

Severance to Job Project - Component 2 – Building Capacity of the NES

Final Evaluation Report

**Austrian Development Agency
National Employment Service, Republic of Serbia
UNDP Serbia – Inclusive Development Cluster**

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Belgrade, 15 January 2010

Executive Summary

This evaluation was directed solely at the Severance to Job Project's Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES, and was asked to:

Analyze relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and other relevant indicators of success that will serve as the basis for the Project evaluation.

Evaluate the NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nation-wide active labour market programmes:

- Evaluate the development of capacities of NES Business Centers in: day to day working with redundant workers, mediation in new employment, crating, updating and using the database and integrating and coordinating with other active labour market measures and other departments within 29 NES Branch Offices.
- Evaluate the added value of engaging the additional Associates in the 10 NES Branch Offices who are directly working on the implementation of the Project in terms of the effects and results achieved.

The terms of reference required the assessment of Component 2 - Capacity Building of NES of the Project as relevant to NES. Component 2 addressed capacity issues in the Branch Offices. It did this through the engagement of Associates, the implementation of a program of activities which changed and improved Branch Office activities with employers and redundant workers, and the provision of a training program which improved the capacity of Branch Office personnel in a number of areas relevant to their work.

In assessing the *relevance* of Component 2 of the project, we see a clear relationship between the content of the delivered training program and the assessed training needs. While the content of the program evolved with time, there generally remained a correlation between the assessed needs early in the delivered program and the later variations, which were based on feedback and changes in the understanding of need. As well as the delivered training program itself, there were aspects of Project implementation, by the Project Team or directly by Associates, that contributed to a higher capacity within the NES. There are aspects of Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES that while useful and relevant to the Branch Offices will not have direct impact on NES policy and practice, because of their focus on Branch Offices. There are components of the training program (eg the action planning) which while useful were not specifically relevant to NES generally. It is largely the view of Branch Office staff and Directors that the training provided through Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES was not particularly relevant in *developing planning abilities/ capacities*.

The capacity building component of the project had an *impact* in a number of areas. Promotional/ presentation skills have been improved; a more pro-active approach to business has been established; activities of social dialogue are happening, with a particular focus on target groups; an approach emphasising 'quality' is in place, together with a desire for and anticipation of innovation; a more professional approach to work practice exists, encompassing improved communication and a better organisation of work. There are new knowledge, skills and attitudes in Branch Offices, and a higher level of commitment. There is a view in the Branch Offices that the Project has 'sped up' the transformation processes begun by NES in 2006, and there are clear indications that this view is correct, but it is not possible at this time to be certain. Change has happened in some Branch Offices in how they approach their responsibilities, and their clients; a large number of Associates and Directors have increased their skill levels and developed new attitudes. Variations in impact has depended on many factors, but mostly the attitude toward change from Business Office Directors and staff

involved in StJ Project training and project activities. If the innovations and changes described become a part of NES practice nationwide, in the form of NES policy and NES approaches, then it will be possible to attribute impact to the Project. But it is important for these changes to become more widespread, and more firmly based in NES policy and practice.

The greatest influence of the Project can be seen in implementation approaches for ALMP. To a certain extent, Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES changed the attitude of NES officers, and of Branch Offices. Now, according to feedback from the field, ‘NES directly knocks on employment doors’. ‘Through the implementation of the StJ Project, we have managed to better organize the implementation of our regular activities and better to make a division of tasks and duties.’ ‘The StJ Project helped us to get out of our office and do fieldwork.’ These are significant comments, as they indicate a more proactive approach within the Branch Office to client groups and a change in the way the Branch Office approaches its work in general – referred to as being ‘client-oriented’.

While there is not a complete consensus in the NES, there is general agreement that the Project’s capacity building program improved the ability of Branch Offices to implement initiatives with the unemployed, particularly in how initiatives were promoted, in communication with clients and employers and in the general work practices in Branch Offices related to field work with beneficiaries and employers.

There was little comment about the role of Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES, in changing, effecting or influencing NES monitoring processes and procedures, and the delivered training had a very small component on monitoring/ evaluating. While this did not effect the actual monitoring of Component 1, the actual work with redundant workers, which was an on-going part of StJ Project implementation, from comments in interviews and responses to questionnaires, it can be argued that Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES, did not work on developing capacity in the monitoring and evaluating of ALMP. This is unfortunate, as it was indicated as a training need, and there is a qualitative difference between ‘monitoring of ALMP’ and ‘evaluating effects and impacts’, which was an assessed training need not addressed in the training program. The NES would well benefit from a monitoring and evaluation structure (including qualitative processes) in the field that would contribute important information and feedback on the design, implementation and effectiveness of ALMP. Branch Office activities in monitoring and evaluation can add significantly to NES effectiveness in these areas.

In delivery of Component 2, the Project Team was *effective* in its activities, in addressing issues and in achieving outcomes. In particular it:

- engendered a team dynamic and approach;
- developed a proactive approach to work with employers;
- when confronted with difficulties in implementation based on initial planning was able to make the necessary changes that ensured the achievement of results;
- developed the skills of Associates.

In assessing the *effectiveness* of Component 2 of the Project, the evaluation team has comments in three areas:

- there was no plan for nor effective dissemination of training beyond those Associates who were directly involved;

- there was too strong an emphasis on the impact of the training on the Project, and not enough emphasis on how the training can and should impact on NES more generally;
- the training should not add a burden to the work and experience of the Associates, but make them more effective generally. There was a perception that the Project was not improving knowledge, skills and attitudes but was adding to work load.

The activities of Strategic Marketing related to the design, development and use of a database at NES offices for the StJ Project was a failure. Comments on the design and functionality of the database demonstrated a high level of disappointment. As a result, for the purposes of tracking participation in StJ, and for monitoring the impact of Component 1 of the Project, existing NES systems and the existing NES database were used.

The project's *efficiency* is assessed as having been at a high level. The project team was clearly professional, timely, skilful and courteous in their approach to and relationship with the NES, and this approach was clearly appreciated.

Sustainability of the contribution of Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES to NES's ALMP implementation will be dependent to a large extent on the individuals involved, and the approach and flexibility of the Business Offices, rather than on the NES structural framework. There are specific Offices, and particular Associates who are more likely than others to continue to work along the lines established during the project: work with employers, making use of social dialogue and continuing the development of media and presentation skills, and developing innovative approaches for target groups. Whether or not this is sustainable at a wider level in the organisation is dependent on the on-going transformation processes within NES, and the perceived relevance of StJ to this transformation process. There are indications from NES, including statements from the final conference, that indicate an intent at NES to continue with these changes – time will be needed to determine whether or not this intent becomes a reality.

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1 Introduction

The intent of this consultancy, as stated by UNDP, was to produce a final evaluation of Component 2 – Building Capacity of NES, of the Severance to Job project, assessing the outcomes of the activities implemented and provide lessons learned for the future. For the purpose of the evaluation, UNDP engaged two consultants (the evaluation team) and provided them a framework for their work in the form of a Terms of Reference, which can be found in full at Annex 1.

The initial step taken by the evaluation team was a review of all relevant project documentation. The key documents reviewed, and which provided the framework for the approach of the evaluation team, were:

- Severance to Job – Project Proposal for the Austrian Development Agency.
- Assessment of Skills and Competences of Counsellors in NES Business Centres and Technical Conditions for Implementation of ‘Severance to Job’ Project.
- Assessment of Capacity of NES to Implement the ‘Severance to Job’ Active Labour Market Programme.
- Evaluation of the Progress in the Work of NES Business Centres within the *Severance to Job* Project.
- Mid-term Evaluation Severance to Job Project.

Subsequent to the document review, and conversations with project personnel, a detailed plan of analysis was developed. The plan of analysis was designed to address two key criteria:

- The evaluation Terms of Reference.
- Indicators of success as detailed in project documentation.

There were no indicators of success for Component 2 in the Project Proposal (see proposal page 32 and 33). The only specific indicators relate to Component 1, which is the subject of a separate evaluation. The evaluation team therefore needed to develop an understanding of the project’s intent, and relevant indicators of success, from other sources.

The best indicators within existing project documentation were provided in the initial *Assessment of Skills and Competences of Counsellors in NES Business Centres and Technical Conditions for Implementation of ‘Severance to Job’ Project* Report (Todorovic et al March 2007), as it relates directly to the skills and competencies of counsellors in NES Business Centres. As this is the start of the *thread* of project documentation from assessment to design to implementation to monitoring to evaluation and reporting, it also made sense to use this report as the benchmark for indicators. The report discusses/ emphasises the following areas:

- Training for redundant workers.
- Informing, motivating and providing assistance to redundant workers.
- Informing and motivating potential employers and public.
- Mediation between redundant workers and employers.
- Database.
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation of impacts of the project.

A second key document, *Evaluation of the Progress in the Work of NES Business Centres within the Severance to Job Project*, was the result of work undertaken in late 2007 and reported on in January 2008, and focuses specifically on improvements in NES capacity in:

- Implementing the Project information campaign and organising info-seminars for potential employers.
- Rendering advisory and motivation services to redundant workers.
- Job matching aimed at matching redundant workers with interested employers by means of organizing job fairs, individual and group meetings.
- Collecting and preparing documentation for self-employment.
- Preparing individual contracts on investment of severance pay into new employment and employment contracts on the basis of prepared contract models, and monitoring of delivery of individual contracts.
- Preparing individual contracts on allocation of self-employment funds.
- Improving the procedure for collecting data on redundancies and employers' needs, maintaining the data base, data analysis and forecasting of future labour market developments.
- Improving the procedure for work with redundant workers and participating in the trainings aimed at building NES capacities.
- Monitoring Project beneficiaries.
- Reporting and monitoring Project implementation and evaluating Project impact.

In other words, this document extended the definitions of key areas of capacity but maintained the strong thread with the initial key indicator areas from the *Assessment of Skills and Competences* report. It makes sense then for this evaluation to follow up on the work of these two assessments, maintaining this strong thread between the content and intent of the initial assessment and the mid-term evaluation.

The evaluation assessed the content and results of the provided training to determine if:

- The training program responded to assessed needs.
- The capacity of NES personnel has been built by participation in the training.

Further, beyond this analysis of the training per se, the evaluation analysed the capacity of NES Business Centres to:

- Provide relevant and useful training for redundant workers.
- Inform, motivate and provide assistance to redundant workers.
- Inform and motivate potential employers and the public.
- Mediate (act as a bridge between) redundant workers and employers.
- Create, update and use a database (and to assess the value of this database in the longer term for NES activities).
- Monitor, evaluate and report on project activities, outcomes and impacts.
- Integrate and coordinate with other active labour market measures and other departments (evaluation ToR).

Finally, the evaluation will look into the added value of engaging the additional Associates in the 10 NES Branch Offices (evaluation ToR).

The approach of the evaluation team was both quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitatively, a matrix of all provided training and all participation in the training from each NES Centre was created. The matrix provided an objective picture of participation, in the exact program presented, for comparison with the qualitative interviews. Aspects of the matrix were analysed, and tables of this analysis are provided at Annex 5.

Qualitatively, a series of questions were addressed to relevant people. The following details the steps undertaken:

- Preparatory work.
- Preparation of questionnaires to be provided to NES Branch Office Directors.
- Preparation of interview questions for Branch Office personnel. The questions are reflective and interpretive in nature, to assist in the analytical process. A range of questions has been developed, covering each of the areas designated in the evaluation ToR and the plan of analysis. The interview process involved a series of three, 30-minute interviews with each of 10 offices. The complete set of interviews was organised to ensure a range of qualitative discussions across all designated areas, to ensure adequate feedback from each office and about each designated area.
- Distribute questionnaire to the Directors of all NES Branch Offices.
- Selection of 10 offices on which to concentrate the interview process.
- Identification of people within the 10 offices to participate in the interview process.
- 30 x 30 minute interviews with identified people in each office.
- Interview with NES Directorate.
- Interview with MoERD.

The analysis was based on the documentation provided, with an emphasis on following the project 'thread' from initial assessment through proposal to activities and then evaluation and reporting. These materials, together with the related commentary from project staff and NES personnel in their responses to the questionnaire, assisted the evaluation team:

- To evaluate how the proposal responded to the assessment.
- To evaluate how the implementation addressed the assessment and the proposal.
- To evaluate 'the NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nation-wide active labour market programs' (evaluation ToR).
- To evaluate 'the development of capacities of NES Business Centres in: day to day working with redundant workers, mediation in new employment, creating, updating and using the database and integrating and coordinating with other active labour market measures and other departments within 29 NES Branch offices' (evaluation ToR).
- To analyse the above in the context of relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

2 Analysis Of The Project

This section provides an analysis of the project according to the requirements of the Terms of Reference and the evaluation team's own plan of analysis (which is found at Annex 2). The analysis draws heavily on the responses of NES and MoERD personnel, together with the Project Document, training assessment documents and the mid-term evaluation report. Responses of NES Business Office Directors, relevant NES office staff, representatives of the NES Directorate and representatives of the MoERD are quoted throughout the document. These quotes are not attributed here – all source documents including attribution of all quotes found here are available from the evaluation team.

2.1 Evaluation of the development of capacities of NES Business Centres

One of the key questions to be addressed by this evaluation is, 'was there development of capacity in NES Business Centres as a result of the work of the Project?' This question must be answered from the perspective of the level of capacity prior to the Project. In evaluating the development of capacity, it is important to have a clear understanding of the assessed areas of need for the building of capacity within the NES Branch Offices, given that needs assessments, project planning and program content and implementation should correlate.

The initial report: *Assessment of Capacity of NES to Implement the 'Severance to Job' Active Labour Market Programme* indicated two key areas of priority related to Component 2 – capacity within NES Branch Offices:

... should be directed to the improvement of procedures and methods for working with redundant workers. The Central Project Team should also provide NES staff with a questionnaire for employers and redundant workers based on which their motivation and perceptions concerning the project offerings should be surveyed. Data base on employers needs should be created and additional trainings provided for NES staff engaged on the Project.

... should be provided during the inception and early implementation phase to secure that project procedures are applied uniformly throughout the country. In addition, trainings should help local staff improve their presentation skills (to present project to redundant workers and employers), conduct preliminary analysis of interested redundant workers and in regard to legal issues (how to shape template contracts to meet individual needs of employers and redundant workers).

The more detailed analysis found in the *Assessment of Skills and Competences* report, provides a clear direction for the capacity building program of the project:

Based on conducted survey aiming at assessing skills and competences of NES counsellors and technical conditions in their branch offices business centres for implementation of "Severance" to Job Project we may conclude the following:

... the most needed are those in the following fields:

- data analysis and forecasting future labour market trends
- developing strategies how to better approach potential employers and how to productively use severance for job
- adjusting contracts' formats to specific needs of redundant workers and employers to facilitate signing of individual agreements
- informing on Project options and details, including legal assistance offered by the Project
- organizing information seminars for potential employers (options offered by the Project, advantages of employing redundant workers, legal issues)

The needs for several types of trainings received moderately high average scores. These are the following:

- procedures of data collection on redundant workers and labour market demand
- psychological and motivational assistance (long-term advantages of investing severance in job swaps)
- evaluation of Project impact and effects
- using and maintenance of data base
- continual monitoring of contracts signed
- continual reporting to Central Project Team on implementation of Project activities

A ‘plan of training’ was developed by the report’s authors, based on the analysis, and composed of the following components:

Project goals and implementation of project activities

- Options offered by the Project including information on legal assistance.
- organizing information seminars for redundant workers.
- organizing information seminars for potential employers focused on advantages of employing redundant workers.

Legal issues and monitoring of signed contracts

- getting detailed information on contract formats.
- adjusting contract formats to specific conditions in order to prepare individual contracts for job swaps.
- continual monitoring of contracts signed.

Motivating redundant workers to intensify their communications and start cooperation with potential employers

- psychological and motivational assistance to redundant workers and informing them on short-term and long-term advantages of a decision to invest severance for obtaining a new job.
- developing strategies how to better approach potential employers and how to productively use severance for job swaps.

Data collecting, data analysing and maintenance of data base

- designing and implementing procedures of data collection connected with redundant workers and employers’ needs.
- using and maintaining data base.
- data analysing and forecasting labour market trends.

Reporting, monitoring and evaluation of Project activities

- continual reporting to CPT on Project activities.
- evaluation of Project effects and impacts.

This ultimately led to the Project’s own training plan, described in the following list of actual training sessions delivered:

- Project goals and implementation of projects activities.
- Legal issues and adjusting template contracts.
- Capacity building in presenting the Project to redundant workers and potential employers and encouraging their cooperation.
- Organizing Employment Fairs.
- Active Approaches to Job Searching.
- Project implementation guidance.
- Data collecting, maintenance of data base, data analyzing, monitoring and reporting (including Project Implementation Procedures overview).
- Retreat on analyzing positive and negative aspects of NES and CPT cooperation
- Good practice presentation.
- Mediation techniques between potential beneficiaries and Presentation techniques.
- Successful organization of round tables.
- PR Seminar for NES Branch Offices staff.
- Introduction to the new concepts of the STJ Project.
- Project progress and plans.
- Project implementation guidance to newly formed Branch Offices.
- Activity planning and monitoring the planned progress.
- PR Seminar for NES Branch Offices staff.
- Development of capacities of NES staff in active labour market measures targeting professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.
- Capacity development in the field of planning and implementing active labour market measures for mentors.
- Capacity development in the field of planning and implementing active labour market measures for mentors (Advanced).
- Study tour – Slovakia.
- Study tour – Austria.
- Public and Media Appearance.

We return to the key question: ‘was there development of capacity in NES Business Centres as a result of the work of the Project?’ With some minor exceptions, the training program passes the first test in relation to this question - there is a clear link, a clear relationship between the content of the delivered training program and the assessed training needs as summarised above. The content of the program evolved with time – there was a direct correlation between the assessed needs early in the delivered program and some variation later, based on feedback and changes in the understanding of need.

Business Office Directors were generally felt that the training was organised so Associates could have ‘practical application in situations they can expect to face’ and that their staff ‘gained the knowledge and skills necessary for practical project realization’. The emphasis of comments from Directors was that the training contributed to better project implementation,

with a secondary emphasis on their value to on-going work with the unemployed and with ‘employers in an active relationship with the NES’.

Did the training attract participation from NES staff; was it seen as relevant and in so being, did staff attend?

Annex 5 provides a number of charts that demonstrate the level and consistency of participation in the training program. The tables at Annex 5 also provide information on the breakdown of participation by gender and participation by management and staff. Participation levels remained high throughout the training program, and included generally high participation rates across NES Branch Offices, indicating an on-going interest from NES staff in the program.

We turn then to the third test in relation to the key question – that of the quality and effectiveness of the training program. We will address this question against the whole of the training/ capacity building program, but with a particular focus on the areas specified in the Evaluation ToR – the long-term capacity within NES to plan, implement and monitor nationwide, active labour-market programs:

- Day to day work with redundant workers.
- Mediation in new employment.
- Creating, updating and using a database.
- Integrating and coordinating with other active labour market measures and other departments within the 29 NES Branch Offices.

2.2 Analysis of NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nation-wide active labour market programmes

2.2.1 Plan

The National Employment Service (NES) is a centralised organisation with a branch office structure that implements the policies and programs as established by the Directorate. General program directions, as well as the specific focus and detail of active labour market programmes, are determined at a national level, by the Directorate with advice and input from the Ministry, particularly in relation to the nature and selection of target groups. ‘The Directorate develops procedures for ALMP, NES Branch Offices do not have influence on this process.’ ‘Every year NES Branch offices submit their requests for the ALMP. Based on received requests, the NES Directorate approves a quota per each branch office for the ALMP. There are no local/regional funds for ALMP.’ ‘The Branch offices implement ALMP for 6-9 months. After this period there is a possibility for revision of quotas and money can flow from one branch office to another (where demand is higher).’

It is the view of NES Branch Office Directors and their staff that existing planning processes, ie those in place within NES prior to the StJ Project are appropriate and effective. Although not universally agreed, it is also largely the view of Branch Office staff that the training provided by the Component 2 of the StJ Project was not particularly relevant in developing planning abilities/ capacities. ‘The project did not have impact on regular planning processes.’ ‘The StJ Project did not have much impact on regular ALMP programs. They are well established and procedures are well developed. There was an agreement with UNDP to use these procedures on Severance to Job.’

Branch Office Directors generally were of a view that the training on action planning was relevant and appropriate. Indeed, this training was deemed by Directors as one of the most important and relevant sessions.

One employment counselor participated on the training for action planning and development of action plans. The training was at the end of the project, and useful in the sense of setting adequate objectives and plan of activities that need to be fulfilled in the following period in order for the StJ Project to be successfully implemented at the level of Branch Office, with all the available material and human resources of the Branch Office. The training was also of an educational character and applicable for action planning in general.

This training however, while interesting and useful, is not directly relevant to the planning processes of the NES. It is the one training commented on as likely to have a wider influence on participants, ie that it can be valuable outside StJ and outside NES activities, but at the same time is not specifically relevant to ALMP activities. In any case, it was held later in the StJ Project timeframe, meaning its impact on StJ Project implementation was limited.

2.2.2 Implement

There is a more widely held view about the influence Component 2 – Building Capacity of NES, had on implementation of ALMP, and that the StJ Project influenced program implementation in a number of offices. One Office commented on how the implementation of ‘regular activities’ was better organised as a result of the implementation of the Project, as they improved their capacity to assign tasks and duties. Possibly of greater importance is a change in attitude – a change in how Offices approach field work.

The StJ Project has changed the attitude of NES officers. Now NES directly knocks on employment doors. In general, since 2006 NES has achieved great changes (before 2006 the main duty of NES was to register unemployed persons). With the project, NES has sped up an internal transformation process toward being a client-oriented agency.

The StJ Project helped us to get out of our office and do fieldwork. NES staff visited companies and did preventive promotion for potential redundant workers through group sessions.

There is a significant point made in a number of comments about a change from a passive approach to an active one – ‘The project created a big change among NES workers - to be more active in seeking cooperation and synergy with other parties.’

These are significant comments, as they indicate:

- A more proactive approach within the Branch Office to client groups.
- A change in the way the Branch Office approaches its work in general – referred to as being ‘client-oriented’.

These fundamental changes were described in a small number of offices, and generally where there were project-dedicated Associates and where Component 2 of the Project had most influence. Important, but less significant change was more widespread. There was a widely held view that the Project’s promotional approaches were particularly effective, including the use of media, employment fairs and roundtable sessions. Comment was made on the insistence by the Project Team of quality promotional materials, and one Office in particular had success with television:

In cooperation with the local TV, the NES office made a TV show *Best Practices In Re-Employment/Self-Employment In Zlatobor District*, which by examples describe

concrete results achieved through the StJ Project. The show has achieved great impact in informing beneficiary groups and was broadcast many times.

Happiness with the form and content of the Project's employment contract templates was universal.

Branch Office personnel were questioned on the relevance of the training program to their work, and responses would indicate that 'the most useful was the training course on motivation and planning since during that course the action plan that could be undertaken in order to promote the StJ Project was created.' It is noted also that 'the needs on the local level were according to the problem solution suggested by the project, so the end users (employers and redundant workers) were satisfied'.

It was agreed that relevance went beyond the Project, as 'how to create an action plan will, for sure, be useful in future work', and 'During seminars, employees within the Branch Office were engaged on the StJ Project, gained knowledge and skills necessary for practical project realization, monitoring the results but also knowledge and skills necessary for conducting the job within the dealings of the NES, which have some relation with project work.

Not every office had the same opinion, although this is not surprising given the quality of inputs and outputs varied across the Branch Offices. Concerns were expressed about the Project causing 'a heavy burden on associates in terms of their regular duties, so they did not have enough time to dedicate to project implementation', although this is more an issue of work organisation at a Branch Office, and developing the understanding that *building capacity* in the organisation ultimately provides benefits in relation to 'regular duties'. Also not surprising was the view expressed by some that the 'training courses where the work in mediation was presented (were not relevant) because the Associates involved in project implementation were already familiar with the work' - it is not anticipated that there would be universal agreement with the content or quality of the program.

But the capacity building component did influence, change and modify the work of Branch Offices, particularly in how they approached potential employers, in how they presented ALMP and in how the coordinated and communicated within and between offices.

It is possible that the most significant change is in relation to employers, with Associates now approaching businesses rather than waiting for approaches themselves. There were comments from a number of Offices that this was a most fundamental change, and indicative of the transformation processes that have been going on within the NES for several years. Associated with this change, and complementing it, are the presentation skills and approaches used in the Project. The capacity of Associates to sell ('the NES now works as the agency for selling unemployed persons') the unemployed ALMP has been improved, and Associates have a feeling that they are better able to promote initiatives. It was also expressed that there are higher levels of innovation in the thinking and actions of Associates.

There was, during the Project, improvements in activity-related communication within and between Offices. These improvements, although Project-related, have the potential to assist with better organisation and coordination of ALMP.

2.2.3 Monitor

NES monitoring procedures are 'mostly desk based, with fieldwork only in critical cases', where there are apparent breaches or issues to be addressed. These monitoring processes are 'based on NES Procedures', with the 'first monitoring is done 3 months after signing of a contract and then on a 6-month basis. Generally then, as with planning processes, the Offices follow established procedure, and are of the view that these procedures work.

There was little comment about the role of Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES, in changing, effecting or influencing NES monitoring processes and procedures, and the delivered training had a very small component on monitoring/ evaluating. While this did not effect the actual monitoring of Component 1, the actual work with redundant workers, which was an on-going part of StJ Project implementation, from comments in interviews and responses to questionnaires, it can be argued that Component 2 – Capacity Building of NES, did not work on developing capacity in the monitoring and evaluating of ALMP. This is unfortunate, as it was indicated as a training need, and there is a qualitative difference between ‘monitoring of ALMP’ and ‘evaluating effects and impacts’, which was an assessed training need not addressed in the training program. The NES would well benefit from a monitoring and evaluation structure (including qualitative processes) in the field that would contribute important information and feedback on the design, implementation and effectiveness of ALMP. Branch Office activities in monitoring and evaluation can add significantly to NES effectiveness in these areas.

2.2.4 Development of capacities of NES Business Centres

There is no clear agreement across Branch Offices about the relevance and effectiveness of the StJ Project’s capacity building for day-to-day work with redundant workers. The Project was particularly significant in some Offices as it ‘changed the attitude of NES Officers’. The change in attitude was a direct result of changes in process, as Associates now ‘directly knock on employers doors’, an activity that was found to be both useful and effective. This change in approach was seen as contributing to a facilitation of an ‘internal transformation processes to a client-oriented agency’. What is important is to see the relation between a change in approach and a change in attitude. The Project assisted Associates to have a different approach – it improved their capacity in delivery of ALMP – and in doing so changed perceptions within the NES of how to effectively communicate with clients.

The specific capacity building done in presentation skills was important in this regard. Associates felt they gained new ways of preparing and delivering presentations on NES services, and indeed the actual use of these skills with the media, in direct contact with employers, and in round table sessions and other social dialogue activities confirmed with Branch Office staff the value of these new skills.

It is necessary to make reference to the social dialogue processes, as it was felt the Project created ‘a good model for social dialog. There were employment programs even before the Project but the Project has achieved excellent results in imposing social dialog at the local/ regional level.’ Offices felt the positive effect of the Project’s implementation processes.

Through the StJ Project, 20 redundant workers from Koža (leather) factory wanted to join their severance payments together and buy part of the company. The idea was to buy shares and continue with work in a part of the factory. Dialogue was established between NES, the Uzice Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Development Agency, the Municipality of Uzice and others. There were several meetings held in resolving this issue, during which some irregularities over the ownership of the factory premises and land ownership were discovered, as a result of which the redundant workers were advised not to invest their money in the factory. Although the initial idea was not implemented, through these activities NES is helping to initiate and coordinate social dialog among various stakeholders on issues related to employment.

The practice, used in the Project, of ‘listening to target group needs is good for creation and designing new projects’ was deemed significant as it can ‘create changes in attitudes and techniques in approaching target groups’.

Branch Office Directors made particular mention of the value of the training session on mediation techniques with workers and potential employers. It was felt this training was 'concrete and practical'. This was important as there are 'no special procedures how to work with redundant workers. NES officers do not have responsibility or duty to visit companies that might have redundant workers. In many cases the companies did not accept the NES visit.' Developing capacity in approaches to workers and employers creates possibilities for better outcomes with ALMP.

Change, and improvements in capacity were not universal as a result of the capacity building component of the Project. Much depended on specific individuals (whether Associates or Directors) and specific Branch Offices. Significant change occurred in four Offices, change that is likely to be on-going, and a number of other Offices expressed demonstrated levels of change as a result of and satisfaction with the Project. In some Offices the Project, its activities and the associated training were seen as an imposition, outside the framework of the duties of NES officers and 'not useful'. One comment was that Project training 'had helped in organization of promotional activities, but there were no offered innovative solutions'. Another felt that there was 'little opportunity to apply much of the training in practice due to lack of employers interested in hiring redundant workers, and the implementation of the StJ Project in some places was late'. Another felt the capacity of Branch Offices was 'not developed only by this project. The personal attitudes of NES BO directors and key workers are also crucial for building capacity'.

A number of comments were made on the timing of the Project, and components of the training program. While it is not in the scope of this evaluation to address Component 1, the fact that activities with redundant workers were seen to have come too late, and to have been in some ways inappropriately focused, had an impact on the sense of relevance of the training provided to Branch Office staff – it appeared less relevant in this context.

Activity 24 - Creating, improving and updating databases on redundant workers and prospective employers and Activity 25 - Processing and extrapolating data on redundant workers and employers needs were related to improvements in capacity within the Branch Offices on the collection and analysis of data on redundant workers and employers. Specifically, the activities were to collect data continuously on redundant workers and potential employers – maintaining up-to-date databases on both sides willing to take part in the project and processing and analysing the collected data on redundant workers and potential employers. These activities were intended not only to help matching workers with employers, but also to strengthen NES capacity to analyse data and predict the situation on the labour market in Serbia.

The database training had its supporters and its detractors, although with Branch Office staff it was not generally mentioned. One however was not overly impressed.

I remember the 2-day training on databases - mostly it was focused how to import data into an excel sheet.

When asked which training was the most useful, Branch Office Directors specifically indicated 'Data collection, data base maintenance, data analysis, monitoring and reporting'. Another said the data collection, data base maintenance training course 'contributed to successful management of the database of the project users, monitoring the results and regular reporting.'

As opposed to the database training, the activities of Strategic Marketing related to the design, development and use of a database at NES offices for the StJ Project was a failure. Comments on the design and functionality of the database (one is shared below) demonstrated a high

level of disappointment. As a result, for the purposes of tracking participation in StJ, and for monitoring the impact of Component 1 of the Project, existing NES systems and the existing NES database were used.

Strategic Marketing created a database based on a survey. The database included (1) businesses/employers interested in redundant workers, and (2) potential redundant workers. The data included in the database were not relevant and in many cases they were inaccurate. Only about 50% of provided data was valid. Many businesses/employers included in the database claimed they were not consulted nor informed about the database. It was similar with the potential redundant workers. The database was developed later on by data collected in the field. At the end of project implementation the database was delivered to the Directorate. After the project the database is not active anymore and no-one is using it.

The evaluation was directed to specifically address the question of the integration and coordination of other active labour market measures and other departments within the 29 NES Branch Offices. In ‘changing the attitude of NES officers’, and in advancing the ‘internal transformation processes toward a client-oriented agency’, the Project also contributed to an improvement in internal communication and cooperation in Branch Offices. ‘There is a good cooperation established through the StJ Project. Personal contacts established through the StJ Project have helped and advanced cooperation on other NES activities.’ ‘Today, every NES Associate is informed about the work of their colleagues and the StJ Project contributed a lot in that regard’. It is possible that this change in internal communication will have an on-going effect in the approaches taken by Offices, and in the quality and effectiveness of their work.

The Project also improved communication and coordination between offices, however in a mostly informal way. ‘Cooperation with other NES Branch offices was done through formal and informal conversations during seminars and trainings. There are some elements of informal cooperation between NES Branch offices.’ Given the vertical nature of the NES structure, with the Directorate at the top and communication generally functioning between Branch Offices and the Directorate, it is not surprising that ‘communication with other Branch Offices is on an ad hoc basis’. Where there was deemed to be capacity to focus on the Project, ie in those Offices with dedicated Project personnel, communication is more structured and more effective, but in any case more ‘ad hoc and personal’ than structured. It would be worth the consideration of NES to improve the structure of communication between Offices, particularly in relation to *practice*. The effectiveness of the implementation of ALMP in Offices could be improved if communication was facilitated directly between Offices, enabling the more effective spread of innovative and successful approaches.

The evaluation raised questions about the quality of the dissemination of the provided training within any given office. There are examples of Branch Offices giving specific attention to the dissemination of the knowledge and skills from the training to staff within the Office ‘knowledge achieved during training was transferred to colleagues orally’, but as with a number of other aspects of the Project, these approaches to sharing were dependent on individuals involved in particular Branch Offices, more than on a determined structure from the Project - ‘There is no a formal procedure of disseminating information or reporting after training participation.’

Knowledge from trainings has been disseminated only if some of the colleagues, who did not participated at the training, asked to be acquainted with the training. There were no presentations or other methods of dissemination of information from trainings.

There was a view expressed in interviews that a training session would not be relevant to persons not attending that session, and therefore no need to have a dissemination plan or

approach. There is no indication that thought was given in project design and implementation processes to the question of dissemination of StJ Project training within a given Branch Office, or more generally to NES personnel who did not participate in any given training.

While there is relatively strong agreement across each of the areas of discussion – agreement on appropriateness of content and quality of delivery - there was no unanimity. There is however a loose correlation between the quality of responses, the positive nature of responses and the relative success of the Project in the field. During project implementation it became clear that the addition of the 10 Associates to work directly on the Project added value to implementation processes. To quote from the *Mid-term Evaluation*:

However, by far the most important capacity building measure was the project-financed hiring of 10 new associates in an equal number of NES branch offices.

...

The results that are relevant to assessing progress relating to Goal 2 are unequivocal.

... 463 out of 665 placements of workers in some form of employment (either with a firm or in self-employment) occurred in the ten branch offices with project-supported staff. Virtually all (114 out of 115) placements of redundant workers in employment with a private-sector firm occurred in these ten branch offices.

An analysis of responses to the qualitative interviews of this evaluation supports this assessment, either on the basis of the fact of the existence of a dedicated Associate or based on the quality of the particular employee. Associates have been credited with changes to work models within Offices that go beyond the project, with the proactive approach to potential employers specifically mentioned.

It is also specifically mentioned that engaging an Associate to work on the Project releases others ‘from the potential burden of working on the Project’. As addressed elsewhere, the evaluation team has some concerns with this comment, in that it demonstrates the existence of the view that the Project was outside the work of the NES, not a capacity building process *within* the organisation.

Capacity building of the NES Office was upgraded by employing an Associate who was engaged to implement StJ activities. This Associate is an excellent worker, one of the best within the Branch office and definitely the best Associate engaged on StJ activities throughout Serbia.

Užice, Kraljevo and Vranje achieved the best project results, mostly due the fact they had assigned associates to work only on StJ.

It is of particular interest to note that while some offices did not think they would have achieved better results with a dedicated employee on the Project, the fact is they did not achieve as good of outcomes as those Offices where there was a dedicated Associate. In most cases this lack of success was attributed not to the Office’s staffing complement but to issues with workers and employers.

There would not be better results achieved if we had a person who will work only on this project. We did the maximum, yet the mentality of redundant workers is a problem.

We are not sure whether the project would achieve better results if there was a person who will work only on the Project. The problem was that there was no interest among target groups, neither with employers nor with redundant workers. Neither group liked the contractual obligations that the project foresaw.

The above discussion addresses the questions of the evaluation Terms of Reference, largely from the perspective of NES employees. The responses are drawn from one-on-one interviews with Branch Office personnel (Directors and staff) and from Directorate and MoERD representatives. In relation to further development of the capacity of NES Branch Offices, three priority areas become apparent from the information and feedback provided during the fieldwork. These three priority areas are particularly relevant to negotiations about and the design of a follow-up program.

- Refinements to the relationship between the Directorate and the Project Team

Discussions in this area are not intended to go to the relationship between the on-going work of Government entities and externally funded projects operating within these entities. It is not the intent of this discussion to address the breadth of this issue, in terms of control and autonomy, but the more particular components of efficiency and effectiveness, as these issues presented themselves in the evaluation.

There appears have been little correlation between the planning processes used by the Directorate and the capacity building in planning envisaged for Component 2 – Building Capacity in the NES. The specific question was to ‘evaluate the NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nation-wide active labour market programmes’ and yet the Project’s focus was on ‘action planning’ and on activities at the Branch Offices, neither of which are directly relevant to NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nation-wide ALMP. The role of the NES Directorate, and the nationally-focused strategies and activities of the Directorate require a closer coordination with the concepts, strategies and activities of a Project.

There also appears to have been little coordination with the Directorate related to the development of the database. The database activity within Component 2 – Building Capacity of the NES could and should have added value to the data storage and analysis processes used by the NES nationally. Instead, not only was it poorly implemented by the contractor but ultimately provided no benefit to NES nationally.

The evaluation Terms of Reference indicate that coordination between Branch Offices is of understood value to, and a priority for the NES, and the evaluation team would agree that the quality of NES activities would benefit from a greater focus on coordination of and cooperation between Branch Offices. It is not however clear that this is a NES priority, given the vertical nature of the NES structure and its planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. From a project implementation perspective, prior to pursuing greater coordination and cooperation between Branch Offices it would make sense to ensure this is indeed a NES priority, so that project initiatives can support and add value to NES strategic directions.

- Associates

The Project-dedicated Associates were, as is discussed elsewhere, the critical intervention decision of the Project. As originally designed, the Project was to work within the on-going, day-to-day processes and activities of the Branch Offices, an approach that regularly struggles to succeed for a number of reasons, not least that existing staff see Project activities as additional to their on-going responsibilities and therefore an imposition, or something for which they were not employed and are not being paid.

The question of sustainability becomes relevant here, as Project initiatives cannot be sustained where there are no human resources dedicated to project activities. This question relates back to the relationship between the Project and the Directorate, with

the most effective approach being to understand these issues during project design, and to work together to establish a long-term solution that includes an on-going staffing component within the NES nationally.

- Content, extent and quality of training

The original *Action Plan for Training and Staff Development* included 5 topics and 13 modules. The delivered training program incorporated 22 sessions, with no clear topical framework. The evaluation team is of the view that to maximise effectiveness of the training program, a four-step process should be followed, and a training program developed with a more significant focus on the quality of content than on the number of subjects covered.

- Terms of Reference for Associates determined by the NES.
- Project dedicated Associates selected from participating NES Branch Offices.
- Training needs assessment for the chosen Associates.
- Training program developed for the group of Associates.

2.3 Relevance

The capacity building program of Component 2 was largely relevant to Branch Offices, although there are aspects of the content and delivery that were more important to some Offices than others. Specifically, capacity building related to implementation of activities was more relevant to the Branch Offices than other training sessions, and relevant beyond StJ Project activities. According to comments from the field, the early training program (particularly prior to 2009) was not understood by participants as capacity building, but as a series of information sessions or ‘consultations regarding the Project’.

Branch Office staff largely considered the training program relevant and appropriate, if not significant to their work. The ‘training was very useful to NES Branch Offices. At the beginning they had an informative character in regard to project implementation yet later on (mostly in 2009) they were capacity building oriented.’ The training related to presentation of programs, including round tables, presentations and approaches to clients were widely mentioned as the most relevant sessions.

In discussing the relevance of the Project’s capacity building it is important to go beyond the training program itself and look at how the work of the Project Team and the Associates developed capacity in the Offices. It is particularly important to mention here the change in nature of the relationship with employers, and the proactive nature of contact and negotiation processes as a result of the project, and the changes in practice within offices related to coordination and cooperation.

According to the *Mid-term Evaluation Report*:

In interviews, Ministry and NES policy makers identified capacity as a key issue. The NES has been going through radical changes and still has far to go to catch up with international good practice. NES capacity building is especially needed in developing, administering and monitoring active labor market policies one of which is the productive use of severance this Project aims to achieve.

The evaluation team would assess that while the StJ Project addressed some aspects of this ‘key issue’, and that clearly the Project has contributed to the mentioned transformation processes within Branch Offices, further work could be done in developing the capacity described in the *Mid-term Evaluation Report*.

In general we can assess Component 2 of the Project as relevant to NES. The program addressed capacity issues in the Branch Offices. It did this through:

- the engagement of Associates.
- the implementation of a program of activities which changed and improved Branch Office activities with employers and redundant workers.
- the provision of a training program which improved the capacity of Branch Office personnel in a number of areas relevant to their employment.

We make the qualifying comment though that the relevance of the Project can not be said to extend to the activities and outcomes of the NES as a whole. There are aspects of the Project that while useful and relevant to the Branch Offices will not have impact on NES policy and practice. There are components of the training program (eg the action planning) which were not relevant to NES generally.

2.4 Impact

Component 2 – Building Capacity of the NES impacted on the work of Branch Offices in a number of ways, some more significant in certain offices and some more widespread. Of most significance was the change in relationship with the businesses. There is a practice now of approaching businesses – ‘NES now directly knocks on employment doors’. This pro-active approach did not previously exist, and some NES staff believe it is a good example of the ‘speeding up of an internal transformation process to a client-oriented agency’ that NES has been undergoing since 2006.

This component impacted on the work done by Branch Offices in presenting NES, and NES initiatives (such as ALMP) to the public and to potential clients. ‘This has been a significant impact on the transformation of the NES, which now works as the agency for selling unemployed persons’. Specific skill improvement, including public presentation skills and skills in presenting ideas and programs is seen as important at the Branch Offices, as well as the specific skill of organising organizing round tables. Roundtables themselves were in important initiative, as they gave potential employers/ employees a creative venue for discussing issues of concern to both.

The training program was seen as important in developing the skills which are ‘important in terms of working with the concrete target group at whom the project was aimed.’ In this way ‘the project has enabled the strengthening of active measures of employment.’ ‘The project achieved the best results in creating a good model for social dialog. There were employment programs before StJ but this project has achieved excellent results in imposing social dialog at the local/regional level.’ One Branch Office Director said:

As a Branch Office we have learned through the project what social dialogue is through direct contact with employers.

Business Office Directors generally assessed the positive nature of the training program’s impact on the work of their office. While their comments made particular reference to specific project activities, it was noted that it ‘is possible to apply gained knowledge in future work’, and that the training ‘contributed (not just) to a successful project realization (but also) to a better quality of realized programs’. Further, Directors felt that the Project contributed to a level of ‘innovation in the work of the Service and of employees’, which supports the idea of the Project contribution to the NES transformation processes.

More practically, the capacity building component contributed to ‘a more effective approach to work and a higher engagement of associates’ through ‘better organisation and

professionalism in work’ and ‘better communication between functions, as a higher level of cooperation was needed in order for interested persons to be informed in a timely manner.’ As well, ‘the activities of the Project have contributed, to a large extent, to a higher dedication to vulnerable groups and bigger connections with employers to whom the project was aimed’. These comments indicate improvements in work practices within Branch Offices as a result of project training and the approach of the Project team.

It can be seen that Directors attribute some impact to Project training, pointing to new knowledge, skills and attitudes, and seen in an increased level of commitment to quality work with redundant workers’.

Through the financial and non-financial support of the project, the impression that people were not alone was created - that they had come together through common interests and ideas. Workers engaged in this project have told us, quite often, that without the support they would hardly have been able to manage at the labor market, and that their fear of uncertainty has been reduced, and that they could barely wait an opportunity like this one.

Employers involved in the project often said that the assistance provided has stimulated them to hire new employees.

That the project has had an impact in a number of areas is clear. Promotional/ presentation skills have been improved; a more pro-active approach to business has been established; activities of social dialogue are happening, with a particular focus on target groups; an approach emphasising ‘quality’ is in place, together with a desire for and anticipation of innovation; a more professional approach to work practice exists, encompassing improved communication and a better organisation of work. There are new knowledge, skills and attitudes in Branch Offices, and a higher level of commitment.

It remains to be seen whether or not Component 2 – Building Capacity of the NES has had *impact*, ie, whether or not the effects of this component have a wider influence within NES and or have an influence that is seen in the longer term. There are indications from within NES that project approaches (both related directly to ALMPs and to the changes as a result of the capacity building program) will become a feature of NES policy and practice. If the innovations and changes described above become a part of NES practice nationwide, in the form of NES policy and NES approaches, then it will be possible to attribute impact to the Project. There is a view in the Branch Offices that the Project has assisted (‘sped up’) the transformation processes begun by NES in 2006. There are clear indications that this view is correct, but it is not possible at this time to be certain. Change has happened in some Branch Offices in how they approach their responsibilities and their clients; a large number of Associates and Directors have increased their skill levels and developed new attitudes. Variations in impact has depended on many factors, but mostly the attitude toward change from Business Office Directors and staff involved in StJ Project training and project activities. The impact was most notable in Uzice, followed by Kraljevo and Kragujevac. But theses changes must be more widespread, and more firmly based in NES policy and practice for it to be said that the Project had impact.

2.5 Effectiveness

Generally, the Project was effective in its activities, in addressing issues and in achieving outcomes. Success in this is discussed below, followed by a further discussion on concerns the evaluation team has with the effectiveness of the project.

The Project engendered a team dynamic and approach. As a result of the work of the Project, and involvement of Business Offices in Project activities, there is improved communication

within Business Offices (both between Associates and across functions). The Project was helpful ‘because of the exchange of information and experiences of working together’. This particular comment was made more than once, and referred to both internal office experience and communication between Offices.

The Project developed a proactive approach to work with employers. There was no practice of ‘knocking on employers’ doors’ prior to the Project. This initiative opened new avenues for effective engagement with employers, and is possible to be used well into the future and well beyond the confines of the StJ project.

The Project, when confronted with difficulties in implementation based on initial planning was able to make the necessary changes that ensured the achievement of results. Early in implementation there was a perception within the NES that the Project activities were not able to be completed as the existing workload of Associates was too great to allow them to also take on the Project requirements. The Project was able to re-organise its budgets and structures and was able to employ the 10 Associates dedicated to Project Activities.

The Project developed the skills of Associates. The training program ‘provided training for Branch Office associates both theoretically and practically in conducting project tasks’. ‘The project has enabled the strengthening of active measures of employment.’ The training courses were of good quality and useful, because knowledge and skills acquired during the training can be used in the work of the employees (training of unemployed people, guiding employers in an active relationship with the NES).

In assessing the effectiveness of Project, the evaluation team has comments in three areas.

- No plan for knowledge transfer

There was no plan for nor implementation of dissemination of training beyond those Associates who were directly involved. There was not plan to ensure that Branch Office personnel not involved in a given training would have benefit from the program. As a result, all knowledge transfer was ad hoc and informal, and largely oral explanation. ‘Knowledge from training was disseminated only if colleagues who did not participate in the training asked to be acquainted with the training. There were no presentations or other methods of dissemination of information from the training program.

- Too strong an emphasis solely on the Project

A close reading of the feedback from Branch Office Directors shows that they saw training program as almost completely Project-oriented. They are positive in their assessment of the program, they do not generally assess effectiveness beyond the implementation of the Project itself. The Project was intended to be relevant to the NES beyond Project activities, but it is not certain that this was understood by Branch Office Directors or others.

- The training should not add burdens but make staff more effective generally

A number of comments were made throughout the field work about how some components of the training could not be implemented as they were an ‘added burden’ on work load and unable to be achieved.

There is a persistent, if relatively small, thread of discontent which saw the Project as an imposition, or added work. The training program focused on capacity in the NES, so by definition was directed to making staff more effective and efficient in all of their work. Not all participants experienced it this way, and it is incumbent on Branch

Office Directors, and or the NES Directorate, to ensure that this is understood within the organisation.

2.6 Efficiency

There is strong support across Branch Office staff and management for the approach of the Project team, the quality of their communication and their openness to suggestions. There were numerous comments about the positive role played by Project staff in discussions and meetings, and the importance this had in the efficient delivery of the project. The Project team was understood to be working in a way to 'not to burden other associates with irrelevant data' and yet to ensure all relevant information was passed on in an appropriate manner.

Generally, Branch Office Associates were seen to be involved on a high level with the project, and 'fully involved in all project activities and have contributed to its implementation'. The project also assisted Branch Offices to work better with each other, improving project delivery approaches, with the quality of participation being described as being 'on a high level'. Branch Office staff felt that the project team was 'open to suggestions and new ideas'. Therefore, the last few trainings were the most useful ones. In 2008 training sessions were mostly meetings regarding implementation of the StJ project - by 2009 the events had a capacity building character.

The strongest comments of support were reserved for the Project's legal team, which had a strong influence on procedures related to the Project but particularly for the work they did on the employment contracts.

A clear negative in terms of efficiency was the project database, discussed in detail elsewhere.

Databases delivered by Strategic Marketing were useless. That was identified and reported at the beginning of the project. Later on NES staff developed databases in the right way. At the end of the project they were delivered to the Directorate and were included in Joint Integration System (an integrated NES database).

When asked about the quality of their involvement in Project delivery mechanisms, and the efficiency of the Project Team in project delivery, Branch Office Directors felt 'the project team made a huge contribution in project realization, they were available at any time for various questions and dilemmas that would appear during the concrete work on the project.' It was also felt that the team was 'fully engaged' in the project, and prepared to assist wherever necessary so that Associates felt supported in their work employers. The project team 'accepted all invitations to visit employers and to talk to management', demonstrating 'extremely good communication' related to resolving dilemmas and addressing areas of unclarity in project realisation.

As well as the general levels of efficiency, Branch Office Directors were of the opinion that the training program was well organised, of a high quality and interactive in approach. It was felt that the courses had 'an adequate agenda, presentations and material, in both electronic version and hard copy.' They were 'significant, mainly in analysis, planning and control of project implementation on the field', and demonstrated an 'interactive relationship with the participants with acceptance and respect of everybody's opinion'.

The project's *efficiency* is assessed as having been at a high level. The project team was clearly professional, timely, skilful and courteous in their approach to and relationship with the NES, and this approach was clearly appreciated.

2.7 Sustainability

According to the *Mid-term Evaluation Report*:

... the project has produced a great deal of legal analysis and drafting necessary to the promulgation of new employment modalities, and this work (a combination of technical assistance and capacity building) will continue to have impact far into the future.

When asked about sustainability of project initiatives and outcomes, Branch Office Directors were generally of the view that Project activities have been or will be completed and that Project Associates are 'monitoring control of the project realization on agreed targeted dates'. There is also a widely implemented approach involving the on-going engagement of employees hired to work on the project, either on activities with a 'Project flavour' or in other areas.

According to one Director, 'measures of the project that were realized in the Branch Office have fit into existed measures without disturbing them. The organizer of measures for solving redundancy is monitoring the measures' realization.' There are a number of Offices where project-type activities are on-going, and where 'the project associate is still working in the Branch office, with determined employment, in the sector of employment programs' or where 'the employee that was hired to work on the project is still implementing activities on further implementation and monitoring of the program - realization of contractual obligations'. However, regardless of the training in which they participated, and their involvement in the Project, of the 10 StJ paid Associates, only 4 remain within NES. As was raised in the *Mid-term Evaluation Report*:

The key issue is whether the NES will maintain new staff in post after project support ceases. There is no evidence that NES has made allowance for taking over the costs of new staff.

This remains a key issue.

Sustainability of the StJ Project's contribution to NES's ALMP implementation will be dependent to a large extent on the individuals involved, and the approach and flexibility of the Business Offices, rather than on the NES structural framework. There are specific Offices, and particular Associates who are more likely than others to continue to work along the lines established during the project: work with employers, making use of social dialogue and continuing the development of media and presentation skills, and developing innovative approaches for target groups. Whether or not this is sustainable at a wider level in the organisation is dependent on the on-going transformation processes within NES, and the perceived relevance of StJ to this transformation process.

3 Annexes

Annex 1 - Terms of Reference – Scope of Work

The incumbent is expected to:

1. Analyze relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and other relevant indicators of success that will serve as the basis for the Project evaluation;
2. With support from the National Evaluation Expert, evaluate the NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nation-wide active labour market programmes:
 - a. Evaluate the development of capacities of NES Business Centers in: day to day working with redundant workers, mediation in new employment, crating, updating and using the database and integrating and coordinating with other active labour market measures and other departments within 29 NES Branch Offices.
 - b. Evaluate the added value of engaging the additional Associates in the 10 NES Branch Offices who are directly working on the implementation of the Project in terms of the effects and results achieved.
3. Conduct interviews with central NES office and MoERD.
4. Approve draft questionnaire for interviews with NES to be done by National Evaluation Expert;
5. Produce draft and final Evaluation Report (including lessons learned and recommendations for the future interventions in this field).
6. With inputs from National Evaluation Expert, prepare proposal for follow up initiative with description of possible activities (7 pages).
7. Present findings to the relevant representatives of UNDP, ADA, MoERD, NES.

The incumbent will have the duties to:

1. Review all relevant documents of the Severance to Job Project significant for the evaluation;
2. Develop a plan of analysis and indicators of success;
3. Develop questionnaire for interviews with key staff members within NES;
4. Carry out interviews with MoERD and other relevant stakeholders together with the National Consultant
5. Analyze relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and other relevant indicators of success of the Project;
6. Prepare and submit the draft Evaluation Report, including lessons learned and recommendations for the future;
7. Prepare and submit the final Evaluation Report (English) within one week of receiving the feedback from UNDP;
8. Based on project results, lessons learned and inputs from National Evaluation Expert, submit a proposal for follow up initiative (including description of possible activities);
9. Present findings to the relevant stakeholders.

The incumbent will work in coordination with the National Evaluation Expert.

Annex 2 – Plan of Analysis and Indicators of Success

Introduction

Per the requirements of the evaluation Terms of Reference, this document provides the consultants' plan of analysis and project indicators of success. These two items form the core of the consultants' evaluation methodology, so are presented here as components of our methodological approach.

In preparing our methodology we have used the evaluation Terms of Reference as our primary guide, with the intention of responding directly to the Terms of Reference in our field and analytical work. We have also used a range of provided project documentation and reporting to ensure there is an historical reference point for the work of the evaluation.

Plan of Analysis

We will take both a quantitative and a qualitative approach.

Quantitative

Quantitatively, we will create and have completed a matrix of all provided training and all participation in the training from each NES Centre. This will provide us an objective picture of participation, in the exact program presented, for comparison with the qualitative interviews.

Qualitative

Qualitatively, we will address a series of questions to relevant people. The following details the steps that will be undertaken.

Preparatory work.

Finalisation of questionnaires to be provided to NES Branch Office Directors.

Finalisation of interview questions for Branch Office personnel. The questions are reflective and interpretive in nature, to assist in the analytical process. A range of questions has been developed, covering each of the areas designated in the evaluation ToR and our plan of analysis. The interview process will involve a series of three, 30-minute interviews with each of 10 offices. The complete set of interviews will be organised to ensure a range of qualitative discussions across all designated areas, to ensure adequate feedback from each office and about each designated area.

Step 1. Distribute questionnaire to the Directors of all NES Branch Offices.

Step 2. Select 10 offices on which we will concentrate the interview process.

Step 3. Identify people within the 10 offices to participate in the interview process.

Step 4. 3 x 30 minute interviews with identified people in each office.

Data Analysis

Our analysis will be based on documentation provided, with a particular emphasis on following the project 'thread' from initial assessment through proposal to activities and then evaluation and reporting. All of these materials, together with the related commentary from project staff and NES personnel in their responses to the questionnaire, will assist us:

- To evaluate how the proposal responds to the assessment.

- To evaluate how the implementation addresses the assessment and the proposal.
- To evaluate ‘the NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nation-wide active labour market programs’ (evaluation ToR).
- To evaluate ‘the development of capacities of NES Business Centres in: day to day working with redundant workers, mediation in new employment, creating, updating and using the database and integrating and coordinating with other active labour market measures and other departments within 29 NES Branch offices’ (evaluation ToR).
- To analyse the above in the context of relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Critical documents for the analysis include:

- Severance to Job – Project Proposal for the Austrian Development Agency.
- Assessment of Skills and Competences of Counsellors in NES Business Centres and Technical Conditions for Implementation of ‘Severance to Job’ Project.
- Assessment of Capacity of NES to Implement the ‘Severance to Job’ Active Labour Market Programme.
- Evaluation of the Progress in the Work of NES Business Centres within the *Severance to Job* Project.
- Mid-term Evaluation Severance to Job Project.

Summary of the plan of analysis:

- Document review.
- Interviews/ questionnaires with relevant project staff, NES national and Ministry personnel.
- Interviews/ questionnaires with NES Business Centre personnel.
- Analysis of responses to questionnaires/ interviews in the context of project documentation and the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.
- Address particularly the analysis in terms of relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Indicators of Success

There were no indicators of success for Component 2 in the Project Proposal (see proposal page 32 and 33). The only indicators relate to Component 1.

The best indicators within existing project documentation therefore are provided in the initial *Assessment of Skills and Competences of Counsellors in NES Business Centres and Technical Conditions for Implementation of ‘Severance to Job’ Project Report* (Todorovic et al March 2007), as it relates directly to the skills and competencies of counsellors in NES Business Centres. As this is the start of the thread of project documentation from assessment to design to implementation to monitoring to evaluation and reporting, it also makes sense to use this report as the benchmark for indicators. The report discusses/ emphasises the following areas:

- Training for redundant workers.
- Informing, motivating and providing assistance to redundant workers.
- Informing and motivating potential employers and public.

- Mediation between redundant workers and employers.
- Database.
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation of impacts of the project.

A second key document, *Evaluation of the Progress in the Work of NES Business Centres within the Severance to Job Project*, was the result of work undertaken in late 2007 and reported on in January 2008, and focuses specifically on improvements in NES capacity in:

- Implementing the Project information campaign and organising info-seminars for potential employers.
- Rendering advisory and motivation services to redundant workers.
- Job matching aimed at matching redundant workers with interested employers by means of organizing job fairs, individual and group meetings.
- Collecting and preparing documentation for self-employment.
- Preparing individual contracts on investment of severance pay into new employment and employment contracts on the basis of prepared contract models, and monitoring of delivery of individual contracts.
- Preparing individual contracts on allocation of self-employment funds.
- Improving the procedure for collecting data on redundancies and employers' needs, maintaining the data base, data analysis and forecasting of future labour market developments.
- Improving the procedure for work with redundant workers and participating in the trainings aimed at building NES capacities.
- Monitoring Project beneficiaries.
- Reporting and monitoring Project implementation and evaluating Project impact.

In other words, this document extended the definitions of key areas of capacity but maintained the strong thread with the initial key indicator areas from the *Assessment of Skills and Competences* report. It makes sense for the current evaluation to follow up on the work of these two assessments, maintaining this strong link to the content and intent of the initial assessment and the mid-term evaluation.

The evaluation will assess the content and results of the provided training to determine if:

- The training program responded to the assessed needs.
- The capacity of NES personnel has been built by participation in the training.

Further, beyond this analysis of the training per se, the evaluation will directly analyse the capacity of NES Business Centres to:

- Provide relevant and useful training for redundant workers.
- Inform, motivate and provide assistance to redundant workers.
- Inform and motivate potential employers and the public.
- Mediate (act as a bridge between) redundant workers and employers.
- Create, update and use a database (and to assess the value of this database in the longer term for NES activities).
- Monitor, evaluate and report on project activities, outcomes and impacts.

- Integrate and coordinate with other active labour market measures and other departments (evaluation ToR).

Finally, the evaluation will look into the added value of engaging the additional Associates in the 10 NES Branch Offices (evaluation ToR).

Annex 4 –Interview Questions Used With NES Branch Offices

The first three sets of questions were directly from the Evaluation Terms of Reference.

NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nationwide active labour market programs.

Specifically we are discussing ALMPs. We need to find out whether or not this question of planning of nationwide ALMPs is just for the national NES or is a question relevant at the Business Centre level as well.

Can you describe for me the planning processes you undertake when developing nationwide ALMPs. Are these processes done jointly with other Business Centres? Is this process different to what you followed prior to the project? How? Let's talk about an example – describe an ALMP you have planned – what was it, and how did the planning work?

Tell me about the training you attended. What was the content about? What changes in your approach did you learn during the training? (Training 19 and training 20 are on the topics of planning and implementing ALMPs. Possibly also training 15 and training 16.)

What about in implementation? Describe for me the implementation processes you undertake with ALMPs. Are these processes done jointly with other Business Centres? Is this process different to what you followed prior to the project? How?

Now let's talk about your monitoring and evaluation processes in the same way: describe for me the monitoring and evaluation processes you undertake with nationwide ALMPs – what do you do? With whom? How do you report on this monitoring?

Development of capacities of NES Business Centres

Day to day working with redundant workers

What training work did you do prior to the project with redundant workers?

You participated in training related to this during the project. Do you recall that training? What did it involve? What did you learn? (From Tablexx: active approaches to job searching; development of capacities of NES staff in active labour market measures targeting professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities).

How do you now put it into practice? How would you describe the work you do now in advising, motivating and assisting redundant workers? What new skills do you have? Have you organised information campaigns? How did you do that?

How much time do you spend advising and motivating redundant workers each week? What does it involve? Do you assist them in active approaches to job searching? How?

Are you involved in assisting unemployed people with disabilities? What does this involve? Did you participate in the project training on this subject? What was the training about? Do you use it now in your job?

Do you prepare individual contracts on investment of severance pay?

Mediation in new employment

(From Tablexx: Capacity building in presenting the Project to redundant workers and potential employers and encouraging their participation; organising employment fairs; active approaches to job searching).

Have you organised employment fairs? What about individual or group meetings with interested employers? How much work do you do with employers in assisting them to think about employing redundant workers (project beneficiaries)?

Do you work as a 'bridge' between redundant workers and potential employers? How. Can you describe an occasion where you have mediated between a worker and an employer. Did you learn how to do this at the project training?

Creating, updating and using the database

How would you describe the quality of the information in the database created and used during the project? Is it well integrated into previously existing databases? If not, why not?

Is the management and maintenance of the database timely and of a high quality? Can you access appropriate, necessary information from it?

How do you use the database? How often do you access the database for information relevant to your job or to the employment of a redundant worker?

Will the database continue to be a useful tool for you in the future? If not, why not?

Integrating and coordinating with other active labour market measures and other departments within 29 NES Branch Offices.

How well do you coordinate your work on ALMPs with other NES Branch Offices? Provide an example of a coordinated program, or an ALMP that has been implemented by more than one Office.

How well did it work? Was it an effective way of approaching the provision of services? Why or why not?

Evaluate the added value of engaging the additional Associates in the 10 NES Branch Offices.

Mid-term evaluation, Page 19, paragraph 1: To get an idea of the strength of the first effect, 463 out of 665 placements of workers in some form of employment (either with a firm or in self-employment) occurred in the ten branch offices with project-supported staff. Virtually all (114 out of 115) placements of redundant workers in employment with a private-sector firm occurred in these ten branch offices. The new 34 contracts (as of May 2008) were also signed in the branch offices with new associates engaged – Kraljevo and Vranje.

What has been the effect of the engagement of the 10 Associates in your office? Has the Associate in your office had an impact on placements of redundant workers? How? To what extent? Has your Associate had a significant role in the delivery of the project? How? Is your Associate going to be engaged by NES upon project completion?

Follow-up Mid-term Evaluation and Evaluation of Progress Recommendations

The fourth set of questions is related to a follow-up of the Mid-term Evaluation and the Evaluation of the Progress recommendations.

Mid-term evaluation

Of specific interest are Recommendations 3, 4 and 6, as they reflect on NES capacity as described above (planning, implementing etc; work with redundant workers; mediation in new employment). Question whether or not the recommendations were implemented, and the effect they had on project implementation.

Recommendation 3: Before moving into the cooperatives and non-core modalities, commission a high-quality study on how many takers there are likely to be. This study should use qualitative approaches, such as focus groups, as well as survey approaches to probe credibly what the likely level of interest of redundant workers and potential clients will be. This work should closely involve relevant NES staff who, after all, foresaw a number of the difficulties that were encountered with StJ to date. In addition, a market survey is called for to reveal the needs for specific products and services that could be offered by the cooperatives or through non-core spinoffs. The project should adopt a critical perspective, asking, e.g.

- Where is the StJ project value added? As a source of information and awareness, as a source of good-practice, as a source of technical assistance in drafting legislation, as a source of funds, etc.?
- What is the actual value of preserving worker ties and promoting socially responsible downsizing on the part of firms?
- How do these modalities address or fail to address some of the risk issues that bedeviled the first three components of StJ?

Recommendation 4: The StJ modalities must be advertised to workers at risk *before* they become redundant. Worker psychology and attitudes prior to and after being listed as redundant are different, and experience with StJ implementation has revealed that the various modalities offered are more acceptable to workers the earlier the project intervention is made. In this process MoERD and its agencies (Privatization Agency and NES) should take a lead by advertising StJ among both workers and prospective employers.

Recommendation 6: Redundant workers should be granted adequate access to training programs. At present, they compete with other groups of unemployed to receive the obligatory trainings which make them eligible to apply for regular NES and StJ project funds. The availability of, as well as the actual need for, training should be assessed.

Evaluation of Progress

Of specific interest are the four recommendations below as they reflect on NES capacity. Question whether or not the recommendations were implemented, and the effect they had on project implementation.

- Along with communication skills, especially the skill for communication with vulnerable groups (potential redundant workers), aptitude for motivating beneficiaries and engaging employers, there is also the need for training a greater number of staff members in Project presentation. Considering the agenda of the previously held training on this topic, we conclude that it would be useful to organize training on the topic of presentation skills and skills of communication with beneficiaries that would be attended by a number of staff members from all NES Branch Offices.
- Along with the need for organizing training for staff in Project presentation, it is estimated that one should certainly organise meetings with the PR officers of NES Branch Offices to additionally discuss Project presentation in the media, all the more, because this is an area, the managers themselves view as very significant.
- Branch managers are of the view that visits to companies that are in the process of making redundancies by staff with the aim of presenting the Project are the most important for Project success. It is important to continue Project promotion in the media, as well. It is necessary to “strengthen” job matching activities and the activities on organising specialised meetings and employment fairs

- Connecting and integrating all functions within the NES Branch Offices would contribute to the improvement of job matching and thus to better implementation of activities. Since NES has departments specialised in job matching, the organisation of training within NES itself in the area of job matching for staff working on the Project, would be the most useful, in our opinion. That training would be delivered by their colleagues, experts in this area. In this way, NES capacities of both training participants and training providers would be enforced in multiple manners. At the same time we consider as very important the use of internal capacities and enhancement of interaction between various departments of NES.

Annex 3 – Questionnaire Used With NES Branch Offices

Factors of Analyses	1	2	3	4	5	Comments 1= weak/very low 2 = insufficient/low 3 = acceptable/medium 4 =good/high 5 = excellent/very high										
0. General Information																
Name and Surname:																
Function:																
Branch Office:																
Number of Employees:																
Does your Branch Office have a Business Center: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No																
If yes, how many employees has the Business Center?																
Based on your knowledge, how many of your staff have participated at training courses organised by the StJ Project?																
1. General acquaintance with the StJ Project																
<i>Assessment Questions:</i>																
- to what extent you are acquainted with the StJ Project?																
- to what extent was your Branch Office involved in implementation of activities of the StJ Project?																
a. What is your general understanding of the goals and objectives of the StJ Project?																
b. How would you assess the quality of your involvement in the StJ project? Please elaborate:						<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>				
1	2	3	4	5												
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
c. Please list StJ Project activities in which your NES Branch Office staff participated.																
2. Project Preparation and Design																
<i>Assessment Questions:</i>																
-To what extent were you involved in planning and designing the StJ training activities?																
a. Were you included at any stage in the planning and/ or designing of any of the StJ training activities? If so, please provide a description of your involvement:						<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Yes</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">No</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No													
b. Did you find the StJ Team helpful in accommodation your requests you had which were relevant to the StJ training activities? Please elaborate:						<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Yes</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">No</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No													
c. Does your NES Branch Office have needs, which could have been included in the StJ training activities, which were not covered by the Project? Please elaborate.						<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">Yes</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">No</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No													
3. Relevance of the Programme																
<i>Assessment Questions:</i>																
-to what extent were the problems focused on by the Project, in designing and delivering the training program, in line with your local situation?																

a. To what extent were training activities appropriate for your local situation? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Was there any training course that you found irrelevant to your needs? Please elaborate:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes			<input type="checkbox"/>	No
c. To what extent were the training needs initially identified still relevant at the end of the Project? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
d. Are there new training needs that have appeared during implementation that are of greater priority and relevance to your NES Business Office? If you answered yes, please detail those needs:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes			<input type="checkbox"/>	No
4. Efficiency						
<i>Assessment Questions:</i>						
<i>-to what extent has the StJ Project implemented planned activities?</i>						
a. To what extent was the StJ Project team efficient in managing implementation activities? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
b. To what extent was the StJ Project team transparent and public organizing training activities? Please elaborate.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
c. How would you rate the quality of the StJ Project team's organization and procedures in the efficient implementation of project activities?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
d. How would you rate the quality of communication you had with the StJ Project team? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
e. How would you rate the quality of your contribution to the efficient implementation of the training and other activities of the StJ Project? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Effectiveness						
<i>Assessment Questions:</i>						
<i>-to what extent have project results contributed to achieving the project's specific objectives?</i>						
a. How would you rate the quality and usefulness of the training provided by the Project? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
b. How would you rate the quality of the training provided to your staff? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Which of the provided training courses did you find most useful for your NES Branch Office? Please list the most effective courses with a brief explanation of why they were most useful:						
d. Which of the provided training courses did you find least useful for your NES Branch Office? Please list the least effective courses with a brief explanation of why they were not useful:						

6. Impact					
<i>Assessment Questions:</i>					
- to what extent did participation in the training program increase the capacity of your NES Branch Office?					
a. to what extent did participation in the training program contribute to increased capacity in your NES Branch Office? Please provide some detail or examples of this increased capacity:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. To what extent did participants in the training, from your Branch Office, transfer their new knowledge and skills to other employees of the Branch office? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. To what extent does the new capacity of your staff contribute to implementation of current activities and creation of new initiatives in your Branch Office? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. To what extent is your Branch Office applying the training and experience from the StJ Project to regular and extraordinary activities not directly related to or supported by the Project? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. To what extent have project activities and results contributed to changes in policy, procedure or communication in your Branch Office? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Sustainability/Replicability					
<i>Assessment Questions:</i>					
- to what extent are project results sustainable without further external development assistance?					
- to what extent did project implementation create a model or practice for replication?					
a. To what extent has your NES Branch office achieved sustainability of project activities and results? Please elaborate:	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. To what extent are NES Branch Office employees who participated in the StJ training activities still working in your office? Please elaborate:					
c. To what extent has the project created a model for replication of activities after project completion? Please elaborate:					
d. To what extent consideration was given to gender equality, minority issues, IDPs/Refugees and inclusion of other vulnerable groups in the execution of the project? Please elaborate in details for each category:					

Annex 4 –Interview Questions Used With NES Branch Offices

The first three sets of questions were directly from the Evaluation Terms of Reference.

NES long-term capacity to plan, implement and monitor nationwide active labour market programs.

Specifically we are discussing ALMPs. We need to find out whether or not this question of planning of nationwide ALMPs is just for the national NES or is a question relevant at the Business Centre level as well.

Can you describe for me the planning processes you undertake when developing nationwide ALMPs. Are these processes done jointly with other Business Centres? Is this process different to what you followed prior to the project? How? Let's talk about an example – describe an ALMP you have planned – what was it, and how did the planning work?

Tell me about the training you attended. What was the content about? What changes in your approach did you learn during the training? (Training 19 and training 20 are on the topics of planning and implementing ALMPs. Possibly also training 15 and training 16.)

What about in implementation? Describe for me the implementation processes you undertake with ALMPs. Are these processes done jointly with other Business Centres? Is this process different to what you followed prior to the project? How?

Now let's talk about your monitoring and evaluation processes in the same way: describe for me the monitoring and evaluation processes you undertake with nationwide ALMPs – what do you do? With whom? How do you report on this monitoring?

Development of capacities of NES Business Centres

Day to day working with redundant workers

What training work did you do prior to the project with redundant workers?

You participated in training related to this during the project. Do you recall that training? What did it involve? What did you learn? (From Tablexx: active approaches to job searching; development of capacities of NES staff in active labour market measures targeting professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities).

How do you now put it into practice? How would you describe the work you do now in advising, motivating and assisting redundant workers? What new skills do you have? Have you organised information campaigns? How did you do that?

How much time do you spend advising and motivating redundant workers each week? What does it involve? Do you assist them in active approaches to job searching? How?

Are you involved in assisting unemployed people with disabilities? What does this involve? Did you participate in the project training on this subject? What was the training about? Do you use it now in your job?

Do you prepare individual contracts on investment of severance pay?

Mediation in new employment

(From Tablexx: Capacity building in presenting the Project to redundant workers and potential employers and encouraging their participation; organising employment fairs; active approaches to job searching).

Have you organised employment fairs? What about individual or group meetings with interested employers? How much work do you do with employers in assisting them to think about employing redundant workers (project beneficiaries)?

Do you work as a 'bridge' between redundant workers and potential employers? How. Can you describe an occasion where you have mediated between a worker and an employer. Did you learn how to do this at the project training?

Creating, updating and using the database

How would you describe the quality of the information in the database created and used during the project? Is it well integrated into previously existing databases? If not, why not?

Is the management and maintenance of the database timely and of a high quality? Can you access appropriate, necessary information from it?

How do you use the database? How often do you access the database for information relevant to your job or to the employment of a redundant worker?

Will the database continue to be a useful tool for you in the future? If not, why not?

Integrating and coordinating with other active labour market measures and other departments within 29 NES Branch Offices.

How well do you coordinate your work on ALMPs with other NES Branch Offices? Provide an example of a coordinated program, or an ALMP that has been implemented by more than one Office.

How well did it work? Was it an effective way of approaching the provision of services? Why or why not?

Evaluate the added value of engaging the additional Associates in the 10 NES Branch Offices.

Mid-term evaluation, Page 19, paragraph 1: To get an idea of the strength of the first effect, 463 out of 665 placements of workers in some form of employment (either with a firm or in self-employment) occurred in the ten branch offices with project-supported staff. Virtually all (114 out of 115) placements of redundant workers in employment with a private-sector firm occurred in these ten branch offices. The new 34 contracts (as of May 2008) were also signed in the branch offices with new associates engaged – Kraljevo and Vranje.

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Follow-up Mid-term Evaluation and Evaluation of Progress Recommendations

The fourth set of questions is related to a follow-up of the Mid-term Evaluation and the Evaluation of the Progress recommendations.

Mid-term evaluation

Of specific interest are Recommendations 3, 4 and 6, as they reflect on NES capacity as described above (planning, implementing etc; work with redundant workers; mediation in new employment). Question whether or not the recommendations were implemented, and the effect they had on project implementation.

Recommendation 3: Before moving into the cooperatives and non-core modalities, commission a high-quality study on how many takers there are likely to be. This study should use qualitative approaches, such as focus groups, as well as survey approaches to probe credibly what the likely level of interest of redundant workers and potential clients will be. This work should closely involve relevant NES staff who, after all, foresaw a number of the difficulties that were encountered with StJ to date. In addition, a market survey is called for to reveal the needs for specific products and services that could be offered by the cooperatives or through non-core spinoffs. The project should adopt a critical perspective, asking, e.g.

- Where is the StJ project value added? As a source of information and awareness, as a source of good-practice, as a source of technical assistance in drafting legislation, as a source of funds, etc.?
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Recommendation 4: The StJ modalities must be advertised to workers at risk *before* they become redundant. Worker psychology and attitudes prior to and after being listed as redundant are different, and experience with StJ implementation has revealed that the various modalities offered are more acceptable to workers the earlier the project intervention is made. In this process MoERD and its agencies (Privatization Agency and NES) should take a lead by advertising StJ among both workers and prospective employers.

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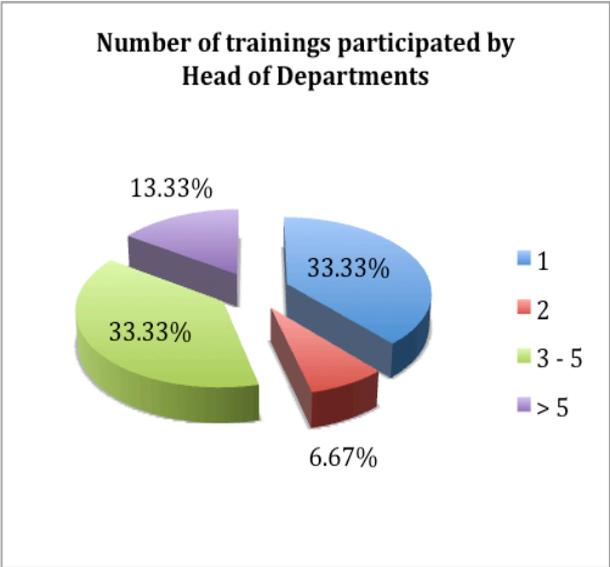
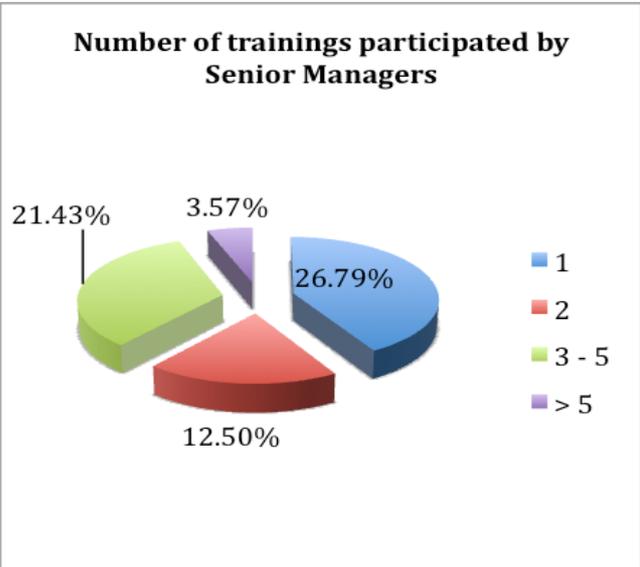
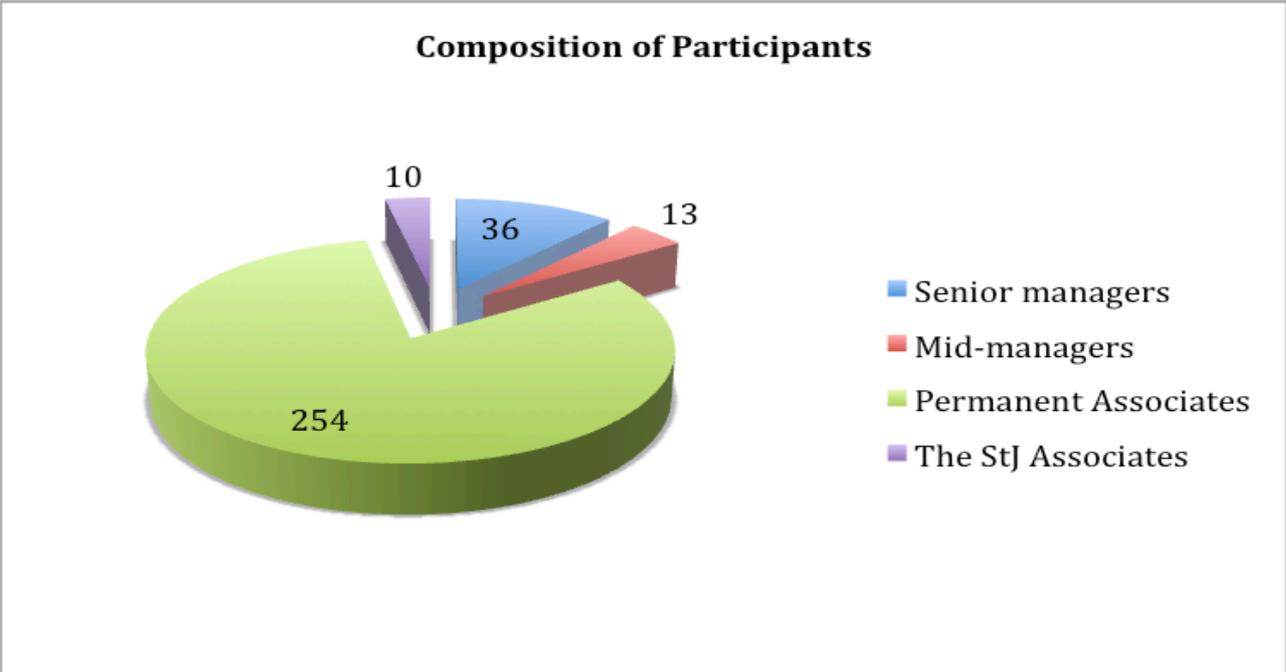
Evaluation of Progress

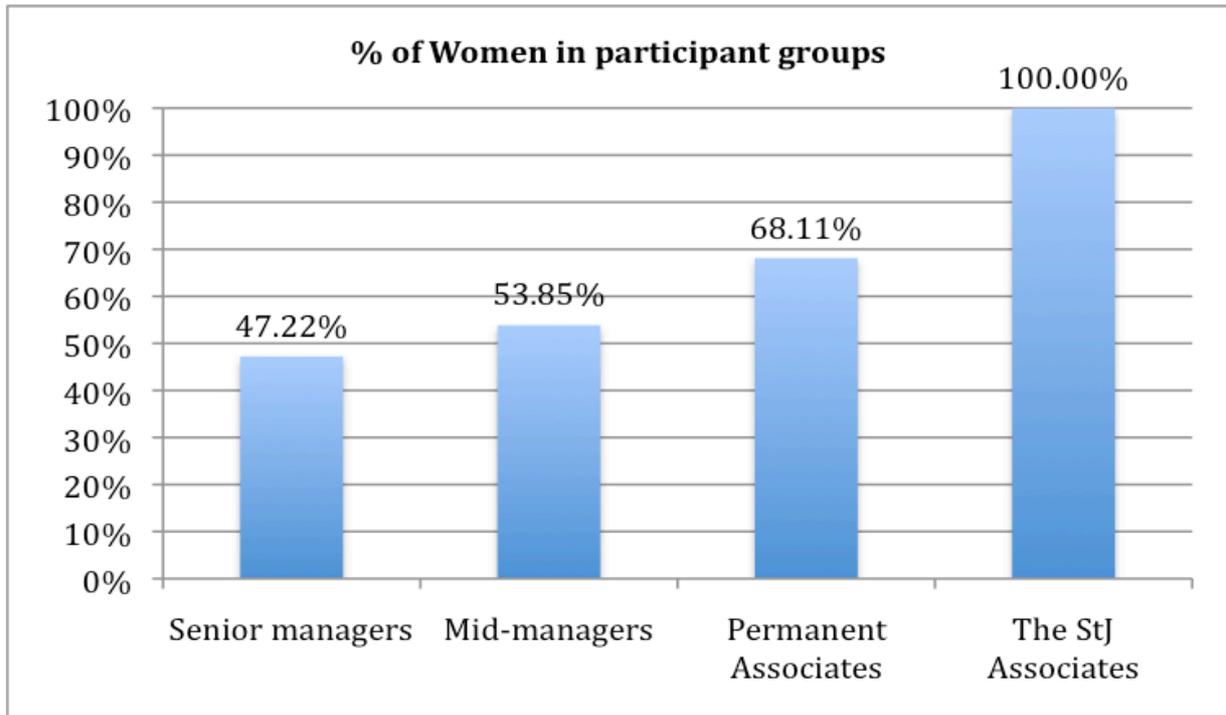
Of specific interest are the four recommendations below as they reflect on NES capacity. Question whether or not the recommendations were implemented, and the effect they had on project implementation.

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- Along with the need for organizing training for staff in Project presentation, it is estimated that one should certainly organise meetings with the PR officers of NES Branch Offices to additionally discuss Project presentation in the media, all the more, because this is an area, the managers themselves view as very significant.

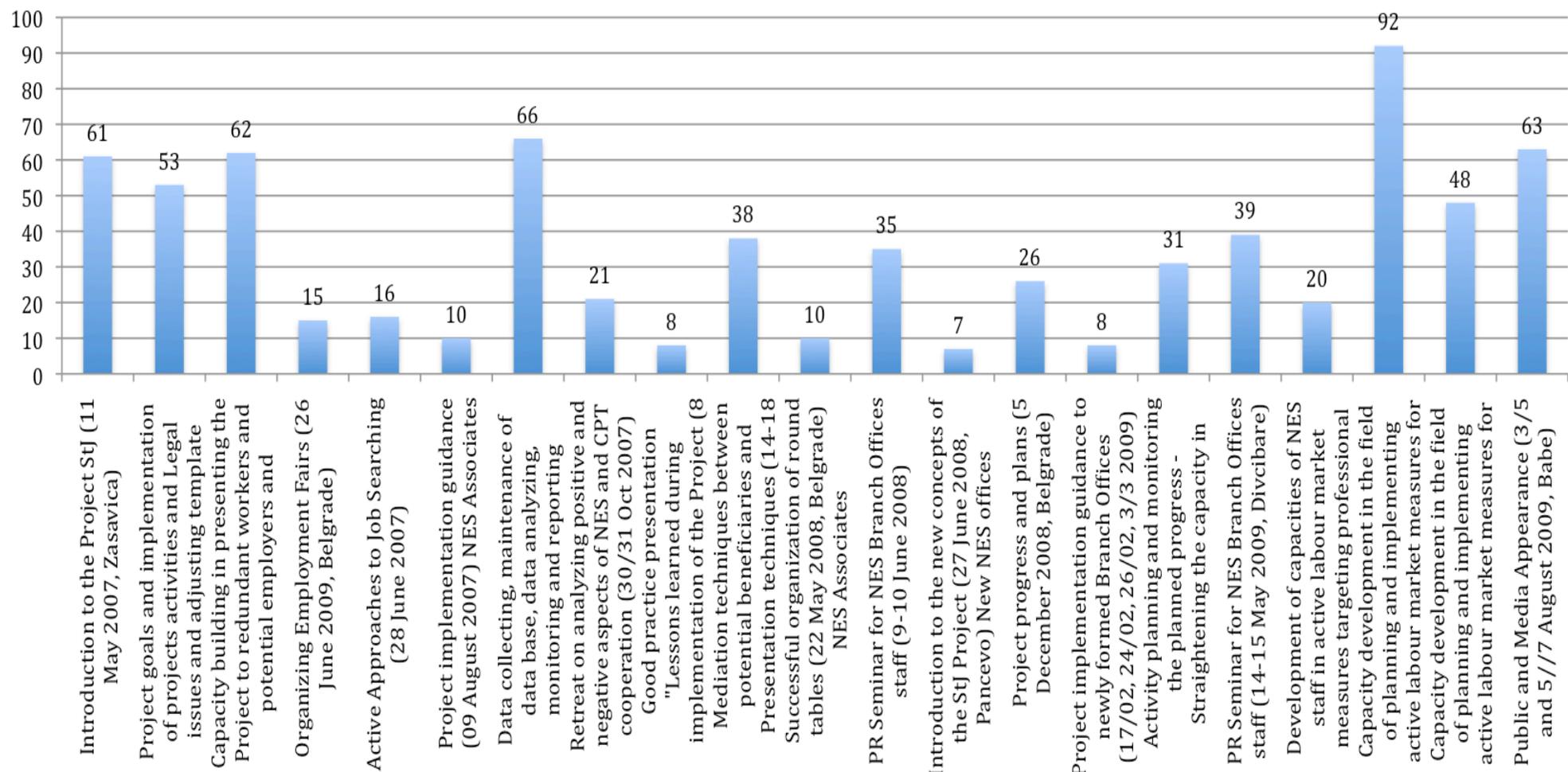
- Branch managers are of the view that visits to companies that are in the process of making redundancies by staff with the aim of presenting the Project are the most important for Project success. It is important to continue Project promotion in the media, as well. It is necessary to “strengthen” job matching activities and the activities on organising specialised meetings and employment fairs
- Connecting and integrating all functions within the NES Branch Offices would contribute to the improvement of job matching and thus to better implementation of activities. Since NES has departments specialised in job matching, the organisation of training within NES itself in the area of job matching for staff working on the Project, would be the most useful, in our opinion. That training would be delivered by their colleagues, experts in this area. In this way, NES capacities of both training participants and training providers would be enforced in multiple manners. At the same time we consider as very important the use of internal capacities and enhancement of interaction between various departments of NES.

Annex 5 – Summary Tables of Training Participation





"Participants at Training Modules"



No. of training participated

