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Ex-post evaluation 2010 – Brief Report

Promotion of Vocational Training in Technical Professions
in Macedonia

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This report was produced by independent external experts.
It reflects only their opinion and assessment.

Hamburg, 11/04/2011

Tabular overview

The evaluation mission

Evaluation period	12 May 2010 – 15 January 2011
Evaluating institute / consulting firm	GFA Consulting Group GmbH
Evaluation team	Andreas Dernbach (international expert), Jove Jankulovski (national expert)

The development measure

Title according to the offer	Promotion of Vocational Training in Technical Professions, Macedonia
Number	PN 2000.5151.6, PN 2002.2559.9 and PN 2004.2209.7
Overall term broken down by phases	Phase I: 10/2000 – 03/2003 (2 years and 6 months) Phase II: 04/2003 – 01/2005 (1 year and 10 months) Phase III: 02/2005 – 07/2006 (1 year and 6 months) Overall Project duration: 10/2000 – 07/2006
Total costs	Phase I: 1,943,000 EUR (BMZ) + 200.000 EUR (GoM) Phase II: 500,000 EUR (BMZ) Phase III: 500,000 EUR (BMZ) Total costs: 3,143,000 EUR
Overall objective as per the offer, for ongoing development measures also the objective for the current phase	Graduates of supported industrial-technical vocational profiles have obtained a professional qualification according to the needs of a modern economy.
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)
Implementing organisations (in the partner country)	MOES, Bureau for Development of Education (BDE), Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CVET) and 8 vocational pilot schools (2 in Skopje, and 1 in Gostivar, Ohrid, Bitola, Kavadarci, Strumica and

	Shtip) plus 3 non-pilot schools (in Skopje and in Kavardarci)
Other participating development organisations	None
Target groups as per the offer	Young people who are threatened by poverty and unemployment in case they do not obtain qualified vocational education and training; and companies that offer vacancies to graduates of vocational schools.

The rating

Overall rating <i>On a scale of 1 (very good, significantly better than expected) to 6 (the project/program is useless, or the situation has deteriorated on balance)</i>	4
Individual rating	Relevance: 4; Effectiveness: 4; Impact: 4; Efficiency: 4; Sustainability: 3

This Project “Promotion of Vocational Training in Technical Professions, Macedonia” (the Project) was implemented in three Phases between October 2000 and July 2006. The first Phase (10/2000 – 03/2003) was financed through Stability Pact Funds (SPF) and Phases 2 (04/2003 – 01/2005) and 3 (02/2005 – 07/2006) directly through the Government of Germany (GoG) and the Government of Macedonia (GoM). The total costs of the Project were EUR 3,143,000. The Project budget was almost completely disbursed (97.8% of committed funds). The mode of financing (SPF, then GTZ) exacerbated predictable, long-term Project planning. The intention of the architects of the SPF was to stabilize Macedonia (and the Balkan region) which at that time was at the edge of a civil war. In this situation the GoG wished to speed up preparatory activities and to deliver tangible inputs in a short period of time. The overarching goal of the Project was defined as: “The national economy (of Macedonia) is strengthened through the provision of skilled work-force”. The expected outcome of the Project was: “Graduates of supported industrial-technical vocational profiles are qualified according to the needs of a modern economy.” The performance of the Project’s outcome is assessed against three indicators as defined in the Project documents:

- (1) 75% of graduates of vocational profiles in eight supported pilot schools that do not move to higher education institutions find adequate employment within three months after graduation.
- (2) 75% of randomly selected vocational education and training (VET) students from eight pilot schools confirm that the vocational training meets their expectations.
- (3) Representatives of the private industry participate in the development and revision of training programmes, implementation of training programmes (internships) and examinations (analysis of internship places, minutes of examinations).

The evaluators developed a revised results chain on the basis of which the Project was evaluated. The evaluators argued that the exemplary qualification of vocational students according to the needs of a modern economy does not necessarily contribute to the strengthening of the national economy. Instead, the exemplary reform of vocational curricula would result in an improved employability of vocational graduates on abroad basis only if the Project’s reform initiative would be rolled out beyond pilot schools. In this case the necessary quantity of qualified personnel would become available to modern employers and ultimately the national economy would be bolstered.

Two evaluators (one international and one national) undertook a field mission in Macedonia from 9 to 27 September 2010. During the mission they interviewed representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the Bureau for the Development of Education (BDE) and the Vocational Education and Training Centre (VETC) in the capital, Skopje, and senior staff of the local GTZ office in Skopje. The consultants then visited all eight pilot schools supported by the Project across the country. Visits to three non-pilot schools enabled

the evaluators to do comparative assessments. The mission also held in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs and the former Project staff and telephone interviews with international short-term consultants. Direct interviews with representatives and experts from other relevant donor and implementation agencies provided relevant information mainly regarding donor coordination.

The Project, which was developed under time pressure in June 2000 during a period when Macedonia faced the risk of civil war, procured and delivered machines and tools for practical training purposes before a comprehensive needs assessment had been carried out. Once the decision to develop three 3-year exemplary vocational curricula in the occupational fields of metal technology, electronics and automobiles was made and approved by the MoES, the Project revised and consolidated the technical specifications of the necessary equipment and delivered additional equipment to eight pilot schools of which two are located in predominantly Albanian settlements (Gostivar and Kumanovo) as was explicitly requested by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The Project addressed the over-specialisation and theory bias of vocational education and proposed to reduce drastically the number of vocational profiles within a distinct occupational field. It then developed three new exemplary vocational curricula (machine mechanic, electro-mechanic and automobile electronics) with an increased share of practical training (50% instead of 20%) implemented in equal portions by schools and companies. The pilot-testing of these new curricula started in September 2003. The evaluators learnt that pilot-schools since the end of the Project face more and more difficulties to find enterprises that are ready to provide practical training opportunities.

Capacity building was mainly done on individual level and to a less extent on institutional and political level. Trainings in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Germany enabled vocational teachers to implement the new curricula according to industry needs. But the Project did not address sufficiently systemic issues, e.g. an ongoing train-the-trainer system to enable the roll-out of new curricula into non-pilot schools. Lessons learnt in the revision of exemplary curricula of selected vocational profiles were discussed ad-hoc in working groups with representatives from MoES, BDE and the pilot schools. However, the Project did not manage sufficiently to evaluate systematically lessons learnt by the Project and to feed recommendations into the VET policy reform process. The evaluators believe that the Project missed the opportunity to do so in coordination with other donor-funded programmes in the field of VET. The GoM organised four bi-annual donor coordination meetings in the education sector in the years 2004 and 2005 but then discontinued this activity.

The GoM took little ownership of the Project. Key decision making processes e.g. on the selection of occupational fields and vocational profiles, procurement of equipment, selection of pilot schools and experts, capacity building measures were prepared by GTZ and formally

approved by the GoM without having been discussed in a Project Steering Committee which was never established.

The Project was assessed along the five DAC criteria - relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, and sustainability:

The evaluators judge the Project's **relevance** as **unsatisfactory (rating 4)**, i.e. negative results predominate despite identifiable positive results. This assessment reflects a number of identified weaknesses. The Project did not fully meet the needs of the vocational students as it did not prepare them sufficiently for a difficult labour market. The Project also did not sufficiently consider the needs of enterprises. While the Project was generally in line with Macedonian education policy it completely failed to address gender issues.

The Project's **effectiveness** was rated as **unsatisfactory (rating 4)**. The performance of two out of three indicators (adequate employment of graduates of vocational pilot profiles and participation of private industry in the ongoing development of vocational profiles) were far below expected levels. A tracer study conducted by the evaluators during the mission shows that today instead of 75%, less than 10% of the sample of graduates from pilot schools are adequately employed. The participation of industry in the ongoing development and implementation process of reforming vocational curricula also remained clearly below expectations. Only indicator no. 2 (vocational training meets expectation of 75% randomly selected pilot students) performed above expectation (83%).

The **impact** of the Project was rated to be **unsatisfactory (rating 4)**. One intended impact of the Project was to strengthen the Macedonian economy and to bring graduates of 3-year vocational education programmes into employment. A tracer study implemented by the evaluators during the field mission shows that nearly 50% of pilot-school graduates are unemployed today and that among the others most are not adequately employed (see para. above). The evaluators therefore judged that the Project made limited contributions to the overall impact and at the same time acknowledged that the planned impact was not realistic given the limited duration and funding of the Project. The exemplary modernisation of vocational education serves the need for qualified personnel of modern enterprises. But as the reform (of three vocational curricula) did not trigger off a reform process beyond the selected eight pilot schools the benefit of the Project for the Macedonian economy on national level is very limited. Project documents suggest that the 2006 VET law was developed with the help of the Project. This newly created regulatory framework was in principle in line with European standards. However, the evaluators had to acknowledge that the implementation of the law did not effectively contribute to sustainable school-industry cooperation in vocational education and especially in the provision of practical training opportunities. The tracer study shows that graduates from reformed vocational education programmes are less affected from youth unemployment compared to national standards. If

the modernisation of vocational curricula would have gone beyond the pilot schools, the Project also could have had a stronger impact on the reduction of youth unemployment.

The **efficiency** of the Project was rated as **unsatisfactory (rating 4)**. The early procurement of equipment which was organised upon request of the BMZ as a swift response to the critical situation in Macedonia at that time (civil war) negatively affected the efficiency of the Project as later, after it was decided which vocational profiles to reform, additional equipment had to be purchased. The efficiency of the Project could have been increased through more systematic cooperation with the EU-funded TVET programme which had a very similar scope of activities. But cooperation between the Project and this programme was left with short-term experts and not covered on institutional level (i.e. GTZ, European Training Foundation (ETF) and European Delegation in Skopje). Although the Project had very limited resources (only up to three local long-term staff plus intermittent international short-term experts) it managed to install the delivered equipment in a very efficient way in time and to train teachers in pilot schools to make best use of the new equipment for the pilot testing of three new curricula. Eventually, the team on the ground also succeeded in starting the pilot programmes in time, i.e. in September 2003.

The evaluators believe that the **sustainability** of Project outcomes depends on the acceleration of systemic VET reform and the effective provision of incentives for industry to provide adequate practical training opportunities. The Project contributed to the social and political sustainability of Macedonia as it has catered for the needs of disadvantaged youths from rural areas and because it has promoted the cooperation between different conflicting ethnic communities. In summary, the evaluators rate the sustainability of the Project as **satisfactory (rating 3)**.

The **overall rating** of the Project is **unsatisfactory (rating 4)**.

The evaluators offer the following recommendations for consideration in future VET projects:

- Any project should be managed through a Steering Committee (SC) chaired by a representative of the recipient country. The GoM should play a prominent role in setting up a SC and use it as a key tool to maintain ownership of technical assistance projects.
- The exemplary reform of vocational curricula alone does not bring about necessary systemic VET reforms. VET projects need to pay equal attention to reforms at micro-level, but also at meso- and at systemic level. In doing so, GoM and GTZ should seek close cooperation with like-minded donors to cluster resources and information for systemic VET reform.
- In Macedonia, like in other transition countries, not enough traditional employment opportunities are available for vocational graduates, irrespective of the quality of their education and training. It is recommended, therefore, that more attention is given to

entrepreneurship training when designing a TVET project. This, together with the provision of seed-funding, is likely to promote more job opportunities.

- Recipients of equipment need to be actively involved in the definition of technical specifications and tender procedures even if they are managed centrally. BMZ should even in a situation of time pressure allow GTZ sufficient time to design technical assistance project with due diligence by using baseline studies and other important information.
- Project staff and experts should enjoy a higher degree of management discretion to make better use of locally available know-how and to react in a more flexible way to local developments. GTZ should consider to delegate more decision making power to project teams in the country to ensure management discretion at appropriate level.
- Needs assessments in vocational education and training should take needs of vocational schools and local enterprises into consideration bearing in mind that vocational education and training is to be implemented in both places. GTZ may consider providing in the future more technical assistance and support to enterprises involved in vocational education and training instead of being focused on the work with vocational schools.
- GTZ also needs to pay more attention to establish an ongoing dialogue between vocational schools, enterprises and TVET policy makers to make sure that the exemplary reform of vocational curricula is not an end in itself, but the means to an end i.e. reforming TVET systems in order to strengthen the national economy.
- Gender differentiation needs to be considered during the design phase. It is too late to address this issue during the implementation of a project. Through a gender sensitive ex-ante definition of project results and scope of activities equal opportunities issues need to be addressed (e.g. through the provision of gender-awareness training in capacity-building programmes and the setting of enrolment targets for training programmes).

Promotion of Vocational Training in
Technical Professions,
Macedonia 10/2000 – 07/2006

Overall Objective:
Graduates of supported industrial-technical vocational profiles are qualified according to the needs of a modern economy.

Cross-cutting issues				
Public Private Partnerships (PPP-1)	Poverty (EPA)	Good Governance (PD/GG-1)	Gender (G-0)	Environment (UR-0)
Status: PPP-measures were neither prepared nor implemented.	Status: EPA-Project didn't have pro-poor approach but contributed to poverty reduction as graduates are less affected by youth unemployment.	Status: Project was designed ad PG-GG-0 and implemented as rapid intervention without emphasizing participatory approach.	Status: Project failed to contribute to gender mainstreaming in vocational education in technical occupations.	Status: Very limited environmental impact of vocational pilot schools. Project addressed environmental issues during capacity building measures.

Indicator 1:
75% of grad. of voc. profiles in 8 supported pilot schools that do not move to higher educ. Institutions find an adequate employm. Within 3 months after graduation

STATUS:
Only 9.7% of sample students (tracer study) who didn't move to higher educ. said that they found adequate employ. Nearly half of all sample students (48.1%) stated that they were unemployed and 24% said that they had continued voc. educ. on technical level.

Indicator 2:
75% of randomly selected VET students from 8 pilot schools confirm that the voc. Training meets their expectations.

STATUS:
83% of sample (tracer study) confirmed that the reformed 3-year voc. educ. met their expectations.

Indicator 3:
Rep. of the private industry participate in the development and revision of training programs, implementation of training programs (internships) and exam. (analysis of internship places, minutes of examinations).

STATUS:
The majority (63.7%) of interviewed enterprises provide practical training only. 28.3% of sample companies provide pract. training and are involved in impl. of final exam. Only 3.5% of interviewed enterprises are fully committed to an ongoing reform process and 4.4%of companies do not cooperate at all with vocational schools.

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