Improved conditions, greater equitable access and a system to prioritise investments in Serbia schools

Project description

Education and training are essential priorities for Serbia to increase employment, yet the quality of the current education system is low, the education infrastructure is degraded and investments in this sector are inadequate, affected by rigid allocation mechanisms and insufficient funding from local governments.

The School Modernisation Programme (2010-2014) is aimed at improving the quality of learning conditions for students at all levels of pre-university education, increase equity in the education system and provide for more efficient allocation and investment in physical infrastructure that is aligned with the corresponding country needs and global circumstances. The programme is made up of 3 components: components 1 and 3 focussed on renewal and expansion of school infrastructure and building of new schools and component 2 supporting the strategic development of the Serbian education system through technical assistance. The value of the overall programme is estimated at €100 million, co-financed by an EIB loan of €50 million.

The total grant planned by WBIF amounts to EUR 800 000, including EUR 400 000 for interest subsidy on the CEB loan, and EUR 400 000 for technical assistance. The TA financed by by WBIF and EIB addresses the main tasks in Component 2 of the Programme. First, assistance has been provided to the Ministry of Education and Science in Serbia in preparing its Education Sector Strategy, which lays out the vision for education and how to achieve the country’s development goals. A sub-set of an overall strategy for the sector includes the decision to invest in expanding, rehabilitating and upgrading the school infrastructure. Secondly, support is provided for the completion of conception and implementation of the Informational and management system in education, co-financed by World Bank loan. A third task is to improve the Decision Methodology for Investments in Education Infrastructure, the process by which Serbia makes decisions relating to investments in school infrastructure. WBIF technical assistance is expected to be completed by 2014.

Key Facts

- **Project title:** Schools modernisation programme
- **Reference:** WB4-SER-SOC-05
- **Beneficiary:** Serbia
- **Promoter:** Ministry of Education, Science Technological Development
- **IFI:** EIB
- **Sector:** Social
- **Support:** Technical assistance
- **Timing:** 2011-2014

Support provided by WBIF

- Technical and management support
- Identification of investment.

Finances

- **WBIF grant:** € 800,000
- **Estimate total investment:** € 100,000,000
- **Estimate IFI loan:** € 50,000,000

Project location: Countrywide
Project title: TA for school modernization programme, Serbia

The Beneficiaries
The school system in Serbia faces many problems with its school infrastructure after years of under investment. At 3.4% of GDP, investment in education is still well below EU levels (5.2%). In this context, for example, many schools still operate with three daily-shifts of teaching, in part because of the poor existing infrastructure and facilities. The immediate effect of the project will be to improve working conditions for the pupils, teachers and school staff and provide for conditions needed to improve education in the country.

The quantitative outputs
With the support of the technical assistance provided by WBIF and EIB, the Ministry of Science and Education has produced its updated education strategy. The strategy identifies among its priorities an important investment component in expanding, rehabilitating and upgrading the school infrastructure. The technical assistance subsequently has helped the ministry to set up a methodology for rational decision in defining the investment priorities for school infrastructure. The technical assistance produced a first set of 20 schools to be upgraded, then the ministry through a national process over Serbia’s territory is identifying in a priority list of more than 100 schools that should receive various types of improvements. A first set of investment has been financed as part of the project (component 1), and the technical assistance contributed to define the next investment programme expected to be financed by IFI loans.

The qualitative improvements
Good education is an essential priority for Serbia to increase employment and productivity. The quality of school infrastructure is a necessary condition to improve the quality of education services in schools. In particular, the reduction of the recourse to the three-shift system in the schools upgraded by the project is expected to improve the quality of the education received by the pupils.

The technical assistance has improved the allocation of funds to the identified schools for a better use of scarce resources.

After years of under investments, the upgraded facilities and equipment in schools will improve the environmental quality of the school buildings. In particular, the upgraded schools will comply with energy efficiency legislation.

Good governance
Through its Education Strategy, the ministry has clarified the priorities for the education sector and the decision methodology is now used as a rational tool to set priorities of investment in the sector. The technical assistance has helped the ministry to improve governance in these processes.