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**UKRAINIAN STANDARDIZED EXTERNAL TESTING
INITIATIVE (USETI) LEGACY ALLIANCE**

JANUARY 1, 2010 - DECEMBER 31, 2012

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

**Development Experience Clearinghouse
Quarterly Report: Q1 (January – March 2010)
Pre-Award Authorization: 22 CFR 226.25(e)(1)**

GDA

Submitted by:

**AMERICAN COUNCILS FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
in cooperation with
AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH**

The USETI Legacy Alliance is a Cooperative Agreement under the Global Development Alliance funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. American Councils is the Cooperating Partner, together with USAID, and 13 other founding partners. The Agreement will build on accomplishments of previous assistance, in order to: build a sustainable, strengthened Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment capable of independently and transparently developing and implementing secure tests that meet international standards; secure a legislative basis for testing and higher education admission, and an institutionalized partnership between business, higher education, and policymakers; transform public support for testing into a proactive, contemporary, public expectation; and assist in the development of a basic, high-quality test-preparation industry driven by informed consumer demand.

1. Summary of Activities

Throughout the period of Quarter 1 of the project, American Councils received pre-award authorization under 22 CFR 226.25(e)(1), January 12, 2010, to carry out the following activities: (1) The provision of technical assistance to the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment (UCEQA) to develop training materials for individuals who will be charged with marking exams during upcoming external testing campaigns; (2) The preparation of a roundtable with Ukrainian employers to discuss testing and related reforms; (3) The development of a project website; (4) The provision of technical assistance and training to UCEQA to enable the effective construction of a new ability-based standardized test; (5) The provision of technical assistance with the revision of the curriculum for a Bachelor's level course on educational measurement; and (6) Media monitoring of coverage of testing and related reforms.

The following report, for activities carried out in Quarter 1, January through March 2010, reflects activities carried out under authorization cited above.

1.1 Events and Activities

Special Meetings

Working Meeting with key external testing stakeholders. On February 19, 2010, the USETI Legacy Alliance arranged a working meeting with key testing stakeholders to discuss the political transition and plan for contingency scenarios.

Considering the fact that the newly elected president, Viktor Yanukovich, and his team actively criticized HEI admissions through external testing, the meeting participants agreed to undertake activities in cooperation with one another to minimize possible negative consequences should external testing be abolished.

As a result of this meeting, the following decisions were made:

- International Renaissance Foundation agreed to finance national polling on external testing as well as to support an informational campaign supporting the external testing;
- Participants agreed to complete research correlating the 2009 external testing results to the results of freshmen mid-year examination (Correlation Analysis);
- The MOES Minister agreed to arrange meetings with employers supporting external testing (due to Cabinet of Ministers authority shift in March 2010, the meeting was canceled);
- The MOES Minister agreed to institute a UCEQA Civic Board as the body monitoring UCEQA's activities;
- Civic Network OPORA agreed to administer a forum on the Admissions Management System "Konkurs".

Area 1. Reinforcing and Building UCEQA's Test Development and Operational Capacity

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Ability Test construction development. On February 15-17, 2010, USETI Alliance participated in the training in test construction and item writing in Kharkiv. During the training, the participants developed UkrSAT test approbation for 2010.

Correlation Analysis of the 2009 SET results with First Year Achievement. On March 18, 2010, a Small Scale Validity Study 2009 was presented at a press conference. The analysis links the results of the 2009 external exam to first-year student academic achievement as measured by their mid-year examinations. Twenty-six HEIs from all regions of

Ukraine participated in the study. The analysis also included a survey of more than 22,000 teachers and students on their attitudes toward external testing as the major instrument of HEI admissions decisions.

The aim of the analysis was to investigate three aspects of testing in admissions:

- The *validity* of admission on the basis of the external testing;
- The *efficiency* of admission on the basis of the external testing;
- The *attitudes* of key reference groups to admission on the basis of the external testing.

Faith in the external testing system among students was expressed by 86% of those surveyed. Ninety percent (90%) of school teachers and 82% of school students appreciate and support external testing. Only 8% of school employees versus 23% of HEI employees do not trust External Independent Testing (EIT). Only 29% of HEI employees and 29% of school graduates do not support testing. Survey participants noted that the quality of the tests has significantly improved when compared to 2007.

Apart from public trust in external testing, researchers found that the standardized, external testing based admission system was both efficient (comparing the results of the first mid-term exams to UCEQA test score certificates) and fair (comparing those who applied with those who got accepted to HEIs). The main findings of the research are as follows:

- External testing effectiveness is high; the correlation coefficient of the average external testing score and the student's grade point average from the winter and summer semesters of 2008-2009 is 0.522;
- Efficiency of the system differs by departments (related majors): from 0.277 for health sciences, 0.367 for engineer sciences, and up to 0.639 for law and jurisprudence;
- Adding the secondary school grade point average and giving them equal weight as the external testing score improves the correlation;
- Across Ukraine, on average 57.3% of those applying to HEIs were accepted; 60.46% of women and 53.52% of the men who applied were accepted.

The rejection rate of those eligible for admittance to HEIs based on the external testing scores did not go above 20%. International comparisons of this figure indicate that the rules of admission to Ukrainian HEIs are fair. For example, in reviewing admittance by location of secondary education the findings were as follows:

- 69.17% of graduates from large cities were accepted into HEIs,
- 63.94% from cities,
- 56.57% from villages,
- 61.37% from city-like settlements,
- 51.92% from village-like settlements.

For previous year graduates (2008 and earlier) – the number of those who were accepted into HEIs is significantly lower – 36.78% compared to 57.3% accepted in 2009.

The study was delivered to the newly appointed Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine Dmytro Tabachnyk.

Technical Assistance (TA) delivered – Supporting Training of Open Ended Item Markers. On March 30 - April 3, 2010, USETI Consultant Dr. Algirdas Zabulionis began working on a Training of Trainers in order for UCEQA specialists to train new open-ended item scorers. Working with the methodologists responsible for training of open-ended markers, Dr. Zabulionis made recommendations on more efficient ways of training, including issuing practical examples of scripts. He will also start working with UCEQA specialists on creating a manual on open-ended item scoring. The assistance he provided is necessary to properly build inter-rater reliability. Dr. Zabulionis also helped UCEQA specialists to conduct analysis of the population of students who are going to take tests in 2010, and assisted UCEQA in improving test administration logistics.

Area 2: Legislative/Policy

ELPEG meeting on new admission policy challenges. On March 23, 2010, USETI Legacy conducted an ELPEG meeting. The aim of the meeting was to coordinate efforts in response to a controversial statement by the members of the new Cabinet of Ministers on potential changes to the procedures governing the 2010 admission campaign in Ukraine.

Informational Admission System Development. During the reporting time period, USETI Legacy Alliance was closely involved in the development of the “Konkurs” Admissions Management System which will be used during the 2010 admissions campaign.

During this period, a schedule for the work of “Konkurs” in 2010 was developed in cooperation with the Higher Education Department at MOES. In addition, the procedures for UCEQA certificate verification were developed and approved in cooperation with UCEQA.

Also, on February 9, USETI Alliance participated in MOES meeting with representatives of 356 HEI who will be responsible for the work of “Konkurs” in 2010.

Area 3: Public outreach

External testing support. In January 2010, a campaign in support of testing materialized and brought together various institutions. It was formed in response to the Program of the Candidate of the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich, which contained the eventual abolishment of the external testing and reinstatement of internal HEI exams as an element of HEI admissions.

In early February, six NGOs (the Coalition “To Help the People!”, the All-Ukrainian Civic Youth Organization, “Debate Academy”, “Student Republic,” “Ukraine-XXI”, “Ukrainian Student’s Association”, and the All-Ukrainian Student Council for the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine) joined the “For an Enlightened Ukraine: Admissions Without Bribes!” campaign, with the aim of defending external testing regardless of who wins the elections.

After the new Cabinet of Ministers was voted in by the Verkhovna Rada in early March 2010, the Civic Network OPORA disseminated an open letter to Volodymyr Semynozhenko, Vice- Prime Minister of Ukraine, that addressed the introduction of new admission rules for HEIs that would not include external independent testing. OPORA called on the representatives of the new government to cease actions which could negatively impact the practice of external independent testing in Ukraine, which has altered for the better societal expectations and reduced the level of corruption during admissions to HEIs.

On March 15, 2010, a press conference was held by Volodymyr Polokhalo, Chairman of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Committee on Education and Sciences, and Volodymyr Kovtunets, USETI Legacy Alliance Legislative and Government Relations Manager, at the “Hlavcom” Agency Press-Center.

On March 17, 2010, USETI Legacy Alliance held a coordination meeting with external testing stakeholders to discuss actions to take in support of external testing in 2010. MPs, Students representatives, IRF, UCEQA and USETI Alliance representatives participated in the meeting. At the meeting parties shared the actions which their organizations implement in support of external testing.

On March 22, 2010, civic organizations which have monitored external testing for the past two years – OPORA and CVU – insisted that legislative stabilization of external independent testing is needed in order to define its status in relation to the admission process, and to legitimize civic monitoring of its execution. This was announced by OPORA’s press-service.

During this period of uncertainty about 2010 external testing and its role in HEI admissions, UCEQA consistently defended external testing as central to HEI admissions decision-making in Ukraine.

On March 30, 2010, the Testing Technologies Center initiated a meeting in support of external testing with Ukrainian NGOs. Representatives of Civic Network OPORA, Democratic Initiatives Foundation, “Ukraine XXI Century”, Committee of Voters of Ukraine, Student Republic, Ukrainian Student Organization “For an Educated Ukraine”, NGO Coalition “Na dopomohu lyudyam” (“To Assist the People”), USETI Legacy Alliance, Pro.Mova Company and “Fakt” Publishing House participated in the meeting. Participants described the activities their organizations will undertake to support external testing this year.

USETI Legacy Alliance Quarter 1 Report - Annex 1: Chart of Completed Activities

Activities	Progress
Activity 1: The provision of technical assistance to the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment (UCEQA) to develop training materials for individuals who will be charged with marking exams during upcoming external testing campaigns	USETI Legacy Alliance consultant Algirdas Zabulionis worked with UCEQA on March 29 through April 2, 2010.
Activity 2: Preparation of a roundtable with Ukrainian employers to discuss testing and related reforms	Rescheduled for Q3 because New Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine was defined.
Activity 3: The development of a project website	Project Website updates regularly.
Activity 4: The provision of technical assistance and training to UCEQA to enable the effective construction of a new ability-based standardized test	USETI Legacy Alliance consultant Mark Zelman worked with Ability Test Development Work Group on February 15 through 17, 2010 in Kharkiv
Activity 5: The provision of technical assistance with the revision of the curriculum for a Bachelor's level course on educational measurement	USETI Alliance Partner Marlardalen/Tempus established new lectures.
Activity 6: Media monitoring of coverage of testing and related reforms	Media monitoring received regularly.