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| FINAL EVALUATION |
| Social Inclusion through Vocational Education Training  A Government of Albania project implemented by UNDP in collaboration with ILO and financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation |
| DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT |
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| This report has been prepared as a result of an independent assessment. The views expressed herewith belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the UNDP Programme. |

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ADC/ADA Austrian Development Cooperation

CTA Chief Technical Advisor

ILO International Labour Office

MoES Ministry of Education and Science

MoLSA/EO Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

MSWY Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth

NES National Employment Service

PM Project Manager

ToR Terms of Reference

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

VET Vocational Education and Training

***PREFACE***

This final evaluation covers assistance to the Republic of Albania’s social inclusion efforts financed by the Republic of Austria/ Austria Development Cooperation, a Government of Albania project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme in cooperation with the International Labour Office.

This Evaluation Report has been prepared by Sabina Ymeri during the period December 2013 to January 2014. The factual basis was provided by formal project documentation, regular project progress reports, other relevant sectoral and regional documents and materials, and interviews with the main parties, stakeholders and final beneficiaries.

## Executive Summary

**Introduction**

The *Addressing Social Inclusion through Vocational Education and Training* project (SIVET) was designed to support social inclusion of marginalised and socially excluded groups through facilitation of their access to vocational education and training. The project was financed by the Government of Austria through the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), with a contribution of 524,755 USD, and a co-contribution of UNDP of 58,306 USD. The project was formulated as a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Office (ILO), in close consultation with the Government of Albania. It has been implemented by the United Nations Development Programme country office in Albania in cooperation with ILO under an agreement between the Austrian Development Cooperation Office and UNDP through the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) was the primary implementing partner for activities under SIVET, as the lead agency in charge of social issues and social inclusion in Albania. Other implementing partners included central and local government bodies such as the National Employment Service (NES), Ministry of Education, municipalities, regional council and deconcentrated offices in the three pilot regions of Elbasan, Fier and Lezhe where direct implementation of SIVET activities took place.

The main purpose of this evaluation was to provide a judgment on the overall performance of the SIVET project, and measuring its (potential) impact. The evaluation has looked at relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of programme results; as well as highlight the impact, main results, good practices and lessons learned from the experience. The methodology for preparing this evaluation report comprised initial data collection, document research and literature survey, and structured interviews with relevant stakeholders in Tirana and the pilot regions. The evaluation was carried out during the period December 2013 – February 2014.

**The intervention**

The SIVET project was intended to complement the efforts of the Government of Albania to facilitate access to vocational education and training by both promoting participation in VET as well as building the institutional capacity to support the inclusion of marginalized and socially excluded groups in the VET system. The ultimate aim was to promote coordination on employment and social services across national institutions and between the central and local levels. The project further proposed to address the needs of the targeted disadvantaged groups through the design of employment programmes linked to social services in three selected target municipalities, and building the capacities of local structures to implement such programmes.

The project stands on four pillars of action:

1. Generation of better and more reliable information on vulnerable and marginalised groups at risk of labour market exclusion
2. Institutional capacity support to relevant institutions
3. Advocacy, policy dialogue, and awareness raising (including the private sector)
4. Design of employment programmes in target municipalities

The SIVET Project is aligned with the ONE UN programme approved by the Albanian Government in October 2007, as well as national strategies on Social Inclusion and Strategy Employment and Vocational Educational Training.

**Evaluation Findings**

**Relevance:** Overall, the SIVET project was highly relevant and needed. It has been rather ambitious in scope relative to its resources. The project has been flexible in response to changing needs and programme environment. The SIVET Project has been very well designed, based on realistic need assessment and problem identification.The defined outcomes of the project have been designed with a clear view to national objectives as set out in the National Strategy for Development and Integration and the Social Inclusion strategy adopted by the Government of Albania. The project had also a strong regional component, with activities designed to increase awareness as well as strengthen capacities at the local level and enable them implement some of the labour market measures for marginalised groups.

SIVET project management has been flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the sector and beneficiaries. The Project Steering Committee has played an important role in adjusting project activities and outputs. Some of the components of the project were modified in the course of project implementation and new activities were added in respect of newly arising needs and opportunities. Component four of the project was redesigned at the initial stages of the project; from a direct field implementation activity to a capacity building activity, which may have arguably reduced its potential impact.

The project has adopted a sound participatory approach, with inclusive participation of national, regional and local authorities and stakeholders envisaged already at design stage. The MoLSA (now MSWY) has played a strong guiding ole as the lead partner and there has been good coordination with stakeholders at the national and regional level. Specific interest of vulnerable categories such as women, minorities, people with disabilities have been at the heart of the SIVET. However, the gender assessment of the project document at approval stage revealed some weaknesses of the project design in terms of the gender sensitive approach. These weaknesses were largely addressed in the later stages of the project.

**Efficiency**: Overall, project implementation has been in line with the timeline and major milestones. The majority of outputs have been completed efficiently. The project management arrangements have been complicated resulting in increased administration and coordination burden. However, the project team has successfully mitigated these difficulties without considerable impact on project results.

The Project has succeeded in delivering all of its outputs, but the administrative burden on the Project team has been substantial. In practice, the synergies and cross-fertilisation of the specific expertise and experience of the two UN agencies did not materialise to the desired level. Coordination between the implementing agencies has been uneasy.There is no evidence of the two agencies making efforts to harmonize procedures, management approach with regard to the project, or reporting patterns, in particular as regards financial reporting. Funds are spent efficiently and in line with the budget adopted. Financial gains that were materialised due to the strengthening of the Euro vis-à-vis the US dollar in the months pending formal adoption of the project document by the Government of Albania were reallocated to produce two new studies that had been requested by the main beneficiary. Financial reporting is made on a periodic basis by UNDP to the donor, with detailed financial and monitoring information according to outcomes and activities as well as budget items. Financial information from ILO has been limited to reporting by major budget lines and/or balance carried forward.

Programme steering by the PSC served as a sound platform the strategic guidance of the project and coordination with national partners at the central and local level.Coordination with the project partners has however been very good, both at the central and regional level. The project and both implementing agencies have maintained good contacts and consultations with counterpart agencies as well as civil society organisations, which have been included proactively in the project implementation.

**Effectiveness:** The SIVET project outputs have been fully completed and the outcomes have been largely achieved. Overall quality of the outputs has been very good, notwithstanding the need for improvements evidenced by the gender review of some of the main outputs carried out by the donor close to the end of the project. Implementation of pilot labour market measures in the three pilot regions was not made due to alleged budget scarcity. This has weakened the potential impact of the project.

SIVET has mostly delivered high quality products***.*** Flexible management has adapted to the changing environment, particularly to commit programme resources when activities need it. As a result, the products delivered are of good quality and each assignment has been conducted on an as needed basis. The implementation of the active labour market measures foreseen in component 4 would have however given a more tangible dimension to the project and tested some of its outputs. It would have provided a tangible result and understanding of the process needed and costs associated for the employment of at-risk-of exclusion individuals, which would have contributed to the government’s efforts in the field.

Longer-term impact remains to be demonstrated. The project has produced a number of good quality studies and provided capacity building at the national and local levels. The studies have the potential be adopted immediately into policies addressing more facilitation of access to labour services and/or expansion of such services to new areas, such as the countryside. The government will need to demonstrate its will in pursuing some of these initiatives. The new government has taken stock of the studies produced and has requested UNDP to produce a roadmap for the implementation of some of the recommendations.

**Sustainability:** The project has put a great emphasis on follow up and sustainability through the adoption of an inclusive and participatory approach already at design stage as well as throughout the implementation stage. National ownership and leadership has been excellent and some of the key recommendations presented by the project are already being transposed into the MSWY’s programme.

National ownership on the project has been strong and is expected to materialise soon through the endorsement by the government of several project recommendations.There is good evidence on the leadership and commitment to the project demonstrated by the MOLSAEO and later MSWY. The outputs and results of the projects were immediately taken on board by the new government, indicating that interventions had been well targeted and unequivocal.

The project’s participatory approach has been a key aspect that has yielded its results in the field by increasing ownership and sustainability of results at the local level. Activities and interventions at the local level show good prospects for sustainability. According to authorities at the local level one of the main achievements of the project is the fact that stakeholders from different institutions sat together to develop a common understanding on the challenges and initiated an on-going discussion.Staff turnover however remains a concern for result sustainability.

**Conclusions and Lessons Learned**

**Conclusions**

The SIVET Project has been a relatively small project with a clear design. The project has been very relevant for Albania and in line with the objectives of the national social inclusion and vocational education and training strategies. The project supported the government’s intention to introduce an integrated approach in the management of employment and vocational education and training programmes for people at risk of exclusion from the labour market. Programme design has been ambitious in terms of the intended achievements compared to the relatively modest budget. A strong participatory element has been built into the project design with activities at the national and regional level in three pilot regions, allowing for the stakeholders at all levels to be included in the interventions and benefitting from the project. This has raised the prospects of sustainability already at design stage. The project should have made more efforts to mainstream gender issues at the design stage.

There is clear evidence about strong national ownership over the project and its results. The MolSAEO – and later MSWY has provided good guidance and has been committed to the project. The change in the government following the 2013 elections did not bring about any changes in the project and its outputs are being currently considered for implementation by the new government. This further reinforces that the intervention has been highly needed and timely.

Project implementation has been generally in line with the approved budget and timeline. The project starting date was delayed by more than six months due to the delay in formal endorsement of the project document by the Government of Albania. Following official signature of the project by the Minister of Social Affairs the inception stage and mobilisation of resources were completed in less than two months and the project officially started in June 2011. It further received a no cost extension of six months in June 2013, during which it produced other studies under request of the government. The six-month extension was financed through a surplus budget created due to the strengthening of the Euro vis-à-vis the US dollar in the months pending official endorsement of the project.

The project outputs have been mostly achieved with success and contribute to the achievement of the project goals. The project has produced a series of studies that have produced baseline data to be taken into account by policymaker for evidence-based policymaking. A series of capacity building activities and consultations forums have been highly appreciated by stakeholders at the national and local level as an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences with partner institutions. The project has largely made use of national expertise, which has a strong understanding of the local conditions and enabling environment. A gender review carried out by ADA in June 2013 indicated that the project should have paid more attention to mainstreaming gender issues in the project activities and outputs. This finding has been particularly significant in the case of a project that focused entirely on social inclusion and vulnerable groups. The majority of project outputs that were subject to the review were updated to reflect a more integrated gender approach. However at the time of this evaluation one of the project outputs is still pending formal acceptance by the donor.

Project impact is difficult to trace, especially as the project focused largely on the production of intangible outputs, such as studies which would support the policymaking process of the government; as well as capacity building activities. The government is preparing to adopt some of the recommendations put forward by the project in the immediate future, such as the proposal for the extension of employment services to rural areas. The adoption of the bottom-up policy paper by the government would arguably bring about positive impacts at the regional level, including increased attention on inclusion of the vulnerable as well as better funding opportunities. Some of the project outputs have been used by the local authorities to raise funds for activities in the area of social inclusion and employment. The project did not succeed in creating an immediate visible impact through the implementation of employment programme. The implementation in the field of some of the proposed active labour market measures tailored for the most vulnerable would not only have created some opportunities for the vulnerable, but more importantly would have provided a clear tool that could have been replicated by the government at the national scale.

Prospects for sustainability are positive, due to the largely inclusive and participatory approach as well as high commitment of national and regional level stakeholders. Some of the project outputs are already being carried forward by the government and/or other donor programmes.

Project management arrangements have been complex resulting in higher administrative burden. The project management team has delivered a good job as confirmed by stakeholders. However, project coordination between the two implementing agencies has not been easy due to changing schedules and focus given to the SIVET project.

**Lessons learned**

***National ownership key to project success*** – National ownership and commitment to the project is a key precondition for the quality of products and eventually sustainability of results. The project was designed through careful consultations with the main beneficiaries to fully reflect their needs, which later ensured active commitment to the activities. The project agenda was aligned with the policymaking agenda of the beneficiaries. The fact that this agenda was not changed following the change in Government indicates that the desired outcomes of the project were highly relevant and timely for the country.

***Project management flexibility is desired but may change the course of action*** – Management flexibility has been a notable advantage in project management. Transparency in reporting and continuous consultation with project partners and stakeholders through among other regular PSC reports are preconditions required for such management flexibility. The active role and guidance by the Steering Committee has ensured regular updating of the working plan in accordance with the needs of the beneficiary. However, this incorporated flexibility has allowed for the redesign of component four, which was among the few activities of the project that were going to provide tangible results. This was a source of disappointment for several stakeholders as well as the donor itself, who considered this component as the essence of the project and would have preferred to see the direct implementation of labour market measures in the field. In the future the donor and implementing agencies should provide for a more thorough process of consideration and evaluation of the (un)feasibility of planned actions.

***A clear and more precise regulation of management arrangements in joint implementation initiatives between UN agencies would be beneficial.*** The programme has suffered on the coordination side because the roles and responsibilities shared among the agencies have not been clear. Implementation of projects comes down to people on both agencies’ sides and for people it is always better to have a clear description of roles and mandates. The synergy potential between the two agencies’ expertise has not been fully explored.

***The full potential of joint programming initiatives between UN agencies is best achieved when each agency commits its resources on their core area of expertise***. This has been a small project focusing first and foremost on enabling policymaking efforts through capacity building for data collection, analysis and service delivery. Programming of future joint initiatives should consider a targeted developmental perspective that is well tailored to the general expertise as well as field experience of each agency. Projects of this nature benefit most when a holistic approach is adopted instead of each agency focusing on their own components. Contractual and/or outsourcing types of relations should be avoided unless there are unique aspects of expertise that can be offered best by a UN partner agency. Activities with immediately visible achievements such as the employment programmes would be much appreciated and can provide suitable models for future replication.

## 1. Introduction

### Background

The *Addressing Social Inclusion through Vocational Education and Training* project (SIVET) was designed to support social inclusion of marginalised and socially excluded groups through facilitation of their access to vocational education and training. The project goal is in line with the national Vocational Education and Training strategy as well as UN initiatives on social inclusion in Albania. Interventions include the generation of information and studies on vulnerable and marginalised groups at risk of labour market exclusion; improvement of institutional capacities at the central and local level on data analysis, and design of employment programmes in support of inclusion of marginalised groups; as well as advocacy and awareness raising. The project has used a participatory approach at the central and local level.

The project is financed by the Government of Austria through the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), with a contribution of 524,755 USD, and a co-contribution of UNDP of 58,306 USD. The total budget for the project has been 583,061 USD. The project was formulated as a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Office (ILO), in close consultation with the Government of Albania. It has been implemented by the United Nations Development Programme country office in Albania in cooperation with ILO under an agreement between the Austrian Development Cooperation Office and UNDP through the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM).

The project implementation responsibilities are shared between UNDP and ILO, with UNDP having overall responsibility for the management of financial and human resources and both agencies to be held accountable for the delivery of outputs and proper management of inputs for the components for which they are responsible. Overall, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) is the principal body that coordinates and oversees the implementation of the project, with the responsibility to provide policy guidance on objectives and outcomes; as well as ensure effective and efficient use of funds. The project was managed by a National Project Manager hired by UNDP and a Chief Technical Advisor hired by ILO to provide technical guidance for the whole project and with specific focus on ILO led components.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) was the primary implementing partner for activities under SIVET, as the lead agency in charge of social issues and social inclusion in Albania. Other implementing partners included central and local government bodies such as the National Employment Service (NES), Ministry of Education, municipalities, regional council and deconcentrated offices in two of the three pilot regions of Elbasan, Fier and Lezhe where direct implementation of SIVET activities took place. Other partners were also involved in project activities contributing to its outcomes, such as civil society organisations, private sector representatives.

### Purpose of the evaluation

The main purpose of the evaluation was to provide a judgment on the overall performance of the SIVET project, and measuring its (potential) impact. The evaluation has looked at relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of programme results.

In particular, this evaluation was expected to provide an assessment of the achievement of the expected outputs in accordance with the Work Plans and Programme Logframe, as well as highlight the impact, main results, good practices and lessons learned. The final evaluation is intended to provide recommendations for any future interventions directed to the main users and partner programmes.

### Methodology used in the evaluation

This final evaluation focuses on the actual performance of the project, assessing effectiveness and sustainability of outputs as well as the relevance and efficiency of the intervention taking into account relevant national strategies as well as UN Country programme in Albania.

Evaluation focus and generic questions were established in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation. Annex 1 provides a detailed evaluation matrix, linking evaluation issues and questions to evaluation criteria, and sources of information.

The methodology for preparing this evaluation report comprised initial data collection, document research and literature survey, and interviews (see Annex 4 and Annex 5). Following an initial desk analysis undertaken by the Evaluator, primary data has been gathered through structured interviews with all relevant stakeholders in Tirana and two of the three pilot regions. The field visit to the regions enabled direct contact with implementing bodies, programme partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries and end-users and constitutes an important source of information.

This evaluation strictly adheres to the transparency norms and ethical principles set by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

## 2. Description of Intervention

### Overview of project concept

The SIVET project was intended to complement the efforts of the Government of Albania to facilitate access to vocational education and training by both promoting participation in VET as well as building the institutional capacity to support the inclusion of marginalized and socially excluded groups in the VET system. The ultimate aim was to promote coordination on employment and social services across national institutions and between the central and local levels. The project further proposed to address the needs of the targeted disadvantaged groups through the design of employment programmes linked to social services in three selected target municipalities, and building the capacities of local structures to implement such programmes.

The project stands on four pillars of action:

1. Generation of better and more reliable information on vulnerable and marginalised groups at risk of labour market exclusion
2. Institutional capacity support to relevant institutions
3. Advocacy, policy dialogue, and awareness raising (including the private sector)
4. Design of employment programmes in target municipalities

The SIVET Project was built upon the following outcomes, and based on national and sectoral priorities for social inclusion and vocational education and training.

1. *Government policies and practices necessary to promote social inclusion and reduction of regional disparities are strengthened.*
   1. National capacities for the collection, analysis and use of data/indicators to identify marginalized and socially excluded groups, enhanced. (Component
   2. The institutional capacity of national institutions to address the labour market exclusion of marginalized groups is enhanced
2. *Institutions and forums in place to support people’s participation and empowerment to take active part in policy formulation and decision-making.*
   1. Awareness of the relevant institutions, the private sector, VET providers and social partners on their shared responsibility toward marginalized groups is increased
   2. Employment programmes tailored to the needs of the marginalized groups in target municipalities designed and implementation capacity of local institutions enhanced

In line with the ONE UN programme approved by the Albanian Government in October 2007, the two key development outcomes of SIVET are closely aligned with that of the One UN Programme in Albania 2008 – 2013, as endorsed by the Government of Albania:

*1. A transparent and accountable government, developing and implementing effective national policies;*

*2. An enabling environment is in place to ensure people’s participation in policy formulation and the national decision-making process;*

*4. Regional and local government strategies implemented with full participation of communities.*

### Detailed description of the project:

The project agreement between UNDP and ADA was signed on 1 September 2010. The initial foreseen project duration was for two years starting from September 2010. However, the project did not start until June 2011, due to the delay in the formal adoption of the project document by the Government of Albania. The project was subsequently granted a six-month no-cost extension until December 2013, mainly to finish some new activities that had been included in the work plan during the project duration.

Based on the documentation provided, the main activities and outputs produced so far by the SIVET are briefly summarised below. The structure of presentation follows the desired programme objectives and outcomes.

1. ***Generation of information on vulnerable and marginalised groups at risk of labour market exclusion***

Strengthening national capacities for collection, analysis and use of data that is used for the formulation of evidence-based policies for marginalized groups was the primary aim of this component, in the context of addressing issues related to social exclusion. In the context of the existing national strategy on social inclusion, survey instruments like the 2008 Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS) provide a wealth of data necessary for measuring the progress of national strategies through measurable indicators, as well as for the collection and analysis if data for the identification and targeting of vulnerable groups. This component was implemented by UNDP.

***2. Institutional capacity support to relevant institutions***

The project placed an emphasis on capacity development of decision-makers, managers and staff of participating central and local institutions as well as social partners to better design, monitor and evaluate policies, strategies and action-oriented employment programmes for marginalised groups, which promote and focus on their skills development and vocational training opportunities. This component was implemented by ILO, except for the activity 2.3 under the responsibility of UNDP.

***3. Advocacy, policy dialogue, and awareness raising***

This component focused on the policy dialogue among the relevant institutions, such as MoLSAEO and MoES, the NES, the National VET Authority, VET centres, public training providers, and the social partners. The dialogue process intends to increase awareness on the importance and benefits of an appropriate legal and institutional framework to support the inclusion of marginalised people into the labour market. This component was mainly implemented by UNDP, with ILO inputs to the activity 3.1 and implementing directly the activity 3.4.

4. ***Direct implementation in target municipalities***

This component aimed to work with the key stakeholders to actually extend the employment services to the socially excluded in the three target municipalities, to build capacities of the service providers and these municipalities to scale up similar services in the future as well as to encourage replication of these services elsewhere in Albania. The component was built on the area-based development approach of the UN Joint Programme on Youth Employment and Migration programme (YEM), which was operating in Kukes and Shkoder regions. The ultimate aim is for the project was to contribute to the building of sustainable local capacity to run such a methodology, as well as replicate/up-scale it in the future. This component will be implemented by ILO. However, the active labour market measure activities were not implemented given that ILO argued that the budget was not sufficient to support those activities.

## Evaluation Criteria and Evaluation Questions

This chapter examines the performance of the SIVET, based on considerations of needs assessment and design, inputs, outputs, ownership, results and sustainability, set against the Evaluation Questions detailed in Annex 1.

### 3.1 Design level

***Relevance: Overall, the SIVET project was highly relevant and needed. It has been rather ambitious in scope relative to its resources. The project has been flexible in response to changing needs and programme environment.***

***The SIVET Project has been very well designed, based on realistic need assessment and problem identification.*** The project has clear intervention logic with a comprehensive approach. The programme document is sound and coherent; presenting a good overview of the challenges to access and inclusion of marginalized and at risk of exclusion categories in the labour market and relative needs at the institutional and programmatic levels. The defined outcomes of the project have been designed with a clear view to national objectives as set out in the National Strategy for Development and Integration and the Social Inclusion strategy adopted by the Government of Albania. The programmed activities and expected results thereby directly respond to identified problems and needs and have been designed to work in the given environment of national and regional level institutions. This was a relatively small project that was designed to support policymakers by providing them with reliable and accurate data and information, enhancing their capacity in generating data and conduct evidence based policy processes. The project had also a strong regional component, with activities designed to increase awareness as well as strengthen capacities at the local level and enable them implement some of the labour market measures for marginalised groups.

The project document has been developed primarily by UNDP, with ILO inputs incorporated at the project design stage. Individual programme components have been developed in close connection with each other. The project design has been likely built on an assumption of synergy effects between the work of the two UN agencies, indicating that the programming approach did not foresee separation according to individual agencies tasks and agendas The implementation of the four programme components was separated between UNDP and ILO in accordance with the respective agencies strengths and expertise, with UNDP taking primary responsibility for components 1 and 3, and ILO in charge mainly of components 2 and 4 of the project.

The planned timeline and budget have proven largely adequate for the implementation. The project did not become operational for more than six months following agreement between the donor and UNDP, mainly due to internal bureaucratic delays experienced by the Government of Albania. The document was formally endorsed by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs more than 6 months following the official approval date by the donor. The project officially started in June 2010, following a short inception phase of almost two months that was used to adjust the workplan and mobilise project staff and resources. It was granted a no-cost extension of six month duration which was used to finance further activities requested by the main beneficiary, to be financed through a reallocation of budget costs resulting primarily from a net gain in the total budget due to a fluctuation in the exchange rate.

***The project has been adaptive to address changing needs of the sector and beneficiaries.*** The high degree of flexibility can be regarded as one of the positive features of the project design. During the project implementation stage the Project Steering Committee has played an important role in adjusting project activities and outputs. Some of the components of the project were modified in the course of project implementation and new activities were added in respect of newly arising needs and opportunities. Component four of the project was redesigned at the initial stages of the project; from a direct field implementation activity to a capacity building activity that would in turn enable authorities implement active labour market measures. The reconceptualisation of component four was requested by ILO on grounds of budget insufficiency to directly implement active labour market measures and was approved by the PSC at its second meeting.

***Project monitoring indicators (output indicators) are relevant and largely fulfil SMART criteria.*** Quantified outputs have been provided wherever possible already at design stage. However, the project monitoring matrix at the project document stage was not sufficiently detailed with SMART indicators, due to the lack of data availability on baseline indicators. The monitoring and evaluation framework was improved by the JP team at the beginning of implementation. Clear indicators, baselines and targets have been further elaborated for many activities during regular progress monitoring reports submitted to the Project Steering Committee.

***The SIVET objectives respond directly to the related national and sectoral strategies, including their operational context.*** The project has been formulated in close consultation with the Government of Albania, and it was specifically designed to support the government’s efforts in finding new ways to lift vulnerable categories out of exclusion through facilitating access to the labour market. It addresses the development of new policies in the field of social inclusion through research, capacity building as well as piloting of initiatives.

***The project has adopted a sound participatory approach, with inclusive participation of national, regional and local authorities and stakeholders envisaged already at design stage.*** The MoLSA (now MSWY) has played a strong guiding ole as the lead partner. Consultations were carried out with other central level agencies such as the National Employment service, as well as with the Ministry of Education. The project had strong participation, information and awareness raising components, including in particular the bottom-up approach for policy making through the local working groups, the data collection studies at the regional level. Inclusion of social partners, in particular workers and employers associations could have been more active. Social partners have participated in the Project Steering Committee meetings and some of the project’s dissemination activities; however the programme could have benefitted more from a more active inclusion especially at the local level.

***Specific interest of vulnerable categories such as women, minorities, people with disabilities have been at the heart of the SIVET***. Indeed, the main beneficiaries of the SIVET – and SIVET promoted policies through the Government of Albania are expected to be members of vulnerable/marginalised groups that have no access to or are at risk of exclusion from the labour market. The project has maintained a good balance in its operations through substantial participation and consultation of women, minorities or the disabled. However, the gender assessment of the project document at approval stage revealed some weaknesses of the project design in terms of the gender sensitive approach. The donor issued some recommendations and conditions to be followed up during implementation, including the provision of sex-disaggregated data and introduction of gender sensitive indicators from the evaluation and monitoring matrix of the project. A later review carried out in July 2013 by the donor on gender aspects revealed that there was room for the project to take stock of these recommendations on many of its outputs.

### 3.2 Implementation level (process)

***Efficiency: Overall, project implementation has been in line with the timeline and major milestones. The majority of outputs have been completed efficiently. The project management arrangements have been complicated resulting in increased administration and coordination burden. However, the project team has successfully mitigated these difficulties without considerable impact on project results.***

***The Project has succeeded in delivering all of its outputs, but the administrative burden on the Project team has been substantial.*** SIVET has been intended as a joint Project implemented by UNDP and ILO, although UNDP has borne the principal responsibility in ensuring overall project progress as well as quality assurance. In practice, the synergies and cross-fertilisation of the specific expertise and experience of the two UN agencies did not materialise to the desired level. The cooperation and coordination could have been improved, and the project could have benefitted if a more holistic approach was adopted by both agencies instead of each focusing on their own components.

***Coordination between the implementing agencies has been uneasy.*** There is no evidence of the two agencies making efforts to harmonize procedures, management approach with regard to the project, or reporting patterns. The fact that the ILO backstopping office was located in Budapest, and the official in charge of the project oversees projects in multiple countries at the same time has lengthened response rates and slowed down the rhythm of inter-agency consultation. The financial reporting systems also seem to have been completely incompatible with each other, with UNDP generating very detailed and comprehensive financial reports, while ILO was reporting at a general budget line item level. Requests by UNDP for ILO to provide more detailed financial information to be included in the reports to the donor have not always been responded by ILO. This has been particularly cumbersome for UNDP, which retained ultimate responsibility for the project and project reporting vis-à-vis the donor.

Coordination with the project partners has however been very good, both at the central and regional level. The project and both implementing agencies have maintained good contacts and consultations with counterpart agencies as well as civil society organisations, which have been included proactively in the project implementation.

The project was led by the National Project Manager (PM) that was hired by UNDP. An international advisor hired by ILO had the responsibility to provide technical input on the overall project and support the project manager in the implementation of activities. A project assistant was hired to support the project team until July 2013. The project team received technical and organisational support by the relevant organisations – the local UNDP office in Tirana and the ILO office in Budapest.

Coordination between the two organisations and within the project staff has proved difficult. It is worth mentioning that accountability lines for project staff were clearly linked with the home offices. Efficient coordination was made difficult in this situation, with the PM struggling to keep track of ILO activities and the CTA arguing that he was not given sufficient authority in the project. Coordination within the team has been made even more difficult due to the fact that the CTA as an ILO hired consultant had other commitments outside the SIVET project, which was in perspective a relatively small and less relevant intervention. Overall, it is clear that the CTA has commit his time to the ILO-led components and has abstained from the responsibility to provide proactive guidance on all project outputs and overall performance. The lack of proper coordination may be attributable to some extent to a personality clash; however the lack of clearly defined accountability lines to the project and the project management team seems to have been an important factor in this regard.

***Programme steering by the PSC served as a sound platform the strategic guidance of the project and coordination with national partners at the central and local level. The PSC was chaired by the Deputy Minister of*** Labour and Social Affairs, with the participation of the Ministry of Education, NES, and the pilot municipalities, as well as ADA, UNDP and ILO. The PSC has met five times over the project duration, and has performed well as the main coordination body. The MoLSAEO (later MSWY) has demonstrated strong ownership of the project and has brought into the PSC discussion of technical issues that were of relevance to the project. High level representatives of ADA and UNDP have always been present at the SC meeting. ILO has been represented by the Country Coordinator in Albania or project assistant from the office in Budapest, while the specialist from the Budapest office acting as the coordinator on ILO side for the project was present in the last PSC meeting. The CTA of the project has also participated regularly to the meetings, together with the PM. Regular progress reports that have been submitted to the PSC have been prepared by the PM with some ILO input.

SIVET has been rather flexible, which is one of the positive features of the project, which has succeeded in addressing the relevant policy issues. For instance, the total labour market study and the study on access of people with disabilities to VET services had not originally been planned in the project, but the main project beneficiary requested these outputs as important pillars for the envisaged reforms. ADA showed good flexibility in approving the extension required to that end. A number of other changes were adapted to the project in the course of its implementation, including the drafting of the SNA and the redesign of component four of the project.

***The evidence from the programme does not indicate specific benefits from the joint project implementation approach.*** As explained above, coordination has been insufficient and there has been limited sharing of work methodologies among agencies. The full potential of synergies between the two agencies was not achieved. In particular, the project has benefitted to some extent from ILO-s reputation with the main project counterparts, especially at the regional level. However, the project operated in an area that was not necessarily well-linked with the traditional core competencies of ILO i.e. social dialogue and tripartism or decent work conditions, in which case ILO’s expertise would have been unique. ILO’s approach to remain detached from the main project management structure as a non-resident agency has characterized its contributions to the overall project to be somewhat intermittent. However, the fact that both agencies contracted local consultants to deliver the majority of outputs largely mitigated these effects resulting in generally qualitative outputs.

***The management arrangements have thus been very complicated for a project of this size and scope***. Roles and responsibilities shared among the agencies have not been clear. The letter of Agreement entered into between UNDP and ILO in April 2011 following months of consultations does not assign clear roles and responsibilities for each agency’s mandate. The agreement in essence assigns the responsibility for the services to be performed by ILO, but without clearly specifying respective roles and responsibilities, or eventual troubleshooting or remedy measures to be taken in case of failure to honour the agreement. Lessons have been learnt in this regard by both agencies, in particular with a view to minimize contractual type relations in the future should there not be obvious gains or competitive advantages materialised.

***Funds are spent efficiently and in line with the budget adopted***. Financial gains that were materialised due to the strengthening of the Euro vis-à-vis the US dollar in the months pending formal adoption of the project document by the Government of Albania were reallocated to produce two new studies that had been requested by the main beneficiary. Financial reporting is made on a periodic basis by UNDP to the donor, with detailed financial and monitoring information according to outcomes and activities as well as budget items. Financial information from ILO has been limited to reporting by major budget lines and/or balance carried forward. The lion share of project funds has been spent on technical expertise. UNDP has commissioned all of its deliverables to national experts, whereas ILO has made a greater use of international experts, resulting in higher relative costs per its outputs. Whenever possible, it is advisable to make use of the in-country expertise which is both more cost effective but also has often a higher degree of understanding of the local context and challenges. ILO costs have been relatively higher also in terms of administrative costs: with ILO’s administrative costs amounting to 13% of the total budget as opposed to UNDP’s 7% administrative costs. The budget for the project was rather small but proved to be adequate. An exception to this observation is made in the case of the pilot intervention of the fourth component of the project, which was not delivered arguably because ILO sustained that funds allocated for that purpose were not sufficient.

### 3.3 Results level

***Effectiveness: The SIVET project outputs have been fully completed and the outcomes have been fully or partially achieved. Overall quality of the outputs has been very good, notwithstanding the need for improvements evidenced by the gender review of some of the main outputs carried out by the donor close to the end of the project. Implementation of pilot labour market measures in the three pilot regions was not made due to alleged budget scarcity.***

Details on the extent to which the individual outcomes have been already effectively achieved are given below:

## Component 1: Generation of information on vulnerable and marginalized groups at risk of labour market exclusion (UNDP led component)

* 1. *Provision of technical assistance to the MoLSAEO on the monitoring of the EU Laeken indicators.*

The scope of this activity was modified in the course of project implementation upon PSC endorsement to accommodate the request of the MoLSAEO to receive support for EU project management. Need assessment exercises were carried out to identify financing needs as well as three project fiches were prepared and submitted to the IPA Greece – Albania Cross-Border Programme 2013. The TA to the MoLSAEO was supported for one year.

* 1. *Using LSMS 2008 data undertake a study to identify marginalized groups*

This study explored the characteristics of vulnerable groups, comparing them with the rest of the population. It was the first time that statistical data available from existing survey tools were processed to develop an understanding of the challenges, identify target groups; as well as develop develops policies for targeting the vulnerable groups. The study was very well received by the MoLSAEO and other stakeholders and has succeeded in producing baseline indicators that can be used as benchmarks for the future.

* 1. *and 1.5: Conduct workshops on the use of statistical tools to identify socially excluded groups and assess their status over time, both at the national level and in the municipalities; Conduct targeted surveys at the regional level for better identification of marginalized groups*

These studies were carried out with a participatory approach that included capacity building techniques and on-the job-training for government officials at the local level. The studies produced were highly appreciated by stakeholders at the national and local level, as it was the first time that this type of thorough research, based on a clear set of indicators adapted from Eurostat methodology had been carried out at the local level on issues of social inclusion. The adopted approach ensured ownership of targeted officials over the study outcome as well as a more effective capacity building process. The data produced were used by the authorities at the regional level to raise funds on social inclusion issues: for instance in the region of Elbasan the Municipality is the main beneficiary of an IPA CBC project on Youth and Employment whereas the regional council is implementing an IPA CBC project on minorities inclusion. Both proposals were developed based on the regional studies. Furthermore, findings of the national report were shared and discussed with the Local Working Groups and National Working Group (under component 2.1). Three regional workshops with the participation of 56 officials from regional administration were organized to present the final regional studies and coach officials on the use of information and data collection tools to update, collect, and process better information on socially excluded groups.

* 1. *Support the collection of statistics at MoES on the children at risk of social exclusion within mainstream education (ILO)*

A detailed report on the social inclusion issues in the education system, both at a national level and in the three targeted regions, as well as the links between policy and legislation framework in the area of education and employment for the targeted vulnerable groups was produced in February 2012 to serve as input for the Local and National Working Groups.

*1.6. Conduct an assessment of the rural labour market*

The study on the assessment of the rural market was initiated by the project during the extension phase and it was intended to inform the government’s intentions to extend labour services to rural areas, where such services are missing altogether currently. The study was finalized in December 2013 and it was very well received. The government has taken stock of the analysis and recommendations and is preparing to launch the first piloting initiatives based on its recommendations in the following months.

*1.7 Conduct an assessment of the access of people with disabilities to vocational training*

This study on the inclusion and access of people of disabilities to public vocational training was initiated by the project during the extension phase and it was intended to explore and identify possible exclusion factors from the labour market for people with disabilities. It also aimed at informing the government on possible gaps or needs for improvement in public policies and institutional procedures with regard to access of the disabled to vocational training.

## Component 2: Institutional capacity support to relevant institutions

* 1. *and 2.2. Establish a national working group on VET for marginalized groups and provide technical expertise to the working group on the review of national VET strategies, identifying education and training needs of these groups, and establishing target group oriented delivery modalities*

The national working group (NWG) was established in February 2012 with the participation of all main VET stakeholders and representatives from the beneficiaries (NGOs). NWG was established to act as a consultative body for the government to provide input on its proposed policies, as well as act as an umbrella body for the local working groups. Technical expertise was provided to the operation of the working groups at the local and national level, in order to enable them analyze information, identify problems and opportunities and formulate evidence based recommendations. The final policy paper that was produced through this approach presents some interesting findings and recommendations for the future that need to be taken further by the government.

* 1. *Provide training to Vocational Training instructors and Vocational Education teachers on delivery modalities specific to the needs of the target groups*

The project designed and implemented three training sessions involving teachers of VET Schools in the three targeted municipalities. In close cooperation with the Head of VET department at MoES 86 teachers form 5 VET schools were trained on the needs of marginalised groups in vocational schools. They have shared best practices and identified challenges and ways to overcome them. At the end of the workshops participants have developed an individual plan regarding their further needs and actions to take in order to respond to the marginalised groups in Vocational education.

* 1. *Support the publication of a practical guide for NES/Employment offices on how to address the needs of marginalized groups*

A practical guide for NES/employment offices on how to address needs of marginalized groups was produced through an ILO international consultant and was very well received by the beneficiaries. The guide offers insight on how to support the design, monitoring and evaluation of active labour market programmes targeting individuals at risk of labour market exclusion. It was produced by an international consultant based on a consultation process. Although some elements from it and the other trainings on the topic have been introduced by labour office staff in their everyday routine, it remains difficult to comply with all the steps recommended in the guide due among other to lack of resources, poor infrastructure. The output has been satisfactorily achieved, but impact may be limited.

* 1. *Training of NES counsellors on career orientation for marginalized groups*

In order to improve the capacity of NES counsellors to deal with vulnerable groups, training needs analysis was conducted through a questionnaire filled out with 34 frontline staff from the three regional offices. Based upon the result of the TNA, as well the practical guide on NED, a training course was organised in Tirana to build capacities in the areas of 1. Customer relations; 2. Developing individual employment plan and vocational guidance; as well as 3. Identifying Training Needs for the Unemployed. A local training provider was contracted to deliver the training courses, which were held in Tirana in two shifts. Furthermore, ILO organised a study visit to Graz for nine stakeholders from the regional offices. The study visit aimed at providing acquaintance for the participants on good practices and experiences in employment services that could be also replicated in Albania.

## Component 3: Advocacy, policy dialogue, and awareness raising

A series of advocacy and awareness raising activities were organized under this component. UNDP organized multiple meetings and roundtables with government officials, civil society and the private sector to present the findings of the studies, increase awareness on social inclusion responsibilities of national authorities; sensitize the private sector on CSR practices. A media campaign was also launched, with Mania Cards distributed bearing information on issues of social inclusion. Outreach to the communities and officials seem to have been good and participation in events relatively high. However, this kind of events should be organized periodically in order to achieve a stronger impact. ILO also carried out a study on the identification of best practices in the integration of marginalized groups, which served as an input for the discussions and work of the local working groups.

## Component 4: Direct implementation in target municipalities

*4.1. On the basis of the information collected on labour market demand and the identification of economic opportunities in the regions, develop feasibility studies and training proposals*

This sub-activity was modified during the project upon request of the NES. Hence, the PSC endorsed the preparation of a Skill Needs Analysis at the national level, with specific focus on the three pilot regions. The sample for the SNA was representative of the country and weighted for the three pilot regions and it was prepared based on official INSTAT data. The approach for the preparation of the SNA was participatory, in order to build-in the capacity strengthening component during drafting and enable NES staff have the expertise to perform similar studies in the future. The SNA was carried out during 2012 and following submission of the final version to the Steering Committee in June 2013; it was formally delivered to national authorities by ILO as a finished output.

However, the SNA was subject to the gender review carried out by ADA in July 2013 and apparently found to miss gender components completely, which would allegedly warrant the complete redesign of the study. ILO made a revision of the SNA during August and September 2013 and submitted a new version with somewhat improved reference to gender issues as data allowed. However, the improvements were not deemed satisfactory in as ADA argues that gender is not mainstreamed into the document, which missed relevant data disaggregated by sex in the analysis of skills available. One of the important reserves towards the study is that the study misses an integrated approach on gender, among other sex-disaggregated data for each of the vulnerable categories identified in the data, such as minorities or people with disabilities.

National authorities – including MSWY and NES have however shown appreciation of the study. The SNA was carried out based on a thorough methodology approved by ILO and seems to be fit for future use by NES. Indeed, the IPA programme in support of Human Resource Development financed by the EU and implemented by ILO has requested for official clearance by ADA to print and disseminate the SNA report for use at each regional office, and it is currently planning further capacity building activities for NES staff in the remaining regions based on this methodology. According to experts involved in the study as well as ILO, the SNA is a working tool that can be improved with time. Stakeholders believe that while not being a labour market study that could have incorporated more detailed analysis on labour market determinants and particular skills associated with men and women, it still offers a valuable contribution to NES and regional offices future work with - among other vulnerable groups.

*4.2 Facilitate institutional linkages with social partners, community associations, and local development actors*

Three Local Working Groups, facilitated by ILO, convened regularly and to discuss and produce a policy document and recommendations of social integration at grass-root level; which were further integrated in the national policy paper. The LWG experience was very positive not only due to the outputs of the groups; but what was especially appreciated at the local level was the opportunity to sit together with different institutions and discuss overarching issues of social inclusion, which cannot be resolved through alone interventions.

*4.3 Conduct capacity building on the methodologies for job finding for vulnerable groups, targeting local partners tasked with administering training*

Elements of the capacity building were provided to the Local working groups through the regular meetings. However formally this component was redesigned to focus on support to local governments to write project proposals, of which some applied to the Regional Development Fund grant window funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation, and others to IPA CBC and other calls. The outcome of these applications is not known till today.

*4.4 Employment programmes in the target municipalities*

This activity was not implemented as ILO argued that the budget allocated for this purpose was not sufficient. The PSC agreed to the proposal to seek other funding opportunities for support of employment programmes, such as other ongoing project. However, it was not possible to secure other funding and the project supported capacity building activities for project proposal writing for other beneficiaries, in particular authorities at the local level and NGOs. The lack of a concrete intervention in the project has probably weakened its impact prospects. If some of the active labour market measures would have been piloted, the government would have more information on the feasibility of various measures and adaptability to the different vulnerable groups.

A final conference for the presentation and dissemination of the project’s results was held in Tirana in December 2013 with the participation of all main stakeholders at the national and regional level. The focus of the conference was the presentation of the studies, main findings and activities performed over the two years duration of the project. The final conference was held at a time when the new government embarked on a process of reformation of policies and institutions and it was a good opportunity to confront the findings and recommendations with the new perspective brought in by the new government. The general feedback received from the major stakeholders was very positive on all the main studies presented. The Deputy Ministers of Social Welfare and Youth that were present during the conference recognized the high need for the inputs contributed by the projects as well as reinforced the intention to go forward in the near future with some of the measures and recommendations of the project.

***SIVET has mostly delivered high quality products.*** Flexible management has adapted to the changing environment, particularly to commit programme resources when activities need it. As a result, the products delivered are of good quality and each assignment has been conducted on an as needed basis. The implementation of the active labour market measures foreseen in component 4 would have however given a more tangible dimension to the project and tested some of its outputs. It would have provided a tangible result and understanding of the process needed and costs associated for the employment of at-risk-of exclusion individuals, which would have contributed to the government’s efforts in the field. However, concerns over the inclusion of the gender dimension in the SNA analysis have been expressed by the donor. These have not been resolved so far and the donor representatives and the authors of the report have not succeeded in reaching a common understanding over the potential of the tool. Initial feedback on the SNA from the main beneficiaries is however positive.

***Programme implementation is adequately followed up by the PSC.*** The PSC has met regularly twice a year, chaired by MoLSA. UNDP Country Director and/or Programme Analyst have been closely involved in overseeing the implementation. ILO regional office in Budapest has also played a role in the coordination of ILO activities as well as coordination with UNDP counterparts. Implementation progress is presented and discussed according to a schedule. Participation in PSC meetings of stakeholders from municipalities could have been better. Social partners such as workers and employers organisations have also been invited to PSC meetings; however their contribution to the project has been limited.

***Longer-term impact remains to be demonstrated. The project has produced a number of good quality studies and provided capacity building at the national and local levels. The studies have the potential be adopted immediately into policies addressing more facilitation of access to labour services and/or expansion of such services to new areas, such as the countryside. The government will need to demonstrate its will in pursuing some of these initiatives. The new government has taken stock of the studies produced and has requested UNDP to produce a roadmap for the implementation of some of the recommendations.***

### 3.4 Sustainability

***Sustainability: The project has put a great emphasis on follow up and sustainability through the adoption of an inclusive and participatory approach already at design stage as well as throughout the implementation stage. National ownership and leadership has been excellent and some of the key recommendations presented by the project are already being transposed into the MSWY’s programme.***

***National ownership on the project has been strong and is expected to materialise soon though the endorsement by the government of several project recommendations.*** There is good evidence on the leadership and commitment to the project demonstrated by the MOLSAEO and later MSWY. The outputs and results of the projects were immediately taken on board by the new government, indicating that interventions had been well targeted and unequivocal. The Government is currently preparing to make several improvements in the area of employment services and social inclusion, including consideration of expansion of employment services to rural areas as well as improvement of access and infrastructure for people with disabilities at regional VT centres, in compliance with recommendations from the project’s studies. The government still has to adopt the National Policy Paper that was produced as the result of the National Working Group Work to show full commitment to these issues.

***Sustainability of results seems to have good prospects.*** The majority of the project’s activities have been designed through a process of consultations with the beneficiaries. Hence ownership of the results has been one key ingredient of the project performance. Recommendations from studies produced by the project under component 1, in particular the labour market and people with disability studies are currently being considered by the government for immediate adoption. Some of the project’s outputs such as the NES practical guide have already been incorporated into the system; while other donors such as the EU though its IPA 2011 programme on Human Resource Development are already expanding on capacity building activities that have been carried out through this project.

***Staff turnover remains a concern for result sustainability.*** Some of the key activities of the project have focused on knowledge transfer and capacity building. However, some of the key staff having received support from the project were no longer employed in the regional offices following the 2013 elections.

***Activities and interventions at the local level show good prospects for sustainability***. According to authorities at the local level one of the main achievements of the project is the fact that stakeholders from different institutions sat together to develop a common understanding on the challenges and initiated an on-going discussion. Relations between local government institutions and regional central government offices have intensified during the project duration.

***The project’s participatory approach has been a key aspect that has yielded its results in the field by increasing ownership and sustainability of results at the local level***A considerable portion of the project’s outputs were developed through a process of intense consultations with local stakeholders. The approach of learning-by-doing together with the officials has ensured active participation as well ownership of the outputs. The regional survey results have been an excellent example of good teamwork of different institutions at the local level under the overall guidance of the project consultants. The regional studies have served as the main body of data and research that have enabled local authorities in Elbasan win several proposals submitted to the IPA CBC Programme on issues of social inclusion and employment.

## Conclusions and Lessons Learned

### 4.1 Conclusions

The SIVET Project has been a relatively small project with a clear design. The project has been very relevant for Albania and in line with the objectives of the national social inclusion and vocational education and training strategies. The project supported the government’s intention to introduce an integrated approach in the management of employment and vocational education and training programmes for people at risk of exclusion from the labour market. Programme design has been ambitious in terms of the intended achievements compared to the relatively modest budget. A strong participatory element has been built into the project design with activities at the national and regional level in three pilot regions, allowing for the stakeholders at all levels to be included in the interventions and benefitting from the project. This has raised the prospects of sustainability already at design stage. The project should have made more efforts to mainstream gender issues at the design stage.

There is clear evidence about strong national ownership over the project and its results. The MolSAEO – and later MSWY has provided good guidance and has been committed to the project. The change in the government following the 2013 elections did not bring about any changes in the project and its outputs are being currently considered for implementation by the new government. This further reinforces that the intervention has been highly needed and timely.

Project implementation has been generally in line with the approved budget and timeline. The project starting date was delayed by more than six months due to the delay in formal endorsement of the project document by the Government of Albania. Following official signature of the project by the Minister of Social Affairs the inception stage and mobilisation of resources were completed in less than two months and the project officially started in June 2011. It further received a no cost extension of six months in June 2013, during which it produced other studies under request of the government. The six-month extension was financed through a surplus budget created due to the strengthening of the Euro vis-à-vis the US dollar in the months pending official endorsement of the project.

The project outputs have been mostly achieved with success and contribute to the achievement of the project goals. The project has produced a series of studies that have produced baseline data to be taken into account by policymaker for evidence-based policymaking. A series of capacity building activities and consultations forums have been highly appreciated by stakeholders at the national and local level as an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences with partner institutions. The project has largely made use of national expertise, which has a strong understanding of the local conditions and enabling environment. A gender review carried out by ADA in June 2013 indicated that the project should have paid more attention to mainstreaming gender issues in the project activities and outputs. This finding has been particularly significant in the case of a project that focused entirely on social inclusion and vulnerable groups. The majority of project outputs that were subject to the review were updated to reflect a more integrated gender approach.

Project impact is difficult to trace, especially as the project focused largely on the production of intangible outputs, such as studies which would support the policymaking process of the government; as well as capacity building activities. The government is preparing to adopt some of the recommendations put forward by the project in the immediate future, such as the proposal for the extension of employment services to rural areas. The adoption of the bottom-up policy paper by the government would arguably bring about positive impacts at the regional level, including increased attention on inclusion of the vulnerable as well as better funding opportunities. Some of the project outputs have been used by the local authorities to raise funds for activities in the area of social inclusion and employment. The project did not succeed in creating an immediate visible impact through the implementation of employment programme. The implementation in the field of some of the proposed active labour market measures tailored for the most vulnerable would not only have created some opportunities for the vulnerable, but more importantly would have provided a clear tool that could have been replicated by the government at the national scale.

Prospects for sustainability are positive, due to the largely inclusive and participatory approach as well as high commitment of national and regional level stakeholders. Some of the project outputs are already being carried forward by the government and/or other donor programmes.

Project management arrangements have been complex resulting in higher administrative burden. The project management team has delivered a good job as confirmed by stakeholders. However, project coordination between the two implementing agencies has not been easy due to changing schedules and focus given to the SIVET project.

### 4.2 Lessons learned

***National ownership key to project success*** – National ownership and commitment to the project is a key precondition for the quality of products and eventually sustainability of results. The project was designed through careful consultations with the main beneficiaries to fully reflect their needs, which later ensured active commitment to the activities. The project agenda was aligned with the policymaking agenda of the beneficiaries. The fact that this agenda was not changed following the change in Government indicates that the desired outcomes of the project were highly relevant and timely for the country.

***Project management flexibility is desired but may change the course of action*** – Management flexibility has been a notable advantage in project management. Transparency in reporting and continuous consultation with project partners and stakeholders through among other regular PSC reports are preconditions required for such management flexibility. The active role and guidance by the Steering Committee has ensured regular updating of the working plan in accordance with the needs of the beneficiary. However, this incorporated flexibility has allowed for the redesign of component four, which was among the few activities of the project that were going to provide tangible results. This was a source of disappointment for several stakeholders as well as the donor itself, who considered this component as the essence of the project and would have preferred to see the direct implementation of labour market measures in the field. In the future the donor and implementing agencies should provide for a more thorough process of consideration and evaluation of the (un)feasibility of planned actions.

***A clear and more precise regulation of management arrangements in joint implementation initiatives between UN agencies would be beneficial.*** The programme has suffered on the coordination side because the roles and responsibilities shared among the agencies have not been clear. Implementation of projects comes down to people on both agencies’ sides and for people it is always better to have a clear description of roles and mandates. The synergy potential between the two agencies’ expertise has not been fully explored.

***The full potential of joint programming initiatives between UN agencies is best achieved when each agency commits its resources on their core area of expertise***. This has been a small project focusing first and foremost on enabling policymaking efforts through capacity building for data collection, analysis and service delivery. Programming of future joint initiatives should consider a targeted developmental perspective that is well tailored to the general expertise as well as field experience of each agency. Projects of this nature benefit most when a holistic approach is adopted instead of each agency focusing on their own components. Contractual and/or outsourcing types of relations should be avoided unless there are unique aspects of expertise that can be offered best by a UN partner agency. Activities with immediately visible achievements such as the employment programmes would be much appreciated and can provide suitable models for future replication.

## Annex 1. Evaluation Matrix

| **Evaluation question** | **Main**  **question** | **Sub-questions** | **Source of Verification** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EQ 1 –**  **Design level** | ***Relevance:***  ***Is the intervention in line with national policies and strategies and the sector? Does it reflect the needs of the target groups?*** | Is the identification of the problems, inequalities and gaps, with their respective causes, clear in the project design? Was there a need assessment stage? | Desk study (project documentation) |
| Does the project take into account specific needs associated with vulnerable groups? Are there areas that could have been included but haven’t? | Desk study (project documentation);  interviews |
| Is there an evaluation plan and SMART indicators needed to measure the outputs and outcomes of the project? | Desk study (project documentation); progress reports |
| ***Ownership:***  ***Have the national authorities at the national and regional level provided leadership and oversight over project activities? Have other stakeholders participated actively?*** | Do the project objectives and intended outcomes comply with the national strategies and need assessment at the national and regional level? | Desk study (project documentation);  interviews |
| To what extent have the country’s national and local authorities, nongovernmental stakeholders and social partners been involved, at project design stage? Were stakeholders consulted? | Desk study (project documentation);  interviews |
| **EQ 2**  **Implementation level** | ***Efficiency:***  ***To which extent is the intervention efficient in terms of resources and input committed when delivering outputs and immediate results?*** | How does the management model contribute to achieving results in terms of financial, human resources, coordination and decision making arrangements? Is there clear allocation of roles and responsibilities between agencies; are there clear guidelines? | Desk study; progress reports;  interviews |
| How good is coordination with the project stakeholders at the national and regional level, including nongovernmental stakeholders? | Desk study (progress reports, project documentation)  interviews |
| How is the pace of project implementation perceived; is there a clear sequencing of desired outputs and outcomes? Do the project components interrelate? Are there overburdened/underused resources? | Desk study (progress reports, project documentation)  interviews |
| Are work methodologies, reporting guidelines, shared among agencies? | Desk study (progress reports, project documentation)  interviews |
|  | Are the outputs delivered within the stipulated timeframe and budget? | Desk study (progress reports, project documentation)  interviews |
| ***Have the main project counterparts provided leadership to the project?*** | What has been the actual involvement of beneficiaries in project implementation? Have they owned the project results? Have national stakeholders contributed to project implementation? | Desk study; progress reports;  interviews |
| **EQ 3**  **Results level** | ***Effectiveness:***  To which extent is the intervention effective in delivering outputs and immediate results? | To what extent has the project achieved its result and contributed to national objectives and those of the ONE UN strategy?  Are there changes in capacity of staff, work methodologies, policies of the beneficiary? | Desk study; progress reports;  interviews |
| Are the outputs produced of high quality? Does the project have appropriate quality assurance mechanisms to measure progress and ensure quality? | Desk study; progress reports;  interviews |
| Has the project provided support to the intended categories? Were there good practices, or other examples identified? | Desk study; progress reports;  interviews |
| **EQ 4**  **Sustainability** | ***Sustainability:***  Are the identified results sustainable (or likely to be sustainable) – i.e. will they persist in the long term? | Is the project supported by national and regional institutions? Do they have commitment to the project results?  Have capacities been created or strengthened in national partners at central and local level?  To what extent will the recommendations/outputs of the  project be taken on board by national and regional authorities? | Desk study; programme documentation; progress reports;  interviews |

## Annex 2. SIVET Monitoring Matrix

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal** | | | |
|  | **Long term desired effect** | | |
| *To facilitate access to vocational education and training by both promoting participation in VET as well as building the institutional capacity to support the inclusion of marginalized and socially excluded groups in the VET system.*  **Anticipated Outcome:**  *The labour market integration of socially excluded and marginalized groups in three selected municipalities is addressed through better access to VET and improved VET and employment services offered. Coordinated efforts on employment and social services across national institutions and between the central and local levels.* | | |
| **1** | **Outputs: Generate information for better identification and targeting of marginalised groups at risk of labour market exclusion** | | |
| **Activities** | **Indicators** | **Evidence of actual progress as a result of the work so far[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
| 1.1 Provision of technical assistance to the MoLSAEO | 1.1 Number of project proposals/fiches drafted and approved by donors (on behalf of MoLSAEO) | * Three project proposals drafted and submitted by the MoLSAEO to the ‘Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 |
| 1.2 Using LSMS 2008 data to undertake a study to identify marginalized groups | 1.2 Report on Vulnerable Groups of being excluded from labour market are completed and presented to key stakeholders | * Report finalized and disseminated to key stakeholders |
| 1.3 Conduct workshops on the use of statistical tools to identify socially excluded groups and assess their status over time, both at the national level and in the municipalities | 1.3 At least 30 local officials from Fier, Elbasan and Lezha trained in identification and data analysis of marginalized groups | * Activity completed; three workshops on data collection at local level conducted with participation of 56 representatives from administrative offices in the targeted regions. |
| 1.4 Support the collection of statistics at MoES on the children at risk of social exclusion within mainstream education | 1.4 Statistics on children collected and published by MoES | * Report finalized and disseminated to key stakeholders |
|  | 1.5 Conduct targeted surveys at the regional level for better identification of marginalized groups | 1.5 Identification/data collection on vulnerable groups at risk of labour market exclusion undertaken in the regions of Fier, Elbasan and Lezha. Report submitted | * Draft Report prepared and findings discussed with key stakeholders at local level and will be presented to the PSC in December. Report will be then finalized and translated into Albanian |
|  | 1.6 Conduct an assessment of rural labour market in the three targeted regions | 1.6 Report on labour markets outlining the major findings of this survey and highlights their policy implications. | * Tors developed. Administrative procedures for hiring a research company underway. Work anticipated to start in June 2013 |
| **2** | **Outputs: Enhance the institutional capacity of duty bearers in targeted regions[[2]](#footnote-2) to better design, monitor and evaluate policies, strategies and action-oriented employment programmes for marginalised groups** | | |
| **Activities** | **Indicators** | **Evidence of actual progress as a result of the work so far** |
| 2.1 Establish a national working group on VET for marginalized groups | 2.1 National WG established and meets in average on quarterly basis | * A National Working Group meeting was held on 3 May 2013 to discuss the policy document elaborated by the Local Working Groups |
| 2.2      Provide technical expertise to the working group for the preparation of *a policy document on social inclusion in the Labour Market, with recommendations to the relevant Albanian institutions* | 2.2 A draft policy document on social integration in the Labour Market submitted to the Project Steering Committee and to the National and Local Working Groups | * The draft policy paper was commented by the Local Working Groups in March 2013. * The improved version of the paper has been presented to the NWG in May 2013 |
| 2.3 Provide training to VT instructors and VE teachers on delivery modalities specific to the needs of the target groups | 2.3 At least 50 VET instructors and teachers in the regions of Fier, Elbasan and Lezha trained on delivery modalities specific to the needs of the target groups | * Three Training workshops are delivered with participation of 86 VET teachers form 5 Vet Schools in Fier, Elbasan and Lezha |
| 2.4 Support the publication of a practical guide for NES/Employment offices on how to address the needs of marginalized groups and establish a referral mechanism to VET | 2.4 A practical guide on how to address the needs of the marginalized groups published and launched | * The guide has been prepared and translated into Albanian in order to disseminate it to the stakeholders of the project. |
|  | 2.5 Training of NES counsellors on career orientation for marginalized groups | 2.5 At least 34 job counsellors trained  At least 15 stakeholders from the Local Working Groups take part in a study tour to AMS in Austria (indicatively to Graz in October 2012) | * A Training Needs Analysis has been conducted based on which a training plan has been designed. * Based upon the above-mentioned TNA, two modules have been set for all the job counsellors of the three NES regional Offices (September- October 2012 * A study visit was organised to Graz for 12 stakeholders, but nine took effectively part offering good practices and experiences that could be also replicated in Albania |
| **3** | Outputs: Raise awareness on fulfilment of legal obligation and enterprise social responsibility among relevant institutions[[3]](#footnote-3) to support the inclusion of marginalised people into the labour market | | |
| **Activities** | **Indicators** | Evidence of actual progress as a result of the work so far |
| 3.1 Organize one national and three regional roundtables to present the findings of the studies on marginalized groups, and use this as a platform for policy dialogue | 3.1 At least 1 round table at national level and 3 round tables in the three targeted municipalities are organised. Number of recommendations/ suggestions documented | * Three LWG are fully functioning. At the end of the project, a wrap-up national conference will be organised, presenting the achieved results. |
| 3.2 Undertake awareness raising activities | 3.2 Number of media broadcasting; Number of leaflets disseminated; Number of press releases issued | * A media campaign is designed to encourage the participation of marginalized groups in vocational education schools and training centres. The awareness raising campaigns will target the privet sector as well as the local authorities on their roles. |
| 3.3 Social responsibility (CSR) practices to facilitate awareness raising on the integration into the labour market of socially excluded groups | 3.3 At least 3 awareness raising activities organized in the targeted areas on fulfilment of legal obligation and enterprise social responsibility (CSR) | * 3 forums in three local communities are organised. Best practices in CSR shared. Awareness raised both in terms of legal obligations as well as enterprise social responsibility. |
| 3.4 Identify and promote best practices in the integration of marginalized groups in the labour market, including the roles played by the local authority and communities. | 3.4 Best practices on integration of marginalised groups in the labour market, are collected and shared with key stakeholders.  At least 3 regional workshops are conducted. | * Study on the best practices in Albania, in the region and in EU countries in the integration of marginalized groups in the labour market is completed. The findings discussed and validated in with LWGs in June 12 |
| **4** | Outputs: Strengthen the capacities of the service providers[[4]](#footnote-4) to design and extend employment programmes and services for socially excluded and marginalised groups | | |
| **Activities** | **Indicators** | Evidence of actual progress as a result of the work so far |
| 4.1 On the basis of the information collected on labour market demand and the identification of economic opportunities in the regions, develop feasibility studies and training proposals | 4.1 Skill Need Analysis conducted  Mapping of the training providers conducted  3 Feasibility studies conducted and published | * Data analysis completed and main findings will be presented to the SC on June 4, 2013 * Training supplier mapping completed and will be presented to the SC on June 4, 2013 * The SNA Methodology has been submitted on 14 February 2013 to MoLSAEO for endorsement * Report on the SNA and training providers mapping have been finalised and will be presented to the SC on June 4, 2013 |
| 4.2 Facilitate institutional linkages with social partners, community associations, and local development actors | 4.2 The 3 local Working Groups established and meets in average on quarterly basis | * Three Local Working Groups established and fully functioning. |
| 4.3 Conduct capacity building on the methodologies for job finding for marginalised groups, targeting local partners tasked with administering training | 4.3 Training on job creation for the three Local Working, coupled by technical assistance to draft sound project proposals for applying for funds | * Training on local development and project design conducted in the three targeted regions; * Project proposals, ready for financing, produced in the three regions. |
| 4.4 Employment programmes in the target municipalities | 4.4 number of proposals drafted by LWG in Lezha and approved by donors; other proposals drafted for national and international funds in the other two regions | * 11 project proposals drafted and ready to be presented to donors. |

## Annex 3. List of Interviews

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Name | Institution | Position |
| 1 | Anduena Shkurti | SIVET Project | Project Manager |
| 2 | Astrid Wein | Austrian Development Cooperation | Head of Office |
| 3 | Blendi Gremi | Elbasan Regional Council | Head of Strategic Development Department |
| 4 | Brikena Nallbani | National Employment Service | Deputy Director; Head of HR Department |
| 5 | Bukuroshe Manaj | “Ne Dobi te Gruas Shqiptare” NGO/ Service center | Director |
| 6 | Diamanta Vito | Municipality of Elbasan | Head of Strategic Development Department |
| 7 | Dolly Wittberger | Austrian Development Cooperation | Advisor |
| 8 | Dorina Rapti | Ministry of Education and Sports | (Former) head of VET Department |
| 9 | Eduart Shehu | Regional Employment Office Elbasan | (Former) Director |
| 10 | Eno Ngjela | UNDP Country Office | Programme Analyst |
| 11 | Ervin Saraci | Municipality of Elbasan | Head of Social Services Sector |
| 12 | Etleva Jaku | Regional Employment Office Lezha | Head of Statistics |
| 13 | Florenc Qosja | Austrian Development Cooperation | Deputy Head of Office |
| 14 | Francesco Panzica | ILO/SIVET | Chief Technical Advisor |
| 15 | Genta Prodani | Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth | Head of Employment Policy and Migration Department |
| 16 | Kastriot Sulkaj | Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Equal Opportunities | (Former) Deputy Minister |
| 17 | Linda Maçi | Lezha Regional Council | Head of Department of Integration and Development |
| 18 | Natalia Popova | ILO Budapest Regional Office | Employment Specialist |
| 19 | Yesim Oruc | UNDP Country Office | Country Director |
| 20 | Ylli Cabiri | Human Resources Development Project | SIVET Consultant |

## Annex 4. List of documents consulted

Strategic Documents

1. Government of Albania Programme 2013
2. [Government of Albania-UN Programme of Cooperation (2012-2016)](http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/goa-un-programme-of-cooperation-2012-2016-.html)
3. Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training 2007 – 2013, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; dsdc.gov.al
4. Strategy on Social Inclusion (cross-sectoral – dsdc.gov.al)

Project Management Documents

1. Project Steering Committee Minutes – Meeting 1-5
2. Project Steering Committee Reports 1-5
3. Project Document - Addressing social inclusion through vocational education and training (VET) & Project Budget
4. SIVET Gender Matrix
5. Comments on revised SNA, UNDP SI-VET, September 2013
6. SIVET Gender Consultancy Report

Project Outputs

1. A Bottom – up Approach in Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Men and Women at Risk of Social Exclusion Policy Paper
2. A Practical Guide for NES Staff to address the needs of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Groups through targeted Active Labour Market Programmes and Vocational Education and Training
3. Good practices in the integration of marginalized groups in the labour market
4. Information Gathering - Data Collection On Vulnerable Groups at Risk of Labour Market Exclusion (Regional Reports)
5. National Study on Rural Labour Market
6. Skill Needs Analysis
7. Social Inclusion in Education and Employment
8. Vocational Training for Individuals with Limited Abilities in Albania
9. Vulnerability in the Labour Market Report

## Annex 5. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| LOCAL EVALUATION CONSULTANT FOR SIVET PROJECT (FINAL EVALUATION) | |
| **Location :** | Tirana, ALBANIA |
| **Application Deadline :** | 04-Nov-13 |
| **Type of Contract :** | Individual Contract |
| **Post Level :** | National Consultant |
| **Languages Required :** | English |
| **Starting Date :** (date when the selected candidate is expected to start) | 12-Nov-2013 |
| **Duration of Initial Contract :** | 15 working days within a month |
| Background | |
| Albania has had an impressive growth and poverty reduction record in the past years. Prior to the financial crisis, which has impacted the world economy, Albania had achieved a growth rate of about 8% since 1998. Although many improvements have been achieved throughout the economy and poverty levels have been reduced significantly, vulnerability of some groups still remains an issue. General decreases in poverty have not equally affected the entire population, and certain groups have not been able to catch up. Vulnerable groups are at higher risk of social exclusion as well as exclusion from the labor market. The labour market is one of the most important channels through which social exclusion risks materialize. In Albania, high unemployment, and the deterioration of social protection and social services are legacies of a long transition. Addressing unemployment tackles two key dimensions of social exclusion, namely exclusion from economic life and from social services. Exclusion from the labour market leads to the loss of crucial social benefits, such as healthcare, pension and disability insurance, which increase the risk of long-term exclusion.  In the frame of the GoA-UN Project Cooperation for 2012 – 2016, the access of men and women to the labour market is identified as a key challenge. As such, UNDP’s “Addressing Social Exclusion through VET” project aims to address the capacities of key state institutions to develop and implement employment and vocation education and training (VET) policies and programmes. SIVET project ultimate aim is to promote coordination on employment and social services across national institutions and between the central and local levels. It further addresses the needs of the targeted disadvantaged groups through the design of employment programmes linked to social services in three selected target municipalities, and building the capacities of local structures to implement such programmes. The SIVET Project has been funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation and UNDP.    Main Objectives of SIVET Project   * Generation of information on vulnerable and marginalised groups at risk of labour market exclusion; * Capacity development of decision-makers and duty bearers to better design, monitor and evaluate policies, strategies and action-oriented employment programmes for marginalized groups; * Advocacy, policy dialogue, and awareness raising (including the private sector); * Design of employment programmes in target municipalities     Key Project Results to Date  Following the approval of the project document in March 2011, the Project has commenced in July 2011. In line with the set Project objectives, the key results achieved to date by the SIVET Project include:   * A national and 3 regional studies on vulnerable groups at risk of being excluded from labor market are completed and presented to key stakeholders * A Practical Guide and series of training for 56 representatives of National Employment Offices from the 3 regions to address the needs of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Groups through targeted Active Labour Market Projects and Vocational Education and Training has been accomplished * Good practices on social inclusion in Europe, in the Balkans, and in Albania have been collected and disseminated to all key stakeholders in the three selected regions. * 60 VET instructors and teachers in the 3regions are trained on delivery modalities specific to the needs of the target groups. * Skills Needs Analyses to identify labour market demand and economic opportunities has been carried out in all 12 regions * A policy document: a bottom – up approach in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion has been developed and presented to the key stakeholders at National level. * Awareness raising activities on fulfilment of legal obligation and enterprise social responsibility are organised   Key partners of the Project include the Ministry of Welfare and Youth and National Employment Service, Ministry of Education and Sports. Naturally the Project has active interaction with regional and local public officials and administrations in the targeted areas, the VET institutions as well as other local level stakeholders. | |
| Duties and Responsibilities | |
| This final evaluation exercise will:   1. Measure to what extent the SIVET project has fully implemented the activities, delivered outputs and attained outcomes and specifically measuring development results. 2. Generate substantive evidence based knowledge, by identifying best practices and lessons learned and make recommendations for improved future assistance to Albania.   **Evaluation scope and objectives**  More specifically the Consultant will:   * assess the relevance of the overall project and the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved; * assess the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project; * look at the project as a whole, identifying good practices and lessons learned to be used as a knowledge base for developing future technical assistance packages; * analyze strategies and implementation modalities so as to provide recommendations to be integrated in the planning process in Albania; * review the project sustainability and potential life-long impact on Albania’s social and economic conditions.   **Suggested Analytical Framework**  The key evaluation criteria revolve around the following aspects:  *Relevance:*The Consultant will assess the degree to which the project takes into account the local context and development problems. The evaluation will review the extent to which the objectives of the project are consistent with beneficiary requirements and needs, and assess whether the approach was coherent with the Country's policies and Poverty Reduction Strategy objectives. The evaluation will also review the extent to which the project design was logical and coherent, and it will assess the link between activities and expected results, and between results and objectives to be achieved.  *Effectiveness:* The evaluation will assess the extent to which the Project's objectives have been achieved, compared to the overall project purpose. In evaluating effectiveness it is useful to consider: I) if the planning activities were coherent with the overall objectives and project purpose; 2) the analysis of principal factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives.  *Impact:* The evaluation will assess the main impact effectively achieved by the SIVET Project in the context of reference.  *Sustainability:* The evaluation will assess the project capacity to produce and to reproduce benefits over time. In evaluating the project sustainability it is useful to consider to what extent intervention benefits will continue even after the project is concluded and the principal factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the project sustainability.    **Outputs and Deliverables**  The consultant shall produce the following deliverables through the course of the as­signment:  *Work plan* – within two days of the start of the assignment. The Consultant will submit the wok plan which will include a detailed approach and methodology and schedule. In par­ticular, the work plan will require a clear approach to data collection and work organization to examine the project in its full scope.  *Preliminary findings and draft evaluation report* – within 10 days of the start of the assignment, the Consultant will share a draft report. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate progress on the assignment and adherence to the TORs, and will identify any evaluation issues that may need further clarification before completion of the assignment.  *Presentation of findings* – within 12 days of the start of the assignment a presentation of findings and preliminary recommendations to key stake­holders will be carried out. The purpose of this session is to provide opportunity for initial validation and support fur­ther elaboration of the evaluators’ findings and recommendations.  *Final evaluation report* – within a week of receiving the consolidated comments from projects’ stakeholders, the Consultant will submit a final document that addresses relevant comments and provides comprehensive reporting on all elements of the assignment. This report will be submitted to the SIVET project team for clearance.  *Summary of the report***-** a two-page summary of the Project Evaluation Report should be provided in addition to the fully fledged evaluation report.    **Evaluation Report Outline**  As a minimum, the Evaluation Report (draft or final) shall include the following components (the exact structure of the report may be influenced by the project components and compo­nents of the Evaluation TOR):  Executive Summary; Introduction (Project outline; Methodology; Analysis; Findings; Best Practices and Lessons Learned; Recommendations; Relevant Annexes, for example: a. List of people interviewed; b. List of acronyms; c. Evaluation work plan and TOR; d. List of key reference documents)    **Evaluation methodology**  The evaluation will be carried out through the analysis of various sources of information including desk analysis, survey data stemming from the performance monitoring, as well as interviews with governmental counterparts and project partners and direct beneficiaries.    **Management arrangements, work plan and time frame**  *Desk review* - Review of key project documents (2 working days)  *Field visit* - The Consultant visits project sites, interviews stakeholders and beneficiaries and gathers additional information (5 working days)  *Report drafting* - The Consultant drafts the evaluation report (5 working days)  *Presentation of findings* - Workshop on the presentation of the draft report (1 working day)  *Final report* - The Consultant finalizes the report embedding the comments (2 working days)    It is expected that the Consultant will conduct consultations and meetings with representatives of the following institutions:   * UNDP Albania * Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth * National Employment Services * Ministry of Education and Sports * Select members of the Project National and Local Working Groups in Lezha, Elbasan and Fier * VE schools and VET centres in Lezha, Elbasan and Fier   **Evaluation Principles and Ethics**  The evaluation should be conducted in accordance with the principles laid out in UNDP Eval­uation Policy [http://www.undp.org/evaluation/ and](http://www.undp.org/evaluation/)<http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/> and the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” <http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines>. and the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” . and the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” . and the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” . and and the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” .   Implementation Arrangements  The national consultant will have overall responsibility for the production of deliverables, in particular the evaluation report, and is ultimately accountable for its quality. The consultant is also responsible for facilitating the communication to ensure adequate consultations with all stakeholders and for reporting to UNDP on progress.  The Consultant will report to An Evaluation Reference Group which will be established and which will encompass representatives from Government, the ADC, UNDP, and ILO. The Evaluation Reference Group will provide guidance in the development of the work plan and ensure the monitoring of satisfactory completion of eval­uation deliverables. In consultation with the Consultant and as requested, UNDP personnel will make available all relevant documentation and provide contact information to key project partners and stakeholders, and facilitate contact where needed.    **Timeframe for the Evaluation Procces**  The Evaluation is expected to start in November 2013 and have an expected total duration of 15 working days within a calendar month. The final work plan will be confirmed by the Consultant and upon submission of a draft work plan for discussion. | |
| Competencies | |
| * Knowledge on Social Inclusion and Labour Market strategies and approaches * Excellent analytical skills * Excellent communication and report-writing skills in English | |
| Required Skills and Experience | |
| Academic Qualifications/Education:   * Advanced Post-University Degree in International Development Cooperation, Economics or closely related field of studies   Experience:   * Substantial knowledge in the field of, and 7-10 years of experience with project evaluation in development cooperation contexts * Experience in international project evaluation * Prior organizational experience in the evaluation of projects executed by UNDP and ILO is an advantage   Language skills:   * Excellent working knowledge of English and Albanian.   **Evaluation of Applicants**  Individual consultant will be evaluated based on a cumulative analysis taking into consideration the combination of the applicants’ qualifications and financial proposal.  The award of the contract will be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:  a) responsive/compliant/acceptable, and  b) Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.  Only the highest ranked candidates who would be found qualified for the job will be considered for the Financial Evaluation.  *Technical Criteria* - 70% of total evaluation – max points: 70  Criteria A: Professional Experience on project / programme evaluation – max points: 35  Criteria B: Educational Background– max points: 25  Criteria C: Effective writing skills – max points: 10  *Financial Criteria* - 30% of total evaluation – max points: 30    **Application procedure**  Qualified and interested candidates are requested to apply no later than 4 November, 2013.  Please submit the following to demonstrate your interest and qualifications by explaining why you are the most suitable for the work:   * **Cover letter** explaining why you are the most suitable candidate for the advertised position. Please paste the letter into the "Resume and Motivation" section of the electronic application. * **Filled P11 form** (Personal History Form) for Service Contracts and Individual Contracts, including past experience in similar projects and contact details of referees (Blank form can be downloaded from [http://www.undp.org.al/index.php?page=bus\_center/vacancies ; please upload the P11 instead of your CV.](http://www.undp.org.al/index.php?page=bus_center/vacancies); please upload the P11 instead of your CV. * **Financial Proposal**\* - specifying a total lump sum amount for the tasks specified in this announcement. The financial proposal shall include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (number of anticipated working days and any other costs such as per diems, travel and incidental expenditures in project sites).   Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please make sure you have provided all requested documents.    UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that would take into account both the technical qualification of Individual Consultants as well as their financial proposals. The contract will be awarded to the candidate obtaining the highest combined technical and financial scores. UNDP retains the right to contact references directly.  Due to large number of applications we receive, we are able to inform only the successful candidates about the outcome or status of the selection process. | |

1. Disaggregated for women and men if this is possible or any other relevant dimensions of difference and/or social exclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Fier, Elbasan and Lezhë [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Same as above [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Same as above [↑](#footnote-ref-4)