

MID-TERM EVALUATION

VIE/031

Strengthening of Human Resources in the
Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam

PROJECT SUMMARY DATA

Country	Vietnam
Long Project Title	Strengthening of Human Resources in the Hospitality and Tourism in Vietnam
Short Project Title	Tourism Human Resources Development
LuxDev Code	VIE/031
Final Version of the Report	May 2012

RATING OF THE PROJECT BY THE EVALUATION MISSION

Global rating (Effectiveness)	4 On a scale of 1 (excellent results, significantly better than expected) to 6 (the project was unsuccessful, or the situation has deteriorated on balance)
Rating using other evaluation criteria	Relevance: 1 Efficiency: 5 Sustainability: 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Framework of the evaluation mission

This was a mid-term evaluation of project VIE/031 "Tourism Human Resources Development" carried out by a team of three experts (two International - Charles Blair and Peter Mac Nulty - and one National - Nguyen Duc Hoa Cuong) during March and April of 2012. Tourism Development International of Ireland was commissioned by LuxDev to carry out the evaluation. The main elements of the mission comprised the following:

- briefing at LuxDev Regional Office in Hanoi;
- literature review of project documentation and relevant technical documents ;
- fieldwork and site visits to beneficiaries ;
- interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholder consultations ;
- debriefing at Regional Office ;
- concluding stakeholder presentation and information sharing session at the Ministry of Culture, Sports & Tourism.

In addition, a debriefing at LuxDev headquarters took place on 15 May 2012 when the draft report was presented by the evaluation team and discussed, with comments subsequently received. A visit to the Alexis-Heck Hotel School in Diekirch was undertaken later the same day.

Specific objective of the project

Specific objective: increase quantity and improved quality of graduates from selected tourism schools/colleges in key tourism zones through upgraded capacity of schools to deliver practice-orientated and demand-driven training. Expected results are as follows:

Result 1: the management of hotel and tourism schools and capacity to operate practice hotels and restaurants are improved as required by the Government of Vietnam;

Result 2: the quality of training in the nine key tourism schools is more practice-orientated and industry demand-driven in line with the national policy/Government of Vietnam regulation.

Results achieved by the project at the moment of the evaluation mission

The project office was established, equipped, staffed and operational. Similarly, the institutional framework of the project has been established and functioning: project management unit, project steering committee and additionally the project working group.

At the time of evaluation very little had been achieved in terms of tangible benefits having been received by the nine beneficiary institutions (the tourism schools and colleges). More than two thirds of the way in to the project the beneficiary institutions have received none of the hardware elements. Main results, or outputs, of the project so far are as follows:

- planning and organisation for activities still to be implemented ;
- site visits by the chief technical adviser to beneficiary institutions ;
- four project working group workshops organised and implemented ;
- one three-day workshop for eighteen teachers on food & beverage cost control organised and delivered ;
- five food production teachers, one from each of the new schools and colleges placed for one academic year at the Alexis-Heck Hotel school in Luxembourg ;

- surveys undertaken of rooms identified for demo-kitchens and language labs ;
- detailed specifications for the demo-kitchens being finalised ;
- Other activities were in the process of being organised and scheduled, but not yet implemented.

Main conclusions

Evidence gathered throughout the mission from all relevant sources, beneficiaries and key stakeholders alike and from observations made by the Tourism Development International evaluation team, clearly indicates that it is vital to progress with implementation more effectively and efficiently at a faster rate. This means identifying and acting upon solutions, rather than dwell on problems and difficulties. Alternative options have to be found and taken forward to overcome blockages in the form of more effective and innovative solutions for achieving desired outcomes. The pace and intensity of implementation has to quicken, with parallel activities taking place, in order to deliver intended and planned benefits.

Project aims and objectives

Validity: the original aims and objectives of VIE/031, as expressed in Results 1 & 2 remain perfectly valid and appropriate in view of the tourism and hospitality industry's growing need for trained, professional staff at all levels. If the quality of tourism products and services are to meet internationally accepted standards the emphasis needs to be on:

- capacity building of the schools and colleges ;
- raising the quality of education and training the institutions provide ;
- practice-orientation of training provision ;
- industry relevant, demand-led training.

Project organisation and administration

Communication: better and more effective communication between the project office and beneficiaries will increase efficiency and reinforce commitment and the sense of ownership on the part of beneficiaries. Otherwise there is a risk of the project losing its cohesion and fragmenting as a consequence. '*Participative management*' is a two-way process that requires the active engagement of all parties concerned with more follow-up from the chief technical adviser and the project office to keep beneficiaries better informed and updated after workshops and site inspections by technical experts.

Alignment and procedure: while every effort is being made to align procedures and systems, this is a continuous process. Similarly, procedures e.g. procurement on the LuxDev side could be reviewed and streamlined to increase efficiency.

Monitoring: internal monitoring mechanisms should have alerted the LuxDev's regional office and the project management unit at an early stage that the project was falling behind schedule. Corrective action and adjustments should have been made accordingly in a timely manner to avoid and reduce further delay in implementation.

Capacity building and institutional strengthening

Resourcing impacts on quality: constraints on access to key resources impacts on quality of training and education the schools and colleges are able to provide; this applies to human, technical, equipping and financial resources.

Timeframe

Implementation in original timeframe not possible: the project is nowhere near as far advanced as it should be at this stage; delays mean that it is still very much '*work-in-progress*' and cannot be fully implemented within the planned three year timeframe. With less than six months implementing time remaining (allowing for closure and hand-over during the fourth quarter of 2012), around 60 - 70% of the 3 380 000 EUR is still unspent. Therefore an extension will need to be proposed, agreed and taken forward through the appropriate official channels, following standard procedures.

Main recommendations

In order to achieve the originally planned results, the project has to regain momentum and accelerate and intensify implementation through the execution of industry demand-led activities. It has to deliver tangible benefits to the target institutions in a constructive spirit of partnership with the schools and colleges in question. Based on the situational analysis undertaken by the consultants during the course of the mid term evaluation a number of inter-related, key actions are recommended for the project and its partners in order to achieve stated objectives as intended, specifically the following:

Immediate priority / urgent

- undertake a strategic review with the beneficiaries of their needs and capacities ;
- propose and pursue the approval of an extension of the project ;
- produce a revised work plan to be approved by the project steering committee for next two years for activities within clearly defined timelines and revise logical framework accordingly;
- restructure and streamline the project's institutional arrangements ;
- reallocation of budget to meet the capacity building and institutional strengthening needs of the beneficiaries to reflect the emphasis on the new institutions ;
- strengthen the management capacity of the project office to implement with greater fluency and efficiency ;
- ensure that effective monitoring mechanisms are in place to keep to the timelines and budgets for each activity, with prompt corrective action to be taken where necessary.

High priority:

- refocus activities to intensify the capacity building of senior management and all levels of teaching staff ;
- direct resources to building the management and human resource capacity, equipping and raising quality of teaching and instruction standards in the new tourism schools and colleges ;
- develop and extend the co-ordination with Environmentally & Socially Responsible Tourism (European Union-funded programme) ;
- devise a term of reference and procure a long-term national tourism human resource development expert to go into the beneficiary institutions to follow-up on capacity building inputs to ensure effective implementation, and hence sustainability, at school level; this appointment should be on a full-time basis, where funding allows ;
- contract with the British Council to design and deliver english language teaching programmes for teachers of the tourism schools and colleges, and also for consultancy services for installing "Language Learning Resource Centres" in the schools and colleges.

Medium priority:

- emphasis placed on building the capability of directors to enable beneficiaries to effectively identify opportunities and successfully manage commercial, income generating activities in order to achieve a meaningful degree of self-funding and independence and hence sustainability post-project; also as means of expanding practice-led training opportunities for students ;
- develop a model approach that each institution can implement for promoting closer industry linkages and co-operation on several different levels including: training and teaching inputs, internships, and employment opportunities ;
- provide guidelines and technical assistance from the project office in collaboration with ESRT to enable the beneficiaries to produce a five-year demand forecast for student enrolments, as a school and college management and planning and management tool ;
- support a higher participation rate of young women in management positions in the industry by using role models and encourage the adoption of industry codes of practice that promote gender balance at that level ;
- looking beyond VIE/031, it is recommended that the Government of Luxembourg and LuxDev begin to plan for a next phase to focus and concentrate key development resources on the institutional development and strengthening, capacity building of the new Danang campus as the “national reference point” or model. LAO/020 can provide the inspiration and exemplar, for example with regard to operational matters and financing of the practice hotel.