

A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT ON THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAM “HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT”*

The Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences is realizing a two-year project on the operational program “Human Resources Development” – Grant BG051PO001-3.3.04 “Support of developing Ph.D. students, post-graduates and young scientists”, priority ax – 3 “Improving quality of education and training in accordance with the labor market needs for creating knowledge-based economy”. The value of the project is significant for the scale of the Institute – 397 995 BGN. It is co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund. The project is entitled “*Development of the Potential of Ph.D. Students and Young Scientists for Inter-Disciplinary Social-Economic Studies*”. It targets Ph.D. students (all forms of education – full-time, part-time and individual) and young scientists from the Economic Research Institute at BAS. The project application has targeted 24 direct beneficiaries, namely 19 Ph.D. students and 5 young scientists. Due to the serious interest yet before the end of the first year the project already targets more than 30 beneficiaries from Economic Research Institute, as well as from Veliko Turnovo University, Trakia University – Stara Zagora, Institute of Thracology at BAS, etc.

The general goal and the specific goals of the project are:

General goal – developing and strengthening the potential of the Ph.D. students and young scientists for inter-disciplinary social-economic studies.

Specific goals:

- Increasing the attractiveness of the Ph.D. study and the scientific career in the economic field for the young people;
- Improving the development and successful completion of the dissertation works at the Economic Research Institute;
- Last but not least, improving the career opportunities of the young scientists.

The main activities on the project include:

- Support of new and current Ph.D. programmes through facilitating the development of the dissertation works, as well as the academic mobility of the Ph.D. students;
- Implementation of programmes for development of young scientists by creating conditions for increasing their qualification and academic mobility, as well as support for solving specific research tasks.

The following attractive training modules are offered to the Ph.D. students, young scientists and all interested scientists at the first stage of the project:

- Methodology of scientific studies;
- Economic anthropology;
- Management of projects and communications;
- Empirical studies.

Some of the lecturers are colleagues from the Economic Research Institute, e.g. Prof. Rossitsa Chobanova. Others are from New Bulgarian University – Haralan Alexandrov and Ninel Kioseva, as well as from the University of National

and World Economy – Andrey Nonchev. Attracting lecturers from other institutions has turned out to be an interesting and in our opinion winning course, especially having in mind the opportunity to maintain a wider academic network in support of the project activities.

Another task is updating the individual plans of the Ph.D. students, so that they will include activities from the project action plan. Despite all efforts, only 11 individual plans have been updated in this way so far. Moreover, it is due to the fact that some of the people are stricken off to defense, others are newly enlisted. One way or another, the project management team has the ambition to orient the beneficiaries, as well as their tutors, towards a long-term organization of their work together.

More than 20 consultations have been carried out among the beneficiaries and the more experienced colleagues of BAS, universities and professionals. The activity aims at gradual establishing of network of young and more experienced researchers on problems of their mutual interest. The public activity of the scientific circles is expected to be encouraged.

Undoubtedly, the opportunity for academic mobility in the country and abroad, foreseen in the project, can only be of benefit to the Ph.D. students and young scientists. The colleagues who have taken the opportunity – Maria Ivanova and Olga Grozdanova – share interesting experience from their visits in London and Glasgow.

The project provides for carrying out an empirical “omnibus” study – with a set of various questions among 3000 households and 1000 enterprises from all over the country. It aims at creating an information database to be used by the beneficiaries in the preparation of the empirical parts of their dissertations; improving the level of their publications, etc. Anyway, some of the training modules, i.e. Empirical Studies, Statistical Methods and Econometrics, are directed towards quality development of the young colleagues in the research itself.

However we are proud, that the project achieves the set targets – the modules really “upgrade” the qualification of the participants. The opportunities for mobility and consulting, for instance, expand the horizon of the young scientists, as well as of the colleagues with richer and varied experience. On the other hand, the created website – <http://www.hrdproject.org> – provides more information on the opportunities for Ph.D. studies and scientific career, offered by the Economic Research Institute at BAS.

It would not be exaggerated to say that the accomplishment of the project activities at the Economic Research Institute at BAS builds the sometimes insufficient capacity for work on international programmes.

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