

Evaluation Summary

Project to support Vocational Training in Vietnam

Country: **Vietnam**

Sector: **Vocational training**

Evaluator: **Ali Chelbi Consulting - ACC**

Date of the evaluation: **February–March 2019**

Key data on AFD's support

Project numbers: CVN 1127 & CVN 1127

Amount: €24.5 M + Grant: €500 K

Disbursement rate: as at May 2019: 93% for the loan and 100% for the grant

Signature of financing agreement: October 2012

Completion date: October 2019 (loan) and December 2017 (grant)

Total duration: 7 years



Context

In recent years, Vietnam has marked up strong economic growth, with a GDP increase of between 5% to 7%. This growth has created a significant need for human resources in the country's different productive sectors. To meet these needs, the Vietnamese government has crafted a vocational training development strategy (2012-2020), comprising two major lines of action: quantitative and qualitative. The first line aims to train 530,000 new students per year at lower and upper secondary levels and 1.7 million at elementary level. The second line of action has adopted several relevant principles such as quality, the schools' autonomy, compliance with international or regional standards, involvement of companies in the functioning of the schools, the creation of an Apprenticeship Support Fund, etc., as well as the principle of placing orders for training from the school in exchange for payment based on a predefined price list. The financing component nonetheless includes a highly constraining provision for the schools: as from 2019, they are required to reimburse 50% of the credits contracted for their investments, which may lead them to disinvest and turn towards less technical and less capital-intensive training.

In this framework, AFD financed a programme in 2012 to restructure 5 vocational training centres.

Actors and operating method

AFD's support concerns five training institutes: Nghi Son Vocational College (in Thanh Hoa), Vinh Phuc Vocational College of Agricultural Mechanics (CAM), Viet Xo Vocational College of Electromechanics and Construction (in Ninh Binh), Dung Quat Vocational College of Technology (in Dung Quat), Lilama Technical and Technological College 2 (in Dong Nai - Ho Chi Minh-City). The project is managed by a project management unit (PMU) within the General Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA).

Objectives

The project's objectives are to upgrade the colleges (except Nghi Son) to Centres of Excellence compliant with international standards. Eight higher technical certificate and vocational degree courses are to be developed in line with international standards, in the chosen streams, (equivalent to French EQF levels 5 & 6). AFD is financing hi-tech equipment with loans and using grants to fund technical assistance to adapt French programmes and train trainers.

Expected outputs

- Quality labels for the schools,
- Implementation of 5 new streams, developed in partnership with economic operators,
- Development of new management tools for the schools,
- Diversification of financing sources for the schools and continuing education,
- Increase in the number of students enrolled,
- Twinning with French schools to develop an active partnership between the two parties,
- Construction of a school building for Lilama 2 (e-building) designed as technological showcase for energy efficiency.

Performance assessment

As this is a mid-term evaluation, only three criteria have been taken into account,

Relevance

The project is relevant as it has maintained several aspects that are part of the objectives of the Vietnamese strategy, such as international recognition for the training or the quality labelling. It is also consistent with AFD's intervention strategy in Vietnam. The choice of French higher technical certificate and vocational degree levels is also relevant as the levels of these diplomas are well-matched to the needs of the Vietnamese economy. The project did not, however, focus sufficiently on integrating girls into vocational training, on support for schools to develop continuing training, on the principle of their autonomy, or on support for the DVET in understanding the concept of the international recognition of diplomas.

Effectiveness

The project achieved some of its objectives, such as the transfer of programmes, quality labelling and the modernisation of facilities and equipment.

The e-building was built to schedule, but its environmental performance has still to be demonstrated. The insertion rate of graduates was also taken into account and had a positive score even though this is not explicitly referred to in the project objectives and although it does not yet involve the streams financed by the project (the first wave of students has not yet graduated).

Project activities must be stepped up in order to achieve other objectives, such as introducing new management tools for schools, implementing partnerships with French schools, and increasing the number of students in the project-funded streams (even though the initial objective of 3,000 students trained was removed from the project), as well as the objective for the schools to generate their own resources, mainly via continuing education, which is still very underdeveloped.

Efficiency

The acquis in this domain are chiefly: the budget was respected and the PMU was well-organised and able to manage this type of project despite a substantial lack of resources. The least efficient aspects include delays in implementing activities, the student drop-out rate, and the trainers' engagement in relations with businesses.

Conclusions and lessons

AFD's support enabled progress to be made towards the reform, particularly on the questions of international certification of the programmes, partnership with businesses and modernisation of school equipment and facilities.

This evaluation led to two series of recommendations.

The first relate to short-term actions to be taken to ensure the sustainability of the current project and respond to the issues to be addressed with the 5 schools targeted by the project. The points to be worked on are:

- Increase the headcount via consultations with potential employers so that their recruitment needs can be better known.
- Conduct a survey with young people to get a better understanding of their opinions on the specialties proposed, as well as the attractiveness that vocational training has for girls.
- Support the centres in setting up an offer of continuing education, at least for some subjects where skill levels are high and where there is a modern infrastructure that can be made available to companies.
- Assistance to the 5 centres and DVET in designing an adapted business model that factors in the requirement that the centres partially self-finance using own revenues.
- The centres' information systems.

The second recommendations involve the directions to be taken for a new AFD programme in Vietnam and revolve around two major axes:

Axis 1: Governance: this involves support for DVET in order to make headway with implementing the continuing education reform and covering the following topics: the principle of the schools' autonomy, quality labels, overall financing of the system, macro-governance (State), meso (partner organisations) and micro (schools). This support would also call on the participation of pilot schools in implementing the concepts that will likely be developed.

Axis 2: Continuing education: this requires involving businesses more in continuing education practices and developing a related service offering at the level of the schools. This axis will include assistance to both parties in identifying training needs.