

STANDARD PROGRESS REPORT

No. and title: **00064041-UNDP Vocational Education and Training System (VET) in Armenia Project**

Reporting period: **01/04/2009 till 11/20/2009**

I. PURPOSE

- The main purpose of the VET Project is to achieve significant change with sustainable results by modernizing Vocational Education and Training System in Armenia. Main objectives of the VET Project are to raise youth employability by modernizing vocational education and training (VET) system in Armenia as a proven way to reduce poverty and generate income. Modernization include whole chain of pilot steps aimed at development of normative and legislative environment in the VET sector, enhancement of the vocational education and training system content; provision with trainings on various topics for VET faculty and students, upgrading facilities of the acting VET establishments and conducting PR campaign for VET system in Armenia to match demand and supply sides of the dynamically changing domestic labor market.
- The Project is contributing to socially-oriented economic growth by helping government authorities to implement pro-poor policies and programmes in Vocational Education and Training sector; to increase employment and business opportunities for the country's remote marzes by helping them to create an enabling environment for acquiring modern knowledge and occupational skills for learners to promote their labor market access and to create possibility for establishment of their own businesses.
- The Project is strengthening the capacity of the poor and socially disadvantaged to contribute to the country's growth by raising youth employability, broadening awareness on different opportunities to obtain vocational education in colleges and craftsmanship colleges; developing strategic partnership between private business and vocational institutions, and increasing participatory approach in the development and implementation of vocational education and training system policy.

The objectives of the Project are to upgrade facilities and furnish with new equipment the selected country's 12 pilot VET schools; and provide labor market with skilful workforce to be trained based on updated qualification standards, modular programs and textbooks according to modern and innovative educational technologies. The Project is designed to address issues of 12 pilot VET colleges across the country as well as to contribute to the VET policy formulation and implementation through development of a number of VET policy fundamental papers.

- **Main implementing partners:** RA Ministry of Territorial Administration.
Other partners: RA Ministry of Education and Science (Responsible Party), National Institute of Education, National Center for VET development, VET schools; RA Ministry of Social Affairs; State Employment Services Agency, Youth Career Centers, Social Partners (private sector representatives); Donor Organizations (EU Delegation, WB, USAID, Eurasia Foundation, British Council, etc.), private educational funds, NGOs and Adult Association; Education Association; 12 Pilot VET institutions- direct beneficiaries of the VET project; Other VET establishments and training centers.

II. RESOURCES

Total approved budget for 2009:

Initially approved budget - **USD 505,082**

Revised budget - USD 651,810

UNDP VET Project financing is provided by the Government of Denmark in the amount totaled **USD 601,810** and the rest of funds (**USD 50,000**) is provided by UNDP TRAC Resources.

III. RESULTS

The Project is designed to cover 12 pilot VET colleges by upgrading their laboratories as well as modernize whole chain of educational process starting from development of State Competency-Based Qualification Standards (CBQSs) and ending up with new training materials/guidelines and training programs for trainees on new curricula and text books.

Main focus of the VET Project is derived from the current trends of the labor market and reflects results of both recently made research works and analytical papers on both labor market and Vocational Education System in Armenia. The following four-five groups of specialties having highest demand in current labor market (May 2006 up to the beginning of 2009) in comparison with other specialties have been identified: 1. Construction specialties; 2. Craftsmanship technical specialties; 3. Agricultural industry and food processing; 4. Tourism and service include business hospitality and public catering, and 5. IT sector.

The UNDP VET Project is implementing through the following **2 main components** plus **1 component** introduced in the middle of 2009 as a respond measure to mitigate social consequences of ongoing economic crises:

Component 1: Development of labor market oriented content and context of vocational education and training system

Component 2: Facilities Upgrade for 12 pilot VET colleges

Component 3: Mitigation of Financial Crises Consequences through provision with vocational re-training for registered unemployed

Sub-activities of the 1st Component:

Development of Competency-Based Qualification Standards (CBQSs) for the VET Specialties

1. Development of the following 5 middle-level professional education CBQSs with occupational classifiers to be aligned to the NQF level descriptors is completed, namely:

- “1706 Use of lifting machine, construction and road building vehicles”
- “1707 Technical operation of rolling stock”
- “1103 Production of black and colored metals’ alloy”

- “2913 Installation, correction and use of electrical equipment in industrial and municipal buildings”
- “3114 Operation and maintenance of agro-vehicle and agricultural equipment”

International Policy Advice:

1. Draft *Career Guidance and Vocational Orientation Model* is submitted to the concerned national stakeholders for discussion and adoption on the state level;
2. Draft *Income Generating Model for VET schools* based on the examples of 12 pilot VET schools is developed and submitted to the concerned national stakeholders for discussion and adoption on the state level;
3. *Draft on National Qualification Framework Levels Descriptors along with corresponding draft Government Decree and alterations to the Law on Education* is already submitted to the concerned national stakeholders for discussion and adoption on the state level;
4. Localization of the *Life-Long Learning Concept* is finalized and adopted on October 15, 2009 during 43rd Session of the Government.

Local Expertise involved as a support tool to International Advice

1. 21 Experts - development of CBQs;
2. 1 Expert - Career Guidance and Vocational Orientation Model;
3. 2 Experts-Income Generating Model for VET schools.

Capacity Building for Policy Makers, VETs Faculty and VETs Students:

1. 2 six-day training programs on CBQS and Modular teaching system are carried out for 35 VET sector employers;
2. Two-day training course on presentation of Agricultural educational didactic package (“Technical Maintenance of Agricultural Vehicles” and “Exploitation of Agricultural Machinery”) for 18 VET faculty across the country is carried out;
1. Training sessions on NQF occupational classifiers and CBQs are carried out for 21 participants involved in the development of CBQs;
2. First VET Study tour entitled “VET System Management” to Denmark is completed for 12 VET policy-makers and implementers from the concerned organizations;
3. Second VET Study Tour entitled “How to run VET schools” to Denmark is scheduled for November 30-December 04, 2009 for 12 VET Schools principles; policy-makers and implementers from the concerned organizations;
4. IT Capacity building for National Center for VET Development is ongoing; the development of www.mkuzak.am webpage of the NCVETD is completed;
5. Establishment of strategic partnership with Diaspora community, namely AGBU is successfully piloted. The cooperation aims at granting of fellowships for 13 disadvantaged students at Gyumri State Technical College to let them complete the education in the College and acquire vocational qualification for further employment. The main source of financing comes through fundraising campaign organized by AGBU in June, 2009, in New York.

Sub-activities of the 2nd Component:

1. Needs assessment of Laboratory Equipment to be procured for 12 pilot VET colleges is finalized
2. **Wood processing, auto-driving and sewing VET educational laboratories** for 4 VET pilot schools are procured through international tenders
3. Development of lists of technical specifications by **international expert** for the following 5 VET labs to be procured in 2010 are completed: **1. Printing & Publishing; 2. Wood-curving; 3. Auto-driving; 4. Cosmetology, and 5. Hotel Management.**

Sub-activities of the 3rd Component:

In light of ongoing global economic crisis, which has serious implications for poverty, the VET Project elaborates its own respond to mitigate social tension associated with the growing unemployment rate, as one of the crisis main signals. The Project came up with initiative to conduct and fund **short-term training programs for registered unemployed on vocational specialties currently demanded in the labor market.** The training programs with strong practical component are offered by the Project to the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOSA) as a part of active labor market policy instruments. In light of this, extensive negotiations were held with the State Employment Agency of MOSA and as a result of the negotiations, training needs, training programs left beyond state budget financing as well as UNDP VET Project focus along with available budget allowing implementation of the joint program were discussed and identified. Letter of Agreement was signed between concerned parties allowing implementation of re-training program for 170 registered unemployed with the budget totaled 55,000 USD. Corresponding contracts with about 20 training providers are already signed and re-training of unemployed is ongoing. VET Project intervention directly addresses the problem of increasing unemployment as well as provide some income for those needing support, since training programs imply among other logistics cost fellowship expenses.

For the reporting period not only all activities stipulated by the AWP, but also additional set of initiatives was undertaken within the framework of the VET Project resulting into budget revision made in September 2009 requiring additional 146, 728 USD to complete all series of activities foreseen in 2009 within the framework of the Project. The Project had supervision mission on September, 2009 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark with extremely positive feedback on the Project implementation phase.

Main outputs/results:

- **4 Draft VET Policy Papers, namely:**
 1. *Career Guidance and Vocational Orientation Model;*
 2. *National Qualification Framework Levels Descriptors*
 3. *Income Generating Model for VET Schools*
 4. *Life-Long Learning Concept is adopted by the Government Session N43 on October 15, 2009*
- **Capacity Building of National Stakeholders:** Series of policy advice and capacity building activities for more than **83 VET employers** are successfully initiated and completed not only in Armenia, but also in Denmark. NCVETD and 12 VET Pilot

colleges are direct beneficiaries of the Project activities in terms of human and institutional capacity building.

- *VET Pilot Schools Facilities Upgrade: 4 VET pilot schools across the country have been provided with professional education laboratories for wood processing, auto-driving and sewing; List of Technical Specifications for additional 5 laboratories in the following vocational occupation fields of 1. Printing and Publishing; 2. Wood-curling; 3.Auto-driving; 4.Cosmetology, and 5.Hotel Management to be procured in 2010 is developed.*
- *Establishment of strategic Partnership with Diaspora in the field of Vocational education with additional fund mobilization*
- *Quick respond to ongoing economic crises to mitigate social tension associated with rapidly growing unemployment through re-training of registered unemployed in a number of vocational occupations currently demanded by the labor market.*

Key partnership relationships are developed with the Ministry of Education and Science and National Institute of Education and NCVETD. Strong ties are observed with 12 pilot VET schools and with the considerable number of other vocational institutions, Ministry of Social Affairs and State Employment Agency, representatives of donor organizations like EU, WB, USAID, and representatives from Danish consulting companies in the VET sector. All the above-mentioned organizations are very supportive and cooperative.

IV. FUTURE WORK PLAN-2010

Component 1: Development of labor market oriented content and context of vocational education and training system

- Development of Modular Programs and corresponding Manuals based on the already developed CBQs
- Publishing activities of already adopted LLL Concept, Manuals, etc.

International Policy Advice:

- VET Teachers Continues Training Concept (tbd)

Capacity Building for Policy Makers, VETIs Faculty and VETIs Students

- Institutional and human capacity building for NCVETD

Cooperation with Diaspora might be continued (tbd)

Component 2: Facilities Upgrade for 12 pilot VET colleges

- Procurement of Laboratory equipment for pilot VET schools
- Procurement of IT equipment for direct beneficiaries

Component 3: Mitigation of Financial Crises Consequences through provision with vocational re-training for registered unemployed

- Re-training of registered unemployed might be continued (tbd)

V. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The total budget for the Project for 2009 is USD 505 082, revised – USD 651, 810

Main Donor	Approved Budget, USD, 2009	Revised Approved Budget, USD	Expenditures by December 2009
Government of Denmark	455, 082	598, 110	557, 847.5
UNDP Armenia	50, 000	50, 000	50, 000
AGBU		3,700	2,345.6

Delivery rate as of November 20, 2009 is 94 %. By the end of 2009 the delivery rate is expecting to reach 100%.