakeholders and clients involved in the EU's external assistance programmes. These include European institutions such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, related European agencies, and Delegations of the European Commission, as well as partner country governments and their stakeholders. The ETF also cooperates with the international donor community on the exchange of information and experience on lessons learned in the assistance field.

ETF support is tailored to the specific needs and requirements of its clients and stakeholders. Through the staff of the ETF, the European Commission, partner country governments and their policy advisors can:

- **learn about what works in human resources development**, where there can be problems, and what lessons can be learned from other countries and systems facing similar problems;
- **learn about emerging international developments and trends in vocational education in a lifelong learning context and related labour market issues;**

³ These countries are: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument.

⁶ Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation.

- **undertake** in depth policy reviews on human resources development to identify appropriate policy and implementation solutions and how to implement them;
- **obtain assistance** in designing and implementing new assistance programmes or in making current programmes more effective; and
- **receive up-to-date, comprehensive information** about what is happening in partner countries in the human resources development field and its environment and EU Member States so partner country ministries are aware of cutting edge policies;

The results of the ETF's Work Programme are reported through its annual activity report (AAR). The AAR is submitted to the European Commission and describes the achievements of the ETF during the year. The report also serves as a benchmark for the ETF in making progress towards the objectives of its mid-term perspective and ensures that there is a clear link between the mid-term perspective, the ETF's annual Work Programme and the work it undertakes for the European Commission and with partner country stakeholders.

Details of all ETF projects, activities and its annual activity report are available from the ETF's website at <http://www.etf.europa.eu>. The site contains detailed implementation plans including expected outputs for projects and ETF country plans.

The ETF monitors the progress towards its objectives and its performance as an agency of the EU through a series of corporate indicators. These corporate indicators cover seven main categories of action and 21 key variables which cover the key functions of the ETF, its performance as a centre of expertise and its institutional obligations as an agency of the European Union. The main categories against which the ETF assesses its performance are that:

1. it provides information, policy analysis and advice and supporting relevant stakeholders in partner countries to build capacity in human resource development;
2. it disseminates information and encourages networking and exchanges of experience and good practice between the EU and partner countries;
3. it supports the delivery of Community assistance to partner countries in the field of human resource development;
4. it contributes to the analysis of the overall effectiveness of training assistance to the partner countries;
5. it facilitates the exchange of information among donors engaged in human resource development reform in partner countries;
6. it is a recognised centre of expertise;
7. it is a well functioning and soundly managed agency of the EU.

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE ETF IN 2008

ETF activities in 2008 are guided by its Mid-Term Perspective (MTP). The Mid-Term perspective (MTP) describes strategic objectives that will be achieved progressively by the ETF during the period 2007-10. These objectives support the external assistance instruments of the EU and aim to ensure that by 2010:

- the partner countries the ETF works with under the EU's external assistance programmes are provided with information, analyses, and policy advice on human resource development;
- partner country stakeholder capacities in human resource development have been strengthened to contribute to more relevant education and training sectors;
- the exchange of information and experience has been facilitated among donors engaged in human resources development reform in partner countries;

- ETF policy advice and programming analyses for the European Commission have contributed to the improvement of the effectiveness and relevance of Community assistance programmes to partner countries in the field of human resources development; and
- ETF dissemination and networking activities transfer relevant policy lessons between EU Member States and partner countries and between partner countries, and support the engagement of partner countries with relevant EU's policies and programmes.

The 2008 Work Programme covers the second year of the Mid-Term Perspective four year cycle. The Work Programme builds on the initiatives started in 2007 by consolidating its activities within the framework of the new external assistance instruments and the growing demand for policy related assistance⁷ from partner countries. In line with the human resource development (HRD) focus of the Mid-Term Perspective, the 2008 Work Programme has a broadening perspective and places the ETF's work on education and training and related labour market reform in the wider framework of competitiveness, employability and social inclusion. In 2008, the ETF's actions place greater emphasis on the impact of its work on partner country capacities, the support provided to national policy priorities in the partner countries and the use of policy facilitation processes as part of its services.

The overall objectives of the 2008 Work Programme are to:

- support the European Commission in the development and deployment of external assistance; and
- support the continuing development of partner country capacities in human resources development.

The Work Programme aims to reinforce analyses and reform processes in partner countries through capacity building actions for sector programmes.

In 2008, the ETF will launch a new cycle of innovation and learning projects. These projects facilitate international dialogue and debate between the EU and partner countries on policy strategies and innovations in HRD and distribute methodologies and tools that assist partner country stakeholders and policy makers in the development of HRD sector policies that can be supported by the EU's external assistance programmes.

Other initiatives in the neighbourhood region relate to employment and the Black Sea Synergy Initiative. The Work Programme continues the ETF's cooperation with Cedefop and the sharing of analyses with EC services and the World Bank. The ETF will also collaborate with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), mainly by sharing complementary experiences and analyses in areas of common interest, including the use of scenarios to identify policy options, approaches to social partnership, and the methodologies and results of the ETF research of surveys on vocational human resource development and migration. In addition, DG Enlargement has requested exceptional and ad hoc assistance from the ETF for the design and monitoring of a human resources development component of the EU Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot Community in the areas of Cyprus not under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Assistance will also be needed to monitor the reform process in the education sector in the Turkish Cypriot Community⁸.

In the course of the year, the ETF will continue to adapt itself to consolidate its knowledge management and organisational capacities to serve the objectives of the external assistance instruments.

The ETF's actions in the 2008 Work Programme are organised into three main pillars of action to support its mid-term objectives. These pillars are:

- Support to education and training reform
- Corporate communication of the ETF's activities, products and services; and
- Organisational learning: strengthening the ETF's knowledge and systems to support the delivery of Community assistance.

⁷ Regional conferences in the Mediterranean region, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and 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.

⁸ Request to be confirmed.

PILLAR 1 SUPPORT TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFORM IN 2008

The ETF 2008 Work Programme consolidates the country emphasis outlined in the Mid-Term Perspective of 2007 and the ETF's priorities and distribution of effort across the countries it works with will remain largely unchanged from 2007.

In 2008, the ETF's priorities and distribution of effort across the countries it works with is stable and will remain largely unchanged from 2007. In 2008, the ETF will focus on cross cutting themes that contribute to vocational education and training in a lifelong learning context. The ETF will support qualification frameworks, lifelong learning, capacities for improving labour market functioning and the management of quality of vocational education training systems. The contribution of skills development to achieving equity and poverty reduction and the capacities of stakeholders involved in human resource development, including social partners and policy makers are key elements in the ETF's work.

The ETF's operations within this pillar are managed within five activities:

- 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.
- Activity 2:** Contributing to the Neighbourhood process through cooperation and partnership in human resource policy development and policy implementation
- Activity 3:** Contributing to economic and development cooperation in human resource development in Central Asia
- Activity 4:** Supporting the European Commission and partner country policy development through innovation and learning;
- Activity 5:** Providing technical assistance to the European Commission on the Tempus Programme (Trans European mobility scheme for university studies) and progressive transfer to the EAEAC⁹

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 instrument for pre-accession (IPA). 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 (as defined in UNSCR 1244), Montenegro and Serbia).

From the EU, potential candidate countries will receive assistance covering institution building and democratisation, economic and social development, regional and cross-border cooperation and some alignment with the *acquis communautaire*¹⁰, 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*.

A main objective of the ETF's contribution to the Enlargement process is to promote the ownership and national responsibility for the identification and implementation of assistance in candidate and potential candidate countries. This is a key feature of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

⁹ EAEAC is the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency based in Brussels.

¹⁰ The *acquis* is the body of common rights and obligations that is binding on all the Member States of the European Union. Applicant countries must accept the *acquis* before they can join the EU. <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement>

The objectives of the ETF for 2008 are to support the Enlargement process of the EU by:

- supporting the European Commission in the identification and deployment of external assistance to human resources development in the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance;
- supporting education and training reform and employment policy by increasing partner country capacity in agreed areas.

The level of ETF support will follow a similar pattern to 2007 with priority given to the three candidate countries of Croatia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia together with Albania and Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244)¹¹ in 2008.

Reform challenges in the region

Human capital development is one of the major challenges in the overall process of socio-economic development in the candidate and potential candidate countries.

All countries and territories of South Eastern Europe (except Albania) have managed to decrease the percentage of people with low levels of education in younger age groups. However, this remains disproportionately high, in particular when compared with the new Member States.

Furthermore, in the countries and territories of the region there is a lack of high level skills appropriate for generating and supporting innovation-led growth by absorbing and generating new technologies. The main challenges cover the need to modernise employment services and the development of measures that support the transition of individuals back into employment. This is part of a broader policy development need that would support the uptake of the European Employment Strategy. Other challenges relate to improving participation and completion rates in education and training and measures to improve retention and quality.

Specific activities at country level

ETF actions address greater transparency requirements in quality assurance arising from further developments in the European Qualifications Framework and the Education and Training 2010 programme, the facilitation of social partner contributions to HRD policy and implementation and the development of qualification frameworks. Support will also facilitate dialogue on the design of accreditation and assessment processes in initial vocational and education as well as through the ongoing development of teacher and trainer networks. The ETF will also build on the labour market analyses that have been undertaken to support the country analyses for Commission Services. A key element of the ETF's work in South Eastern Europe will be to strengthen the administrative and management capacity in the area of employment policy and the development of policy options in the area of social exclusion. The ETF will exchange knowledge and information with key partners in the region, such as the World Bank in consultation with the European Commission, and will also work with, where appropriate, other agencies, such as Eurofound, in the area of social partnership. A key element of the ETF's work will be its ongoing cooperation with Cedefop in relation to candidate countries. The ETF will also support the involvement of candidate and potential candidate countries in activities under the Slovenian Presidency, in particular the anticipated Slovenian Presidency conference on the social impact of education. The breakdown of activities in the candidate and potential countries is as follows.

Candidate countries

Croatia

In Croatia, the ETF will support the development of the capacity to formulate and deliver effective policies in education, training (including the Croatian Qualification Framework (CROQF)), employment and social inclusion spheres. At the same time, the capacity to manage and implement IPA component IV funds¹² needs to be further strengthened.

¹¹ Under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244: <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/3427824.html>

¹² Component IV of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance covers human resources development.

A major event (possibly in cooperation with Cedefop and the World Bank with European Commission participation) will outline human resource development issues in relation to accession - linked to the contents of IPA Component IV. This will be followed by inputs – mainly from ETF staff and local experts – to support the continued development and setting up of a national qualifications framework, establish a national vocational training council and support sector councils in the lifelong learning framework. In the context of capacity building and public administration reform generally, there remains a need for close cooperation also with other stakeholders to ensure no overlaps

As sector councils will loose direct support from CARDS 2003 by the end of 2008, it will be important to ensure there is consensus on their continuation. ETF assistance will also facilitate the understanding of the goals of the EU's Education and Training 2010 agenda, promote Croatia's engagement in benchmarking, reporting and regional cooperation within the framework of the European Charter for SMEs¹³ as well as develop governance and administrative capacities in reform and change management in the employment policy area. All activities embarked on by the ETF will directly support, or complement IPA Component IV where appropriate.

Another issue for 2008 will be the ETF's contribution to IPA assistance in human resources development, through CODEF¹⁴ on HRD issues thus connecting policy level debates with actual programming and projects being undertaken. The ETF will continue to support the European Commission by commenting on accession related documents and acting directly on requests from the EC Delegation. Croatia will also participate in capacity building activities facilitated by the ETF in the organisation of learning and teaching processes and in the development of HRD policy options in the area of social inclusion.

Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM)

In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM) in 2008 the ETF will concentrate on supporting the European Commission by providing comments on IPA planning and reporting documents, and, when requested, facilitating project planning workshops on IPA HRD project fiches.

In the course of the year, the ETF will also give information and advice on further needs in the field of human resources development, covering the specification of deliverables, updates to the country analysis, inputs to progress reporting and the annual update of the multi-annual indicative programming document (MIPD)¹⁵ and the human resources development operating plan¹⁶. Also in support to the Commission, the ETF will offer appropriate support to the Directorate General for Employment (DG EMPL) on topics related to human resources development to be agreed with DG EMPL.

In line with ETF project assistance for both candidate and potential candidate countries, ETF actions in the country in 2008 will also involve dialogue on the goals of the EU's Education and Training 2010 agenda, the promotion of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's engagement in benchmarking, reporting and regional cooperation within the framework of the European Charter for SME's as well as the development of governance and administrative capacities in reform and change management in the employment policy area.

The ETF's contributions to the capacity building of local actors will focus on promoting social inclusion through education, peer learning to support vocational training reform (with an emphasis on vocational teacher training and school development) and enhancing both social partners' and education actors' capacities to design and implement employment policies.

Turkey

The ETF will support the European Commission by providing comments on IPA planning and reporting documents, as well as Joint Assessment Process (JAP) and Joint Inclusion Memorandum

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/charter_en.htm

¹⁴ Central Office for Development Strategy and Co-ordination of EU Funds (<http://www.strategija.hr>)

¹⁵ Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) is a strategic planning document developed with each country covering all relevant IPA components.

¹⁶ Operational Programmes (OP) are set up within the framework of the five IPA components by the beneficiary country and contain identification of measures and actions needed to reach objectives and priorities set out in the MIPD

(JIM) documents¹⁷ and on IPA HRD project fiches as requested by the Commission. The ETF will also give updated information and advice on further needs in the field of HRD and support the Commission by responding to specific requests. The ETF's work in Turkey in 2008 will continue to include the provision of policy advice and support to the reform processes. The main priorities are to support capacity building, lifelong learning, teacher training and employment policy.

To bridge the gap between finalised and upcoming EU projects, the ETF will facilitate discussions among national stakeholders on existing strategy papers and on how to move towards implementation, including support for the new Vocational Qualification Authority¹⁸. The ETF will help social partner initiatives in sectors to engage in discussions on strategies and qualifications, including promoting increased understanding of the issues arising from the EU's Education and Training 2010 goals¹⁹. Turkey will also participate in a peer learning activity on such initiatives in candidate countries and Serbia. ETF support will be provided to the Ministry of Labour in the development of its administrative capacities and Turkey's participation in EU activities in education and training, including the development of teacher training networks.

Potential candidate countries

Albania

The ETF's focus in 2008 in Albania will be on specific initiatives emerging from current developments in the sector of education and training, including working with stakeholders to establish a policy framework and on the roles that various actors can play in policy formulation and implementation. In 2008 emphasis will be placed on vocational training accreditation and assessment policies for which a mandate has been given to recently established National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVETA). The expectations are that policymakers and key stakeholders in the country will strengthen their capacities in HRD policy planning, improve the potential for cooperation on cross-sectoral issues, and are better prepared to identify the key areas for IPA contributions in HRD improvement.

ETF assistance will also support the understanding of the goals of the EU's Education and Training 2010 agenda, Albania's benchmarking, reporting and regional cooperation within the framework of the European Charter for SME's. Albania will also participate in developing governance and administrative capacities for carrying out reforms and managing change in the employment policy area. In addition, Albania will be involved in capacity building activities developed by the ETF in the organisation of learning and teaching processes and in dialogues for the identification of HRD policy options in the area of social inclusion.

Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244)

In Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244) the new role of the EU (replacing UNMIK) and the opportunity to develop comprehensive education sector reform is expected to require a high level of investment in 2008 from the ETF. A strengthening of donor coordination by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) is likely to increase the support for the education sector, e.g., in its Pre-University Education Strategy.

The European Commission may launch a needs assessment - in partnership with MEST and other donors to guide future support for primary/secondary education. The ETF could be asked to take part in the needs assessment that may run for the whole sector or for specific sub sectors of the education system. The European Agency for Reconstruction and the Commission are in discussion with the ETF, MEST and other donors and stakeholders in planning and targeting this assistance. ETF

¹⁷ JAPs are Joint Assessment Papers agreed between the European Commission and Candidate Countries on the key challenges in labour market reform and for employment policies. They focus on the need to promote and manage rapid structural change in order to establish flexible and adaptable labour markets. Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) identifies and outlines the principal challenges which the candidate country faces in tackling poverty and social exclusion. It assesses the strengths and weaknesses of existing policies and identifies future challenges and policy priorities.
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_analysis/japs_en.htm

¹⁸ Law of "Vocational Qualification Authority" No.5544 (MYKK) 210906, Official Gazette, 26312.
<http://svet.meb.gov.tr/svet/news/mainmenu/news.htm>

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html

assistance will also involve facilitating the understanding of the goals of the EU's Education and Training 2010 agenda, the promotion of Kosovo's engagement in benchmarking, reporting and regional cooperation within the framework of the European Charter for SME's as well as the development of governance and administrative capacities in reform and change management in the employment policy area. Kosovo will also participate in capacity building activities facilitated by the ETF in the organisation of learning and teaching processes and in the development of HRD policy options in the area of social inclusion.

Serbia

The strengthening of social partnership in the field of human resources development will be a transversal theme in the assistance provided by the ETF in Serbia in 2008. The ETF will support Commission services to reinforce social dialogue in the field of HRD upon request. Social partnership will play a crucial role in different 2008 Work Programme projects (services to the Commission, governance in HRD, social inclusion). ETF support to the capacity of social partners to contribute to HRD will have a multiplying effect.

The ETF will organise a number of workshops to raise awareness, assess needs for capacity building and promote the role of economic and social councils at national and local levels. ETF assistance will also involve facilitating the understanding of the goals of the EU's Education and Training 2010 agenda, including support to policy dialogue on national qualification frameworks, the promotion of Serbia's engagement in benchmarking, reporting and regional cooperation within the framework of the European Charter for SME's as well as the development of governance and administrative capacities in reform and change management in the employment policy area. Serbia will also participate in capacity building activities facilitated by the ETF in the organisation of learning and teaching processes and in the development of HRD policy options in the area of social inclusion.

Montenegro

In Montenegro, national qualifications framework (NQF) development (which includes quality assurance issues across the education system) will be the core reform line for the duration of the IPA programme with potential bi-annual support from IPA funds depending on targets and overall performance on previous programmes. Building on ETF support for the NQF developments of 2005-06 and in particular the National NQF Commission appointed by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2006, the ETF will support the Montenegrin authorities in their efforts to realise a national qualifications system aligned with the European Qualifications Framework. ETF assistance will also cover the promotion of a deeper understanding of the implication of the goals of the EU's Education and Training 2010 agenda for Montenegro, the involvement of Montenegro in benchmarking, reporting and regional cooperation within the framework of the European Charter for SME's as well as participating in capacity building activities facilitated by the ETF in the organisation of learning and teaching processes and in the development of HRD policy options in the area of social inclusion

Bosnia and Herzegovina

ETF activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008 will contribute to the existing efforts that aim to improve governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including its HRD systems. Emphasis will also be put on enhancing the role and capacities of social partners and relevant ministries and improving inter-ministerial cooperation in HRD with a view to supporting the implementation of the Multi Indicative Planning Document and hence the mid-term priorities of the European Partnership agreement. ETF assistance will also facilitate the understanding of the goals of the EU's Education and Training 2010 agenda, the promotion of Bosnia and Herzegovina's engagement in benchmarking, reporting and regional cooperation within the framework of the European Charter for SME's as well as the development of governance and administrative capacities in reform and change management in the employment policy area. Bosnia and Herzegovina will also participate in capacity building activities facilitated by the ETF on the organisation of learning and teaching processes and in the development of HRD policy options in the area of social inclusion.

Activity 2: Contributing to the Neighbourhood countries through cooperation and partnership in human resource policy development and implementation

The European Neighbourhood region comprises a wide range of countries, covering at least three distinct sub-regions of focus: Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and the Mediterranean. External assistance to the region is provided through the EU's European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) which aims to facilitate the closer integration of the countries of the region into the EU's internal market.

In the European Neighbourhood region covered by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) in 2008 the ETF's objectives are to:

- contribute to strengthening EU services in the definition and implementation of its external policies by providing input to the project cycle, in particular the preparation and design of sector interventions as requested;
- support the capacities of partner countries to design, implement and monitor the reform of human resource development systems.

The level of ETF support will follow a similar pattern to 2007 with Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan in the Mediterranean region and Ukraine, Moldova, and the Caucasus receiving detailed levels of support. For 2008, the EC Delegation in Syria has made a number of requests for support to implement activities foreseen in the 2007-10 indicative programme. Tunisia, Algeria, Russia, Palestinian Authority, Belarus, Lebanon and Israel will receive support as requested by the European Commission and in line with current project priorities. In 2008, ETF support will reflect the increasing demand from the European Commission and partner country stakeholders for assistance related to policy design and implementation.

Reform challenges in the region

Within the neighbourhood region, education and training systems are frequently centralised and government-led. Greater autonomy for schools and education centres, more extensive stakeholder dialogue, as well as social partnerships at different levels of vocational education and training systems are key underlying factors for successful reform in the region.

Many countries in the Mediterranean region and some in Eastern Europe have embarked on partial or full sector reforms of their education and training systems. In the regions, this is linked to wider policy frameworks of economic growth and employment. The relationship between investment in education and economic growth has become increasingly important as large investments in education and training have not yet been translated into higher employment levels or the reduction of poverty. In addition, the demographic challenge in most Mediterranean countries, growing unemployment rates in the overall neighbourhood region, together with international labour mobility are all generating a demand for greater effectiveness in employment and labour market policies. There is a growing need in the region to build comprehensive and integrated strategies that link different policy areas across the human resources sector. In 2007 this has been reflected in the development of national and regional programming documents for the neighbourhood countries that earmark education and training as a priority area of intervention in the programming period 2007-10.

Specific activities at country level

To foster policy learning across the region and in line with emerging trends in external assistance²⁰, the ETF will continue to promote the exchange of good practice among countries in region where this can reinforce national development processes. This will be the case of the MEDA-ETE regional project²¹ but also of other ETF initiatives such as the national qualifications framework (NQF) project

²⁰ In the conclusions of the EuroMed Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers in Tampere in December 2006, ministers considered "the ENP as a tool which contributes to reinforcing and complementing the Barcelona Process...". In April 2007, the EC published a communication on "the Black Sea Synergy – A new regional cooperation initiative" to see how cooperation on the 'ENP East' could be reinforced. http://www.euromed-seminars.org/mt/archive/ministerial/viii-Tampere_Conclusions.pdf

²¹ ETE is a regional project under the MEDA Programme under the responsibility of the Commission. The ETF has been asked to implement the project". <http://www.meda-ete.net/>

and skills and employment reviews undertaken in the context of the Black Sea Synergy Initiative²². These reviews will consider, inter alia, issues related to mobility and migration. The ETF will also intensify its contacts with EuroMed partnership institutions and key EC services to ensure that its analysis can be fed into the structured regional dialogue of the Barcelona process²³.

Egypt

In Egypt, the ETF will continue to provide advice to the EC Delegation on the reform of the TVET sector and will support the Egyptian authorities in key components of overall reform such as career guidance, NQF, an Observatory function as well as contributing to strategy development and institutional capacity building (such as the Supreme Council for Human Resources Development). The ETF will provide policy and technical advice for national capacities to implement and monitor reform and also promote Egypt's work with the EuroMed Charter for Enterprise. Additionally, relevant assistance will also be provided under the MEDA-ETE regional project. At the request of the EC Delegation, the ETF will also carry out the second assessment of progress of vocational training reform and the contribution of the MEDA project to it as well as preparatory work for a sector budget support in the field of education and training. In partnership with the Italian authorities and the World Bank, the ETFs are also considering further analysis of sector skills needs and mobility issues as a follow up to the ETF 2006-07 migration and HRD project.

Morocco

In Morocco, the ETF will focus on strengthening the capacities and tools for the strategic analysis and monitoring of the reform with a view to future sector interventions. The support to an NQF strategy will continue throughout 2008. The ETF will also provide policy and technical advice to support national capacities to implement and monitor reform. In line with the ETF project assistance the MEDA group of countries in the Neighbourhood region, the ETF will also promote Morocco's engagement with the framework of EuroMed Charter for Enterprise as well as providing support to Morocco where relevant under the MEDA-ETE regional project.

Jordan

In 2008 in Jordan, the ETF is expected to complete the actions that started in 2005 to assist the EC Delegation in the design of a sector policy support programme. The ETF will continue reinforcing national capacities to implement and monitor reform and will provide advice on key reform areas such as NQF, career guidance and social partnership. The ETF will also consolidate the National Observatory Function and promote Jordan's engagement within the framework of the EuroMed Charter for Enterprise²⁴ as well as providing support to Jordan where relevant under the MEDA-ETE regional project.

Ukraine

In Ukraine, the ETF will continue to support the EC Delegation in its joint initiative with the World Bank to support the national process of designing a comprehensive skills development strategy. In 2007, following a series of participatory workshops, a concept note was drafted. In 2008 and based on the key issues raised by the concept note, support will focus on the development of reform scenarios. The NQF project will underpin this process. In the context of the Black Sea Synergy Initiative, the ETF will carry out an employment review, which may contribute to DG Employment and DG External Relations related activities.. The skills and migration profile started in 2007 will be completed and disseminated in 2008.

²² **The Black Sea Synergy is a regional cooperation strategy** that complements the broad EU policy towards the region set out in the pre-accession strategy with Turkey, the ENP and the Strategic Partnership with Russia. Its primary task is the development of cooperation within the Black Sea region and also between the region as a whole and the European Union. http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf

²³ The Barcelona process steers the development of a strategic partnership with each of the countries of the MEDA region. It covers three main objectives: 1. the definition of a common area of peace and stability 2. the construction of a zone of shared prosperity through an economic and financial partnership and the gradual establishment of a free-trade area 3. The rapprochement between peoples. http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/

²⁴ The EuroMed Charter contains the common principles on which the Mediterranean partners can base their enterprise policies. The objective is to create an environment conducive to investment and private sector development as well as to define common strategies and projects, both at national and regional level. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/ind_coop_programmes/med/charter.htm

Moldova

In Moldova, and if interest is confirmed by national authorities, the focus will be on providing advice to EC services (EuropeAid and the EC Delegation) and national stakeholders with a diagnosis of the human resources development sector and recommendations in terms of possible future sector interventions. In the context of the Black Sea Synergy Initiative, the ETF will carry out an employment review, which may contribute to DG Employment and DG External Relations related activities.

Caucasus

The region continues to be a priority area for the EC. In terms of ETF interventions and after a year of intensive work in Armenia to support the responsible EC Delegation and EuropeAid in the design of two sector interventions in the field of HRD, the ETF will continue ad hoc support to the responsible EC Delegation including a stocktaking of the state of sector reform in the country. The ETF will continue to devote resources to the NQF project in **Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia** as a lever for debate on sector reform and will foster social dialogue in particular. In the context of the Black Sea Synergy Initiative, the ETF will carry out an employment review in each of the three countries, which may contribute to DG Employment and DG External Relations related activities

Syria

In Syria, the EC has given very high priority to reform of education and training systems in the 2007-10 National Indicative Programmes. The ETF will provide support to the EC Delegation on two specific projects/programmes. One is an already approved ENPI project on upper secondary education in which the ETF is expected to provide expertise on the links between vocational training and general upper secondary education including, among others, the issues of career guidance and teacher training as areas of common interest among the two “sub-systems”. The second project/programme relates to reform of continuing training. The ETF has been asked by the EC Delegation to start preparing the ground for this future project expected to be financed in 2010. For 2008, the ETF has been asked to increase awareness among Syrian businesses and the academic community on the importance of a lifelong learning approach, continuous upgrading of skills, etc. Finally and in the framework of the support to the promotion of business development, the ETF has been asked by the Delegation to cooperate with the Syrian Enterprise and Business Centre (SEBC) to enhance and increase understanding on the importance of development of entrepreneurship skills. Providing updates on the state of EU and international debate on the issue and sharing the experience of the new Member States and candidate countries are among the specific requests made. The ETF will also continue the ongoing Observatory function project to develop reliable HRD information systems. The ETF will also promote the EuroMed Charter for Enterprise as well as providing relevant support under the MEDA-ETE regional project.

Tunisia

In Tunisia the ETF will promote the EuroMed Charter for Enterprise as well as providing relevant support under the MEDA-ETE regional project. The ETF will also contribute to facilitating national reform debates using national qualification frameworks as a basis for discussion.

Algeria

In Algeria, the ETF will promote the EuroMed Charter for Enterprise as well as providing relevant support under the MEDA-ETE regional project.

In **Israel and Lebanon** and the **Palestinian Authority**, ETF activities will be based on specific requests from the European Commission and engagement with the EuroMed Charter for Enterprise under DG Enterprise. The ETF will also provide support under the MEDA-ETE regional project for which the Commission is responsible and the ETF is the implementing body.

In **Russia**, the ETF will provide support to debates on national qualification frameworks. Overall, the ETF's activity level is expected to decrease following the evolution of the policy framework for cooperation with the EU defined in the four common spaces. For **Belarus**, the level of ETF activity will remain limited and based on requests from the Commission.

In addition to the range of activities the ETF and in the context of the Black Sea initiative, the ETF anticipates the possibility of follow up activities from the EuroMed Conference on Employment expected to be held in December 2007.

Activity 3: Contributing to economic and development cooperation in human resources development in Central Asia

In line with its Mid-Term Perspective, the ETF will also provide support to the five Central Asian republics formerly supported by the Tacis Programme and, since 2006, included within the Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI). ETF support in this region follows a framework tailored to the region as a whole and adapted to the resources available to support reform in HRD in each of the five republics. Within its activities under the DCI, the ETF places a strong emphasis on regional cooperation and consultation with European Commission and its Delegations in each of the republics of Central Asia.

The introduction of the Instrument for Development Cooperation in Central Asia in 2007 saw a higher priority given to education and training system reform, and in particular to vocational education and training. The European Commission now supports human resources development in Central Asia through education and training system reform in particular vocational education and training, the modernisation of higher education and skills development to enhance living standards and reduce poverty. To optimise the ETF's work in the countries, the ETF, at the request of the EC Delegation or EuropeAid, will provide direct support to Commission services in identifying, formulating and reviewing projects and on direct support to the countries through specific policy advice, helping them to prepare for future Community assistance and spearheading new areas of development such as links between skills, employment and migration. In 2008, the ETF will also investigate how vocational schools at local level could become a vehicle in the skills development process and at the same time define improvements at the vocational education and training system level which would enable schools to be involved.

In 2008, in Central Asia under the countries covered by the Instrument for Development and Cooperation the ETF will:

- at the request of Commission Services contribute to strengthening EU services in the definition and implementation of its external policies by providing input to the project cycle;
- support the capacities of partner countries to design, implement and monitor the reform of human resource development systems.

Reform challenges

The Central Asian Republics are in the middle of discussions about how to ensure that their education and training systems are ready to meet the challenges of globalisation and the many and diverse realities of the economies, labour markets and populations of the region.

Tajikistan has moved the responsibility for vocational education and training from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to the Ministry of Education and is in the process of redefining the role of vocational education within the overall education system. **Kazakhstan** has put renewed emphasis on education and training by introducing a national programme for developing vocational education and training. Through support from the EC Delegation and EuropeAid, **Kyrgyzstan** has started preparations for a sector programme approach (SWAp) in education. This includes the establishment of a national vocational education and training policy task force which has begun to prepare a comprehensive policy for basic secondary and post-secondary vocational and technical education. At the same time, the countries have started to consider how skills development can best be an integral part of rural and local development initiatives and Tajikistan is concerned about skills and employment and its links to migration. Tacis projects will also continue to support vocational education and training system reform in both **Kazakhstan** and **Uzbekistan**. **Turkmenistan** has taken the first basic steps for a complete redefinition of its education system with the aim of reintroducing a system which can be comparable to and recognised by education systems in neighbouring countries and the EU. After initial declarations in early 2007 that the education and training system in **Turkmenistan** would undergo fundamental changes, there is still a lack of clarity as to the extent of these changes.

Key challenges which concern the countries include:

- the development of institutional capacity to improve the organisation, content and quality of education and training;
- the need to reduce the mismatch between the supply and demand for skills through the development of comprehensive education and training systems that can respond to emerging qualification needs at all levels;
- the contribution of skills development to improving competitiveness and to enhancing living conditions and reducing poverty;
- the development of mechanisms to enable and encourage adult training and to initiate a move towards lifelong learning;
- the role of qualifications and skills development for employment and the links to migration.

Specific activities

In the course of the year, the ETF will facilitate policy debate on national qualification frameworks as a reference and inspiration for national policy debates and discussions on the kind and role of national qualification frameworks relevant in **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**. A similar approach will be adopted to facilitate policy debate on skills development for poverty reduction, in particular bringing together the experience from field work in **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan** on establishing partnerships for skills development, national policy discussions on skills and poverty, and regional exchange and peer reviews on national policy guidelines for each of the three countries.

In **Tajikistan**, the ETF, in coordination with the EC Delegation and its capacity building programme with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, will discuss skills development for employment and its links with migration with the aim of improving the knowledge base in the country on the relationship between qualifications and skills development, employment and migration to inform future policy making.

The ETF will also share its experience with other donors and in particular, in consultation with the European Commission, engage with the World Bank in both **Kazakhstan and Tajikistan**. At the request of the European Commission, the ETF will also share experience in HRD related issues with other countries. This may involve the provision of expertise on vocational education and training policies in support of the UNESCO led vocational education and training project in **Iraq** which started in 2007 and will continue throughout 2008.

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

The ETF's Innovation and Learning Programme improves the continuous development of HRD sector policy strategies in partner countries. It ensures that the ETF is supporting 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 the broad functions undertaken by the ETF, 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 policymakers in the development of HRD sector policies that can be supported in the EU's external assistance programmes.

Each year the Innovation and Learning programme undertakes analyses to broaden the evidence and knowledge of how key policy themes work in partner countries. Innovation and Learning Projects run for approximately 18 months and generate evidence-based policy advice that can be provided to

partner countries and the European Commission. This also provides a background for ETF input to the external relations strategy of DG EAC. The ILP also supports cooperation with other international agencies.

In 2007, Innovation and Learning analyses yielded published policy related lessons and dissemination activities based on work undertaken in 2006 and concluded in 2007. These analyses cover policy related research actions in the Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood regions specifically in Albania, Croatia, Egypt, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), Moldova, Morocco, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine.

The themes covered in these policy lessons are:

- Teaching of key competencies, including entrepreneurship in lifelong learning for young people and adults;
- Implications of migration trends between partner countries and the European Union for vocational training policy development;
- Transition from vocational education and training to work; and
- Impact measurement in continuing vocational training in the Mediterranean region and Russia.

In 2007, the Innovation and Learning Programme commenced two key projects on policy learning and knowledge management. The policy learning activity involves each of the three ETF regions and consolidates the experience that the ETF has developed in policy learning since 2003. The results integrate technical and thematic elements that support HRD policy development in partner countries as well as policy tools for development and implementation. The project will strengthen the external assistance programme of the EU as a series of technical contributions to policy facilitation and implementation.

The current policy learning project represents an important investment in establishing recognised approaches to policy facilitation in partner countries. In 2008 it is proposed to add to these approaches with a country level policy review process that will strengthen the ETF's assessments of policy information and analyses. It will also support the ETF profile as an international centre of expertise in HRD policies in countries in transition.

The objective is to consolidate the ETF's capacity to assess partner country education and training systems/policies and consider the fitness of the systems to support major development policies related to equity, employment and competitiveness. The methodology will draw on the fundamental ETF approaches developed since 2003 around policy learning, participatory approaches and peer learning. It will also draw on the analytical structure that has emerged around lifelong learning and employment policy and which link education and training with competitiveness, employment and social equality.

The activity will be included as an objective for the current knowledge management project as the main effort concerns internal knowledge sharing and consolidation of existing expertise.

The output should be a HRD policy and system assessment framework that can be tailored to the specificity of partner countries or the context of the assessment. The initiative will draw on the various analytical approaches used in the ETF during recent years and by leading international organisations and donors. The activity will include a limited benchmarking of ETF approaches with other bodies in the EU and in development aid. The framework will be tested over the remainder of the Mid-Term Perspective.

In 2008, the ETF will commence a new Innovation and Learning Cycle for the period 2008-09 including three new analyses covering the contribution of vocational education and training to equality and equity, competitiveness and employability. The ILP cycle will have an emphasis on countries covered by the Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood Instruments and will reinforce the ETF's capacity to provide input to Community assistance. These new innovation and learning analyses, which will conclude in 2009, will cover:

- gender equality and equity in education and training and its links with access to the labour market for women;
- the contribution of the modernisation of vocational education and training systems and policies to the development of competitiveness and,

- the implications for lifelong learning and training policies in three selected partner countries of more flexible labour markets and the need for higher levels of security and employability.

In 2008, the ETF will cooperate with the World Bank on the analysis of data and results produced by the migration project that started in 2006 and finished in 2007. The ETF will also cooperate with Eurofound on issues of complementary and common interest arising from ILP activities, e.g. links between migration trends between partner countries and the European Union and the implication for vocational training policy development and the contribution of skills to enterprise re-location in the partner countries of the neighbourhood region.

2008 will also see the start of the ETF's new International Advisory Panel (IAP) developed in 2007. The IAP responds to recommendations from the European Commission in 2006, that the ETF revise the existing Advisory Forum that was established under the ETF's founding Council Regulation. The International Advisory 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 the 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 International Advisory Panel will offer support to the ETF through:

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

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 Providing technical assistance to the European Commission for the Tempus Programme (Trans European mobility scheme for university studies)

The latest phase of the Tempus Programme, Tempus III, which came into force in 2000 and ran until 2006 will conclude in the period of the Mid-Term Perspective. The successor programme, Tempus IV is under preparation by the Commission services in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders and the first call for applications for the new programme is expected to be launched in spring 2008.

Tempus is a source of information on higher education issues in partner countries. In particular, many projects provide 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 in both the partner countries and the EU Member States.

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.

The information generated by the variety of different projects, and analysed and compiled 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 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. In addition, the ETF has been asked by the Commission to assist in the preparatory activities of Tempus IV.

Planning assumptions anticipate that from mid 2008, the management of the Tempus Programme will be undertaken by the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture in Brussels. The ETF will ensure the transfer of Tempus activities to the Executive Agency.

The ETF provides 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 support provided by the ETF covers the full project cycle. It therefore comprises selection, contract management and monitoring, information and publications and all IT related support.

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 regulatory framework.

Support for the first selection under the new Tempus IV will be provided and includes the registration, checking and a first evaluation of project applications received.

In the course of 2008, the Tempus Department will ensure the coordinated management of 750 running Tempus projects, including content advice following preventive monitoring and field monitoring activities, but also finance related contracting, in line with grant agreement and overall financial regulations.

The overall provision of relevant IT tools and the upgrading of existing information systems will continue throughout 2008. In addition, major new IT activities are planned in order to accommodate the new features of the Tempus IV Programme in the existing Tempus databases.

In terms of general administrative support, the ETF Tempus Department will manage the Tempus conventions through the day to day preparation and follow-up of commitments, reporting and monitoring activities, checking and payment of invoices and regular contacts with framework contract suppliers.

The ETF will, in close cooperation with DG EAC and the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture ensure the transfer of all Tempus activities to the agency in Brussels.

PILLAR 2: CORPORATE COMMUNICATION (ACTIVITY 6)

In 2008, the ETF will further develop its corporate external communication to serve stakeholders and citizens by providing relevant information on key issues to ensure clear and common understanding of the role of the ETF and ETF support to human resources development within the context of the EU external relations policies.

The overall aim of ETF corporate communication is to support policy learning and knowledge sharing in the ETF's field of responsibility and to enhance the impact of EU external assistance by informing about ETF activities, results and added value. The communication and information activities will aim at influencing developments by reaching the ETF expert audience of policymakers, partners, experts and practitioners at both European and national levels.

In line with European Commission initiatives on communication with citizens, ETF activities in 2008 will also involve increased efforts to communicate the benefits of ETF work and improve awareness of the ETF and its role as well as the EU in general among citizens across the EU, and in its host country, Italy, in particular.

To be successful, ETF information and communication activities must be distinct, visible, proactive, regular and transparent. The ETF must stand out as an EU body which is open to decision makers, authorities, organisations and the public. Information gathered must be made freely available to the European Community.

The ETF communication policy is to provide a balanced range of information and communication services and publications. In 2008 this will include the following priorities:

- Production and dissemination of online and printed, high quality information on ETF key issues to a wide audience comprising policymakers, partners and practitioners. New tools will be developed for regular information exchange with ETF stakeholders particularly at European level and in the partner countries, including the annual Yearbook, a bi-annual magazine, electronic newsletters etc.

- Targeted promotion activities at conferences, fairs and exhibitions in the field of human resource development, education and training. Such activities will concentrate on promoting the ETF's new role and its expertise publications identified as flagships by the ETF Editorial Board.
- Dialogue-generating and face-to-face communication with ETF main audiences through conferences, events and visits as well as extensive press coverage of ETF activities and vocational education and training issues. Activities of this type in 2008 will include the promotion of events around the theme of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, cooperation with the EU Presidencies of Slovenia and France and promoting the new, extended mandate of the ETF.
- It is anticipated that the process for the recasting of the ETF's Council Regulation will be concluded. The ETF will therefore work with the European institutions as well as the partner country stakeholders to promote the new regulation.

PILLAR 3: ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING: STRENGTHENING KNOWLEDGE AND SYSTEMS (ACTIVITY 7)

As regards strategic management priorities for 2008, the ETF will work closely with the Commission, Member States and partner countries to implement the strategic objectives included in the Mid-Term Perspective 2007-10. 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 the ETF's Council Regulation expected in 2007.

As raised by the triennial external evaluation of the ETF by the Commission in 2006, the ETF will continue 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 is to continually 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.

In 2007, the ETF developed and commenced the implementation of a new set of corporate indicators that will provide the benchmark against which the ETF will monitor its progress towards its Mid-Term objectives. 2008 reflects the first full year of implementation of these indicators and their deployment will require an organisational response covering all areas of activity.

It is anticipated that 2008 will also see the approval of the recast regulation of the ETF by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. This regulation will formalise the directions that the ETF has been moving towards during its adaptation to the framework of the new external assistance instruments.

The ETF's regulatory environment is developing in line with the more global changes underway in the major EU institutions. Considering the confirmation of the European Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS) as the agencies' internal auditor, the ETF will adapt its internal audit approach and will expect in 2008 to have the benefit of a new internal audit report from the IAS and will therefore see a number of actions implemented to address the areas for improvement identified in that report while maintaining the already ongoing activities such as the process mapping activities.

In addition, the ETF will pay attention to its compliance with recent or ongoing evolutions in the EU public service regulations and in particular the Personal Data Protection Directive as well as adaptation to the update of the public procurement directive and revision of the framework financial regulation. Finally, the ETF intends to prepare for the adoption of a revised financial management software package developed by the European Commission (the so-called ABAC suite). Furthermore, the ETF intends to pay more attention to the environmental impact of its activities and will consider taking steps to initiate its certification as an EMAS organisation.

An additional element that will mobilise some resources throughout the organisation is the phasing out of Tempus activities and the support needed for the closure and repatriation of liabilities the ETF holds for that scheme to the Executive Agency for Education and Culture.

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 2007 implemented an adapted organisational model of its administrative support and coordination activities. Consolidation of the new organisational model chosen for the Administration Department in 2007 will be supported in 2008 by an assessment of benefit gained and eventual adaptations will be implemented to focus on a risk based and proportional management of administrative processes.

In 2007, the ETF began to collaborate with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working Conditions as was foreseen in the 2007 Work Programme. The cooperation involves information exchange and joint participation in conferences and related activities. In 2008, the ETF will also continue its working relationship with Cedefop and at administrative level with bodies active in the same geographical environment namely the European Food Safety Authority in Parma and the Joint Research Centre in Ispra.

ABB allocation to all ETF activities	Staff	ABB Allocation
P1. Support to education and training reform	69.0	12,198,000
Act 1. Contributing to the enlargement process by supporting the modernisation and reform of education, labour market and training systems in the candidate and potential candidate countries	19.3	3,272,000
Act 2. Contributing to prosperity and development in the European Neighbourhood through cooperation and partnership in human resource policy development and implementation	18.9	3,224,000
Act 3. Contributing to economic and development cooperation in human resource development in Central Asia	5.9	1,076,000
Act 4. Supporting the European Commission and partner country policy development through innovation and learning	12.9	1,976,000
Act 5. Tempus Technical Assistance	12.0	2,650,000
P2. External Communication	9.0	1,068,000
P3. Organisation Learning: Strengthening knowledge and systems	52.0	4,718,000

Projects proposed for the IPA region

WP 2008 projects in support of EU's external assistance in the Enlargement area						
Number	Project	Objective	Expected Results	Country Involvement	Project Funds 2008	Expected duration
IPA-08-01	Facility to respond to 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.	<p>Candidate country progress towards accession through an improved contribution of HRD policies to socio-economic development including candidate country cooperation with Cedefop.</p> <p>Improved contribution of HRD policies to socio-economic development in pre-accession countries.</p>	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	220,000	2007-10
IPA-08-02	Education and training 2010	Policymakers and stakeholders in the region have ongoing access to systematic information on the developments and purposes of the EU's Education and Training 2010 agenda and advice on its possible application to strategies for modernisation.	<p>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.</p> <p>Dissemination strategies are prepared with policymakers and stakeholders from all IPA countries to provide information on Education and Training 2010 targeted at national development priorities.</p>	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	150,000	2007-10
IPA-08-03	Social Inclusion ²⁵	Analysis and advice on social inclusion issues including urban/rural disparities and, where appropriate, the access of vulnerable minorities and IDPs to education and training and employment and socio-economic development to support preparation and implementation of National Action Plans for Inclusion ²⁶ .	<p>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.</p> <p>Lessons drawn from experience; particularly, the experience of New Members States.</p>	All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)	80,000	2007-09

²⁵ This activity will draw on studies undertaken by DG EMPL for Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

²⁶ Direct DG ELARG request

IPA-08-04	Entrepreneurship Learning	<p>Policymakers and stakeholders in all countries covered by the IPA have access to information on developments and purposes of the European Charter for SMEs²⁷ and produce data for reporting progress on Chapters 1 and 4 of the Charter.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia</p>	80,000	2007-09
IPA-08-05	Peer learning to support vocational training reform processes	<p>Policy dialogue and reviews and regional cooperation are undertaken with policymakers on selected policy priorities identified by the countries in line with their framework of relations with the EU.</p>	<p>Strategies and actions based on analysis of policy challenges and international practices are identified with Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey's policymakers for inclusion in assistance plans to address HRD sector priorities.</p> <p>Information and experiences from international developments are shared with policymakers in each country.</p>	<p>Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey</p>	80,000	2007-10
IPA-08-06	Governance and administrative capacity in employment	<p>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 policies²⁸.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Increased administrative capacity in potential candidate countries to develop active labour market policies.</p>	<p>Albania, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey)</p>	160,000	2007-10
IPA-08-07	Learning and teaching	<p>Capacity building activities and networking are undertaken in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia and to strengthen professional expertise in policy formulation in teacher training and the organisation of learning processes.</p>	<p>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey 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.</p>	<p>All (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (as defined in UNSCR 1244), former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey)</p>	60,000 (+100,000 from title IV)	2007-08
Total IPA					930,000 (+100,000 from title IV)	

²⁷ Direct DG ENTR request

²⁸ Direct DG EMPL request

Projects proposed for the Neighbourhood region

WP 2008 Projects for Cooperation with ENPI Region						
Number	Project	Objective	Expected Results	Country Involvement	Project Funds 2008	Expected duration
ENPI-08-08	Facility to respond to Commission requests and to support national VET reform	To support the delivery of Community assistance to partner countries in the HRD field	Relevant assistance opportunities for education and training are identified and designed Contribution of assistance to overall reform assessed Analysis and relevant information provided as input to EU assistance	All, depending on Commission request (Armenia, Egypt, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, Syria, Ukraine)	180,000	2008-10
ENPI-08-09	Facility to respond to HRD policy reform in ENPI countries	To provide relevant advice and develop national capacities for the design and implementation of reform	Analysis and relevant information provided as input to EU assistance and to national policy design National capacities for the design and/or implementation of sector reform developed	Armenia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco	200,000	2008-09
ENPI-08-10	Entrepreneurship Learning	To support DG Enterprise in the implementation of the EuroMed Charter for Enterprise	Methodology for monitoring of progress on Charter implementation designed and agreed Analysis on results of Charter Implementation and progress made by partner countries provided to EC and EuroMed policymakers Dissemination and exchange of experiences on entrepreneurship learning enhanced between ETF-EuroMed Charter participants	Mediterranean region	90,000	2007-10
ENPI-08-11	Meda regional project on Education and Training for Employment	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.	National capacities on specific issues linked to education and training reform enhanced A permanent Observatory network consolidated Relevant information and analysis provided on issues relevant to education and training reform in particular apprenticeship and quality Dissemination and exchange of experiences on issues related to education and training reform enhanced between EU Member States, partner countries and other donors.	Mediterranean region	80,000	2007-10

ENPI-08-12	National Qualifications Framework	To support national education and training reform debate using national qualifications as a strategic framework for discussion	National strategies on NQF development designed Pilot experiences in selected countries carried out Peer learning strengthened Dissemination and networking activities carried out to expose PC to EU policies and MS and other PC good practice	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Russia, Ukraine ²⁹	230,000 ³⁰	2007-09
ENPI-08-13	HRD Observatory Function	To reinforce national institutional capacities in selected Mediterranean countries to collect, process and analyse relevant information on E&T 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	Egypt, Jordan, Syria ³¹	50,000 ³²	2007-09
ENPI-08-14 NEW PROJECT	Employment reviews	To provide relevant analysis on the development and generation of human capital and how it is allocated to the labour market.	Methodology designed and agreed with relevant EC services National reviews produced and discussed with relevant national stakeholders and EC services Information disseminated in relevant ENPI events Cross country report and dialogue with stakeholders Follow up on EuroMed Employment Conference 2007 (TBC)	Caucasus, Moldova, Ukraine ³³	100,000	2008-09
TOTAL ENPI					930,000	

²⁹ This project is a continuation from 2005/06

³⁰ Additional €150,000 will be provided by the Italian Trust Fund for activities in the Mediterranean region

³¹ This project is continuation from 2003/04

³² Additional €100,000 will be provided by the Italian Trust Fund

³³ In consultation with DG EMPL

Contributing to economic and development cooperation in human resources development in Central Asia

WP 2008 Activities: Contributing to economic and development cooperation in human resources development in Central Asia						
Number	Project	Objective	Expected Results	Country Involvement	Project Funds 2008	Expected duration
DCI-08-15	Support to Tacis and DCI project cycles	To improve the relevance of HRD components in EU funded interventions in Central Asia through support to the identification, formulation and policy impact assessment of EU support and through preparatory and complementary actions to raise the countries absorption capacity	EC interventions identified, formulated and policy impact assessed on request from the European Services. Preparatory and complementary capacity building actions undertaken	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	120,000	2008
DCI-08-16	National qualification frameworks in Central Asia	To develop an understanding of NQF concepts as a reference tool in national education and training policy discussions	National sector qualification frameworks for tourism refined Regional dialogue on options and strategies for education and training modernisation initiated National education and training policy discussions enriched through NQF policy papers	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	120,000	2007-08
DCI-08-17	Skills development for poverty reduction	To promote policy thinking on how to promote partnerships for skills development around vocational schools	VET reform policy guidelines for increasing school responsiveness to local skills development needs prepared and dissemination Regional dialogue on options and strategies for education and training modernisation initiated	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	80,000	2006-08
DCI-08-18 NEW PROJECT	Functioning of the labour market and its links with migration	To get a better understanding of labour market functioning with a special focus on the impact of adult training and migration flows	Country report started Improved awareness in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of links in the labour market with adult training and migration flows	Tajikistan	40,000	2008-10
TOTAL DCI					360,000	

Innovation and Learning Programme

WP 2008 Activities: Innovation and Learning						
Number	Project	Objective	Expected Results	Country Involvement	Project Funds 2008	Expected duration
ILP-08-19	Skill formation policies and foreign direct investment and the development of entrepreneurship learning	To provide evidence based policy advice to partner countries on the links between skills formation and foreign direct investment	Policy advice to the Commission and partner countries on links between foreign direct investment and human resource development policies	TBC	75,000	2008-09
ILP-08-20 NEW PROJECT	Relevance and applicability of encouraging more flexible labour markets and ensuring higher levels of security in partner country contexts and links with lifelong learning	To identify the implications for lifelong learning and training of encouraging more flexible labour markets and ensuring higher levels of security.	Policy advice on the relevance and applicability of decent work agenda in the context of the development of lifelong learning policies in ETF partner countries	TBC	50,000	2008-09
ILP-08-21 NEW PROJECT	Women and jobs	To identify economic and socio-political impediments to the transition process of females and particularly young females from education to work and their impact on the overall economic and social development of the countries	Case studies and advice to Commission and national stakeholders on how to encourage female labour force participation and to facilitate a smooth transition from school to work	TBC	50,000	2008-09 ³⁴
ILP-08-22	Policy learning in partner countries.	To offer advice on the 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	160,000	2008
ILP-08-23	Knowledge management in policy strategy development.	To consolidate and implement a framework for the ETF's support to policy development.	Integration of policy strategies and tools in the deployment of ETF expertise. Strengthened the ETF policy information and analysis assessments of partner countries and the European Commission. Establishment of International Advisory Panel.	All regions	60,000	2008-10
TOTAL INNOVATION AND LEARNING					395,000	

³⁴ Co funded with the Italian Trust Fund

WP 2008 Cooperation with Cedefop			New	Continuation
Operational objective	Actions	Timeframe (semester)	Output indicators	Outcome indicators
Implement the Cedefop-ETF cooperation agreement	Organise knowledge sharing seminars jointly with the ETF. Joint missions to candidate countries	Throughout 2008	Two seminars for the staff of the two agencies and three joint missions to the candidate countries.	Increase awareness of Cedefop staff on recent developments and main issues at stake in candidate countries and VET projects launched by the ETF. Increased awareness of ETF staff on main VET trends in EU countries.
	Organise annual meetings of the ETF-Cedefop joint working group.	Throughout 2008	Two meetings on the progress regarding the joint activities and preparation of the future Work Programme	Positive assessment of the activities undertaken in the candidate countries.
		Jul-08	Joint ETF-Cedefop report for the EU Parliament.	Dissemination of relevant information on familiarisation activities to the European Parliament.
Implement the familiarisation process in line with contract with the DG Enlargement.	Implementation of DG Enlargement subsidy for Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.	Throughout 2008	Interim report monitoring and assessing the project.	Efficient implementation of the contract with DG Enlargement in conformity with the EU rules.
		Throughout 2008	Presentations and participation in workshops/ conferences on request of candidate countries	Dissemination of Cedefop's activities and the EU VET priorities in the candidate countries.
	Familiarise candidate countries with ReferNet activities.	Throughout 2008	Integration of new Member States in ReferNet activities. Establishment of ReferNet contact points in the three countries.	Better adaptability of the candidate countries to the ReferNet activities during their accession period.
	Raise awareness of EU policies and Cedefop activities in Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.	Throughout 2008	Organisation of three workshops/ conferences in the candidate countries.	Dissemination of information and best VET practices at European level to all candidate countries to inform their policy developments.

2008 projects to support strengthening knowledge and systems

Number	Project	Objective	Expected Results	Partner Country Involvement	Project Funds 2008	Expected duration
SKS-08-24	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. 		30,000	2007-10
SKS-08-25	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	100,000	2007-10
SKS-08-26	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. 		20,000	2007-10
SKS-08-27	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	PM	2007-10
TOTAL					150,000	