Evaluation of ETF Activities in Bulgaria

Final Report June 2005
This report has been prepared by SEOR. Three EU experts, Dr Jaap de Koning, Ms Katja Kurolkova and Mr Arie Gelderblom, and one Bulgarian expert Ms Anna Athanassova comprised the external evaluation team.

The views and opinions expressed in the report are those of the evaluators, and, as such, do not necessarily reflect those of the European Training Foundation. The European Training Foundation does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this report and accepts no responsibility for any consequences of their use.

Contact  Jaap de Koning
         Katja Korolkova
Address  SEOR, Erasmus University Rotterdam
         PO Box 1738
         3000 DR ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS
Phone    +31-10-4082220
Fax      +31-10-4089650
Email    seor-secr@few.eur.nl
### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cedefop</td>
<td>European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Acceding and Candidate Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAMCO</td>
<td>Bulgarian Association of Management Consulting Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAMDE</td>
<td>Bulgarian Association for Management Development and Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNO</td>
<td>Bulgarian National Observatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEE</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVT</td>
<td>Continuing Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG EAC</td>
<td>Directorate General for Education and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG Empl</td>
<td>Directorate General for Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG Enlarg</td>
<td>Directorate General for Enlargement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG RELEX</td>
<td>Directorate General for External Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EES</td>
<td>European Employment Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRDC</td>
<td>Human Resources Development Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>Institution Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAP</td>
<td>Joint Assessment Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLL</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM</td>
<td>Labour Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOLSP</td>
<td>Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>Bulgarian Ministry of Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MES</td>
<td>Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Member States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAPE</td>
<td>National Action Plan for Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAVET</td>
<td>National Agency for Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTI</td>
<td>National Training Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phare</td>
<td>One of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the European Communities to assist the applicant countries of central Europe in their preparations for joining the European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMU</td>
<td>Project Management Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium Scale Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPP-ESF</td>
<td>Phare Special Preparatory Programme for the European Social Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET PR</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training Progress Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VETA</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VETERST</td>
<td>Phare Vocational Education and Training; Education, Research, Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

List of abbreviations

Executive summary “Bulgaria Country Evaluation”  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Executive summary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Purpose of the evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Background of the evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Methodology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Analysis and main findings for each evaluation question</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Main conclusion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Main recommendations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Descriptive part on ETF activities in Bulgaria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 The period 1996-2000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 The period 2000-2004</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Context: analysis of the political, economic and social context in Bulgaria. Development of the VET system in the last decade.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Purpose of the evaluation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Methodology</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Assessment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Assessment of individual activities/projects carried out by ETF</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1 Management Training Programme Phare BG 93.15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2 ETF Employers’ initiatives project</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3 Management Training Programme Phare BG 9908.01</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.4 VETERST Phare BG 95.06</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.5 Special Preparatory Program for the ESF (SPP-ESF)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.6 Promotion of the Culture and Practice of Social and Civil Dialogue</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.7 Phare programming (2001-2004)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.8 JAP monitoring process</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.9 Consultation process on LLL Memorandum and Consultation process on LLL</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.10 Follow up to Lisbon Process</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.11 Peer reviews of implementation of VET policy</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.12 Implementation of cooperation program with Cedefop</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Case studies</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Bulgarian National Observatory (BNO)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Country Monograph on Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services (2002-2003)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4 VET PR</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Conclusions: individual projects assessment (4.1 and 4.2)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Overall evaluation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 ETF activities and the Bulgarian VET system</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2</td>
<td>Development of institutions and legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3</td>
<td>VET performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.4</td>
<td>Policy development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.5</td>
<td>Conclusions overall evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1</th>
<th>Conclusions with respect to individual projects</th>
<th>63</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Conclusion overall evaluation</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Annex 1
Terms of Reference of the Evaluation | 71   

### Annex 2
Matrix of ETF activities 1996-2004 | 72   

### Annex 3
List of persons/organisations consulted | 90   

### Annex 4
Literature and documentation consulted | 92   

### Annex 5
Case Study Bulgarian National Observatory | 96   

### Annex 6

### Annex 7
Programmes of the missions | 115  

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY “BULGARIA COUNTRY EVALUATION”

1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

S1. The project ‘Bulgaria Country Evaluation’ is aimed at assessing the ETF activities and interventions in Bulgaria in the period 1996-2004 and providing recommendations which can help ETF in its future activities in Bulgaria and other partner countries. The project has a twofold objective:

- to evaluate individual activities and projects ETF implemented (or ETF contributed to) in Bulgaria;
- to evaluate the ETF interventions in general: provide a broader picture and global overview of all the activities as a whole in relation to VET development in Bulgaria.

2 BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION

S2. The draft final report was prepared in accordance with the requirements of Contract CFT/04/ETF/0054, between SEOR BV and the European Training Foundation. The terms of references can be found in Annex 1. The current evaluation is the first one in the series of country-focused evaluations that the Foundation plans to undertaken in coming years.

S3. The Foundation started its activities in Bulgaria in 1996 and in the period 1996-2000 provided management, technical and monitoring support to Phare projects. After the re-focusing of the ETF role the Foundation became a centre of expertise supporting the Commission external policies rather than a provider of programme management services (period 2000-2004). The ETF started being concerned overall with reform of vocational education and training (VET).

3 METHODOLOGY

S4. The evaluation was conducted in three phases: (a) an Inception phase – during which desk research was made and the interviews were conducted with ETF representatives; (b) an Implementation phase – during which desk research continued and the visits were undertaken to conduct a series of interviews: with key stakeholders in Bulgaria, representatives of the EC Delegation in Bulgaria, representatives of the European Commission in Brussels; and (c) an Analytical phase – during which the findings from earlier stages were analysed and synthesized in the final report.

S5. During the visit to Turin (January) 9 staff members were interviewed and a workshop was conducted with ETF staff to validate the evaluation approach and first findings. During the visit to Sofia (February) face-to-face interviews were conducted with 25 Bulgarian stakeholders and a representative of the EC Delegation in Bulgaria. Additional telephone and e-mail interviews were carried out later on. A one-day visit to Brussels (March) encompassed interviews with 6 representatives of the European Commission (DG Employment, DG Enlargement, DG Education and Culture). The full list of persons/organisations consulted can be found in Annex 3.

S6. The main evaluation tools include: (a) the Matrix of ETF activities which reconstructs the ETF intervention logic in the country, demonstrates the links between ETF general objectives and
objectives of particular projects and initiatives, shows the main outputs and success indicators and serves as a kind of map/guide to ETF interventions in Bulgaria (the Matrix can be found in Annex 2); (b) Desk research which was conducted from the very start of the project and had to be continued during the implementation to feed the analysis with a large amount of documents and materials provided by ETF and collected by the evaluation team (the full list of literature and documents consulted can be found in Annex 4); (c) Interviews and interview schemes which served as an important information source and helped to answer the evaluation questions. Interview schemes elaborated and sent in advance to respondents guaranteed the systematic approach and comprehensiveness of the received information.

S7. The evaluation was carried out along the standard evaluation criteria which in the context of the current evaluation got the following interpretation: relevance (appropriateness of project objectives and ETF interventions in general to country needs and reform development, as well as to the EU priorities); efficiency (the way in which the various project inputs were converted into results; the way in which ETF administrative, management, and other procedures contributed to the achievement of the results); effectiveness (to which extent the results achieved met the project objectives: results versus objectives); impact (in what way have ETF activities/projects influenced institutional, legal and policy development in Bulgaria); sustainability (sustainability of ETF interventions and project results, in case of very recent projects - sustainability prospects).

S8. Four case studies were carried out (after the selection during the visit to Turin): Bulgarian National Observatory (Annex 5); Institution Building Projects 2002, 2003, 2004 (Annex 6); Country Monograph (main text of the report); VET PR (main text of the report). Case studies are considered to be representative of the different type of activity and period of implementation.

4 MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of individual projects

S9. The evaluation dealt with 16 different interventions/activities. Each individual project was evaluated separately along the standard criteria. The evaluation was carried out on the basis of: available project documentation and materials; available evaluation/monitoring reports; information collected via face-to-face interviews (ETF, Bulgarian stakeholders, European Commission); information collected via additional telephonic and e-mail correspondence; other background materials (like publications, etc.)

S10. Although a lot of information was available for our evaluation, the data situation was not optimal.

− There are no “Country Files” within the ETF system, administering and handling the project information. It makes the general picture of one country activities not transparent.
− While going through project files we discovered that in some cases project information is not complete.
− Not all the projects are systematically evaluated by ETF.

S11. The results of the “individual project evaluations” are combined in a summary table which gives an overview of all the interventions versus the evaluation criteria (the table can be found in the main text of the report). The key conclusions drawn from this part of evaluation are as follows:

S12. Almost all projects/activities have been relevant (in respect to Bulgarian national priorities; EU policies, the reform process). There are no project/activities performing poorly on relevance.
S13. In the majority of cases the projects/activities have been implemented efficiently. Among the key factors contributing to the efficiency of the projects should be mentioned:

− Good administrative skills of the ETF, which were especially important in the early period when the projects had to be implemented in an unsettled environment.

− The competences of ETF staff. The ETF managers demonstrated their commitment, professionalism, competence and networking skills. Their input was appreciated both by Bulgarian stakeholders and the representatives of the European Commission, particularly by the former ones.

− Local knowledge and continuity of expertise is an ETF asset appreciated by the Commission as well as by Bulgarian stakeholders. Projects and activities implemented in the country are interlinked, feed each other, as well as the EC programmes and build on the achieved results. In this way the efficiency of each particular intervention is definitely increased.

− The ETF expertise in VET and the research capacity developed by ETF staff.

On the other hand certain aspects should be mentioned which diminished the efficiency:

− In a number of cases the ETF tended to produce rather ambitious terms of references compared to the resources available. This built-in inconsistency caused difficulties in the implementation of projects.

− The time defined by the ETF for project implementation as well as the timing of the starting-up period was not always optimal: often schedules were too pressed.

S14. In terms of effectiveness about half of the project/activities were fully satisfactory. There are no projects performing poorly on effectiveness. In certain cases constrains linked to the country context did not allow full realisation of the objectives.

On the one hand the attainment of the main projects’ objectives contributed to acquisition of new skills and knowledge by Bulgarian stakeholders and increased the capacity of national institutions and the cooperation between them. On the other hand, the situation with data, VET analysis (especially in relation to the labour market) requires further significant improvement, and evaluation of VET issues still has to be developed.

What concerns the ETF products (reports, monographs, reviews, etc.) and their quality, they are valued by Bulgarian stakeholders and the Commission. However, products could have been disseminated more widely than actually happened. We also found out that in some cases the provided expertise is not fully utilised by the Commission. On the other hand, more operational and less general recommendations for future interventions would be more appreciated by the Commission services.

S15. Although the impact issues are not easy to measure and we had to base our judgements on the opinion of a limited number of interviewees, it is still possible to conclude that about half of the project/activities have shown satisfactory impact results.

Raising awareness, attracting attention of a larger audience to VET issues, as well as increased competences and improved cooperation between stakeholders were the most often registered impacts. In a number of cases new institutions and initiatives were stimulated (institutions, like HRDC under VETERST and BAMDE under MTP-I; nationally financed projects, like “100” launched by ME; national networks, like network of VET Centres under the Chamber of Commerce; other donors' projects, like the chain: MTP I - Employers Initiative – MTP II). Next to it some projects (like VETERST) made clear policy impact by stimulating the elaboration of new laws and establishment of new institutions, which exist up till now and form the framework for VET development. At the same time, the impacts of some interventions were less transparent and clear.
S16. In terms of sustainability the results are not as good as for the other criteria. One project/activity performs poorly on this aspect, while only one other is fully satisfactory on this point. On other cases there is some evidence of sustainable results, but not very strong. Although in most cases the rather weak results on sustainability are caused by context factors which are out of the control of ETF, it is still relevant.

S17. The development of inter-institutional dialogues, personal contacts, networking and facilitation, fostering exchange of experiences can be seen as real value added by ETF in the majority of projects.

**Overall evaluation**

S18. An evaluation of ETF interventions in general was conducted to provide a global overview of all the activities as a whole in relation to VET development in Bulgaria. While drawing the broader picture the development of the VET system and the dynamics of the reform process in Bulgaria were overviewed to see how the ETF activities did fit in this development. Such aspects as relevance -content and timing- of the ETF interventions for Bulgaria’s needs and priorities (as they were developing in the concerned period), degree of responsiveness and reactiveness of the provided services were assessed.

S19. The overall conclusion is that the work done by ETF in Bulgaria has been useful. Without ETF’s contribution it would have been difficult for the Bulgarians to develop the necessary institutions and legislation in the field of VET and to put VET issues on the political agenda that were relevant for the accession process and are now relevant to participate as a member state. ETF’s activities also helped to:

- improve policy-making in the field of VET by giving concrete advise to Bulgarian officials;
- improve the cooperation between the various Bulgarian actors in the field of VET;
- improve the information situation concerning VET;
- improve the quality of a number of VET schools;
- stimulate training activities in Bulgaria (for instance by helping the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce to develop a training institution).

S20. From the interviews with Bulgarian stakeholders our conclusion is that ETF activities in the first period (1996-2000) (related to direct management and implementation of large-scale projects) were more highly valued by the Bulgarian stakeholders than the activities in which ETF played a supporting role for the EC. This has more to do with the type of activities than with the role ETF played in it. The EC officials were generally positive about the way ETF has performed in the projects.

S21. Although a lot has been achieved, it did not (or perhaps: not yet) lead to higher participation in VET. In all types of VET (initial vocational education, continuous training and training for the unemployed) there is no evidence of a clear improvement (in terms of expenditure or participation) and reforms have to be continued to catch up with EU average performance. Since many outside factors affect the Bulgarian VET system (like, socio-economic context, political context, activities by other international organisations, etc.), one cannot expect too much about the impact of ETF’s activities on the performance of the system. However, when we look at the ETF activities the following points could have received more attention:

- spreading the conclusion from the international evaluation literature that investment in VET pays off for individual workers and companies as well as for society as a whole;
- providing the Bulgarian stakeholders with information about good practices in the field of policies promoting higher participation in VET.
S22. We also observe that although the information situation with respect to VET has improved, there is still not much information on the labour market outcomes of VET. What is the rate of return to VET compared to other types of education? Do people with vocational education have more stable work lives than people with a different type of education? What is, both in qualitative and in quantitative terms, the need for workers with a VET background in the labour market? Information like this, which seems vital for proper policy-development and for proper educational choice, is missing.

S23. One of the reasons for the low participation rates in continuous training and training for the unemployed, is the lack of funding. However, once Bulgaria joins the Union it will have the possibility to benefit from the Structural Funds aid. Information about good practices of policies promoting participation in VET will then be needed to make effective programs. Furthermore, policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation must be develop further to run programs more efficiently.

Summary of conclusions overall evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item/evaluation question</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressing the priorities of the country in VET</td>
<td>Country initially lacked the know-how even to develop priorities. ETF helped the Bulgarian stakeholders to develop basic know-how and to get in touch with the EU agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF activities reflecting the dynamics of the reform process</td>
<td>ETF activities partly shaped the VET reform process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency with EC priorities and policies</td>
<td>Shift in ETF activities in line with EC wishes. However, the development is not necessarily positive from the viewpoint of the Bulgarians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to the initiation of larger scale EC projects</td>
<td>ETF did not trigger big Phare projects, but they helped to raise awareness of the importance of VET issues. As a result Bulgarian authorities decided to bring these issues in project proposals. The same holds for ESF programs. However the Bulgarians lack knowledge about the type of activities, measures and instruments that would effectively promote VET. Little attention has been paid to the content of the policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue with and between Bulgarian stakeholders</td>
<td>Positive influence on the cooperation between different ministries dealing with VET. Also positive influence on the involvement of the social partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to improvement of information with regard to VET and VET-related labour market issues</td>
<td>Positive contribution. However, available information still shows important deficiencies. Further improvement is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to improvement of information analysis capacity</td>
<td>Positive contribution. However, hardly anything is known about the returns to VET and its impact on the labour market. Few examples of more developed evaluations only available for training of the unemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on institutional and legal developments</td>
<td>Clear positive influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on policy developments</td>
<td>Only few attention has been paid to disseminating good practice policies promoting participation in VET.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on VET performance</td>
<td>No clear signs of improvement in performance VET system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability of what has been achieved</td>
<td>The improved situation with respect to the available information and the information analysis capacity will probably continue to exist after ETF has left, provided that part of the role by ETF is taken over by other European institutions such as Cedefop. Without external support there is a real danger that the situation will again deteriorate. Some of the improvements in training infrastructure are now independent of ETF. Improved institutions and legislation are permanent effects. With respect to many projects the results on sustainability are weak, what is caused in many cases by the context factors which are out of the control of ETF.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

S24. The possibility to improve the performance of the VET system will highly depend on the possibility to use future funding from the EU structural funds. However, from the interviews with the Bulgarian stakeholders, we found out that (i) there are no clear structures for developing and managing individual ESF-projects; (ii) there is a lack of competencies in developing and managing projects. Although ETF has carried out projects in this field, there is still a big need. Further continuation and development of activities supporting the ESF measures would be useful.

S25. While elaborating possible ETF interventions in the ESF field it is worthwhile paying attention to the following aspects. The quality of policies does not only depend on competencies in the field of writing project proposals and managing projects and programmes. It is also, or even more so, to make policies that are effective in promoting VET participation and in raising employability and productivity of the people trained. From the international evaluation literature a lot is known about the effectiveness of various types of measures. Making this information available to the Bulgarians and disseminating the conclusions of such evaluations (i.e., investment in human capital yields high returns to individuals and companies) may contribute to more effective policies and help to promote participation in VET. There seems to be a reason to shift attention somewhat from institutions to concrete policies.

S26. Programs cannot be run efficiently without information on their outcomes. Policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation are still very weak in Bulgaria. ETF could also help to develop this more. Competent Bulgarian researchers are available and should be involved in policy analysis in the field of VET. ETF could organise seminars involving civil servants, staff members from the National Observatory, Bulgarian researchers, foreign experts and others to develop an agenda for policy research in the field of VET. Future ESF funding will contain resources for evaluation in the form of technical assistance.

S27. From the interviews with the Bulgarian stakeholders it became clear that from their point of view also in the coming years ETF’s help is highly needed. Perhaps training a sufficient number of government officials in the issues mentioned previously could reduce the dependency on ETF. Skills in the field of program development, management and monitoring/evaluation should be available on a much wider scale, both nationally as well as regionally.

S28. The efficiency of the new training initiatives can be increased by paying more careful attention to the following aspects:

− for achieving better overall outcomes of training and avoiding overlapping it is essential to ensure closer coordination with other donors and projects providing similar services;
− training programmes need more careful elaboration (more clear formulation of objectives, conceptual justification, if a tailor-made approach is chosen, it has to be aimed at the achievement of particular training goals and search for an optimal combination of theoretical and practical interactive sessions);
− knowledge about the content of potential policy measures is equally important as management skills;
− target group formation should correspond to the defined training objectives and should not be too broad/general; development of a more clear view on the roles of the different stakeholders in the programming process can help in forming adequate groups of trainees;
− it is preferable that the choice of the training-implementing institution is organised on a competitive basis.

S29. It is difficult for actors on the regional and local level to have direct access to the information provided by the European Commission and the institutions connected to the Commission such as ETF. The language problem and limited access to the Internet seems to be the most important
reasons. ETF could help the Bulgarian authorities in making information coming from the European Commission available to a broader group of people working in the VET field (using the channel of National Observatory, for example) This would enable regional and local officials to informal learning of competencies in managing programs and in policy development.

S30. Information on good and bad practices from the new Member States is very important. In those countries the socio-economic context resembles the Bulgarian one more closely and it is more likely that measures that proved to work in these countries will also work in Bulgaria. Therefore, Bulgarian policy makers expressed the need for in-depth contacts with their colleagues in the new EU countries. There is not so much need for large-scale seminars involving many countries, but more for in-depth small-scale workshops. ETF may help in organizing such workshops. Perhaps, such meetings could be organized in a similar way as the peer reviews that are already held for a couple of years within the framework of the European Employment Strategy.

S31. What concerns the ETF products containing recommendations and priority areas for future assistance, it appears that ETF has to formulate those recommendations for future interventions in a more operational and less general way, specifying in more detail what could be done and providing clear examples of how it can be done.

S32. While designing new interventions ETF has to be more realistic in finding the balance between resources available and planned outcomes, to build the activities along better estimated time schedules.

S33. It appears to be useful for ETF information and administrative procedures to develop separate ‘Country files’ accumulating the whole “history” of ETF interventions in particular country. This would allow for more long-term transparency of the activities implemented, provide a possibility to easier assess the achieved results and adjust the activities when needed. Such country files could contain information on:

- country specific projects and initiatives (with relevant project information: dates of implementation, objectives, participating institutions, ETF staff involved, budget, main project results, etc.);
- multi-country projects in which particular country participated (details on the involvement of this particular country; what this cross-country project meant for this particular country; country institutions/experts involved, country specific results achieved) – currently this type of information is the most difficult to find out, but as the majority of ETF initiatives has a cross-country character, the “country” outcomes of such initiatives have to become transparent and visible;
- relevant evaluation and monitoring reports;
- list of ETF staff involved with a reference to the implemented projects/initiatives and contact details;
- list of country experts (may be with short CVs) and institutions involved with a reference to projects/initiatives and their contact details; lists of local project participants, trainees, etc;
- feedback information from the target institutions, target groups, project participants, trainees, local experts, etc;
- key information on the National Observatory: activities/staff/projects assigned by ETF to NO; etc;

It is essential that such country-files are regularly up-dated (most likely ETF country managers have to take care of it). The majority of abovementioned items can be included and combined in one file – Intervention Matrix (similar to one elaborated in Annex 1 of the current evaluation)

S34. ETF has to pay more attention and take more initiatives in the dissemination field (not only rely on the National Observatory in these matters, who’s resources are very restricted). It appears that
currently certain essential materials have limited circulation. In the future dissemination has to be targeted not only at the key involved ministries (MOLSP and MES), but also at a broader range of VET related institutions and NGOs. A combination of electronic dissemination lists with distribution of hard copies can improve the situation and better meet the expectations of the stakeholders. Apart from using the dissemination possibilities of the National Observatory, ETF should explore and consider new dissemination channels (for instance, country wide network of VET Centres existing under Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce). This approach is relevant both for ETF products (reports, monographs, studies) and information materials (EU documents, examples of good practices in new and old member states, international evaluations of VET experiences, mentioned earlier in item S25).
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.4 ANALYSIS AND MAIN FINDINGS FOR EACH EVALUATION QUESTION

1.5 MAIN CONCLUSION

1.6 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS
2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 DESCRIPTIVE PART ON ETF ACTIVITIES IN BULGARIA

The current evaluation covers the period of 1996-2004. The activities of ETF in Bulgaria in the concerned time frames can be split into two main periods according to which we further analyse the undertaken interventions (with a short transition phase between them): (1) 1996 - 2000 and (2) 2000 – 2004.

In the first period ETF provided management, technical support and monitoring of projects and programmes under Phare. It was the main activity of the Foundation at that time. During 2000 an extensive structural dialogue took place between Commission services and the Foundation. The ETF’s role in the candidate countries required revision in view of the significant reorientation of the Phare programme, including the decentralisation of responsibility for management of funds to the countries themselves.

As a result of this process the role of the Foundation was re-focused. The Foundation from that moment onwards was supposed to concentrate on development as a centre of expertise supporting Commission external policies rather than a provider of programme management services. ETF started being concerned overall with reform of vocational education and training (VET) as a lever for economic growth, employment and social cohesion in the partner countries.

Subsequent to the major decision the following priorities were set. For the candidate countries preparation for likely accession has been central to the Community's policies. Human Resource Development is an important priority in the framework of the preparations and capacity building for management of the structural funds; analysis of the progress, gaps and investment needs in vocational training, active labour market policies and employment services contribute to this. Through its Lisbon strategy, the Community has raised the importance of investment in human capital in its aim to become the most competitive and knowledge-based economy and this is also reflected in Community activities.

2.1.1 THE PERIOD 1996-2000

The main activities and issues dealt with during this period are rather diversified and encompass VET reform, management training problems and preparations for ESF. The projects managed by ETF in this period are as follows:

1. VETERST 1996-1999 (Phare BG 95.06)
3. Special Preparatory Programme for ESF 1998-2000 (Phare, multi-country)
4. Bulgarian National Observatory (since 1997)
5. ETF Employers’ Initiatives Project 1999-2000 (ETF funds)

**Transition period:**

6. Management Training Programme 2000-2002 Phare BG 9908.01

The ETF contribution to Phare projects consisted of:

- direct management (including financial – funds stayed with ETF - and content management) like in the case of Management Training Programme 1997-1998 and Special Preparatory Programme for ESF 1998-2000 (component on ESF);
- only content management (while financial management was exercised by PMU established in BG or by EC Delegation), comments on ToR prepared by PMU, etc. like in the case of VETERST 1996-1999 and Management Training Project 2000-2002.

In the early period ETF was so intensively involved in content implementation of the projects that it is very difficult to separate the overall projects’ results from ETF contribution.

ETF had to start its activities in a highly difficult and unstable environment when traditional links between labour market and vocational training were broken and it was necessary to convince Bulgarians that the link can be again created but in a different way. The Phare VETERST project in the implementation of which ETF was directly involved had to be started in the absence of the legal framework. The main purpose of the project at that time was to raise awareness and introduce the understanding of the necessity of VET reform. In a highly bureaucratic system it was not an easy task.

In spite of these difficulties the EU programmes in Bulgaria became an important driver for change in VET. The key Phare project in VET (VETEREST 1995-1999) laid the basis for reforms in VET. This has resulted in the Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA - 1999), the establishment of a National Agency for VET (NAVET- 2000), the introduction of modular curricula, broader occupational profiles and new training methods.

The launch of VETERST was followed by the establishment of Bulgarian National Observatory (BNO – part of Phare Observatory Network). BNO was created in accordance with the agreement signed by two key Bulgarian ministries: the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and from the start contributed to the development of cooperation and dialogue between those ministries. BNO was initially attached to VETERST PMU, but later (from 1999) got its position within Human Resource Development Centre – an institution that emerged as a result of the VETERST project. BNO was developing and building up its capacity with direct support and in close collaboration with ETF. BNO managed to build a good level of expertise, its products became known and recognised, it got its unique place in VET data collection, analysis and dissemination of information.

From the beginning of its presence in Bulgaria ETF became heavily involved in the management training issues which were very acute in the period of restructuring and privatization. ETF was running two Phare Management Training projects: Phare BG 93.15 MTP-1 (1997-1998) and Phare BG 9908.01 MTP-2 (2000-2002). In fact the MTP-2 project was the last Phare project managed by ETF, its implementation happened in the transition period when ETF role was already refocused and the reorientation of the Foundation started coming into practice). The projects were aiming at supporting the improvement of the competitiveness and managerial practices of Bulgarian private sector, with a view to its strategic development.
In between two Phare MT projects ETF carried out in 1998-1999 an assessment of management training needs in Bulgaria and implemented one bridging project - Employers Initiative project 1999-2000. The main beneficiaries of this project were the national and regional chambers of commerce, business support organisations and training providers. The project was elaborated and financed directly by ETF.

Those projects were designed with the objective of increasing the competence of Bulgarian managers and improving the performance of Bulgarian companies in order to support the privatization and the functioning of the market economy, make companies more competitive internationally and prepare for accession to the EU.

In 1998-2000 ETF was entrusted by DG Enlargement to manage Phare multi-country “Special Programme for the Preparation for EU Structural Policy”, in particular the biggest component on ESF (ETF/98/VET/0039). The PMU was not created and funds stayed with ETF. The project was aimed at organizing a series of measures to help the candidate countries to prepare for future access to ESF. With this project one of the first attempts to prepare for ESF interventions was undertaken. It was followed later by a number of institution building interventions.

2.1.2 THE PERIOD 2000-2004

In this period the Foundation moved away from the management of Phare projects and concentrated on development as a centre of expertise supporting Commission external policies rather than a provider of programme management services. ETF started being concerned overall with VET reform. The main activities related to this period are as follows:

4. Phare programming and contribution to JEP monitoring.

With the exception of the Phare Management Training programme II (mentioned in paragraph 2.1.2 as a project belonging to the transition period in ETF role) the year 2001 was the last year of Foundation involvement in managing Phare programmes. ETF continued supporting the Commission by contributing to the Phare project cycle providing comments on policy papers and project proposals prepared by BG. The work with so called Phare project fiches continued during the last years and this type of ETF contribution to Phare programming became the prevailing one.

---

2 The assessment for Bulgaria was carried out in the framework of a wider project “Assessment of the Management Training Needs in Central and Eastern Europe”, sponsored by ETF and executed by CEEMAN.
In 2001-2002 ETF on the request of European Economic and Social Committee designed and implemented the Phare multi country project “Promotion of the Culture and Practice of Social and Civil Dialogue”. This almost half a million euro project contained a 15,000 EURO component for Bulgaria. The project was meant to support the development of a new system of industrial relations encouraging the consolidation of independent employers’ and workers’ organisations as well as the development of effective social dialogue practices.

On the request of the European Commission ETF became involved in the preparation of the series of Country Monographs. For Bulgaria such a Country Monograph on Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services was prepared in 2002-2003. This ETF product was meant to provide a useful analytical tool to assist BG and EC to monitor the progress in implementing the JAP priorities; to identify the most urgent needs and gaps in the field of HRD for the labour market. The Monograph was published and broadly disseminated in Bulgaria. It was submitted to the European Commission and got its recognition.

After that in 2003-2004 ETF was assigned to conduct Peer Reviews of implementation of VET policy (multi-country project). The Peer Review in Bulgaria was focused on continuing vocational training in a lifelong context and was carried out in two regions: North-Central and South-Central. The topic of the report was chosen in consultation between ETF, EU delegation and the BG ministries: MES and MOLSP. The results of the project fed into National CVT Strategy, elaboration of which started in spring 2004.

In continuation of the implemented earlier Phare Preparatory programme for ESF the Foundation started in 2002 the chain of Institution Building projects mainly aimed at supporting ongoing reform in HRD aspects: preparations for ESF. Those projects were feeding into implementation of Phare programming. The 2002 IB project was tendered and carried out by a German contractor, 2003 and 2004 IB projects were directly assigned by ETF to Bulgarian HRDC (BNO). Those relatively small projects focus on raising awareness and training for a rather broad group of national and regional stakeholders.

During the second period Bulgarian National Observatory continued. It was supported by ETF and remained its beneficiary and partner. As Foundation’s partner BNO supported and organised ETF missions, provided access to ministries and stakeholders, gathered and analysed information for ETF reports, monographs, reviews; organised meetings and conferences on behalf of and with the ETF. Being Foundation’s beneficiary BNO received expert and financial support; assistance in its staff development as well as capacity building support. ETF was also promoting BNO activities to increase its visibility and reputation as a recognised national institute in the particular field.

With the support from BNO ETF yearly produces VET Progress Report aimed at providing input into DG Enlargement regular report on BG progress towards accession (in particular Chapter 18 on education and training). BNO Annual Report is providing the background information for the preparation of ETF VET PR.

The Consultation process on life-long learning started in Bulgaria in June 2001 and has not been in great depth because of the short time available (one month). The Ministry of Education was responsible for the consultation process on the EC Memorandum. The consultations involved representatives from the ministries, the social partners, NGOs, government professional organisations, education and training establishments, etc. As a result a National Report on the Memorandum on LL was prepared. On the request of DG Education and Culture in 2003 ETF prepared country report on life-long learning progress in Bulgaria in 2001-2003.
(similar reports were made for 13 countries as a follow up of the 2002 Resolution on Lifelong Learning).

After refocusing ETF role the contribution of the Foundation to Phare took the form of support to Phare programming. On the request of DG Enlargement ETF participated in programming and monitoring missions with DG Enlargement, DG Employment and EC Delegation. ETF was providing comments on Phare project Fiches.

ETF cooperates with Cedefop and a Framework for such cooperation was established in 2001 with the main purpose to prepare the acceding and candidate countries for accession. Within the Implementation of cooperation program with Cedefop ETF started preparing Bulgarian National Observatory for future transfer to national reference point. In 2004 BNO started updating and upgrading information in Cedefop VET-Bib and VET-Instit databases and prepared a number of articles for Cedefop information.

On the request of DG Education ETF prepared in 2004 country report: Bulgaria. Achieving the Lisbon Goal: the Contribution of VET Systems. (similar reports were prepared by ETF for Romania and Turkey). This assignment was carried out in the framework of ‘Maastricht study’. Similar studies for 25 Member states were contracted out by the European Commission to other institution.

2.2 Context: analysis of the political, economic and social context in Bulgaria. Development of the VET system in the last decade.

The Bulgarian transition from a centralized planned economy to a market oriented one started in 1990. The period between 1990 and 1996 was characterized by non-consistent changes and almost constant decline in real income, employment rate reduction and high inflation. As a result, in the second half of 1996 and the beginning of 1997 Bulgaria found itself on the verge of a severe financial and economic crisis that brought to the fore the need for speeding up the reforms. The former system based on the large scale industries with the markets in East European countries collapsed. The year 1997 marked the beginning of the implementation of urgent measures aimed at stabilizing the macroeconomic situation in the country.

The privatisation, restructuring of industry and banking, liquidation of companies and new businesses start-ups were the key economic priorities at that time. By the end of 1999 some 50 percent of the assets previously owned by the state were to be in private hands. But the restructuring and development of the infrastructure necessary for privatisation lagged behind. There was an acute shortage of credit and reliable financial services to private and medium-sized enterprises. To implement this ambitious reform it was essential to radically improve the skills of those who run the firms. It was clear that after privatisation new owners and managers would have to face a complex agenda of restructuring business and improving quality of its management and performance.

In 2000 the government adopted the Strategy for Improvement of the Productive Sector on the basis of which the National Economic Development Plan 2000-2006 was updated. The main priority of the Strategy was to raise the sector’s competitiveness on the basis of strong enterprises within the framework of market principles. The government stated that training and re-qualification of personnel and introduction of quality management were key measures to be taken to enhance the production quality and viability of the enterprises.
The expansion of the private sector was rather promising, but did not compensate for the increase of unemployment due to the fact that large-scale restructuring and consequent loss of jobs was not matched sufficiently by the creation of new jobs (the weakness of the private sector). In 2000 Bulgaria had a very high unemployment rate of average 20% (compared to an EU average of 9%) with a specially high level of long term unemployed (about 60%) and long-term unemployed with low or no qualifications. The employment problems with young people without vocational qualification or one inappropriate for the labour market aggravated the situation (in 2001 youth unemployment rate reached 39.3 %). The investment in active labour market measures were not enough developed and were cut significantly compared to the end of 90-s. The regional disparities combined with ongoing economic restructuring were aggravating unemployment and associated social problems. And frequent government changes were bringing additional difficulties in coping with acute problems.

In spite of all the difficulties since the Helsinki Summit in the end of 1999, Bulgaria has been officially accepted as a candidate country (the delay was mainly due to the heavy economic crisis 1994-1997). This opened the prospects of joining the European Union.

The access to ESF (possibilities opened in the prospect of future EU membership) could become an important factor for resolving sharp problems, addressing regional disparities and stimulating economic and social cohesion. The ESF programmes are essential measures for reducing pressure on the labour market during the process of structural reforms. The complexity of ESF integrated approach and the necessity of preparations for ESF was realised by the Bulgarian authorities already in the end of 90s. The planning of relevant structures and working channels for programming, management, implementation and monitoring of future ESF activities, as well as capacity building for future ESF interventions came in the political agenda.

It is probably not so surprising that under the circumstances described above VET issues were not on the priority list in the middle of 90-s and the awareness of the necessity of VET reform had still to grow. The in-place VET system was inherited from a system serving a planned economy, mainly corresponding to sectors and branches of the centralised economy. This VET system had to be rebuilt corresponding to new social and economic realities. The transformation of the VET system started in 1995; but only since 1999 efforts have been made to introduce these reforms in a systematic way. The reforms progress, but up till now are not completed.

In the middle of 90-s the issues of vocational training were settled under the Law on National Education of 1991. No specialised legal framework existed in the country at that time to guide and regulate labour market training and the functioning of training institutions. Such vacuum in the law created conditions for spontaneous undesirable commercialisation and unfair competition in training services. Hence, the harmonization of the law both in the area of labour and in the area of education was a crucial prerequisite for developing and reforming the VET system.

The situation was aggravated by a number of factors: an insufficiently developed labour market training system, absence of an exact differentiation between institutions and their competencies; absence of coordination and cooperation between the ministries (mainly Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour), and absence of a social dialogue between the government authorities and social partners. Trade unions and employers’ organisations were not fully aware of their place and role in the VET system.

To add to it, research on education and the labour market analysis (relevant for vocational education) was practically non existent. The previously existing capacities within the Ministries working within the central labour planning have been dissolved. There was no work on general
employment trends. The labour market situation was not related to qualification needs and training developments.

Some peculiar aspects of VET system at that time can be described as follows. There was very precise differentiation between education for adults (responsibility of MOLSP) and education for young people (responsibility of MES). Those two types of education were completely separated. The ministries were working separately and did not collaborate. As a result there were two different lists of vocations, two different curricula systems, two different lists of competences (requirements to vocations). There was no corresponding activities and connection between these two systems. The decisions taken by the ministries were not coordinated. At the same time social partners were practically isolated. VET schools had no capacity. Traditional links between labour market and vocational training were broken and it was necessary to convince Bulgarians that the link can be again created but in a different way.

The reform of VET system got momentum and became more systematic after the adoption in 1999 of a special VET Law (Vocational Education and Training Act –VETA). VETA became a legal basis for comprehensive reform of the VET system, including the structure and the content of the system (in particular: curriculum development, standards elaboration, institution building, decentralisation management and financing of VET, with the view to provide vocational qualifications, which meet the requirements of the labour market). The implementation of this law still is in the agenda of the VET reform.

Another important institutional step was taken in 2000 when the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) affiliated to the Council of Ministers was established. NAVET is a state body under the Council of Ministers responsible for licensing of the activities in the VET system as well as for coordination of the institutions related to vocational guidance, training and education. NAVET has a tripartite Management Board and its main functions are related to elaboration of list of professions for VET, elaboration of state educational standards for acquiring vocational qualifications, licensing of Centres for vocational training and for vocational guidance, improving cooperation with the social partners. NAVET got an important role in the reform development.

Since 2001 Bulgaria started developing National Employment Action Plans (NEAP) in accordance with the European Employment Strategy (EES), which are becoming more and more important as one of the main employment policy tools.

The Joint Assessment Paper of Employment Priorities in Bulgaria was signed between European Commission and the Bulgarian government in October 2002. It outlined the finalisation of VET reform as a specific priority including the development of a continuing vocational training strategy. The CVT strategy was elaborated in 2004.

In the end of 2003 the Employment Strategy was adopted. The document summarises the problems which require special attention, among them vocational training issues are stressed as well:

- large number of unemployed people;
- large number of discouraged workers, leaving the labour market;
- vulnerable groups on the labour market;

---

- significant regional differences with respect to employment and unemployment;
- restricted labour force demand – much smaller than the supply;
- unregulated employment;
- skills gaps: Vocational training and qualifications inconsistent with the employer demands;
- insufficient vocational training of the employed with the purpose of adapting the workforce to the changing technologies and business activities.

The key issues in respect to Bulgarian VET system

(i) Decentralisation

The traditionally highly centralised VET system in Bulgaria needed to be decentralised. In 1999 VETA made provision for the decentralisation of VET system from MES to regional (inspectories) and local (municipalities) structures. The law oriented on multi-source funding: state budget, municipal budgets, national and international programmes, income generated by schools themselves. These steps had to create better conditions in which VET system would be more responsive to local labour market needs.

The pilot decentralisation process of the school management from MES to regional, municipal and school levels was progressing very slowly. Up till now the system of the Bulgarian vocational education and training remains heavily centralized. The IVET is financed by the state (with very exceptions when funding is ensured by municipalities). In 2003 only 12 schools out of 504 were financed by municipalities; 25% of schools are funded by other ministries (not MES). The financial regulations till recent required VET school to pay back their own income to the state. The funding for VET has been increased, but it is still considered low compared to the needs of modernization.

(ii) Optimisation of the VET school network

The number of vocational schools in Bulgaria is considered too high, especially taking into consideration the declining number of students (demographic reasons, etc.). Some of those schools do not meet the needs of the labour market: the ongoing economic reform requires different vocational profiles and new quality skills. Overall, VET schools are in poor financial shape: their equipment is outdated; salary payments for staff are low and irregular. Many of them are not able to provide quality vocational training. Maintaining the extensive school network is a problem for the state.

This situation has called for optimisation of the school network. The MES is responsible for that. It has the power to open, transform and close down schools. To optimise the school network a committee has been established under MES. According to the opinion of OECD experts the optimisation criteria defined by the committee were vague and it is difficult for municipalities to assess the schools on the basis of such criteria and make recommendations on the future of schools.

The reform part related to optimisation of the VET school system was also developing rather slowly. The stakeholders were reluctant to close schools fearing the unemployment for teachers, increase in drop-outs, etc. The optimisation was not transparent and did not have a clear strategy. Although MES reports that it has been finalized it is difficult to assess and measure the progress since there was no official document describing the targets of the transformation.
According to the statistics during 6 years the number of VET schools has decreased from 553 in 1998/99 to 496 in 2003/04.

(iii) The relationship between VET and the labour market

The Employment Strategy adopted in 2003 stresses that “still the vocational training does not fully correspond to the labour market demands. There is a discrepancy between the vocations studied and the vocational training system, on the one hand, and the actual labour market demands, on the other.”

Up till now in Bulgaria there is no regular training needs analysis. Some pilot initiatives were undertaken, but they do not lead to general assessment of the needs for VET. In many aspects the approach of the authorities to the issue did not change and is still more aimed at the needs of the system, than on the needs of the labour market. The schools continue to prepare students for jobs which no longer exist. Many graduates from VET schools need further training before they can enter the labour market. There is counselling and vocational guidance system of the Employment Agency, but it needs further development.

With regard to curriculum reform and incorporation of the necessary skills in the curricula, no specific actions have been undertaken. Curricula remain primarily school-based, without enterprise practice, apprenticeship or work placement schemes. Modula curricula introduced through Phare VETERST project have a very small share. Besides, most curricula still in use in schools are outdated if compared to west European standards.

The cooperation between companies and schools remains limited; business sector involvement in the education and training is very restricted. The provision of CVT by schools for adults lacks innovative approach and mainly is done in old fashioned way without taking into account the needs of the market.

The existing VET teacher training is not sufficient. There is no comprehensive system for the training of VET teachers yet in place. The three teacher training centres established under VETERST stopped their existence because of lack of financing. The reform project of the World Bank on general secondary education, (it included teacher training), has been stopped recently. In-service short-term teacher training is provided by University of Sofia, but it does not cover the actual needs in upgrading VET teachers along with the requirements of the labour market. It was mentioned by Bulgarian side that while organising training attention has to be paid to the fact that training adults calls for different teaching methodology. And this methodology is currently not in place.

The necessity to create a closer link between VET system and the needs of the labour market is much better realised. Certain measures called to improve the situation are included in the key policy documents: Employment strategy, Employment Promotion Act, CVT strategy. But the implementation of those measures did not bring yet concrete visible results.

(iv) Development of continuing vocational training (CVT)

The system of continuing vocational training up till recent did not get much attention in Bulgaria. Currently, in view of EES and accession requirements, the lifelong learning concept came to front and Bulgarian government has given a priority for developing CVT. The unfavourable demographic situation, sharp decline of young people entering the labour market makes retraining for adults one of the crucial issues. In 2004 Bulgaria started with the
elaboration of the national strategy for continuing vocational training. The Phare 2003 programme will support the training of adults.

Despite the recent efforts the awareness of the importance of CVT (and LLL) is growing slowly. The provision of CVT by employers (who are the main CVT providers in Bulgaria) was and remains very low. It is one of the lowest in Europe (28 % of businesses providing CVT to their employees in 1999 and even less in 2001 - 25%). The Employment Promotion Act has introduced in 2003 incentives for employers who enhance and upgrade the qualifications of their employees, hire unemployed people, or offer internships and apprenticeships. It also sets the basis for joint efforts of MOLSP and MES in training of unemployed and employed people.

To a considerable extent the problems in CVT are related to training providers. Schools give training to adults in an old fashioned way, they lack teachers with relevant knowledge about the quickly changing industries. The financial regulations were creating obstacles for public providers (requirement to return self-generated income). The numerous private and NGO sector providers active in the market of CVT, propose courses of very uneven quality and their activities lack coordination. The licensing procedures introduced by NAVET in reality do not assure the quality and create some inequalities among the providers. The situation is somewhat better with retraining to the employed and unemployed organised by the Employment Agency. In this view the recently adopted Employment Strategy pays special attention to such measures (with a deadline 2007) as: “Assisting the development of institutions that provide adult vocational training (vocational training centres): increasing the requirements towards the product that they offer”.

(v) Sustainability of reform

The “history” of VET reform development demonstrates that keeping the momentum of the reform is a very difficult task. After implementation of VETERST (which stimulated the changes), the adoption of VETA, establishment of NAVET and defining the key features of transformation the implementation itself was going slowly. The start of VETA was complicated by lack of financial resources (only 4% of GDP allocated to education in 2000). NAVET activities were developing slowly for the same reason. Generally, scarce resources for human resource development created constant problems for the dynamics of the reform. The progress in reform development is very gradual if to look at the pace of decentralisation, school system optimisation, elaboration of standards and curricula, and introduction of the modular approach. Some of the reform components (like decentralisation and optimisation processes) are not properly interlinked.

The implementation of the reform depends not only on the establishment of the relevant institutions, creation of the legal framework, and adequate financing, but also on the availability of skilled staff in the involved ministries and institutions and cooperation between involved stakeholders. NAVET which is supposed to play a very important role in the reform and is expected to ensure the quality is still understaffed. The inspectorates also lack the specialists. Further capacity building is necessary for MES and MOLSP. The development of cooperation between the ministries, ministries and NAVET is crucial for the success of the reform, but it was developing rather weakly and needs to be enhanced. The same holds for the involvement of the social partners.

The recent political decisions of Bulgarian government, the adoption of the Employment Strategy, the elaboration of national strategy for CVT, a clear priority to finalisation of VET reform, as well as continuing support of donors might give new impulse for the VET reform.
Table 2.1 Main steps in Bulgaria VET development (1996-2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Reform</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 (30 July)</td>
<td>Adoption of VETA, amended 2002</td>
<td>Legal basis for VET reform: curriculum development, standard elaboration, institution building, decentralised management and financing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>National Plan for Economic Development 2000-2006 (NPED)</td>
<td>To achieve sustainable low inflationary economic growth as a prerequisite for increased income and improved living standard in relation to the integration process to the European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Establishment of state agency NAVET (tripartite), under the Council of Ministers</td>
<td>Elaborated new list of vocations for VET; development of standards; certification of training providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>National Development Plan</td>
<td>Prepared as a requirement for accession, gives framework for preparation for ESF-type actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Crafts Law</td>
<td>Makes provision for craft teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>National Action Plan for Employment (the first one)</td>
<td>Provides the key employment strategies to be implemented during one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Jan</td>
<td>Employment Promotion Act</td>
<td>Shift from passive to active measures of increasing employment; incentives to employers to train unemployed; to maintain and enhance the qualifications of existing employees; offer new traineeships to the unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The New Social Policy Strategy 2002-2005</td>
<td>Concentrates on 4 priorities, including VET and contains an action plan (measures on national and regional levels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Establishment of Employment Promotion Council (tripartite)</td>
<td>Improves inter-institution cooperation in the field of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 April</td>
<td>National Development Plan revised and updated in April</td>
<td>HRD is declared a top priority; improving employability and employment promotion; improving quality of VET; developing of skills for labour market needs in the context of LLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 April</td>
<td>National Action Plan for Employment</td>
<td>Training adults for vocational qualification (70,000; two times more than in 2002); two times increase of per capita funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Establishment of the National Advisory Board on Vocational Qualification of the Labour Force (tripartite)</td>
<td>Supposed to coordinate and control the activities related to training. The Board is formally established, but not yet fully functioning because of certain problems in identifying the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Nov</td>
<td>Adoption of the National Employment Strategy 2004-2010 (in line with EES)</td>
<td>Strategic goals: raising employment and restricting unemployment; improving the quality of workforce and increasing labour productivity; attaining social cohesion and reintegration of the vulnerable social groups that have the lowest chances of finding employment on labour market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 April</td>
<td>JAP progress report</td>
<td>Investment in HRD for employability, growth and social inclusion; active labour market measures; VET reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Elaboration of CVT strategy</td>
<td>The results feed Phare 2003 which supports policy and system for adult learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The current project ‘Bulgaria Country Evaluation’ is aimed at the assessment of ETF activities and interventions in Bulgaria in the period 1996-2004. This time period is divided into two phases: (1) 1996-2001 and (2) 2001-2004, with a refocusing of ETF objectives in between.

The current evaluation is the first one in the series of country-focused evaluations to be undertaken in coming years. It aims at providing recommendations which can help ETF in its future activities in Bulgaria and other partner countries.

The objectives of the evaluation were adjusted during the workshop in ETF. Compared to the Terms of References there is a certain shift in the objectives. Generally speaking the objective is twofold:

1. To evaluate individual activities and projects ETF implemented (or ETF contributed to) in Bulgaria.
2. To evaluate the ETF interventions in general: provide a broader picture and global overview of all the activities as a whole in relation to VET development in Bulgaria.
3 METHODOLOGY

Main phases

1. Inception phase – during which the interviews were conducted with ETF representatives; and the evaluation approach was adjusted.

2. Implementation phase – during which a series of interviews was conducted with key stakeholders in Bulgaria (visit of evaluation team to Bulgaria; further interviews carried out by Bulgarian team member and telephonic interviews by SEOR experts; e-mail correspondence, etc.); interviews were conducted with representatives of the European Commission (visit to Brussels).

3. Analytical phase – during which the findings from earlier stages were analysed and synthesized in the final report.

Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation was carried out along the standard evaluation criteria which involve such parameters as: relevance, value-added, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

In the context of the current evaluation those criteria got the following interpretation: relevance (appropriateness of project objectives and ETF interventions in general to country needs and reform development, as well as to the EU priorities); efficiency (the way in which the various project inputs were converted into results; the way in which ETF administrative, management, and other procedures contributed to the achievement of the results); effectiveness (to which extent the results achieved met the project objectives: results versus objectives); impact (in what way have ETF activities/projects influenced institutional, legal and policy development in Bulgaria); sustainability (sustainability of ETF interventions and project results, in case of very recent projects - sustainability prospects).
### Detailed questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>To what extent have ETF activities addressed the priorities of the country in VET/labour market reforms as a candidate country?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent did the evolution of ETF activities reflect the dynamics of the reform process in Bulgaria and did it fit into it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent have ETF activities been consistent with EC priorities and policy in the country?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value-added</td>
<td>To what extent the set-up of ETF as an Agency (specialised expertise, know-how, timely response, stakeholder involvement, networks, flexibility) have benefited the delivery of services and activity implementation in Bulgaria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent the ETF support increased the effectiveness of the EC interventions (design of priorities, design of projects, monitoring, etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>To what extent financial, administrative or other procedures contributed to or hindered the achievement of results?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent the information management contributed to or hindered the success of country activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent ETF was able to feed in the lessons learned from the earlier activities into newer projects?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Were the main results (outputs) of the projects achieved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the achieved results correspond to the projects objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>In what way have ETF activities influenced institutional, legal and policy development in Bulgaria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was the contribution of the ETF dialogue with the national authorities, informal policy advice and networking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent has ETF contributed to the improvement of information on VET/labour market issues in Bulgaria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent has ETF contributed to the improvement of information analysis capacity in Bulgaria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent have ETF development projects contributed to the initiation of larger scale EC projects?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>To what extent have the benefits of completed ETF major projects continued?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent is it plausible that ETF initiated activities will continue if and when ETF retires from the country?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent the political and economic environment supports the VET/labour market reforms?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Evaluation tools

To answer the evaluation questions the following tools of data collection and analysis were used.

1. **Matrix of ETF activities.** The initial evaluation tool was the Matrix developed during the starting phase of the project (see Annex 2). It served both objectives of the evaluation:
   - Provided an overview of ETF activities in Bulgaria to be evaluated.
   - Gave a broader picture of all major ETF interventions in relation to the objectives. The Matrix serves as a useful tool of analysis: it demonstrates the links between ETF general objectives and objectives of particular projects and initiatives, shows main outputs and success indicators. It also contains risks and assumptions which bring the whole scheme closer to the actual environment and conditions of implementation. In a certain sense Matrix is a map and a guide to ETF interventions in Bulgaria, it makes the
one-country activities transparent and visible. Matrix helps to reconstruct the general ETF intervention logic in the country.

2. **Desk research and analysis.** Initially scheduled for the starting phase of the project, desk research and analysis continued during implementation phase. Main reasons for that were the following:
   - The large amount of documents and materials to be studied and analysed. (The list of consulted materials is attached in the Annex 3).
   - The evaluation of the individual projects as well as those selected for case-studies was done on the basis of both desk research of the materials and interviews in ETF, BG and EC.

3. **Interviews and interview schemes.** Interviews have to serve an important information source and help to answer the evaluation questions. Interviews were held:
   - with ETF representatives
   - with Bulgarian stakeholders
   - in the EC Delegation in Bulgaria
   - with representatives of the European Commission

   During the ETF visit we interviewed seven ETF staff members (see the programme of the visit in Annex 7). The interviews helped to reconstruct the overall picture of ETF interventions since 1996 and provided information about individual projects. ETF staff was willing to share the information and materials and answer the questions.

   The majority of interviews with Bulgarian stakeholders was conducted during one week visit of evaluation team to Bulgaria, but some of them were carried out later by Bulgarian team member (with those stakeholders who were not available during the visit) and additional interviews were conducted by SEOR experts via telephone. Some of the interviews were followed by e-mail correspondence. The interviews in the European Commission took place during one-day visit to Brussels. The representatives of DG Employment, DG Enlargement and DG Education and Culture were interviewed.

   The interview schemes (presented in the Inception Report) were elaborated in advance and provided a structured format for interviews. The schemes contain a General part (questions about ETF interventions as a whole) and Specific part aimed at particular projects. The interview schemes ensured the systematic coverage of topics by team members. Two different interview schemes were developed: one for Bulgarian stakeholders and the second for the representatives of the European Commission. The interview schemes were sent to the respondents in advance. This approach ensured that respondents were better prepared to give full and detailed answers to the questions.

4. **Analytical phase.** The Analytical phase of the project resulted in the Assessment which consists of two parts:
   - Assessment of individual projects/initiatives in the concerned period.
   - Overall assessment providing a broader view on the ETF activities in the country.

The following aspects need some clarification:
Our approach to the evaluation is twofold. Firstly, we evaluate the individual projects on the basis of the criteria mentioned. Secondly, we try to connect the project outcomes to the development of the VET system in Bulgaria. This is what we call the ‘overall evaluation’. Is it likely that the projects contributed to the new legislation and the new institutions in the VET field in Bulgaria? Do we see an improvement in the performance of the Bulgarian VET system? In doing so, we, of course, acknowledge that many factors out of the control of ETF influence this system.

The assessment of individual projects was carried out along the standard evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability.

As the activities implemented by ETF in the country are of very different nature the applicability of those criteria was decided on individual basis.

In the early period ETF was heavily involved in the implementation of Phare projects, ETF was in fact carrying out large-scale interventions financed by the Commission. In those cases it turned out impossible to separate ETF performance from the performance of the project. Still while making the assessment we were trying to put an emphasis on ETF contribution to the general outcome.

It is known that impact issues are not easy to measure. We based our judgements on the perceptions of a limited number of interviewees and on the reports based on opinions. This can give biased outcomes in a sense that there is always something positive to mention, while a rigorous measurement of effects and impacts is missing.
4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS CARRIED OUT BY ETF

4.1.1 MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMME PHARE BG 93.15

Basic project information

Management Training Programme Phare BG 93.15

| Project objectives | (1) To raise awareness for management development; (2) To provide training and advise to companies and consultants and (3) To set up Bulgarian Association for Management Development and Entrepreneurship (BAMDE) |
| Main results | (1) Bulgarian Association for Management Development and Entrepreneurship (BAMDE) established, it grew out of cooperation of 5 consortium members institutions; (2) Pilot training programmes in a number of companies (focus on practical problems); (3) Bulgarian guide to in-company management training published; (4) enhances competence of management trainers/teachers and consultants, capacity of several BG management training institutions improved; (5) Guidelines for certification and accreditation of trainers, programmes and training providers developed and tested (based on current EU experience); (6) Cooperation links with EU management development profession established (EFMD, ETF, etc.) |
| Period | 1997-1998 |
| Budget | € 1,300,000 |
| ETF role | Direct management by ETF, tendering, no PMU, funds stayed with ETF |
| Contractor | Netherlands Economic Institute (NEI) (NL) |
| Main partner in BG | Ministry of Education |

Relevance

The project was relevant for country priorities and contributed to the reform process. It had to be started in an unsettled and difficult environment at the time when Bulgarian government had to take a system of measures to overcome the economic crisis related to the collapse of large scale planned industry. Restructuring and creation of new private businesses required new skills from the managers of the market economy.

Efficiency

The project had a good level of efficiency. It managed to convert most of its activities, expertise and financial resources into the envisaged results. The programme was well organised taking into account the unsettled environment. It was carried out in consultation with key partners. It insured proper assessment of the training needs, development of a guide to in-company training, successful start of company-based management training for five Bulgarian partners, introduction of quality standards for Bulgarian management training sector, networking with European management development profession. The significant contribution to the projects efficiency has been brought by correct and rational design of the project, as well as the ETF
management which involved work of two ETF experts who formed so called “management training unit”.

**Effectiveness**

The main project objectives of raising awareness for management development; providing training and advice to companies and consultants and setting up a voluntary professional network of training institutions were achieved. The foundations of a more practical and higher-quality training and development of Bulgarian managers were laid down. The project can be regarded as successfully completed. These conclusions are confirmed by evaluation reports (Annual Assessment Report of the OMAS Consortium (September 1998), Final Monitoring Report (November 1998) and the interviews with stakeholder.

**Impact**

The interviews with Bulgarian stakeholder confirmed that this project helped to raise awareness of management training issues. BAMDE (Bulgarian Association for Management Development and Entrepreneurship) was established in 1997 and started acting as a national platform for professional management development in Bulgaria. The need to further develop the achieved results was realised and led to launching the second MTP in 2000. It was also confirmed that participants became much more knowledgeable, competent and better equipped to provide further training and act in market business environment.

**Sustainability**

The project had rather sustainable results. Special attention paid by the project to training the teacher trainers in designing and delivering executive education programmes was meant to insure the “multiplication” effect. But the critical mass of trained trainers and consultants could not be achieved in the scales of such project. To make the results more sustainable it was necessary to continue similar type of activities. This was later done in the framework of ETF “Employer Initiative Project” and Phare Management Training Project II.

### 4.1.2 ETF Employers’ Initiatives Project

**Basic project information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETF Employers’ initiatives project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) To improve the skills and capacity of key staff within regional Chambers of Commerce, NGOs that service SMEs and Employers Associations; (2) To build a capacity within regional Chambers, NGOs and Employers Associations to monitor training needs and training actions within the SME sector; (3) To identify competent training providers and assist them in the development of generic training materials that meet the identified needs of SMEs and business support organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main results</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Training programme and capacity building for 6 regional development offices and 5 Chambers of Commerce to service SMEs carried out; (2) Skills and knowledge of 16 individuals from regional development offices and Chambers of Commerce to service SMEs further developed; (3) Representatives of 6 regional development offices to participate in the new Phare programme for regional development in Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>€ 150,000 (ETF own funds + cofinancing by OWZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ETF role</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF together with OWZ designed ToR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contractor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBF (Germany); Partners: OWZ and in Bulgarian HRDC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relevance

The project was relevant to country needs in view of continuing privatisation and restructuring of the economy. The development of a capacity in management training was a key priority in order to enable Bulgarian companies to operate effectively in competitive national and international open markets. The project was designed by the ETF together with OWZ (terms of references) to cover the gap between Phare BG 93.15 Management Training Project (1997-1998) and Phare BG 9908.01 Management Training Project (2000-2002).

Efficiency

The project in general demonstrated a good level of efficiency: the main inputs were translated into the results. The significant contribution to the project efficiency has been brought by management training methodology applied by contractor (combination of classroom-in-company training and individual work), as well as by the managerial efforts of ETF. But the project efficiency could have been higher:

- As it follows from the assessment report (ETF Employers Initiative Project: Assessment of Outputs and Recommendations) the project had a difficult start, especially during the inception phase, mainly because of the poor performance of the contractor’s team leader. ETF at some point considered stopping the project. After the change of the team leader the project developed its critical mass.
- Better correspondence between the activities proscribed by the terms of references and project duration as well as some flexibility to extend the project could contribute to higher project efficiency. Ambitious terms of references were coming in certain contradiction with limited financial resources and pressed time schedule.
- The programme insured effective training: the assessment by the participants was positive; as follows from the interviews the trained people later were actively used within other EU projects. But the monitoring by ETF of the training results was not done. According to the above mentioned assessment on-site monitoring visits by ETF would have been useful.
- Better cooperation between project partners (IBF, OWZ, HRDC-BNO) could be insured by a more clear definition of their roles in the project and, as suggests the assessment report, by a written agreement between ETF and its parallel-funding partner at the start of the project. The involvement of BNO in the project contributed to the promotion of the Observatory network, but BNO initially supposed to provide local content inputs, in fact managed to provide only logistical support.

Effectiveness

The project was partially effective in a sense that it achieved its overall objective of supporting management development in SMEs in Bulgaria, but did not deliver all the outputs requested by the contract. The main reasons for that “were partly due to time constraints, partly to management arrangements”4. The possibility of extending the time of the project would have been allowed wider awareness raising activities and preparation of a feasibility study.

---

4 ETF Employers Initiative Project: Assessment of Outputs and Recommendations.
Impact

The project had a number of essential impacts. As it was confirmed by the interviews in Bulgaria and in particular in the Chamber of Commerce the project:

− stimulated the creation of a network of VET Centres within the Chamber of Commerce (Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce currently has a regional network of 22 Centres for professional training (so called VET Centres). They are officially registered and provide training. In total 110 full time people work in those Centres);
− under the influence of the project the Chamber of Commerce started thinking about possibility of providing other services to clients, for instance, consulting and advice; these services are currently successfully provided;
− contributed to further cooperation and networking.

Sustainability

The project managed to produce a number of sustainable results. The people trained through this project were actively used within different EU projects. The networking between different players: participants; participants and training providers; participants and foreign counterparts was encouraged. A written agreement on future cooperation between the Chamber of Commerce and Regional Development Offices was signed as a result of the project. By upgrading the skills and knowledge of the participants the project made a contribution to the Phare programme for regional development, which was supposed to follow up. Did it follow up?

4.1.3 MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMME PHARE BG 9908.01

Basic project information

Management Training Programme Phare BG 9908.01

Project objectives

(1) To increase the competence of BG managers and improve the performance of BG companies in order to support privatisation and the functioning of a market economy, make BG companies more competitive internationally and prepare their management for accession to the EU; (2) To assist enterprises in modernising and improving management and organizational change in support and in the framework of enterprise restructuring, performance improvement and strategic development; (3) To expand and improve the provision of management training and consulting services for BG business sector in support enterprise restructuring (4) To provide advice on association management to the local professional Associations: BAMDE and BAMCO

Main results

(1) 40 companies selected and diagnosed (Learning Consortia); (2) training of 40 trainers implemented – improved skills and competences; (3) capacity of BG training providers strengthened; (4) local capacity for consulting services for SMEs in Bulgaria increased; (5) learning modules developed; (6) practical tools, guides, spread sheets developed; (7) dissemination through project web site; (8) BG professional associations BAMDE and BAMCO strengthened; (9) the brochure Management Training Programme BG 9908.01 – Case Studies and CD

Period

2000-2002

Budget

€ 2,000,000

ETF role

Content management by ETF, financial management by the EU Delegation in Sofia

Contractor

Contractor: Bocconi School of Business (Italy), partners: London Business School, Copenhagen BS, KPMG Bulgaria

Main partner in Bulgaria

Ministry of Economy
Relevance

The project was relevant for the needs of the country in the period of restructuring and privatization. Management training plays an essential role in the functioning of the market economy, as well as the capacity of enterprises to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the EU. This has been clearly identified as a mid-term priority within Accession Partnerships for each of the CC. The project had targeted priorities of National Plan for Economic Development (NPED 2000-2006), as well as the National Plan for Regional Development (NPRD 2000-2006). The project focused on the strategic goal of the NPED, which is “to achieve sustainable low inflationary economic growth as a prerequisite for increased income and improved living standard in relation to the integration process to the European Union”. The opinion of stakeholders and members of the project Steering Committee confirm that the project was “on time” and contributed to the reform.

Compared to the first MTP the main partner in Bulgaria was changed. Instead of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economy became the key Bulgarian counterpart. This shift was relevant for the content of the project.

Efficiency

The project was well organised taking into account its complexity (many stakeholders involved, several interlinked actions). Its implementation was challenging for all the parties involved and good cooperation between stakeholders played its positive role. The project insured proper identification of future training providers to be trained through the project (40 people) as well as correct selection of companies to form the Learning Consortia (51 companies). The serious needs analysis and very careful screening of the companies turned out to be very helpful. The essential contribution to the project efficiency has been brought by different types of training provided during the project. The project did allow flexibility and adjustment of the training modules when it was necessary. In this way efficiency was increased. The fact that the situation of each participating company was diagnosed, got detailed analysis and recommendation also speaks for project efficiency.

The strict monitoring from ETF side of all the implemented activities contributed to project efficiency and in the case of such a complex project was very important. The management arrangements, professional work done by the Steering Committee, as well as high commitment of ETF project manager insured efficient implementation of main components.

Effectiveness

The main project objectives of increasing the competence of BG managers and improving the performance and competitiveness of BG companies in the market economy; assisting enterprises in modernising and improving management and organizational change; expanding and improving the provision of management training and consulting services for BG business sector in support enterprise restructuring; and providing advice on management to the local professional associations were achieved. The conclusions of evaluation/monitoring committee were very positive.
Impact

The interviews with Bulgarian stakeholders confirmed that the project contributed to the reform development:

− As a result of the project BAMCO as an association became more visible, sustainable, and trustworthy, some new consultants (about 10) became its new members. Its Consultancy Club became more known.

− MTP project fed into other Phare projects and stimulated the launching of some national projects. The representatives of the Ministry of Economy provided examples of such influence and continuity: (1) the Phare programme “Consulting for SMEs” was built up on the results of the MTP-II project and developed along the same lines; (2) a nationally financed project called “100” (2004-2005) which provides training for people who want to start their own business (BAMCO strengthened during MTP-II using the skills and competences received was designing the project scheme for “100”).

Sustainability

The project shows sustainable results. The general impression formed on the basis of the interviews in Bulgaria is that the project is highly appreciated by the stakeholders, it gave an impulse for management training development and the results of the project are actively used (for instance, the training modules). The trained trainers continue in the same field. Interviews in BAMCO confirmed that most of the consultants trained through the project stayed in the profession and many of them became members of the Association. The upgraded competences and know-how stayed with the involved institutions (how to prepare training courses; how to find clients, how to design projects, etc.) and were actively used later on. The cooperation between some companies and trainers continued.

It was more difficult to figure out the sustainability of the project results for the companies involved as BAMCO lost contacts with the companies and this is partly true for the Ministry of Economy. Still the Ministry could confirm further successful development of a number of involved companies (EQE Bulgaria AD, Energokabel, Prosoft AD, Sparki Eltos AD, Balgarska Roza AD, Wizkom EOOD, Samokov Borovets AD). Our further attempts to interview directly their representatives did not succeed (contact details changed, persons not available, etc.)

The case studies with recommendation prepared for participating companies were published in a brochure Management Training Programme BG 9908.01 – Case Studies (compiled with a CD), the brochure was disseminated. Among other publications related to this project it is worth mentioning “MTP – climbing the ladder which leads towards success” (both in Bulgarian and English) which gives detailed overview of the projects and presents the views of numerous project participants and stakeholders.

According to the stakeholders the sustainability of the project could have been increased by a follow-up project which was expected and the need for which was clearly seen.
4.1.4 VETERST Phare BG 95.06

**Basic project information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VETERST Phare BG 95.06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main results</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ETF commented on</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contractor</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relevance**

Phare intervention in vocational education rightly set the emphasis on the need to upgrade education, training system. Traditionally heavily centralised system of Bulgarian VET with a high number of VET schools established in the end of 80-s, with no adequate equipment and programmes to provide qualitative training in the mid of 90-s urgently needed modernization. VETERST project gave an impulse to the development of the reform and paved the way to the establishment of the legal basis and framework for such reforms. Creation of relevant legal basis was at that time a crucial precondition for the reform development. It has made a significant contribution to the improvement of education and training, science and technology provision in Bulgaria at a time when educational reform was not a national priority.

**Efficiency**

The large scale and complex project of 7 different components did show high level of efficiency. Due to its additional staff resources, more streamlined procedures and sector expertise, ETF has managed to avoid major problems in the implementation of Phare VET programmes, as has been the case with Phare programmes in other sectors. There has been evidence of an improvement in the quality of programme management, underpinning and complementing the decentralised management approach of Phare. This is one of the important conclusions drawn by the authors of the report "Review and lessons learned of Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform programmes 1993-1998".

Another report Evaluation of Phare VET Programme BG 95.06 (AMU Gruppen AB) stresses that in comparison with other Phare VET activities in CEE, the Bulgarian VETERST Programme had a positive reputation (positive image of VETERST, positive attitude of Bulgarians towards the project, who considered it important for themselves).

A number of factors contributed to high efficiency of the project. One of them is the innovative approach taken to the realisation of the project: the implementation of the programme not only
concerned the pilot schools, but also was complemented with the policy advice activities. The work went from two sides and on two levels: schools/pilots and high policy-making echelon. Other factors to be mentioned are: the accumulated management capacity of the PMU, predominantly competent consultants, and the management style of the Programme Manager at ETF highly appreciated by the involved stakeholders. The programme was completed in time, and the available funds were committed.

**Effectiveness**

The project was effective in a sense that it did meet its overall objective to contribute to economic and social reform in Bulgaria through the development of education, vocational training, science and technology, and to ensure the availability of national human resources for economic and social restructuring. It was developing in a difficult environment characterised by frequent government changes (government that signed Memorandum for the project soon stepped out). As it was pointed out by Bulgarian stakeholders a modular approach was introduced and it became an important achievement.

If to turn to more particular outcomes the policy-making and mainstreaming of pilot results has been less successful, and not all components have been executed in a way it was envisaged (UVET programme only completed work on 18 professions instead of the planned 20/25, some created Teacher Centres and Teacher Career Path Centres failed what limited the dissemination to non-pilot schools, etc.).

**Impact**

Notwithstanding the difficult environment the programme had to work in, it has helped materially; it has introduced new institutions, strategies and curricula. And above all, it has provoked new thinking of people in the education sector – a major achievement which can not be reversed.

The PMU became a training platform for a number of enthusiastic Bulgarian managers and staff, a significant capacity in EU programmes and procedures was built. This resulted in the creation of such new institutions as the HRDC, and the Leonardo and Socrates offices and successfully contributing to the improvement of Bulgarian educational management.

A number of project outcomes fed the elaboration of new national strategies and policy documents. For instance, the feasibility study on Science and Technology policy was supportive of Bulgarian National Development Plan 2000-2006.

**Sustainability**

Sustainability of different programme components and aspects turned out to be different. Some of them were bound to stay as institutions or national policies, but sustainability of others was not guaranteed. The sustainability at the recipients' level was the highest. At the national level sustainability turned out to be more problematic.

Partly it is related to the way the programme was designed: it was assumed that “pilot” approach would lead to an effective implementation and mainstreaming of results at national level (i.e. 30 pilot schools via dissemination system will spread new curricula, modules, teacher training methods, etc. throughout the Bulgarian education and training system). Within the overall programme design no clear provisions were foreseen as to how the mainstreaming to national
level was meant to happen. The framework (like, agreement between the main actors, consensus about the goals and strategies, sufficient funding, etc.) needed for large-scale mainstreaming to the national system was not taken care of.

Public commitment by the MES during Programme Review Conference 14 February 2000 to implement the immediate and urgent recommendations was not supported by concrete measures and funding. Those concerns formulated by the evaluators of the Programme after its closing were relevant as the dissemination of the project results went slowly and by now only 13% of the VET schools implemented the new modular approach. VET reform developed not at an equal pace and in certain periods was loosing its momentum.

The slow dissemination is partly also due to other factors as financial crisis which happened after the programme and diverted attention from VET issues, often changes of actors involved, etc.

After the finalization of the project the dissemination of project results continued. For the period 1999-2004 a total of 31 VET schools introduced the modular approach (compared to 33 pilot schools within project duration). It mean that in the year 2003/2004 in total 64 VET schools (out of 496 existing in 2003/2004) were implementing modular approach (288 classes and 7000 students) – about 13% of all VET schools. The number of trained teachers on modular approach for 2004 is 594 (compared to 217 in 1999). A survey and analysis of the modular approach carried out in the end of 2003 concluded that the system-wide dissemination and implementation of modular approach has to continue for effectiveness and sustainability.

The number of elaborated and approved standards by July 2004 was 36. It is expected that the process of elaborating the standards for all 200 vocations will continue until 2006/2007.

Sustainability at the recipients’ level was rather high: the investment made in the pilot schools and other educational institutions, administrative staff, teachers and students has meant a new era in their life. The status of the schools in the pilot regions was changed. They developed contacts with social partners, got experience in international networking, etc.
Policy Impact

− The project had laid a solid basis for the development of VET reform strategy for Bulgaria.
− In the result of the project activities the cooperation between involved ministries (MES and MOLSP) and other institutions improved considerably.
− Significant contribution to the elaboration of the legal framework for the reform. ETF provided support in preparation and drafting of VET Law (VETA) adopted in 1999.
− The project prepared the grounds and concept for the establishment of the National Agency for VET (NAVET, created in 2000).
− At the end of VETERST Bulgaria managed to fulfil 60% of the acquis communautaire in the education field. For this reason Bulgaria started the accession negotiations with Brussels in the field of education.

4.1.5 Special Preparatory Program for the ESF (SPP-ESF)

Basic project information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To organize a series of measures to help the candidate countries to prepare for future access to ESF and in particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to enhance the understanding of CC administrations as to Structural Fund policies in general and the ESF in particular and their implementation requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to facilitate administrative changes which promote horizontal coordination among government agencies concerned with future implementation of the ESF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to train officials from relevant ministries on the design and implementation requirements of a national program supported by the ESF on basis of a preceding socio-economic analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to increase the awareness of social partner representatives in each country on the objectives, benefits and operational requirements of an ESF supported program and as to their role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main results</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) 3 multi-country conferences on ESF priorities and principles (Sofia, Warsaw and Prague) + conference in Lisbon (Jan. 1999); (2) Study visits to Finland and Spain; (3) NTI established – New Bulgarian University Centre of Public Administration (4-week training on ESF for civil servants); (4) National Training Plans drafted; (5) Supplementary seminar in BG for 30-40 officials (in-depth and technical information on ESF); (6) National Seminar’ for 100 participants – focus on ESF principles and methodology; (7) Tailor-made local seminars in the BG priority regions (Montana, Sofia); (8) a background study; (9) final conference in Brussels 2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1998-2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>€ 2,100,000 – ESF component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF managed component on ESF, no PMU, funds stayed with ETF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Preparation for the ESF” formed one of the four and the biggest (2,1 mln. Euro) component of the Phare multi-country “Special Programme for the Preparation for EU Structural Policy” aimed at candidate countries, including Bulgaria. In 1998 the DG Enlargement entrusted ETF with the management of this project. DG Employment also became involved in the implementation of the project by providing advice to ETF, monitoring of the project and training inputs. ETF mobilized the internal team of three persons (project manager and two assistants) working full time on the project, as well as ETF country managers who assisted their colleagues on a part-time basis.
ETF took over the preparation and monitoring of the activities and contracted out local logistical support for the practical organization of training events in the CC. ETF was responsible for organising study visits in the Member States of the EU and for identifying EU and CC experts to take part in the training events. Monthly progress reports were prepared for the Commission Services and a regular dialogue has been maintained throughout the course of project implementation between ETF and the involved Commission Services on wide range of management issues.

For Bulgaria the programme envisaged the following activities:

- Three multi-country conferences on ESF priorities and principles (Sofia, Warsaw and Prague) + conference in Lisbon (January 1999)
- Study visits to Finland and Spain (one-week each)
- A number of seminars in Brussels (DG Employment) explaining about ESF
- Establishment of the National Training Institute (NTI) - New Bulgarian University Centre of Public Administration, which provided a 4-week training on ESF for civil servants + some other activities
- Drafting of National Training Plans
- ‘Supplementary seminar’ in BG for 30-40 officials (in-depth and technical information on ESF) (end 1999)
- National Seminar for 100 participants – focus on ESF principles and methodology (end 1999)
- Additional training event in Bratislava – June 2000
- A background study
- Final conference in Brussels 2000

Relevance

The project was relevant for the needs of Bulgaria. It was clear that when joining European Union Bulgaria would benefit from the Structural Funds (ESF). It was necessary to start preparatory steps for future structural actions, which could help to establish structural policy frameworks to address regional disparities and stimulate economic and social cohesion. It was important to raise awareness of those issues and bring the knowledge about ESF and experiences of European countries with ESF. This could pave the way to planning the organisation of relevant structures and working channels for programming, management, implementation and monitoring of future ESF activities.

On the procedural point of view there are major differences between Phare (which was already familiar to Bulgarian stakeholders) and the ESF procedures. These differences exist in:

- the approach to programming: Phare uses annual programmes, but ESF is based on multi-annual programmes;
- project implementation: Phare works mainly through national authorities, but ESF operates at regional and local authorities level, as well as nationally.
The differences were not fully clear to involved Bulgarian stakeholders and it was making planning the organisation of relevant structures and programming settings for ESF more difficult.

**Efficiency**

The Annual Assessment Report concludes that “the ETF expertise in the field of education and in training, as related to labour market issues, ensured a fruitful exchange of views with the DG Employment as well as with the project counterparts in the CC. The ETF has effectively managed the SPP Training project, and succeeded in optimizing the use of the project finances to provide the most suitable and complete services to the CC”. “The education and training networks developed by the ETF in the CC since 1995 also contributed to the successful implementation of the SPP training project”.

Interviews in Bulgaria confirmed that ETF well designed and planned the whole programme. It was a good balance of meetings at central and regional levels. The activities, available expertise and financial resources were converted into envisaged results. The biggest contribution to the project efficiency has been brought about by (1) an introductory Conference in Portugal (the extra time for Bulgarian delegation in Lisbon did allow to visit Portugal Ministry of Labour and learn about the experience of Portugal, the country of the same size and population as Bulgaria); (2) the chain of seminars in Brussels provided the knowledge and explanation of ESF principles; (3) the study visits to Finland and Spain (gave opportunity to learn about experiences of different regions, including Andalusia – the poorest region of Spain what was very relevant for Bulgaria). The logistical support of HRDC contributed to the efficient organisation of local events and seminar. The fact that the project events were publicised in Bulgarian media contributed to raising awareness of the ESF issues among broader circle of stakeholders.

**Effectiveness**

The project objectives were mainly achieved. The project has enhanced the understanding of the Bulgarian officials of SF policies and main implementation requirements; it also emphasized the need of inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation on ESF issues. The objective of increasing awareness of social partner representatives was not achieved as the size of SPP training project obliged ETF to concentrate on training of central public administrations and limited number of regional representatives. The project could not address the training needs of all future ESF stakeholders, particularly of the social partners.

**Impact**

The project had a positive impact in Bulgaria. As a result of the project intervention participants became better aware of ESF issues and required some skills important for ESF preparations. The knowledge acquired by the stakeholders has been used for the formulation of HRD components within the National Development Plans and for drafting of NEAPs, as well as for Phare programming.
**Sustainability**

Part of the project results turned out to be sustainable and part of them – not. The interviews with Bulgarian stakeholders confirmed that:

- The experience in programming learnt through the training and country visits (especially to Finland) was later used in BG in respect to Phare programming (bottom-up approach with a special role of ministerial coordinators).

- The recent establishment of ESF department in MOLSP (about 98 people) was inspired by Finish experience. Currently MOLSP creates in all regions of BG a network of its representatives (2 coordinators in each region), who have to work with all stakeholders in the region. Coordinators participate in programming, transfer and follow ideas of the ministry. Similar plan are in the agenda of MES.

- The cooperation and contacts gained through this project continued (for example, with Finish colleagues and experts from other countries as well).

The National Training Institute (NTI) component in Bulgaria turned out to be not a sustainable result. As it was confirmed by the interviews the NTI in Bulgaria turned out to be rather weak. Established under the New Bulgarian University it fulfilled main planned project activities and after that stopped its existence in the situation of lack of financial support and absence of cooperation from the side of MOLSP which became a key player in ESF issues. Training Institute failed in finding any additional funding for continuation of its activities. The conclusion of Bulgarian stakeholders was that ETF should care more about the sustainability of the project's results and not to allow good initiatives to fail. Currently the need in such an institute remains in view of continuing capacity building for ESF.
4.1.6  PROMOTION OF THE CULTURE AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL AND CIVIL

DIALOGUE

Basic project information

Promotion of the Culture and Practice of Social and Civil Dialogue (multi-country -9 countries) Phare B-700/200/T-
2000/054

Project objectives

To support the development and/or consolidation of the institutional arrangements which promote
the active participation of the civil society organisations in the social and economic decision-making
process in the SEE countries

To reinforce the specific expertise and skills of social partners in the countries of SEE to engage in
effective social dialogue practices between themselves as well as with the relevant policy makers

To foster a closer relationship between the interests discussed in the social dialogue process and
those of the civil society

To promote cooperation as well as exchange of experience and good practice and mutual
coordination between social partners and non-governmental organisations both at regional level as
well as with counterpart organisations in the EU and CCs

Main results

(1) enhanced conditions for social dialogue in CC and reinforced links between social partners and
representatives of the civil society; (2) developed cross-border cooperation at regional level; (3)
networks between social partners from EU and CC established; (4) cooperation between NGOs at
regional level strengthened; (5) functioning of institutions designed to secure the participation of
civil society in policy making developed/improved

Period

June 2001-March 2003

Budget

€ 489.869 – total; € 14.805 – for Bulgaria

ETF role

ETF designed and implemented the project on the request of European Economic and Social
Committee

Contractor

In BG: HRDC

The project was the result of a consultation process and a political decision taken as a follow-up
to the Conference “Civil Society, Democratisation, Participation and the Stability Pact for
South-East Europe” (Thessaloniki, January 2000). The ETF was requested by the European
Economic and Social Committee to be the Delivery Agency for this project.

The target group was established in each project country composed of the representatives of the
MOLSP, trade unions, entrepreneur, and other civil society organisations (later it turned out that
it was not possible to find significant number of representatives of CSOs.) Project
implementation units (PIUs) were set in each country to carry out a review of the situation with
the support of the target group. In Bulgaria HRDC was playing the role of the PIU and as
interviews confirmed it was a good and reliable partner. The main activities of the project
included:

- Study visits and training seminars in Italy and Belgium (to compare individual country
  situations with EU social dialogue and design National Work Plans).
- Preparation of the country reviews (the structure of the reviews was suggested by the
  ETF).
- National seminars organised by PIUs where the country reviews were presented (ETF
  prepared the standard agenda to guide the organisation and structure of national seminars
  and ETF Manager was involved in selection of training topics and identification of
  trainers).
- Cross country analysis was implemented based on 9 country reviews (it was contracted
  by ETF to a Serbian expert).
Regional conference in Thessaloniki and a final seminar in Zagreb.

The Bulgarian PIU prepared the final report containing comments on results and outcomes, experience gained and lessons learnt during the project (not all countries managed to prepare and submit such reports). This report extensively described the discussion points, interventions and recommendations done by the participants.

Relevance

The project was relevant for Bulgarian needs in a sense that actual situation in Bulgaria was characterised by: (i) weak institutional development of social partners and civil society organisations; (ii) poor expertise and skills of social partners to engage in effective social dialogue processes; (iii) lack of knowledge concerning good practices of social dialogue in the EU and lack of networking with colleagues from other countries. The Final Report of Ex-Post Evaluation of the Project concludes that “Although the project tackled an important number of needs in the region, it did not manage to sufficiently cater for countries’ specificities. It points to the fact that the project was not based on a prior needs assessment, but rather on a political decision. This fact also explains the several changes in the project activities and its budget breakdown”.

Efficiency

The project had a good level of efficiency: it managed to fruitfully convert most of its activities, available expertise and financial resources into envisaged results. The results differed from country to country, but as the interviews and evaluation reports confirm in Bulgaria the project was a success. The high commitment of ETF Project Manager and good work of the HRDC contributed to the project efficiency. Bulgaria prepared a country review (taking stock of the situation and formulating some conclusions) and also a final report with conclusions and recommendations (this final report was not available among the documents received from the ETF). Also the fact that Bulgarian Head of the Cabinet of MOLSP was closely following the project increased the efficiency of the project in Bulgaria compared to some other countries involved. Such key activities as the study visits, training seminars and conferences, cross-country analysis, national seminars, as well as the performance of the expert group, the efficient work done by the Steering Committee were essential for the project success.

Effectiveness

According to the conclusion of evaluation reports, the project was partially effective. Its results have substantially contributed to the attainment of two of the project objectives related to the promotion of cooperation, networking and mutual coordination between the social partners in the region and at European level as well as increased knowledge, generic skills and tools enabling a better social dialogue process and change in the attitudes. At the same time given some constraints linked mainly to the country context (related to decision-making process, poor participation of the civil society organisations, etc.) the results of the project have contributed only in part to the fulfilment of the two other objectives: development of the institutional arrangements able to promote the active participation of the civil society organisations in the social and economic decision-making process and fostering of a closer relationship between the interests discussed in the social dialogue process and those of the civil society.

On the basis of evaluation reports we can conclude that the work of the ETF in relation to the main objectives was highly effective. The ETF Project Manager played a multiple role: project steering; technical and financial management of the project (TOR for PIUs, cross-country
analysis selection of trainees and consultants, logistical arrangements, etc); expert advice and contribution to project implementation; facilitation and networking. The ETF Project Manager was not only managing the project, but he was also part of the expert group and of the Steering Committee. The tasks were not easy and credit should be given to him for many of the project achievements (Ex-Post Evaluation of the Project. Final Report. May 2003, p. 8).

The overwhelming majority of the involved organisations rated the operation and the inputs of ETF as “good” and “very good”. The facilitator role of ETF in fostering exchange of experience, good practice and networking among social partners was highly appreciated. They also gave credit to ETF for its important contribution to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge on social dialogue process, thus improving the institutional capacity of the participating organisations. Also reported was the active participation of the ETF in the seminars and the general understanding and support provided in different phases of the project to overcome barriers.

Several budget modifications were operated by ETF because of the complexity of the project management and necessity to adjust the design.

Impact

The project had a positive impact in Bulgaria. As a result of the project intervention there is more commitment for dialogue and cooperation, confidence and transparency. Participants became more knowledgeable and better equipped to take on the different challenges of social dialogue development. The relationship between different actors improved.

As the interviews and evaluation reports confirm there have been some factors (mainly from outside the project and beyond its influence) that did not allow stronger impact of the project. The most important one is that policy makers were hardly involved in the project and the switch from consultative role to a decision-making one did not happen.

Sustainability

After the project lifetime the networking was still functioning and there were attempts of the participating organisations to put in practice what they learnt and to continue the work started during the project. Dissemination of the project results was done on the occasion of a Regional Conference in Thessaloniki and a final seminar in Zagreb. But as the interviews confirmed, when project finished there were no possibility in Bulgaria to transfer the received knowledge. The involved project participants were not from the top level to make some policy-decisions about further implementation. Besides, the number of people trained was not enough to form a critical mass of individuals able to initiate and drive change within their organisations and at national level.

The feedback received on the project from the Commission (the European Economic and Social Committee) in 2002 was very positive and contained recommendation for the follow-up. As it turned out in reality Bulgarian actors were not prepared for continuation of the activities not supported by the donors.
4.1.7 PHARE PROGRAMMING (2001-2004)

Basic information about the activity

After the refocusing of the ETF role, the Foundation on the request of DG Enlargement started providing advice and support in Phare programming. The support took the form of written input as well as participation in the programming missions with DG Enlargement, DG Employment and EC Delegation. The activities related to Phare programming were implemented in accordance with the following requests from the Commission:


In response to those requests the ETF participated in the programming and monitoring missions and provided general and detailed comments/questions/recommendations on the project fiches. The comments and recommendation were produced on the basis of ETF accumulated knowledge of Bulgarian context and needs, build-up expertise in the field of VET and labour market issues. The given advice was supported by consultations with involved Bulgarian stakeholders. The ETF annual VET Progress Reports are used to improve the targeting of Phare support.

The main fiches (project schemes) were as follows:

- Public Administration (council of Ministers);
- ESF Activities (MOLSP);
- Social Dialogue Success (MOLSP);
- Lifelong Learning Basic Skills (MES);
- Network of Centres for Information and Professional Orientation (MES);
- Vocational schools (MES);
- Vocational Training of Adults (MOLSP);
- Vocational Qualifications (MOLSP, MES)

Evaluation conclusions

On the basis of the interviews in DG Enlargement, DG Employment and EC Delegation and also on the basis of the documentation provided by the ETF (written correspondence with the Commission and written comments) we can conclude that the comments and recommendations were accepted by the Commission and incorporated into programming documents. The input was provided on time. The interviews confirmed the high level of satisfaction of the Commission with the provided input. The high quality of ETF expertise, detailed knowledge of Bulgarian needs, realities and context are very much appreciated by the Commission. The contribution of the ETF is seen as a real added value.
4.1.8 JAP MONITORING PROCESS

Basic project information

Support to the Commission (D 20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project objectives</th>
<th>To help both European Commission and candidate countries to implement the targets and policy proposals in education and training and to support the JAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main results</td>
<td>Candidate countries better aware of, and participate in, EU discussions on education and training and employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ETF inputs delivered to Phare project cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support delivered to JAP monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>€ 50,000 - total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF product with support from BNO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Policies (JAP) was signed by the Government of Bulgaria and the European Commission in 2002. ETF on the request of DG Employment started providing comments and advice on the progress in implementation of JAP priorities. ETF also participates in JAP seminars and contributes to the monitoring of JAP process.

The interviews in the Commission confirmed that the customer is satisfied with the ETF contribution to JAP process.

4.1.9 CONSULTATION PROCESS ON LLL MEMORANDUM AND CONSULTATION PROCESS ON LLL

In October 2000, the European Commission published a Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. The consultation on the Memorandum was proposed to the candidate countries as an optional exercise. As a result all the countries involved carried out and submitted national reports on the Memorandum.

The consultation process in Bulgaria started late compared to other countries - only in June 2001. The Ministry of Education and Science was the main body responsible for the consultation process. The process included: setting up a Lifelong Learning Task Force, two round table discussions, and written consultation among all members of the task force. The LLL Task Force consisted of the representatives at national level from ministries, social partners, NGOs, education and training research establishments, professional institutions, etc. The activities were not supported by a grant from the Commission.

The summary report was prepared in very short time frames (submitted one month after the consultations started). Within such short time frames the consultation process was rather formal. The information presented in the report is general with rough proposals for future implementation. In Bulgaria there were numerous obstacles in translating LLL into reality. The report of the Task Force stressed such of them as: resistance to the change by some organisations, rigid education and training systems, learners that lack motivation and lack of financial resources. Other difficulties included out-dated teacher training system, lack of
validation of non-formal learning, lack of the involvement of regional authorities and overestimation of higher education. All these factors stand on the way of successful realisation of LLL. Besides, there was no legislation or strategy for LLL in Bulgaria. Different LLL principles were present in various acts.

The ETF was involved in the consultation process and summarised the results in a separate report “Summary and Analysis of the Feedback from the Candidate Countries as Part of the Consultation on the Commission’s Memorandum on Lifelong Learning” (ETF, November 2001), which contained an Annex on the developments in Bulgaria. It was stressed that the five key messages of the Memorandum corresponded to Bulgarian priorities outlined in NEDP (2000-2006) and NEAP (2001). As an example of an interesting practice, related to the first key message, was given a national programme for social and economic integration of the Roma population, which included basic skills.

Two years after the end of the consultation process progress reports on LLL were prepared in all the countries as a follow up of the 2002 Resolution on Lifelong Learning. Such country report was also prepared for Bulgaria (2003). On the request of the European Commission (DG EAC) ETF did draw in the end of 2003 an assessment “Implementing Lifelong Learning strategies in Europe: Progress report on the follow-up to the 2002 Council resolution on Lifelong Learning. Acceding and candidate countries”. It was based on the country progress reports, documents and reports in this field elaborated earlier, as well as on the outcomes of the Athens conference organised by ETF in May 2003 “Lifelong development of competencies and qualifications of the workforce: roles and responsibilities”.

These activities were supported by the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support to the European Commission on the follow-up of the “Objectives”/“Bruges”/“lifelong learning processes” (C 30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main results</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ETF role</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relevance**

The topic of the report was relevant both for the European and Bulgarian priorities emphasized in a number of policy documents (new Employment Promotion Act, January 2002, NEDP, NEAPs, etc). The report had an important role and was integrated by DG EAC in overall assessment. The report was released on time.

---

5 For instance, Reference material for Central and Eastern European countries drawn up ETF at the request of the European Commission “Creating a framework for continuing vocational training in a lifelong learning context” 2001; a cross-country report prepared by ETF “Thirteen years of reforms and cooperation in VET in the candidate countries” 2003.
**Efficiency**

The preparation of the assessment report was done in an efficient way. The knowledge acquired by ETF through continuous work in CCs on LLL issues starting from 2000 contributed to the efficiency. The questionnaire carried out prior to the report helped to structure country progress reports and provided concrete country information and details.

**Effectiveness**

The main project objective of helping the European Commission and the candidate countries to implement the targets and policy proposals in education, training and lifelong learning was achieved. The work of the team resulted in a report which adequately reflected the situation in the acceding and candidate countries country (including Bulgaria) and provided the recommendations.

**Impact**

It appears that the activities described above starting from the consultation process on the Memorandum on LLL had a positive and clear impact in Bulgaria. And if the situation in the countries two years after the end of consultation process has not changed radically and Bulgaria did not have at that moment any specific measures or strategies for LLL, the awareness of the importance of LLL has risen significantly. LLL issues moved in the priority list of Bulgarian government (what was not the case in 2000-2001).

One of the main political achievements of the consultation process and the follow-up activities of the 2002 Resolution on Lifelong Learning became the agreement between Bulgarian government and the European Commission on the development of a Strategy for adult learning (with the support of the Phare Programme 2003). In addition a national strategy on CVT was developed (it feeds into adult learning strategy under Phare). The ETF peer review on “CVT and the context of LLL in Bulgaria” undertaken just before the drawing of CVT strategy became a logical continuation and a valuable supporting activity for strategy preparation.

To sum it up, the main results were achieved in the sphere of institutionalisation of LLL issues. The actual improvements in terms of increased number of trainees, employers involved in CVT, etc are still to come along with the elaborated and adopted plan.

**4.1.10 FOLLOW UP TO LISBON PROCESS**

**Basic project information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achieving the Lisbon goals: contribution to VET Country reports for Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey (D 20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To assess the progress of VET in BG in relation to Lisbon/Copenhagen criteria (publication), research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>project; ETF was asked to to prepare for BG, RO, TUr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report: Bulgari. ‘Achieving the Lisbon goals: the contribution to VET’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>€ 3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF product with support from BNO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The European Commission DG EAC has commissioned a research report entitled ‘Achieving the Lisbon goals: the contribution to VET’ (the Maastricht Study). The Maastricht Study was
carried out in a very short space of time. This report has occupied a central place in the Dutch EU presidency conference on VET held in Maastricht in December 2004. With respect to the three candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey), ETF has been asked by the Commission to prepare country reports, which were integrated in the final composite report. (Similar reports for 25 MS were contracted by EC to a consortium of 10 research groups led by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in London).

Relevance

The topic of the report was relevant both for the European and Bulgarian priorities. The report had an important and formative role in taking stock of VET in Europe and in the definition of how European policies for VET should develop. The report was released on time to be presented at the Maastricht conference in December 2004. It was used to support a larger report ‘Achieving the Lisbon goals: the contribution to VET’.

Efficiency

The Report was prepared in very short time frames. The work of the team was organised efficiently. Two ETF staff were involved. They were supported by BNO which made a number of contributions. The support provided by the National Observatory turned out helpful and efficient. The work was carried out in consultation with key partners. The report was built along the standard structure used in the preparation of the similar reports for Romania and Turkey. In this way it did allow further comparative analyses.

Effectiveness

The main project objective of assessing the progress of VET in Bulgaria in relation to Lisbon/Copenhagen criteria was achieved. The work of the team resulted in a report which adequately reflected the situation in the country and provided the recommendations.

Impact

The interviews in the European Commission confirmed that the Bulgarian report made a useful contribution to the larger Commission report. The representatives of DG EAC were satisfied with the quality of the report. Bulgarian stakeholders appreciate the report and use it as background information and referent point.
4.1.11 PEER REVIEWS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF VET POLICY

Basic project information

Peer reviews of implementation of VET policy (Multi-country)

Project objectives

To improve local capacities to assess vocational training systems (to enhance the understanding of VET policies, EU hard and soft acquis; to improve local capacities to prioritise and define an agenda for VT reforms; to promote regional exchange and cooperation)

To review and assess the situation of CVT in an LLL context and provide recommendation for policy development

Main results

(1) updated Review documents prepared and submitted to the Commission; (2) thematic background papers drawn up; (3) peer review missions carried out; (4) national validation and other staff development events held; (5) analytical reports published in English and in Bulgarian; (6) dissemination activities carried out

Period 2003-2004

Budget € 200,000 - total; € 40,000 – for BG

ETF role ETF product with support from BNO

The Peer Review Programme focused on the South East European countries (11 countries). It was launched by the ETF in 2002 and was designed as a follow-up to the thematic reviews on education policy carried out by the OECD in 2000 and 2001. The basic objective of those peer reviews is to promote the identification and exchange of good practices and the potential for their successful transfer to other countries.

Peer review in Bulgaria was carried out in 2003-2004 in two regions: North-Central and South-Central. It was focused on continuing vocational training in a lifelong context and was intended to contribute to capacity building. The topic of the report was chosen in consultation between ETF, EU delegation and the BG ministries: MES and MOLSP.

Relevance

The topic chosen for peer review was in line with national priorities. Recently Bulgarian government has given high priority for developing continuing vocational education as part of a general strategy to promote lifelong learning, what was emphasised in many policy documents. The main product was used by the ministries in elaboration of the new CVT strategy. The report was released just on time to contribute to the formulation of the strategy (the work on the strategy started in April 2004). The timing of the report also did fit well in the new Phare cycle.

Efficiency

The Programme was well organised taking into account the complexity of the exercise. It was carried out in consultation with key partners. It insured proper identification of national and regional institutions and their representatives. The support provided by the National Observatory turned out helpful and efficient (sending out information letters, further intensive telephone contacts, etc.). This preparatory work paved way to the visits and interviews. Less successful was the organisation of the round table which had some difficulties in attracting the employers representatives. The time dedicated to the main dissemination event (half-day) seemed to be too short to put the main findings in the light of broader international practice.
**Effectiveness**

The main project objectives of reviewing and assessing the situation of CVT and providing recommendations for policy development were achieved. The work of the team resulted in a report which adequately reflected the situation in the country and provided realistic recommendations. Another output of the project – improved networking also corresponded to the initial objective of promoting cooperation and exchange. Recent evaluation of the peer reviews stresses that ETF’s work through the peer review exercise was described during the interviews as the only current example of an organisation supporting networking effectively.

**Impact**

The interviews with BG stakeholders confirmed that peer review contributed to the formulation of the new CVT strategy. Peer reviews obtained the opinion of 50 institutions and through interviews, round tables and discussions managed to attract more attention to the topic and raise awareness of the stakeholders. The dissemination and follow-up activities carried out at national and regional levels played important role in networking.

**4.1.12 IMPLEMENTATION OF COOPERATION PROGRAM WITH Cedefop**

Cedefop and ETF have complementary expertise. Cedefop benefits from ETF experience in the candidate countries, and ETF uses Cedefop as a resource for information and best practice in the EU. A Framework for Cooperation between the two Agencies was established in 2001 setting out the scope, principles, priorities and modalities for their cooperation. The main purpose was to prepare the acceding and candidate countries for accession and to clarify for them the role of each Agency.

In the last two years the cooperation was developing fruitfully. ETF and Cedefop complement each other in technical working groups (TWGs) set up by the Commission. Two Agencies work together in a number of areas as: LLL; transparency of qualifications; quality in VET; guidance and counselling, etc.

The joint efforts are mainly aimed at:

− facilitating the involvement of ACCs in enhanced European cooperation;
− preparing ACCs for full participation in Cedefop activities by the time of accession (after 10 countries joined the EU in May 2004, the ETF concentrated on further familiarisation of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey with Cedefop activities and networks);
− information, knowledge management and dissemination.

Bulgaria as a candidate country was involved in the activities organised under Cedefop-ETF cooperation. Bulgarian representatives were taking part in the conferences and seminars, in a number of cases they were actively involved by making presentations, like during the 2003 conference in Bratislava where a country presentation was made by Bulgarian expert.

− December 2003 conference “Career Guidance Policies in ACCs” (Bratislava). To inform the future policy developments in the field in the NMSs and CCs by presenting the results of the surveys on career guidance policies carried out by ETF; to promote a cross-country exchange of knowledge and experience.
February 2004 seminar “Validation of non-formal and informal learning” (Vilnius). To raise awareness on the progress made in the preparation of common principles of validation and get the first feedback from the participants on presented principles.

April 2004 seminar “Quality in VET: policy developments at European level and their relevance for ACCs” (Prague). To familiarise the NMSs and CCs with the policy proposals and action plan put forward by the TWG set up at the European level. ETF presented the analysis of the situation in the new member states and CCs.

In 2004 the cooperation continued in the framework of the project summarised in the table below.

National Observatories Contributions to Cedefop Info (C35)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project objectives</th>
<th>To contribute articles to Cedefop Info 3/2003 and to specific dossier on enlargement in Cedefop Info to be published in May 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>July 2003 – December 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>€ 1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF/BNO activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the framework of this project in 2004 ETF is preparing Bulgarian National Observatory for future transfer to national reference point. The BNO started participating in Refernet meetings and other meetings such as Agora process. In a number of cases there were interventions from Cedefop experts in BNO events in Bulgaria, when they were giving presentations. The NOs in ACCs have been invited to start performing some documentary activities for Cedefop. Such documentary activities are new to NOs and have been included in the score of activities requested and funded by the ETF. They include the collection of information for Cedefop’s bibliographical database and for Cedefop’s institutional database as well as the supply of news items to Cedefop’s information services. In 2004 BNO started updating and uploading information in Cedefop databases VET-Bib (publications in VET in Bulgaria) and VET-Instit (the institutions for VET in the country).

The ACCs were also invited to provide articles for Cedefop Info issues. A specific dossier on enlargement was supposed to accompany a Cedefop Info issue in 2004 with contributions also from ETF and NOs. In response to that in 2003-2004 BNO prepared and delivered four articles on different VET issues for Cedefop information. Two of them were published in Cedefop Info.
Besides, the BNO cooperates with Cedefop as far as the new Europass documents and procedures are concerned.

Articles submitted to the Cedefop in 2004:
- Project “Adult Education at the SEU” and informal education in Bulgaria
- Enhancing the university systems of managing the quality of training contribution to Bologna process - Bulgarian experience
- Securing the quality of vocational education and training

Articles submitted to Cedefop in 2003:
- Developing national standards is a priority in Bulgaria’s efforts to upgrade the vocational education and training (VET) system (Cedefop Info 3/2003).
- In-service VET TT – actual status and perspectives.

Evaluation conclusions

Bulgaria gradually becomes involved in the cooperation with Cedefop. The activities (conferences, seminars, etc.) organised by the ETF provide an opportunity for Bulgarian representatives to participate in these mutual learning initiatives, learn more about the goals, principles, methods and activities of Cedefop. With ETF assistance Bulgarian National Observatory started submitting data according to Cedefop requirements and following the invitation announced at Cedefop Annual Meeting 2003 submitted a number of articles for Cedefop information. The described activities as well as the interviews in Bulgaria confirm that the process of familiarisation is progressing.

4.2 CASE STUDIES

4.2.1 BULGARIAN NATIONAL OBSERVATORY (BNO)

The detailed case study can be found in Annex 5. Here were provide some conclusions.

(i) Through nine years of its existence BNO with the support of the ETF has built its capacity and became an established unit, the necessity/usefulness of which is commonly recognised in Bulgaria.

(ii) BNO provides ETF with information and gives a dissemination channel for the Foundation services and products. The interviews confirmed that ETF is satisfied with BNO functioning and provided services.

(iii) BNO provides policy advice to Bulgarian stakeholders mainly through its reports which are recognised and used by the ministries and some other involved institutions. The reports have an added value in a sense that they help their users to systematise information and data, serve as a useful background material in elaboration of policy documents.

(iv) BNO makes certain contribution to VET data collection/systematising and to the analysis of VET issues. Although there is some improvement through the last decade, the situation with respect to policy analysis and evaluation as well as with VET data remains relatively poor in Bulgaria. The dissemination of the information collected by BNO and the quality of reports it produces, could be improved.
BNO contributes to the improvement of cooperation between the ministries and other institutions. It organises a lot of events, including seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. which bring together Bulgarian stakeholders at central, regional and local levels. The costs of supporting BNO are relatively low. In this sense the services provided represent good value for money. BNO currently does not seem to be a fully sustainable institution. The self advertising and marketing strategies are not developed. The prospect of BNO becoming part of Cedefop Referent seems to be a logical step in BNO development, but will depend on the BNO evolvement in the remaining pre-accession period.

4.2.2 INSTITUTION BUILDING IN HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN BG (2002, 2003, 2004)

The detailed case study can be found in Annex 6. Here we provide some conclusions.

(i) The three IB projects implemented since 2002 were relevant to the needs of the country and national priorities in view of the availability of ESF funds for Bulgaria in the near future.

(ii) Compared to the resources available (this are small-scale projects) the results in terms of the number of trained participants should be seen as adequate (within three years 140 national, regional and local stakeholders trained and another 40 people involved in targeted dissemination).

(iii) The projects contributed to the development of inter-institutional contacts and cooperation. The training events were bringing together Bulgarian stakeholders at central, regional and local levels.

(iv) The projects were well organised and developed according to the envisaged time schedule, which proved to be too pressed for the implementing institutions.

(v) ETF IB activities are complementary to similar activities carried in a larger scale within other projects. It is important to insure better coordination to avoid overlapping and achieve better overall outcomes. National Aid Coordinator (unit within the Ministry of Finance) has in principle to take care of it.

(vi) The weaker side of the project was the approach taken to the target group formation, which turned out to be too general and thought over not carefully enough. An approach with a more clear view on the roles of the different stakeholders in the programming process could have insured better results.

(vii) Although the project contributed to raising awareness of the necessity to prepare for ESF-type actions and attracted the attention to these issues, it did not fully succeed in building a comprehensive and conceptually justified training programme. The training sessions claimed to be tailor-made were more of a general nature. Better balance between practical exercises and lectures could be found.

(viii) In order for the dissemination to play its role of spreading the “added-up” skills and knowledge it is essential that not only general information about the project is available on the web-site, but also the training materials. The materials in the form of presentation sheets cannot be easily used by the stakeholders not familiar with the context.

(ix) It is known that investments in education/training guarantee more impact only on a long-term basis and when a critical mass of trained people is achieved. It also holds for the IB projects. The training efforts have to be continued (in other regions) to produce more visible results and impact. However, to insure solid effects, the concept of future similar interventions has to be better developed.
In the last decade Bulgaria and other candidate countries went through serious changes and reforms of their employment and education policies. On the request of the European Commission ETF prepared Country Monographs for all MS and also for Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. The aim of the Monographs was to put these changes in a wider context dedicating special attention to the link between education, training and employment policies. The Monograph was also supposed to provide a useful tool to assist Bulgaria and the Commission to monitor progress in implementing the JAP priorities as well as to identify the most urgent needs and gaps to be fulfilled.

Bulgaria Country Monograph is an independent ETF product. It does not have a status of a policy document as JAPs and JIMs. Country Monograph for Bulgaria was one of the last ones to be prepared in the chain of 25 similar products. The delay was due to the postponement of the signature of JAP.

Two ETF projects were aimed at the Monograph:

2. Monograph seminar: November 2003 (Euro 5 000)

ETF mobilized a strong team for the preparation of the Monograph:

1. 3 ETF staff
2. 1 external EU expert
3. HRDC (BNO) experts
4. 1 local Bulgarian expert
Country Monograph was submitted to the Commission on time. It was translated in Bulgarian language and disseminated in Bulgaria.

Relevance

The topic of the Monograph is in line with national priorities. Recently Bulgarian government pays much attention to finalization of the VET reform. It was emphasized in many policy documents. The Monograph was aiming at helping to identify the most urgent needs and gaps to be fulfilled. At the same time Bulgaria after the signature of the Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Policies (JAP) has to implement the priorities specified in this document. The Monograph was designed as a tool to assist Bulgaria and the Commission in monitoring progress in implementation of JAP priorities.

Efficiency

The preparation of the Monograph was well organized. The document was elaborated in consultation with main Bulgarian stakeholders. A launch meeting between the ETF and key national policy makers familiarised the authorities with the Monograph objectives and allowed to consult with them on the methodology. It was followed later by additional rounds of consultations, which included numerous proposals and a vivid discussion at the stage of the drafting the Monograph. The involvement of Bulgarian stakeholders in the Monograph preparation increased the quality of the product on one hand, and contributed to the further acceptance of the Monograph by the authorities.

The strong team of experts mobilized for the preparation of the Monograph became a good guarantee for the high standard of the product. The support provided by the BNO was helpful and efficient (providing background material and information; organizing workshops, missions, seminars and dissemination events).

The dissemination activities were supported by a small project ‘Monograph seminar’. The dissemination activities and presentation of the Monograph in the country were rather wide and included presentations at the regional level. Still, according to the opinion of some Bulgarian interviewees, dissemination and information about the Monograph were not sufficient as “only involved stakeholders know about it and receive the relevant information”.

Effectiveness

The main objectives of the Monograph to provide a useful analytical tool to assist BG and EC to monitor the progress in implementation the JAP priorities and to identify the most urgent needs and gaps in the field of HRD for the labour market were achieved. The work of the team resulted in a product, which adequately reflects the situation in the country, gives overview of VET reform development and provides realistic recommendations. The quality of Bulgarian Country Monograph is considered both by the Commission and by BG stakeholders to be very good. According to the opinion expressed by interviewed Commission representatives Bulgarian Country Monograph has a high ranking in comparison to other country Monographs. Bulgarian Monograph was one of the last to be prepared and the team learnt on the lessons from the earlier ones.

6 Consultations were held also on regional level including meetings in Pazordijk, Plovdiv, Blagoevgrad, Vratza, Sevlievo, Veliko Tarnovo.
An additional output of the project is an improved inter-institutional cooperation and dialogue. This was achieved in the result of numerous consultations via working groups and seminars, which brought together representatives of key BG ministries, NAVET, NGOs, etc.

**Impact**

As the interviews in Bulgaria confirmed the Monograph is broadly used in everyday work, in particular:

- in elaboration of school strategies;
- in preparation of ministerial documents (MES, MOLSP);
- as a background paper in elaboration of policies (for instance of ‘Strategy for CVT’).

The publication of an Executive Summary of the document could have increased the impact of the Monograph. Key stakeholders expressed their disappointment that the Monograph was not published as a book.

The interviews in the EC (DG Empl, DG Enlarg, DG EAC) demonstrated that the Commission representatives are satisfied with the outcome of the project. The Monograph is used as a tool for JAP follow-up process. According to some interviewees in DG Employment, the Monograph is not used at a maximum and Commission has to make better use of the document, which contains a lot of valuable information. The interviews in DG EAC and DG Enlarg proved that the Monograph is known and used in ‘ad-hoc’ way, occasionally when there is a need in some particular information.

### 4.2.4 VET PR

**Review of progress in vocational training reform in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey (D21)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project objectives</th>
<th>To prepare an updated review of progress in vocational training reform for Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main results</td>
<td>Updated Review documents prepared and submitted to the Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>€ 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF product</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a yearly basis ETF continues to make available updated and concise analyses of the situation and key developments in vocational training in Bulgaria. Such yearly VET Progress Reports are prepared on the request of DG Enlargement. The aim of such analyses is to contribute to the reports which are drawn up annually by the Commission to track the progress of each candidate country towards accession. Analyses are also designed to improve the targeting of EU Phare Programme support to these countries in the area of HRD. In 2004 the analysis in the reviews focused on monitoring developments in key areas of EU policy priorities and the targets on education, training and lifelong learning.

**Evaluation conclusions**

The Commission representatives from DG Enlargement confirmed the usefulness of VET PR. DG Enlargement, the main user of the product, is satisfied with ETF contribution. The reports are submitted on time (annually in July) to feed the Commission annual report “Bulgaria:
Progress towards accession” (in particular the 18-th chapter on human resource development). The interviews confirmed that the quality of the information satisfies the main customer. Although the customer would appreciate if ETF while formulating priorities for future interventions could be less general and more operational, specifying in more detail what could be done and providing clear examples of how it can be done.

VET Progress Reports are not familiar to representatives of other Commission services (DG Employment, DG EAC) and EC Delegation.

In Bulgaria VET Progress Reports has a limited circulation. It is known and used mainly by the involved ministries MES and MOLSP. Other involved stakeholders are not familiar with it. The representatives of the MES confirmed that they can download the document from the ETF website. The reports provide an overview of yearly development and are used as background information. Although representatives of MOLSP made a remark that sometimes VET Progress Reports include not all the relevant information. For instance, the MOLSP survey ‘Employers needs in specific vocations’ (2004) was not reflected in VET PR.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS: INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS ASSESSMENT (4.1 AND 4.2)

Relevance

Almost all projects/activities have been relevant. They were launched and carried out in accordance with Bulgarian national priorities and in line with the EU policies towards ACCs and Bulgaria in particular. The interventions did fit well in the course of the reform process. There are no project/activities performing poorly on relevance.

Efficiency

In the majority of cases the projects/activities have been implemented efficiently. The following key factors contributed to the efficiency of the projects:

− The ETF good administrative skills were very important especially in the early period when the projects had to be implemented in an unsettled environment.

− The competences of ETF staff. The ETF managers demonstrated their commitment, professionalism, competence and networking skills. Their input was appreciated by both the Bulgarian stakeholders and the representatives of the European Commission, particularly by the former ones. For many of the implemented projects the work of the ETF managers can be regarded as a factor increasing the efficiency of the projects in general.

− Local knowledge and continuity of expertise is an ETF asset appreciated both by the Commission and the Bulgarian stakeholders. Projects and activities implemented in the country are interlinked, feed each other, as well as the EC programmes and build on the achieved results. In this way the efficiency of each particular intervention is definitely increased.

− The ETF expertise in VET, research capacity developed by ETF staff
On the other hand, certain aspects should be mentioned which diminished the efficiency:

- In a number of cases the ETF tended to produce rather ambitious terms of references compared to the resources available. This built-in inconsistency caused difficulties in the implementation of projects.
- The time defined by the ETF for project implementation as well as the timing of the starting-up period was not always optimal: often schedule were too pressed.

**Effectiveness**

As to the effectiveness (which was seen as the achievement of the project objectives) we can say that about half of the project/activities performed were fully satisfactory. There are no projects performing poorly on effectiveness. In certain cases the constrained linked to the country context did not allow full realisation of the objectives.

On the one hand the attainment of the main projects’ objectives contributed to acquisition of new skills and knowledge by Bulgarian stakeholders, increased the capacity of national institutions and the cooperation between them, insured some progress in VET analysis and data. On the other hand, the situation with data, VET analysis (especially in relation to the labour market), and evaluation of VET issues remains rather poor in the country.

What concerns the ETF products (reports, monographs, reviews, etc.) and their quality, they are valued by Bulgarian stakeholders and the Commission. However, as it follows from the interviews, products could have been disseminated more widely than actually happened. We also found that in some cases the provided expertise is not fully utilised by the Commission. On the other hand, more operational and less general recommendations for future interventions would be more appreciated by the Commission Services.

**Impact**

Although the impact issues are not easy to measure and we had to base our judgements on the opinion of a limited number of interviewees, it is still possible to conclude that according to our estimates about half of the project/activities have shown satisfactory impact results. Raising awareness, attracting attention of a larger audience to VET issues, as well as increased competences and improved cooperation between stakeholders were the most often registered impacts. In a number of cases new institutions and initiatives were stimulated (institutions, like HRDC under VETERST and BAMDE under MTP-I; nationally financed projects, like “100” launched by ME; national networks, like network of VET Centres under the Chamber of Commerce; other donors’ projects, like the chain: MTP I - Employers Initiative – MTP II). Next to it some projects (like VETERST) made clear political impact by stimulating the elaboration of new laws and establishment of new institutions, which exist up till now and form the framework for VET development. On the other hand, in certain cases the impacts were less transparent and clear.

**Sustainability**

For sustainability the results are not as good as for the other criteria. One project/activity performs poorly on this aspect, while only one other is fully satisfactory on this point. On other cases there is some evidence of sustainable results, but not very strong. Although in most cases the rather weak results on sustainability are caused by context factors that are out of the control of ETF, it is still relevant.
**Added value**

The development of inter-institutional dialogues, personal contacts, networking and facilitation, fostering exchange of experiences can be seen as real value added by ETF in the majority of projects.

Our **Last conclusion** is that although a lot of information was available for our evaluation, the data situation was not optimal. We make the following remarks on this point:

a. There are no “Country Files” within the ETF system of administering and handling the project information. It makes the general picture of one country activities not transparent. Under these circumstances the task of reconstructing the history of almost 10-years ETF intervention in Bulgaria turns out to be a hard issue, which can be compared with making puzzle of numerous pieces.

b. While going through project files we discovered that in some cases project information is not complete.

c. Not all the projects are systematically evaluated by ETF. Evaluating projects after some time, as we had to do, is difficult, as those involved cannot always be traced. Moreover, the ones that can be traced have sometimes difficulties in remembering what happened in the project.
4.4 OVERALL EVALUATION

4.4.1 ETF ACTIVITIES AND THE BULGARIAN VET SYSTEM

The ultimate purpose of the ETF activities in Bulgaria is to contribute to a better functioning of the VET system. However, when we try to analyse the effects of the ETF activities we should keep in mind that many other factors affect the performance of the system.

Fig. 4.1 Factors affecting the functioning of the Bulgarian VET system

Figure 4.1 gives a graphical representation of the factors affecting the Bulgarian VET system. Clearly, the impact of the ETF activities will be difficult to isolate as:

1. Internal factors in Bulgaria play a critical role. These factors relate to the socio-economic system and the political system. Although the requirements for accession to the European Union and the activities developed by the Commission and other organizations to support the transition process have had an impact on institutions and legislation, it is much less clear whether it has affected investment in human capital. In the present situation, government, employers and workers simply lack the resources for major investment in this field. Improving institutions and legislation, dissemination of good practices of training measures and spreading the ‘message’ that education and training usually entail
high financial returns may have some effect on human capital investment, but economic development and market pressure will be the dominant forces affecting such investment;

b. particularly the recent ETF activities are small parts of broader EC initiatives: in those cases the impact of the broader initiative may be small even if ETF performs well in the way it takes care of its own part;

c. the EC and ETF are not the only international organizations supporting and advising Bulgaria in the field of education and training. Other organizations are, for example, the Worldbank and the United Nations.

However, it is still important to look at the performance of the Bulgarian VET system. If we could not observe any improvement in the system since ETF has started its activities in Bulgaria, this would be problematic, even if it had nothing to do with the quality of ETF’s activities. However, even then we would have to be careful in drawing conclusions about the usefulness of activities such as carried out by ETF. If we could sufficiently underpin the proposition that ETF made a significant contribution to institutional development and legislation, then one could still argue that this will have a positive long-term effect on the quality of the VET system and the levels of VET expenditure and participation. Therefore, we start our analysis by looking at the role ETF played in developing VET institutions and legislation in Bulgaria (section 4.3.2). Next, we look at the development in VET performance.

4.4.2 DEVELPMENT OF INSTITUTIONS AND LEGISLATION

From the interviews with Bulgarian stakeholders, it became clear that when ETF started its activities in Bulgaria the VET system was in a complete deadlock. Under the former communist system the large state-owned companies played a key role in VET. Firstly, their need for new, young staff with initial vocational education was quite predictable. The same was true of the competencies required. Furthermore, many of these companies had their own training schools. After the transition this system collapsed. Many companies, after being privatised, went bankrupt. It both deprived initial vocational education from its main takers. It also meant the end for a considerable part of the training infrastructure in VET.

There is general consensus between the stakeholders in Bulgaria that ETF plays a crucial role in making the Bulgarian stakeholders (ministries, social partners, school system, etc.) aware of:

− the role of VET in a market economy and how the VET system should respond to market demands;
− the deficiencies of the existing VET schools in Bulgaria and how quality should (could) be improved;
− the fact that institutions and legislation in the field of VET are still highly important in a market environment. Relevant institutions may include tripartite and/or bipartite organizations defining training needs, promoting training and providing training. Legislation may, for example, refer to the accreditation of courses;
− the requirements in the field of VET to be met by candidate countries.

ETF did not only bring awareness of the deficiencies of the existing system, but also helped to develop new institutions and legislation. The Bulgarian institutions all agree that it would have been difficult if not impossible for the Bulgarians to develop what has been achieved on these points, without the help of ETF. The relevant ministries and the social partners almost completely lacked the expertise in this area. ETF activities helped them to develop a political agenda for VET.
What also became clear from the interviews is that there was very precise differentiation between education/training for adults (responsibility of MOLSP) and education for young people (responsibility of MES). Those two types of education were completely separated. The ministries were working separately and did not collaborate. As a result there were two different lists of vocations, two different curricula systems, two different lists of competences (requirements to vocations). There was no corresponding activities and connection between these two systems.

It is perhaps no exaggeration that under the circumstances at the time, any support was helpful. However, the Bulgarian stakeholders are generally very positive about the way ETF (and particularly the current country manager) has acted. The main achievements are according to the Bulgarian stakeholders:

- awareness about the importance of VET in a market economy and about the responsibilities of the various actors in the VET system. This includes a variety of points such as the responsiveness of vocational schools to market demands, the responsibility of employers for indicating their needs (both in qualitative and quantitative terms) to the school system, the responsibility of employers and workers for continuous training and last but not least the responsibility of the central government first of all for initial vocational education and training for the unemployed, but also for promoting continuous training of workers. Promoting continuous training may involve the development of an accreditation system, stimulating cooperation of the social partners in organizing training, government subsidies, etc.;
- awareness about the state the Bulgarian VET system was in compared to the situation in the EU countries and the need for catching up with these countries in view of a future accession to the EU;
- improvement of the data situation with respect to VET so that policy development in the VET field could be based on facts;
- practical advice for Bulgarian policy makers in developing a strategy and a political agenda with respect to VET, which is reflected in a number of Bulgarian policy papers such as the Human Resources Development Strategy 2000-2006 and various national action plan. A national strategy specifically for VET is now in preparation. ETF helped to ‘translate’ the European strategies and standards to the Bulgarian situation;
- improved cooperation between the various institutions in the field of VET (between ministries, between the social partners and between the government and the social partners);
- the development of new institutions such as the state agency NAVET which among other things has a role in accreditation of suppliers in the field of training;
- the development of a VET act, which would have been difficult, according to the Bulgarian stakeholders without external support;
- concrete assistance in improving the quality of vocational education schools;
- concrete support in developing an infrastructure for continuous training.

In table 4.1 these results are related to the various ETF projects.
Table 4.1  Main achievements in the field for which the Bulgarian stakeholders attribute an important role to ETF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main achievements</th>
<th>ETF activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness about role VET in a modern economy</td>
<td>VETERST, BNO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the political agenda and a strategy for VET</td>
<td>VETERST, Peer Review, Country Monograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical advise in developing a VET strategy</td>
<td>VETERST, Peer Review, Phare programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the data situation on VET in support of policy development and evaluation</td>
<td>BNO, VETERST, Country Monograph, cooperation with Cedefop activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved cooperation between the involved actors</td>
<td>VETERST, BNO, Country Monograph, Peer Review, Institution Building, Social Dialogue Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of new institutions</td>
<td>VETERST, MTP PROJECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a VET act</td>
<td>VETERST, BNO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete support in improving the quality of VET schools</td>
<td>VETERST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete support in developing a framework and infrastructure for continuous training, raising awareness</td>
<td>Employers Initiative, Consultation process on the Memorandum on LLL, progress report on LLL, Peer Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the interviews with the Bulgarian stakeholders we can also conclude that the ETF projects during the first part of the period were valued higher than for instance the institution-building project during the second part of the period. It also became clear that the Bulgarians still see the role played by ETF as crucial for Bulgarian policy-making in the VET field.

The officials from the European Commission that we interviewed for the evaluation were in general positive about what ETF has done within the framework of EC initiatives in Bulgaria. However, the reaction was usually a very general one. Most of the officials interviewed did not have a detailed picture of the VET system in Bulgaria. They looked at it more from a general and a comparative point of view. Where the Bulgarian stakeholders gave the impression that the contribution made by ETF was highly important to them, the EC officials usually indicated that ETF did a good job, both in terms of quality and efficiency, in those cases where ETF carried out specific tasks in EC initiatives.

4.4.3  VET PERFORMANCE

VET performance consists of two components:

- the output per student measured as the impacts on the labour market and the economy. Does VET have a positive effect on income after taking the investments (costs) into account? Does investing in VET strengthen a person’s position on the labour market in terms of employability, length of worklife, etc;
- the level of human capital measured by the number of people engaging in VET and the expenditure per student. Also the percentage getting their diploma is relevant.

To what extent can we observe improvements in the functioning of the VET system since the mid 1990s? Almost nothing is known about the effects of training in Bulgaria. As far as we know no rates of return to education are available. Neither do we know of any Bulgarian studies dealing with the impact of education or continuous training on labour market outcomes. Only in
the field of training of the unemployed a few studies can be found, one older study dealing with various active measures including training, and a current study on the ‘from social assistance to employment’ programme. The latter programme, however, hardly contains a training aspect, although this training was meant to play an important role. In view of the lack of information we do not know whether the returns to education have increased, whether training has become more effective in reducing the risk of unemployment for workers and in increasing the reemployment chances for the unemployed. In other words we do not know whether VET has become more cost-effective from the viewpoint of the labour market and the economy. A number of improvements in the quality of VET, VET schools and VET staff as a direct results of ETF activities are reported in the various ETF reports (see also the previous section), but here we deal with the question whether the output of the VET system has improved.

There is some information, however, about the development in VET expenditure and participation. With respect to initial education both expenses and numbers of student are available (see table 4.2). During the period 1997-2004 the relative number of students in initial vocational education compared to the total number of students in secondary education has dropped. However, it looks as recently the downward trend has been stopped. The share of vocational education in total expenditure on secondary education was initially lower than the share of students. However, between 1997 and 2000 the share in expenditure has increased and since 2000 it is on a similar level as the share of students.

### Table 4.2 Number of students in and expenditure on initial vocational education (IVE) as a percentage of total secondary education (1997-2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>97/98</th>
<th>98/99</th>
<th>99/00</th>
<th>00/01</th>
<th>01/01</th>
<th>02/03</th>
<th>03/04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage share of students in IVE</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage share of expenditure on IVE</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Country Monograph.

Expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP does not differ much between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ EU countries. The same is true for expenditure in secondary education. The percentages for total education and secondary education are for 2002 5.2 and 2.4 respectively. For Bulgaria the corresponding figures are lower: 3.6 and 1.7.

Table 4.2 contains data on the number of IVE students as a percentage of the 15-18 year-old population between 1995 and 2000. For six out of the nine other accession countries this percentage is higher than for Bulgaria; for the three Baltic States it is lower. Figures on the share of VET students in upper-secondary education show a similar pattern.

---

7 This is based on provisional results of an evaluation study in which Jaap de Koning is involved.
Table 4.3 Vocational/technical secondary streams in % of the 15-18 year-old population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>62.9 a)</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>71.8 b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>66.6 b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


b) 1999.


Drop-out rates for the 18-24 year-old appear to be higher for Bulgaria compared to the other nine countries included in table. The difference with the ‘old’ EU countries was not that big in 2002.

How does Bulgaria perform in terms of participation of the adult population in education and training? As we can conclude from table 4.4 the participation rate for Bulgaria has been relatively low compared to both the other ‘new’ EU countries and the ‘old’ EU countries. The table gives the figures for 2001 and 2002. On average the figure for the other new countries was three times as high; for the EU six times as high. The figure in 2003 for Bulgaria was similar to the ones for 2001 and 2002: 1.4 per cent. The average for the EU was 9.0 per cent in 2003 and the Lisbon goal for 2010 is even 12.5 per cent. From table 4.4 we can thus conclude that Bulgaria is considerably lagging behind in continuous training for workers. This type of training is a crucial element in life-long learning, which is to be considered of vital importance for modern economies.
Table 4.4  
Percentage of the adult population (25-64) participating in education and training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU average</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisbon goal 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


If we look at expenditure on company training, we can observe the same pattern. In 1999 expenses on company training made by companies amounted to 2.3 per cent of total labour costs for the EU, 1.5 per cent for the other accession countries and 1.0 per cent for Bulgaria. The differences are not as big as for participation in adult education and training which suggests that once Bulgarian companies invest in workers they tend to invest a relatively high sum.

Table 4.5  
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as a percentage of total labour costs, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accession countries</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Progress towards the common objectives in education and training, Indicators and benchmarks, working document, European Commission, 2004

There is also information available on training for the unemployed. In the period 1999-2002 there is no clear pattern in the number of unemployed completing training courses financed by the Public Employment Service. It dropped in 2000, then strongly increased in 2001 and remained more or less on the same level in 2002. However, data on 2001 and 2002 from a different source shows a very different pattern with a further drop in 2001 and a strong increase in 2002. Furthermore, the available information on training expenditure by the Public Employment Service show a different pattern than the data on numbers of participation. The only similarity is a clear increase in 2002. It is difficult to draw conclusions about developments in training for the unemployed from this data.
Table 4.6  Number of unemployed completing training courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of unemployed completing training courses</td>
<td>12875</td>
<td>9951</td>
<td>16471*</td>
<td>17632*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure in training for unemployed adults and those at risk (in Bulgarian currency)</td>
<td>1,598,890</td>
<td>1,570,501</td>
<td>1,389,600</td>
<td>2,447,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Country Monograph.


Bulgaria is an average performer compared to the countries in Central and Eastern Europe that recently joined the EU, when it comes to expenditure on active measures as a percentage of GDP. However, expenditure on training measures for the unemployed is low in Bulgaria.

Table 4.7  Public expenditure on active labour market policies as a percentage of GDP(2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>All active measures</th>
<th>Training measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD, ETF and national statistics.

On the basis of the available information we tend to conclude that in terms of VET performance Bulgaria is not only lagging behind the ‘old’ EU countries, but is also doing worse compared to the ‘new’ EU countries. The available information does not point to some clear improvement of the situation.
POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The conclusion of the previous section illustrates that although well-developed institutions and legislation in the field of education and training may be pre-conditions for a good performance of the VET system, they clearly are not sufficient conditions. What is needed more? We can think especially of the following conditions:

a. employers and workers are convinced of the positive financial returns entailed by investment in vocational education and training;

b. the government and the social partners have sufficient knowledge about effective measures they can apply to promote training in the private sector;

c. the organizations implementing policy measures (departments within ministries and local government, but in principle also private organizations) should dispose of a staff of sufficient size and quality for a proper implementation of these measures;

d. income levels are sufficient to support high(er) investment in human capital by the government and the private sector.

ETF cannot do much about d), but it could help to fulfil conditions a) to c).

One could argue that given the available resources, it was logical to concentrate on developing institutions and legislation first. However, given the fact that we see no clear increase in VET expenditure and participation in Bulgaria, it seems to be important to pay more attention to the question how this can be changed.

There is a vast amount of international studies, both in developed and developing countries, showing the high returns to training and education. Some of the research deals specifically with VET. With respect to initial education the outcomes of the international literature imply that the financial return to education is roughly 5 to 10 per cent.\(^8\) Therefore, investing money in school education usually entails a higher return than savings put on the bank. For vocational education, particularly secondary and higher vocational education in fields such as technology and economics, the returns are above average. Partly, the impact on earnings goes through labour market participation: people have a lower probability of becoming unemployed and tend to participate in the labour market longer, the higher their education is and the more relevant it is in the labour market. Apprenticeship training, which is also considered part of initial education, has been shown to have a reducing effect on youth unemployment. Finally, vocational education has a particular relevance to the innovation process, the engine of productivity growth.

Positive effects have also been shown with respect to continuous training of workers. Training tends to reduce the risk of unemployment and plays a positive role in the innovation process.\(^9\)

---

\(^8\) See for example: de la Fuente and Ciccone (2002), Human Capital in a global and knowledge-based economy.

Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002), Returns to Investment in Education, Policy research working paper, the World Bank, Latin America and the Caribbean Region, Education Sector Unit.

The picture is more mixed for training of the unemployed\textsuperscript{10}. The international literature contains only few examples of successful training measures for young unemployed. But more promising results are reported for other groups, among them older unemployed.

This is, of course, only a very brief summary of the literature. More can be learned from it than we can show on this place. Making this information available to the Bulgarians on different levels (individuals, firms, social partners and government officials) may be one factor in promoting VET. It would, of course, need ‘translation’ of this literature to a form understandable by workers and business people. Also relevant in promoting training would be dissemination of the basic insights from the human resources management literature on training and human resources development. Training using ICT as a medium seems to be particularly relevant for a country such as Bulgaria, as it may help to reduce training costs. This is also a field with a fast growing evaluation literature.

However, in addition to this, government can more actively promote training by financially supporting firms and workers investing in training. Most governments in Western Europe have arrangements in this field, some of which have been unsuccessful, while others did help to promote investment in human capital. Review studies of the international literature (EIM/SEOR, 2005, OECD, 2003 and 2004) give a description of the various measures used and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these measures on the basis of the outcomes from evaluation studies\textsuperscript{11}. Box 4.1 gives a short summary. Much more can be learned from the existing experience. Box 4.1 only illustrates the usefulness of the available literature in this field.

---


Box 4.1 Experiences with various measures for promoting training

Tax deduction schemes

Tax deduction schemes for training costs have the advantage of building on existing institutional arrangements. It allows companies to apply for the incentive with limited additional administrative costs. Conditions for applying are usually very transparent and straightforward. However, the advantage of limited conditions is also linked to high deadweight loss of these tax deductions, because targeting and conditions for additionality are limited.

Levies

Levies are systems in which levies are imposed on the wage costs to finance training activities. Often, companies which reach a certain threshold of training investments are no longer obliged to contribute. The levies can be organised at sectoral level (like the Netherlands) or imposed on a national level (France), although also in the latter case, contribution and redistribution of the funds also takes place at sectoral level.

Relatively limited conditions and high deadweight losses are also expected to apply to levies, although there is surprisingly little robust research about the effectiveness of levies in various countries, in spite of the fact that they play a central role there in the training system. However, from a public spending viewpoint, it is important to note that levies are - compared to fiscal deductions - much cheaper, because in essence it is a transfer of money from companies with low investments in training to companies with high investments and in that sense a counterbalance to market imperfections. At the same time this means that levies are not very popular with smaller companies investing little in training, which perceive the levy as an extra tax burden.

Subsidy schemes

Generally, subsidy schemes are coupled to more extensive and detailed rules, linked to better targeting towards specific groups and rules for additionality. This results in high administrative costs for authorities, suppliers and users and a loss of flexibility to allow accommodation of user needs (demand driven). On the other hand, this also results in lower deadweight.

Some of the evaluated subsidy measures were also somewhat a-typical and in that sense innovative. The Employer Training Pilots in the United Kingdom also subsidise indirect training costs (opportunity costs for time spent on training), which can be an important bottleneck for (smaller) companies to invest in training. Part of the success of the Employer Training Pilots can also be attributed to dedicated marketing (direct contact with employers) and training advice and guidance which are also offered.

Individual Learning Accounts

Individual Learning accounts are saving accounts which can (only) specifically used for training. Contributions to the accounts can come from the employee himself, the employer, often in combination with a contribution from a public institution. The Individual Learning Account is a new type of instrument; it just emerged in the late nineties, hence there is, as yet, little evidence on their impact in the long run. However the early signs seem to be rather positive. The individual learning account fits within the concept of 'employability' in which the employee is given a certain self-responsibility to anticipate future changes and adapt and update skills.

Vouchers

Vouchers are a sort of rights to make use of training services. The danger of abuse is limited, because vouchers can only be cashed-in by using services of training institutes. Another positive aspect is the accreditation system that is mostly included with this type of measure guaranteeing a certain quality of training.

Other measures

Some of the measures listed and selected for case study do not involve incentives. Examples are the University for Industry (UfI) and Investors in People (IIP) in the United Kingdom. The first measure targets - among other things - a wider availability of courses through e-learning. The second one provides an award for companies, which perform very well in the field of training. As far as there is evidence on the effectiveness of these measures, the indications are positive. These types of measure have the advantage that they are relatively cheap, because costs are only incurred for implementation.

Some of the advantages are systematically described in the following table, although some of these results are only tentatively. The table shows that in most cases there is a trade-off in advantages and disadvantages.
On the basis of the training experience in the Western World, good practices could be identified that might help the Bulgarians to develop effective policies. This is particularly relevant in view of the ESF support Bulgaria will get in the near future. With this money the Bulgarian government can actively stimulate training. However, one should avoid spending the money on schemes that already proved ineffective in other countries. Therefore, making the evaluation literature (some of which is not so easily accessible) available to the Bulgarians in a form that is helpful to the government and the social partners would also be important. At the same time exchange of information with other new member states is important, as the social and economic context in these countries is more similar to Bulgaria than the situation in Western Europe.

**4.4.5 CONCLUSIONS OVERALL EVALUATION**

When ETF started its activities in Bulgaria the old VET system had collapsed as a result of the transition process. There was no policy agenda and no policy strategy with respect to VET. There was a general lack of awareness of the importance of VET in a modern market economy. Furthermore, Bulgarian policy-makers lacked the knowledge to take the steps that were necessary to catch up with the EU in the VET field.

From our investigation it became clear that ETF has made clear contributions to the development of new institutions and legislation in the VET field in Bulgaria. Furthermore, the available information with respect to VET has improved. Tangible results have also been achieved in improving training infrastructure, the quality of VET schools and improved cooperation between the various actors. ETF has also played a role in preparing Bulgaria for future large-scale support programs such as ESF. However, we rank the latter activity among the somewhat less successful activities.

The activities carried out by ETF are highly valued by the Bulgarian stakeholders. This is also true for the role of ETF’s country managers. Officials of the EC were also generally positive about the role played by ETF as a contractor in EU initiatives.

However, despite the achievements, which could be seen as preconditions for a well performing VET system, we do not yet observe clear improvements in the performance of the VET system. Furthermore, Bulgaria performs less well in the field of VET than most other new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe (on most indicators Bulgaria is in fact the worst performer).
Partly, this may be a matter of time as the impact of better institutions and legislation will take time to influence behaviour. However, good institutions and legislation are probably not enough to stimulate companies and individuals to invest more in VET. One also needs policies that effectively stimulate such investment. So far, only few attempts have been made by ETF to make the Bulgarians familiar with the policy experience in Western Europe, particularly not with regard to continuous training for workers and training of the unemployed. There is a lot of information about what works and what does not, which could help the Bulgarian government and the social partners in designing effective measures. Such information about effective measures is highly needed in the coming years when Bulgaria has to develop programs absorbing ESF aid.

Although the information situation with respect to VET has improved in Bulgaria, hardly anything is known about the impact of VET on the labour market and the economy. Are young people with vocational education more or less successful in the labour market than young people with different types of education? What is the return to vocational education compared to other type of education? What is future need for people with a background in VET? Policy analyses that might provide answers to these and other questions are lacking. Filling this gap seems to be important.
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS WITH RESPECT TO INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Relevance

Almost all projects/activities have been relevant (in respect to Bulgarian national priorities; EU policies, the reform process). There are no project/activities performing poorly on relevance.

Efficiency

In the majority of cases the projects/activities have been implemented efficiently. The following key factors contributed to the efficiency of the projects:

− The ETF good administrative skills were very important especially in the early period when the projects had to be implemented in an unsettled environment.
− The competences of ETF staff. The ETF managers demonstrated their commitment, professionalism, competence and networking skills. Their input was appreciated by both the Bulgarian stakeholders and the representatives of the European Commission, particularly by the former ones. For many of the implemented projects the work of the ETF managers can be regarded as a factor increasing the efficiency of the projects in general.
− Local knowledge and continuity of expertise is an ETF asset appreciated both by the Commission and the Bulgarian stakeholders. Projects and activities implemented in the country are interlinked, feed each other, as well as the EC programmes and build on the achieved results. In this way the efficiency of each particular intervention is definitely increased.
− The ETF expertise in VET, research capacity developed by ETF staff

On the other hand certain aspects should be mentioned which diminished the efficiency

− In a number of cases the ETF tended to produce rather ambitious terms of references compared to the resources available. This built-in inconsistency caused difficulties in the implementation of projects.
− The time defined by the ETF for project implementation as well as the timing of the starting-up period was not always optimal: often schedule were too pressed.

Effectiveness

As to the effectiveness (which was seen as the achievement of the project objectives) about half of the project/activities were fully satisfactory. There are no projects performing poorly on effectiveness. In certain cases the constrains linked to the country context did not allow full realisation of the objectives.

On the one hand the attainment of the main projects’ objectives contributed to acquisition of new skills and knowledge by Bulgarian stakeholders and increased the capacity of national institutions and the cooperation between them. On the other hand, the situation with data, VET
analysis (especially in relation to the labour market), and evaluation of VET issues remains rather poor in the country.

What concerns the ETF products (reports, monographs, reviews, etc.) and their quality, they are valued by Bulgarian stakeholders and the Commission. However, products could have been disseminated more widely than actually happened. We also found that in some cases the provided expertise is not fully utilised by the Commission. On the other hand, more operational and less general recommendations for future interventions would be more appreciated by the Commission services.

**Impact**

Although the impact issues are not easy to measure and we had to base our judgements on the opinion of a limited number of interviewees, it is still possible to conclude that about half of the project/activities have shown satisfactory impact results.

Raising awareness, attracting attention of a larger audience to VET issues, as well as increased competences and improved cooperation between stakeholders were the most often registered impacts. In a number of cases new institutions and initiatives were stimulated (institutions, like HRDC under VETERST and BAMDE under MTP-I; nationally financed projects, like “100” launched by ME; national networks, like network of VET Centres under the Chamber of Commerce; other donors’ projects, like the chain: MTP I - Employers Initiative – MTP II). Next to it some projects (like VETERST) made clear political impact by stimulating the elaboration of new laws and establishment of new institutions, which exist up till now and form the framework for VET development. On the other hand, the impacts of some interventions were less transparent and clear.

**Sustainability**

For sustainability the results are not as good as for the other criteria. One project/activity performs poorly on this aspect, while only one other is fully satisfactory on this point. On other cases there is some evidence of sustainable results, but not very strong. Although in most cases the rather weak results on sustainability are caused by context factors which are out of the control of ETF, it is still relevant.

**Added value**

The development of inter-institutional dialogues, personal contacts, networking and facilitation, fostering exchange of experiences can be seen as real value added by ETF in the majority of projects.

**Additional conclusion**

Is that although a lot of information was available for our evaluation, the data situation was not optimal. We make the following remarks on this point:

a. There are no “Country Files” within the ETF system of administering and handling the project information. It makes the general picture of one country activities not transparent. Under these circumstances the task of reconstructing the history of almost 10-years ETF intervention in Bulgaria turns out to be a hard issue, which can be compared with making puzzle of numerous pieces.
b. While going through project files we discovered that in some cases project information is not complete.

c. Not all the projects are systematically evaluated by ETF. Evaluating projects after some time, as we had to do, is difficult, as those involved cannot always be traced. Moreover, the ones that can be traced have sometimes difficulties in remembering what happened in the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support to the Commission; Provision of analysis and information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Training Programme Phare BG 93.15</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Training Programme Phare BG 9908.01</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VETERST Phare BG 95.06</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Preparatory Program for the ESF (SPP-ESF) Phare</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of the Culture and Practice of Social and Civil Dialogue</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phare programming 2001-2004</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation process on LLL Memorandum and Consultation process on LLL</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving the Lisbon goals: contribution to VET Country reports for Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer reviews of implementation of VET policy</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National observatory</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Monograph on Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution Building in Human Resources Development</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET PR</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF Employers’ initiatives project</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of a programme of cooperation with Cedefop</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0/+</td>
<td>0/+</td>
<td>0/?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - fully achieved  
0 - partially achieved  
- - not achieved  
? - not clear (we apply this score in situations when the available sources (evaluation, monitoring reports, project files, interviewees, etc.) provide with contradictory or unclear conclusions)  
NR - not relevant (the character and nature of different ETF interventions do not allow to apply all standard evaluation criteria to all interventions; in certain cases we use “NR” score to report that particular criterion is not suitable for particular activity)
5.2 **CONCLUSION OVERALL EVALUATION**

The overall conclusion is that the work done by ETF in Bulgaria has been useful. Without ETF’s contribution it would have been difficult for the Bulgarians to develop the necessary institutions and legislation in the field of VET and to put VET issues on the political agenda that were relevant for the accession process and are now relevant to participate as a member state. ETF’s activities also helped to:

- improve policy-making in the field of VET by giving concrete advice to Bulgarian officials;
- improve the cooperation between the various Bulgarian actors in the field of VET;
- improve the information situation concerning VET;
- improve the quality of a number of VET schools;
- stimulate training activities in Bulgaria (for instance by helping the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce to develop a training institution).

However, the latter activity was abandoned in recent years, when ETF, on request of the Commission, started concentrating on a supporting role in EC initiatives. One of the latter activities is organizing training for organizations that will have to play a key role in the future structural funds programmes. From the interviews with Bulgarian stakeholders our conclusion is that ETF’s activities in the late 1990s and the early years after 2000 were more highly valued by the Bulgarian stakeholders than later activities in which ETF played a supporting role for the EC. This has more to do with the type of activities than with the role ETF played in it. EC officials were generally positive about the way ETF has performed in these projects.

Although a lot has been achieved, it did not (or perhaps: not yet) lead to higher participation in VET. In all types of VET (initial vocational education, continuous training and training for the unemployed) Bulgaria is lagging behind the new EU countries, making the distance with the old EU countries quite big. Furthermore, there is no evidence of a clear improvement.

Since many factors outside the control of VET affect the Bulgarian VET system, one cannot expect too much about the impact of ETF’s activities on the performance of the system. However, when we look at the ETF activities the following points could have received more attention:

- spreading the conclusion from the international evaluation literature that investment in VET pays off for individual workers and companies as well as for society as a whole;
- providing the Bulgarian stakeholders with information about good practices in the field of policies promoting higher participation in VET.

We also observe that although the information situation with respect to VET has improved, there is still not much information on the labour market outcomes of VET. What is the rate of return to VET compared to other types of education? Do people with vocational education have more stable work lives than people with a different type of education? What is, both in qualitative and in quantitative terms, the need for workers with a VET background in the labour market? Information like this, which seems vital for proper policy-development and for proper educational choice, is missing.

One of the reasons for the low participation rates in continuous training and training for the unemployed, is the lack of funding. However, once Bulgaria joins the Union it will have the
possibility to benefit from the Structural Funds aid. Information about good practices of policies promoting participation in VET will then be needed to make effective programs. Furthermore, policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation must be develop further to run programs more efficiently.

**Summary table of conclusions overall evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item/evaluation question</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressing the priorities of the country in VET</td>
<td>Country initially lacked the know-how even to develop priorities. ETF helped the Bulgarian stakeholders to develop basic know-how and to get in touch with the EU agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF activities reflecting the dynamics of the reform process</td>
<td>ETF activities partly shaped the VET reform process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency with EC priorities and policies</td>
<td>Shift in ETF activities in line with EC wishes. However, the development is not necessarily positive from the viewpoint of the Bulgarians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to the initiation of larger scale EC projects</td>
<td>ETF did not trigger big Phare projects, but they helped to raise awareness of the importance of VET issues. As a result Bulgarian authorities decided to bring these issues in project proposals. The same holds for ESF programs. However the Bulgarians lack knowledge about the type of activities, measures and instruments that would effectively promote VET. Little attention has been paid to the content of the policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue with and between Bulgarian stakeholders</td>
<td>Positive influence on the cooperation between different ministries dealing with VET. Also positive influence on the involvement of the social partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to improvement of information with regard to VET and VET-related labour market issues</td>
<td>Positive contribution. However, available information still shows important deficiencies. Further improvement is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to improvement of information analysis capacity</td>
<td>Positive contribution. However, hardly anything is known about the returns to VET and its impact on the labour market. Few examples of more developed evaluations only available for training of the unemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on institutional and legal developments</td>
<td>Clear positive influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on policy developments</td>
<td>Only few attention has been paid to disseminating good practice policies promoting participation in VET.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on VET performance</td>
<td>No clear signs of improvement in performance VET system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability of what has been achieved</td>
<td>The improved situation with respect to the available information and the information analysis capacity will probably continue to exist after ETF has left, provided that part of the role by ETF is taken over by other European institutions such as Cedefop. Without external support there is a real danger that the situation will again deteriorate. Some of the improvements in training infrastructure are now independent of ETF. Improved institutions and legislation are permanent effects. With respect to many projects the results on sustainability are weak, what is caused in many cases by the context factors which are out of the control of ETF.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

I. The possibility to improve the performance of the VET system will highly depend on the possibility to use future funding from the EU structural funds. However, from the interviews with the Bulgarian stakeholders, we found out that:

− there are no clear structures for developing and managing individual ESF-projects;
− there is a lack of competencies in developing and managing projects.

Although ETF has carried out projects in this field, there is still a big need.

II. While elaborating possible ETF interventions in ESF field it is worthwhile paying attention to the following aspects. The quality of policies does not only depend on competencies in the field of writing project proposals and managing projects and programmes. It is also, or even more so, to make policies that are effective in promoting VET participation and in raising employability and productivity of the people trained. From the international evaluation literature a lot is known about the effectiveness of various types of measures. Making this information available to the Bulgarians may contribute to more effective policies. There seems to be reason to shift attention somewhat from institutions to concrete policies. Disseminating the conclusions from the international evaluation literature that investing in human capital yields high returns to individuals and – companies could also help to promote participation in VET.

III. Programs cannot be run efficiently without information on their outcomes. Policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation are still very weak in Bulgaria. ETF could also help to develop this more. Competent Bulgarian researchers are available and should be involved in policy analysis in the field of VET. In the field of training for the unemployed a few examples can be given of serious evaluations involving Bulgarian researchers. ETF could organise seminars involving civil servants, staff members from the National Observatory, Bulgarian researchers, foreign experts and others to develop an agenda for policy research in the field of VET. Future ESF funding will contain resources for evaluation in the form of technical assistance.

IV. From the interviews with the Bulgarian stakeholders it became clear that from their point of view also in the coming years ETF’s help is highly needed. Perhaps training a sufficient number of government officials in the issues mentioned previously could reduce the dependency on ETF. Skills in the field of program development, management and monitoring/evaluation should be available on a much wider scale, both nationally as well as regionally. But, as was already said, knowledge about the content of potential policy measures is equally important as management skills.

V. The efficiency of the new training initiatives can be increased by paying more careful attention to the following aspects:

− for achieving better overall outcomes of training and avoiding overlapping it is essential to ensure closer coordination with other donors and projects providing similar services
− training programmes need more careful elaboration (more clear formulation of objectives, conceptual justification, if tailor-made approach is chosen, it has to be aimed at the achievement of particular training goals, and search for an optimal combination of theoretical and practical interactive sessions)
− knowledge about the content of potential policy measures is equally important as management skills.
target group formation should correspond to the defined training objectives and should not be too broad/general; development of a more clear view on the roles of the different stakeholders in the programming process can help in forming adequate groups of trainees;

- it is preferable that the choice of the training-implementing institution is organised on a competitive basis.

VI. It is difficult for actors on the regional and local level to have direct access to the information provided by the European Commission and the institutions connected to the Commission such as ETF. The language problem and limited access to the Internet seems to be the most important reasons. ETF could help the Bulgarian authorities in making information coming from the European Commission available to a broader group of people working in the VET field. This would enable regional and local officials to informal learning of competencies in managing programs and in policy development.

VII. Although information on good and bad practices in the Western countries is valuable, experiences from other new EU countries are equally or even more important. In the latter countries the socio-economic context resembles the Bulgarian one more closely. Therefore, it is more likely that measures that proved to work in these countries will also work in Bulgaria. Therefore, Bulgarian policy makers expressed the need for in-depth contacts with their colleagues in the new EU countries, particularly the ones that have already progressed in the way they with, for example, EU programs. There is not so much need for large-scale seminars involving many countries, but more for in-depth small-scale workshops. ETF may help in organizing such workshops. Perhaps, such meetings could be organized in a similar way as the peer reviews that are already held for a couple of years within the framework of the European Employment Strategy.

VIII. What concerns the ETF products containing recommendations and priority areas for future assistance, it appears that ETF has to formulate those recommendations for future interventions in a more operational and less general way, specifying in more detail what could be done and providing clear examples of how it can be done.

IX. While designing new interventions ETF has to be more realistic in finding the balance between resources available and planned outcomes, to build the activities along better estimated time schedules.

X. It appears to be useful for ETF information and administrative procedures to develop separate ‘Country files’ accumulating the whole “history” of ETF interventions in particular country. This would allow for more long-term transparency of the activities implemented, provide a possibility to easier assess the achieved results and adjust the activities when needed. Such country files could contain information on:

- country specific projects and initiatives (with relevant project information: dates of implementation, objectives, participating institutions, ETF staff involved, budget, main project results, etc.)
- multi-country projects in which particular country participated (details on the involvement of this particular country; what this cross-country project meant for this particular country; country institutions/experts involved, country specific results achieved) –this type of information currently is the most difficult to find out, but as the majority of ETF initiatives has a cross-country character, the “country” outcomes of such initiatives have to become transparent and visible;
- relevant evaluation and monitoring reports;
- list of ETF staff involved with a reference to the implemented projects/initiatives and contact details;
- list of country experts (may be with short CVs) and institutions involved with a reference to projects/initiatives and their contact details; lists of local project participants, trainees, etc.
- key information on the National Observatory: activities/staff/projects assigned by ETF to NO; etc.

It is essential that such country-files are regularly up-dated (most likely ETF country managers have to take care of it). The majority of abovementioned items can be included and combined in one file – Intervention Matrix (similar to one elaborated in Annex 1 of the current evaluation).

XI. ETF has to pay more attention and take more initiatives in the dissemination field (not only rely on the National Observatory in these matters, who’s resources are very restricted). It appears that currently certain essential materials have limited circulation. In the future dissemination has to be targeted not only at the key involved ministries (MOLSP and MES), but also at a broader range of VET related institutions and NGOs. A combination of electronic dissemination lists with distribution of hard copies can improve the situation and better meet the expectations of the stakeholders. Apart from using the dissemination possibilities of the National Observatory, ETF should explore and consider new dissemination channels (for instance, country wide network of VET Centres existing under Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce). This approach is relevant both for ETF products (reports, monographs, studies) and information materials (EU documents, examples of good practices in new and old member states, international evaluations of VET experiences, mentioned earlier in item S25).
ANNEX 1  TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EVALUATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annex 2</th>
<th>Matrix of ETF Activities 1996-2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall objective</td>
<td><strong>ETF mission</strong>: to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development by enabling our partner countries to reform their vocational education and training systems mainly through the EC Phare, CARDS, Tacis and MEDA Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Support to the Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective as formulated in &quot;ETF Work Programme 2002&quot;</td>
<td>As a centre of expertise, the principal role of the Foundation is to respond to requests for support from the European Commission. This assistance is usually delivered at the programming, identification, monitoring, evaluation or dissemination stages within the context of project cycle management. Services are provided to five Directorates General within the European Commission (External Relations; Enlargement; Employment and Social Affairs; EuropeAid; and Education and Culture).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective as formulated in &quot;ETF Work Programme 2004&quot;</td>
<td>To respond to needs articulated by Commission services especially in relation to programme design and implementation, institution building, and policy dissemination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions into which objective is translated:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provision of expertise and information in the pre-accession financial assistance programming cycle, primarily in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provision of analytical input at the request of DG ESA in the process of monitoring the implementation of the priorities identified in the JEP for employment policy as well as in the planning and preparation for the ESF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continue to facilitate the more systematic association of the acceding and candidate countries with the EU policy developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>update the ETF &quot;Review of progress in vocational training reforms for Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey (an input to the regular annual reports by DG Enlargement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provide support to DG ESA in the process of preparing Bulgaria...to take part in the EES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reinforce ETF funded support for institution building in the field of human resources development in Bulgaria... in cooperation with EU assistance programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Training Programme</td>
<td>1997-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Training Programme</td>
<td>2000-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| VETERST Phare BG 95.06       | 1996-1999 | ETF commented on ToR prepared by PMU, content management of the project, financial management through PMU in BG  
Contractor: British Council | Country manager (Henrik Faudel) + Support of the Strategy unit of ETF | To initiate and support VET reform in Bulgaria Impo... | * 18 standards were elaborated on a pilot basis and modular approach was introduced in the VET system  
* a total of 33 pilot schools from 18 towns were involved in the project for approval of the modular curriculum approach for vocational training in 18 vocations  
* A long-term overarching VET policy paper developed  
* 3 centres for teachers training established  
* 3 foreign language centres established  
* new VET Law developed and ratified in July 1999  
* establishment of the National Agency for VET (NAVET)  
* broad dissemination of results (see previous column) | * Political stability and consistency in the reform Process  
* Commitment of Bulgarian authorities to the introduce changes  
* Successful identification of the pilot schools  
* Commitment of schools to introduce new methods  
* Ability and commitment of authorities to launch dissemination strategy  
* Commitment of the authorities to elaborate and establish new VET Law and NAVET |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title and information</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ETF role</th>
<th>ETF HR</th>
<th>Project Objectives</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
<th>Assumptions and risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Preparatory Program for the ESF (SPP-ESF)</td>
<td>1998-2000</td>
<td>ETF managed component on ESF, no PMU, funds stayed with ETF</td>
<td>3 ETF staff: project manager and 2 assistants + assistance of the country manager on part-time basis</td>
<td>To organize a series of measures to help the candidate countries to prepare for future access to ESF and in particular: to enhance the understanding of CC administrations as to Structural Fund policies in general and the ESF in particular and their implementation requirements to facilitate administrative changes which promote horizontal coordination among gov-t agencies concerned with future implementation of the ESF to train officials from relevant ministries on the design and implementation requirements of a national program supported by the ESF on basis of a preceding socio-economic analysis to increase the awareness of social partner representatives in each country on the objectives, benefits and operational requirements of an ESF supported program and as to their role</td>
<td>For Bulgaria: +Enhanced understanding by public administrators of SF policies and implementation requirements +Knowledge acquired has been used for the definition of HRD components within NDP and NEAP + Awareness raised, increased competences, national training plans drawn via: * 3 multi-country conferences on ESF priorities and principles (Sofia, Warsaw and Prague) + conference in Lisbon (Jan 1999) * Study visits to Finland and Spain * NTI established – New Bulgarian University Centre of Public Administration (4-week training on ESF for civil servants) * National Training Plans drafted * ‘Supplementary seminar’ in BG for 30-40 officials (in-depth and technical information on ESF) (end 1999) * ‘National Seminar’ for 100 participants – focus on ESF principles and methodology (end 1999) * Tailor-made Local seminars in the BG priority regions (since Jan 2000) march 2000 Montana, June 2000 Sofia</td>
<td>* Success in identifying project participants: motivated and committed participants * Viability of the newly established institution: NTI * Commitment of Bulgarian side to transfer the acquired skills and competences into the development of National Training Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phare Multi-country</td>
<td>ZZ 97-17</td>
<td>Subcontractor: ILO institute (for National Training Institute component) Bulgarian NO provided support to ETF in organisation of seminars</td>
<td>Gerard Mayen, Luis Kerr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 mln – ESF component</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 components:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Horizontal support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Statistics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preparation on ESF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fisheries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of the Culture and Practice of Social and Civil Dialogue Phare B-2000/054 Multi-country: 9</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>ETF designed and implemented the project on the request of European Economic and Social Committee) Contractor in BG: HRDC</td>
<td>1 ETF person part time: Francesco Panzica</td>
<td>To support the development of a new system of industrial relations encouraging the consolidation of independent employers' and workers' organisations as well as the development of effective social dialogue practices In a more general way to enhance the possibilities of the non-governmental organisations in these countries to play an active role in the preparation and implementation of national economic and social policies Specific objectives: To reinforce the specific expertise and skills of SP to engage in effective social dialogue practices between themselves and with policy makers To foster a closer relationship between the interests discussed in the social dialogue process and those of civil society To promote cooperation as well as the exchange of experience and good practice and mutual coordination between the SP and NGOs at regional level and with counterparts in CC and EU</td>
<td>* enhanced conditions for social dialogue in CC and reinforced links between social partners and representatives of the civil society * developed cross-border cooperation at regional level * networks between social partners from EU and CC established * cooperation between NGOs at regional level strengthened * functioning of institutions designed to secure the participation of civil society in policy making developed/improved</td>
<td>* Political and social stability, continuity of reform process * Success in identifying project participants – social partners organisations * Commitment of the participants, openness and willingness to learn new approaches * Success in identification regional participants (SP, NGOs) * Willingness of regional partners to cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution Building in Human Resources Development in BG Multi-country: BG, RO, TU BG: 99,000</td>
<td>2002 (sept-nov)</td>
<td>ETF prepared ToR, tendered the project and monitored project implementation Contractor BGZ Subcontractors</td>
<td>ETF Ulrike Damyanovich</td>
<td>To train competent government officials who will be in charge of the implementation of the Structural Funds and in particular those who already are in charge of Phare, ISPA and SAPARD projects in Bulgaria. (emphasis on inter-institutional cooperation) (study visit to Objective 1 region, seminars) Tailor-made support and training/advice in the planning and design of projects in HRD, ensuring the transfer of knowledge from EC programming. Providing examples of EU best practice in the design and development of ESF-type actions. Focusing on HRD within the context of the EES. Establishment of a network of common knowledge regarding priorities and objectives for HRD projects.</td>
<td>* 34 people trained from respective ministries and institutions * training materials developed * examples of EU good practice of ESF-type actions shown to the participants (study visit to Berlin) * recommendations for future formulated * inter-institutional cooperation improved</td>
<td>* relevant criteria for selection of participants * commitment and motivation of the participants * dissemination mechanism elaborated * partners awareness in importance of cooperation * training meets the needs of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Institution Building in the field of HRD C35 Multi-country: BG, RO, TU Total: 150,000 BG: 49,980</td>
<td>Oct 2003-Mar 2004</td>
<td>ETF prepared ToR as a follow-up to ETF-IB-2002, and monitored the project</td>
<td>ETF Ulrike Damyanovich Links: further development of ETF IB 2002, complements Phare 2003 on adult learning and peer review on CVT in LLL context</td>
<td>To provide IB support to the national/regional VET/labour market stakeholders in BG in planning and implementing HRD projects within the overall on-going economic reform, and with particular emphasis on regional cooperation (in 2 regions and disseminated in 2 other regions). Concentrates on CVT in a LLL context Tailor-made support and training/advice Provide examples of best practice from EU and CC Improve inter-institutional cooperation at national/regional level I the field of CVT</td>
<td>* a network of national/regional key stakeholders established * IB provided to 50 VET/labour market stakeholders in 2 regions (new skills for design and implementation of CVT acquired) * training materials developed and delivered (emphasis on everyday work) * dissemination initiatives implemented by trainees in 2 other regions * report on main findings and recommendations for transfer experience to other regions</td>
<td>* willingness of stakeholders at national and regional levels to cooperate * successful identification of participants according to relevant criteria * commitment and motivation of the participants * commitment of the authorities to disseminate and implement results in other regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution Building D22</td>
<td>Sep 2004-Mar 2005</td>
<td>ETF prepared ToR as a follow-up to ETF-IB-2002, and monitored the project</td>
<td>ETF Ulrike Damyanovich</td>
<td>To provide IB support to the regional VET and LM stakeholders, while encouraging better cooperation with the national stakeholders in BG in planning and implementing HRD projects within the overall going economic reform. It will take place in 2 regions: NC and SC, which were involved in 2003 IB project. Dissemination of results in electronic form (1) Tailor-made support and training to regional and municipal/local stakeholders (focus on design of priorities in CVT at regional level in line with local development plans, partnership development among stakeholders, design of possible projects under Phare/ESF in CVT); (2) provide examples of best practice from EU MS and CC in the design, dev-t and implementation of ESF-type actions on a regional level (CVT+ cooperation between stakeholders); (3) Improve inter-institutional cooperation at national/regional level in the field of CVT and foster CVT platform in BG, involving major stakeholders</td>
<td>* A network of key national/regional stakeholders established * Enhanced capacity of national and regional institutions and stakeholders to plan and design HRD projects * IB provided to 50-70 stakeholders from regional/municipal admn-ns, ed LM institutions at regional level in 2 regions * new skills acquired for Phare/ESF programming and implementation in regional context</td>
<td>* relevant criteria for selection of participants * participants are motivated and committed * relevance and high quality of training materials * regional and national institutions are motivated to implement the acquired skills and transfer them into HRD plans * training meets the needs of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for IB in the field of HRD/CVT Multi-country: BG, RO, TU</td>
<td>170.000</td>
<td>Contractor: BG HRDC</td>
<td>To provide IB support to the regional VET and LM stakeholders, while encouraging better cooperation with the national stakeholders in BG in planning and implementing HRD projects within the overall going economic reform. It will take place in 2 regions: NC and SC, which were involved in 2003 IB project. Dissemination of results in electronic form (1) Tailor-made support and training to regional and municipal/local stakeholders (focus on design of priorities in CVT at regional level in line with local development plans, partnership development among stakeholders, design of possible projects under Phare/ESF in CVT); (2) provide examples of best practice from EU MS and CC in the design, dev-t and implementation of ESF-type actions on a regional level (CVT+ cooperation between stakeholders); (3) Improve inter-institutional cooperation at national/regional level in the field of CVT and foster CVT platform in BG, involving major stakeholders</td>
<td>* A network of key national/regional stakeholders established * Enhanced capacity of national and regional institutions and stakeholders to plan and design HRD projects * IB provided to 50-70 stakeholders from regional/municipal admn-ns, ed LM institutions at regional level in 2 regions * new skills acquired for Phare/ESF programming and implementation in regional context</td>
<td>* relevant criteria for selection of participants * participants are motivated and committed * relevance and high quality of training materials * regional and national institutions are motivated to implement the acquired skills and transfer them into HRD plans * training meets the needs of participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for the preparation of Country Monograph on VET system</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>An independent ETF product upon request of DG EMPL</td>
<td>3 ETF staff: Ulrike Damyanovich, Franci Kluser, Alison Kennedy; + Expert FAS Ireland + HRDC (NO) + 1 local expert</td>
<td>The main purpose of the Monograph is to provide a useful analytical tool to assist BG and EC to monitor the progress in implementing the JAP priorities; to identify the most urgent needs and gaps in the field of HRD for the labour market</td>
<td>* the Monograph prepared in consultations with national stakeholders * the Monograph submitted to the Commission * the Monograph appreciated by the Bulgarian side, is translated in Bulgarian and is disseminated</td>
<td>* cooperation with BNO and support of BNO in the preparation of the Monograph * cooperation with national stakeholders * access to relevant information and data * high quality of the product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country monographs prepared for all 10 new MS and BG, RO, TU</td>
<td>24.620</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monograph seminar</td>
<td>Nov. 2003</td>
<td>3 ETF staff: Ulrike Damyanovich, F. Kluser, A. Kennedy; + Expert FAS Ireland + HRDC (NO) + 1 local expert</td>
<td>Presentation of the product, feedback, dissemination</td>
<td>* feedback received * further dissemination steps</td>
<td>* willingness of Bulgarian stakeholders to disseminate and use the results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phare programming</td>
<td>2001-2004</td>
<td>Advice to DG Enlargement</td>
<td>ETF Ulrike Damyanovich, Haralabos Fragoulis</td>
<td>Comments / advise on Phare projects in the field of economic and social cohesion sector to DG ENLARG to support the VET/labour market reform process: written input as well as participation in programming missions</td>
<td>* comments accepted by DG ENLARG and BG counterparts and incorporated into programming documents * terms of reference * reports</td>
<td>* cooperation with BG stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation process on LLL Memorandum</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>DG Education and Culture</td>
<td>ETF</td>
<td>Assessment of progress with regard to EU Memorandum on LLL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U. Damyanovich, H. Fragoulis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation process on LLL</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>Assessment on request of DG EAC (LLL 2002-2003)</td>
<td>ETF</td>
<td>Comments / advise on Phare projects in the field of economic and social cohesion sector to DG ENLARG to support the reform process (revision of Phare fiches)</td>
<td>* assessment paper available and integrated by DG EAC in overall assessment</td>
<td>* data and information available * cooperation with BG stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U. Damyanovich, H. Fragoulis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAP monitoring process</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Comments / advise on request from DG Empl (JAP)</td>
<td>ETF</td>
<td>Comments / advise on JAP Progress report in particular with regard to HRD in a labour market context; participation in JAP seminar</td>
<td>* ETF inputs delivered to Phare project cycle * ETF support delivered to JAP monitoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U. Damyanovich, H. Fragoulis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up to Lisbon Process D20: BG, RO, TU 3.000</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Lisbon: assessment on request from DG Education for Maastricht conference</td>
<td>ETF</td>
<td>To assess the progress of VET in BG in relation to Lisbon/Copenhagen criteria (publication), research project (similar reports for 25 MS are contracted by EC to British consortium of research groups; ETF was asked to to prepare for BG, RO, TU)</td>
<td>* Report 'Achieving the Lisbon goals: the contribution to VET'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U. Damyanovich, H. Fragoulis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Provision of Information and analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong> as formulated in &quot;ETF Work Programme 2002&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Foundation supports the development of structured and standard international information and analysis on vocational and labour market-related training in partner countries. The Foundation’s principal network for information provision and analysis is the system of National Observatories which operates throughout the Candidate Countries, Western Balkans and the NIS region and which is linked to the Foundation’s Advisory Forum. In 2002, the Foundation aims to broaden the network to include also the MEDA region. According to the needs and capacities within each region, the Foundation will also focus on reinforcing international-level information-gathering and analysis as a long term sustainable function within partner countries. This will be achieved by strengthening the capacities and outputs of national institutions to provide Observatory services such as assessment of vocational training and its links to the labour market and co-ordination of national stakeholder networks. In addition, the Foundation also disseminates to its partner countries structured information and analysis about EU and Member State approaches and best practice in the field of vocational training.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong> as formulated in &quot;ETF Work Programme 2004&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>To continue support to and cooperation with National Observatories in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and capitalise on ETF investment in the National Observatories in the acceding countries. Actions into which objective is translated: to continue to provide adequate support to the National Observatories in Bulgaria,.. to cooperate with Cedefop to complete the preparatory phase of familiarizing the NOs with the functions and working methods of Cedefop’s ReferNet (facilitate possible inclusion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian National Observatory</td>
<td>Since 1997</td>
<td>ETF network</td>
<td>H. Faudel, L.Kerr, U.Damyanovich</td>
<td>To contribute to policy making in the Bulgarian VET system through data collection updating the country report on the VET system and the labour market by strengthening links between various VET institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Bulgarian National Observatory Multy-country | 2002 | ETF network | Overall coordinators for the Observatory network:  
- Alison Kennedy 2002  
- Jean-Raymond Masson 2004  
BG:  
- Ullrike Damyanovich, Irene Bianchi and Margareta Nikolovska (2000-2004) | to develop further National Observatory capacities and to provide structured information and analyses on vocational training and labour market/employment policy development in the context of LLL as an input to accession preparations at national level and to ETF’s analytical work to support National Observatories in elaborating and implementing country-based strategic development plans | * a short analytical country report and regular updates on VT and LM/employment developments in the context of LLL  
* quantitative information/statistical data on VT, LLL, LM/employment policies in accordance to international standards  
* a country fact sheet on VET  
* ETF VET PR and following consultations with national stakeholders  
* NO web-page updated  
* assistance to the implementation of ETF projects assured  
* local support to ETF missions assured | * relevant capacity of the BNO  
* availability of data and information according to international standards  
* high degree of cooperation from the side of BNO staff  
* willingness of BG stakeholders to cooperate and recognise BNO |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title and information</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ETF role</th>
<th>ETF HR</th>
<th>Project Objectives</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
<th>Assumptions and risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bulgarian National Observatory Multy-country | 2003 | Overall coordinator for the observatory network: Vaclav Klenha BG: Irene Bianchi | to prepare National Observatories to participate in the Cedefop Refer network to develop further NO capacities and to provide structured information and analyses on vocational training and labour market/employment policy development in the context of LLL. This will contribute to accession preparations at national level and to ETF’s analytical work | * report on financing: investment in human resources  
* plan for building the consortium developed and agreed with relevant partners  
* assistance to the implementation of ETF projects assured  
* NOs perform selected tasks/activities similar to REFER consortia  
* NO web-page updated  
* ETF VET PR and following consultations with national stakeholders  
* a short analytical country report and regular updates on VT and LM/employment developments in the context of LLL | * increased capacity of the BNO  
* access to relevant data and information  
* high quality of BNO’s products  
* ability to identify local experts |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title and information</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ETF role</th>
<th>ETF HR</th>
<th>Project Objectives</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
<th>Assumptions and risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian National Observatory</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>ETF network</td>
<td>Overall coordinator for the observatory network: Jean-Raymond Massan</td>
<td>To continue support of, and cooperation with, National Observatories and capitalise on the ETF investment in the NO</td>
<td>* National Observatory provides services and carries out work programmes as agreed with ETF</td>
<td>* increased capacity of the BNO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-country BG, RO, TU</td>
<td>D24</td>
<td></td>
<td>BG: V. Damyanovich and Irene Bianchi Margareta Nikolovshe</td>
<td>Main activities: - Update country report - consultations on the VET PR - seminars on the Objectives and Copenhagen process - key indicators 2004 - training in evaluation and monitoring of ESF-type projects - follow-up of peer review and IB activities - identification and transfer of good examples of practice on LLL - preparation of thematic report</td>
<td>* preparation for possible future integration of Observatory into Cedefop network continued</td>
<td>* commitment to participate in cooperation with Cedefop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* access to relevant data and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* high quality of BNO’s products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* ability to identify local experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET PR Multi-country</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>ETF product assessment with support from NO request from DG Enlargement</td>
<td>ETF country manager Ulrike Damyanovich</td>
<td>To provide input into DG Enlargement regular report on BG towards accession: Chapter 18 education and training in particular The analyses of the situation and key developments in VET in the CC which is done to contribute to the reports which are drawn up annually by the Commission to track the progress towards accession. Analyses also helps to improve the targeting of EU Phare Programme in the area of HRD</td>
<td>* updated Review documents prepared and submitted to the Commission</td>
<td>* fruitful cooperation with BNO and local stakeholders * availability of data and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer reviews of implementation of VET policy</td>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>In the framework of the cooperation with the stability Pact</td>
<td>ETF : country manager U.Damyanovich, H. Fragoulis + International team</td>
<td>To improve local capacities to assess vocational training systems (to enhance the understanding of VT policies, EU hard and soft acquis; to improve local capacities to prioritise and define an agenda for VT reforms; to promote regional exchange and cooperation) To review and assess the situation of CVT in an LLL context and provide recommendation for policy development PR (PR of CVT in LLL in BG, in 2 regions NC &amp; SC): - a complementary exercise to support Phare 2003 on adult learning and develop adult learning strategy; - further dev-t and research of the findings about CVT in the Monograph</td>
<td>* thematic background papers drawn up * peer review missions carried out * national validation and other staff development events held * analytical reports published in English and in Bulgarian * dissemination activities carried out</td>
<td>* strong ‘peer’ team identified and formed * cooperation with BG stakeholders * access to relevant data and information * openness and cooperative behaviour of interviewees * commitment of BG authorities to disseminate the results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. Development projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title and information</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ETF role</th>
<th>ETF HR</th>
<th>Project Objectives</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
<th>Assumptions and risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong> as formulated in ‘ETF Work Programme 2002’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In each region a small number of activities will take place which aim to pilot or prepare the ground for more substantial measures at a later stage. It is through such development activities that the Foundation encourages and supports partner country innovation across the wide range of issues associated with economies and labour markets in transition. The outcomes from these ‘test bed’ initiatives will also contribute to the stock of knowledge and expertise available within the Foundation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong> as formulated in ‘ETF Work Programme 2004’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To accelerate and reinforce systematic cooperation and communication with Cedefop through the full and effective implementation of the commonly agreed Framework of Cooperation Actions into which objective is translated: Implementing the exit-entry strategies for each of the ten new member states to ensure their smooth and effective integration in Cedefop activities and network strengthening thematic cooperation with Cedefop, by: creating regular knowledge sharing opportunities developing common projects or initiatives in specific thematic areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title and information</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ETF role</th>
<th>ETF HR</th>
<th>Project Objectives</th>
<th>Indicators of success</th>
<th>Assumptions and risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETF Employers’ initiatives project ETF funds 150.000 (co-funded by OWZ)</td>
<td>19992000</td>
<td>ETF together with OWZ designed ToR Contractor: IBF, Partner: HRDC BG partner Links: Project to cover the gap between Phare Management Training Project I and MTP II</td>
<td>ETF: L.Kerr, U.Damyanovich, A.Trisoglio, R. Teunissen</td>
<td>To support management development in SMEs in Bulgaria To set up local capacity for consulting services for SMEs in Bulgaria To build the capacity of Business Support Organisations and Training Providers who supply services to Small &amp; Medium Enterprises, in order that they may identify and develop a response to staff development needs of those enterprises. Improve the skills and capacity of key staff within regional Chambers, NGOs that service SMEs and Employers Associations to: (a) Identify training needs and solutions for member companies; (b) Assist in the development of strategic plans including staff development plans; (c) Provide a range of consultancy services for the companies included in the pilot Build a capacity within regional Chambers, NGOs and Employers Associations to monitor training needs and training actions within the SME sector. Identify competent training providers and assist them in the development of generic training materials that meet the identified needs of SMEs and Business Support Organisations. Encourage networking (between participants; participants-training providers; participants – foreign counterparts)</td>
<td>* training programme and capacity building for 6 regional development offices and 5 Chambers of Commerce to service SMEs carried out * skills and knowledge of 16 individuals from regional development offices and Chambers of Commerce to service SMEs further developed * representatives of 6 regional development offices to participate in the new Phare programme for regional development in Bulgaria</td>
<td>* relevant criteria for selection of the participating institutions and stakeholders * commitment of the participating institutions * high quality and relevance of training materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project title and information</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>ETF role</td>
<td>ETF HR</td>
<td>Project Objectives</td>
<td>Indicators of success</td>
<td>Assumptions and risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of cooperation program with Cedefop</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td>Haralabos Fragoulis</td>
<td>To consolidate cooperation which started between ETF and Cedefop in 1997, a Framework for Cooperation between the two agencies was established in 2001: to prepare ACC for accession and clarify for them the role of each Agency</td>
<td>Candidate countries are better prepared to participate in Cedefop activities and to take part in EU policy development and implementation in the area of education, training and LLL</td>
<td>* commitment of the participants * cooperation between involved parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To facilitate the participation and involvement of CCs in Community vocational training policy development during the transition period before accession</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare CCs for full participation in Cedefop activities when they accede</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* commitment of the participants * cooperation between involved parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities which include the implementation of a programme of cooperation with Cedefop</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>Haralabos Fragoulis</td>
<td>Objective of the 2004 project: ACC become aware of, and actively participate in EU and Cedefop activities in the field of vocational training through concerted action by ETF and Cedefop</td>
<td>BG, RO and TU are familiar with Cedefop networks and activities</td>
<td>* commitment of the participants * cooperation between involved parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 3  LIST OF PERSONS/ORGANISATIONS
CONSULTED

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
– Mr. Aristotelis Margos - DG Employment
– Mr. Denis Kennedy - DG Employment
– Mr. Alastair Macphail - DG Education and Culture
– Mr. Paul Vandermeeren - DG Enlargement (previously)
– Mr. Martin Schieder - DG Enlargement
– Mr. Georg Fischer - DG Employment (previously)

EC DELEGATION IN BULGARIA
– Mrs. Pia Bjorkbacka - Employment, Social Policy and Education

EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION
– Mrs. Ulrike Damyanovic - Bulgaria Country Manager since 2001
– Mr. Henrik Faudel - Bulgaria Country Manager 1996-1999
– Mr. Arjen Vos - Head of ESEE Department
– Mr. Haralabos Fragoulis - Deputy Head of ESEE Department
– Mr. Gerard Mayen - Team Leader for the Observatory Function and Jordan Country Manager, MEDA Department
– Mr. Francesco Panzica - Albania Country Manager
– Mr. Robert Teunissen - Expert in Management Training and SME Development, EECA Department
– Mrs. Outi Kärkkäinen - ETF Evaluation Unit

STAKEHOLDERS IN BULGARIA
– Mrs. Penka Ganova - Ministry of Education and Science, Head of Department ‘Continuing Vocational Training’
– Mrs. Antoaneta Vojkova - Ministry of Education and Science, Chief Expert Department ‘Continuing Vocational Training’
– Mrs. Elka Dimitrova - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Director, Labour Market Policy Directorate
– Mrs. Lilia Dobroslavska - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Chief Expert, Labour Market Policy Directorate
– Mrs. Boyka Tsolova - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Expert, Labour Market Policy Directorate
– Mr. Krasimir Popov - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Director, Preaccession Funds and International Programmes and Projects Directorate
– Mrs. Rossitza Steljanova - Employment Agency, Deputy Director
Ms. Tzveta Dimitrova - Employment Agency, Head of Department, Programmes and Preaccession Funds
Ms. Dimitrina Kostadinova - Employment Agency, Director of Directorate
Mr. Eli Anavi - Ministry of Economy, Director, Enterprise Development Directorate
Ms. Elena Mitova - Ministry of Economy, State expert, Management of Programmes and Projects
Mr. Andrej Lalov - Ministry of Economy, Head of Coordination, Planning and Programming, Department of the Preaccession Programmes and Project Directorate
Mr. Joachim Frede - Ministry of Economy - Resident Twinning Adviser
Ms. Maria Antova - National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Vice-President
Mr. Johan Theesen - Institute for International Cooperation at the Association of the German Popular Universities (IIZ DVV), Regional Director SEE
Mr. Nikolay Pirimov - Deputy Director, Human Resource Development Centre
Mrs. Iskra Petrova - Human Resource Development Centre, Senior expert Bulgarian National Observatory
Mr. Ivo Baev - Human Resource Development Centre, expert Bulgarian National Observatory
Ms Vanya Tividosheva - Human Resource Development Centre, expert Bulgarian National Observatory
Mr. Tsako Pantaleev - Human Resource Development Centre, Director HRDC till 2002
Ms. Ekaterina Ignatova - BAMCO, Executive Director
Ms. Lilija Hristova - National Centre for Vocational Training within Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Secretary General
Ms. Julija Simeonova - Confederation of Independent Unions, Executive Secretary
Mr. Dimitar Matev - Balkan Institute of Labour and Social Policy, Vice president
Ms. Svetlana Alexandrova – Professor at New Bulgarian University, former Director of National Training Institute
ANNEX 4  LITERATURE AND DOCUMENTATION CONSULTED

5. 2004 Regular Report on Bulgaria’s progress towards accession. EC. Brussels, 6.10.2004
6. Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Bulgaria, October 2002
9. Progress towards the common objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks, working document, European Commission, 2004
11. Thematic review of national policies for education – Bulgaria, OECD, 2002
13. OECD, Co-financing Lifelong Learning, 2004
17. Thirteen years of cooperation and reforms in vocational education and training in the acceding and candidate countries, ETF 2003
27. K. Schönmann and O’Connel. Education, training and Employment dynamics. 2001
29. Vocational education and training against social exclusion (Bulgaria) ETF 2000
31. Teachers and trainers in the Bulgarian VET system. Bulgarian National Observatory. 2003
32. Financing: investment in human resources. Report. ETF ?
34. National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). Detailed presentation of the institute available on the web-site; Standard (state education requirement) for vocational qualification acquisition, provided in NAVET
35. VETA (available only in Bulgarian)
38. Presentation materials of Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce
39. Presentation materials of BAMCO
45. Ex-post evaluation of the project “Action plan to promote the culture and practice of social dialogue and of participation of civil society” Final Report. May 2003
47. Employers’ Initiative Project. Assessment of outputs and recommendations
54. Management Training Programme BG 9908.01 – Case Studies
55. MTP – Climbing the Ladder which Leads towards Success. Euromodel XXI, 2002
59. Opinion of the Specialised Section for External Relations on Promoting the involvement of Civil Society Organisations in South-East Europe – Past Experiences and Future Challenges. European Economic and Social Committee, May 7, 2003
60. Phare Special Preparatory Programme for the European Social Fund. Composite report N 3, October 2000
63. Special Preparatory Programme for the European Social Fund (SPP-ESF): materials of the conferences, study visits, seminars
64. Special Preparatory Programme for the European Social Fund (SPP-ESF):Preparatory activities for the establishment of an ESF National Training Institute in Bulgaria.
66. Schedule of the regional meetings related to presentation and discussion of the report “CVT in LLL context”
69. Republic of Bulgaria National Report on the Memorandum of Lifelong Learning
72. Some additional Details of Joint reporting Cedefop/ETF 2003
73. Cooperation between Cedefop and European Training Foundation. Summary joint progress report. June 2004
74. Minutes from the conference “Career Guidance Policies in Accessing and Candidate Countries”, Bratislava, 5-6 December, 2003
75. Materials of the Conference “Lifelong development of Competences and Qualifications of the Workforce”. Athens 23-24 May, 2003 (draft conclusions, presentations, etc.)
76. Summary conclusions of the Conference “Lifelong Learning and Social Dialogue” Malmo (Sweden), 23-25 April, 2001
77. ETF seminar “Quality in VET: policy Developments at European level and their relevance for Accessing and Candidate Countries” Prague, 19-20 April 2004. Draft conclusions
78. Phare Fiches: Life Long Learning and Vocational Education and Training; Human Resources Development and Promotion of Employment; Development of an adult training centre network; Vocational Qualifications;
79. Comments of ETF on the Fiches, e-mail correspondence with DG Enlargement
81. HRDC/BNO Modernization of Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria. National country report 2001. Bulgarian National Observatory (five similar annual reports were prepared, the 2001 report was the last one, after that only short reports were prepared)
82. HRDC/BNO. Professional education and training in Bulgaria. Short Country Report 2002
83. HRDC/BNO. Short Country Report 2003
84. Support for institution building in the field of human resources development. Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey. May-December 2002. - Terms of References
88. Seminars agendas
90. Support for institution building in the field of HRD/ Continuing Vocational Training. First interim report. September-December 2004
92. Seminars agendas and lists of participants
93. Survey on VET and LLL
95. Schedule of the regional meetings related to Monograph preparation.
96. Review of Progress in Vocational Education and Training reform in Bulgaria. ETF 1999 (VET PR)
98. Review of Progress in Vocational Education and Training reform in Bulgaria. ETF 2004 (VET PR)
99. Bulgaria. Assessment of the VET sector with regard to the “Acquis Communautaire”. 2004
100. Bulgaria. Assessment of the VET sector with regard to the “Acquis Communautaire”. 2003
102. Website of ETF
103. Website of BNO
ANNEX 5  CASE STUDY BULGARIAN NATIONAL OBSERVATORY

The case study is built on the basis of:

1. Interviews in BNO and further e-mail correspondence with BNO
2. Interviews with key stakeholders in Bulgaria
3. Interviews in ETF
4. Interviews in the European Commission
5. Study of the available documents and reports

1. The structure, institutional setting and resources

Bulgarian National Observatory is part of a network of National Observatories which has developed since 1996. BNO was established in the end of 1997. It was established following the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Since 1 July 1999 BNO is a unit within the Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC) which is a kind of umbrella organization for a number of programmes/units like Leonardo, Socrates, etc.

BNO has a Steering Committee of 5 persons with representatives of MES, MOLSP and HRDC Director. BNO also has an Advisory Committee of 10 members, in which ministries, social partners and experts are represented. Advisory Committee is an expert body which formulates needs and priorities and presents them to ETF.

BNO has currently a staff of 4 experts: one senior expert who is leading the Observatory, two experts-consultants and a financial specialist. BNO created a network of external experts which is rather broad: about 40-50 experts from Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Education and Science, Employment Agency, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, National Institute for Education, National Statistical Institute, freelancers, research associates or professors from University of Economy in Sofia, experts working in Social Partners’ organisations and etc. BNO cooperates with National Institute for Education (NIE) and a number of NGOs. BNO and NIE complement each other, there is no duplication in their activities. BNO unlike other research institutions in BG tries to combine education and labour market issues. BNO has regular contacts with National Observatories in other countries (Slovenia, Macedonia, Kosovo, etc.)

The perception of key Bulgarian stakeholders is that BNO is a unique institute. No other institute in BG provides the same set of services.

BNO developed a web site which serves different functions including dissemination of products, information and data. Web site is functioning in two languages: Bulgarian and English and is regularly updated.

The main customers of BNO are: ETF, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Economy, Social Partners, NGOs, since recently Cedefop also starts using information delivered by BNO, etc.
BNO is well known, recognized and appreciated by the main customers. The perception of other stakeholders (like Chamber of Commerce) is that BNO is not known broadly enough, especially by NGOs and better marketing and self-advertising strategy could help changing the situation.

The main financial resources for BNO come from the ETF, only infrastructural items are covered by the state (office space, etc.). According to the Evaluation of the NO network carried out in 2000, Bulgarian National Observatory in 1998-2000 was one of the “best funded” in the whole NO network receiving, for example, in 2000 the total of € 245 337 (which consisted of ETF regular funding and ETF other contracted funds).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ETF regular</th>
<th>ETF other contracted</th>
<th>Other projects contracted</th>
<th>Annual total income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>34 120</td>
<td>12 500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46 620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>26 800</td>
<td>110 650</td>
<td>13 400</td>
<td>150 850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>21 440</td>
<td>223 937</td>
<td>6 992</td>
<td>252 369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>30 953</td>
<td>16 090</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47 043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>16 255</td>
<td>128 951</td>
<td>16 890</td>
<td>162 096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>16 255</td>
<td>79 844</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>96 099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>36 301</td>
<td>179 980</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>216 281</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ETF regular support to BNO does not differ much from ETF regular support to other observatories in the network. Regular support covers a set of more or less standard products/services: short country report, key indicators, country fact sheets, some thematic reports, consultations on the “Review of progress in VET”, etc. The total funding of BNO is high mainly due to the second component “ETF other contracted funds” meant for different additional projects and activities which vary from year to year. One of the main reasons for this is that BNO has built its capacity and provides good quality services. Some of the assignments BNO receives via tenders organised by ETF, and it proves that BNO is a competitive unit.

2. Objectives

The main objectives of BNO are stated in the rules concerning the structure and activities of HRDC. Initially the objectives were defined by ETF in consultation with Bulgarian ministries. They are agreed and signed by MES and MOLSP. The objectives of BNO are as follows:

- to support the education reform process;
- to provide information;
- to collect data;
- to support cooperation between ministries, other stakeholders at national and regional levels;
- to disseminate information on EU policies and priorities;
- to provide the EC with information on BG

BNO objectives reflect the priorities set by the Government as well as the EC priorities for candidate countries.
3. The relationship with ETF

The relationship of BNO with ETF has two main aspects: on one hand BNO is a beneficiary, and on the other hand BNO is a partner of ETF.

- **As a beneficiary BNO receives from ETF the following support:**
  - expert support and staff development;
  - financial support;
  - promotion by ETF of BNO activities (in the EU, to increase visibility);
  - preparation by ETF of cross-country reports based on analyses from each observatory;
  - capacity building support from ETF.

- **As a partner BNO provides assistance to ETF in the following areas:**
  - setting up missions;
  - providing access to ministries and stakeholders;
  - organizing meetings, Advisory Forum and conferences, on behalf of and with the ETF;
  - information gathering and analyses for ETF reports, monographs, reviews, etc;
  - participating as a partner in some projects run by the ETF;
  - running projects contracted to it by the ETF (for instance, Intuition Building projects which are evaluated in a separate case study, see Annex 2).

The list of BNO activities and projects for the period 2001-2004 is attached in the annex.

4. Functions of Bulgarian National Observatory and their realisation

*Providing analysis and policy advice for VET and LM reform*

The inputs of BNO in this respect are mainly in the form of reports and studies. The main product is the annual country report (short country report). Next to it there are a number of other thematic materials on VET produced every year. Those products are used by the key ministries and institutions (MES, MOLSP, ME, NAVET) dealing with VET and labour market reform. BNO reports also feed into ETF products (like VET PR, Monograph, etc.). Since recently BNO products are submitted to Cedefop: different articles on VET in Bulgaria, as well as VET data in required format (see also item 4.1.12) While preparing the products BNO uses its own resources and the inputs of external experts from its network. Policy advice function is also implemented via participation of BNO in the working groups, seminars, training events, conferences where the recommendations and conclusion of their reports can be presented and discussed.

*Opinion of stakeholders*

The interviews in Bulgaria confirmed that BNO products are well regarded by key stakeholders. In the Ministry of Education it was stressed that BNO reports are especially valued because they provide an overall picture and make positions and approaches of ministries (MES and MOLSP) transparent. The analysis and explanation of figures and data contained in those reports is helpful. Another valuable for users aspect is that the reports provide some relation between vocational training and labour market. During interviews in MOLSP it was emphasized that the annual report of BNO gives the general overview, it is
‘everything in one product’, laconic and informative by its nature which is used by many stakeholders and is often ‘quoted’ in academic circles.

Interviews in the European Commission demonstrated that BNO products are not familiar to the representatives of the DG Employment, DG Enlargement and DG Education and are not directly utilized by them. The interviewed representatives of the EC know about BNO via ETF.

We can conclude that BNO products are well known and used by ministries and other institutions as a background information helpful in the preparation of different policy documents (like National Economic Development Plan, national strategy for CVT, etc.). The BNO reports and thematic studies are used as a reference tool, they help systematize and analyse information and in this way save time for ministry officials. On the other hand it should be noted that the situation in the VET analysis in Bulgaria remains still rather poor. It suggests that there is room for improvement of the quality of BNO reports and building further research capacity.

According to the opinion of some stakeholders BNO could enlarge the variety of its products by providing tailor-made analysis which would be useful for industries (tourism, IT, etc.) and in this way make itself more known and sustainable. The perception of those interviewees was that there is a growing demand for such type of products.

**Dissemination of information and good practice**

Dissemination of information and good practice from the EU and other sources is considered by stakeholders as a very useful and valuable function. The dissemination of BNO annual report and other products is done regularly via e-mail. Hard copies are also distributed in a number of cases. The web site of BNO plays an important role in the dissemination of information (the key products are available on it). It is regularly updated and currently is in the process of finalisation. After that it will be better suited for the disseminate of projects results (for instance, of the Institution Building projects).

The dissemination is targeted at the relative ministries, agencies and social partners as well as at the regional institutions, which are usually stakeholders in the field of vocational education and training and labour market. Such regional institutions are: VET schools and Inspectorates for Education, labour offices, district administration, municipality administration, employers’ representation, providers of training such as licensed training centres and etc.

Another important channel of dissemination are numerous events (seminars, conferences, training sessions, etc) organized by BNO. Such seminars are designed to present and disseminate ETF and BNO products, for example, Country Monograph, Peer Reviews on CVT, etc. The events are organized in different parts of the country, bring together a broad audience and provide a good opportunity for wide publicity and dissemination.

**Opinion of stakeholders**

The perception of some involved stakeholders was that BNO could play a more active role in the distribution of “good” and “bad” practice examples (from the EU, including recent experiences of the New Member States). In this way BNO would give more possibilities to learn on the lessons from other countries experiences. Quick express information provision would be also very much appreciated by a number of interviewed stakeholders. The dissemination of key EU documents could be improved by consistent translation of them by BNO. Currently different translated versions of important EU documents circulate in the ministries,
in certain cases only selected chapters are translated. This situation often leads to inconsistency in interpretation and other inconveniences. BNO possessing good knowledge of VET/labour market issues and adequate language skills could improve the situation by supplying one authorized translated version of essential EU documents.

Networking

The BNO has developed a rather broad network within the country which encompasses key ministries and other institutions at the national level, regional and local VET stakeholders, social partners, research institutes, NGOs, etc. BNO has its own local expert network on which it can draw to assist with writing reports, studies and seminars.

The network developed by BNO is not only the national one. BNO has regular contacts with Observatories of other countries especially in the Balkans (apart from regular contacts and exchange of information, BNO was conducting training for the Macedonian National Observatory to support its start; etc.). BNO started cooperation with Cedefop.

The networking activities of BNO contribute to the improvement of cooperation between the ministries and other institutions. BNO organises a lot of events, including seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. which bring together Bulgarian stakeholders at central, regional and local levels. The BNO contribution to the inter-ministerial dialogue was especially visible in the first years of BNO existence when, according to the interviewed stakeholders, BNO was providing a discussion and meeting place for the representatives of MES and MOLSP.

5. Sustainability prospects for the future

Through years of its existence BNO became a well established unit with a good level of knowledge of Bulgarian VET system. There is a common opinion that the function of BNO is useful and necessary. But as the interviews confirmed currently BNO depends on external financing.

It appears that BNO could make itself more self sustainable by:

− Conducting market needs analysis and finding ways to meet them.
− Developing itself in the direction of a service centre which provides tailor-made analysis.
− Developing itself in the direction of an information centre. The information centre of the EC Delegation in Sofia is a good example of an open and easy accessible centre, which is appreciated by Bulgarian stakeholders.
− Developing self advertising and marketing strategies (one of the possibilities is: to use for advertising its services and product the network of 22 VET Centres existing within the Chamber of Commerce).

Opinion of stakeholders

Some of the interviewees in Bulgaria expressed the view that the Observatory is not well known by many people. It was suggested that the current location of the Observatory is not an optimal one for open contacts and does not allow for an easy access. Because of its location next to the Socrates programme, BNO becomes partly associated with it; and Socrates programme has a reputation of a closed one.
Provision of tailor-made analysis which would be useful for industries (tourism, IT, etc.) could make BNO more independent. There is a demand for it. Advertisement can be done through Chamber of Commerce VET Centres, which cover practically all the regions of Bulgaria. BNO could develop like a service-centre and information centre.

One of the possible prospects for BNO is to join the Cedefop Referent. BNO gradually becomes involved with Cedefop by providing data in the standard format and analytical information on Bulgarian VET development. It seems to be a logical step in BNO development to join Refernet, but it will depend on the BNO evolvement in the remaining pre-accession period and ability to prove its suitability.

6. Conclusions.

− Through nine years of its existence BNO with the support of the ETF has built its capacity and became an established unit, the necessity/usefulness of which is commonly recognised in Bulgaria.
− BNO provides ETF with information and gives a dissemination channel for the Foundation services and products. The interviews confirmed that ETF is satisfied with BNO functioning and provided services.
− BNO provides policy advice to Bulgarian stakeholders mainly through its reports which are recognised and used by the ministries and some other involved institutions. The reports have an added value in a sense that they help their users to systematise information and data, serve as a useful background material in elaboration of policy documents.
− BNO makes certain contribution to VET data collection/systematising and to the analysis of VET issues. Although there is some improvement through the last decade, the situation with respect to policy analysis and evaluation as well as with VET data remains relatively poor in Bulgaria. The dissemination of the information collected by BNO and the quality of reports it produces, could be improved.
− BNO contributes to the improvement of cooperation between the ministries and other institutions. It organises a lot of events, including seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. which bring together Bulgarian stakeholders at central, regional and local levels.
− The costs of supporting BNO are relatively low. In this sense the services provided represent good value for money.
− BNO currently does not seem to be a fully sustainable institution. The self advertising and marketing strategies are not developed. The prospect of BNO becoming part of Cedefop Referent seems to be a logical step in BNO development, but will depend on the BNO evolvement in the remaining pre-accession period.

7. Annex: List of BNO activities/projects 2001-2004 (as provided by BNO)

Grant 2001

1. Country report on VET system (incorporating Key Indicators) - The report prepared in Bulgarian and in English. The Bulgarian version of the report published in a brochure and disseminated among the key institutions and organizations in VET field. Key Indicators (statistical information/data on VET and labour market) collected and sent to ETF in advance. Key Indicators incorporated in VET Report.

2. Assessment of VET sector with regard to the "Acquis Communautaire" – The paper prepared after consultations and comments received by the Ministry of Education and Science,

3. Country Fact Sheet on VET in Bulgaria – Including brief presentation of state and major developments in VET system (initial VET, CVT, financing, responsible bodies, national priorities, donor activities, BNO activities, statistical data and organizational chart of education system). Consultations with experts from key institutions and organizations in VET field. The Fact Sheet was available in both English and Bulgarian.

Projects 2001

1. Delivery of Training for the Macedonian National Observatory - The main aims of the training were presentation of the functions and running of Bulgarian Observatory and exchange of BNO experience with the Macedonian NO staff. The training was organized and delivered on 4-5 October 2001 in Sofia. 3 representatives of Macedonian NO took part in the training.

2. Round table "Integration of work and learning" - A report on Integration of Work and Learning was prepared and presented on the Final conference on Integration of Work and Learning, held in June 2001 in Slovenia. The report was published on a CD-ROM and in the site www.see-educoop.net

3. Organization of study visit of Albania expert in Bulgaria - The study visit was organized under the Staff Development Programmes for Key Decision Makers in the field of VET to prepare EU programmes. The visit was held in the period of 4-9 October 2001 in Sofia. 13 core Albania key actors took part in the visit. The BNO provided logistical support for the organisation and running of the visit.

Development of Sectoral Skills in South Eastern Europe – The Observatory facilitated the implementation of the project, implemented by ETF, through delivery of services for contracting experts from western Balkans to draft analysis for three economic sectors in their country. Analysis for Bulgaria was also handled.

Framework contract 2002

1. Short country report on new developments in VET - lifelong learning – labour market and employment policy - The report prepared in Bulgarian and in English. The Bulgarian version of the report published in a brochure and disseminated among the key institutions and organizations in VET field.


3. Country Fact Sheet on VET in Bulgaria - Including brief presentation of state and major developments in VET system (initial VET, CVT, financing, responsible bodies, national priorities, donor activities, BNO activities, statistical data and organogram of education system). Consultations with experts from key institutions and organizations in VET field. The Fact Sheet was available in both English and Bulgarian.
4. **Key Indicators** – statistical information/data on VET, lifelong learning, labour market and employment policy development in accordance with international standards. The data was collected by the National Statistical Institute and by the National Employment Service. For some indicators additional calculations were made.

5. **Thematic report “Teachers and Trainers in VET system”**. The report was produced in Bulgarian and English language version. In addition a hard copy in Bulgarian was produced and disseminated. The report is also available for download in both language versions on the Observatory website.

6. **Seminar on Human Resources in Education Sphere** - The seminar was planned initially for May 2001 (according to the BNO Work Programme 2001), but it was postponed and organised on 5 April 2002 in Sofia. About 50 participants from ministries, National Institute of Education, trade unions, Inspectorates for Education, school directors took part in the event.

**Projects 2002**

1. Organisation of a Regional seminar on *“Dissemination of good practices in TTT in Western Balkans”* – The BNO participated and won the tender launched by ETF for the organisation of the seminar. The seminar held on 11-13 March 2002 in Sofia, with participation of about 45 experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, Croatia and Montenegro, EU experts and ETF representatives.

2. "**The Social Dialogue in Bulgaria**" - report was prepared both in Bulgarian and in English. The Bulgarian version was published in a brochure and disseminated among the key institutions and organizations in VET field. A seminar for presentation of the report was organized with the participation of key stakeholders and social partners’ organizations.

3. **Policies for Information, Guidance and Counseling services** – A questionnaire with information on the current state of policy developments in the field of Information, Guidance and Counseling was fulfilled by the BNO and an expert from the Department “Information and Publishing Center” of the Employment Agency. The information collection was made through desk research and by interviews with key stakeholders. The questionnaire was prepared only in English.

4. **Participation SMAEP** – The observatory acted as a project partner in a project funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy targeted for unemployed persons from the mining industry of one region in Bulgaria. The observatory provided supported identification of target group to be trained for start up of own business.

5. **Eurone&t 2002-2004 (finalized 2004)** - The BNO was a core partner in the international project “Towards the European Society: Challenges for Education and Training Policies and Research arising from the European Integration and Enlargement” under the 5th Framework Programme. The aim of the project was establishment of a thematic network focusing on the impact of integration of the European societies, including the integration of the accession countries on the policy domain of E&T in Europe. The project had three thematic domains and the BNO participated in Domain 1: modus vivendi: “E&T policies between internationalised challenges and national systems, traditions, cultures, values and policies”.

103
6. **Organization of ETF Advisory Forum** in Sofia, Bulgaria - the Observatory undertook all work necessary for the preparation and organisation of the meeting providing in particular the following services:

- Liaise with all participants on travel and accommodation arrangements and keep them informed on relevant organisational developments.
- Liaise with speakers in order to collect conference documents (slides/ handouts etc) which will be readily distributed to AF members during the conference.
- Liaise with Advisory Forum members of Bulgaria exploring possibilities for co-financing of study visits and/or official dinner/reception.
- Provide secretarial and technical support during the meeting.
- Secure timely payment transfers on the basis of invoices and within the overall budget agreed with ETF.
- Prepare an overall financial report for ETF on conclusion of the activity.
- Prepare and distribute to participants a content report on the key conclusions of the conference, including useful materials distributed during the meeting.
- Provide an evaluation report on organisation and logistics based on participants' opinions. The evaluation questionnaire will be agreed with the Foundation previous to its distribution to participants.

7. **Monograph on Vocational Education and Training and Public Employment Services in LLL perspective** The Observatory provided support for the preparation of Country Monograph on Vocational Education and Training Systems and Structures and Public and Private Employment Services in Bulgaria. The main purpose of the monograph is to provide a useful analytical tool to assist Bulgaria and the Commission to monitor progress in implementing the JAP priorities as well as to identify the most urgent needs and gaps to be filled. The Monograph was be prepared in consultation with the country authorities but remains an independent ETF product.

**Framework contract 2003**

1. **Update of short country report** – report is available in BG and EN in BNO website

2. **Preparation of thematic report "Investment in Human Resources - Financing of VET system"** - BG and EN versions available

3. **Pilot participation in activities related to CEDEFOP REFER network** (Bibliographical data provided for VET-Bib Cedefop database and presentation of information on key organizations in the field of VET for Cedefop VET-Instit database)

4. **Collection of Key Indicators 2003** – Key indicators database collected as requested and initially formulated by the ETF

5. **Consultations on the "Review of progress in VET reform reports"**; consultation has been done with the institutions as follows: Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social policy, Employment Agency, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Trade Union “Podkrepa, Confederation of Independent Syndicates, Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bulgarian Industrial Association
Projects finalized 2003

1. Developing Common Approaches in Vocational Education and Training for Disadvantaged Youth in Western Balkan countries - The aim of the project is to support access of disadvantaged young people to vocational education and training through the development of appropriate education and training provision and parallel support services, including creating pathways to employment.

The specific objectives of the project are to: analyse in detail the profile of disadvantaged youth in the WBA countries- national reports written by WBA experts- transversal report based on the national studies written by Candidate Country (CC) and European union (EU) experts identify the extent to which current reforms launched by WBA countries in the area of vocational education and training do actually care for disadvantaged youth either through preventive or remedial measures facilitate the exchange of experience for the socio-economic (re-)integration of disadvantaged youth through modernisation in VET among WBA countries, CC’s and EU Member States come up with recommendations for the VET reform process in the WBA countries.

The Observatory acted as a management body for all the related project activities.

2. Preparation of Monograph II phase – During the second stage of Monograph preparation updates and incorporation of complementary information was put into the draft Monograph.

3. Presentation of the Monograph results – Monograph was presented and discussed during one-day national event with participation of representatives from all relevant ministries, national agencies and social partners as well with some of the institutions /mainly VET centers, involved in meetings during preoperational phase.

Document has been sent to all relevant authorities. Also it is available in BNO website in BG and EN versions.

Framework contract 2004

1. Update of short country report – Draft version has been prepared in BG and EN and is in process of final editing with regards to some comments and recommendations by ETF.

2. Preparation of thematic report Initial Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria. First draft has been prepared in BG and EN and is in process of final editing with regards to some comments and recommendations by ETF.

3. Activities on the Bulgarian participation in the Cedefop REFER network updated and upgraded information in CEDEFOP VET-Bib and VET-Instit databases prepared 4 articles for CEDEFOP info.

4. Collection of Key Indicators 2004. Key indicators database for 2004 was collected as requested by the ETF.

5. Participation in preparation of "Maastricht study" – Report on “Contribution of VET for achievement of Lisboan goals, Maastricht study”. The Observatory supported the process of drafting of the report by provision of information to the ETF. English version of the report is available in ETF website.
6. Consultation on the "Review of progress in VET reform reports" consultation has been carried out with line ministries e.g. Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social policy and other institutions such as Employment Agency, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Trade Union “Podkrepa, Confederation of Independent Syndicates, Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bulgarian Industrial Association, Employers Association “Vazrazhdane”.

7. Seminars on the Objectives and Copenhagen process - The Observatory organized national event “Copenhagen Process – Objectives, Results and next steps” and gathered representatives of all relevant institutions at National level in order to present and update the information concerning the development of VET at European level and provide opportunity for discussion the priorities of VET in Bulgaria related to the Copenhagen objectives.

**Projects finalized 2004**

1. Peer review "CVT in Bulgaria in the context of LLL" - launched 2003 /finalized 2004

During 10 days visit / November 2003/ peers team took interviews from more than 50 representatives at national and regional level. Interviews were organized as round tables discussions and spot visits. Meetings were organized in Sofia, South Central Region and North Central Region. Peer review report was presented and discussed to National Stakeholders in May 2004. Taking into account comments and recommendations raised by participants during the discussions and subsequently the written feedback received, a final version of the report was drafted and disseminated through organized parallel regional events in Plovdiv and Pleven in June 2004. In addition hard copy in Bulgarian version of the report was published and disseminated. The Peer review report is also available in BG and EN version in BNO website.


Project activities covered 2 regions – South Central /Plovdiv, Smolyan and Pazardzhik/ and North Central /Gabrovo, Lovech and Pleven/ and dissemination events took place in two neighboring regions – South-West /Blagoevgrad, Pernik, Kustendil/ and South East /Sliven, Yambol and Burgas/. Representatives from VET centers, NGOs, Labour offices, Municipalities (a total of sixty from both regions) were trained in project cycle management, European Social Fund - type of projects. Contributions to the training sessions were given by EU experts, while the National policy context and pre-accession grand schemes as an instrument for human resource development were facilitated by experts from Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education and Science. The dissemination events aimed to provide this information other 50 stakeholders at regional level /see above/.

In addition to the training sessions a web site for the project was created. Apart form all the related information such as activities and downloadable information comprising all presentations and other relevant information the site also includes information systemized in directories “Who is who in the regions in terms of provision of continuing vocational training”, and a directory listing “Examples for good practice”. So far the information is available in Bulgarian only, but an English version is under preparation parallel to the update of the web site that will also incorporate all the information concerning Institutional Building 2004.

3. Institutional Building 2004 - launched September 2004 / to be finalized 2005

The Institutional Building project 2004 covers the same regions as the first phase one. At this stage the project targets to municipal and district administration, regional structures of the employment agency and local business. A total of fifty participants were involved in training
sessions. Training modules were based on ESF Framework, Programming phases in Bulgaria, strategy development sessions Socio-economic and SWOT analysis, and drawing up regional priorities and measures related to continuing vocational training as a part of the overall regional development.

Information mentioned above was composed in 2 documents – respectively for South Central and North Central regions. Documents will be available in project website in BG and EN.

4. Translation of Europass documents

The Observatory cooperated with CEDEFOP for translation of Europass documents in Bulgarian. The activity started in August 2004 and finished in March 2005. It is expected that these documents will be available on the CEDEFOP website in April.

The following documents have been translated: CV + Instructions, Mobility + Instructions, Certificate supplement + Instructions, Language passport + Instructions, Quality Manual,
ANNEX 6   


The case study is built on the basis of:
- Interviews in BNO and further e-mail correspondence with BNO
- Interviews with key stakeholders in Bulgaria
- Interviews in ETF
- Interviews in the European Commission
- Study of the available documents and reports

**Basic projects information**

Since 2002 ETF yearly implements Institution Building Projects in Bulgaria which are considered by the Foundation to be an essential separate type of activity.

The 2002 project was aimed at the necessary institution building support to the government officials who will be in charge of the implementation of Structural Funds and in particular of the European Social Fund (ESF). In the framework of this project 12 representatives of 5 Bulgarian ministries were trained for the planning and design of Phare projects and became familiar with examples of best practice from EU Member States.

The 2003/2004 project was designed as a follow-up and further development of the previous one. The focus of the project moved from the national level to regional one. Two regions were selected: North-Central and South-Central and 80 VET and labour market stakeholders were trained on ESF/Phare principles, programme and project design. The project concentrated on Continuing Vocational Training (CVT) in a LLL context and in this way was complementing with its activities Phare 2003 project on adult education. It was also closely linked with ETF peer review on “CVT in a LLL context”. The activities were concentrated on delivery of the information concerning the HRD as national priority and European Social Fund: programming and projecting the projects. The project results were disseminated in two other regions, with involvement of another 40 participants.

The 2004/2005 project kept its focus on the same two regions (North-Central and South-Central) to provide the continuity and develop further the discussions started earlier. The activities were built upon human resource development as regional priority and were aiming to support preparation of regional action plans for continuing vocational training and its possible support by the ESF Project managed to train 50 VET and LM Stakeholders. The dissemination took place in electronic form through the project web-site.

The table below summarises the main project information. It provides the overview of the institution building activities since 2002.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IB 2002</th>
<th>IB 2003</th>
<th>IB 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>BGZ (Germany); subcon: BEF (Bulgarian Economic Forum); GHD (Global Human</td>
<td>HRDC (BNO)</td>
<td>HRDC (BNO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>tender procedure</td>
<td>No tender procedure (Project directly assigned to HRDC)</td>
<td>No tender procedure (Project directly assigned to HRDC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>EURO 99.000 for three countries: BG, RO, TK</td>
<td>EURO 49.980</td>
<td>EURO 50.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff</td>
<td>Information was not available</td>
<td>4 BNO</td>
<td>4 BNO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regions</td>
<td>National level</td>
<td>2 regions: Central North and Central South + dissemination of results in</td>
<td>2 regions: North Central and Central South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 other regions, namely West-South and East-South</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the</td>
<td>To train competent government officials who will be in charge of the</td>
<td>To provide IB support to the national/regional VET/labour market</td>
<td>To provide IB support to the regional VET and LM stakeholders, while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>project</td>
<td>implementation of the Structural Funds and in particular those who</td>
<td>stakeholders in BG in planning and implementing HRD projects within the</td>
<td>encouraging better cooperation with the national stakeholders in BG in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>already are in charge of Phare, ISPA and SAPARD projects in Bulgaria</td>
<td>overall on-going economic reform, and with particular emphasis on</td>
<td>planning and implementing HRD projects within the overall going economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(emphasis on inter-institutional cooperation)</td>
<td>regional cooperation. Concentrates on CVT in a LLL context</td>
<td>reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>providing tailor-made support and training/advice to the national</td>
<td>Tailor-made support and training/advice</td>
<td>Tailor-made support and training/advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>authorities in planning and design of projects in the field of HRD</td>
<td>Provide examples of best practice from EU and CC</td>
<td>Provide examples of best practice from EU and CC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>providing examples of best practice from EU Member States in design</td>
<td>Improve inter-institutional cooperation at national/regional level I</td>
<td>Improve inter-institutional cooperation at national/regional level I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and development of &quot;ESF type actions&quot;</td>
<td>the field of CVT</td>
<td>the field of CVT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improving social dialogue among key stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs analysis</td>
<td>Survey about the providers of training in the regions (see attached)</td>
<td>yes (questionnaires for employers, NGOs, training providers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach to target group formation</td>
<td>Broad approach: to attract wide circle of people who later will be involved in different roles and ways in the ESF programmes</td>
<td>Even broader approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target group</td>
<td>Representatives of regional administrations, municipalities, labour offices, Vet schools, NGO, training centres, employers representation</td>
<td>Wider target group: besides representatives of regional administrations, municipalities, labour offices, also training providers, NGOs, chambers of crafts employers representation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of retrained people</td>
<td>12 people trained</td>
<td>80 people retrained</td>
<td>50 people retrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability of the group</td>
<td>The target group was stable, but were some drop outs</td>
<td>The target group was changing from event to event</td>
<td>The target group remained stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Certain problems with attendance</td>
<td>Certain problems with attendance, some inscribed participants (especially representatives of employers) tend not to show up they did but not always</td>
<td>Certain problems with attendance, some inscribed participants (especially representatives of employers) tend not to show up employers participated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of training</td>
<td>Two 1-day seminars and one 1-week study visit</td>
<td>Two 2-days seminars in each region (in total 4 seminars)</td>
<td>3 events per region, each lasting 2 days or in total six events for the two regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The topics of training courses/sessions/lectures/seminars</td>
<td>HRD in Bulgaria (Phare, ISPA, Sapard), HRD in the EU – programming and policy integration (EES, ESF), best practice in programming and implementation of the Structural Funds in Berlin region</td>
<td>EU structural funds, Pre-accession instruments and grant schemes, PCM, EU and National Programming phases, good practical examples of ESF type of projects, elaboration of project proposals</td>
<td>EU structural funds, Pre-accession instruments and grant schemes, PCM, EU and National Programming phases, National CVT strategy and implementation plan, strategic planning and SWOT – theory and practical assignments, identification of priorities and measures for CVT developments, elaboration of project proposals based on identified priorities and measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training methods</td>
<td>IB 2002</td>
<td>IB 2003</td>
<td>IB 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module system, combination of practically oriented sessions and lectures; discussions, practical assignments, drafting projects</td>
<td>Interactive, practically oriented sessions, good balance between theoretical and practical work</td>
<td>Interactive, practically oriented sessions, good balance between theoretical and practical work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training materials</td>
<td>Specially designed training materials, lecture materials and exercises for the seminars</td>
<td>Specially designed presentations, Web resources with EC and national documents, provided by the trainers, feedback on practical tasks, performed by the participants</td>
<td>Specially designed presentations, Web resources with EC and national documents, provided by the trainers, feedback on practical tasks, performed by the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts involved in training</td>
<td>Information was not available</td>
<td>Two EU Two BNO</td>
<td>One EU Two BNO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two core BG consultants (ministry of labour and ministry of economy) Representatives of ministries for different events (providing only certain inputs)</td>
<td>Two core BG consultants (ministry of labour and ministry of regional development) representatives of ministries for different events (providing only certain inputs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking outcomes</td>
<td>Brought together representatives five key ministries, cooperation improved, personal contacts established and working</td>
<td>Brought together representatives of different institutions, cooperation improved, personal contacts established and working</td>
<td>Brought together representatives of different institutions, cooperation improved, personal contacts established and working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Inception report and Final report</td>
<td>Interim and Final performance and financial reports</td>
<td>Interim and Final performance and financial reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Evaluations by the participants of project events and a final evaluation during the wrap-up seminar (organised by contractor during the project)</td>
<td>Questionnaires following each event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relevance**

The three IB projects implemented since 2002 were relevant to the needs of the country and national priorities in view of the availability of ESF funds for Bulgaria in the near future. To a certain extent those projects can be seen as a continuation of the activities implemented in the framework of the Phare SPP - ESF programme (1998-2000). Recently Bulgarian government was stressing in a number of documents that the knowledge of the ESF approach and principles, as well as cooperation between stakeholders, are crucial for successful preparations for ESF.
Efficiency

While evaluating the efficiency of institution building activities it makes sense to separate the first 2002 project which was tendered and carried out by the EU contractor from two later projects directly given by ETF to HRDC (BNO) and implemented by this Bulgarian institution.

The 2002 project was well organised and insured proper identification of the target group (government officials at the national level from 5 Bulgarian ministries experienced with Phare), which remained stable, motivated and active during the whole project. On the other hand, the development of concrete criteria for the selection of the participants as well as availability of their CVs at the stage of selection could make the group stronger.

The needs analysis carried out at the start of the project was helpful for further project development. But a more detailed assessment of the needs before the launch of the project could have led to a better-tailored and more specific institutional building programme.

The project managed to convert its activities and resources into envisaged results. The biggest contribution to the project efficiency was brought about by one-week study visit to Berlin during which the participants had an opportunity to assess, discuss and evaluate the implementation of the Structural Funds in this specific region. The study visit had a balanced programme with a good mixture between best practice and programme level. The projects selected for presentation and analysis during the study visit were meant to show the best examples of ESF in action for local development.

It appears that the timing of the project (the start during the holiday period) and the time dedicated to the seminars (start-up and wrap-up ones) was not optimal and too short to achieve the most efficient results. It did not allow dealing properly with such issues as solid needs analysis, dissemination and transfer.

The 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 IB projects were well organised and were developing in consultations with key stakeholders. BNO has a good record in organising events and logistical support. The selection of the pilot regions was done in consultations with MES and MOLSP. Both projects concentrated on the same regions (Central-North and Central-South), which demonstrate very different level of economic development. It seems that the fact that during both years the activities were developing in the same regions increased the efficiency of the project.

The target groups of regional stakeholders were identified, although approach taken to the group formation was a broad one (for both projects and it became even broader for 2004/2005 project): “different stakeholders, with different experience in the field of projecting and implementing projects and programming process”\(^{12}\). It seems that such a “broad” approach chosen for the formation of the target group partly had to do with the fact that the general structure and institutional setting for ESF interventions in Bulgaria are not transparent. A more careful approach to the target group formation with a more clear view on the roles of the different stakeholders in programming process (municipalities: will they design project themselves? NGOs: what will be their position?) could have insured better results.

\(^{12}\) Report on main findings of the IB project in Bulgaria (November 2003 – May 2004, p. 2.). The participants represent: labour offices, trade unions, VET centers, municipalities, regional administrations, universities, Bulgarian and regional industrial associations, regional centers for economic development, public donation foundation, centers for adult education, etc.
The projects managed to convert their activities and resources into planned results. The seminars and training sessions were combining theoretical and practical aspects. The work in teams on practical exercises was especially appreciated by the participants. But still the optimal balance was not found. It seems that efficiency of training could be higher in case the whole concept of training would be better developed and more time would be dedicated to practical sessions with high involvement of all the participants.

It appears that the prior needs analysis carried out for 2004 IB project did allow preparing a better training programme. In the second year efficiency of the training was increased by making target group stable during the whole year, compared to the situation when it was changing from event to event during the first year.

**Effectiveness**

The main project objectives of **2002 IB project** of (a) providing tailor-made support and training/advice to the national authorities in planning and design of projects in the field of HRD, (b) providing examples of best practice from EU Member States in design and development of “ESF type actions” and (c) improving social dialogue among key stakeholders were achieved. Such key results of the project as increased knowledge, skills, competences of the participants as well as improved networking, cooperation and interaction between involved stakeholders contributed to the realisation of the objectives.

The objectives of **2003/2004 and 2004/2005 IB projects** were mainly achieved. The work of the project team contributed to the improvement of knowledge, skills and competences of the participants in planning and implementing HRD projects. Another output of the project – improved inter-institutional cooperation at national/regional level and networking also corresponded to the initial objective.

**Impact**

It is known that investments in education/training guarantee more impact only on a long-term basis. It holds also for the IB projects. Trained national and regional participants (in total during three years about 140 participants were trained and dissemination covered another 40 people) definitely improved their knowledge and skills via organised events. The networking effect was also achieved. Compared to the resources available the results should be seen as adequate. On the other hand the impact could be more solid in case the whole concept of the project would have been more carefully thought over and better targeting would have been undertaken. Better coordination of IB training with other similar initiatives, which are rather numerous in the country, could also allow more significant impact.

**Sustainability**

The skills acquired during the project are an important asset to build upon. The attempts of the participating stakeholders to put in practice what they learnt during the project would be a good indication of project sustainability. The inter-institutional networking, personal contacts are functioning and provide better basis for future actions. The 2002 project had too little time for substantial dissemination (one 1-day wrap-up seminar, which had to deal with dissemination). Later projects paid more attention to the dissemination. The special actions built in the 2003/2004 project (dissemination events in two other regions for 40 representatives of stakeholders) and electronic dissemination planned for 2004/2005 are meant to sustain the achieved results. The BNO web-site via which the dissemination is supposed to be done is
currently under construction. The information about IB projects is partially available, but not the items really meant for dissemination (good practice examples, etc.). The dissemination can play its role of spreading the “added-up” skills and knowledge better in case all training materials are available on the website. At the moment it is too early to make conclusions about the effectiveness of dissemination measures.
**MISSION TO ETF (11-15 January 2005)**

**SEOR:** Jaap de Koning, Katja Korolkova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wednesday 12 January</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting with Outi Kärkkäinen 9.30 am</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of documents on ETF Bulgaria activities 1996-2000 and other documents not received by Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meetings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00-15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.30-16.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.30-17.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday 13 January</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meetings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.45-10.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30-11.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00-12.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00-15.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of project and activity documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of the workshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friday 14 January</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of the workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.30-16.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MISSION TO BULGARIA (13-18 FEBRUARY 2005)

SEOR: Jaap de Koning, Katja Korolkova, Anna Athanassova (Bulgarian Expert)

Monday, February 14

                 921 74 28
11:45 – 12:30    Ms. Tsvetana Ivanova, World Bank Community Development Consultant, 2, Triaditza, 932 95 45
12:30 – 13:30    Lunch
13:45 – 15:45    Ms. Elka Dimitrova, Director, Labour Market Policy Directorate
                 Ms. Lilia Dobroslavska, Chief Expert, Labour Market Policy Directorate, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2 Triadiza str.987 87 09, 980 67 06
15:45 – 16:30    Mr. Krasimir Popov, Director, Preaccession Funds and International Programmes and Projects Directorate, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2 Triadiza Str., 932 95 46
16:45 – 17:45    Ms. Rossitza Steljavova, Deputy Director,
                 Ms. Tzveta Dimitrova, Head of Department, Programmes and Preaccession Funds, Employment Agency, 3, Dondukov Str, 980 76 72, 933 28 41

Tuesday, February 15

11:00 – 12:30    Ms. Maria Antova, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, 125, Tzarigradsko shosse, bl.5, 5 floor, room 514, 875 02 23, mobile 0888 751 05 41
12:30 – 13:30    Lunch
14:30 - 16:00    Ms. Pia Bjorkbacka, EU Delegation, 9, Moskovska Str. 933 52 52, 933 52 53
16:15 – 17:30    Mr. Andrej Lalov, Mr. Joahim Frede, Ministry of Economy, 8 Slavjanska Str., 940 75 00, 980 25 13, 0898 490 095
Wednesday, February 16

11:00 – 12:30 Mr. Theesen, Institute for International Cooperation at the Association of the German Popular Universities, 147 Knjaz Boris Str. near the Synagogue, 983 65 43

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

14:00 – 17:30 Mr. Ljudmil Kovatchev, Director, HRDC, Mr. Ivo Baev, HRDC Senior Expert, 15 Graff Ignatiev Str. 91 550 20, 91 550 10, 91 550 19

Thursday, February 17

10:00 – 11:30 Ms. Ekaterina Ignatova, Executive Director, BAMCO, Makedonija square, the CITUB building, floor 17, office 7, 917 05 06

11:30 -12:30 Ms. Julija Simeonova, Executive Secretary of the Confederation of Independent Unions in charge of VET, Makedonija square, the CITUB building, floor 14, office 11, 917 04 72, 0887 60 50 66

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

14:00 – 15:30 Mr. Eli Anavi, Director, Enterprise Development Directorate, Ministry of Economy, 8 Slavjanska Str., 940 75 81, 940 75 56

16:00 -17:30 Mr. Dimitre Matev, Balkan Institute of Labour and Social Policy, 22 Tzarigradsko shousse, 971 25 58, 0888 590 391

Friday, February 18

10:00 – 11:30 Ms. Lilija Hristova, Expert, National Centre for Vocational Training to the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 42, Partchevitch Str., 7 floor, room 1 or 2, 987 26 31/35 ext. 302
VISIT TO BRUSSELS (MARCH 2, 2005)

Jaap de Koning, Katja Korolkova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>EC</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>Mr. Aristotelis Margos Mr. Denis Kennedy</td>
<td>DG Employment</td>
<td>Rue de Spa 3 tel. 32-2-2958968 (DK) tel. 32-2-2958992 (AM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15</td>
<td>Mr. Alastair Macphail</td>
<td>DG Education</td>
<td>Rue Beliare 7 tel. 3222951753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>Mr. Paul Vandermeeren</td>
<td>DG Enlargement</td>
<td>Avenue de Tervuren 41, floor 3, office 27; tel 32-2-2992611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Mr. Martin Schieder</td>
<td>DG Enlargement</td>
<td>Rue de la Loi 170, 3/168 tel: 32 2 2967557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.15</td>
<td>Mr. Georg Fischer</td>
<td>DG Employment</td>
<td>Rue Joseph II – 27, J27 2/21, tel. 3222969739</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>