

ALBANIA

ETF COUNTRY PLAN 2007

Executive Summary

The ETF Country Plan for Albania is designed to address the issue of human resource development (HRD) in the context of the government's strategy for economic and social development and the objectives emerging from both European partnership priorities and the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). Within the overall reform objectives, the focus is on measures aimed at more rational HRD, including improved education and training delivery in Albania.

As in most transition countries, the major issue in Albania continues to be the actual implementation of reform policies, as there is excessive overlap between planning processes and insufficient integration between strategic plans and resource allocation. In order to support Albania in tackling its agenda for economic growth and job creation, enhancing education and skills, and socially including vulnerable groups, the ETF will focus on the following:

- Improving the policy formulation and implementation capacity of key stakeholders.
- Facilitating the dissemination of EU policies and best practices (so as to assess the feasibility of different policy options).
- Creating regional thematic networks and peer learning activities to support learning from the experiences of neighbouring countries.
- Enabling sustainable policy impact by facilitating donor interventions.

Recent ETF initiatives have aimed at sharing partner country knowledge of systemic issues and of the connection between education and training policies and broader socioeconomic policy challenges (poverty reduction, transparency, migration, social participation and employment).

The ETF aims to assist with shaping policy formulation and implementation in education, training and HRD, so as to improve delivery at the country level. During the period 2007-2010 in Albania, the ETF will respond comprehensively to these new strategy directions. Albania is an ETF priority country, which is reflected in the ample listing of activities and allocation of resources planned for its mid-term strategy.

1. Socioeconomic background

While economic growth has been relatively rapid in recent years, and macroeconomic policy has generally been sound, Albania remains relatively poor and under-developed. The results of a poverty study reveals that 25.4% of Albanians (780,000 people) live below the general poverty line and that 4.7% are below the nutritional poverty line. This figure is high compared to other countries in South Eastern Europe¹.

Privatisation has significantly reduced the industrial capacity of the country, which was, in any case, already obsolete. Foreign direct investment remains low, at between 3% and 5% of GDP. Albania is

¹ Labour Market Review of Albania. ETF (2006).

mainly an agrarian subsistence economy, characterised by a large percentage (94%) of micro- and small enterprises and a large informal economy.

The Albanian population can be considered to be quite homogeneous, with minorities representing just 2% to 3% of the population. The constitution guarantees the national minorities an education in their mother tongue, and this has been implemented for the Greek and Macedonian minorities.

The education system is organised as follows: pre-school education, mainly provided by kindergartens; basic education (grades 1 to 8), which is free and compulsory; secondary education (general, social-cultural and vocational); and higher education. Based on Ministry of Education data for 2005, there were 1,670 pre-school institutions serving 75,000 students; and 1,721 basic education institutions serving 473,500 students. In 2005, secondary education was provided to 141,000 students in 374 institutions; 314 provided general secondary education, 20 offered social-cultural secondary programmes, and 40 provided initial vocational education (to 17,500 students).² The share of vocational education students in total secondary enrolments declined sharply between 1990 and 2002 (from 72% to 19%), due mainly to the closure of many vocational and multi-programme secondary schools (which offered both vocational education and general secondary education programmes).

Higher education provision in Albania is governed by specific legislation dating from 1999, which permits the establishment of private tertiary education institutions. There are 12 universities and 2 academic schools in Albania. The gross enrolment rate in tertiary education rose significantly between 1989 and 2004 (from 6.6% to 19%), although the increase was largely accounted for by part-time enrolments.

Since the start of the transition, public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has gradually declined, from 5% in 1991 to 3.7% in 1995 and to 2.8% in 2002.

Albania has participated in several Programmes for International Student Assessment (PISA), which have revealed that a significant proportion of students aged 15 have poor reading literacy. In total, 70.3% of the students who participated in PISA fall below Level 1, while the average for OECD countries is 19.1%.³

Despite some improvements in education provision at different levels, the quality of the education system remains a challenge, largely in terms of physical infrastructures and the teaching and learning processes.

Continuing Vocational Education and Training (VET) is provided by a network of vocational training centres administered by public entities, private entities and non-government organisations. There are 9 public centres in operation at present, located in the larger cities and managed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities. These public centres employ around 106 staff. In 2004 they provided training to about 8,300 people.

Most employment is self-employment (63%), mainly in the informal sector. A lack of demand for labour has led people to start their own income-generating activities—typically poorly paid jobs, with little added value and requiring few skills. Formal sector labour demand is limited, and largely restricted to the public sector and selected private economic sectors, e.g., banking and, to a small degree, tourism and construction.⁴

This situation poses major problems for the government in general and for economic policy in particular. The extent of unrecorded and undeclared activity is a key impediment to generating tax revenues from channels other than international trade. It is difficult to formulate and implement sectoral economic policies when estimates are subject to wide margins of error as a result of unrecorded activities. Informal employment and undeclared incomes also increase the difficulty of targeting social policy interventions to those most in need.

Unemployment in Albania, though high by western European standards, is lower than in many neighbouring countries. The main data trends indicate that in the early years of transition, unemployment was over 20%; since 1999 the rate has been falling, reaching 14.4% in 2004. Young people looking for their first job are particularly hard hit by unemployment. Emigration is a common tactic for dealing with the lack of employment opportunities in Albania.

² Financing VET, mechanisms and priorities in Albania. Self-assessment document for peer learning project, ETF (2006).

³ PISA results 2003.

⁴ Ibid. 1.

Since the beginning of transition there has been substantial internal migration from rural to urban areas, mainly to Tirana and Durrës. Over the past 7 years, the proportion of rural inhabitants has decreased by 13%, while the urban population has grown, by 3.2% in 2002-2003 and by 2% in 2003-2004⁵. The population of Tirana alone is estimated to have grown from around 200,000 in the early 1990s to close to 800,000 in 2005⁶.

Albania has continued to contribute to stability in the region, particularly through its measured stance in regard to the situation in neighbouring countries⁷.

2. Key policy issues and strategies in human resource development

The over-arching process of economic and social policy in Albania begun to be developed following the commencement of SAA negotiations with the EU in 2003. Economic and social development is considered to be a basic framework for the main priorities of government in terms of reducing poverty, guaranteeing sustainable economic growth, achieving the Millennium Goals, and integrating the country into NATO, the EU and the region. Thus, in 2003, a National Strategy for Socioeconomic Development was established as a multi-year plan to combat poverty and to strengthen governance. A permanent body was established in the Ministry of Finance and a deputy ministers network was created to ensure coordination and consultation with civil society. Ministries were required to compile detailed 4-year plans, and attempts were made to link these plans to higher level goals and objectives.⁸

The Albanian government adopted a National Strategy on Pre-university Education for the period 2004-2015, focusing on 5 main pillars: improved governance, improved quality of teaching and learning, improved financing of pre-university education, capacity building and HRD, and development of VET in the context of overall pre-university education. The target set for secondary VET is to increase participation from 17% to 40% of overall enrolment. Finally, the proportion of GDP allocated for education is set to rise from 3.7% to 5%.

Significant reform initiatives that require substantial policy dialogue include the development of a quality assurance system, the extension of primary education from 8 to 9 years, the development of a national curriculum framework based on learning outcomes, the development of a teaching system that includes performance appraisal and merit-based incentives schemes, the improvement of textbook development modalities, examinations and students monitoring, and new financing mechanisms for improving efficiency and resource use.

Overall reform of pre-university education is predicated upon a reorganised and more effective Ministry of Education focused on its core activity of policy development and implementation and operating within the context of a decentralised education system and increased school autonomy. In December 2006 a new organisational structure was proposed aimed at developing this more strategic orientation for policy development and implementation and aimed at building capacity and the motivation to carry actions through.

A VET strategy is currently being elaborated under the new CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation) project. VET legislation was adopted in 2002, and a National VET Council with tripartite representation was established, with the aim of improving policies and reform management in the VET sector. The legislation also prepared the ground for the creation of a National VET Agency to perform inter-sectoral functions not covered by other VET institutions and departments.

In 2003, the Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities adopted a Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training, whose main aim is to assess the current situation and define

⁵ Based on World Bank Living Standards Measurement Surveys conducted in Albania in the second quarters of 2002, 2003 and 2004.

⁶ Albania: Selected Issues and Statistical Appendix. IMF Country Report No.05/90 (March 2005). This means that Albania's migration flow has been five times higher than the average migration flow in developing countries.

⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006–2007. COM(2006) 649. (Brussels 2006).

⁸ Progress Report on Implementation of the National Strategy for Socioeconomic Development during 2004: Objectives and Long-Term Vision. Priority Action Plan 2005-2008. Ministry of Finance, Republic of Albania.

concrete measures to be undertaken in order to improve labour market policies. It focuses on 4 main dimensions: the labour market and services provision, VET and HRD, entrepreneurship and job creation, and employment funding policies.

The government of Albania operates an Employment Promotion Programme that provides support in regard to 4 key labour market issues:⁹

1. **Unemployed job seekers.** Employers providing employment to job seekers on a temporary basis (3–6 months) receive up to 100% of the minimum wage and are reimbursed for social insurance contributions.
2. **Workplace training for unemployed job seekers.** Employers who provide training and employ a trainee for at least a year are offered financial support in the form of trainee wages and social insurance contributions for the nine months of training.
3. **Institutional training.** Training is provided for (i) companies that guarantee employment after completion of training and (ii) companies that can demonstrate that training would be useful for the participants. Potential beneficiaries who refuse to participate in these courses are deleted from the unemployment register and are refused unemployment compensation.
4. **Unemployed women.** This programme, which commenced in 2004, aims to integrate marginalised women into the labour market (Roma women, previously trafficked women, and old and disabled women).

3. EU and other donor policies and interventions

a. *EU-funded education and training projects*

For the period 2002-2004, the CARDS programme allocated 149.9 million EUR to Albania, of which 42.4 million EUR was earmarked for economic and social development. As part of this programme, the European Commission (EC) has been investing in the creation of a skilled and competent Albanian labour force, which will enable the country to progress towards closer association with the EU through the SAA. EC assistance in the field of higher education, including support for implementation of the Bologna process, is provided through the Tempus programme¹⁰.

Recent CARDS programmes—CARDS 2002 and CARDS 2004, including a new twinning project aimed at supporting the National VET Agency—mainly envisage assistance aimed at accomplishing 3 VET goals in Albania: (a) development of a demand-orientated VET system and associated methodologies; (b) institutional development, including support to a progressive VET reform process at the national level; and (c) improvements to system delivery that will enable rationalised and decentralised delivery of skills through VET schools¹¹.

Within these EU technical assistance areas, which link up with Albanian government strategies, 3 main VET reform streams can be identified: development of a national qualifications framework (NQF); development of a regional VET centre concept/approach; and development of institutions/bodies linked to the newly created National VET Agency.

The development of an NQF represents an opportunity to discuss and consider different VET policy options linked with the issue of transparency of qualifications, as well as an opportunity for enhancing trust and cooperation among VET stakeholders. The Albanian education and training system, like that of all the countries in the region, is based on learning inputs; consequently, the curriculum development process is very much influenced by this philosophy, which will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the development of a coherent NQF. The regional VET centre concept is another important development. A policy decision has been made to run a pilot phase until 2009, after which it

⁹ Ibid. 1.

¹⁰ Data from the Albanian Ministry of Education indicate that 9.7 million EUR have been allocated by the TEMPUS programme for 2000-2007.

¹¹ Terms of reference of the CARDS 2004 VET project in Albania.

will be decided whether this concept is suitable for country-wide implementation in Albania.¹² Finally, development of the National VET Agency is supported by a current CARDS twinning project. It is important to take into account how the Agency will be profiled, and in which direction its mandate will be developed. Future adjustments will be required in regulations and legislation in order to ensure that the Agency has a coherent structure that does not overlap with other institutions and bodies, and to ensure that it functions effectively and is operationally capable of serving the needs of a modern Albanian VET system.

All three reform streams will have a substantial impact, both horizontally and vertically, on current VET status quo and, consequently, pose substantial challenges for policy decision-making.

b. Other donor projects

The World Bank has recently finalised preparation of its third EEEP¹³ support programme for education reform in Albania, aimed to run for a period of four years (2006-2010) and funded by a budget of 75 million USD.

The EEEP will support the government in the implementation of the first phase of its National Strategy for Pre-university Education. The objective is to improve the quality of learning conditions for all students and to increase enrolment in general secondary education, especially among the poor. The intervention is based upon a sector-wide approach (SWAp) structured around the following priority areas:

Priority 1: To strengthen education leadership/management/governance (10 million USD).

Priority 2: To improve teaching and learning conditions (26 million USD).

Priority 3: To improve and rationalise the education infrastructure (32 million USD).

Priority 4: To set the stage for higher education reform (7 million USD).

The European Investment Bank has agreed to co-finance the EEEP through pool financing. Other donors are expected to use the same approach to support education strategies in areas not covered by the EEEP. This offers an interesting opportunity for the EC to allocate funds to VET and adult learning based on commonly agreed needs.

Donors in the VET field are particularly active, and include Swisscontact, Kultur Kontakt, and IIZ/DVV with its Adult Education in Albania-PARSH project. Some donor interventions have had a significant impact on overall reform in the education and training sector. As one example, the Swiss government runs a programme (Support to Vocational Schools) in 5 vocational schools in Albania (the Beqir Çela Vocational School in Durrës, the Mechanical and Agricultural School in Lushnjë, the Stiliano Bandilli Vocational School in Berat, and the Ali Myftiu and Sali Ceka Vocational Schools in Elbasan). The programme has focused on developing and implementing instruments for improved management at the school level, developing teaching and learning materials, improving existing courses and services, developing and implementing new courses, improving school infrastructures, and creating partnerships with industry and other schools.

UNICEF has been also active in the country, with projects covering early childhood and compulsory education, national interventions in the form of institutional strengthening, and local interventions in the form of school community partnerships.

Capacity building of local authorities has been supported through a range of ad hoc donor initiatives. The capacity of these bodies, together with that of social partners, needs to be further strengthened so as to manage the process of decentralisation in all areas.

c. Lessons learnt

The adoption of the National Strategy for Pre-University Education, the creation of a matrix of donor assistance to Albania, and the adoption of a SWAp have all strengthened the coordination of donor

¹² The regional VET centre concept in Albania is based on the consortium philosophy practised in some EU member states. Different education and training schools/centres provide their services in the region through consortium cooperation.

¹³ Education Excellence and Equity Project: Republic of Albania. Project Appraisal Document. World Bank (May 2006).

support. The Ministry of Education and the main donors have, in addition, established a group called Partners in Education with the aims of promoting donor coordination and assisting the ministry with the implementation of its National Strategy for Pre-university Education.

Although progress has been achieved at the policy level, further effort is required in order to implement the ambitious initiatives on the reform agenda. In this respect the capacity of the relevant institutions needs to be strengthened in order to maximise government policy outcomes. In particular, there is a need to improve policy communication between stakeholders in order to support evidence-based policy-making among stakeholders in the country and capitalise on the policy initiatives that have been taken on board.

In order to meet the challenges implied by integration in the EU, the government needs to invest in human and financial resources and to fortify central and local government linkages, so as to better exploit possibilities arising from EU co-funding and to address socioeconomic inequalities.

Coordination of donors is an important aspect of policy processes in education and training. So as to better coordinate and facilitate these policy processes, stakeholders need further support to streamline their activities.

Although Albania has received quite substantial donor assistance, this has been almost entirely based on a piloting philosophy—both in donor and internal initiatives—and has not, as yet, succeeded in establishing a strong and efficient system.

d. The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) 2007-2013

The government of Albania has adopted a revised national plan to implement European partnership priorities and the SAA. This plan includes a preliminary attempt to cost the European integration process, which is necessary for budgetary forecasting. It also broadly schedules reform and capacity building steps and defines institutional responsibilities. This plan forms part of a new National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI). Work has begun on the development of 23 sector strategies and 10 cross-cutting strategies for the NSDI. Line ministry budget allocations will be limited to actions described in the 23 sector strategies. The NSDI will feed into an Integrated Planning System through which national and donor resources will be allocated. This strategic and operational framework should help the government to fulfil SAA reform commitments.¹⁴ As a potential candidate country, Albania will mainly receive EU support through IPA Component I (Transition Assistance and Institution Building).

In the HRD field, EU financial assistance will address the following mid-term priorities:

1. To advance education and VET reform so as to support socioeconomic development.
2. To create links between the education system and the labour market.
3. To improve the capacity of the public employment service, by making it relevant to the Albanian context (where the formal labour market is limited mostly to the public sector).
4. To develop relevant active labour market measures to combat unemployment (in particular long-term and youth unemployment).

4. Mid-term perspective ETF intervention strategies

In the period 2007-10 the ETF will continue its strategy of assisting partner countries in determining reform priorities, mobilising cross-stakeholder engagement, establishing consensus, providing systemic feedback and creating the necessary knowledge in the education and training reform areas. All these issues are also considered to be of mutual interest for Albania and the EU.

A pilot project approach in Albania has not provided for sustainability and better policy implementation. Although the new focus will be on specific initiatives emerging from EU-funded VET projects, the ETF in Albania will work with policy makers, policy entrepreneurs and wider group of stakeholders to provide policy analyses, support policy dialogue, introduce policy options and policy priorities, and

¹⁴ Albania 2006 Progress Report. COM (2006) 649 final. Commission Staff Working Document (November 2006).

provide means for a better implementation of policy choices. All these initiatives will be linked to education and training, and—more broadly—to HRD, with a view to improving socioeconomic conditions in Albania.

The ETF considers Albania to be a priority country, and this is reflected in the comprehensive listing of activities and resource allocation that it is planning for its mid-term strategy. Major goals will be to work with policy makers and stakeholders so as to better identify the problems to be addressed, the respective roles of the various actors, the concrete steps that can be taken and the timetables to be established for the achievement of objectives, as well as how these goals can be supported through the various ETF activities.

Given the existing socioeconomic context, and taking into consideration the key HRD policy issues and strategies for the country, as also EU and other donor policies and interventions, the ETF will address 3 policy challenges in Albania in the mid term period: economic growth and job creation, general enhancement of education and skills, and social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups of society.

a. *Economic growth and job creation*

An important challenge for the country is to foster a conducive environment for employment creation and economic growth. This will require an integrated approach to economic development, employment and education through stakeholder cooperation and a stronger involvement of social partners and civil society. In this context, ETF support will be provided to the key stakeholders in the various phases of the policy process with the aim of facilitating reform initiatives that can contribute to activating unemployed and inactive members of the labour force. Measures and outputs are described as follows:

Measures

- To update country intelligence and to provide inputs and advice for country-based activities so as to achieve decentralised management of EU HRD funds (2007-10).
- To reinforce stakeholder networks by creating operational links with IPA country coordinators, parliament committees on education and the labour market, and social partners (2007-10).
- To implement policy analyses of the current situation in regard to policy working groups/initiatives in order to identify best options/proposals for the establishment of a HRD working group (2007).
- To improve policy learning processes through the support of a HRD cooperation and coordination body that will include the broader group of stakeholders involved in decision making and policy implementation processes (2008-10).
- To develop and promote social partner involvement in the implementation of education and training strategies and employment policies (2007-10).
- To establish effective regional/local partnerships in support of HRD, based on an assessment of donor-driven projects and of lessons learned, and on a systemic approach to providing inputs to the IPA programme and using ETF funds (2007-10).
- To facilitate donor coordination through donor intervention mapping and information sharing (2007-10).
- To contribute to improved governance and administrative capacity in the employment area (2007-10).

Outputs

- The implementation of annual country analyses on political, socioeconomic, education and training, and labour market issues (2007-10).
- The establishment of networks with IPA country coordinators and parliament committees on education and the labour market (2007-10).
- The establishment of a functional stakeholder body aimed at improved policy dialogue in HRD issues (2007-10).
- The implementation of a policy analysis of the current role of social partners and their future involvement in economic development, employment, education and training issues (2008-10).
- The implementation of a stocktaking exercise of regional/local development issues and the formulation of recommendations for effective partnerships (2007-08).
- The development of an instrument for design and planning, implementation and monitoring of active labour market policies (2007-08).
- The presentation of concrete proposals to the EC for the design of EU-funded national interventions in the area of HRD for economic growth and job creation (2007-10).

b. General enhancement of education and skills

The enhancement of population and labour force education and skills is one of the main challenges facing Albania in regard to developing its economy and enhancing its capacity to produce higher added-value products. With the support of different donors, the government has undertaken a number of activities aimed at tackling this issue, including the following:

- Strengthening the capacity of schools to deliver better quality services through the implementation of modernised curricula, teacher training and investment in infrastructure and equipment.
- Ensuring compatibility between secondary level vocational curricula and the curricula to be developed in general secondary education, so as to improve education system flexibility by providing opportunities for horizontal and vertical mobility.
- Strengthening both the pre-service and in-service teacher training systems.
- Strengthening the capacity of existing institutions (particularly the National VET Council and the National VET Agency) to successfully fulfil their roles.
- Empowering the newly established National VET Agency with a view to future Albanian involvement in lifelong learning programmes funded by the EU.
- Ensuring coordination of initial and continuing VET developments so as to pool resources, ensure coherency, and avoid duplication and waste of resources (in 2009, a political consensus will be reached as to whether the regional VET concept, currently being piloted, is relevant for Albania).
- Ensuring better provision of post-secondary VET programmes that meet the increased demand for higher education.
- Ensuring implementation of the Bologna declaration with reference to the European Credit Transfer System for higher education.

A significant number of stakeholders are involved in this wide spectrum of horizontal and vertical policies and reforms; particularly crucial for the implementation of policies is that these stakeholders be kept fully informed.

The ETF aims at supporting Albania in its education and training policy development processes. It is expected that this will have a significant effect on the way in which decisions are understood, accepted and adopted by all those with a stake in the education and training system. More concretely, to facilitate the development and implementation of the comprehensive policies listed above, the ETF will effect a number of policy learning activities through measures with anticipated outputs as follows:

Measures

- To conduct a systemic policy analysis of adult learning and continuous training resulting in suggestions for input to a draft lifelong learning strategy for IPA programming (2007-08).
- To implement a stocktaking exercise of the results of pilot donor-driven education initiatives, so as to develop a country-driven approach based on the use of newly available policy analysis tools (e.g., those recommended for the EC SWAp (2008-2010).
- To facilitate policy dialogue in regard to EU Education and Training 2010 and Copenhagen process policies and to apply major EU instruments such as the Common Quality Assurance Framework, the European Qualifications Framework, Education and Training 2010 benchmarks and indicators, career guidance for policy makers, etc. (2007-10).
- To facilitate policy dialogue in regard to the development of comprehensive and effective entrepreneurial learning, as part of the framework established by the European Charter for Small Enterprises, through benchmarking, reporting and regional cooperation (2007-10).
- To facilitate policy dialogue based on the peer learning principle, given that the sustainability and visibility of education and training reforms are highly dependent upon national level involvement and policy maker support, and on understanding how large-scale education and training programs are designed and implemented and how they affect schools (2007-2010).
- To facilitate knowledge sharing by applying the principle of communities of practice, thereby enabling decision makers and staff from education and training institutions to learn from other VET reform experiences and to develop a capacity to formulate and implement their own reform objectives (2007-2010).

Outputs

- A systemic analysis of adult learning and continuous training, the preparation of a policy report, the provision of advice to stakeholders for the development of a comprehensive lifelong learning policy/strategy, and input to the IPA programme for EU support implementation (2007-2008).
- The dissemination of relevant tools and principles from EU policies and best practices through a HRD working group (2008-2010).
- The presentation of concrete proposals to the EC for the design of EU-funded national interventions in education and training policies (2007-2010).
- The facilitation of policy dialogue in regard to education decentralisation and school autonomy based on outcomes of the ETF 2006 peer learning exercise on VET financing (2007).
- The implementation of peer learning exercise in the education field that focuses on the dynamic interface between national policy making and school-level realities (2007-2010).
- The preparation of descriptors and learning outcomes in regard to entrepreneurial learning for all ISCED levels (2007-2010).

c. Social inclusion

Ethnic diversity in the Western Balkan countries poses 3 closely inter-related challenges: to rebuild socially cohesive societies that permit cultural diversity and ethnic reconciliation, to improve employment opportunities for socio-economically disadvantaged ethnic groups, and to correct the educational deficit experienced by socio-economically disadvantaged ethnic minorities, particularly among young people.

Policy makers in these countries need to address these issues through systemic measures in the field of education, training and employment policies. The experiences of EU member states (in particular the newer members) and the experience gained through donor projects aimed at improving education and labour market outcomes among ethnic minorities can prove useful for Albania.

The ETF is launching a three-year regional project (2007-09) on the social inclusion of ethnic minorities through education, training and employment. The aim of the project is to enhance the capacity of national stakeholders in the western Balkan countries to address the skill deficiencies of ethnic minorities and facilitate social inclusion through education and training and better employment opportunities. More concretely, the following measures and outputs are planned for Albania:

Measures

- A country analysis that identifies the needs of the most vulnerable groups, which will provide input to national stakeholders and EC services in regard to measures for reducing social exclusion, and which will assess, among other issues, the condition of minorities in employment and education (2007).
- Identifying elements of good practice in Albania in the fields of education, training and employment support in order to counteract existing deficiencies (2007).
- Building capacity in national actors for developing education, training and employment policies/measures that address the specific needs of ethnic minorities (2007-09).
- Establishing and facilitating an informed debate with key stakeholders in Albania on the reasons behind the poor educational and labour market outcomes of ethnic minority groups, and the risks entailed in regard to their social inclusion but also for social cohesion in general (2007-09).

Outputs

- The preparation of a country review on social inclusion, with recommendations for national and international stakeholders (2007).
- The preparation of an inventory of good practices for the inclusion of ethnic minorities through education and training and employment policy measures (2007).
- The presentation of concrete proposals to the EC for the design of EU-funded national interventions in social inclusion policies (2008-09).

5. Work programme 2007-2010: objectives and indicators

ETF 2007-10 ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES IN ALBANIA

ETF objectives for Albania 2007 - 10: To support Albania in dealing with a challenging socioeconomic environment

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT TITLE	SPECIFIC COUNTRY OBJECTIVES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	YEARLY OUTPUTS	PROJECT DURATION
IPA 07-01	Facility to respond to EC requests	To maximise the effectiveness of IPA in the area of HRD, making the European perspective for Albania more tangible, and contributing to socioeconomic development.	<p>ETF country information and stakeholder networking.</p> <p>Reinforced stakeholder networks through the establishment/ facilitation of HRD working groups.</p> <p>Establishment and reinforcement of cooperation and partnership between interested Ministries, different territorial levels of public administration, and public administrations and civic society.</p> <p>Contribution to IPA</p> <p>Strengthened CARDS and IPA project implementation and outcomes, using ETF different policy learning initiatives.</p> <p>Support and implementation of relevant CARDS and IPA projects in compliance with national strategies and policies for HRD.</p> <p>Expanded opportunities for Albanian participation in EU initiatives.</p>	<p>ETF country information and stakeholder networking.</p> <p>Permanent relationship with task force group chaired by the MoES and MoLSP. .</p> <p>Permanent relationship with Partners in Education group in charge for SWAp in education sector.</p> <p>A functional country platform for support/facilitation of policy dialogue, which can form the core of a HRD group.</p> <p>Contribution to IPA</p> <p>National policy documents in the field of VET and LM make reference to the findings and recommendations of the ETF policy analyses.</p> <p>EC programming documents in the field of VET/labour market make active use and reference to the findings and recommendations of ETF policy analyses.</p>	<p>ETF country information and stakeholder networking.</p> <p>ETF database contains up-to-date information about key stakeholders in HRD sector.</p> <p>Members of parliament committees, IPA national coordinators, Partners in Education representatives and task force group representatives participate in EU events and ETF policy learning initiatives.</p> <p>Contribution to IPA</p> <p>EC programming documents for Albania.</p> <p>EC sector documents for Albania.</p> <p>Terms of reference for EC on CARDS 2006 for VET and labour market sector fiche (2007-2010).</p>	<p>ETF country information and stakeholder networking</p> <p>Country analysis on political, socioeconomic, education and training and labour market issues (2007).</p> <p>Task force members participate in ETF meetings (2007-2010).</p> <p>Partners in Education participate in ETF and EU events (2007-2010).</p> <p>Contribution to IPA</p> <p>Systemic stocktaking analysis of adult learning and continuous training, with suggestions for inputs to the drafting of a lifelong learning strategy and to IPA programming (2007).</p> <p>Monitoring and review reports on different EC interventions prepared and disseminated (2007-2010).</p> <p>Terms of reference prepared for the sector fiche for CARDS 2006 (2007).</p>	2007-2010
IPA 07-02	Education and Training 2010	To maximize possibilities for key policy makers and	Regular access of HRD policy makers and key stakeholders to systematic information on the	Country platform, i.e. members of HRD group, actively involved in policy learning initiatives	ETF key indicator document for Education and Training 2010 for Albania	Capacity building delivered to key policy makers and HRD group members on selected policy	2007-2010

		<p>stakeholders: in Albania in relation to: determining reform priorities, mobilising cross-stakeholder engagement, establishing consensus and commitment, and creating the necessary level of policy knowledge in reform areas considered of mutual interest for Albania and EU.</p>	<p>purposes and developments of EU policy priorities developed under the Education and Training 2010 agenda.</p> <p>Up-to-date knowledge for HRD policy makers and key stakeholders on the EU policy priorities developed under the Education and Training 2010 agenda.</p>	<p>emerging from 3 major streams of VET reform (see Section 3 of the country plan).</p> <p>Staff of newly established National VET Agency and members of National VET Council actively participate in policy-relevant activities and policy reviews of selected topics in relation to the Education and Training 2010 agenda.</p>	<p>ETF report/ document related to selected Education and Training 2010 policy priorities for Albania.</p> <p>Country policy analyses document for quality assurance in education and training.</p> <p>CARDS and IPA project reports and relevant policy documents.</p>	<p>priorities in Education and Training 2010 (2007-2010).</p> <p>Key Education and Training 2010 indicators prepared for Albania (2007- 2008).</p> <p>Country policy analyses document for quality assurance in education and training (2008).</p>	
IPA 07-03	Social inclusion	<p>To provide improved possibilities for key stakeholders in Albania to address the skill deficiencies of ethnic minorities and facilitate their social inclusion through education and training and better employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Development of national policies and documents for education, training and employment policies/ measures that address the specific needs of ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Development and delivery of proposals to the EC for the design of national and regional EU-funded interventions relevant for Albania.</p>	<p>Selection of elements of good practice for the inclusion of ethnic minorities through education and training in EU member states suitable for Albania.</p> <p>Active participation of Albanian key stakeholders in the study for social inclusion.</p> <p>Draft study discussed with key stakeholders and results of the study disseminated in the country.</p>	<p>Inventory of good practices developed and on file with ETF.</p> <p>Inventory of country contacts/ directory of institutions on file with ETF.</p> <p>ETF mission reports.</p> <p>Project progress reports.</p> <p>Cross-country study on social inclusion.</p> <p>National reports/ documents make reference to the findings of cross-country study on social inclusion.</p>	<p>Collection of background materials/ studies and update of ETF information (2007).</p> <p>Expert meetings organised to discuss preliminary findings /outcomes of the study (March and October 2007).</p> <p>Capacity of national actors in a policy learning context built with the aim of facilitating and supporting their own actions in achieving inclusion of ethnic minorities through education, training and employment measures.</p>	2007-2009

IPA 07-04	EL	To support DG Enterprise and Industry in monitoring policy progress on the education and training provisions of the European Charter for Small Enterprise in Albania, with particular reference to performance indicators and learning outcomes.	<p>Development of EL outcomes for all ISCED levels for Albania.</p> <p>Establishment of policy performance monitoring on EL as part of the wider policy support system.</p> <p>Requirements of the European Charter for Small Enterprises tracked comprehensively.</p>	<p>Active participation of Albanian EL experts in an evaluation of indicators with revisions agreed by the national authorities.</p> <p>Active participation of Albanian EL experts, education policy advisors and employers, in a regional review of lifelong EL.</p> <p>Albania EL experts integrated into ETF virtual community of IPA regional experts.</p>	<p>Country report on EU Charter.</p> <p>DG Employment cross-country report on Charter.</p> <p>National EL stocktaking exercise resulting in a national report.</p> <p>Conference on comparative approaches to lifelong EL (2010).</p> <p>ETF EL virtual community.</p>	<p>Development of EL indicators and EL outcomes for all ISCED levels by national experts (series of country targeted and regional events) (2007-2009).</p> <p>Analytical paper on lifelong EL developments in Albania with reference to policy provisions (2010).</p> <p>Participation in the first international conference on comparative approaches to lifelong EL (2010).</p>	2007-2010
IPA 07-05	Policy learning to support VET reform process	To support the quality of policy design and implementation through the facilitation of policy learning using the peer learning instrument.	<p>Analysis of impact of national education and training policies on school level using peer learning as tool in Albania, Kosovo and Turkey.</p> <p>Dynamic interface between policy making at national level and implementation realities at school level better understood and elaborated in country documents.</p> <p>Improved national policy design and understanding of implementation problems.</p>	<p>Preparation of country analyses/ self-study document on how policy development and implementation has impacted on the learning process and management of schools.</p> <p>Clearly identified and elaborated policy design and implementation issues.</p> <p>Country plan developed for follow up/ country discussion on options for and barriers to reform at school level.</p>	<p>ETF 2007 dissemination event in Albania.</p> <p>Policy self-study document/ report prepared by national stakeholders on file with ETF.</p> <p>Background materials for Albania for relevant peer learning on file with ETF.</p> <p>ETF country manager and ETF staff peer learning mission reports.</p> <p>Cross-country reports on file with ETF.</p>	<p>National workshops to follow up 2006 peer learning on VET financing (April 2007).</p> <p>Collection of background materials (June/July2007).</p> <p>National self-study document (Aug 2007).</p> <p>Peer learning event in Albania, Kosovo and Turkey (Sept/Oct 2007).</p> <p>Preparation of cross-country synthesis report.</p> <p>Final regional conference/ regional debate on the findings of the peer learning project.</p>	2007-2010

IPA 07-06	Governance and administrative capacity in employment	To improve governance and administrative capacity in employment, and to ensure assistance in developing, managing and evaluating active labour market policies in Albania.	<p>Clearly identified indicators and descriptor levels for monitoring and evaluation of active labour market measures in Albania.</p> <p>Future actions for IPA programming verified and indicators in place.</p>	<p>Indicators and descriptor levels elaborated for Albania.</p> <p>Establishment of regular platform of key stakeholders for assessment of country administrative capacity and reporting on progress.</p> <p>Priorities for future action plans and input into IPA programming developed and agreed.</p>	<p>Set of indicators for performance measuring/ monitoring of administrative capacity in employment on file with ETF.</p> <p>ETF mission reports.</p> <p>ETF country validation and indicators verification meetings.</p> <p>Project progress reports.</p>	<p>List of indicators and descriptors for assessment of administrative capacity in employment and active labour market measures (2007).</p> <p>Selection of a reduced number of actions to contribute to increasing administrative capacity (2008-2010).</p> <p>Revision of the indicators and descriptors tool for Albania to increase administrative capacity (2008-2010).</p>	2007-2010
IPA 07-07	Learning and teaching	To build up communities of practice as a social learning platform for better exchanges of innovation experiences in VET teaching and learning.	<p>Clarification of the challenges faced by VET support institutions, and participants from Albania are familiar with practice examples related to innovation of teaching and learning at the school level.</p> <p>Local capacity in place to cope with and carry out innovative school-based development projects.</p>	<p>Common European policy frameworks translated into local didactic learning arrangements.</p> <p>VET support institution staff prepared to carry out national VET/HRD reform activities and equipped to join international partnership agreements and efficiently take part in knowledge sharing.</p>	<p>Albania actively take part in CoP</p> <p>MoES representatives from Albania take part in an ETF steering committee for project.</p> <p>Project proposals prepared for implementation in a small number of pilot schools.</p> <p>National action plan for project implementation on file with ETF.</p> <p>ETF virtual community.</p> <p>Reports on results of innovation and entrepreneurship projects.</p> <p>National dissemination events with local school networks.</p>	<p>Project start-up workshop in a EU VET school (2007).</p> <p>ETF annual West Balkan VET teacher training conference/ Portuguese EU Presidency event (20-22 Sept 2007).</p> <p>One-week training programme on innovation and entrepreneurship (Oct 2007) .</p> <p>Development school project implementation (2008).</p> <p>International conference on pedagogical approaches to innovation and entrepreneurship (2009).</p> <p>Study tours to EU VET centres (2009).</p>	

IPA 07-08	Networking	To establish 2 stakeholder networks –parliamentarians and social partners – which will ensure their active participation in policy formulation, design and implementation relevant for the IPA region.	<p>Parliamentarians from Albania systematically engaged</p> <p>in policy learning on HRD reform strategies in the IPA region, with a view to promoting HRD as a political priority and fostering regional cooperation.</p> <p>Fully functional platform for policy learning for social partners in IPA, strengthening the involvement of social partners at all levels in HRD policy development and implementation.</p>	<p>Parliamentarian network</p> <p>Permanent links with parliament committees and IPA national coordinators.</p> <p>Albania parliamentarian committees better aware of ETF activities and have provided strategic inputs to ETF work programming for 2008.</p> <p>Parliamentarian committee representatives join some of the Stability Pact seminars/ round tables.</p> <p>Social partner network</p> <p>Social partners in Albania better aware of ETF activities and have provided strategic inputs to ETF 2008 work programming;</p> <p>State of/gaps in social dialogue in Albania and gaps for improvement in HRD identified.</p> <p>For both networks, members have shared knowledge and experiences on regional HRD issues and on EU HRD issues and good practices.</p>	<p>IPA programming.</p> <p>Events/meetings minutes.</p> <p>Project progress reports.</p> <p>ETF report on the state of social dialogue In Albania.</p>	<p>Parliamentarian network</p> <p>Informal meetings with individual parliamentarians about individual projects and the ETF work programme, including Albania country plan (2007-2008).</p> <p>Field visits to EU/partner countries (2008).</p> <p>Formal training for some of the MP/SP leaders by enabling participations in cluster groups and other capacity building activities (2008).</p> <p>Social partner network</p> <p>Albania country profile on social dialogue in HRD (2007).</p> <p>Study visit organised with the aim at developing links with existing European networks (if budget available, otherwise postponed to 2008).</p> <p>Regional seminar organised towards year-end to analyse the results of the stocktaking exercise (2008).</p>	2007-2008
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