Mid-term plan of priority actions

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this year the matrices of mid-term priority actions were developed in line with the medium-term budgeting process. This was decided in order to address a criticism made by various stakeholders, not least in the Joint Staff Assessment of last year’s Progress Report, that it is often not clear what the cost of priority policies is and whether they fit into the MTBP. According to the instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance, the preparation of the medium-term budget relies on the contribution of line ministries in 2 steps:

**Programme Policy Review** Ministries describe policy goals and objectives for each programme.

**Programme Expenditure and Investment Planning** Ministries identify target output levels for each of their programmes and allocate sufficient resources from their medium-term budget preparation ceiling to each programme for the delivery of those target outputs. Resource allocations include allocations for public investment.

Only 5 ministries have worked through these procedures this year: Education, Health, Labour and Social Affairs, Agriculture and Food, and Territorial Adjustment and Tourism. In addition, the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications submitted a review of one of its programmes. Their Programme Policy Review matrices are presented below. A Programme Policy Review is not intended to be a full and comprehensive review of the sort that is required for an update of the NSSED. However, line ministries need to demonstrate that they have:

* identified and described each of their expenditure programmes;
* reviewed the policies relating to each expenditure programme to ensure that a programme policy statement can be written (or revised);
* reviewed the policies so that they are consistent with and reflect wider national policies (NSSED, European integration, NATO accession); and
* identified the status of each of their policy statements (for example, whether any particular policy statement has implicit or explicit Council of Ministers approval)

The NSSED Department took part in the process through the MTBP Secretariat and reviews of the line ministry inputs for consistency with the national strategy.

Of the remaining ministries, the 8 ministries with the largest shares in the budget were asked to prepare a sector expenditure strategy, a less comprehensive procedure to encourage a strategic approach to the planning of public expenditure. The sector strategies identify concisely target outputs, beneficiaries, the current situation, plans for reform and the budget implications for each programme to consolidate the link between budgets and policies. Of these ministries, the following submitted a sector expenditure strategy: Defence, Finance, Industry and Energy, and Local Government and Decentralisation. The NSSED Department was directly involved in assisting the Budget Department in the development of these strategies. The following ministries did not submit a strategy: Culture, Youth and Sport, Environment, Justice, and Public Order.

It must be stressed that the matrices do not yet indicate whether the proposed activities will receive budget funding, as the medium-term budget programme process had not yet been completed at the time of writing. However, their inclusion in the Progress Report is considered essential in showing the links between the NSSED and MTBP processes. This is a first small but significant step for the NSSED Department to assume an increasing role in the formulation of strategies at the sector level. In the context of the Integrated Planning System, the NSSED Department will assume increasing responsibilities over the coordination of sector and crosscutting strategies. The prioritisation process will need to be ever more strategic in linking long-term goals with medium-term policies that are embedded in medium-term budgeting.

* 1. Ministry of Education and Science

Programme 1: Planning and management

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| Policy description | Policy goals | Policy objectives | Policy standards |
| Guidance of decentralisation process of pre university education system (in cooperation with The Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation). Increase of efficiency for education system administration in all levels of education. | (1) All communes will manage investments for new buildings and school maintenance beginning year 2010  (2) All schools (public and non public) of pre-university education system will be inspected once in three year. | Year 1  (1) Pilot experiment for decentralisation executed by Tirana Municipality will end in 2006. (2) Amended law for decentralisation of education system (3) Increase 20% number of communes involved in decentralisation process for education system. (4) 20% of schools inspected using the new inspection system.  Years 2-3  (1) Increase 20% number of communes involved in decentralisation process for education system. (2) 20% of schools inspected using the new inspection system. | (1) Legal framework and guidelines for decentralisation process in education  (2) Investments in infrastructure / maintenance of schools functions transferred to local governments  (3) New inspection system, adapted from European experiences, to evaluate the performance of all schools of pre-university education system. |

Programme 2: Basic education

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| Policy description | Policy goals | Policy objectives | Policy standards |
| (1) Equal opportunities to compulsory education for all children of relevant age  (2) Complete education reform in content and methodology designing new curricula and implementing standards of content and achievement  (3) Improve management of human resources by raising teacher motivation | (1) Increase number of school years, by expanding the compulsory education from 8 to 9 years; increase average years of education for population from 9.5 to 10.5 during next 10 years.  (2) Increase enrolment rate in compulsory education (99%) and kindergarten (47%).  (3) Increase the number of schools and classrooms; improve teaching facilities in order to provide optimal teaching conditions; equip schools with teaching and laboratory tools as well as other necessary school equipment.  (4) Increase education results by implementing minimal and maximal educational standards. | Year 1  (1) Build new schools and rehabilitate existing ones, particularly in urban areas reducing by 20% the students that learn under inappropriate conditions. (2) Design new curricula (programmes and textbooks) for the 3rd and 7th classes of compulsory education. (3) Increase number and quality of school equipment, providing for their maintenance, with particular emphasis on laboratories of chemistry, physics, and biology. (4) Provide 100% of pupils with textbooks.  Year 2  (1) Design new curricula for the 4th and 8th classes of compulsory education. (2) Build new schools and rehabilitate existing ones, particularly in urban areas, reducing by 30% the students that learn under inappropriate conditions. (3) Widely equip basic education schools with teaching and laboratory tools in order to increase the teaching quality. (4) Provide 100% of pupils with textbooks.  Year 3  (1) Design new curricula for the 5th and 9th classes of compulsory education. (2) Build new schools and rehabilitate existing ones, particularly in urban areas, reducing by 30% the students that learn under inappropriate conditions. (3) Widely equip basic education schools with teaching and laboratory tools in order to increase the teaching quality. (4) Provide 100% of pupils with textbooks. | (1) Number of textbook/students, complete 100% of needs.  (2) Number of rehabilitated or newly build schools and surface (m2)/ pupils.  (3) Number of equipment and necessary teaching tools reaching 3 laboratories per 1000 pupils.  (4) 22 pupils/teacher  (5) 35 pupils/classroom  (6) Assessment of achievements according the standards reaching 98% practicability. |

Programme 3: General secondary education

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| Policy description | Policy goals | Policy objectives | Policy standards |
| Increase high secondary education enrolment, create optimal working conditions in schools, reform methods and content to improve teaching quality and student comprehension | (1) Higher secondary education enrolment: 79% in 2006 and 90% in 2009.  (2) New diversified secondary education curricula in all higher secondary schools.  (3) Improve content quality, teaching level, and student comprehension through improved curricula, continued progress in school technology, and teacher qualification and motivation.  (4) Improve school infrastructure through the construction and rehabilitation, expanding capacity by 5-7 % annually, to reduce number of pupils per class and equip schools with teaching materials.  (5) Publish and subsidise all higher secondary level textbooks for all students | Year 1  (1) Implement new curricula, programmes and textbooks for the third year of the diversified higher secondary school (Grade 11). (2) Train teachers to implement the new curricula (3) Construct and rehabilitate schools, especially in urban areas, to decrease the number of students per class to 35 by 2009. (4) Equip 60% of higher secondary schools with laboratories and teaching materials, including computers.  Year 2  (1) Implement new curricula, programmes and textbooks for the third year of the diversified higher secondary school (Grade 12) (2) Train teachers to implement the new curricula (3) Construct and rehabilitate schools, especially in urban areas, to lower the number of students in unsuitable classrooms by 20%. (4) Equip 80% of schools with laboratories and teaching materials  Year 3  (1) Consolidate and possibly improve new curricula in diversified secondary education. (2) Train all teachers to implement the new curricula (3) Equip all schools with laboratories and teaching materials | (1) Number of new programs and textbooks covered 100%.  (2) Student-classroom rate 35  (3) 3 laboratories per 500 pupils  (4) 90% enrolment rate  (5) 95% promotion rate |

Programme 4: Professional secondary education

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| Policy description | Policy goals | Policy objectives | Policy standards |
| Reform Technical and Vocational High Education according to labour market needs and the development of specific areas of the country. Increase the number of students in this educational system through new possibilities, curricula design on two levels and extension of collaboration with business and community. Better professional preparation of students, establishing the facilities of professional training (practice) and equipping existing ones with machineries and suitable technology. | Introduce new studying profiles (branches) to increase the demand for this kind of education, hence aiming to increase the enrolment in this system at about 30% of students studying in general high education. Respond to market needs in different areas of country. | Year 1  (1) Rehabilitate 10% of schools and equip them with teaching and laboratory tools to increase teaching quality. (2) Extend curricula in two levels. (3) Prepare new curricula based on the study of labour market needs. (4) Increase number of students by 20%.  Year 2  (1) Improve existing curricula and prepare 20% of textbooks. (2) Introduce new branches of study. (3) Equip professional education schools with didactic tools for general subjects. (4) Equip professional training facilities with machinery and equipment.  Year 3  (1) Introduce new profiles (branches) of study and provide respective teaching programmes and 40% of textbooks. (2) Equip professional education schools with teaching and didactic laboratory tools (50%). (3) Equip facilities of professional training (practice) with machineries and technologic equipment (30%). | (1) Number of students per teacher: 20.  (2) Two professional and vocational textbooks for three students.  (3) Teaching laboratories and facilities for every school.  (4) One place of work per two students exercising professional practice. |

Programme 5: University education

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| Policy description | Policy goals | Policy objectives | Policy standards |
| Reform higher education with principles and goals of Bologna Declaration in order to achieve European standards. The main priorities are:  (1) Expand capacity of university and post-university education to respond to society needs for qualifications  (2) Increase teaching quality through the improvement of curricula and enrichment of laboratories and technical equipment.  (3) Institutional and financial autonomy  (4) Improve scholarship system to reflect academic performance and economic need of students. | (1) Increase number of university and post-university students joining from high schools from 75% to 90%.  (2) Each university should be able to cover 40% of academic necessities from their own revenues.  (3) Increase mobility of students and lecturers implementing the ECTS credits system as well as the subsidiary diploma. | Year 1  (1) Increase number of students by 10%. (2) Accreditation of first 3 universities  Year 2  (1) Designate laws and regulations for financial autonomy. (2) Increase number of students by 10%. (3) Accreditation of other 4 universities  Year 3  (1) Create intranet network among universities. (2) Increase number of students by 10%. (3) Scholarship scheme to be based on merits. (4) Each university should be able to cover 40% of academic necessities from their own revenues. (5) Improve laboratory equipment in Polytechnic University and natural science universities by 20%. (6) Accreditation of 3 other universities | (1) Ratio student/lecturer: 20/1  (2) Ratio between academic and administrative personnel: 3/1  (3) Student diploma will have 180 credits ECTS or 20-25 hours per week  (4) Proportion of in-class hours vs. out-of-class hours: 2/3 |

Programme 7: Scientific research

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| Policy description | Policy goals | Policy objectives | Policy standards |
| (1) Reform of scientific research system  (2) Management of scientific research programs as well as the integration of Albanian scientific research with European programs.  (3) Involvement of private sector in scientific research activities. | (1) National Platform for the reformation of scientific research system.  (2) Scientific research institutions integrated within national research and development programs as well as in network with European research programmes. Implementation of national evaluation indicators of VSHT in research system until by 2015.  (3) Involve private business in national research and development programmes as well as in international programs financing x%. | Year 1  (1) Platform for reformation of scientific research implemented in three years. New organisation structures for scientific research institutions, normative acts for their administration, as well as new legislation for the scientific research system. (2) Increase 15% each year in national and international programs, in cooperation with European scientific research structures and initiatives. (3) Involve private business in national scientific research programs and bilateral agreements, as well as in financing projects x% (amount of money).  Years 2-3  (1) Pending on KPSHZHT decision for scientific research reformation, creation of new organisation structures for scientific research institutions, normative acts for their administration. (2) Increase 15% each year in national and international programs, in cooperation with European scientific research structures and initiatives. (3) Involvement of private business in national scientific research programs and bilateral agreements, as well as in financing projects x% (amount of money). | (1) National Platform presents new legislation, creates 3 scientific research centres and changes financing system according to international standards  (2) Approval and project financing for the national and international programmes to be done through a competition system based on the best European practice. |