

FINAL EVALUATION

VIE/034

Bac Kan Vocational Training and Education
– Phase II

PROJECT SUMMARY DATA

Country	Vietnam
Long project title	Bac Kan Vocational Training and Education
Short project title	Bac Kan VET II
LuxDev Code	VIE/034
Version of the Report	November 2020

RATING OF THE PROJECT BY THE EVALUATION MISSION

Global rating (Effectiveness)	2 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: 2 Sustainability: 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project VIE/034 is the second phase of a Luxembourg development cooperation support to the Bac Kan College. The main objectives of this second phase are to consolidate the achievements of the first phase-project VIE/021 – Bac Kan Vocational Training and Education; to improve the school's management thereby enhancing the financial robustness through its income generating potential, and to offer a market- as well as client-oriented educational programme.

Bac Kan Vocational College established since 2002 has the mission of providing high-quality services in vocational education, applied research, consultation and science and technology transfer to meet the economic, social and cultural development needs of Bac Kan province as well as the north-eastern region of North Vietnam. In March 2020, Bac Kan Provincial People's Committee announced the decision of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs on merging Bac Kan Community College into Bac Kan Vocational College of Ethnic Minorities and renamed to Bac Kan College. After the merger, Bac Kan College is a public non-business unit under the Bac Kan Provincial People's Committee, under the state management of vocational education and training of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, operating under the College charter and the law. Organizational structure after the merger includes nine departments and faculties with nearly 140 officers, lecturers and staff.

The final evaluation of the project was conducted in Quarter II and Quarter III, 2020 in a participative way and the major data collection methods was qualitative taking into consideration the involvement of different parties at different levels. The main findings were discussed around the four criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Particularly:

- relevance of the project has been assessed in three levels:
 - at institutional level, the project has demonstrated its high relevance with strategic priorities of the national and ongoing reforming direction of the vocational training sector, provincial development strategies, and the development cooperation programme between Luxembourg and Vietnam,
 - at organizational level, the project has been aligned with the Bac Kan College long-term development strategy, helped to address high demand for skilled labours from enterprises and employers,
 - at individual level, the project approach is appropriate for increasing competence and confidence of the college Faculty members and management staff, and students as well;
- looking at effectiveness, the project has significant contributions in achieving the set:
 - at the level of the overall objective, the project has promoted employment and livelihood development in Bac Kan province by helping the Bac Kan College to increase relatively higher paid employments for its graduates in enterprises outside the province. By different ways, direct and indirect, graduates' working experiences and incomes will be used to support livelihood development in their homeland,
 - at the level of specific objectives, the project's intensive investment in both hard and soft infrastructures for the school leadership, core faculties including Agroforestry and Mechanical Engineering Faculties, and campus facilities has turned the Bac Kan College into a more attractive and well managed institution. Revenue generating activities promoted by the project have become significant non-budget revenue for the school, with a high share in total revenue of a vocational education and training institution, even compared to other large and long-established ones in Vietnam,
 - there are various evidence showing that Result 1 of improving the Bac Kan College's overall management has been achieved. This is the first time that the Bac Kan College can formulate its development strategy with clear statement of the school vision, mission and core values. Decision making process in the school is more evidence-based and different new management tools are introduced at different extents. The stronger link with industry and the network of domestic colleges and international counterparts has been shaped, enabling the Bac Kan College to continuously improve relevance and quality of its training curricula and research activities,

- for Result 2, the Bac Kan College's offering of an attractive market- and client-oriented educational programme, discussion with different stakeholders showed that various market- and client-oriented training curricula have been developed and delivered, its visibility to the society has been enhanced, its Faculties' research confidence and capacity has been improved. The cooperation with District Vocational Training Centers is still limited, requiring an innovative approach in working with this group of beneficiaries,
- in fact, from a vocational education and training institution on the edge of being closed in a new autonomous context, thanks to the prompt intervention of project VIE/034 the Bac Kan College has been rehabilitated to become a strong competitor with its counterparts in the neighboring province Thai Nguyen, where concentrates a lot of long-established centrally and provincially managed institutions;
- the efficiency dimension of the project has been assessed in terms of project financial disbursement, operational and output efficiency. In general, project support is efficient, especially if output efficiency is taken into account. Operational efficiency, on the other hand, can be seen in some activities and less in others. The main cause of that is regulation changes and difference between project and the Government of Vietnam procedure. The total budget of Luxembourg is 3 400 000 EUR. As of early August 2020, the project disbursed EUR 3 040 000 (equivalent to 89.4%). The rest of the budget will be fully disbursed in November 2020;
- regarding the sustainability dimension, there are both strengths and threats. The most important factor contributing to greater sustainability of the Bac Kan College operation is strengthened capacity and confidence of the Bac Kan College Faculty members and administration staff. The second factor is the prestigious image that the Bac Kan College has made lasting effort to build up. Learning facilities in the Bac Kan College have been systematically invested into, as an accelerator of the Government of Vietnam investment in machinery and equipment from the Targeted program. Different revenue generating activities have been well developed, some of which including driving training, veterinary clinic and potential mushroom plantation. The Targeted Program on National Target Occupations or similar programs are most likely to be continued in medium term as a funding vehicle to support vocational education and training system. Apart from these strengths, there are some threats to sustainability, including: the uncertainty of the autonomy policy, the uncertainty posed by a merger, the cultural norms and customs of ethnic minority community and the challenge for the Galaxy English Center to continue its current operation and make profit after the project concludes.

Important lessons learnt are:

- the project interventions were implemented at the right time and targeted the right institution. Right at the time when the vocational education and training schools need to move towards the autonomy, the VIE/034 project provided the Bac Kan College with a holistic package of supports, including the training facility development and human resources development;
- the project has introduced comprehensive and flexible approaches which were based on the needs of the management team, Faculty, learners, and the potential employers;
- the selection of areas of intervention is highly appropriate. They cover the key aspects of the schools; competence such as developing the long-term plan, delivering public relation and communication strategies, promoting school's image to attract learners, enhancing training quality and developing new training programs, promoting the industry links to increase employment opportunities for learners, last but not least, strengthening the income-generation activities for the sustainability;
- the support of Bac Kan provincial agencies, in particular Provincial People's Committee, Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and the high commitment of management team, the Faculties, project staff and Technical Advisor is an undeniable success factor.

The evaluation team has suggested recommendations for different stakeholders - Provincial People's Committee, the Bac Kan College and the donor:

- Provincial People's Committee and line departments should proactively work with central ministries to provide an enabling legal framework for the Bac Kan College to diversify its sources of revenue in alignment with the Government of Vietnam's autonomy policy;
- Provincial People's Committee should work closely with Ministry of Planning and Investment to persuade the donor for another phase of the project, whose support will focus on strengthening

the Bac Kan College's competitiveness in providing training services for occupation aligned with provincial priorities;

- the Bac Kan College should take advantage of all networking results developed by project VIE/034 by:
 - proactively engaging in international cooperation with existing foreign partners,
 - taking advantage of Luxemburg support to develop partnership with counterparts from Laos and other Luxemburg network countries,
 - exploring new cooperating opportunities with the donors who are actively supporting vocational education and training system in Vietnam such as *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*, Japan International Cooperation Agency and Canada;
- the Bac Kan College should develop a follow-up strategy with its sent graduates to solve the dilemma of expanding the Bac Kan College's reach to labour market outside student's homeland;
- the Bac Kan College should work with Provincial Department of Science and Technology to use its Research and Development budget to support the best Bac Kan College research proposals which have high practicality and potentiality for commercialization;
- the Agroforestry Faculty should be enhanced by the Bac Kan College to become a unique training faculty in the region and a regional hub in agroforestry;
- diversified revenue sources should be enhanced, especially with the English Centre;
- in parallel with investment in the first "outlet" of the Bac Kan College, capacity of staff and Faculty members in the newly merged Bac Kan Community College also needs to be developed;
- for the donor, to sustain its contributions to the Bac Kan College in the last decade, Luxemburg should consider a chance to design the third phase of the project, with continuing support for development of the Agro–Tourism Faculty and providing home-based vocational training for ethnic minority community.