

**Management Training and Economics Education Project for
Central and Eastern Europe
Project No. 180-0029**

**Monitoring and Evaluation Contract
Contract No. DHR-0029-C-00-5059-00**

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT - July/August 1996

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Submitted to:

Office of Human Resources (ENI/HR/TE)
Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States
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A. INTRODUCTION

The Management Training and Economics Education Project (MTEEP) is based on using institution-to-institution linkages to undertake short term, high impact training while simultaneously upgrading Central European institutions for long term management and economics education. The Project was initially approved in 1990, and is expected to continue through 30 June 1999. The purpose of this monitoring and evaluation contract is to provide technical assistance for formative monitoring and summative evaluation of MTEEP. Currently there are eleven active grants to U.S. universities working with partner institutions in nine Central and Eastern European countries which are covered by these services. The contract was signed in July, 1995. This is the 13th monthly report of activities.

B. OVERALL

The annual report was completed and sent to USAID/Washington for final approval. Approval was received from both John Batelle and Carolyn Coleman and the report was duplicated and distributed to USAID/Washington, USAID Missions, Project Directors, In-Country Coordinators and Partners in Country, approximately 45 reports were sent out. Several new features of the annual report are:

- < the inclusion of data and its analysis from a series of questionnaires distributed by the MTEEP team to US Project Directors, In-Country Directors and local partners;
- < more comprehensive program reach and financial status data for each grant;
- < summary tables of findings by impact and sustainability indicators for each grant.

Planning for the fall site visits occurred. Approval was asked and received for adding the new component visiting U.S. grantee home offices.

A work plan, detailing time lines and content, for the next semi-annual report was prepared, discussed among the evaluation team members and approved by them.

One newsbrief was distributed. The monthly progress and financial reports were submitted to USAID. Regular contact with project directors was maintained.

C. GRANTEE UPDATES

University of Nebraska-Lincoln: Albania

The evaluation team was in touch with both Patricia Bekele at USAID/Washington and Dr. Sang Lee, Project Director for UNL regarding project status. Dr. Lee sent the team an update which described the use of additional funding to upgrade the status of the in-country director, train 4 Albanian faculty at UNL, and add staff in-country to assist the in-country director. In addition, they have secured e-mail access in-country for the in-country director. Each of these

improvements had been recommended by the evaluation team in May, and Dr. Lee agreed to have these changes in place by August 1. It appears that he has met this deadline. He also agreed to have the other two centers moving closer towards becoming functional by August 1st. Dr. Lee's update was less specific about the steps he and his staff have taken on this task, and the team will pursue this next month.

University of Delaware: Bulgaria

In July, UD staff responded to the draft annual report section on their project with numerous comments. All of the information which could be substantiated was included in the final version of the report, however most of the team's concerns remain and these focus on the unclear relationship of the goal of sustainable programs to UD's efforts. Specifically, the team was informed that UD will not be transitioning the leadership of the Business Development Center to local control as had been planned for this summer. UD intends to retain control of the BDC indefinitely, given their assessment of the current political climate. The team attempted to communicate again with the in-country director but had not heard from him as of the writing of this report.

University of Pittsburgh: Czech Republic

The team made several attempts to reach the U.S. project director regarding project status and late reports. As reported in an earlier report, the project director for CERGE-EI took a position at the University of Michigan. The team is unaware that any replacement has been named, and contact regarding the project has been proceeding through the in-country assistant, Mike Jetton, in the interim.

Indiana University: Hungary

The team was in contact with the Project Director, Bruce Jaffee, regarding his and his colleague's (Ron Oppen, SUNY-Hungary) concerns about recent meetings with USAID/Hungary (see SUNY:Hungary). Plans for the fall site visit were discussed, and the team requested that Dr. Jaffee provide a one-page summary of the current project status. Dr. Jaffee reports that they will be sponsoring a training retreat for MATAV at Lake Balaton in October, and is planning another training program with Aeroplex, also in October.

SUNY: Hungary

The team had extensive contact with the Project Director, Ron Oppen, regarding his concern about USAID/Hungary's request for additional evaluative information and the implication his staff sensed that failure to participate would result in a loss of funding. Further, Mr. Oppen expressed concern that this new evaluation fails to recognize that SUNY's program does not target small and medium enterprises (the focus of the evaluation), but rather targets entrepreneurs and faculty. The team will discuss the issue with USAID/Washington and, if desired by the two grantees, will meet with USAID/Hungary to assist in developing a workable strategy.

Eight TUB faculty visited American universities and businesses this summer. A number of seminars were conducted on the topic of enterprise renewal and six participants from Hungary were present at the regional governments' seminar in New York. Six food industry representatives visited the U.S. through the Szeged program.

SUNY-B: Latvia

The team was in contact with the Project Director, John Thomas, whose concerns were more focused on the USAID evaluation issue in Hungary (Mr. Thomas works with the SUNY project in Hungary as well). SUNY sent additional information regarding their program which was incorporated into the final version of the annual report. Mr. Thomas noted that USAID/Latvia (Howard Handler) has been very visible and that their relationship with USAID/Latvia has been positive. Mr. Handler attended the opening of the computer lab and the graduation of the second MBA cohort. He also noted that a new staff member has been identified as a deputy to Dr. Brinkmanis in Riga, and he will start in January, 1997.

TAMIU: Lithuania

The team has concentrated its communication this month with the U.S. based project staff as they are struggling with the recent, significant cut in funding. They submitted a revised budget and work plan to USAID/Washington, but had not heard back as of the writing of this report. The U.S. staff told the team that the USAID/Lithuania office sees only the delay and is impatient with TAMIU because work is not occurring on schedule (for example the shipment of computers). U.S. TAMIU staff expressed frustration with being unable to secure necessary signatures from USAID/Washington and with the resulting bad impression being created with the USAID/Lithuania office. Plans for a U.S. site visit in September were coordinated, as well as plans for the in-country site visit in October.

University of Maryland: Poland

The team was in contact with the Project Director, Dr. Lee Preston, initially because of a failure of the project to file any quarterly reports. While drafts had been submitted to the team during the course of writing the annual report, no final (and complete) versions had followed. Dr. Preston was surprised at this and said that with the loss of his U.S. assistant, the in-country director had taken on the responsibility for generating these reports. We also discussed their progress for opening the WEMBA program this fall, and the team's plan to visit them in October.

University of Minnesota: Poland

As UMinn's project director was on vacation much of this month, the team's contact was limited to working with him to set up the fall site visit schedule. Their projects appear to be working well, having spent a quiet summer (both run academic programs that do not run formally in the summer).

Washington State University: Romania

The team was in contact with the Project Director, Bob Tolar, numerous times to settle the in-country site visit schedule and set up a date for the U.S. site visit in September (9/24 was agreed upon as the date). Dr. Tolar told the team that his chief-of-party, Brett Rogers will be leaving Romania in October to return to WSU to be Dr. Tolar's assistant. Shannon Alexander, who has been working in Romania with the project for some time, will become the new chief-of-party. Dr. Tolar also reported that the new USAID/Romania director had recently arrived. Project activities appear to be running smoothly.

University of Pittsburgh: Slovakia

The team attempted contact with the in-country director, Dr. Kevin Sontheimer, several times via e-mail to discuss project status and dates for the fall site visit, but at the time of this report had not yet heard back from him. According to past communications, and the project's work plan, most activities consisted of planning and preparation for the new cohorts in both the WEMBA and the AE programs. Earlier conversations with Dr. Sontheimer indicated that enrollment for the AE program appeared to be hitting the critical targets, and that was encouraging.

D. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED/ACTIONS TAKEN

No specific problems to report but there are a few trends the team is noticing and preparing for:

- a) USAID field offices appear to be shifting their goals for some of the projects, sometimes fitting them into strategic objectives that don't match their efforts very well. Project staff are anxious about these changes. The team's approach is to stay well informed, and assist in keeping communication between field offices and project staff open.
- b) Project staff (grantees) are about to transition in some projects (in-country directors, primarily) and so the team will make a concerted effort to bring these staff into the MTEEP loop via the newsbrief and direct contact.
- c) Several projects are in their last months of funding as their field offices close out. The team is developing an inventory to use with these projects to be sure that our assessment accurately captures the issues triggered as a project closes out. These will be reviewed this fall with those projects that are the first to close, and modified, if necessary for the next cohort of closures.

E. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Activities continue generally on schedule.

F. PLANS FOR SEPTEMBER, 1996

- U.S. Site visits to TAMIU, WSU and UMCP will be completed.
- Finalize clearances will be secured for October site visits. The two teams will visit:
 - Team 1: Romania, Hungary and Slovakia
 - Team 2: Lithuania and Poland

- 6 month questionnaires for Project Directors, In-Country Directors and Local Partners will be distributed by Datex.
- 2 Newsbriefs will be distributed.
- Initial report preparation will begin for the semi-annual report.
- Datex will conduct a debriefing for USAID/Washington on the annual report.