

IPA 2008 National Programme for Albania.
Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Albania

1. Basic information

1.1 CRIS Number: 2008/020-116

1.2 Title: **Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training (VET)¹ in Albania:** Construction of new VET schools, rehabilitation of VET schools, provision for VET didactical tools for improving teaching and learning conditions in VET, and provision for support of the priorities in VET reform

1.3 ELARG Statistical code: 02.26

1.4 Location: the Republic of Albania

Implementing arrangements:

1.5 Contracting Authority (EC): Delegation of the European Commission to Albania

1.6 Implementing Agency:

Delegation of the European Commission in Albania on behalf of the Albanian Government. Rruga e Durrësit, No. 127/1, Laprake Tirana, ALBANIA

1.7 Beneficiary

Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of the Republic of Albania: Rruga e Durrësit, No. 23, Tirana, ALBANIA

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Financing:

1.8 Overall cost (VAT Excluded): **8.000.000 EUR**

1.9 EU contribution: **7.000.000 EUR**

1.10 Final date for contracting: Three years following the date of the conclusion of the Financing Agreement.

1.11 Final date for execution of contracts: Two years following the end date of contracting. These dates apply also to national co-financing.

¹ Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is responsible for VET schools at the level of secondary education. Ministry of Labor, Social Services and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO) is responsible for the Vocational Training Centers. National Agency for VET (NAVETA), which has been established in December 2006, has a mandate to work on institutionalization and improvement of the quality of the VET provision.

1.12 Final date for disbursements: One year following the end date for the execution of contracts.

2. Overall Objective and Project Purpose

2.1 Overall Objective²

Overall objective of the project is to support the implementation of Albania's National Education Strategy with special focus on Pre-University Vocational Education and Training, supporting national socio-economic development and cohesion through development of a coherent VET system and a well skilled labour force.

2.2 Project purpose

The project purpose is to improve quality of learning conditions for students in VET schools, and to provide better education and training opportunities for the poor communities/areas.

Consolidate the network of VET schools and expand the opportunities for vocational education for poor, through upgrading of the VET school infrastructure;
Consolidate the VET didactical and technological equipment in selected VET schools;
Consolidate the on-going VET reform through measures at national/ regional and/or local level: to support on-going VET curriculum reform and boost standards through development of the Albanian Qualification Framework agenda, to further support implementation of the new Regional VET Centre concept based on EU standards in order to allow for more rationalized usage of available schools space and VET didactical and technological equipment

2.3 Link with European Partnership, Stabilization and Association Agreement and other key strategic documents

The Thessaloniki European Council endorsed the introduction of the **European Partnerships** as a means to materialise the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries within the framework of the stabilisation and association process. The main priorities identified for Albania relate to its capacity to meet the criteria defined by the Copenhagen European Council of 1993 and the conditions set for the stabilisation and association process, notably the conditions defined by the Council. The last European Partnership document, in the list of Medium Term priorities indicates that Albania should step up efforts to improve the education system, including creating a modern Vocational Education and Training³.

Following the Commission's November 2005 Enlargement Strategy Paper which stressed that Albania's reform progress paved the way for the conclusion of the negotiations, Albania signed a **Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)** with the EU on 12 June 2006 in Luxembourg. The SAA provides a framework for mutual commitments on political, trade and economic issues while encouraging regional cooperation. The Article on Education and

² The objectives of this sector fiche are in line with the broad MoES objectives which are indicated in the framework of the **Sector-Wide Approach Programme** - Education Excellence and Equity Project jointly financed by the Government of Albania, the World Bank, EIB and CEB, which is implemented following the World Bank Procedures for Procurement. (Memorandum of Understanding, referring also to usage of Procurement Standards of the World Bank has been signed by the donors involved in this SWAP). Despite the fact that this SWAP is also developing **Performance Based Management indicators**, there are no indicators on secondary VET in order to monitor progress of the policy implementation which have been set up by the Government of Republic of Albania

³ **2006/54/EC: Council Decision** of 30 January 2006 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2004/519/EC

Training in SAA document indicates that “the Parties⁴ shall cooperate with the aim of raising the level of general education and vocational education and training in Albania, as well as youth policy and youth work. A priority for higher education systems shall be the achievement of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration. The Parties shall also cooperate with the aim of ensuring that access to all levels of education and training in Albania is free of discrimination on the grounds of gender, colour, ethnic origin or religion. The relevant Community programmes and instruments shall contribute to the upgrading of educational and training structures and activities in Albania. Cooperation shall take due account of priority areas related to the Community *acquis* in this field.”

In July 2006, Albania adopted a National Action Plan to implement the European Partnership recommendations. Progress on these reform priorities is encouraged and monitored by the European Commission, notably through the annual EU Progress Reports and through political and economic dialogue⁵. **EU Progress report 2007 for Albania** indicates that the country made some progress in the area of education – the budget for education, which was at a low level, has been significantly increased in the year 2006. The implementation of the scheme on final and entry exams for Albanian universities (State Matura) continues. The Parliament passed a new law on higher education which includes the follow-up of the Bologna process. A master plan for higher education covering the period until 2016 has been launched. **Albania continues to work on a qualifications framework in line with the European Qualifications Framework**. It has been recognized that the **National Vocational Education and Training Agency** has started its work and it is responsible for standards, qualifications, accreditation, assessment, curricula and teacher training in VET. An initiative for the development of post-secondary and higher VET has been launched by setting up a vocational academy at the University of Durrës to provide technical training, taking into account the needs of the national economy.⁶ Under the Mid-Term priorities, in the European Partnership document, it is clearly stated that **Albanian Government should step up efforts to improve the education system**, including primary education, and to create a modern vocational education and training system.⁷

2.4 Link with Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD)

Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document⁸ 2007-2009 for Albania, which is the coherent framework for Community assistance for Albania as potential candidate country, in the section of social requirements clearly indicates that “Albania has broadly achieved macroeconomic stability. This has contributed to its progress towards being a functioning market economy but further reforms must be pursued. Some progress took place in the area of education, including approval of national strategies for secondary education and vocational training.”

In the section of main priorities of the document, Commission clearly indicates that it is necessary to continue to work on “advancing the reform of the education and VET system to

⁴ Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) is signed between the European Communities and their Member states, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part, and they are referred to as Parties

⁵ NAP has been updated and in September 2007, The National Plan for the Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement 2007 – 2012, has been developed with EU Technical assistance. Electronic version of the document is available on the WEB page of the Ministry for European Integration <http://www.mie.gov.al>

⁶ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Albania 2007 Progress Report, EN; { COM(2007) 663 final available at <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement>

⁷ 2006/54/EC: Council Decision of 30 January 2006 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2004/519/EC

⁸ COMMISSION DECISION C(2007)2245 of 31/05/2007 on a Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2007-2009 for Albania

support the development of economy and society, as well as creating a link between the education system and the labour market.”

2.5 Link with National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013

In November 2005, Government of Albania, committed itself to adopt the so-called Integrated Planning System⁹ (IPS), which includes two cornerstone processes: i) a medium to long-term strategic planning process, the **National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2007-2013**, which establishes national strategic priorities and goals, ii) the so-called Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP). During 2007, Government of Republic of Albania, worked intensively to compile NSDI document, which consists of 24 sector strategies and 8 cross-sector strategies, where also education, vocational education and training, employment policy and labour market, social policy, as well as migration policy, where one of the major issue is to fight the brain drain phenomenon through cooperation with international institutions to develop programmes that will attract students in order to utilize their skills in the country. In addition, MTBP, in the chapter for education indicates that extension of the VET schools capacities and construction of new schools is important part of the Government policy.

In addition, there is a Draft **Regional Development Country Strategy** which is intended as a key element of the new National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) providing the coordinated approach to the sustainable socio-economic development of all of the parts of the country and linking a range of central government ministries and institutions with socio-economic actors and institutions across the country in a concerted long term “top-down – bottom-up” effort to achieve a more balanced development of the country and to reduce socio-economic disparities. As such, it will represent a significant cross-sectoral, area focussed strand of the NSDI, where certainly VET plays important role.

3. Description of the project

3.1 Background and justification

The education sector suffered during the initial transition period since 1991 with reduced resources, deteriorated physical infrastructure and the need to realign the education system to demands of market economy. The level of physical destruction was significant and maintenance was poor during the transition, and Albania still has to make substantial efforts to improve the quality of school infrastructure. Many vocational schools were closed down during the 1990s. The enrollment rate in all levels, except higher education, declined significantly during the 1990s.

In the past few years, however, the government adopted more pro-active responses to challenges associated with transition in the education sector as outlined in the **National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI)**¹⁰. Education is one of the top priority areas for the new government. Albania has developed a comprehensive education sector strategy, especially for pre-university education, as spelled out in the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007 - 2013, **National Education Strategy 2007-2013** and the Mid-Term Budget Framework, focusing on 5 main pillars: improved governance, improved

⁹ **The Integrated Planning System (IPS)** is a broad planning and monitoring framework which aims to ensure that the core policy and financial processes developed by the Government of Albania proceed in an integrated manner. These core processes are: NSDI (National Strategy on Development and Integration), MTBP (Mid-Term Budgetary Program), Government’s Program, European Integration, Public Investment Program, and External Assistance.

¹⁰The document is available at the Council of Ministers Republic of Albania web page of the <http://km.gov.al>

quality of teaching and learning, improved financing of pre-university education, capacity building and HRD, and **development of VET in the context of overall pre-university education**. The target set for secondary VET is to increase participation from 20% to 40 - 50% of overall enrolment. Finally, the proportion of GDP allocated for education is set to rise from 3.7% to 5%.

In addition, **VET Strategy 2007-2015** was drafted by the MoES during 2007 considering the inputs from National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)¹¹. It is foreseen that this document is adopted by the Council of Ministers by the end of 2007. The major focus of the strategy is placed on improving quality of VET, as well as implementation of new Albanian Qualification Framework Law.

The VET is declared as priority of the Government for the period 2007-2010, and there are significant reasons for that. There are **41 VET schools in Albania** which are under the responsibility of the MoES, which are distributed in 22 districts and organized in two levels of VET education - 3 years VET and 5 years VET. The number of pupils enrolled in VET schools in Albania has changed significantly after the fall of communism, and the impact of this unlucky transition consequence is very apparent in Albania nowadays. The vocational enrolment rates in 1990 were 72% of the total enrolment in secondary schools and it plummeted after the demise of communism reaching to 20% in 2006. Some of VET schools used to deliver short term courses for adults, based on article 22, point (c) of VET law, but currently such extra curricular activities for adults are almost non-existent due to very limited financial autonomy in practice.

The actual fact finding points out that the **map of VET schools** in Albania is rather in difficult conditions. In general, “public secondary vocational schools are small size and the average number of students is about 330 students per school, and the average number of students per class is about 20. Same applies for teachers and for the teaching staff (12-15 teachers/school). In comparison with similar schools abroad, such figures are very low. There are some large vocational schools (up to 700 students) but they are very few and there are some very small schools (100-200 students). There are many cases where the vocational schools are part of the primary or general secondary schools, lacking the necessary workshops and facilities for adequate education and training for the students that attend the VET classes. All these have influenced the gradual reduction of the positive reputation of this sector of education, and actually, there is a general opinion that many of vocational schools **"have no perspective"** and that they **"very soon will be closed"** There are some vocational schools that apply entrance criteria or entrance exams, to select better students. This is because these schools lack the physical capacities to fulfil all the requests. In certain specialities such as middle economist, tourism, hydro-sanitary installation, auto mechanics, etc, the ratio of the requests with enrolment is 2:1 to 3:1.”¹²

The enrolment of students in secondary general education increased, however, at the same time there is also significant increase in enrolments at tertiary level; all these makes pressures on the labour market where nowadays significant numbers of unemployed university level graduates are the result. This is, in fact, clear indication that the Government will soon face serious challenges in coping with the existing situation.

¹¹ NAVETA, Draft National VET Strategy, May 2007

¹² During 2003 ETF made an exercise of the VET school mapping and a survey on “Re-distribution of public VET institutions/resources” in Albania has been commissioned.

All these issues are very important due to the emergent need to consider the possibilities for more **rationalized usage of the space available in the public schools** in the near future. In addition, capital investments in construction and rehabilitation of secondary VET schools is in line with previous interventions of the EU CARDS programme in Albania, which also paid significant attention to development of so-called Regional VET Centres, a new concept which needs to strengthen the cooperation between the MoLSAEO and MoES in providing broader spectrum of education and training opportunities for the citizens.

Albanian Government has been supported in VET reform by consequent EU funds. Recent CARDS programmes—**CARDS 2002, CARDS 2003 and CARDS 2004**, including a twinning project aimed at supporting the National VET Agency—mainly envisage assistance aimed at accomplishing 3 VET goals in Albania: (a) development of a demand-oriented VET system and associated methodologies; (b) institutional development, including support to a progressive VET reform process at the national level; and (c) improvements to system delivery that will enable rationalised and decentralised delivery of skills through VET schools and centres¹³.

As a result of joint efforts of the Government, EU and number of donors active in the field, **3 main VET reform streams can be identified**: **a.** development of institutions/bodies linked to the newly created National VET Agency (NAVETA) and support of National Vocational Education and Training Council (NVETC), **b.** development of a coherent system of VET through continuous work on curriculum and more recently on national qualifications framework (NQF); and **c.** development of a coherent system of VET delivery through continuous support of pilot VE schools, Regional Vocational Training Centres, and new pilot Regional VET centre (RVETC) concept/approach.

This sector fiche is designed to build on all these achievements, and in particular to strengthen the infrastructure for VET delivery in the country. It is also expected that program will provided the impetus for the development of coherent system of VET by bringing together the resources of a wider partnership of key players. Shaping a more coherent approach to VET in Albania having in mind that human capital is important ingredient for future development of the economy of the country (in particular with a lifelong learning perspective as a guiding principle), involves the building of bridges between different parts of education and training systems, and between the systems and the wider world of learning.

3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross border impact

The development of human resources through investment in VET was underestimated and not always considered as part of the VET governance which suppose important decisions making and in particular with regard to the priority education and training needs, resources distribution across the priority areas for education and training, how can obtain the maximum returns from existing resources. This EU Programme where big part is investment in infrastructure will further contribute to strengthening the parity of esteem between general secondary and secondary vocational education.

The proposed EU programme in the framework of IPA 2008 would be implemented in broader framework of the Government objectives for VET, which is clearly indicated in the National

¹³ Final report of the EU CARDS 2003 VET programme in Albania.

Strategy for Pre-University Education. The objectives are in line with the Education Excellence and Equity Programme, which is implemented by the MoES, and which is a partnership between the Government of Albania, World Bank, Council of Europe Bank, and European Investment Bank. Therefore, this EU intervention will contribute to the Government priorities through: (i) increasing student attraction in pre-university VET by improving conditions and teaching quality in the VET schools; (ii) expanding teaching and learning opportunities in the VET as one of the priorities criterion for development at a regional level; and (iii) ensuring equality and access for all the students to secondary education and creating possibilities for adaptation to the labor market demand.

The proposed EU Programme directly contributes in improving conditions in teaching and learning in VET. Through increased enrollment rates in VET especially in the outskirts poor areas and reduced disparity of attendance between rural and urban areas as a major social issue in education, it will contribute to equip a new generation with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude to respond to the changing demands of the competitive regional and global market and will eventually lay the basis for better development of human capital in Albania.

3.3 Results and measurable indicators

Component 1: Support for construction and rehabilitation of VET schools

Result 1: Detailed technical designs for construction of new VET schools and rehabilitation of existing VET schools.

Indicator – The works for construction and rehabilitation of VET school are launched.

Result 2: New VET schools built

Result 3: VET schools rehabilitated

Result 4: Supervision of works and compliance with requested services during construction and defect liability period ensured

Indicators: - The VET schools constructed and rehabilitated are in use and fully operational.

Component 2: Provision of VET didactical tools/ technological equipment for improving conditions of selected schools

Result 5: Selected VET schools are equipped with VET didactical tools/ technological equipment

Indicator - VET didactical equipment installed, functional and in use by teachers and instructors

Component 3: Provision for support of implementation of VET priorities

Result 7: VET quality provision has been strengthened, with particular attention to the region of Tirana, where the majority of poor population is located

Result 8: The capacity of the regional/local actors to design and implement vocational education and training programmes/ curriculum for students and adults has been strengthened

Result 9: VET provision through support of curriculum implementation, teacher training programme development, implementation of the Albanian Qualification Framework, further strengthened.

Result 10: VET schools map, as well as identification of post-secondary VET programmes developed and made available.

Indicators

- The VET sector in Albania has improved performance, priorities of the country in VET are better managed by MoES and NAVETA, and performance based indicators on VET teaching and learning processes, which are developed based on EU standards, indicate clear progress.
- VET schools have enhanced their capacities to deliver services in accordance to their mandate as given by Albanian legislation.
- Effectiveness of VET improved through updated equipment, programmes (curricula, teacher trained, AQF implementation) to correspond with emerging economic development and employment needs of the country.

3.4 Activities

Component 1: Support for construction and rehabilitation of VET schools/ Works

Activity 1: Contract for detailed technical designs of construction and rehabilitation of secondary VET schools as well as preparation and finalisation of tender dossier/s.

- Detailed technical design for the construction of the new *Agricultural High School in Bushat*, Shkoder;
- Detailed technical design for construction of the new *Technical School within the Industrial High School “Arben Broci”*, Shkoder;
- Detailed technical design for construction of the new *Technical School in Kamez*, Tirana;
- Detailed technical design for construction of the *Electrical Technical School* within the “*Sali Ceka*” School, Elbasan
- Detailed technical design for construction of the **Vocational School in Rethina municipality**, Shkoder
- Detailed technical design for extension and rehabilitation of the *Vocational Economical high school*, Lezhe;
- Detailed technical design for rehabilitation of the “*Petro Sota*” *Vocational School*, Fier;
- Detailed technical design for rehabilitation of the *Vocational School*, Cerrik, Elbasan.
- Detailed technical design for rehabilitation of the *Vocational high school, “H.Cela”* Durres

Activity 2: Construction of new VET schools¹⁴ .

- Contract for construction of the *Agricultural High School in Bushat*, Shkoder
- Contract for construction of the new Technical School within the *Industrial High School “Arben Broci”*, Shkoder

¹⁴ This is a preliminary decision. After accomplishment of costs estimation, with the agreement of the parties, the above names of schools can be subject of changes, considering equivalent VET Schools according to the priorities of MoES.

- Contract for construction of the new *Technical School in Kamez*, Tirana;
- Contract for construction of the *Electrical Technical School* within the “Sali Ceka” School, Elbasan;
- Contract for the construction of the *Vocational School* in Rrethina municipality, Shkoder

Activity 3: Extension and rehabilitation of VET schools.

- Contract for extension and rehabilitation of the *Vocational Economical high school*, Lezhe;
- Contract for rehabilitation of the “*Petro Sota*” Vocational School, Fier;
- Contract for rehabilitation of the *Vocational School*, Cerrik, Elbasan;.
- Contract for rehabilitation of the *Vocational high school*, “*H.Cela*” Durres.

Activity 4: Carry out Supervision of works for construction and rehabilitation of VET Schools.

Component 2: Provision of VET didactical tools/technological equipment for improving conditions of selected schools

Activity 5: The broad objectives of the National VET strategy are to deliver quality VET in Albania. Among other issues, one of the critical conditions, to do so is to enhance status and attractiveness of VET, though adequate training equipment and tools, adequate supply of training materials, and practice. Other requirements may include relevant textbooks and training manuals that are already available.

Component 3: Provision for support of implementation of VET priorities/ Technical assistance

Activity 6: Technical assistance will be deployed to ensure smooth continuation of VET reform. Technical assistance will support further activities mainly related to development of a coherent system of VET through continuous work on curriculum and more recently on Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF); development of a coherent system of VET delivery through continuous support of pilot VE schools, Regional Vocational Training Centres, and new pilot Regional VET centres (RVETC) concept/approach¹⁵.

In order to consolidate the VET sector and to make maximum out of the funds provided by EU in this project fiche, it is necessary to ensure VET secondary schools mapping, as well as mapping of universities and/or institutions that offer post-secondary VET: the document produced will serve the needs of VET policy and planning in the sector¹⁶.

3.5 Conditionality and sequencing

The construction of the new schools, as well as rehabilitation of existing ones is conditioned by issues related to land ownership and municipality permits for construction. The procedures for the construction’s permits and the land ownership in principle start immediately after the finalisation of the detailed technical designs. All these are tasks of the MoES and MoES needs to ensure that in all cases of buildings proposed for construction and/or rehabilitation, the

¹⁵ Particular attention should be paid to the Region of Tirana.

¹⁶ VET sector in MoES and National Agency for VET.

ownership and property rights are clear and all necessary permits are issued. All these should be available and ready no later than **1 March, 2010. Only after this is finalized, the EU can implement the procedures for contracting Works.**

Due to specificity of the works in the sector of education, and even though some works can be arranged for school holiday periods, it is often necessary for work to be done when the premises are occupied, especially this refer to rehabilitation and/or extension of existing school buildings. The hazards on site may include dangerous equipment and machinery, vehicles, flammable materials, scaffolding, fencing, ladders or waste and debris. In addition, works may involve the use of dangerous or toxic materials and may give rise to environmental problems i.e. through noise, dust or other emissions.

There may be significant risks, not just of damage to property but also of injury as a result of the works. Works can be an attraction to children and they must be properly managed in order to ensure that the significant risks are controlled. The works that is proposed must be covered by risk assessments, keeping in mind education and training process: both the client (the school, as well as MoES or Regional Directorates involved) and the contractor(s) are required to carry out formal risk assessments which will effectively define how the work should be carried out to ensure the safety of everyone involved, and all these should be carried out based on appropriate safety standards.

In order to use effectively the funds allocated for VET didactical and technological equipment, the MoES should develop clear criteria for targeting the schools within the list of schools already proposed for construction and/or rehabilitation or equivalent VET Schools according to the priorities of MoES. It is important to co-ordinate this scoping exercise with several construction initiatives going on, and in particularly initiatives that are funded by the Council of Europe Bank and the European Bank for Investment.

The ownership of assets will belong to the Ministry of Education and Science as main beneficiary of the project, where applicable to local government, and in case of VET didactical tools, if possible based on EU regulations, as well as based on Albanian legislation, should belong to the schools.

The procedures of construction permits and land ownership demand a close cooperation between the local government and the central government. During the last phase of the preparation of the technical plans and design, administrative procedures should be run in parallel. MoES has chosen free areas where we don't expect to have any problem for land ownership or for construction permits.

It should not be underestimated that the push to extend the coverage and thus the benefits of education carry considerable financial demands for the Government that appear at later stage. Experience from other countries, including those considered as rich countries, shows that Governments face constraints in generating additional public and private resources to meet the high cost of post-compulsory education – in case of Albania, secondary general education after grade 9, and VET education at secondary level. Therefore, when proposing major capital investments in VET it is always good to keep in mind the two basic questions: 1. How the access to the school buildings will be provided for students, because this involves costs and it is related to post-compulsory education?¹⁷ 2. How much proper maintenance of the building will cost on annual bases, once constructed/ reconstructed?

¹⁷ Component 3 which involves VET school mapping should contribute significantly to this issue.

3.6 Linked activities

In 2008, **EU VET CARDS 2006 programme**¹⁸ will have started its implementation - “Support to improved operation of pilot Vocational Schools and Vocational Training Centers” in Albania. Expected results of this intervention are: (i) VET policy makers in the country have updated their skills in VET policy design, implementation and monitoring of the VET reform policies in Albania, (ii) VET institutions and VET bodies have enhanced their capacities to deliver services in accordance to their mandate as given by Albanian legislation, (iii) Improved effectiveness of VET provision through updated programmes (curricula, teacher trained, Albanian Qualification Framework implemented) to correspond with emerging economic development and employment needs of the country.

The **European Training Foundation (ETF)**, as an **Agency of the European Union** has actively supported initiatives in Albania to embed the EU Education and Training 2010 agenda within national system, through work on qualifications, quality assurance and career guidance and wider support to the implementation of human resource development initiatives. Albania has participated also in peer review and peer learning activities of ETF, since 2003. In its activities in the country, ETF applies a principle of policy-learning through involvement of **policy-makers and senior officials** from the sector as peers in order to create the conditions for better targeted capacity building and to improve the conditions for policy implementation.¹⁹ In 2006 peer learning exercise on the issue of VET financing took place in Albania, while in 2007 peer learning exercise was related to implications of policies on schools and school management.

The **Education Excellence and Equity Project** jointly financed by the Government of Albania, the World Bank, BEI and CEB supports the National Education Strategy to be implemented based on Sector-Wide Approach and aims at (i) maximizing support to teachers and school principals in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning; (ii) increasing opportunities of good education for all; (iii) targeting support to regions and populations that are most affected by poverty and lack of opportunities; (iv) recognizing and encouraging local and regional initiatives to improve the quality of schools; and (v) raising efficiency and reducing corruption by participatory transparent review procedures of the sector performance.

3.7 Lessons learned

Experience from previous interventions in VET suggests that to successfully instigate change requires investment over a number of years. The failure to tackle VET reforms in a systemic, holistic way has, in other countries within the region, resulted in key functions in the system failing to operate effectively, insufficient institutional capacity and resulting lack of commitment from stakeholders, social partners and industry. This has meant many excellent VET institutions becoming quickly isolated, without the systemic support necessary to evolve collectively to meet labour market needs, resulting in training delivered becoming outdated and graduates entering employment without the skills and knowledge demanded by the economy - or simply remaining unemployed.

The implementation of different projects in Albania provides opportunity for many lessons learned to be taken into account. As an example in the domain of Works/Construction and rehabilitation often, the design of the projects was with lower quality, than discrepancy between actual designs and actual construction, supervision with lack of standards, however,

¹⁸ Project Fiche of the EU CARDS 2006 VET programme in Albania

¹⁹ Reports on recent initiatives in Albania of the European Training Foundation/ Agency of European Union are available on ETF Web page: <http://www.etf.europa.eu/>

the most emphasised is the lack of respect for deadlines in fulfilling the construction and rehabilitation contracts, all of which significantly can undermine the normal school processes. Experience from the sector shows that often it is forgotten to assist schools in managing the risks associated with building work, and this is not about the design, but it is about how the education process is organized and affected when reconstruction/ construction/ regular maintenance takes place. This refers to the planning of the various stages of the work as well as the actual work activities, the equipment and hazardous substances in use and the interface with normal school activities and processes which are taking place in the schools and/ or other school facilities, like school yard, etc. Even though some building work can be arranged for school holiday periods, it is often necessary for work to be done when the premises are occupied.

Although progress has been achieved further effort is required in order to implement the ambitious initiatives on the reform agenda of the Ministry of Education and Science. In this respect, it is important to take into account the capacity of the relevant institutions which carry out the reforms, and not to underestimate absorption capacity of the system.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in EUR):

			SOURCES OF FUNDING									
			TOTAL EXP.RE		IPA COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION		NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION
ACTIVITIES	IB (1)	INV (1)	EUR (a)=(b)+(c)+(d)	EUR (b)	%(2)	Total EUR (c)=(x)+(y)+(z)	% (2)	Central EUR (x)	Regional / Local EUR (y)	IFIs EUR (z)	EUR (d)	% (2)
<i>Activity 1 Detailed design and preparation of tender dossiers of works for construction and rehabilitation of VET schools.</i>		X	<u>350 000</u>	<u>350 000</u>	100							
Contract 1.1 Detailed technical designs and tender dossiers of works contracts for construction and rehabilitation of VET schools			<u>350.000</u>	<u>350.000</u>								–
<i>Activity 2 Construction of new VET schools</i>		X	<u>4 070 000</u>	<u>4 070 000</u>	100							
Contract 2.1 Construction of the Agricultural High School in Bushat, Shkoder			<u>430 000</u>	<u>430 000</u>								–
Contract 2.2 Construction of the new Technical School within the Industrial High School “Arben Broci”, Shkoder			<u>910 000</u>	<u>910 000</u>								–
Contract 2.3 Construction of the new Technical School Kamez, Tirana			<u>910 000</u>	<u>910 000</u>								
Contract 2.4 Construction of the Electrical Technical School within the “Sali Ceka” School, Elbasan			<u>910 000</u>	<u>910 000</u>								
Contract 2.5 Construction of the Vocational School in municipality Rrethina, Shkoder			<u>910 000</u>	<u>910 000</u>								
<i>Activity 3 Extension and rehabilitation of existing VET schools</i>		X	<u>1 280 000</u>	<u>1 280 000</u>	100							
Contract 3.1 Extension and reconstruction of the Vocational Economical high school, Lezhe			<u>320 000</u>	<u>320 000</u>								
Contract 3.2 Rehabilitation of the “Petro Sota” Vocational School, Fier			<u>280 000</u>	<u>280 000</u>								

<u>Contract 3.3</u> Rehabilitation of the Vocational School, Cerrik, Elbasan			<u>280 000</u>	<u>280 000</u>								
<u>Contract 3.4</u> Extension and reconstruction of the Vocational high school, "H.Cela" Durres			<u>400 000</u>	<u>400 000</u>								
<u>Activity 4</u> Supervision of works for construction and rehabilitations of VET schools		X	<u>350 000</u>	<u>350 000</u>	100							
<u>Contract 4.1</u> Supervision of works for construction of new VET schools and of works for extension and rehabilitation of existing VET schools			<u>350 000</u>	<u>350 000</u>								
<u>Activity 5</u> Provision of VET didactical tools/equipment for improving conditions of selected VET schools		X	<u>1 000 000</u>			<u>1 000 000</u>	100					
<u>Contract 5.1</u> Supply, Provision of VET didactical tools/equipment for improving conditions of selected VET schools			<u>1 000 000</u>			<u>1 000 000</u>						
<u>Activity 6</u> Provision of support for the implementation of VET reform priorities	X		<u>950 000</u>	<u>950 000</u>	100							
<u>Contract 6.1</u> Technical Assistance Provision for support of the implementation of VET reform priorities			<u>950 000</u>	<u>950 100</u>								
.....												
TOTAL IB			950 000	950 000		0						
TOTAL INV			7 050 000	6 050 000		1 000 000						
TOTAL PROJECT			<u>8 000 000</u>	<u>7 000 000</u>		<u>1 000 000</u>						

NOTE: DO NOT MIX IB AND INV IN THE SAME ACTIVITY ROW. USE SEPARATE ROW

Amounts net of VAT

- (1) In the Activity row use "X" to identify whether IB or INV
- (2) Expressed in % of the **Total** Expenditure (column (a))

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule (periods broken down per quarter)

Contracts	Start of tendering	Signature of Contract	Project Completion
Contract 1.1	Q1 2009	Q3 2009	Q1 2010
Contract 2.1	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 2.2	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 2.3	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 2.4	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 2.5	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 3.1	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 3.2	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 3.3	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 3.4	Q1 2010	Q3 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 4.1	Q4 2009	Q2 2010	Q3 2012
Contract 5.1*	Q2 2011	Q3 2011	Q4 2011
Contract 6.1	Q1 2009	Q3 2009	Q3 2012

* This contract will be financed and implemented by the MoES

6. Cross cutting issues

6.1. Equal Opportunity

The adequacy and effectiveness of the policies, agreements, laws, rules and practices governing VET in Albania, with particular reference to equal opportunities are also related to the conditions under which students get their education, and in particular access to education and training. The construction and the rehabilitation of the schools will contribute to insuring equality and access for and to all the students in schools in the rural areas. This will increase enrollment rate especially in the outskirt poor areas and reduce disparity of attendance between rural and urban areas as a major social issue in education.

In general, not only in Albania, but in most of the countries, high levels of early school leavers are encountered representing low socio economic groups in society. Early school leavers have low levels of access to VET, consequently they have low levels of employment and earn less. Therefore, in the design of actual policies and actions linked with implementation of this programme, in particular, attention should be paid to the fact that there are some VET curriculum/ programmes that need additional efforts in order to be better attended from both males and females. Policy needs to be adopted to encourage female early school leavers to either stay in school or access further education immediately upon leaving school.

6.2 Environment

This sector fiche includes significant amount of works/ construction and rehabilitation of VET schools buildings and this will include different environmental issues, like: dust; noise and vibration, hazard materials split, etc. Therefore, in all cases, it is important to pay attention to

Albanian legislation and/or EU regulations, where applicable on environmental protection. EIA will be carried out during the design stage.

6.3 Minorities

Usually, whenever speaking about minorities, and about their meaningful inclusion in education, it is basically seen as **a process** of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. Therefore, providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in VET settings for minorities means to pay particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that those groups that are statistically most “at risk” are carefully monitored, and that, where necessary, steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in VET. The construction and the rehabilitation of the VET schools will have, certainly, a positive impact in the enrolment of different minorities - Roma, Egyptians, and of other minorities – in VET.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 - Log frame in Standard Format

Annex 2 - Amounts contracted and Disbursed per Quarter over the full duration of Project

Annex 3 - Description of Institutional Framework

Annex 4 - Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents:

Annex 1:Annex I – Logical framework – IPA 2008 MoES/ VET sector

<p>LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX</p>	<p>PROGRAMME NAME AND NUMBER Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Albania: Construction of new VET schools, rehabilitation of VET schools, provision for VET didactical tools and technological equipment for improving teaching and learning conditions in VET and provision for support of the priorities in VET reform</p>		
		<p>CONTRACTING PERIOD:</p>	<p>DISBURSEMENT PERIOD:</p>
		<p>TOTAL BUDGET: 8.000.000 MEUR</p>	<p>IPA BUDGET: 7.000.000 MEUR</p>
<p>INTERVENTION LOGIC</p>	<p>OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS</p>	<p>SOURCES OF VERIFICATION</p>	<p>RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS</p>
<p>OVERALL OBJECTIVE</p> <p>Overall objective of the project is to support the implementation of Albania’s National Education Strategy with special focus on Pre-University Vocational Education and Training, supporting national socio-economic development and cohesion through development of a coherent VET system and a well skilled labour force.</p>	<p>The VET sector in Albania has improved performance, priorities of the country in VET are better managed by MoES and NAVETA, and performance based indicators on VET teaching and learning processes, which are developed based on EU standards, indicate clear progress.</p>	<p>Secondary VET schools better serve the communities where they operate. All activities in this sector fiche are integrated in the normal activities of the MoES and NAVETA. All documents produced are consistent with, and supportive of Government relevant sector policies. The ownership is with the MoES and NAVETA.</p>	<p>To improve the policy impact and to make more substantial influence of the EU funds invested in VET in Albania, it is important to gradually anchor all activities as closer as possible to the budgets and action plans of the institutions that are partners in this sector fiche, mainly MoES and NAVETA.</p>

<p>PROJECT PURPOSE</p> <p>The project purpose is to improve quality of learning conditions for students in secondary VET schools, and to provide better education and training opportunities for the poor communities/areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consolidate the network of VET schools and expand the opportunities for vocational education for students from poor areas. - Consolidate the VET didactical and technological equipment in selected VET schools - Consolidate the on-going VET reform through measures at national/ regional and/or local level 	<p>MoES and NAVETA have been supported to build capacities in secondary VET policy planning and implementation. .</p> <p>Instruments and sources for policies in secondary VET have been made available, by assisting and guiding partners through participatory processes.</p> <p>Intensive and structured discussions among policymakers, social partners, experts and practitioners, in VET take place, to further develop and incorporate in the Regional VET Centres concept where resources and benefits are shared.</p>	<p>VET school map and map on post-secondary VET in use for VET policy planning by MoES, NAVETA and MoLSAEO</p> <p>Register of VET didactical equipment and technological equipment available with NAVETA</p> <p>VET programmes available and on files with MoES, MoLSAEO and NAVETA</p> <p>Curriculum reform finalized and AQF/ different profiles implemented in selected RVETC</p>	<p>Complex legislative and regulatory framework in VET has been carefully analyzed and identification has been done of advantages and disadvantages</p> <p>Challenges that exist with social partners' participation in VET policy implementation have been appropriately identified and analysed and all involved are very well aware of it.</p> <p>Secondary VET schools mapping and mapping of post-secondary course have been well elaborated and form a firm basis for further and on-going improvement of VET policy</p> <p>Key stakeholders and target groups are clearly identified in the activities</p> <p>In year 2008 EU VET CARDS 2006 programme will be implemented, therefore, relevant policy developments have been taken into account</p>
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<p>RESULTS</p> <p>Component 1: Support for construction of new VET schools and rehabilitation of VET schools</p> <p>R1: Detailed technical designs and preparation of tender dossiers of works contracts for construction of new VET schools and of works contracts for rehabilitation of existing VET schools, following the EU requirements applicable for VET schools</p> <p>R2: New VET schools built.</p> <p>R3: VET schools rehabilitated.</p> <p>R4: Supervision of works for construction and works for rehabilitation of VET Schools with requested services during construction and Defects Liability Period.</p> <p>Component 2: Provision of VET didactical tools/ technological equipment for improving conditions of selected schools</p> <p>R5: Selected secondary VET schools are equipped with VET didactical tools/ technological equipment</p> <p>R6: VET didactical and technological equipment installed,</p>	<p>VET schools have enhanced their capacities to deliver services in accordance to their mandate as given by Albanian legislation</p> <p>Effectiveness of VET improved through updated equipment, programmes (curricula, teacher trained, AQF implementation) to correspond with emerging economic development and employment needs of the country.</p>	<p>Technical design for Construction and rehabilitation of the schools buildings available in due time for contracting of works contracts.</p> <p>All construction/ property/ safety permits available with the MoES</p> <p>Actual works on new buildings and rehabilitation of the VET schools finalized</p> <p>Supply from the MoES of VET didactical tools and technological equipment in secondary VET schools which is accessed and used by teachers</p> <p>Curriculum for improving the skills of poor students and adults in the Region of Tirana available</p> <p>Regional VET Concept functional in Albania</p>	<p>MoES VET sector and Policy department are well prepared and familiar with national policies in VET</p> <p>VET policy makers in the country have updated their skills in VET policy design, implementation and monitoring of the VET reform policies in Albania,</p> <p>VET institutions and VET bodies have enhanced their capacities to deliver services in accordance to their mandate as given by Albanian legislation,</p> <p>VET policy makers in the country have updated their skills in VET policy design, implementation and monitoring of the VET reform policies in Albania,</p>
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<p>functional and in use by teachers and instructors</p> <p>Component 3: Provision for support of implementation of VET priorities in form of soft actions</p> <p>R7: VET quality provision has been strengthened, with particular attention to the Region of Tirana, where the majority of poor population is located</p> <p>R8: The capacity of the regional/local actors to design and implement vocational education and training programmes/ curriculum for students and adults has been strengthened</p> <p>R9: VET provision through support of curriculum implementation, teacher training program development, Albanian Qualification Framework implementation further strengthened</p> <p>R10: VET schools map, as well as identification of post-secondary VET programmes developed and made available.</p>			
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ACTIVITIES	MEANS	ALLOCATED PROJECT BUDGET	PRECONDITIONS
<p>Component 1: Construction of new secondary VET schools and rehabilitation of existing secondary VET schools/ works</p> <p>A1: Detailed technical designs and preparation of tender dossiers of works for construction and of works for rehabilitation of secondary VET schools</p> <p>A2: Construction of new VET schools</p> <p>A3 Extension and rehabilitation of VET schools</p> <p>A4: Supervision of works for construction and works for rehabilitation of VET schools</p> <p>Component 2: Provision of VET didactical tools and technological equipment for improving conditions of selected schools/ Supplies</p> <p>A5: EU standardized procedure for VET didactical tools supply implemented fully and with high quality by the MoES.</p> <p>Component 3: Provision for</p>	<p>Relevant activities are integrated in the annual plan of appropriate departments of the MoES.</p> <p>Relevant activities are integrated in the Annual plan of appropriate Departments of the NAVETA. Appropriate tender/ procurement procedures are run by EC for Design and tender dossier preparation Services.</p> <p>Appropriate tender/ procurement procedures are run by EC for Works.</p> <p>Appropriate tender/ procurement procedures are run by EC for Supervision Services.</p> <p>Appropriate tender/ procurement procedures are run by MoSE for Supplies.</p> <p>Appropriate tender/ procurement</p>	<p>TOTAL BUDGET UNDER IPA IS 7 MEUR</p> <p>Component 1: Construction of new secondary VET schools and rehabilitation of existing secondary VET schools/ Works Includes: design, works and supervision.</p> <p>6,050,000 100% EU Contribution</p> <p>Component 2: Provision of VET didactical tools for improving conditions of selected schools/ Supplies</p> <p>1,000,000 EUR 100% National contribution</p> <p>Component 3: Provision for support of implementation of</p>	<p>There is a commitment of national policy makers and key stakeholders to lead on the implementation of VET policy and not to leave that task to the technical assistance deployed</p> <p>Technical assistance deployed is aware about complex issues of stakeholders relationship in the context of national VET policies and instead of relying on classical “to do” approach, implements process oriented design and approach ensuring that know-how is transferred in the national institutions</p> <p>Technical design is delivered on time</p> <p>All permits for construction and reconstruction are available on time and MoES is in charge for that</p> <p>MoES and NAVETA ensure careful and well structured preparation of the teams that will be leading activities related to the implementation of this sector fiche</p>

<p>support of implementation of priorities in VET in form of soft actions/ technical assistance</p> <p>A6: development of a coherent system of VET through continuous work on curriculum and more recently on Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF);</p> <p>A7: development of a coherent system of VET delivery through continuous support of pilot VE schools, Regional Training Centres, and new pilot Regional VET centre (RVETC) concept/approach.</p> <p>A8: VET secondary schools mapping, as well as mapping of universities and/or institutions that offer post-secondary VET.</p>	<p>procedures are run by EC for TA Services.</p>	<p>priorities in VET in form of soft actions/ technical assistance</p> <p>950,000 EUR 100% EU contribution</p>	
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ANNEX II: amounts (in €) Contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project

Contracted	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Q1 2010	Q2 2010	Q3 2010	Q4 2010	Q1 2011	Q2 2011	Q3 2011	Q4 2011	Q1 2012	Q2 2012	Q3 2012	Q4 2012
Contract 1.1			350 000													
Contract 2.1							430 000									
Contract 2.2							910 000									
Contract 2.3							910 000									
Contract 2.4							910 000									
Contract 2.5							910 000									
Contract 3.1							320 000									
Contract 3.2							280 000									
Contract 3.3							280 000									
Contract 3.4							400 000									
Contract 4.1						350 000										
Contract 6.1			950 000													
.....																
Cumulated			1 300 000			1 650 000	7 000 000				7 000 000					
Disbursed	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Q1 2010	Q2 2010	Q3 2010	Q4 2010	Q1 2011	Q2 2011	Q3 2011	Q4 2011	Q1 2012	Q2 2012	Q3 2012	Q4 2012

Contract 1.1			210 000		140 000											
Contract 2.1							43 000	75 000	80 000	90 000	120 500				21 500	
Contract 2.2							91 000	150 000	180 000	200 000	243 500				45 500	
Contract 2.3							91 000	150 000	180 000	200 000	243 500				45 500	
Contract 2.4							91 000	150 000	180 000	200 000	243 500				45 500	
Contract 2.5							91 000	150 000	180 000	200 000	243 500				45 500	
Contract 3.1							32 000	60 000	68 000	70 000	74 000				16 000	
Contract 3.2							28 000	50 000	55 000	59 000	74 000				14 000	
Contract 3.3							28 000	50 000	55 000	59 000	74 000				14 000	
Contract 3.4							40 000	80 000	85 000	85 000	90 000				20 000	
Contract 4.1							70 000		81 000		83 000		81 000		35 000	
Contract 5.1																
Contract 6.1			190 000		133 000		133 000		133 000		133 000		133 000		95 000	
.....																
Cumulated			400 000		673 000		1 411 000	2 326 000	3 603 000	4 766 000	6 388 500		6 602 500		7 000 000	

Annex III: Description of Institutional Framework²⁰

There are 40 public VET schools in Albania out of which 15 are national schools depending directly on the MoES. The Ministry: (i) hires the school principals; (ii) gives the approval for hiring the teaching staff upon the proposal of the Regional Departments of Education (RDE); and (iii) decides on the school budget and manages the largest part of it. The national VET schools propose to the MoES to introduce and/or to drop courses based on their relevance for their region. In addition, there are 25 local VET schools depending on the RDE that are responsible for the principals and teachers' recruitment, financial management etc.

The VET schools have the same status as the general education schools. According to the existing regulatory framework²¹, they should have School Boards, which are already established in all VET schools, composed of 7 - 11 members²² and representing teachers, parents, students, RDE and Local Government. This is a Board with responsibilities: approval of the 4-years and annual Working Plan of the school, management of the financial contribution of parents, and approval of the detailed curricula. Some parents who are entrepreneurs are always included in these boards but this is rather for pragmatic reasons than for establishing a real cooperation with social partners at VET schools' level.

The MoES is the main governmental body responsible for preparing and implementing of educational policies and management of the education system, including overall resource management of the public education system and supervision of the non public education sector. In addition and according the VET Law, MoES is responsible for VET schools of the secondary education and for issuing licenses to VET providers and VT courses within VET schools. In particular, the national VET schools depend directly from MoES. The responsible department for VET is the VET Unit within the Department of Curricula. The sector coordinates the work of subordinate agencies such as NAVETA and the Institute of Training and Curricula, and covers a range of other tasks such as VET schools human resources and infrastructure, curricula and teacher training etc. The MoES has also 12 RDEs and 24 district education offices. The local VE schools depend directly from the RDEs²³.

The National Agency for VET (NAVETA) was established in 2006²⁴ as subordinate institution of MoES. Its mission is the establishment of a unified VET system, which is nationally and internationally recognized. NAVETA prepares programs for VET development that are approved by the MoES and MoLSAEO. Preparation of the national list of specialties (professions), Albanian Qualification Framework (AQF) and Frame Curricula; accreditation of VET providers; establishment of standards for initial and on going training for teachers and trainers; and establishment of VET evaluation and certification criteria are the main functions of NAVETA, which are highly important for enabling the environment and recognition of adult learning in Albania.

²⁰ Institutional Framework presents the situation as of 31 December 2007. Given the fact the VET sector is in the process of significant restructuring, and given the fact that even the structure of VET system is in the process of policy dialogue the moment, it is important to take into account the lap time between writing this part of the document and the time needed for EC program cycle.

²¹ MoES Instruction No. 40, date 17.10.2007.

²² This number depends from the total number of students in the VET school.

²³ As per reorganization of the MoES in July 2007.

²⁴ Government Decree No. 237, date 10.05.2006.

Annex IV: Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents²⁵

VET legislation was adopted in 2002, and a National VET Council with tripartite representation was established, with the aim of improving policies and reform management in the VET sector. The legislation also prepared the ground for the creation of a National VET Agency to perform inter-sectoral functions not covered by other VET institutions and departments. The agency has been established in December 2006. The **VET Law** also defines the National VET Council (NVETC) as a consultative body in charge of the VET coordination among the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO) and other related public and non-public institutions. According to this law, NVETC is a tripartite structure. The proposal for the opening and closure of VET schools and Vocational Training (VT) courses according to the labour market needs, the participation in the national VET standards and curricula development processes, the implementation of vocational courses according to their specific needs, and the support for the organization of professional practices and tests for students are the main competences of social partners as defined by this law. Consequently, the NVETC functions, responsibilities and procedures are defined by a specific Government Decree²⁶.

The National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development (NSSED) was the basic policy document of the Albanian Government defining the long-term development objectives and identifying the appropriate priority measures to achieve these objectives. NSSED was adopted by the Albanian Government in 2002 and its implementation status was analyzed twice, in 2003 and 2004 defining also the specific objectives and priority measures to be achieved for the periods 2003 – 2006 and 2004 – 2007 respectively. Reducing unemployment and increasing the vocational component in secondary education were important objectives of NSSED. At present, the Government has prepared National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013 (NSDI), which is in the consultation process with different actors and groups of interests and is foreseen to be adopted soon replacing in this way NSSED.

The NSDI develops an integrated approach for the social-economic development of the country and its European Union (EU) integration perspective. Increasing the effective role of the government in the labor market and creating direct employment opportunities are emphasized as important challenges of the NSDI in the field of employment. The strategic priorities relate to improvement of public employment services across the country and development of partnerships with private sector, increasing efficiency of the active and passive employment programs, improvement of the vocational education and training system including preparation of Albanian Qualification Framework (AQF), curriculum modernization, institutional developments, development of competencies of teachers and instructors etc. Although the strategic priorities relate and facilitate the process of adult learning, no specific and explicit reference about lifelong learning including adult learning and related European and national processes is made in NSDI.

The Albanian government adopted a National Strategy on Pre-university Education for the period 2004-2015, focusing on 5 main pillars: improved governance, improved quality of teaching and learning, improved financing of pre-university education, capacity building and HRD, and development of VET in the context of overall pre-university education. The target set for secondary VET is to increase participation from 17%-20% to 40% of overall enrolment. Finally, the proportion of GDP allocated for education is set to rise from 3.7% to 5%.

²⁵

²⁶ Government Decree No. 16, date 28.12.2002.

A separate **VET Strategy 2007-2015** was drafted by the MoES during 2007 considering the inputs from National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)²⁷. It is foreseen that this document will be adopted in 2008 by the Council of Ministers. The major focus of the strategy is placed on improving quality of VET, as well as implementation of new Albanian Qualification Framework Law.

Overall reform of pre-university education is predicated upon a reorganised and more effective Ministry of Education focused on its core activity of policy development and implementation and operating within the context of a decentralised education system and increased school autonomy. In July 2007 a new organisational structure was adopted in the Ministry of Education and Science, with aim to develop more strategic orientation for policy development and implementation and aimed at building capacity and the motivation to carry actions through. In July 2007, two agencies – Institute for Curriculum and Institute for Teacher Training have been merged into one agency – Institute for Teacher Training and Curriculum.

The **Strategy of Employment and Vocational Training (SEVT)** was adopted by the Albanian Government in January 2003²⁸ covering the period 2003 – 2008 part of which are the priority actions on employment promotion and Vocational Training system development. This strategy was drafted by the MoLSAEO working group including also experts from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy (MoETE), Bank of Albania (BoA) and the Faculty of Economy of Tirana University. The main objective of the document was to assess the current situation and define concrete measures to be undertaken in order to improve labour market policies. It focuses on 4 main dimensions: the labour market and services provision, VET and HRD, entrepreneurship and job creation, and employment funding policies.

A new sector strategy named **Sector Strategy on Employment 2007 – 2013 (SSE)** was drafted during the period 2006 – 2007 by the MoLSAEO taking into account recommendations of the World Bank (WB), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and EU Guidelines on Employment. This document includes also an implementation Action Plan (AP), which is foreseen to be adopted by the Council of the Ministers by the end of 2007. The major focus of the strategy is placed on active labour market measures, as well as implementation of Labour Code.

²⁷ NAVET, Draft VET Strategy, May 2007

²⁸ Government Decree No. 67, date 10.01.2003.