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This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Unit.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| ALL | Albanian Lek |
| ALMM | Active Labour Market Measure |
| ALMP | Active Labour Market Programme |
| CTA | Chief technical advisor |
| ESDF | Employment and Skills Development Fund |
| EU | European Union |
| EO | Employers' Organisations |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| IPA | Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance |
| LLL | Life Long Learning |
| MoES | Ministry of Education and Science |
| MoH | Ministry of Health |
| MoLSAEO | Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities |
| MoSWY | Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth |
| NAVETQ | National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications |
| NES | National Employment Service |
| NESS | National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 |
| NSM | New Service Model |
| OSH | Occupational Safety and Health |
| SLI | State Labour Inspectorate |
| SILSS | State Inspectorate for Labour and Social Services |
| TA | Technical Assistance |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| TU | Trade Unions |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present document is the Evaluation Report (ER) for the final independent evaluation of the project entitled "Human Resources Development in Albania" (European Union IPA 2010 Project on Human Resources Development in Albania) under the Contract No. 40136680/0/06.01.2015, between the International Labour Office (ILO) and Pluriconsult Ltd.

Background and context

Albania's strong economic performance prior to 2008 was accompanied by positive changes in employment and a strong reduction in poverty rates. The strong economic performance before the global economic downturn was accompanied by reduction in poverty. The poverty rate decreased from 25 percent in 2002 to 12 percent in 2008, and rural poverty dropped by an even more impressive rate, from 40 to 15 percent over the same period. However, the effects of the global and Eurozone crises and sluggish growth appear to have modestly reversed the poverty trend. Extreme poverty has increased for both urban and rural areas. The Labour Force Survey data on employment shows that 27 percent of Albanian households had at least one member who had lost a job versus a Europe and Central Asia average of 18 percent. Available data on the unemployment rate indicate that it increased from 12.5 percent in 2008 to 16 percent in 2013, with lack of jobs being more pronounced in vulnerable groups such as youth and women. Persisting output gaps and strains in the labour market are also reflected in the declining trend of the labour force participation rate.

Albania has significantly increased access to all levels of education. Primary and lower secondary enrolment are nearly universal, and between 2009 and 2013, pre-primary net enrolment shot up from 47.4 to 79 percent and upper secondary enrolment from 76 to 92 percent. However, the poorest quintile have lower education attainment compared to the wealthiest quintile, particularly for pre-primary (half), upper secondary (two-thirds), and higher education (one-fourth), limiting these groups' access to economic opportunities and the potential assets base of the country.

The importance of education and skilled labour for individuals themselves and for economic development is well recognized in Albania. As a result, major and wide-ranging education reforms have been initiated in recent years covering different levels of education, higher education included. *The challenge in Albania is to enhance the quality and relevance of the education and training system to improve labour market outcomes for current workers*, while ensuring that learning outcomes are translated into relevant skills so that the pipeline of workers meets the needs of the labour market. The synergies between Vocational Education and Training (VET) and the labour market remain weak. Efforts were and continue to be envisaged for making vocational education and training (VET) more attractive and to involve potential employers in the preparation of programmes. Prior to the project implementation the participation in VET of the age cohort 15 – 18/19 was less than 20 %, while in other European countries was around 60 %¹.

¹ Albania EU Progress Report 2010

The link between the vocational training offered and labour market demand was indicated in the *Human Resources Development Project Fiche 7 (IPA National Programme 2010 for Albania)* as insufficient, and the capacity of the labour offices to carry out labour market surveys was not strong enough. The capacity of regional labour offices and the quality of services delivered by the public employment services was considered limited. Also the active labour market measures were indicated as ineffective. Vocational training courses offered have not been very much linked with the labour market needs.

In the area of health and safety at work the EU Progress Report 2009 recognised that some progress has been made. Labour Inspectorate was established in 1993 as Directorate within the Ministry of Labour. In 2006 has been transformed into an independent body. The existing (in 2009) staff of 167 units was not sufficient to fully perform the tasks committed by law. The existing structure, based upon 12 regional Directorates and one local Office, was planned to be further expanded covering areas where the presence of State Inspectorate for Labour and Social Services (SILSS) was more needed.

Enforcement of occupational health and safety was assessed as poor and the number of accidents at the workplace was high, particularly in the construction, mining and mineral processing sectors. The agricultural sector was not covered by the labour inspection system. Further efforts are required to increase the human, physical and financial resources of the SILSS. The main problems identified were the lack of adequate capacity to assess rights at work and conditions of work, as well as the poor technical resources.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation was represented by the project on “Human Resources Development in Albania”, funded through the European Union Contribution Agreement N° 2011/268-252 (TC Symbol ALB/11/01/EEC) within the overall frame of European Union’s IPA 2010 National Programme Albania.

The *overall objective* of the project is to have improved labour market functioning and the quality of human capital in Albania.

The project had three *specific objectives* as follows:

- 1/ To strengthen the capacity of the SLI to enforce OSH rules
- 2/ To enhance the capacity of the National Employment Service to reduce unemployment
- 3/ To improve the capacity of the VET system to provide labour market with skilled work force.

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR) the *purpose of the evaluation* was:

- To assess the implemented activities and respective results achieved and their efficiency and effectiveness with regard to indicators of achievements defined for each Component of the project;
- To identify main success aspects of the project and the problems encountered during its implementation, as well as the means undertaken by the project to overcome these problems;
- To document lessons learned and good practices for future wider dissemination;
- To develop recommendations for similar interventions in the future.

The evaluation covered the whole period and entire scope of the implementation of the project (01 September 2011 – 31 January 2015). It serves the following groups of stakeholders: ILO tripartite constituents, including direct beneficiaries of the project action; other national counterparts; the Donor (EU Delegation in Albania); ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe and Headquarters; project staff.

The Evaluation was carried by Pluriconsult Ltd. in January 2015 under the supervision of ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe.

Methodology of the evaluation

The evaluation framework followed the conceptual framework most often used in the ILO which is one that is consistent with results-based management. The framework features the following criteria proposed by OECD: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

The methodological approach used for this evaluation relied on a comprehensive review of relevant documentation and analysis of already available data, as well as on primary data collection and analysis from various sources. The methodological approach followed closely the ToR (Annex 1).

Limitations

The evaluation had three main limitations, a methodological one and two in terms of data collection. From the methodological perspective, this is not an impact evaluation, so the impact of the project could not be measured accurately, but it was only estimated based on reasonable evidence available. In terms of data collection, in the timeframe of the mission agenda agreed with the beneficiary of the evaluation it was not possible to undertake a visit outside the capital city and data reflecting the baseline situation were less available compared with data reflecting the situation to the end of the project.

Observance of norms, standards and ethics

Ethical considerations were taken into account in the evaluation process. As requested by the UNEG Norms and Standards, the evaluator was sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs, acted with integrity and honesty in the relationships with all stakeholders, ensured that contacts with individuals were characterized by respect and protected the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information.

Main findings and conclusions

Relevance

The relevance of the project increased as a result of the ongoing changes brought to the project during the implementation due to a flexible approach which was highly necessary in the context of changes of priorities and of strategic, as well as operational conditions for employment and skills development policies of the new Government in power from September 2013. In the project design phase there was a lack of strategic vision and ownership on behalf of the beneficiary which generated a lack of critical review of the relevance of project planning. In addition, the lack of a solid ex-ante assessment and reliable baseline data created a gap between the initial project planning and the reality found during the implementation.

The project was relevant and contributed to the achievement of Decent Work Country Programme (DCWP) Priority 2 ('Promotion of decent work and enhanced employability of the Albanian labour force'), Outcome 2.1 ('Employment and training policies are formulated and implemented to address both efficiency and equity objectives and are aligned with provisions of international labour standards on employment policy and employment services'). To a lesser extent, the project also contributed to the achievement of DCWP Priority 3 ('Strengthen social protection'), Outcome 3.2 ('Strengthen the effectiveness and quality of labour inspection system').

Effectiveness

Due to its systemic approach the project had a wide coverage in outputs addressing all the human development topics that were planned. The project ended with quite an impressive number of outputs to such an extent that it may raise the need for prioritisation and a closer look to the impact in the interventions that will follow.

The specific objective and expected results of the Component 1 on modernization of State Labour Inspectorate have been fully achieved and there were no structural changes of activities. This component was effective in *implementation of prevention principles and promoting of a safety culture at work*. The new OSH legislation aligned with EU OSH directives has stated a uniform basis for enforcement of OSH rules and inspection performance and has contributed to strengthening labour inspection capacity. The social partners recognized that this component, together with the other project components, contributed to increasing social dialogue in the country. However, strengthening the capacity of SILSS is considered by the representatives of this institution as still requiring investments in equipment, vehicles and more sophisticated software to reduce corruption in the system, to increase mobility of inspectors and to increase capacity of processing declarations.

Component 2 on modernization of the national employment services sustained the increased commitment of the public authorities in the identification of the best approaches for the new employment offices. The new vision on the role of the new employment offices was that these have to "find the right person for the job, rather than to find a job for a person". According to this new approach, the employment offices became more accessible, modern and quality oriented. Consequently, the services provided to jobseekers and employers were brought closer to the EU Employment Service standards and the number of unemployed people asking for services from the new employment offices tripled from 2013 to 2014.

Component 3 on VET reform has been very effective in promoting comprehensive changes at the policy, legislative and institutional levels of the fragmented VET system, as well as in starting changes in the general public's perception on the unattractive VET. This component focused on assisting beneficiaries to elaborate a sustainable Employment and Skills Strategy, improve the attractiveness of the training offer and increase public-private partnership in matching the existent and emerging skills of the labour force with the employment demand and supply.

Over the lifetime of the project ILO has demonstrated to be an effective and constructive partner of its constituents (the Government of Albania and the social partners) and its role has been recognised very positively. ILO has used a highly participatory approach and involved all relevant partners in the country to participate in the project implementation and continuation.

ILO's commitment to quality was highly appreciated by stakeholders. The project involved an important number of activities which required mobilization of very good experts capable to deliver tasks at a high conceptual level. Building on its good technical reputation in the domains the project was concerned, ILO has set-up excellent cooperation with all partners (the line ministries responsible for the policies addressed in the project such as MoSWY, MoE, MoH, the agencies who were targeted as key implemented partners in the project such as SILSS, NES and NAVETQ, as well as with international partners and donors).

Efficiency

The project's efficiency gradually increased till the end when it reached 100% implementation rate and 100% disbursement. The challenges encountered, mostly related to time management efficiency derived from MoLSAEO's lack of commitment and the political changes following the elections in 2013, as well as from ILO's delays in team members' mobilization were addressed in two no-cost extensions, one in August 2013 and another one in August 2014. These two extensions allowed for full completion of project activities to the highest satisfaction of the beneficiary.

Sustainability

The process of modernization of NES and NAVETQ may seem fairly sustainable from the financial point of view as resources are allocated in the NESS for actions in this domain and the Government budget for ALMMs in 2014 tripled to USD 2.7 million. However, the financial constraints derived from a recent IMF loan contracted by the Albanian Government diminishes significantly the margins for ambitious political reforms that demand high financial investments, as it is the case for the employment policies and VET reform. In order to reduce the current adherence of National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) to international donors' funding, these stakeholders tend to favour a more consistent involvement of private sector and a higher level of decentralization of services, which are still lagging behind.

ILO TA made efforts to identify an exit strategy (a portfolio of potential projects on TA for implementation of NESS) with fair chances of sustainability which is technically sound but so far has limited financial perspectives for implementation. EU Delegation in Albania is reluctant to continue the TA outside the frame of an IPA engagement and the IPA II could start the earliest in 2016. MoSWY is engaged in the preparation of a needs assessment for further funding of NESS in order to make better use of the future EU funding. ILO has secured funding from its Regular budget support in order to ensure the resources for bridging the IPA (2010) TA with the next IPA II cycle (2014-2020).

Impact

Component 1 on *Modernization of the State Labour Inspectorate* will most probably have less measurable socio-economic impact as the legislative changes brought by this component will need to be further consolidated by other structural changes. In spite of the important progress in improvement of the OSH legislation some pre-conditions (e.g. awareness on OSH, earmarked budget, inter-institutional cooperation etc.) necessary for the continuity of progress in practical implementation of OSH measures are not in place.

Component 2 on *Modernization of the National Employment Service* which created the premises for increasing the match between labour supply and demand will result in a better functioning of the labour market and a reduction of social inclusion gaps in the country. In very practical terms this component proved so far a stronger policy and institutional impact than a socio-economic impact. In order for the

socio-economic impact to occur the country needs more structural changes to be done in a strategic and sustainable manner.

Component 3 on *VET Reform* aimed at systemic changes which were largely met within the frame of the project's objectives. The emerging impact of the systemic changes can be defined as a contribution to an emerging increased availability of a skilled labour force.

Lessons learned

1. Starting a reform with a partner having an internationally recognized technical expertise in the domain, such as it is the case of the ILO in the employment domain, may gather interest, resources and efforts around the respective strategic approach even when the reform process encounters bottlenecks and difficulties on the way. One of these major difficulties may be encountered at the beginning of a project that is launching a reform with a Government that is coming to the end of its term, which may cause delays and disruptions in the inception and initial implementation (first year) phases of the project.
2. Systemic interventions need time in order to consolidate progress. These type of interventions need to build an enabling environment (including a shift in policy vision, legislative and institutional changes, policy coordination, adapted budget) for the reform to take place, to strengthen the balance between supply and demand of services, to encourage a shift in social norms and to promote quality of services.
3. A project that is devoting an important amount of resources to designing strategies, plans and institutional tools need to be implemented in a flexible manner (i.e. adapting the project to new requests of the Government and social partners) and to explore the existence of a strong local ownership in order to ensure embedding of these instruments in the future practice of the beneficiaries. This may include sharing information about the new approaches beyond the narrow group of specialists and professionals.

Good practices

1. The project has developed a wide and solid partnership with relevant national and international stakeholders, which may have increased the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions beyond the limits of the project.
2. A project that aims at implementing a systemic change needs to have a coordination body to ensure cooperation among the variety of stakeholders, interests and agendas. The project Steering Committee provided that good forum for sharing information and ideas, as well as for planning joint actions.
3. The project's high level of quality and transparency (including a well structured and rich in information website²) built a high level of credibility and mobilized many resources around its wide scope.

² <http://www.ipa-hrd.al/>

Recommendations

1. There is a strong need for the Government to find a better balance between the national and donors' agenda in the continuation of the employment and VET reform process. There has to be a higher level of integration with the economic strategy of the country and more sequencing of the reform. At the same time, the Government has to be encouraged in making progress in increasing its capacity for sound policy analysis and for rigorous data collection and analysis in order to ensure real time and evidence based monitoring of the progress.
2. For the next steps of the reform the Government will have to consider more in depth the reduction in gender skills gaps to increase women's employability. Also, other vulnerable groups (e.g. minorities, persons with disabilities, rural population, formally convicted persons etc.) have to be addressed in order to ensure their inclusion on the labour market.
3. ILO may consider for future projects a stronger focus on social inclusion and employment generation for the interventions aiming at reforming employment services. Also, ILO may consider the exit strategies in the earlier stages of the projects in order to increase the national ownership and sustainability of the respective interventions. This may involve a stronger message to the beneficiaries to increase their commitment to move from beneficiaries of international funding to beneficiaries of transfer of competences allowing them to perform functions independent of international assistance.
4. The development of internship programmes need to be considered by MOSWY in cooperation with social partners; providing incentives may increase the attractiveness of the vocational education. This has to be combined with more efforts in raising the awareness on credible opportunities offered by the labour market. Nevertheless, in the process of getting inspiration from functional dual VET systems that are found in EU member states the national dual system should be designed in a realistic manner, in such a way that it will be adjusted to the country social and economic context.
5. In order to ensure the consolidation of employment and VET reform the Government will have to strengthen the capacity of the social partners in the design, monitoring and evaluation of VET policies and programmes. Also, policy coherence and coordination across ministries needs to be improved and the understanding on what is involved in the European approach to employment and VET reform will need to be increased.

1 INTRODUCTION

The present document is the Evaluation Report (ER) for the final independent evaluation of the project entitled "Human Resources Development in Albania" (European Union IPA 2010 Project on Human Resources Development in Albania) under the Contract No. 40136680/0/06.01.2015, between the International Labour Office (ILO) Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe and Pluriconsult Ltd.

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Project context

According to a recent World Bank report³, since the 2008–09 global financial crisis, economic growth in Albania has remained subdued. The economy grew by an average annual growth rate of 6 percent in the decade before the crisis, which fell to 2.4 percent between 2009 and 2013. The crisis hit harder those sectors of the economy that had the highest contribution to growth, in particular, the construction sector. Growth in 2014 was supported by improved activity in the extractive industry, agriculture, trade, post and communications, and other services. However, manufacturing, construction, and transport declined, substantial downside risks remain, and growth is expected to continue to be below potential over the medium term.

Albania's strong economic performance prior to 2008 was accompanied by positive changes in employment and a strong reduction in poverty rates. The strong economic performance before the global economic downturn was accompanied by reduction in poverty. The poverty rate decreased from 25 percent in 2002 to 12 percent in 2008, and rural poverty dropped by an even more impressive rate, from 40 to 15 percent over the same period.

However, the effects of the global and Eurozone crises and sluggish growth appear to have modestly reversed the poverty trend. The Living Standards Measurement Study data for 2012 indicate that the poverty rate has increased to 14.3 percent since 2008. The extremely poor population, defined as those with difficulty meeting basic nutritional needs, increased from 1.2 percent in 2008 to 2.2 percent in 2012. Extreme poverty has increased for both urban and rural areas. This development is also supported by Labour Force Survey data on employment, which shows that 27 percent of Albanian households had at least one member who had lost a job versus a Europe and Central Asia average of 18 percent. Available data on the unemployment rate indicate that it increased from 12.5 percent in 2008 to 16 percent in 2013, with lack of jobs being more pronounced in vulnerable groups such as youth and women. Persisting output gaps and strains in the labour market are also reflected in the declining trend of the labour force participation rate.

Albania has significantly increased access to all levels of education. Primary and lower secondary enrolment are nearly universal, and between 2009 and 2013, pre-primary net enrolment shot up from 47.4 to 79 percent and upper secondary enrolment from 76 to 92 percent. However, the poorest

³ ALBANIA: *World Bank Group Partnership Program Snapshot, October 2014*

quintile have lower education attainment compared to the wealthiest quintile, particularly for pre-primary (half), upper secondary (two-thirds), and higher education (one-fourth), limiting these groups' access to economic opportunities and the potential assets base of the country.

The importance of education and skilled labour for individuals themselves and for economic development is well recognized in Albania. As a result, major and wide-ranging education reforms have been initiated in recent years, including: (i) curriculum reform to make it more modular and relevant, including by introducing a modern information and communications technology curriculum in basic and secondary schools, equipping all schools with computer labs and Internet access, and providing basic and secondary schools with new science labs; (ii) improved teacher training to ensure that teaching methods focus more on creativity and discussion rather than the uncritical transmission of knowledge; (iii) a more equitable distribution of resources across regions; (iv) improved learning conditions, with less crowded classrooms and less need for multiple shifts in schools; (v) an increase in average teacher salaries; and (vi) a revamping of the content and administration of the Matura examination given upon leaving secondary school to improve relevance and ensure objective results.

Major higher education reforms have also been initiated. In higher education, the focus has been on the adoption of the Bologna process for a modular education that is compatible across Europe, the expansion of the number of students in higher education, and the introduction of short-cycle, sub-degree programs in regional universities. There is also a focus on increasing the efficiency and accountability of higher education institutions, including by introducing a revised per student financing formula, establishing external advisory boards, setting up an accreditation system for universities, and developing university ranking procedures. More recently, the Ministry of Education and Sport has taken action toward strengthening and implementing firm accreditation measures for both public and private providers that included closing down several higher education providers that did not meet minimum requirements.

The challenge in Albania is to enhance the quality and relevance of the education and training system to improve labour market outcomes for current workers, while ensuring that learning outcomes are translated into relevant skills so that the pipeline of workers meets the needs of the labour market. The synergies between Vocational Education and Training (VET) and the labour market remain weak. Efforts were and continue to be envisaged for making vocational education and training (VET) more attractive and to involve potential employers in the preparation of programmes. Prior to the project implementation the participation in VET of the age cohort 15 – 18/19 was less than 20 %, while in other European countries was around 60 %⁴.

According to EU Progress Report 2009, monitoring and assessment of the impact of employment promotion programmes was lacking prior to the project reference period. Efforts for improvement of labour market data were envisaged. These were supposed to include support to carry out statistical

⁴ Albania EU Progress Report 2010

analysis of labour market information both within National Employment Service (NES) and Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO)⁵.

The link between the vocational training offered and labour market demand was indicated in the *Human Resources Development Project Fiche 7 (IPA National Programme 2010 for Albania)* as insufficient, and the capacity of the labour offices to carry out labour market surveys was not strong enough. Also the capacity of regional labour offices was considered limited. Vocational training courses offered have not been very much linked with the labour market needs.

A clear need to reinforce the organisation of the NES at regional level through a consistent decentralisation process has been identified in the same Project Fiche.

Another important issue was the capacity of the NES to plan and deliver effective staff training. Some staff training was in place but still not in a structured and regulated based on internal resources. Dedicated staff training resources was lacking and staff training was not sustainable because of the high staff turnover.

In the area of health and safety at work the Progress Report 2009 recognised that some progress has been made. Labour Inspectorate was established in 1993 as Directorate within the Ministry of Labour. In 2006 has been transformed in an independent body. The existing (in 2009) staff of 167 units was not sufficient to fully perform the tasks committed by law. The existing structure, based upon 12 regional Directorates and one local Office, was planned to be further expanded covering areas where the presence of State Inspectorate for Labour and Social Services (SILSS) was more needed.

Enforcement of occupational health and safety was assessed as poor and the number of accidents at the workplace was high, particularly in the construction, mining and mineral processing sectors. The agricultural sector was not covered by the labour inspection system. Further efforts are required to increase the human, physical and financial resources of the SILSS. The main problems identified were the lack of adequate capacity to assess rights at work and the poor technical resources.

Further assistance was needed for the approximation of the Albanian legislation to the EU standards in the field of Occupational of Safety and Health (OSH), including 11 EC Directives that need to be integrated within the Albanian legislation.

Concerning the impact of the new legislation, it appeared very important to launch an appropriate information campaign not only for public opinion, but mainly for employers and workers' organisations. In order to enforce the rules of OSH there was also the need to have professionals who can support the enterprises in the risk assessment and Safety Management Systems. Training of workers who can contribute to prevention of occupational accidents and diseases, delivered in cooperation with Trade Unions, was also considered as needed.

⁵ Currently, due to the changes of the Government in September 2013, this has been changed into the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth

1.1.2 Description of project objectives

As per the ToR, following the indications of the EU Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2009-2011, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and their implementing agencies - National Employment Service (NES), National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications (NAVETQ) and State Labour Inspectorate (SLI) - jointly prepared at the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010, a project fiche to be financed under IPA 2010 funds. Based on this document, the ILO prepared a fully-fledged implementation plan and signed the Contract No. 2011/268-252 with the Delegation of the European Union to Albania on 24 June 2011.

The *overall objective* of the project is to have improved labour market functioning and the quality of human capital in Albania.

The project had three *specific objectives* as follows:

- 1/ To strengthen the capacity of the SLI to enforce OSH rules
- 2/ To enhance the capacity of the National Employment Service to reduce unemployment
- 3/ To improve the capacity of the VET system to provide labour market with skilled work force.

1.1.3 Funding arrangements and organisational arrangements

The project on “Human Resources Development in Albania” was funded through the European Union Contribution Agreement N° 2011/268-252 (TC Symbol ALB/11/01/EEC) within the overall frame of European Union’s IPA 2010 National Programme Albania.

The project was managed by a *Team Leader*, who at the same time was responsible for managing the VET component. The Project Leader was resident in Tirana. The other remaining two components were managed by *Component Coordinators*: Coordinator for SILSS and Coordinator for NES. The work of the project expert team was backed-up by secretarial support as well as translation support in order to allow professional staff to concentrate on their core tasks. The project office was located in Tirana.

The work of the project team was backstopped by the specialists based in ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe. The specialists advised the project team on technical matters. The team was also assisted by a Programme Assistant and Finance Clerk (50%) from ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe. They ensured execution of financial disbursement, financial administration and back up.

The Team Leader and the Component Coordinators were assisted by *international experts and national consultants* who provided a variety of skills and knowledge required by an effective and efficient implementation of the project components (see Section 3.3).

A *Steering Committee* was established for the control and supervision of the project activities/outputs. The Committee had representatives from following institutions: Deputy Minister of Education and Sciences - Co-chair; Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities - Co-chair; European Integration Office the Ministry of Education and Sciences; European Integration Office the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; Head of VET Department; Head of VET Agency; Director of NES; Director of SLI; EU Delegation; Social partners (e.g. Employers Association

Biznes Albania, Albanian Constructors' Association, Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania etc.); Project Team Leader; ILO National Coordinator.

The Steering Committee was co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education and Sports⁶ and Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth⁷.

1.1.4 Brief description of the project's implementation

The project was composed of three main technical components all linked to the improvement of labour market institutions and increasing employability of the Albanian labour force:

Component 1 - *Modernisation of the State Labour Inspectorate*⁸ (SLI);

Component 2 - *Modernisation of the National Employment Service* (NES);

Component 3 - *Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform*.

Component 1 - *Modernization of the State Labour Inspectorate* focused on providing assistance to national partners to transpose the EU Directives on safety and health at work through the harmonization of legislation; the improvement of human and technical capacity of the State Inspectorate for Labour and Social Service (SILSS); and on raising awareness among public and employers on occupational risks and preventive measures.

The Project Component 2 - *Modernization of the National Employment Service* assisted the MoSWY to develop the employment policy framework and to modernise the functional organization of the NES (namely through the introduction of a new service model, re-organization of front-desk and counselling services, deployment of a quality assurance system, and introduction of a tracer system for Vocational Training Centres). In addition MoSWY has requested a Skills Needs Analysis 2014 survey to be conducted at national and regional levels, as well as a revision of the existing Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) to be undertaken in order to be issued a set of recommendations for improvements.

Component 3 - *Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform* focused on assisting beneficiaries to revise VET legislation, to elaborate the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020, to improve the attractiveness of the training offer and to increase public-private partnership in the implementation of the new VET strategic approach including recognition of prior learning mechanisms and the expansion of post-secondary VET programmes.

1.2 Evaluation Background

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR) the purpose of the evaluation was:

⁶ Previously called Ministry of Education and Sciences

⁷ Previously called Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

⁸ Currently State Inspectorate for Labour and Social Services (SILSS)

- To assess the implemented activities and respective results achieved and their efficiency and effectiveness with regard to indicators of achievements defined for each Component of the project;
- To identify main success aspects of the project and the problems encountered during its implementation, as well as the means undertaken by the project to overcome these problems;
- To document lessons learned and good practices for future wider dissemination;
- To develop recommendations for similar interventions in the future.

The evaluation covered the whole period and entire scope of the implementation of the project (01 September 2011 – 31 January 2015). It will serve the following groups of stakeholders:

- ILO tripartite constituents, including direct beneficiaries of the project action;
- Other national counterparts;
- The Donor (EU Delegation in Albania);
- ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe and Headquarters;
- Project staff.

The Evaluation was carried by Pluriconsult Ltd. in January 2015 under the supervision of ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework followed the conceptual framework most often used in the ILO which is one that is consistent with results-based management. The framework features the following criteria proposed by OECD: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

The evaluation addressed the following questions per evaluation criteria:

Relevance

1. If any, what changes occurred in the national development context or institutions that had implications for the project relevance and implementation strategy?
2. Did the project/component (1,2,3) maintain its relevance over the implementation period, especially after the mid-term evaluation?

Effectiveness

3. Did the project achieve its planned outcomes?

4. Has the capacity of the State Labour Inspection been strengthened as a result of the project activities?
5. Has the capacity of the National Employment Service to combat unemployment been enhanced?
6. Has the VET system been reformed and the employability of workforce been improved?
7. How did the project contribute to the improvement of strategies and systems pertaining to human capital and the labour market functioning?
8. What was social partners' contribution to the project implementation?
9. What is the level of satisfaction of the constituents with the quality of policy documents, studies, technical tools, technical advice, capacity building and other activities delivered by the project?
10. Has the project contributed to the achievements of the objectives formulated under the Decent Work Country Programme?
11. What were the most successful practices adopted and the main problems encountered?
12. What was the division of work tasks within the project team and has the use of local skills been effective?
13. Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support from the ILO, EU and partners?
14. How effective the selection of partners has been in terms of their position to support the project and promote its products/results?
15. How did the project overcome the most difficult problems in its implementation? How successful were these strategies?

Efficiency

16. How were the available resources (staffing, time, skills and knowledge) used during project inception and implementation phases?
17. Have they been used in an economic manner?
18. What were the main success elements and main problems encountered?

Sustainability

19. What is the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes? What more should be done to improve sustainability?
 - a) *Institutional level:* Are the structures allowing the activities to continue in place at the end of the project? Is there local ownership of project outcomes? Are the national partners able to continue implementation the adopted strategies and initiatives after the project completion?

b) *Policy level:* What structural impact will the action have? Will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc.?

c) *Financial aspect:* How will the activities and/or management structures be financed when the project ends? Are there any specific plans in that sense?

Impact

20. Is it likely that the project will produce long-term changes in social and economic wellbeing of Albanian citizens or will have long-term effects on development conditions?

2.2 Evaluation methodological approach

The methodological approach used for this evaluation relied on a comprehensive review of relevant documentation and analysis of already available data, as well as on primary data collection and analysis from various sources. The methodological approach followed closely the ToR (Annex 1).

Document Review: The evaluator reviewed project background materials before conducting any interviews or field data collection to the country, including:

- Project Document (original and revised ones)
- ILO Decent Work Country Programme in Albania
- Work plans (original and revised ones)
- Logframes (original and revised ones)
- Steering Committee meeting minutes
- TORs and Calls for Expression of Interest
- Progress reports (monthly, interim reports and annual report)
- Mid-term evaluation report
- Key-recommendations from the Results Oriented Monitoring missions
- Reports on specific activities (summary notes, minutes of meetings)
- Any surveys, studies, analytical papers produced
- Training curricula and evaluation documents (e.g. summary of evaluation questionnaires)
- Publications and promotion materials
- Project's website (www.ipa-hrd.al)

Planning Briefing: The evaluator had an initial consultation with the ILO specialists and support staff in Budapest and Tirana. The objective of the consultation was to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority assessment questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final assessment report. The following topics were covered: status of logistical arrangements, project background and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, outline of the inception and final report.

Primary data collection: Following the initial briefing, the desk review and the Inception Report, the evaluator undertook a mission to Tirana (the Mission Agenda is attached in the Annex 2) and met with constituents/stakeholders together with an Albanian interpreter supporting the process. As part of the mission agenda *individual interviews and group interviews* (the Interview Guide is attached in the Annex 3) were conducted with the followings:

- a) Project Staff (Project Team in Tirana)
- b) ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe Director and the Employment Specialist
- c) National counterparts (government, public institutions, social partners, etc.);
- d) Direct and indirect beneficiaries;
- e) The donor (EU Delegation in Albania);
- f) Other donor agencies working in the relevant fields.

The field visit also included a *site visit to an Employment Office* established with project support and the *observation* of the final event of the project in Tirana.

Upon completion of the mission, the evaluator provided a **debriefing** to the Project team on the preliminary evaluation findings.

2.3 Limitations

The evaluation had three main limitations, a methodological one and two in terms of data collection. From the methodological perspective, this is not an impact evaluation, so the impact of the project could not be measured accurately, but it was only estimated based on reasonable evidence available. In terms of data collection, in the timeframe of the mission agenda agreed with the beneficiary of the evaluation it was not possible to undertake a visit outside the capital city and data reflecting the baseline situation were less available compared with data reflecting the situation to the end of the project.

2.4 Observance of norms, standards and ethics

Ethical considerations were taken into account in the evaluation process. As requested by the UNEG Norms and Standards⁹, the evaluator was sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs, acted with integrity and honesty in the relationships with all stakeholders, ensured that contacts with individuals were characterized by respect and protected the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information.

It was equally important to ensure the integrity of the evaluation process. For that reason, it was ensured that the evaluator was not involved in any of the stages of project's design or implementation which guaranteed the impartiality across the evaluation data collection, analysis and reporting.

⁹ UNEG and OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards. See UNEG, 2011. Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, United Nations Evaluation Group. Available at: http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=21 and UNEG, 2005. *Standards for Evaluation in the UN System*, United Nations Evaluation Group. Available at: http://www.uneval.org/documentdownload?doc_id=22&file_id=561

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

The objectives of the project were consistent with strategic documents such as European Partnership Document for Albania, Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2009-2011 for Albania, National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013. Based upon the provisions of all these strategic documents Albania had to progressively harmonise its legislation with that of the EU in the fields of working conditions, reform its employment policy and raise the level of general education and vocational education and training (VET).

The project was also relevant and contributed to the achievement of Decent Work Country Programme (DCWP), especially Priority 2 ('Promotion of decent work and enhanced employability of the Albanian labour force'), Outcome 2.1 ('Employment and training policies are formulated and implemented to address both efficiency and equity objectives and are aligned with provisions of international labour standards on employment policy and employment services'). To a lesser extent, the project also contributed to the achievement of DCWP Priority 3 ('Strengthen social protection'), Outcome 3.2 ('Strengthen the effectiveness and quality of labour inspection system').

There is a widely shared opinion among project stakeholders concerning the high relevance of the project for the development of human resources in the country. The project was considered as among the largest in domain implemented so far in Albania. *The relevance of the project objectives and components as they were designed in 2010 and initially planned in 2011 remained over the project's life cycle.* However, during the project life cycle there were political and institutional changes in the country and *the project was highly flexible at the output level in accommodating the changes* that occurred as a result of changing in the context or at beneficiary's requests, especially MoLSAEO's turned into MoSWY, referring to replacing some of the outputs such as incorporating an Adult Learning Strategy and Action Plan in the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 (NESS) that includes the human resource development as cross-cutting policy priority. The VET/Life-long-learning (LLL) Strategy, initially prepared as a standalone strategic document for adult learning was also considered as better integrated in the NESS. NES decentralisation was abandoned and New Active Labour Market Programmes were considered as not necessary to be enlarged by the beneficiary. Other outputs were significantly expanded such as a gender-sensitive NESS, design of New Service Model including Handbook and Toolkit for the re-organisation of NES offices, reorganisation of front-desk counselling, development of a Training Plan for the implementation of the New Service Model and Development of a tracer system to be used by Vocational Training Centres to improve the effectiveness of service delivery. Also, the initial focus on credit transfer system (ECVET) and quality assurance was shifted towards more urgent need for revision of VET legislation. Under Component 1, the training that was initially planned for the SILSS was focus on ToT of those staff who has the capacity to take over and further disseminate the information acquired.

Overall, the evidence resulted from field data collection indicates that a lack of strategic vision and ownership on behalf of the beneficiary in the design phase of the project (and not only this one, but other internationally funded projects as well) generated a lack of critical review of the relevance in the

project planning which increased the need for ongoing changes of the activities and outputs during the project implementation. In addition, a lack of solid ex-ante assessment and reliable baseline data creates a gap between the initial project planning and the reality found during the implementation.

3.2 Effectiveness

Wide coverage, full achievement

Due to its systemic approach the project had a wide coverage in outputs addressing all the human development topics that were planned. There is a unanimous opinion among stakeholders that the project ended with quite an impressive number of outputs to such an extent that it may raise the need for prioritisation of future interventions and a closer look to the impact in the interventions that will follow.

The evidence collected during the evaluation confirms that project fully met the planned objectives and goals and has reached the expectations of the main beneficiaries and partners beyond the initial plans. All 34 outputs that have been completed contributed to the achievement of the specific objectives of the three technical components.

Modernization of the labour inspection

As reported by the project team, although the title of this component was "*Modernization of the State Labour Inspectorate*" and its main focus should have been on strengthening of its human resources capacities, the most significant part of the activities within this Component addressed the harmonisation of OSH legislation (i.e. the assistance for drafting the new 21 by-laws transposing EU Individual OSH Directives).

This legislative work was highly effective and efficient. The 17 drafts of regulations transposing EU Individual OSH Directives were developed in an extremely short time (in average six weeks for each regulation) and resulted in a very good quality product, in concordance with EU *acquis*. Of all these, 11 regulations have been already approved by the Council of Ministers and published in the Official Gazette. In addition, other four regulations were drafted, which are essential for proper implementation of developed OSH regulations.

Direct project activities for strengthening labour inspection capacity were focused in particular on training of labour inspectors through training of trainers of inspectors in order to ensure longer term effects and multiplication of project activities. The five training sessions could not cover all OSH areas and needs; nevertheless they covered the most important topics¹⁰ considered as a very good basis for the next learning stages.

Improvement SILSS's technical, as well as human capacities, has been promoted also by the OSH Action Plan 2015-2020 which defines the policies in OSH area. A positive contribution to the modernisation of SLI envisaged an extended international cooperation. Besides the successful study visit held in Austria, a substantial step ahead is the establishment of the Labour Inspectorates network of SEE Countries, the basis for bilateral agreements on cooperation and the support to the organisation of the Regional Seminar of representatives of national Labour Inspectorates from the Region.

¹⁰ Improvement of training skills, Risk assessment at work, Safety at the construction sites, Psychosocial risks at work and Effective labour inspection performance

Development of effective working tools for labour inspection performance consisting of a set of checklists have a high potential for a significant contribution to strengthening capacity of labour inspectors provided that these will be used in practice. In addition, the development of basic IT module for the digitalisation of the SILSS archive is a contribution to a more effective labour inspection management.

Improvement of general public, employees and employers' awareness on OSH was the third area for reinforcing OSH and for strengthening labour inspection. The public campaigns promoted discussions on OSH and drew public attention on the SILSS activities. Setting-up of a "hot line" for receiving complains about OSH and other working conditions was aimed to help SILSS to improve its reputation, to focus on the target oriented inspections and to promote an effective protection of employees.

Overall, the specific objective and expected results of the Component 1 have been fully achieved and there were no structural changes of activities. This component was effective in *implementation of prevention principles and promoting of a safety culture at work*. The new OSH legislation has stated a uniform basis for enforcement OSH rules and inspection performance and has contributed to strengthening labour inspection capacity. The representation of social partners in the working group meetings was acknowledged by these groups of stakeholders who initially considered the OSH focus of the project as not so important and quite utopian. In the end, the social partners recognized that this component, together with the other project components, contributed to increasing social dialogue in the country. However, strengthening the capacity of SILSS is considered by the representatives of this institution as still requiring investments in equipment, vehicles and more sophisticated software to reduce corruption in the system, to increase mobility of inspectors and to increase capacity of processing declarations.

Modernization of the Employment Services: 'finding the right person for the job rather than finding a job for a person'

This Component had an extensive coverage. However, during the implementation several adjustments were considered necessary and were made upon the proposal and in agreement with NES and MoSWY. Thus, it was decided the drafting of the National Strategy for Employment as a merged document with the already drafted VET and LLL Strategy in what has been finally issued as the NESS. The background analysis of this comprehensive document was drafted based on a review of the most up-dated labour market statistics existing in Albania using the Labour Force Survey. This analysis allowed for identification of the challenges related to the Albanian labour market, as well as the trends in the current situation which are addressed by the national policy priorities as presented in the NESS.

As a result of the NES and MoSWY's commitment in the identification of the best approaches for the new employment offices, the organisation of activities in these offices, both in Tirana and in the regions, has been changed. The new vision on the role of the new employment offices was that these have to "find the right person for the job, rather than to find a job for a person". According to this new approach, the employment offices became more accessible, modern and quality oriented. Consequently, the services provided to jobseekers and employers were brought closer to the EU Employment Service standards and the number of unemployed people asking for services from the new employment offices tripled from 2013 to 2014¹¹.

¹¹ As per the evidence provided by the NES director.

Special attention was paid to the cooperation with other development partners and international donors running complementary projects in the employment sector. For example, for the development of the tracer system for vocational training centers in order to avoid overlapping, it was decided for GIZ to pilot the tracer system in the vocational education schools while the IPA 2010 project was focused on the vocational training centres. Similarly, a good cooperation was established with UNDP for the organisation of workshops with local businesses in 12 Albanian regions for informing the private sector about the New Service Model operating in the newly established employment offices and the new procedures for applying to the employment promotion measures adopted by NES. The cooperation with the Swiss Development Cooperation, the funder of Risi Albania project on the ALMPs review was considered a step forward to extending the project network and bringing together the best practices in an effective manner.

VET reform: profound changes in the Government's approach to the VET system

This component was very effective in reaching its specific objective and in achieving all 13 outputs planned. This component addressed the fragmented and unattractive country's VET system starting based on a strategic approach. The cornerstone output of this component was represented by drafting the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 (NESS) and its Action Plan. This strategic document defines the policy objectives and priorities for promoting employment and development of a skilled labour force in Albania till 2020 and has got a wide consensus in the international and national stakeholders. This document that was adopted by the Council of Ministers in November 2014 is an unprecedented step forward on policy definition and strategic planning for the sector and will most probably be the main document for any future interventions. MoSWY has requested further technical assistance from the project to support the creation of a National Employment and Skills Development Fund (NESDF) in order to ensure the grounds for an appropriate funding mechanism aimed to support the implementation of the strategy.

This component also provided technical assistance for reorganising the NAVETQ, including the drafting of a new Decision of Council of Ministers (DCM) needed to transfer this agency from the MoE to the MoSWY. In a joint initiative with the GIZ VET programme and the Kulturkontakt Austria the project has revised/prepared and submitted to the MoSWY 21 sub-legal acts needed to implement the amended VET Law.

A methodological guide for piloting the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning mechanisms was drafted and approved by the MoSWY. The textile sector was selected to undertake the first pilot on drafting the occupational standards and preparing the assessment tools. Two occupational standards for the textile industry have been prepared, linked with Levels 2 and 3 of Qualification as per the Albanian Qualification Framework. In addition, a group of 10 assessors, including NAVETQ staff members, has been trained on how to conduct recognition and certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning.

The technical assistance for the post-secondary VET in the country included drafting of a feasibility study and of an implementation plan for the expansion of the post-secondary VET system. These documents were discussed and validated in a national event. Also, four frame curricula were drafted for post-secondary VET programmes covering the agro-food processing, garment manufacturing industry, maritime services and VET instructors' sectors.

Overall, this component has been very effective in promoting comprehensive changes at the policy, legislative and institutional levels, as well as in starting changes in the general public's perception on the VET. This component focused on assisting beneficiaries to elaborate a sustainable National Employment and Skills Strategy, improve the attractiveness of the training offer and increase public-private partnership in matching the existent and emerging skills of the labour force with the employment demand and supply.

ILO's comparative advantage

Over the lifetime of the project ILO has demonstrated to be an effective and constructive partner of its constituents (the Government of Albania and the social partners) and its role has been recognised very positively. ILO has used a highly participatory approach and involved all relevant partners in the country to participate in the project implementation and continuation.

ILO's commitment to quality was highly appreciated by stakeholders. The project involved an important number of activities which required mobilization of very good experts capable to deliver tasks at a high conceptual level.

Building on its good technical reputation in the domains the project was concerned, ILO has set-up excellent cooperation with the line ministries responsible for the policies on human resources development as addressed in the project (MoSWY, MoE, MoH) and the agencies who were targeted as key implementing partners in the project (SILSS, NES and NAVETQ). At the international level, the project had a very good cooperation with the Austrian hosting organizations during the study visit on Labour Inspections and OSH topics to Vienna and Linz. Also the collaboration with the Labour Inspectorates of countries in the region (Kosovo¹², Bulgaria and Romania) was quite fruitful. It was reported that a robust cooperation was developed during the design of the NESS with all relevant players in the field of vocational education and training. For example, the Donors' community had an excellent contribution to the drafting of the NESS and the project had been part of the strategic discussions on the VET sector interventions (participation in the DACH-Plus Group¹³ and in the Sub-sectoral Employment and Skills Development sectoral working group). Strong links with the European Training Foundation (ETF) were also established, primarily for the design of NESS. The close cooperation with GIZ, Kulturkontakt, Swisscontact, and Helvetas/Partner Albania has been a continuous element over the project implementation, which has made possible the undertaking of specific joint initiatives, e.g. for the revision of VET legislation and the evaluation of the EPPs.

Overcoming most difficult problem in implementation

The most important bottleneck encountered during the project implementation was of a political nature. The administration that was in place when the project started was not fully committed to the project. Half a year before the elections (June 2013) the public administration work slowed down which further impeded the project speed of delivery (e.g. in drafting of legislation, running of research and preparation of methodological frameworks). The delays were recovered as a positive effect of the political change and due to the extensions of the project implementation time frame. In spite of the long decision process related to the granting of two no-cost extensions of the project, the project had benefited from the openness and flexible approach of the Contracting Authority to make several

¹² Within the meaning of the UN Resolution 1244.

¹³ The DACH-PLUS Group is a group of donor funded projects working for Vocational Education and Training Reform in Albania.

adjustments of the project work plan tailored to the changing needs of the beneficiary, thus creating an environment for a close cooperation with the local counterparts.

3.3 Efficiency

The project's efficiency gradually increased till the end when it reached 100% implementation rate and 100% disbursement. The actual implementation of project activities was delayed by an inception phase that encountered bottlenecks in mobilizing beneficiaries' commitment with no feedback received from MoLSAEO during this phase of the project. Also, the recruitment of the team was slow; while the project start date was 01 September 2011 the team was in place in March-April 2012 and, following all the logistical arrangements, the full project implementation started in May 2012. Difficulties were experienced in finding qualified staff, readily available and willing to relocate for 24 months to Tirana. The ILO ran three international open competitions, strictly following the ILO Human Resources Rules, to ensure maximum transparency and quality of the recruitment process. Once the process was completed, not all experts were immediately available. In the inception phase and until the team was in place, timely and adequate support was provided by both the ILO Budapest Office as well as the relevant technical departments in ILO HQ Geneva so that the project implementation was launched.

The human resources were efficiently involved in the project implementation; however their management encountered several difficulties. For example, the key expert coordinating Component 2 resigned after one year (in March 2013) which left the component without technical coordination. For two months this function was covered by the team leader who was already overloaded with managerial tasks and technical coordination of Component 3. A local expert was hired to coordinate this component, but this person resigned after one year and again during another two month vacancy the team leader had to cover this position. The staff turnover made the implementation of this component more challenging than the other two.

In terms of the allocation of human resources in the project the field evidence proves that merging the role of team leader with the one of technical component coordinator and with the one of ILO CTA generated permanent trade-offs between fulfilment of managerial tasks and of the technical ones which might have partially compromise either the project management process, but most often the technical advice process. The solution that has been identified in order to secure proper project implementation was for the team leader to delegate many technical responsibilities to a national expert.

The financial monitoring was detached by the technical monitoring in the sense that the latest was carried by the project team, while the first was done by the ILO Budapest Office which increased the quality control, but also increased the time necessary for taking project implementation decisions especially related to contracting arrangements. Since May 2014 a monthly expenditure review was made available to the project team which increased their planning and reporting capacity. However, the involvement of team members, especially of the team leader, in inputs' planning process was lacking in the initial phases of the project which left individual potential untapped and did not allow for individual technical strengths and wisdom to emerge in the benefit of the project early phases.

The challenges related to time management efficiency derived from MoLSAEO's low commitment and the political changes following the elections in 2013, as well as from ILO's delays in team members' recruitment were addressed in two no-cost extensions, one in August 2013 and another one in August 2014. These two extensions allowed for full completion of project activities to the highest satisfaction of the beneficiary.

In addition to the core team, the project mobilized a noteworthy number of international experts (around 50) and national consultants (around 30) who provided the necessary skills and knowledge required under the following headings: VET policy/strategy; trainer and teacher training; occupational standards; labour market and training needs analysis; VET reform applied monitoring research; post secondary, non-university VET; curriculum development (technical competences in the sectors); lifelong learning; National Qualifications Framework, assessment, and certification; social partnership in VET; public private partnership in education; Labour Inspection; approximation to the EU Legislation in OSH; approximation to the EU Legislation in Employment; Information Technology; adult education; higher education; quality assurance; procurement; public relations/communications.

Apart from the technical skills that were mobilized by all team members, the project challenged them in terms of making the best use of their soft skills (communication, leadership, trust building, cultural influence etc.) given that "the project implementation has moved from full disagreement at the beginning to the complete output achievement at the end" (representative of an international donor).

3.4 Sustainability

Institutional level

For Component 1 a priority for the successful implementation of newly adopted OSH legislation is the institutional capacity building of labour inspectors. Besides the internationally funded TA projects, from the national budget there is little investment in labour inspectors professional development and no adequate financial rewards. These two factors which decrease the motivation of labour inspectors in combination with a lack of broader advisory services and of anti-corruption programs negatively influence the effectiveness and sustainability of any investment in capacity building of the SILSS staff and keep the impact of these types of interventions at a low level. In addition, the staff turnover reported by former and current management of SILSS, also contributes to a modest sustainability of investments in professional development activities.

In terms of inter-institutional coordination which is required for an effective and sustainable implementation of OSH newly adopted measures, despite being successful in many aspects at their work, MoSWY, SILSS, MoH, Institute of Public Health and all other institutions directly working with OSH still have bottlenecks in their cooperation. There are still gaps in how the roles and competences on OSH communication and public relations in each institution and between them are defined.

The stability and further development of achievements under Component 2 is determined by several factors of which some may contribute to progress, while others may hinder it. Thus, turning the National Employment Service (NES) into a National Employment Agency with an increased job

mediation role on the labour market in the country seems to be a plan for higher flexibility and an increased capacity of NES to address the needs of both supply and demand¹⁴. The number of employment offices were re-organized (from two to five and from five to 10 during the project implementation and it is planned¹⁵ to be further increased to 12. However, as some national and most international stakeholders have mentioned, the political will for this development is in place, the challenge remains with technical and especially financial capacity for turning this plans into practical implementation.

The newly adopted system of scoring for evaluating and selecting applicant enterprises for its ALMMs led to increased credibility of the measures, and a five-fold increase in the number of businesses applying for such measures¹⁶. But the quality of employment services remains to be considered given the under-motivation of staff for reasons of low salaries or high case load.

The institutional sustainability of the Component 3 on VET Reform seems fairly good given the current political commitment, but challenging in implementation because it involves a strong coordination and technical capacity in addition to a strong financial commitment. In spite of the transfer of VET from MoE to MoSWY, MoE still has some responsibilities such as for the general education part of VET curricula or for teachers' training which requires a good cooperation between the two ministries. Currently, the cooperation has been reported by stakeholders as not being fully functional which may impede on the future progress of VET reform. Also, the coordination between VET on one side and the high education and pre-university education on the other side is still lagging behind.

A major issue throughout the VET system is staffing. The average age of technical teachers is close to retirement. Many of them lack proper qualifications to teach the curricula. Some teach subjects for which they have no university qualifications. Teachers, in general, lack pre-service and in-service training. Low teacher salaries are a major contributor to the lack of qualified teachers.

An effective implementation of the VET reform will require further development of the cooperation between Government and social partners. This was piloted in the project but by far it needs to be strengthened in order to ensure a fully operational connection with labour market needs.

Policy level

The sustainability of Component 1 at the policy and legislation level was appreciated by most stakeholders who informed this evaluation as being high. The adoption of the Action Plan of Policies on Occupational Health and Safety 2015 - 2020 as well as the transposition in 12 regulations of EU OSH individual Directives and drafting of other 6 regulations transposing the remaining EU OSH individual directives indicate a high political commitment for a stable policy and legal OSH framework. However, the remaining challenge refers to the enforcement of the policy plan and legislation which is predominately a matter of financial capacity and less of political will.

¹⁴ Interview with a Government official

¹⁵ MoSWY: *National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020*

¹⁶ http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/local-level-responses-to-the-youth-employment-challenge.html

Similarly, for the Component 2, there is a clear commitment on behalf of the current decision makers for increasing the effectiveness of labour market policies in the future. There have been messages from the highest level that this a priority for the current Government. During the project implementation the Prime Minister of Albania and the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth participated in several inaugurations of the employment offices.. It has been clearly stated by the Prime Minister that:

Our challenge related to employment is enormous, but we are confident we will win it over. We will do so not by turning the State into the major employer, but by putting the Government at the service of the jobseekers and employers and by trying to create these meeting points and pursue very clear policies that encourage investments that bring employment, mechanisms that lead to employment, interactions that produce employment, in order to create a situation where everyone who has something to offer to a job is able to find it. (Prime Minister Address at the Inauguration of Durres New Employment Office, February 2014)¹⁷

The political long term commitment for the continuation of measures aiming at enhancing decent job opportunities for all is reflected by the *National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020*. This strategic document includes the policy objectives and main outcomes for closing the job gap in the country based on a vision built on a continuum *education - skills development - labour market*. The NESS was formally endorsed by the Council of Ministers in November 2014 becoming the policy strategic framework of the country in the domains of employment and vocational training for the next six years.

NESS is also setting-up the strategic framework for the vocational education policies in the country. Following-up on the transfer of competences for VET from the MoES to MoSWY and in order to ensure embedding of the NESS strategic approach in the national legislation a comprehensive legal framework reflecting the European approach to VET and employment sectors remains to be further developed in the near future. Also, amendments to the Labour Code remain to be adopted in order to ensure coherence between the laws that have been revised for the employment and VET reform and the overall legal framework that regulates labour market in the country.

The continuation of implementation of employment and VET reforms may be confronted with bottlenecks related with the social perception of VET (still a negative social perception of VET among general public and young population, in particular) or with the high level of informality of the labour market and informal economy. In spite of the difficulties and limitations in assessing informal economy with accuracy, it is reported that the size of informal economy in Albania accounted for 32.7% of GDP in 2013¹⁸. Reducing informality and increasing workers employability will remain challenging and will require sustained investments in employment promotion programmes closely connected to attractive VET opportunities.

Financial level

¹⁷ <http://www.kryeministria.al/en/newsroom/speeches/our-new-model-of-national-employment-service1391594628&page=5>

¹⁸ This is calculated as the difference between GDP by expenditure and GDP by production divide by GDP by expenditure (Merita Boka and Giuseppe Torluccio: *Informal Economy in Albania* in 'Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies', MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy Vol. 2/No. 8 October 2013).

The state budget allocation for the State Inspectorate for Labour and Social Services as the main actor in the OSH field is not adequate. Average annual budget for labour inspection is 150 mil. ALL (1.1 mil €). From this amount 86% are for salaries of staff and relating insurance funds. Only 19 mil. ALL (135 000 €) are annually allocated for services (including utilities, supplies, travel costs) and 2 mil. ALL (14 000 €) for investments. Inspectors do not obtain reimbursement of travel costs and per diem, they are not equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE), use their private telephones, utilities are not paid in some regional branch offices, maintenance of premises is either insufficient or not provided. Furthermore, inspectors have to work daily in the field. As concerning investments, all 7 cars (for 133 inspectors) are in bad technical conditions, many premises should be refurbished and equipped with air conditioning. No resources are allocated for campaigns, training, public relations, conferences, activities of the Focal Point¹⁹. International funding does not seem to be an option as international donors and IPA II does not include SILSS among their priorities for the next years. Therefore, it can be assessed that the financial sustainability of the achievements under Component 1, especially those referring to the improvement of capacity of SILSS staff, the development of SILSS's IT&C system and, to a certain extent, the awareness on OSH improved among public and employers, is low.

The process of modernization of NES may seem fairly sustainable from the financial point of view as resources are allocated in the NESS for actions in this domain and the Government budget for ALMMs in 2014 tripled to USD 2.7 million²⁰. The overall allocations under IPA II cover social sector reforms which may include consolidation of the progress achieved. In fact it should be mentioned that in February 2014 the IMF approved a 36-month €330.9 million loan under the Extended-Fund Facility (EFF) for Albania in support of the authorities' reform program. The financial constraints derived from the IMF loan diminished significantly the margins for ambitious political reforms that demand high financial investments, as it is the case for the employment policies and VET reform. In order to reduce the current adherence of NESS to international donors' funding, these stakeholders tend to favour a more consistent involvement of private sector and a higher level of decentralization of services²¹, which are still lagging behind.

In spite of having the highest allocation in NESS (approximately 50% of the total estimated allocation), the financial constraints mentioned above may reduce the financial sustainability of the progress of VET reform while it is widely recognized by all stakeholders that VET is more costly than general high education because of the investments in equipment and materials required for the development of students' skills. Vocational education has been severely underfunded for a number of years, although the funding allocation in 2012 increased by over 28 per cent. More than two-thirds (77.8%) of the annual allocation goes to cover staff costs, leaving very limited resources for the upgrading of equipment, modernization of workshops and curricula development. The schools' workshop facilities are out-dated and in many cases located in highly dilapidated premises. Lack of investments in workshops and laboratories have resulted in inadequate facilities for practical competence transfer to VET learners.

¹⁹ MoSWY: *Action Plan of Policies on Occupational Health and Safety 2015 - 2020*

²⁰ http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/local-level-responses-to-the-youth-employment-challenge.html

²¹ Interviews with international donors' representatives.

An important role in the sustainability of employment and VET reforms is attributed (especially by the Governmental stakeholders and project staff) to the creation of Employment and Skills Development Fund (ESDF). NESS clearly stipulates the creation of ESDF as a policy outcome and the related outputs. The ILO TA team advised the MoSWY and the Ministry of Finance that the ESDF can be established as a special fund constituted of State Budget consisted of 470 million ALL. This amount may result from just a slight increase of both employers' and employees' contributions (at about 0.25%), sectors contributions, , as well as donors and philanthropic contributions. The role of national funding sources is important for the sustainability of this fund, as it is not clear how ESDF will be connected to the contribution of international donors and to what extent it depends on these contributions.

Some of the international donors remain to a certain extent interested in supporting the progress of employment and VET reforms in the country. Thus, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and Austrian Development Agency (ADA) were active in providing assistance in the development of the employment and vocational education domains in Albania. The first two are still present, active and interested for continuation of assistance, while ADA's plans for the future assistance in the domain are not finalized yet. Human resources development (including VET and employment topics) is among the priorities of the EU assistance in the country for the next programming period (2014-2020), however it depends from the Government's priorities how this assistance will be allocated and implemented.

Table 1 below summarizes the findings on sustainability presented above reconciling the three main aspects of sustainability (institutional, policy and financial) analysed. To conclude on sustainability, it should be mentioned that ILO TA made efforts to identify an exit strategy (a portfolio of potential projects on TA for implementation of NESS) with fair chances of sustainability which is technically sound but so far has limited financial perspectives for implementation. EU Delegation in Albania is reluctant to continue the TA outside the frame of an IPA engagement and the IPA II could start the earliest in 2016. MoSWY is engaged in the preparation of a needs assessment for further funding of NESS in order to make better use of the future EU funding. ILO is undertaking the necessary steps to secure funding from its Regular budget support in order to ensure the resources for bridging the IPA (2010) TA with the next IPA (2014-2020).

Table 1 – Overall evaluation of project outcomes' sustainability

| Sustainability | Low | Medium | High |
|---|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Project outcomes | | | |
| <i>Component 1: Modernization of the State Labour Inspectorate</i> | | X | |
| 1.1. OSH strategic documents developed | | | X |
| 1.2. OSH Legislation in line with the EU Acquis | | | X |
| 1.3. Improvement of capacity of SLI staff | X | | |
| 1.4. IT&C system of SLI developed | X | | |
| 1.5. Awareness on OSH improved among public and employers | | X | |
| <i>Component 2: Modernization of the National Employment Service</i> | | X | |
| 2.1. Employment policy framework developed | | | X |
| 2.2. Employment counselling and other ALMP services improved | | X | |
| <i>Component 3: VET Reform</i> | | X | |
| 3.1. VET policy framework developed | | | X |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 3.2. Albanian Qualification Framework further developed | | X | |
| 3.3. Post-secondary VET strategy elaborated and implemented | | X | |

3.5 Impact

As presented in the Section 3.2 on effectiveness, the project generated good results which, by their systemic coverage, represent good premises for generating long-term socio-economic changes in the country. Nonetheless, it should be mentioned that not all components have the same potential for generating long-term effects.

Thus, Component 1 on *Modernization of the State Labour Inspectorate* will most probably have the less impact as the results seem not to have reached a critical mass in order to ensure it and furthermore, as already explained in the Section 3.4 on sustainability, in spite of the important progress in improvement of the OSH legislation some pre-conditions for the continuity of progress in practical implementation of OSH measures are not in place. For example, although awareness on safety and health at work plays an important role in the prevention of accidents at work and occupational diseases, the Albanian state budget does not allocate funds earmarked only for the promotion of OSH. In addition, the Albanian Government does not collect reliable, verifiable and systematic data on accidents at work and occupational diseases in order to further develop evidence-based policy actions. Also, in Albania, the occupational medical service is only formal and this is mainly because of the lack of occupational doctors. The Faculty of Medicine does not train occupational medical doctors and there is no other institution that deals with specialization and training of occupational medical doctors.

Component 2 on *Modernization of the National Employment Service* which created the premises for increasing the match between labour supply and demand will result in a better functioning of the labour market and a reduction of social inclusion gaps in the country. In very practical terms this component proved so far a stronger policy and institutional impact than a socio-economic impact. The wide national consensus around *National Employment and Skills Strategy* is expected to increase the employment rate, to enable a gradual transition from passive unemployment to active employment by stimulating employment policies. This strategy together with the modernized National Employment Service which has started based on the piloted New Service Model, are aimed to foster decent job opportunities. However, it is still not very clear how NESS will address the most vulnerable groups (minorities, workers from rural areas, persons with disabilities, women over 45 years old, former convicted people etc.) in order to avoid “creaming²²”. The impact of the policy and institutional changes that have been made by the project remains to be measured in a counterfactual manner in order to be solidly proven.

Component 3 on *VET Reform* aimed to systemic changes which were largely met within the frame of the project’s objectives. The emerging impact of the systemic changes can be defined as a contribution to an emerging increased availability of a skilled labour force. Again, the changes at the policy and institutional level will allow for further progress in the reform process. However, the education and training system in Albania is still characterized by a number of challenges such as: non-responsiveness to labour market requirements and the needs of an innovation-driven economy; low attractiveness of vocational education; underdeveloped adult training and lifelong learning opportunities. The

²² Targeting only the groups that are the easiest to address and for which progress may be reported in a shorter period of time.

persistence of these challenges may reduce the impact of this component and may continue to reduce the impact of further interventions unless they will not be implemented in a coordinated and comprehensive manner as it is proposed in the NESS.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

The objectives of the project were consistent with Government's strategic documents (European Partnership Document for Albania, Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2009-2011 for Albania, National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013). The project was also relevant and contributed to the achievement of Decent Work Country Programme (DCWP), especially Priority 2 ('Promotion of decent work and enhanced employability of the Albanian labour force'), Outcome 2.1 ('Employment and training policies are formulated and implemented to address both efficiency and equity objectives and are aligned with provisions of international labour standards on employment policy and employment services').

The relevance of the project increased as a result of the ongoing changes brought to the project during the implementation due to a flexible approach which was highly necessary in the context of changes of priorities and of strategic, as well as operational conditions for employment and skills development policies of the new Government in power from September 2013. In the project design phase there was a lack of strategic vision and ownership on behalf of the beneficiary which generated a lack of critical review of the relevance in the project planning. In addition, the lack of solid ex-ante assessment and reliable baseline data created a gap between the initial project planning and the reality found during the implementation.

Effectiveness

Due to its systemic approach the project had a wide coverage in outputs addressing all the human development topics that were planned. The project ended with quite an impressive number of outputs to such an extent that it may raise the need for prioritisation and a closer look to the impact in the interventions that will follow.

The specific objective and expected results of the Component 1 on modernization of State Labour Inspectorate have been fully achieved and there were no structural changes of activities. This component was effective in *implementation of prevention principles and promoting of a safety culture at work*. The new OSH legislation has stated a uniform basis for enforcement OSH rules and inspection performance and has contributed to strengthening labour inspection capacity. The social partners recognized that this component, together with the other project components, contributed to increasing social dialogue in the country. However, strengthening the capacity of SILSS is considered by the representatives of this institution as still requiring investments in equipment, vehicles and more sophisticated software to reduce corruption in the system, to increase mobility of inspectors and to increase capacity of processing declarations.

Component 2 on modernization of the national employment services sustained the increased commitment of the public authorities in the identification of the best approaches for the new

employment offices. The new vision on the role of the new employment offices was that these have to “find the right person for the job, rather than to find a job for a person”. According to this new approach, the employment offices became more accessible, modern and quality oriented. Consequently, the services provided to jobseekers and employers were brought closer to the EU Employment Service standards and the number of unemployed people asking for services from the new employment offices tripled from 2013 to 2014.

Component 3 on VET reform has been very effective in promoting comprehensive changes at the policy, legislative and institutional levels of the fragmented VET system, as well as in starting changes in the general public’s perception on the unattractive VET. This component focused on assisting beneficiaries to elaborate a sustainable VET strategy, improve the attractiveness of the training offer and increase public-private partnership in matching the existent and emerging skills of the labour force with the employment demand and supply.

Over the lifetime of the project ILO has demonstrated to be an effective and constructive partner of its constituents (the Government of Albania and the social partners) and its role has been recognised very positively. ILO has used a highly participatory approach and involved all relevant partners in the country to participate in the project implementation and continuation.

ILO’s commitment to quality was highly appreciated by stakeholders. The project involved an important number of activities which required mobilization of very good experts capable to deliver tasks at a high conceptual level. Building on its good technical reputation in the domains the project was concerned, ILO has set-up excellent cooperation with all partners (the line ministries responsible for the policies addressed in the project such as MoSWY, MoE, MoH, the agencies who were targeted as key implementing partners in the project such as SILSS, NES and NAVETQ, as well as with international partners and donors).

Efficiency

The project’s efficiency gradually increased till the end when it reached 100% implementation rate and 100% disbursement. The challenges encountered, mostly related to time management efficiency derived from MoLSAEO’s low level of commitment and the political changes following the elections in 2013, as well as from ILO’s delays in team members’ mobilization were addressed in two no-cost extensions, one in August 2013 and another one in August 2014. These two extensions allowed for full completion of project activities to the highest satisfaction of the beneficiary.

Sustainability

The process of modernization of NES and VET may seem fairly sustainable from the financial point of view as resources are allocated in the NESS for actions in this domain and the Government budget for ALMMs in 2014 tripled to USD 2.7 million. However, the constraints derived from a recent IMF loan contracted by the Albanian Government diminishes significantly the margins for ambitious political reforms that demand high financial investments, as it is the case for the employment policies and VET reform. In order to reduce the current adherence of NESS to international donors’ funding, these stakeholders tend to favour a more consistent involvement of private sector and a higher level of decentralization of services, which are still lagging behind.

ILO TA made efforts to identify an exit strategy (a portfolio of potential projects on TA for implementation of NESS) with fair chances of sustainability which is technically sound but so far has

limited financial perspectives for implementation. EU Delegation in Albania is reluctant to continue the TA outside the frame of an IPA engagement and the IPA II could start the earliest in 2016. MoSWY is engaged in the preparation of a needs assessment for further funding of NESS in order to make better use of the future EU funding. ILO is undertaking the necessary steps to secure funding from its Regular budget support in order to ensure the resources for bridging the IPA (2010) TA with the next IPA (2014-2020).

Impact

Component 1 on *Modernization of the State Labour Inspectorate* will most probably have the less impact as the results seem not to have reached a critical mass in order to ensure it and in spite of the important progress in improvement of the OSH legislation some pre-conditions for the continuity of progress (e.g. awareness on OSH, earmarked budget, inter-institutional cooperation etc.) in practical implementation of OSH measures are not in place.

Component 2 on *Modernization of the National Employment Service* which created the premises for increasing the match between labour supply and demand will result in a better functioning of the labour market and a reduction of social inclusion gaps in the country. In very practical terms this component proved so far a stronger policy and institutional impact than a socio-economic impact.

Component 3 on *VET Reform* aimed to systemic changes which were largely met within the frame of the project's objectives. The emerging impact of the systemic changes can be defined as a contribution to an emerging increased availability of a skilled labour force.

5 LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Lessons learned

1. Starting a reform with a partner having an internationally recognized technical expertise in the domain, such as it is the case of the ILO in the employment domain, may gather interest, resources and efforts around the respective strategic approach even when the reform process encounters bottlenecks and difficulties on the way. One of these major difficulties may be encountered at the beginning of a project that is launching a reform with a Government that is coming to the end of its term, which may cause delays and disruptions in the inception and the initial implementation (first year) phases of the project.
2. Systemic interventions need time in order to consolidate progress. These type of interventions need to build an enabling environment (including a shift in policy vision, legislative and institutional changes, policy coordination, adapted budget) for the reform to take place, to strengthen the balance between supply and demand of services, to encourage a shift in social norms and to promote quality of services.
3. A project that is devoting an important amount of resources to designing strategies, plans and institutional tools need to be implemented in a flexible manner (i.e. adapting the project to new request of the Government and social partners) and to explore the existence of a strong local ownership in order to ensure embedding of these instruments in the future practice of the beneficiaries. This may include sharing information about the new approaches beyond the narrow group of specialists and professionals.

Good practices

1. The project has developed a wide and solid partnership with relevant national and international stakeholders, which may have increased the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions beyond the limits of the project.
2. A project that aims at implementing a systemic change needs to have a coordination body to ensure cooperation among the variety of stakeholders, interests and agendas. The project Steering Committee provided that good forum for sharing information and ideas, as well as for planning joint actions.
3. The project high level of quality and transparency built a high level of credibility and mobilized many resources around its wide scope.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a strong need for the Government to- find a better balance between the national and donors' agenda in the continuation of the employment and VET reform process. There has to be a higher level of integration with the economic strategy of the country and more sequencing of the reform. At the same time, the Government has to be encouraged in making progress in increasing its capacity for sound policy analysis and for rigorous data collection and analysis in order to ensure real time and evidence based monitoring of the progress.
2. For the next steps of the reform the Government will have to consider more in depth the reduction in gender skills gap to increase women's employability. Also, other vulnerable groups (e.g. minorities, persons with disabilities, rural population, formally convicted persons etc.) have to be addressed in order to ensure their inclusion on the labour market.
3. ILO may consider for future projects a stronger focus on social inclusion for the interventions aiming at reforming employment services. Also, ILO may consider the exit strategies in the earlier stages of the projects in order to increase the national ownership and sustainability of the respective interventions. This may involve a stronger message to the beneficiaries to increase their commitment to move from beneficiaries of international funding to beneficiaries of transfer of competences allowing them to perform functions independent if international assistance.
4. The development of internship programmes need to be considered by MoSWY in cooperation with social partners; providing incentives may increase the attractiveness if the vocational education. This has to be combined with more efforts in raising the awareness on credible opportunities offered by the labour market. Nevertheless, in the process of getting inspiration from functional dual VET systems that are found in EU member states the national dual system should be designed ina realistic manner in such a way that it will be adjusted to the country social and economic context.
5. In order to ensure the consolidation of employment and VET reform the Government will have to strengthen the capacity of the social partners in the design, monitoring and evaluation of VET policies and programmes. Also, policy coherence and coordination across ministries needs to be improved and the understanding on what is involved in the European approach to employment and VET reform will need to be increased.

ANNEX 1 - TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FOR THE EVALUATOR

FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Project Title: | "Human Resources Development in Albania" (European Union IPA 2010 Project on Human Resources Development in Albania) |
| Project Code: | ALB/11/01/EEC |
| Lead Office: | ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe (DWT/CO-Budapest) |
| Duration: | 01 September 2011 – 31 January 2015 (41 months) |
| Target country: | Albania |
| Donor agency: | European Commission |
| Budget: | EUR 2,028,177.23 (total eligible cost of the action, with the amount of Euro 2,988,422 approved by the Contracting Authority, however only one instalment received until today) |

Main target groups and institutions:

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (now Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth) and the Ministry of Education and Science (Ministry of Education and Sport), and their implementing agencies, namely the State Labour Inspectorate, the National Employment Service and the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications; Albanian Workers' and Employers' organizations

Final beneficiaries:

- employers and employees;
- jobseekers and unemployed individuals;

- students, teachers, parents and communities with a stake in the vocational education and training system; and
- the Albanian economy and society as a whole.

I. Introduction and Rationale for Evaluation

At the end of the implementation period of the EC funded project "**Human Resources Development in Albania**" (ILO - EU IPA 2010 Project on Human Resources Development in Albania), implemented by the ILO and financed by the European Commission, the ILO is conducting an independent final evaluation of the project in accordance with the ILO Evaluation Policy and donor requirements.

This final evaluation builds on the findings and lessons learned from mid-term evaluation in 2013.

II. Brief Background on Project and Context

Project summary

Following the indications of the EU Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2009-2011, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and their implementing agencies - National Employment Service (NES), National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications (NAVETQ) and State Labour Inspectorate (SLI) - jointly prepared at the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010, a project fiche to be financed under IPA 2010 funds. Based on this document, the ILO prepared a fully-fledged implementation plan and signed the Contract No. 2011/268-252 with the Delegation of the European Union to Albania on 24 June 2011.

Development objective of the project:

The overall objective of the project is to have improved labour market functioning and the quality of human capital in Albania.

The project is composed of three main technical components all linked to the improvement of labour market institutions and increasing employability of the Albanian labour force:

Component 1 - Modernisation of the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI);

Component 2 - Modernisation of the National Employment Service (NES);

Component 3 - Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform.

The ILO - EU IPA 2010 project on Human Resources Development in Albania centres on enhancing the capacity of national institutions to: enforce occupational safety and health regulations, address employment and labour market challenges and improve the skills base of the workforce. The project comprises five components, three of which are technical (Modernization of SLI; Modernization of NES and VET reform) and the other two operational and crosscutting (Project Management and Communication and Publicity).

Project purpose:

Improving the capacity of labour market institutions, mainly the SLI and the NES, and promoting employment by enhancing the employability of Albanian workforce can be considered as the project main purpose.

Planned results:

Component 0: Project Management

Inception phase planned results

- Mobilization of expert team
- Establishment of the Project Steering Committee
- Assessment of what is running in the country for each component
- Draft inception report
- Endorsement of the inception report by the Project SC
- Presentation of the inception report to the EU Delegation in Tirana

Other planned products along the project time span

- Monthly reports
- Mid-term reviews
- Project SC meetings
- Final Independent evaluation
- Final conference
- Draft final report
- Delivery of the final report to the EU Commission

Component 1: Modernization of the State Labour Inspectorate

- Legislation in the field of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is adopted in line with the EU *Acquis*;
- The capacity of SLI is enhanced in line with the national OSH strategy and EU principles;
- Improved awareness on OSH by public opinion and employers;
- Strengthened human and technical capacities of the SLI to enforce legislation, cooperate with other inspectorates and institutions and investigate work accidents.

Component 2: Modernization of the National Employment Service

- Labour Force Survey data is reprocessed according to the latest international standards in order to be used for the preparation of a gender-sensitive National Strategy for Employment and Skills for the period 2014-2020 (to be prepared under a collaborative process with Component 3);
- Counselling services are improved within the framework of the new NES service model (three tier service delivered) . New service model extended to all Albanian regions. Staff of the new offices trained and Tirana pilot office used as an on-the-job training office;
- Monitoring and evaluation capacities of the NES are improved with the elaboration of a Quality Assurance System;
- Vulnerable groups receive more effective services to increase their employability through the review of the existing ALMP's and the adaptation of the regulatory framework done accordingly;;
- The effectiveness and relevance of training is increased and it is based on labour market requirements (NES staff is trained on Skills Needs Analysis and a tracer system is piloted by Vocational Training Centres).
- The Skills Needs Analysis 2014 survey is developed covering both national and regional levels to identify the skills most needed in the Albanian labour market.

Component 3: Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform

- A gender-sensitive National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020 is endorsed (to be prepared under a collaborative process with Component 2) and an Action Plan is prepared;
- A raising awareness media campaign on VET and LLL opportunities is prepared and diffused;
- A conference on VET and LLL policies is organised;
- The Albanian Qualification Framework is further developed and NAVETQ staff at central and local level is trained to effectively further implement it;
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) mechanisms are defined and tested in one economic sector;
- A revision of all VET legislation is carried out to implement the transfer of competences over the VET sector to MoSWY;
- TA is provided to create an Employment and Skills Development Fund (ESDF) as part of the VET reform;

- An IT system is developed for MoSWY as a mean to increase the efficiency of its management procedures;
- Post-secondary VET programmes are developed – including the design of four new curricula in key qualifications/economic sectors and one flagship initiative in maritime sector is piloted;
- TA is delivered to MOSWY to prepare the Sectoral Analysis for the next IPA II cycle.

Component 4: Communication and Visibility

- Project Launching conference: organized in coincidence with the first Project Steering Committee meeting.
- Press office operations (e.g. generating stories for the media; creating Press releases and Press Kits; - organizing regular briefings with journalists; TV and radio coverage)
- Creation and periodical updates of the project's webpage
- Production and dissemination of leaflets
- Production and dissemination of electronic newsletters

Definition of indicators

The Indicators of achievement for monitoring and evaluation as set out in the Project Document are reproduced in Annex 2 below.

Key achievements and major milestones of the project

The original implementation plan and its subsequent revisions - through the two contract's addendums approved by the European Union Delegation (EUD), respectively in August 2013 and August 2014 - outline the project intervention and the technical assistance to be provided by key experts in the reporting period.

The main project achievements are as follows.

Component 1. Modernisation of State Labour Inspectorate

All planned outcomes and outputs have been achieved in the scope of Component 1, such as:

- ✓ The Occupational Safety and Health Action Plan for the period 2015-2020 has been developed under the auspices of the MoSWY, together with other related Ministries, public institutions and social partners, with the assistance of the ILO-EU IPA 2010 project's experts. The document is supplemented by an implementation plan for 2015-2016. After official submission to the MoSWY, it has passed through all mandatory legal procedures and is prepared to be endorsed by the Council of Ministers in early 2015.
- ✓ The challenge for completing the harmonisation of the OSH legislation based on the EU Framework Directive has been fulfilled within the timeframe and scope of the IPA 2010 Project, even further exceeded. All missing 17 Individual Directives were transposed and submitted officially to the responsible Ministries for further legislative procedures. Additionally, one Directive on Safety of Young Workers has been transposed and 3 other

Regulations in the area of Occupational Health were developed, in order to ensure a proper implementation of the new legal framework in this field. In total, 21 legal acts have been prepared and 11 have already been adopted by the Council of Ministers. The others are in the legislative process to be further adopted by the Government of Albania.

- ✓ For strengthening the capacity of labour inspectors, 5 training of trainers (ToT) were delivered to a selected group of inspectors, plus 2 training actions for all labour inspectors. In addition, 12 trainings actions were delivered by trainers in the framework of training of controllers. The total number of trained persons was 360 public officers from SILSS (five times 28 trainers and two times 110 inspectors).
- ✓ A study visit of 10 Labour Inspectors of SILSS to Austria has been realised successfully. 8 institutions and/or organisations were visited. The comprehensive programme allowed fulfilling the aim of transfer good practices on organisation and management of labour inspection, learn different methods of law enforcement, proper implementation of prevention principles, benchmarking of work accident statistics and challenges for research and raising awareness in the OSH area.
- ✓ Bilateral cooperation agreements were established between SILSS and 4 Labour Inspectorates from neighbour countries, as follows: FYROM, Kosovo²³, Bulgaria and Romania. The agreement with Labour inspectorate in Montenegro was accepted but not signed, due to organisational changes in the Government of Montenegro. The agreements are the basis, by one hand, for a wider cooperation between Labour Inspectorates in the region and, by the other hand, for the establishment of a future regional network of labour inspectorates in the South Eastern Europe countries. The international cooperation in the region was acknowledged and further discussed at the Regional Seminar organised by the MoSWY and SILSS, with the support of the IPA 2010 Project, in June 2014, in Tirana, with representatives of the above mentioned countries and of the EU and international organisations.
- ✓ A new working tool, supplementing the labour inspection manuals for labour inspectors, was developed to improve the effectiveness and consistency of labour inspection performance. This tool is a set of checklists aiming at the implementation of new harmonised Albanian legislation, as well as particular topics and subjects of inspection visits. The set consists of 50 checklists for the most essential areas of labour inspection, comprising around 1250 questions/items to be observed.
- ✓ A key-activity to contribute for strengthening the social dialogue was the organisation of a National Labour Council meeting focussed only on OSH topics to observe the World OSH Day in Albania, on the 28th of April 2014, which was widely covered by the media for several consecutive days, with a clear impact on the general public.
- ✓ The development of a tool to improve the technological environment of SILSS was supported by the creation of a Digital Archive for the Labour Inspectorate. This system, specified by the SILSS, supplements the new governmental information system "e-Inspection", prepared by the Central Inspectorate as a national tool that all the inspection bodies are obliged to use as a mean to harmonise the reporting system.

²³ The reference to Kosovo is predicted under UN Resolution 1244.

- ✓ Communication Guidelines on OSH have been developed for the promotion of public relation strategies including the main actors in the OSH field. These guidelines aimed at to create a consistent and unified “voice” that links diverse activities and goals in an appealing way to the different partners and stakeholders. At the same time aims to ensure an effective communication and collaboration between all stakeholders in this area.
- ✓ Two Campaigns for awareness raising on OSH have been prepared and disseminated. The EU OSHA Campaign "*Working together on Risk prevention*" was carried out in November-December 2012 and concluded with an International Conference on Occupational Health and Safety. The second campaign on "*Safety workplaces promote good business*" has been implemented in January-April 2014, oriented preferably for TV spot broadcasting and advertising in newspapers, followed by awareness raising seminars for business representatives.

Component 2. Modernisation of National Employment Service

Despite the fact that the originally planned activities underwent subsequent changes during the project implementation, the Component 2 managed to deliver all the outputs, by fully achieving the contracted and expected results. The most significant achievements of the Component 2 deriving from its outputs can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ The Labour Force Survey 2012-2013 data were reprocessed according to the latest international standards approved by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), adopted in October 2013, in order to allow for reliable statistical data to be used on the analysis of labour market dynamics and the definition of the 2020's targets for the National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020. The project technical assistance guaranteed an accurate assessment of the LFS methodology and results, specifically comparing different survey instruments and labour market statistical data that were used in the preparation of the National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020.
- ✓ The Guide on NES Quality Assurance System was finalized and published online on the NES website, after being reviewed and discussed with the working group members in several meetings during 2014, as well as in a series of bilateral meetings with NES staff. The Guide is accompanied by an implementation plan which takes into consideration the current needs and capacities of NES both in terms of human, technical and financial resources. Further assistance on the implementation of the Quality Assurance System by NES will be needed in the upcoming years.
- ✓ During May-June 2013, five regional trainings on Skills Needs Analysis (SNA) results and methodology were designed and delivered, based on the National SNA 2012 document (prepared under the ILO-UNDP SIVET project). Further to this, the IPA 2010 project provided technical assistance in the preparation of the Skills Needs Analysis Survey 2014, pointing in promotion of vocational training more in tune with skills needs. In particular, the SNA survey 2014 included new sample design criteria (comparing with the previous SNA 2012) and other methodological options ('occupations' being the key-variable for defining skills needs; cooperation with INSTAT for extracting the sample units as per the National Business Registry) that represented an added value for the survey development,, not only because it is one of the most important tools for assessing the real needs for skills of private and public companies in Albania, but also because it should be used a valid methodology to be applied

in future surveys. Thus, it was tested for the first time a sample design that allowed to have quantitative data representative at both (national and regional) levels. Furthermore, the SNA Report for 2014 contained for the first time ever a gender dimension of the skills needs.

- ✓ Since January 2014, eleven client-oriented Employment Offices were reorganized and opened in Tirana, Durrës, Kavaja, Vlora, Elbasan, Gjirokastra, Korca, Fier, Berat, Lac and Kukës. These offices were reorganised basing on the new NES service model (3-tiered service delivery), designed through the technical assistance provided by EU-IPA 2010 project, and adopted by NES. The adoption of this new service delivery model for NES is the result of a continuous process of technical assistance.
- ✓ The NSM Handbook was discussed and finalized in close cooperation with NES. This Handbook was published online on the NES website and printed out in 400 hard copies to be distributed to all regional and local NES offices' staff. The extension of this model to the local employment offices encompassing the territorial administrative reform undergoing in the country should be considered the next stage for further implementation of modern and client-oriented public employment services, namely the ones that would make possible to reach out the rural populations in Albania.
- ✓ As of September 2012, when the work in this output has been initiated, a close cooperation has been established with NES Directors and its staff aiming at the final adoption of this important model. Continuous capacity building actions have been developed: in December 2012, a workshop on the New Employment Service was conducted at management level, whilst in July 2014, three formal trainings were delivered by the Project to the local staff of the new employment offices that conduct interviews. The pilot employment office in Tirana was used by them for on-site training sessions. In addition, from 10th-18th November, 2014, officials from the regional employment offices all over Albania attended three rounds of trainings on "Interviewing and Counselling the Jobseekers" as per the New Service Model. A total of 221 persons, including managers and sub staff were trained. Information workshops for businesses on the new NES service model and on the employment promotion programmes were organised in 12 regions with about 620 participants in total, out of which about 400 were representatives of local businesses; A study visit to Czech Republic was organised to NES and MoLSAEO staff in April 2013.
- ✓ Aiming to increase the effectiveness of the vocational training and its relevance with the labour market requirements, the IPA 2010 project in cooperation with GIZ VET programme in Albania, discussed and recommended a tracer system methodology for TVET programmes. Two distinct tracer system models were piloted in VT Centres (by ILO) and VE schools (by GIZ). This was followed by joint workshop and meetings with MoSWY and TVET institutions. A policy paper offering options on the best practices for implementing a tracer system in the TVET system in Albania, prepared by ILO and GIZ, was submitted to the MoSWY.
- ✓ The assessment of the existing Employment Promotion Programmes (EPPs) was carried out as a joint intervention with the SDC funded project "RISI Albania". In September 2014, a concept note on the program evaluation of the EPPs being implemented in the country was developed. Based on it, a comprehensive evaluation of EPPs implementation from 2008-2014 was undertaken comprising five components: desk-review of international best practices; analysis of the dynamics and trends in EPPs in Albania, in the period 2008-2014;

survey to the beneficiaries of EPPs in 2014 on the implementation of such programmes; focus groups to NES staff and jobseekers to identify new possible programmes; impact assessment in terms of employment and earnings for the 2012/2013 years. The evaluation report including a summary of conclusions and recommendations on ALMPs improvement was prepared and submitted to MOSWY. Inputs to the draft revised Employment Promotion Law and the NES statute were also provided by the IPA 2010 project's experts.

Component 3. VET Reform

All planned outcomes and outputs have been achieved in the scope of Component 3, such as:

- ✓ The final draft of a comprehensive and gender sensitive National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020 (NESS) was submitted to MoSWY in early 2014 and launched by the Government of Albania in late February in a public ceremony. The content of the Strategy was discussed widely in regional round tables, thematic workshops and stakeholders' meetings (from October 2012 to November 2014), involving more than 500 participants. Technical assistance has been provided to finalise the Action Plan 2014-2020 as part of the National Strategy for Employment and Skills' preparations for its implementation phase. The NESS and its Action Plan was adopted by the Council of Ministers in November 2014. This strategic document envisages a set of policy objectives and priorities for promoting employment and developing a skilled labour force in Albania till 2020 and has got a wide consensus in the international and domestic main stakeholders. This configures an unprecedented step forward on policy definition and strategic planning for the sector, and should be considered as the main document for any further technical assistance and future interventions.
- ✓ Technical assistance has been provided to MoSWY on the creation of an Employment and Skills Development Fund in Albania, through (i) the organisation of technical workshops, (ii) the participation of bilateral meetings with the Ministry of Finance, (iii) the participation on the discussions with the National Labour Council members, and (iv) the preparation of a draft Law and its rationale to be submitted for further legislative steps by the Government of Albania.
- ✓ A study visit on the VET system of Bavaria (Germany) was organised in May 2013 for the staff of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Education and Science. It has represented an opportunity to visit several VET institutions and understand how the German VET sector is organised.
- ✓ Technical assistance has been provided for reorganising the NAVETQ, including the drafting of a new Decision of Council of Ministers (DCM) needed to transfer this agency from the Ministry of Education and Sports to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth. This transfer makes part of the overall VET reform undertaken by the new Government as of September 2013, and envisaged in the amended VET Law approved by the Parliament in July 2014. The DCM was submitted to the MoSWY in November 2014, after a set of consultations with local and international experts. Further technical assistance is needed on what regards the AQF implementation as per the EU guidelines.
- ✓ 21 sub-legal acts have been revised/prepared and submitted to the MoSWY in a joint initiative of the IPA 2010 project, the GIZ VET programme and the Kulturkontakt Austria, which were needed to implement the amended VET Law, approved in July 2014, by the

Parliament. The revision of the VET legislation was a decisive operational step to make possible the transfer of competences over the VE schools by the MoSWY. This set of legal acts comprises: a DCM on VET providers establishment, closure and reorganisation; a DCM on the VET providers' status; Guidelines on VET boards, admission criteria, operational conditions, recruitment of managers, supervision of providers; amongst others. Further legislative work is needed regarding three sub-legal acts that focus on counselling services, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and List of Qualifications. ETF has been discussing with MoSWY further technical assistance in this regard to prepare a new legal framework for implementing an overhaul reform of the Albanian VET system by 2020.

- ✓ Technical assistance has been provided to the MoSWY for contributing to the preparation of a Budget Support to the Employment and Skills development sector, as part of the work to be done for preparing the IPA II funding cycle. This will be taken as an illustration of what is needed to be done in terms of financial allocations for budget support in the period 2014-2020, and will be taken into consideration by the PPF-IPA project in the upcoming planning discussions.
- ✓ A methodological guide for piloting the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning mechanisms was drafted and approved by the MoSWY in late 2013. The textile sector was selected to undertake the first pilot on drafting the occupational standards and preparing the assessment tools. Two occupational standards for the textile industry have been prepared, linked with Levels 2 and 3 of Qualification as per the AQF. Guidelines for preparing occupational standards have been prepared and used by the working group members for this specific purpose. A set of assessment tools has been prepared and a pilot was conducted in November 2014 for assessing the competences of textile industry's Production Technician occupation. This pilot was undertaken in close cooperation with the private sector, which has worked closely with the project's experts in the development of the occupational standards and assessment tools, as well. As part of the technical assistance delivered by the IPA 2010 project a group of 10 assessors, including NAVETQ staff members, has been trained on how to conduct recognition and certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning. This was an innovative contribution of this project for establishing diverse pathways for adult's qualification as part of the development of lifelong learning opportunities in Albania. Further developments on the up-scaling and coverage of other sectors by these RPL mechanisms are needed in the country as a very effective way to tackle the skills mismatch of the working population. It also foreseen that these mechanisms can be used as part of the *Façon* Fund recently established by the Government of Albania and social partners to improve the skills, working conditions and competitiveness of this important economic sector for the country's economy.
- ✓ A feasibility study on the expansion of the post-secondary VET system was conducted and its final report submitted in September 2013 to the MoSWY. The main findings and results of this study were presented at a National Seminar in January 2014 in Tirana to more than 120 participants. The report and its executive summary is published online in the MoSWY's and in the IPA 2010 project's websites.
- ✓ An implementation plan for the expansion of the post-secondary VET system was submitted in early September 2013 as a main result of the feasibility study. The policy options set forth by the implementation plan were discussed and validated in the National Seminar held in January 2014.

- ✓ Four frame curricula for post-secondary VET programmes were drafted - covering the agro-food processing, garment manufacturing industry, maritime services and VET instructors' sectors - and a flagship initiative for maritime sector was discussed and set forth its future implementation, together with the IFC initiative for developing a public-private partnership. NAVETQ has been fully involved in the process, considering the priority qualification of Deck Rating and Vet Instructors and has shown high professionalism; the first one as a priority sector for employment generation, set from the Government of Albania, and the second one as a current need of the educational system. Initial discussions with GIZ VET programme have been carried out in order to prepare the implementation of a trial course for VET instructors at Kamza multifunctional centre, in order to evaluate its adequacy and suggest a further systemic adoption of this programme for training all VET instructors in the country.
- ✓ A Human Resources and Operations Management System and an Accounting System have been developed for the MoSWY with technical assistance provided by the project.

III. Purpose, scope and beneficiaries of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is:

- To assess the implemented activities and respective results achieved and their efficiency and effectiveness with regard to indicators of achievements defined for each Component of the project;
- To identify main success aspects of the project and the problems encountered during its implementation, as well as the means undertaken by the project to overcome these problems;
- To document lessons learned and good practices for future wider dissemination;
- To develop recommendations for similar interventions in the future.

The evaluation covers the whole period and entire scope of the implementation of the project.

It will serve the following - external and internal – beneficiaries' groups:

- ILO tripartite constituents, including direct beneficiaries of the project action;
- Other national counterparts;
- The Donor;
- ILO DWT/CO-Budapest and Headquarters;
- Project staff.

The evaluation will be used in the following ways:

- Findings and recommendations will be used to strengthen the achievement of the objectives and improve the strategy and design of future initiatives;
- The evaluation report will be disseminated in the ILO for organisational learning through the EVAL i-Track evaluation database. A summary of the evaluation will be made available publicly through EVAL website.

Norms and standards:

The evaluation will be carried out in adherence with the ILO Evaluation Policy (2005), ILO Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation (2013)²⁴; UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards, Ethical Guidelines, Code of Conduct; and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria.

Gender considerations should be addressed in accordance with ILO Guidance note 4: Integrating gender in the monitoring and evaluation of projects²⁵.

IV. Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will address the following aspects of the project:

1) Relevance of the project:

- Have there been any changes in the national development context or institutions that had implications for the project relevance and implementation strategy? Has the project accurately adapted and handled the on-going changes occurred during the project implementation, especially in the period since after the mid-term evaluation? How the project fits within the IPA strategy of the EU and lessons learnt for IPA II?

2) Effectiveness of the project (outcomes):

- What progress has the project made towards achieving its planned outcomes?
- How did the project contribute to the improvement of strategies and systems pertaining to human capital and the labour market functioning?
- To what extent did the project support the planned technical assistance to the beneficiaries according to the project objectives in the different Components (1 to 3)?

²⁴ http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_168289/lang--en/index.htm

²⁵ http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165986/lang--en/index.htm

- How have constituents been involved in the implementation? Which is the level of satisfaction of the constituents with the quality of policy documents, studies, technical tools, technical advice, capacity building and other activities, delivered by the project? Have there been any resulting changes in constituents' capacities?
- Has the project contributed to the achievements of the objectives formulated under the Decent Work Country Programme? Has it contributed to the cross-cutting goal of gender equality?

3) Effectiveness of the overall project management approach:

- Were the management arrangements effective?
- What was the division of work tasks within the project team and has the use of local skills been effective?
- Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support from the ILO and partners?
- Has the choice of partners been effective in terms of them being in a position to support the project and promote its products/results?
- How did the project overcome the most difficult problems in its implementation? How successful were these strategies? If yes, in which sense did they succeed?

4) Efficiency:

- How were the available resources (staffing, time, skills and knowledge) used during project implementation phases? Have they been used in an efficient manner? What were the main success elements and main problems encountered?

5) Sustainability and impact:

- What is the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes?
 - a) Institutional level: How will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local ownership of action outcomes? Are the national partners able to continue implementing the adopted strategies and initiatives after the project completion?
 - b) Policy level: What structural impact will the action have? Will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc.?

c) The financial aspect: How will activities and/or management structures be financed when the project ends? Is there any planning about these questions?

- Is it likely that the project will produce long-term changes in social and economic wellbeing of Albanian citizens or will have long-term effects on development conditions?

6) Lessons learned:

- What are the main lessons learned, good practices, innovations? Can some examples be identified and disseminated?
- To what extent are the good practices documented and shared with the broader community?
- Are there any areas where difficulties have been experienced? What are the reasons?
- Are there any alternative strategies both in managerial aspects and technical assistance which would have been more effective?

7) Recommendations:

- Are there any suggestions, recommendations for the follow up activities?
- What would be the most appropriate next steps?

Note: OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance will be used to interpret the answers to the evaluation questions.

V. Methodology

Document Review: The evaluator will review project background materials before conducting any interviews or trips to the country, including:

- Project Document (original and revised ones)
- ILO Decent Work Country Programme in Albania
- Work plans (original and revised ones)
- Logframes (original and revised ones)
- Steering Committee meeting minutes

- TORs and Calls for Expression of Interest
- Progress reports (monthly, interim reports and annual report)
- Mid-term evaluation report
- Key-recommendations from the Results Oriented Monitoring missions
- Reports on specific activities (summary notes, minutes of meetings)
- Any surveys, studies, analytical papers produced
- Training curricula and evaluation documents (e.g. summary of evaluation questionnaires)
- Publications and promotion materials
- Project's website (www.ipa-hrd.al)

Planning Briefing: The evaluator will have an initial consultation with the ILO specialists and support staff in Budapest, Tirana and Geneva. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority assessment questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final assessment report. The following topics will be covered: status of logistical arrangements, project background and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, outline of the inception and final report. Following the initial briefing, the desk review and the inception report, the evaluator will have a mission to Tirana/Albania and have meetings with constituents/stakeholders together with an Albanian interpreter supporting the process.

Individual Interviews and/or Group Interviews: Individual or group interviews will be conducted with the following:

- g) Project Staff (TC Project Team in Tirana)
- h) ILO DWT/CO-Budapest Senior Employment Specialist
- i) ILO Headquarters technical departments (phone interviews, e.g. PARDEV, LAB/ADMIN and SKILLS)
- j) Interviews with national counterparts (government, public institutions, social partners, etc);
- k) Interviews of direct and indirect beneficiaries;
- l) Other donor agencies working in the relevant fields.

Field visits: The evaluator will visit the project implementation partners in Tirana. Meetings will be scheduled and organized by the Project Team in Tirana in advance of the evaluator's visits, in accordance with the evaluator's requests (to be received at least with 3 days in advance to the visit) and consistent with these Terms of Reference.

Debriefing: Upon completion of the missions, the evaluator will provide a debriefing to the Project team, ILO/Budapest and HQ on the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations either in via telephone or Skype conference, as appropriate. The draft report will subsequently be shared with ILO constituents for comment.

Post-Trip Debriefing: Upon completion of the report, the evaluator will provide a debriefing to the ILO/Budapest on the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations (possibly, by telephone/or on Skype).

VI. Main Outputs (Deliverables)

- A. Inception Report in English (in electronic format);
- B. Initial Draft Report in English (in electronic format);
- C. Final Report in English (in electronic format);
- D. Translation of the Final Report into Albanian (provided by the project).

Inception Report: The evaluator will draft an Inception Report, which should describe, provide reflection and fine-tuning of the following issues:

- administrative information
- purpose, scope and beneficiaries of the evaluation
- evaluation criteria and questions
- methodology
- main deliverables
- management arrangements and work plan.

The report should be short but exhaustive.

Suggested Report Format for the Final Report

The final version of the report will follow the below format and be no more than 12,500-15,000 words (approx. 25-30 pages) in length, excluding the annexes:

1. Title page
2. Table of Contents, including List of Appendices, Tables
3. List of Acronyms or Abbreviations
4. Executive Summary²⁶
5. Background and Project Description
6. Purpose of Evaluation
7. Evaluation Methodology and Evaluation Questions

²⁶ **The Executive Summary should include:** a brief description of the subject being evaluated; the context, present situation, and description of the subject *vis-à-vis* other related matters; the purpose of the evaluation; the objectives of the evaluation; the intended audience of the report; a short description of the methodology, including *rationale* for the choice of methodology, data sources used, data collection and analysis methods used, and major limitations; the most important findings and conclusions; main recommendations.

8. Status of outcomes
9. Overall findings, conclusions and recommendations²⁷
10. Annexes (list of interviews, meetings' notes, relevant country information, policies, regulations or any other documents demonstrating the impact of the project)

The quality of the report will be assessed against the ILO EVAL Checklists 5: Preparing the Evaluation Report and 6: Rating the Quality of Evaluation Reports²⁸.

VII. Management Arrangements

The final evaluation will be conducted by a single independent evaluator. Interpretation during the interviews in Albania will be provided by an interpreter, if necessary.

Requirements

The evaluator will have experience in the evaluation of development interventions, expertise in the subject matter, an understanding of the ILO's tripartite culture, and knowledge of the region and Albania. He/she will be guided by high professional standards and principles of integrity in accordance with the guiding principles of the International evaluation professionals associations. The evaluator should have an advanced degree in social sciences, proven expertise on evaluation methods, and knowledge about labour market issues and the ILO approach. Full command of English will be required.

The final selection of the evaluator will be based on a short list of candidates from the Evaluation Manager/DWT/CO Budapest, prepared in consultations with the ILO technical specialists and approved by the Evaluation Focal Point in the ILO/EUROPE. The final selection is subject to approval by EVAL/HQ.

Roles and Responsibilities

The External Evaluator is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the terms of reference (ToR). He/she will:

²⁷ Please present recommendations in a concise and numbered list, to facilitate follow-up and entry into the evaluation database.

²⁸ http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_165967/lang--en/index.htm

- Review the ToR and provide input, propose any refinements to assessment questions, as necessary.
- Review project background materials (e.g., project document, progress reports).
- Prepare an inception report
- Develop and implement the assessment methodology (i.e. conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the assessment questions.
- Conduct preparatory consultations with the ILO evaluation manager and technical backstopping officials prior to the assessment mission.
- Conduct field research, interviews, as appropriate and collect information according to the suggested format.
- Prepare an initial draft of the assessment report with input from ILO specialists and constituents/stakeholders.
- Conduct briefing on findings, conclusions and recommendation of the assessment.
- Prepare the final report based on the ILO and constituents feedback obtained on the draft report.

The ILO DWT/CO-Budapest Evaluation Manager is responsible for:

- Drafting the ToR;
- Finalizing the ToR with input from colleagues;
- Preparing a short list of candidates for submission to the Regional Evaluation Officer, Regional Evaluation Focal Point, ILO/ RO/EUROPE and EVAL for final selection;
- Hiring the consultant;
- Providing the consultant with the project background materials;
- Participating in preparatory consultations (briefing) prior to the assessment mission;
- Assisting in the implementation of the assessment methodology, as appropriate (i.e., participate in meetings, review documents);
- Reviewing the initial draft report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the External Evaluators;
- Reviewing the final draft of the report;
- Disseminating the final report to all the stakeholders;
- Coordinating follow-up as necessary.

The Project Team Leader in Tirana in consultation with the Project Technical Backstopper is responsible for:

- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input, as necessary;
- Providing project background materials, including studies, analytical papers, reports, tools, publications produced;
- Reviewing and providing comments on the inception report;
- Participating in preparatory briefing prior to the assessment mission to Tirana;
- Scheduling all meetings and interviews for the mission in Tirana;

- Ensuring necessary logistical arrangements for the mission in Tirana (hotel reservations, travel, interpretation);
- Reviewing and providing comments on the initial draft report;
- Participating in debriefing on findings, conclusions, and recommendations;
- Making sure appropriate follow-up action is taken.

Timeframe

The following is a tentative schedule of tasks and anticipated duration of each for the Evaluator:

- Preparation (desk research, study of project documents) - **5 days**
- Preparation of interview guides, refinement of evaluation questions, inception report – **2 days**
- Interviews with constituents/stakeholders, project partners in Tirana together with local evaluator – **5 days**
- Report writing – **9 days**
- Report finalization – **4 days**

(A total of 25 workdays plus travel (travel cost and UN DSA) for the work of the External Evaluator).

Tentative workplan

| Task | Responsible person | Time frame |
|--|---|-----------------|
| Preparation of the TOR | Evaluation Manager in consultation with project manager/coordinator | Nov-Dec |
| Sharing the TOR with all concerned for comments/inputs | Evaluation Manager | Nov-Dec |
| Finalization of the TOR | Evaluation Manager | 5 Dec |
| Approval of the TOR | EVAl at ILO HQ | 8 Dec |
| Selection of consultant and finalization | Director, DWT/CO Budapest and Evaluation Manager/ EUROPE | 5 Dec |
| Draft mission itinerary for the evaluator and the list of key stakeholders to be interviewed | Project Team/Team Leader Tirana | 8 Dec |
| Excoll contract based on the TOR prepared/signed | Evaluation Manager | 10 Dec |
| Brief evaluator on ILO evaluation policy | Evaluation Manager | 10 Dec |
| Evaluation Mission | Evaluator | 15 Dec or 5 Jan |
| Drafting of evaluation report and submitting it to the Evaluation Manager | Evaluator | mid Jan |
| Sharing the draft report to all concerned for comments | Evaluation Manager | 15 - 22 Jan |
| Consolidated comments on the draft report, send to the evaluator | Evaluation Manager | 23 Jan |
| Finalisation of the report | Evaluator | 29 Jan |
| Review of the final report | Evaluation Manager | |
| Submission of the final report to EVAL | Evaluation Manager | |

Annexes

6.1 Annex 1. Evaluation Questions

The table below provides an identification of issues, method of analysis and indicators for each evaluation criteria as applied during the midterm evaluation.

| Evaluation criteria | Questions (ToRs) | Issues | Methods | Indicators for evaluation criteria |
|----------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Relevance | Did the project handle accurately the on-going changes occurred during the project implementation? | Programme objectives properly address country's needs | Analysis of documentation Interviews with ILO national officers and local project stakeholders | Degree of compliance, complementarities and focus |
| Effectiveness | <p>What progress has the project made towards achieving its planned outcomes? Has the capacity of the State Labour Inspection been strengthened as a result of the project activities? Has the capacity of the National Employment Service in combating against unemployment been enhanced? Has the VET system been reformed and the employability of workforce been improved?</p> <p>How did the project contribute to the improvement of strategies and systems pertaining to human capital and the labour market functioning?</p> <p>To what extent did the project</p> | <p>Achievement of projects result</p> <p>Achievements of project results</p> <p>Achievement of projects result</p> | <p>Analysis of documentation</p> <p>Interviews to countries' stakeholders</p> <p>Statistics, data</p> | <p>Training satisfaction</p> <p>Progress in OSH legislation</p> <p>Quality of documents produced (2 strategies, New Service Model, handbooks)</p> <p>New or better services developed and delivered</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | <p>support the planned technical assistance to the beneficiaries according to the project objectives in the different Components (1 to 3)?</p> <p>How have constituents been involved in the implementation? Which is the level of satisfaction of the constituents with the quality of policy documents, studies, technical tools, technical advice, capacity building and other activities, delivered by the project?</p> <p>Has the project contributed to the achievements of the objectives formulated under the Decent Work Country Programme?</p> <p>Were the management arrangements effective? What were the most successful practices adopted in this scope and the main problems found?</p> <p>What was the division of work tasks within the project team and has the use of local skills been effective?</p> <p>Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support from the ILO, EU and partners?</p> <p>Has the choice of partners been effective in terms of them being in</p> | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | <p>a position to support the project and promote its products/results?</p> <p>How did the project overcome the most difficult problems in its implementation? How successful were these strategies? If yes, in which sense did they succeed?</p> | | | |
| Efficiency | <p>How were the available resources (staffing, time, skills and knowledge) used during project inception and implementation phases?</p> <p>Have they been used in an efficient manner?</p> <p>How were the main success elements and main problems encountered?</p> | <p>Timely operations (Deployment of experts, budgeting and activities implementation, financial and progress reporting, monitoring)</p> <p>Technical assistance to stakeholders</p> <p>Optimal financial management</p> <p>Effective monitoring</p> <p>ILO and EU procedures are respected</p> <p>Achievement (project outputs)</p> | <p>Analysis of documentation</p> <p>Interviews with staff, national officers and other programmes staff, site visits (if needed)</p> | <p>Implementation time schedule compared to plan</p> <p>Resources devoted</p> <p>Quality of trainings</p> <p>Quality of documentation produced by project-related institutions</p> <p>Quality of financial documentation, audit reports</p> <p>Quantitative and qualitative assessment</p> <p>Analysis of compliance and qualitative assessment</p> <p>Quantitative (based on plan and reports) and qualitative assessment</p> |
| Sustainability | What is the likelihood of | Durability of | Interviews to | Long term |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| <p>and Impact</p> | <p>sustainability of outcomes?</p> <p>a) Institutional level: How will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local ownership of action outcomes? Are the national partners able to continue implementing the adopted strategies and initiatives after the project completion?</p> <p>b) Policy level: What structural impact will the action have? Will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc.?</p> <p>c) The financial aspect: How will activities and/or management structures be financed when the project ends? Is there any planning about these questions?</p> <p>What more should be done to improve sustainability?</p> | <p>established institutions</p> <p>Use of training material and other materials</p> | <p>national stakeholders and ILO staff</p> <p>Analysis of materials, interviews</p> | <p>perspectives (legislation plans, strategies etc.)</p> <p>Training and new approaches incorporated into routine practices</p> <p>Stakeholder institutions' strategic plans</p> <p>State Budget allocations to stakeholder institutions</p> |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|--|

6.2 Annex 2. Indicators of achievement (based on the Project Document)

Specific Objective 1

Capacity of the SLI to enforce OSH rules is strengthened

Indicators of achievement

Output 1.1 - Strategic documents developed

1. The National Strategic Policies document on OSH 2014-2020 submitted for endorsement
2. A 2-year rolling AP for National Strategic Policies document on OSH 2014-2015

Output 1.2 - Legislation in the field of OSH in line with the EU Acquis adopted

3. ToCs are prepared and validated
4. Recommendations for revision of existing or new legislation drafted
5. The number of EU Directives transposed into national legislations

Output 1.3 - Capacity of the SLI staff through training and other tools improved

6. Percentage of total SLI staff trained
7. Training materials cover gender issues
8. Inspectors seconded for a practical training in one of the EU sister organizations
9. 5 bilateral agreements reached with SLI in Europe
10. 6 SLI from the Balkans participate to a conference in order to establish a regional network
11. Working tools published cover key areas identified by the staff needs assessment
12. Number of trade unions and employers' organisations participating to the seminars with UK TU on the training for Health & Safety representatives

Output 1.4 - Information and communication system of LI developed

13. The database of SLI is developed
14. Reports of Inspectors include data from the system
15. A system software of Central Inspectorate follows the SLI needs implemented

Output 1.5 - Awareness on OSH by public opinion and employers improved

16. Communication strategy in OSH designed and endorsed by the SLI
17. Number of participants to the information events on OSH
18. National campaign on selected subject of OSH performed
19. Type and number of information materials on OSH disseminated

Specific Objective 2

Capacity of the National Employment Service in combating against unemployment enhanced

Indicators of achievement

Output 2.1 - Policy framework developed

1. A gender sensitive Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 endorsed with reprocessed LFS data
2. The number of NES staff trained on Management by Objectives
3. The number of NES staff exposed to the best practices and EU standards
4. Job descriptions include performance indicators for all NES staff included in the QA system
5. Performance Appraisal system in place
6. Number of regional training workshops are organized to train staff of the NES Regional and Local Offices on conducting Skills Needs Analysis
7. Number of legal and administrative acts implemented

Output 2.2 - Counselling services and Vocational Training

8. NES service model handbook endorsed and published
9. Number of NES officials trained on counselling through the new service model training programme
10. Screening system for unemployed in place in all NES offices
11. Tiered system in place in all NES offices
12. Individual employment plan used for recording the agreed pathways with jobseekers
13. Basic information available to job-seekers on line and in leaflets
14. Number of Counsellors and other NES staff trained on counselling services
15. A tracer system designed and implemented for students of the VET Centres
16. Skills Needs Analysis 2014 survey conducted
17. ALPM's reviewed and recommendations for new programmes drafted

Specific Objective 3

To improve the capacity of the VET system to provide Labour Market with skilled work force

Indicators of achievement

Output 3.1 - Strategic documents issued

1. National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020 endorsed
2. Number of legal and administrative acts approved
3. Number of participants to the conference on LLL
4. Number of participants to the regional round-tables to promote VET and LLL
5. Number of leaflets and media broadcastings produced

Output 3.2 - Albanian Qualification Framework further developed

6. Number of participants to ToT on AQF
7. Number of legal acts on VET revised and submitted
8. Sectoral Approach inputs prepared
9. Recognition of prior learning mechanism are tested in one economic sector

Output 3.3 - Post secondary strategy elaborated and implemented

10. Implementation plan of Post-Secondary VET programmes issued
11. Number of participants to a study visit on Post Secondary to an EU country
12. Feasibility study on post-secondary VET system conducted and measures presented in 5

information workshops

13. Four frame curricula (one per economic sector) designed

14. IT systems developed for MoSWY

ANNEX 2 – FINAL FIELD MISSION AGENDA

Mission Agenda for the Final Evaluation of the IPA 2010 Project on HRD in Albania 12 -16 January 2015

| Monday 12 th | Tuesday 13 th | Wednesday 14 th | Thursday 15 th | Friday 16 th |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>9:00 -10:00 Meeting with Teuta Zejno, Coordinator of Component 2 of the ILO - EU IPA 2010 Project.</p> <p><i>Address: Office of IPA 2010 Project on HRD in Albania "Themistokli Germenji" Street, Pall. 10 n.2 Ap 4, Tirana</i></p> | <p>9:00 Meeting with Luan Bregasi, President of Employers Association, and with Bashkim Sala, Adviser to the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth at Biznes Albania premises.</p> <p>(Taxi required from the Hotel to the premises of Biznes Albania) (Interpretation required)</p> <p><i>Address: Biznes Albania, Rr. Ismail Qemali, Vila 31, Tirana</i></p> | <p>9:30-14:30 Participation in the Final Event of the IPA 2010 project on HRD in Albania at Sheraton Hotel</p> <p>Meeting with Mr. Antonio Graziozi, Director of ILO Budapest (during the coffee break of the event)</p> | <p>9:00 Meeting with Sabine Schubert, Educational Coordinator, Kulturkontakt Austria.</p> <p>(Taxi required from Hotel to Kulturkontakt)</p> <p><i>Address: Rr. Naim Frasheri, P.37/4. Tirana.</i></p> |
| | <p>10:30 Meeting with Gentjana Sula, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, at MoSWY</p> <p>(Taxi required from the EUD to the MoSWY premises)</p> | <p>10:30 Meeting with Avenir Kika, Albanian Constructors Association President at ACA Office.</p> <p>(Taxi required from Biznes Albania to Constructors Association) (Interpretation required)</p> <p><i>Address: Albanian Constructors Association, Pallati KIKA, Rruga</i></p> | | <p>10:30 Meeting with Ejvis Gishti, Alqi Mustafaj, Linda Dhima, Chief of sectors in the NAVETQ.</p> <p><i>Address: NAVETQ, Rr. "Naim Frasheri", Nr.37, Tirana</i></p> |

| Monday 12 th | Tuesday 13 th | Wednesday 14 th | Thursday 15 th | Friday 16 th |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| | | <i>Komuna e Parisit, Tirana</i> | | |
| | <p>11:30 Meetings at MoSWY with:</p> <p>Agron Pullumbi; Erion Manohasa; Genta Qosja. (Directors of Departments of VET, Employment Policies and Labour Inspection at MoSWY)</p> <p>(Interpretation required)</p> | <p>11:30 Meeting with Kol Nikollaj, Confederation of Trade Unions, at IPA project office</p> <p>(Taxi needed from Komuna e Parisit to IPA Project Premises) (Interpretation required)</p> <p><i>Address: IPA project Premises</i></p> | | <p>12:00 Filed visit to the Employment Office Tirana</p> |
| | | | | |
| <p>15:30 Meeting with Maria do Carmo Gomes, Chief Technical Adviser, Team Leader and VET Specialist of the ILO - EU IPA2010 Project</p> <p><i>Address: Office of IPA 2010 Project on HRD in Albania "Themistokli Ghermenji" Street, Pall. 10, n.2, Ap 4, Tirana</i></p> | <p>14:30 Meeting with Arbjan Mazniku, Deputy Minister, and Ermal Elezi, Head of EU integration Unit, at MoES</p> <p><i>Address: MoES, Rr. e Durrësit, Nr.23, 1001, Tiranë</i></p> | <p>12:30 Meeting with Dritan Ylli, General Director and Rezart Tyli, Deputy Director at the State Labour Inspectorate.</p> <p>(Interpretation required)</p> <p><i>Address: State Labour Inspectorate,, Rruga Dervish Hima, Prane Stadiumit Qemal Stafa, Tirana</i></p> | <p>14:30 Meeting with Holger Tausch, Country Director, and Silvana Mjeda, Swiss National Programme Officer at Swiss Development Agency.</p> <p>(Taxi needed from Sheraton Hotel to SDC premises)</p> <p><i>Address: Rruga Ibrahim Rugova, Nr3/1, 1019 Tirana (vis a vis Sky Tower and in front of the French Bakery)</i></p> | <p>14:30 Meetings at MoSWY with:</p> <p>Silvana Radovani (General-Director);</p> <p><i>(Interpretation required/Taxi not required)</i></p> |

| Monday 12 th | Tuesday 13 th | Wednesday 14 th | Thursday 15 th | Friday 16 th |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | | <p>15:30 Meeting with Genci Kojdheli, Director General, and Brikena Nallbani, Deputy Director of National Employment Service, at their premises.</p> <p>(Taxi required from SLI to NES) (Interpretation required)</p> <p><i>Address: National Employment Service (NES), Blv "Bajram Curri", Tiranë</i></p> | <p>15.30 Meeting at RISI Albania premises, with Edlira Muedini, Programme Coordinator and Ermira Shyti, Component Coordinator.</p> <p><i>Address: RISI Albania Office, Rr. Ismail Qemali, P18, Floor 3, Apt. 15, Tirana</i></p> | <p>16:00 Wrap up Meeting with Maria Do Carmo Gomes, Team Leader and VET Specialist of the ILO - EU IPA2010 Project.</p> <p><i>Address: Office of IPA 2010 Project on HRD in Albania "Themistokli Ghermenji" Street, Pall. 10 n.2 Ap 4, Tirana</i></p> |
| | <p>15:30 Meeting with Olga Luisa Anghelakis, Head of Infrastructure and Economic Reform Sector, and Xheni Sinakoli, Programme manager, Delegation of the European Union to Albania.</p> <p>(Taxi/Interpretation not required)</p> <p><i>Address: ABA Business Center, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, 17th floor</i></p> | <p>16:45 Meeting with Ivan Majer, Coordinator of Component 1 and LI and OSH Specialist</p> <p><i>Address: Office of IPA 2010 Project on HRD in Albania "Themistokli Ghermenji" Street, Pall. 10 n.2 Ap 4, Tirana</i></p> <p>18:00 Meeting with Mauricio Dierckxsens, Senior Employment Specialist, ILO Budapest</p> <p><i>Address: Sky Hotel2</i></p> | <p>16:30 Meeting with Sabine Hartig, GIZ VET programme Director at GIZ premises.</p> <p><i>Address: GIZ Office Albania Rr. Ismail Qemali, P. 18, Floor 4, Apt 20, Tirana</i></p> | |

ANNEX 3 – INTERVIEW GUIDE

| Evaluation criteria | Questions |
|----------------------|---|
| Relevance | <p>1. If any, what changes occurred in the national development context or institutions that had implications for the project relevance and implementation strategy?</p> <p>2. Did the project/component (1,2,3) maintain its relevance over the implementation period?</p> |
| Effectiveness | <p>3. Did the project achieve its planned outcomes?</p> <p>4. Has the capacity of the State Labour Inspection been strengthened as a result of the project activities?</p> <p>5. Has the capacity of the National Employment Service to combat unemployment been enhanced?</p> <p>6. Has the VET system been reformed and the employability of workforce been improved?</p> <p>7. How did the project contribute to the improvement of strategies and systems pertaining to human capital and the labour market functioning?</p> <p>8. What was social partners' contribution to the project implementation?</p> <p>9. What is the level of satisfaction of the constituents with the quality of policy documents, studies, technical tools, technical advice, capacity building and other activities delivered by the project?</p> <p>10. Has the project contributed to the achievements of the objectives formulated under the Decent Work Country Programme?</p> <p>11. What were the most successful practices adopted and the main problems encountered?</p> <p>12. What was the division of work tasks within the project team and has the use of local skills been effective?</p> <p>13. Has the project received adequate technical and administrative support from the ILO, EU and partners?</p> <p>14. How effective the selection of partners has been in terms of their position to support the project and promote its products/results?</p> <p>15. How did the project overcome the most difficult problems in its implementation? How</p> |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| | successful were these strategies? |
| Efficiency | <p>16. How were the available resources (staffing, time, skills and knowledge) used during project inception and implementation phases?</p> <p>17. Have they been used in an economic manner?</p> <p>18. What were the main success elements and main problems encountered?</p> |
| Sustainability and Impact | <p>19. What is the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes? What more should be done to improve sustainability?</p> <p>d) <i>Institutional level</i>: Are the structures allowing the activities to continue in place at the end of the project? Is there local ownership of project outcomes? Are the national partners able to continue implementation the adopted strategies and initiatives after the project completion?</p> <p>e) <i>Policy level</i>: What structural impact will the action have? Will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc.?</p> <p>f) <i>Financial aspect</i>: How will the activities and/or management structures be financed when the project ends? Are there any specific plans in that sense?</p> <p>20. Is it likely that the project will produce long-term changes in social and economic wellbeing of Albanian citizens or will have long-term effects on development conditions?</p> |