

FRAME: SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

SUPPORTING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF
COMPREHENSIVE HRD
STRATEGIC VISIONS
IN THE ENLARGEMENT
COUNTRIES



INTRODUCTION

The European Commission has entrusted the ETF to support countries in South Eastern Europe and Turkey in their human resources development (HRD) efforts. The overall objective is to assist the region to develop the skills of people for sustainable economic development and social cohesion in a medium to long-term perspective with particular reference to Europe 2020 and the South East Europe 2020 Strategy. The initiative is implemented in 2013 and 2014 and funded under the 2013 IPA multi-beneficiary envelope.

FRAME supports the development of comprehensive long-term visions for HRD strategies and supports IPA II (2014-2020) programming, which requires coherent and holistic policy making.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

The initiative is built around four components (1. Foresight; 2. Review of institutional arrangements; 3. Monitoring; and 4. Regional cooperation), which will lead to:

1. the definition of a commonly agreed vision and a roadmap for skills 2020 in a wider human resources development context;
2. the development of a prioritized capacity development plan for institutions in charge of HRD;
3. the development of a monitoring tool to assess progress in the realisation of the vision for skills and the implementation of the road map; and,
4. enhanced regional cooperation for comprehensive long-term and forward looking policy planning and implementation, taking into account country specificities.

The process of building a vision for skills is closely linked to the reviewing institutional arrangements (RIA) and monitoring components which brings the different parts of the project together. Exchanging lessons learnt at regional level through the regional component is complementary to this.

Overall, the FRAME initiative supports the countries in South Eastern Europe and Turkey to develop a comprehensive package of closely linked methodological instruments (capitalising on existing practices) that assist countries to (i) formulate a vision for skills development through foresight; (ii) develop or review HRD strategies and policies to respond to broader socio-economic objectives and assess the extent to which institutions and functions can deliver policies effectively; and (iii) monitor progress in the effectiveness of these policies.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

FORESIGHT

The foresight component of FRAME has allowed countries - through a participatory approach where all main HRD stakeholders have been engaged - to develop a skills vision for 2020. The foresight component was carried out at national level and involved HRD institutions (i.e. training providers, relevant line ministries and agencies, academia representatives, etc.) social partners, private sector representatives and civil society and provided a forum to reach a joint agreement on the HRD priorities for each country. The core objective of the exercise was not to develop a new layer of strategies but rather to build on current national strategies, taking account of existing skills-related analyses and forward-looking outlooks and targets already set by the countries. The immediate result was a commonly agreed national vision for skills development with defined priorities and a roadmap for between now and 2020.

Building the capacity of national actors to use and embed forward looking instruments into their policy making practices and providing tools to facilitate their dialogue on HRD was another main achievement of the completion of the foresight component. This has led to the production of a set of country reports formalising the vision for skills and strategic priorities for comprehensive and result oriented policies, which can be used for future national planning and programming, including for EU funds (IPA II).

The foresight component, built on a common methodology, was flexible enough to give countries the opportunity to take on board national specificities and needs. In all countries, the vision building process was closely linked to other on-going exercises at national level and a lot of effort was put into coordinating these with other international activities. Special attention was devoted to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the institutional set up imposed a careful tailoring and adaptation of the ETF foresight methodology, and to Turkey, where the level of skills policies required a partial revision of the foresight approach.

REVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS (RIA)

The RIA component allowed countries to review their institutional arrangements to develop, implement and monitor integrated policies in the field of HRD and to provide a set of recommendations for future actions in relation to the current institutional set up. In particular, the review identified bottlenecks and challenges at system level for policy making and delivery and spotted capacity development priorities also for possible funding by the IPA II programme - contributing to the achievement of the 2020 Skills vision. The review also included a section on “planned budgeting capacities,” linked to the capacity of institutions to work on Mid-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF).

The prioritised capacity development plan produced at the end of the review process and shared among all relevant stakeholders was based on: a mapping of key stakeholders in the HRD sector, the results of other previous analyses (ETF Torino Process and the HRD Reviews, RIA and MTEF reviews, etc.), the implementation of direct structured qualitative interviews with selected stakeholders using common interview guidelines and a specific MTEF questionnaire, as well as the results of the Review Workshop with all relevant stakeholders. In this sense, the RIA component also allowed a constructive dialogue and stronger relationships to be built between different actors in charge of HRD.

Each prioritised capacity development plan included elements such as the need to enhance institutional adaptability to changing contexts and emerging needs, to introduce incentive mechanisms, to codify new procedures, to introduce accountability mechanisms, etc. In particular, the results of the review provided direct inputs to the roadmap drafted under the foresight component and informed the actions to reach the skills vision. Different levels of capacity (e.g. both system level and institutional level) were analysed with the engagement of multiple stakeholders to ensure an integrated development of both short- and medium-term initiatives.

MONITORING

With the monitoring component, the ETF has helped countries to build an evidence-based tool to monitor progress towards their 2020 Skills Vision and roadmaps.

Built on the priorities identified during the foresight and RIA components, a monitoring tool (a set of indicators and methodological guidelines) was developed. The tool takes into account national, regional and European strategic objectives and related monitoring and assessment processes. The two overlapping dimensions of indicators (country specific and regional) ensured responsiveness to national priorities and regional and European goals, targets and benchmarks.

The ETF with national authorities and stakeholders defined and prepared the monitoring tool together. National technical teams were set up and guided the work on identifying a list of feasible indicators to be used for monitoring progress in skills' generation at national level and in referencing progress against regional and EU goals.

Consultations with the European Commission, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and other organisations were carried out to ensure a complementary approach to monitoring and evaluation in the SEET region.

The monitoring component has also identified a number of gaps in capacity and point to the need to further invest in the use of evidence in policy making. Support is needed for this to guide discussions on establishing national priorities and to support the countries to engage meaningfully in a cross-country policy monitoring, assessment and learning process (in line with EU cooperation arrangements, e.g. open method of coordination in education, training and employment; EU2020 Joint Assessment Framework).

REGIONAL COOPERATION

The regional component has strengthened regional dialogue and cooperation among the countries on HRD policies. Stakeholders have requested further regional cooperation and capacity building especially in the areas of monitoring and evaluation and skills anticipation and matching. Particular effort has been dedicated to developing a regional response to the South East Europe 2020 Strategy in close coordination with international and regional players so as to fulfil the need for integration and joined up policies at regional level.

Regional events, such as the Policy Leaders' Forum in Salzburg in October 2013 and technical meetings, helped facilitate exchanges and mutual learning. The regional aspect of the project has also been instrumental in the development of shared methodologies. Finally, the countries cooperated on the monitoring component, emphasising the need to combine indicators, derived from national roadmaps, with international indicators and monitoring, such as EU benchmarks and SEE 2020 Strategy targets.

The regional initiatives and the bilateral consultations highlighted among others, the importance of comprehensive strategies, capacity building and ownership of the policies and the need to move away from supply-driven models of education and training. The FRAME project has been recognised by the countries as an important tool to support national integrated approaches to education, training and employment for long-term planning in the field of skills for growth and social cohesion, and the related use of financial instruments at national and EU level to meet agreed targets.

To this end a regional report summarising the inputs from the national exercises, including issues of key regional relevance and suggestions for follow up regional initiatives has been drafted.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: WWW.ETF.EUROPA.EU

Project contact: frame@etf.europa.eu



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