

Swedish Labour Market Projects in Latvia 1994–1996

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**Department for Central and
Eastern Europe**

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Sida Evaluation 97/35

**Department for Central and
Eastern Europe**

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Foreword

This report is a first evaluation of Swedish labour market projects in Latvia. Assistance in this field started in 1992 on a grant from the Swedish government. The present report focuses on the results of the continuation of these projects, financed by BITS, and later Sida, between 1994 and 1996.

We are most obliged to the Latvian State Employment Board (LSEB) for assisting us during our field mission in Latvia in May 1997. Special thanks are due to Ms Vija Rubina, who arranged our program and also acted as interpreter when necessary. We are obliged to Mr Andris Silins, the Director General, and Ms Evgeniya Novika, Deputy Director General, and to Ms Ludmilla Laudama, Senior Desk Officer of the LSEB, for the time they spared us. Thanks to them, we were able to meet with many participants in the various programs.

Our task has been to describe the strong as well as the weak sides of the projects, and our ambition has been to do that as fair as possible. As the report shows, the general assessments are positive but also some criticism is forwarded. We hope this can result in a productive discussion of how to make already highly competent Swedish technical assistance in the labour market area even better, and strengthening the co-operation between the Latvian and Swedish sides.

Stockholm 10 September 1997

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the AMS and Amu technical assistance projects with the Latvian State Employment Service (LSES) which have been financed by BITS and Sida between 1994 and 1996. The main dimensions of the evaluation are: Achievements of objectives, relevance, whether the results are sustainable, efficiency of project implementation and cost-efficiency. In addition, the report gives Sida recommendations on the relevance of supporting future projects and suggests improvements in project objectives and design.

- ◇ Latvia has one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe, around 20 percent according to the labour force surveys. This means that assistance in the labour market area is of great relevance.
- ◇ Despite the high unemployment rate, unemployment is not considered a high priority problem in economic policy. The authorities choose to look at the rate of *registered unemployment*, which was 7.5 percent in early-1997. The rate of registered unemployment is highly dependent on the rules for how to obtain the status of unemployed. In the Latvian case, this figure underestimates unemployment. According to the labour force surveys, only a fourth of those considered unemployed in the surveys are registered with the employment service.
- ◇ Major reasons for the high unemployment rate and the difference between survey data and registered unemployment are:
 - A large part of the unemployed is living in the country side where there are no jobs and the unemployed do not register with the employment service for that reason as well as other, as for instance, difficulties to get to the labour office.
 - The non-Latvian part of the population ("Russian-speaking") has considerably higher unemployment rates than Latvians (24 percent compared to 14 percent). Many of these do not register with the employment service because of their limited chances of being given the status of unemployed (e.g. because of lack of sufficient knowledge of the Latvian language) and thereby be eligible for unemployment benefits and other assistance.
- ◇ Swedish assistance provided by AMS and AmuInternational has been prominent in comparison with assistance from other donors. In fact, especially AMS seems to have held a principal position in the development of Latvian labour market policy and its institutions.
- ◇ Both the AMS project and the Amu project have been delivered by highly qualified consultants.
- ◇ Cost efficiency is reasonable in both projects. In the AMS project considerable economising has been made in comparison to the budget.
- ◇ The Latvian organisation of the training programs has been of high quality. Further, it is evident that those having participated in the training have gained significantly professionally and personally. The Swedish assistance is highly appreciated by those having taken part in different components of the projects.
- ◇ The programmes have very little visible results, however. In the AMS project about a fourth of the staff, including the central management of the labour market board and most managers of labour offices, have been trained (including the previous project, the number is

even larger) in most components of modern employment services. However, the lack of material and financial resources on the Latvian side has imposed severe problems in implementing the knowledge in practice. In particular, the lack of suitable premises, contemporary equipment as computers and tele-communications, as well as low salaries are eminent. The idea of creating a "model office" has not been realised for this reason.

- ◇ The Amu project is quite diversified, obviously because the Latvian side has expressed wishes to pursue various project ideas not fully realised during the first project period 1993-1994. The most visible result is the establishment of training for disabled car drivers in Jurmala. The orientation in career counselling and vocational guidance has resulted in good competence in the procurement of vocational training and vocational guidance. The PC - usage courses have been highly appreciated by the LSES.
- ◇ Future co-operation should be less geared at training personnel only. It is of importance that the transferred knowledge may be realised in reality, not only in people's minds. This demands that the Latvian side matches the Swedish training resources with financial means enabling the labour offices to develop. We believe that the partners of the co-operation need some support in influencing the political level to obtain changes in these matters.

Since the Swedish assistance plays a major role in the labour market development in Latvia, we would also recommend both the partners of the co-operation and Sida to consider finding other donors willing to help with the material and technical side of the development of the Latvian employment service for complementary or joint projects.

I Project Description

1. *The Objectives of the Evaluation Report*

AMS (the Swedish Labour Market Board) and AmuInternational (the Swedish state-owned vocational training institute) started technical assistance co-operation with the Latvian labour market authorities in 1992. The first projects were financed by the Swedish Ministry of Labour. Since 1994, BITS, later Sida, has continued financing the co-operation by approving additional projects developing employment service and labour market training in Latvia. Unlike the labour market projects in Russia and Poland, the earlier projects in Latvia, financed by the Ministry of Labour, were not evaluated before BITS took over funding. Thus, this is the first evaluation of labour market projects in Latvia and, sometimes, it has been difficult to differentiate between results obtained during the earlier projects and those during the period 1994-1996.

The projects subject to evaluation are:

1. The AMS project on development of labour market institutions. BITS, 20 May 1994, decision number 125-93/94, BITS number LVA 0681, 1 850 000 SEK.
2. The Amu project on development of labour market training. BITS, 11 November 1994, decision number 80-94/95, BITS number LVA 0831, 1 460 000 SEK.

The main dimensions of the evaluation are¹:

Evaluation of Past Co-operation

- Achievements of objectives. Achievement of the project goals as defined in the contracts, taking into account possible changes in circumstances.
- Relevance. The relevance of the project approach, goals and services provided during the technical co-operation in the perspective of the labour market situation and in relation to the needs they intended to serve.
- Efficiency in the project implementation
- Reasons for high/low achievements of goals.
- Side effects
- Cost efficiency
- Conditions for sustainable effects of the projects.
- Gender aspects. Have gender aspects been an integrated part of the projects? If not, what are the reasons.

Opportunities for Continued Co-operation

- The relevance of the proposed long and short term objectives and potential impact of the transfer of knowledge from Swedish inputs

¹ See Terms of Reference for the Consultancy Assignment (*Appendix A1*)

- Organisational strength of and weaknesses of the concerned Latvian organisations
- Tangible results and long term development effects
- Need for co-ordination with other institutions and other donors
- Possibilities of cost-sharing in future projects

In addition the evaluation report should describe the institutional structure, including roles and responsibilities, in the field of labour market policy and labour market training in Latvia.

Based on the above findings, the team should give Sida **recommendations** on the potential of supporting future projects and, if relevant, suggest improvement of existing proposals with regard to the project objectives, organisation and other aspects relevant for achieving the best development effect.

2. *The Team*

The evaluation assignment was entrusted to a team of two persons: Dr Susanne Oxenstierna specialises in labour market economics and other issues in transition economies. In 1991, she took part in the *Economic Survey of the Baltic States*,² initiated by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and between 1992 and 1996 she worked in Moscow in a technical assistance project of the Swedish Ministry of Finance. Mr Henrik Huitfeldt is an economic analyst at Sida. He is specialising in labour economics and has done research on the Czech labour market. Both team members have taken part in previous Sida evaluations of labour market projects.³

3. *Method*

The report is based on interviews with key persons and with participants who have been engaged in different project activities and project implementation. Of great importance was the field visit to Latvia in May 1997, when the team was able to see labour offices and training institutes in Riga, Jurmala, Cesis, Daugavpils, Livani, and Ventspils. The program was prepared by the Latvian State Employment Board (LSEB) and, as seen from the list of interviewed persons, we were able to meet with many people having been directly or indirectly involved in the Swedish projects.⁴

The *Economic Survey of the Baltic States* has provided a starting point for providing an analysis of the development in the labour market and its institutions. In addition, the team has studied and analysed relevant materials, i.e. decisions, project reports, statistic and economic analyses of the Latvian labour market, and material produced in the course of the execution of the projects. A first draft report was submitted in mid-July 1997. In the final version of the report we have paid attention to initial reactions and comments from the Latvian side, as well as from the Swedish consultants.

² Van Arkadie & Karlsson (1992).

³ See Oxenstierna & Pihlgren (1997); Oxenstierna, Lundberg, Huitfeldt (1997)

⁴ See List of Interviewed Persons (*Appendix A2*)

II The Latvian Labour Market

1. *Employment*

Between 1990 and 1995, GDP in Latvia fell with almost 50 percent according to official statistics. During this period a large fraction of the activity in the Latvian economy moved from the official to the shadow economy. According to official statistics, 18 percent of GDP was produced in the shadow economy in 1996.

The size of the shadow economy and problems to measure employment in the private sector makes official statistics on employment unreliable. To get an idea on how employment has responded to the fall in GDP, it is possible to compare the population census from 1989 and the labour force survey that was started in 1995. Every six months a new survey is carried out. The methodology used in the survey is on a high international level and also adjusted to the Latvian situation. For example, persons working at his own farm producing agriculture production for own consumption are recorded as employed.

Using these sources, employment fell with about a third between 1989 and 1995. Thus, the fall in employment corresponds quite well to the officially recorded fall in GDP minus the estimated size of the shadow economy.

In for example Poland and the Czech Republic, the economic recovery was driven by a large increase in the service sector. This structural change was accompanied by a large mobility between different jobs and sectors. In Latvia, the labour mobility, and the creation of new jobs in the service sector, is still low. According to the survey from November 1996, only 2.2 percent of the employed had started his job during the last year. A majority of the employed has worked at the same workplace for 10 or even 20 years.

Table II:1 Employment in Latvia 1989-1996

	1989	Nov. 1995	May 1996	Nov. 1996
Employment ¹	1,458,554	973,000	960,500	965,500
Labour Force Participation Rate ² <i>percent</i>				
Total	95.0	87.3	87.7	86.5
Women	93.0	83.0	84.0	83.0
Men	96.0	91.9	91.5	90.2

1. Persons 15-69 years old. 2. Persons 25-54 years old.

Sources: Van Arkadie & Karlsson (1990) pp. 224, 227 (Population Census 1989); Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (1996a; 1996b; 1996c)

In 1989, the labour force participation in Latvia was high for both men and women. Between 1989 and 1995, the participation rate for prime-age (25-54 years old) persons fell with about 10 percentage points for women and 5 percentage points for men. Still, the labour force participation rate is high in Latvia by international standards. Most of the persons not participating in the labour force are studying, involved in household work or on maternity leave, but an increasing number of the labour force has become discouraged from searching a

job. The number of working pensioners has fallen from about 30 percent during the Soviet times, to less than 10 percent in 1996.

2. *Unemployment*

According to the *Law on Employment* from 1992, a person is defined as unemployed in Latvia, if he cannot earn his living from work for reasons beyond his control and is registered with the local employment service. In addition, the person must fulfil at least one of the following criteria: (i) to have worked (and paid social tax) for at least twelve weeks during the year before becoming unemployed; (ii) to be re-entering the labour market after maternity leave or after a period devoted to taking care of sick members of the family, invalids or elderly; (iii) to be a first-time job seeker.

According to the international definition on unemployment (ILO), a person is unemployed if he fulfils the following three conditions: (i) during a reference week neither worked nor been temporarily absent from work; (ii) actively been searching employment during the past four weeks; (iii) been immediately available to start work within two weeks.

It is obvious that the official definition on unemployment in Latvia excludes a large fraction of unemployed persons who for example do not register at a labour office. On the other hand, some of the people defined as unemployed in Latvia is not unemployed according to the international definition on unemployment, because they are not actively searching for a job.

Thus, *the official definition of unemployment in Latvia largely underestimates the real problem on the labour market*. In the spring 1997, the official unemployment rate was about 7.5 percent, which is not a high rate according to European standards.

Latvia has one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe

According to the labour force survey, which uses the international definition on unemployment, the unemployment rate in Latvia is about 20 percent. Thus, Latvia has one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe. This number is probably somewhat overestimated, because some persons working in the shadow economy could be afraid of reporting their actual employment. The questionnaire is in a very competent manner dealing with these problems, so the overestimation is probably not of a large scale.

Table II:2 *Unemployment According to the Labour Force Surveys 1995-1996¹*

	Nov. 1995	May 1996	Nov. 1996
Unemployment Rate	18.9	22.2	18.3
Share of Long-Term Unemployed ²	61.5	57.4	59.4
Unemployment Rate by Gender			
Women	19.7	21.9	17.7
Men	18.0	22.4	18.9
Unemployment Rate By Nationality			
Latvians	14.8	na	13.8
Russians	24.4	na	24.5
Other	21.9	na	21.8

Sources: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (1996a,b,c).

1. Persons 15-69 years old. 2. Persons unemployed longer than 12 months.

Persons without permanent residence are not included in any statistics in Latvia. According to some estimates, this group could be as large as 200 000. If persons without permanent residence are affected by unemployment more frequently than others, than even the labour force survey could be underestimated.

A larger fraction of the registered unemployed are women than men, but according to the labour force survey the unemployment rate for women is 17,7 percent and 18,9 percent for men. Among the long-term unemployed, the differences between men and women are small.

The Russian-speaking population has larger problems on the labour market than Latvians. The large regional differences in unemployment is one explanation for the higher unemployment rate for the Russian-speaking population. The eastern part of Latvia, where a large fraction of the population is Russian-speaking, was more severely hit by the recession. The industry in this region was in many cases directed towards Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union. In 1996, the unemployment rate in the eastern part of Latvia was more than three times the national average.

Table II:3 Registered Unemployment 1993-1996. Percent

	1993	1994	1995	1996
Unemployment Rate	5.8	6.5	6.6	7.2
Share of Long-Term Unemployed ¹	32.7	43.0	45.0	53.0
Share of Women	53.2	51.9	52.3	54.7
Share of Latvians	48.7	47.2	47.3	49.4

Source: Latvian State Employment Board

1. Persons unemployed longer than 6 months.

3. *Language Laws and Training*

In the 1989 census, only 21 percent of the Russian population in Latvia reported mastery of Latvian as a second language. Latvian is now the state language and although some efforts have been made to give non-Latvians training in Latvian, a large part of the population still do not know the language. A language law was taken in 1990, according to which all workers in the administrative, service and health fields in the public sector must know sufficient Latvian for their professional needs by January 1992.⁵ Later this law appears to have been made even more severe, and now it applies to all sectors of the economy.

Persons not having Latvian as their maternity language, or having finished Russian school or higher education, must show a certificate that they know the state language, Latvian, in order to be registered as unemployed. This usually means they must show that they have passed an exam. There are three levels of knowledge that may be stated first, second, and advanced. The statutory knowledge of Latvian of the unemployed appears to have been introduced in 1996. In regions with a high share of "Russian-speaking" population" (e.g. Daugavpils), the employment service do to some extent try to assist the job-seekers to learn the language, at least those who have basic knowledge, but do not have enough training to cope with a job according to their education and experience. If the employment service places a person, without sufficient knowledge of Latvian, in a job, or even in work subsidised by the employment service, such as *paid social useful works*, the employer may be fined if this is discovered. In principle, this rule also applies to people already employed.

⁵ Van Arkadie & Karlsson, 1991, p. 81.

The possibilities of organising teaching, or up-grading of the knowledge, of non-Latvians in Latvian, are complicated by the fact that the training money for this purpose should come from the budget of the Ministry of Education, not from the social security fund which finances labour market training in general.

4. *Active and Passive Labour Market Policies*

Of the social tax, 1.6 percent is earmarked for labour market policy. In 1996, the employment fund consisted of 16.6 million lat. Of this amount the major part, 13.8 million, was spent on passive measures, mostly on unemployment benefits, and 3 million was spent on active measures.

A reform of the unemployment insurance has recently been initiated. Since June 1 1997, a new system is introduced for all *new registered job seekers*. To be entitled to unemployment benefits a job seeker must have worked (and paid social tax) during 9 months the last 12 months period and not quitted by voluntary reasons. Before June 1 1997, the period was six months. If the job seeker works (and pays social tax) during for example two months, he/she will be entitled to benefits for another two months.

Unemployment benefits

The benefit level is calculated using the job seeker's wage during the six months prior to the unemployment period. It also depends on the job seeker's work experience and his/her period in unemployment.

Work experience:	1-5 years	50 percent of the previous wage
	6-15 years	55 percent of the previous wage
	16-25 years	60 percent of the previous wage
	> 25 years	65 percent of the previous wage
Time in unemployment:	1-3 months	100 percent of the above amount
	4-6 months	80 percent of the above amount
	7-9 months	60 percent of the above amount

Until the first of June this year, the benefit level for all eligible job seekers was 90 percent of the minimum wage (38 Lat). The maximum benefit is five times the minimum wage and the minimum is 90 percent of the minimum wage. Graduated students, women that completed a maternity leave and released prisoners are, as before the reform, entitled to unemployment assistance of 70 percent of the minimum wage.

Active measures

Mainly three different active labour market policy measures are used in Latvia: (i) training or re-training, (ii) so called job clubs (short courses aiming at strengthening the general competitiveness of the job-seeker, e.g. his/her ability to search jobs), and (iii) *paid social useful work (public works)*, usually within the municipality or other public employers. The latter programme is financed over the state budget (maximum the minimum wage) usually with some contribution of the employer, mostly the municipalities, and the other two programs are financed by the social insurance budget.

Up to 1 June 1997, the unemployed in some regions with high unemployment level had the opportunity to prolong the benefit period with six months if he/she carried out some easier work within the municipality, so called *unpaid social useful works*.

Persons engaged in training or re-training get benefits (if their are entitled to benefits) plus 50 percent of the minimum wage. Persons doing public works are paid the minimum wage . They will also be entitled to a new benefit period after their work ends.

Two new programmes targeted on older persons close to retirement age and youth are under preparation. The latter programme is in practise an apprenticeship financed from the state budget.

Table II:4 Active and Passive Labour Market Policy 1992-1997

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997 ¹
- Total (million Lat)	1.19	8.19	10.06	11.51	14.31	19.12
- Share of GDP (%)	0.12	0.56	0.49	0.49	0.52	0.60
- Share of passive measures (%)	84.1	79.5	68.2	63.2	67.9	72.3
- Share of active measures (%)	10.8	15.1	24.8	30.0	24.6	20.9
- Share of administration (%)	5.1	5.4	7.0	6.8	7.5	6.8
Active measures						
- Share of training (%)	37.8	34.6	48.7	61.4	57.3	54.4
- Share of other measures (%)	32.2	65.4	51.3	38.6	42.7	45.4

1. Planned.

Source: Latvian State Employment Board.

5. Further Development of Labour Market Policies

According to internationally comparable statistics, the unemployment rate in Latvia is one of the highest in Europe. The transformation of the society to a market economy has forced a large fraction of the population out of the regular labour market. The labour mobility is very low and the incidence of long-term unemployment is increasing. Thus, the scope for a well functioning employment service seems extremely large, especially to promote labour mobility and to assist persons with large problems on the labour market as the newly graduated and the elderly.

III The AMS Project: Development of Labour Market Institutions

General Assessment: Many people well trained but few visible results

The general impression from the discussions with the participants of the AMS - project is that the project activities have been of high quality and that the participants have profited significantly both professionally and personally. High appreciation was expressed by all seminar participants we met. They also told us about how they had applied the knowledge attained during the training in their daily work. However, a great impediment is the lack of resources for acquiring proper premises and technical equipment. Low status and low salaries, which means that trained staff leave, are other evident problems.

The problems with premises and equipment were obvious in all labour offices we visited. Because of this, there is still no labour office in Latvia where a full concept of a contemporary employment service has been implemented in a visible way. Many of the people in the offices know how they should work, or would like to work, but their possibilities to do so are limited. The best offices we saw were Riga Latgale, where the building was more or less accurate for the services, and Ventspils, where several persons in the staff had taken part in several seminars, which implies that they have a common idea of how to work. The women in charge of these two offices were also very energetic and devoted to their task.

A continuation of the co-operation is much wished for by the Latvian side, and would be relevant in order to consolidate and translate the already transferred knowledge into reality. However, without accurate priority and support from the government for developing the status and material side of the LSES, continued focus on further training of staff will have limited effects. Also, AMS cannot forever train staff of the LSES, the LSES must develop a strategy for internal training.

1. The Institutional Setting

The Latvian State Employment Service (LSES) is a civil state service under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare. The LSES - offices are financed over the state budget, while unemployment benefits and training are financed from the social security fund. Public are financed over the state budget and the employers, usually municipalities, in accordance with contracts⁶. (See further section II above.)

The LSES consists of a board with a staff of 42 persons, six financially independent regional Employment Centres (which means they account for their own administration), 22 local LSES offices and 38 subsidiaries. LSES has a staff of 561 employees.

The calculation of benefits and payment of benefits was separated from the services in 1995. Now, the LSES only decides whether the job seeker can be granted the status of unemployed. Benefits are calculated and paid by the social offices.

⁶ In Livani the LSES payed 80 % and the municipality 20 %.

2. *Project Objectives*

The general project objective was to support the establishment and development of a state employment service on both the central and local levels. The specific project components were the following:

- Forecasting (A)
- Planning and financial control (B)
- Training of placement officers (C)
- Management for LSES - managers (D)
- Handicapped people on the labour market (E)
- Evaluation seminar (F)

The forms for transferring knowledge have been seminars in Latvia and study tours to Sweden.

The expected results were that the about 120 persons taking part in the activities would get a deepened knowledge in various aspects of placement services, management of the LSES-offices, and financial planning and control. The training of placement officers (C-component) was also intended to develop trainers for an internal training program of the LSES staff. Special attention was to be granted to the local offices in Riga, Daugavpils and Liepaja, where concrete improvements were to be made during the project. These offices were supposed to become "models" for other LSES-offices.

2. *Project Results*

All but one of the specific project components has been fulfilled, and it is a general impression that those who took part have profited considerable from the seminars and study tours. The intentions to develop some offices more seriously into "models" for other offices have not materialised. The main reason for this is that the Latvian side has not been able to contribute with material resources to match the Swedish training efforts. The only labour office the evaluation team saw during the field mission in May, which had at least proper premises was the Riga Latgale office. The Swedish consultant has told us that this building was acquired after big difficulties and repaired on LSES means. Other offices (we did not visit Liepaja) are still as a rule small, in unrepaired buildings, and lack elementary equipment. The Swedish side provided the LSES with second-hand furniture and about 30 computers (about 15 each from AMS and Amu) in the first phase of the project (1992-1993), but this is far from enough.

Lack of visibility

Thus, the main reason for the lack of "visible" results is that the LSES obviously has a low priority within the Ministry of Welfare, and there has been problems all along the project with providing financial means. Help from the municipalities in solving these problems also appears to be rare.

Of course, a lot may be done without modern office furniture and computers, and it is evident that the training - especially the injections of the earlier projects - has affected the staffs' abilities to structure and cope with their work. For instance, the handbook *Rokas Gramata*, which was worked out during the first project in 1992, is widely used. Yet, working conditions must to some extent keep pace with changes in people's minds, otherwise they may become frustrated and leave their jobs. Contemporary equipment and premises would probably also affect the status of the LSES positively among the unemployed, employers, and local authorities, and raise the self-confidence of the staff.

Lack of internal training program

The intentions to develop an internal training program has been difficult to realise due to the same lack of financial resources. A training centre was planned for the Riga Latgale office, but means are not available either for restructuring the premises, or starting a training program. The Swedish consultant, Mr Ulf Quarfordt, has provided a *Model Training Program* consisting of 16 seminars in the final report.⁷ This material had not been translated to Latvian, when the team visited Latvia, in May 1997. According to the final report, some seminars were organised by Latvian trainers. However, these efforts have not been continued and no structured training program has been launched.

LSES Central Board (LSEB)

At the central board of the LSES (LSEB) we met the present General Director, Mr Silins the former General Director, Mr Blazhevich, who has been in charge of the Swedish projects, the Deputy Director Ms Novika, Ms Laudama, a Senior Officer who had been responsible for training, and Ms Rubina, the organiser of our program. We were also shown around the office and met with persons in different functions of which many had taken part in several of the AMS seminars.

From our meetings and discussions, it was quite clear that the major part of the internal training of employees and the development of competence has come about through these efforts. In 1995 the budget of the LSES was cut by 6.5 percent due to the general budget deficit problems of the state budget. That meant that at the beginning of 1996 LSES had debts even for maintenance.⁸

Riga Latgale

The office *Riga Latgale* is the one that has got most Swedish assistance. It is situated in the Eastern part of Riga and shares the premises with the county labour office. The office has 20 employees, all women. The office has about 5000 registered unemployed and each month they receive about 250-300 vacancies. The personnel have taken part in many of the seminars both by AMS and Amu. Special focus has been on management for the managers, employer contacts, active measures and career and vocational guidance.

The premises are rather good. There is a big reception room for the unemployed to wait in. The walls are full of boards with information about vacancies, training opportunities and legal documents. The information is only given in Latvian, but for the non-Latvian speaking population there are possibilities to get information in Russian orally. A large part of the office furniture has been given to the office by AMS. But, on the whole the premises need repair and the employees lack equipment as computers. We were told that a reason for not repairing the premises was that the office only rent them from the municipality and it is unknown for how long the labour office will keep them.

Most employees at the office have got their internal training either directly through the AMS and Amu seminars or indirectly, through colleagues having attended seminars. The employees found the seminars interesting because they had developed:

- professional knowledge
- a professional identity
- knowledge of how to implement laws
- an opportunity to study Swedish solutions.

⁷ AMS (1996a)

⁸ *Latvian State Employment Service*, 1996, p. 4.

The contacts with employers were yet not very developed. The employers contact the office when they are planning to fire personnel, not when they have vacancies and want to hire people. It appears the office has specialised in assisting enterprises in crises. The office even advertise in the newspapers about helping enterprises in this situation. Recently, some contacts have been established with growing enterprises, e.g. *Lattelecom*.

About 10 percent of the registered unemployed want some type of retraining, and of those interested most are offered this possibility. In 1996, 980 persons had gone through training financed by the labour office. Training is between 1-6 months, and the trainees get their benefit plus 50 percent of the minimum wage. After the training, about 30 percent get jobs and about 20-25 percent remain unemployed. Of the rest, some may have got jobs in the grey economy. Many employers try to hire without paying the social tax.

The county labour office is situated on the first floor of the building. About 25 persons work here and they are responsible for the five labour offices in Riga. There is also a "job club" (see below). According to the Swedish consultant there were originally plans to have premises for the internal training of the personnel in the building.

Cesis

Cesis is a small town about 1 hour outside Riga. The town is situated in an agrarian area. The labour office in Cesis is manned with a staff of 6-7 persons. The office is situated in a small building and has 3-4 rooms. The director and one more person had taken part in training seminars. The result of the training that was especially mentioned is the *Rokas Gramata*, the handbook developed in 1992. The manual is used and of great help, especially for introductory training of new personnel.

The office had acquired some furniture from AMS, but it had only one computer that was mainly used for registering vacancies. All personnel took part in visits to employers once a week. One person worked with training institutes. However, the number of vacancies was very small 3-4, and the number of registered unemployed about 2 500. The officers went to the countryside to help unemployed to register. Many of the unemployed in the countryside do not come to the office in town. One reason is that the transportation cost is too high.

The director of the office was thinking of trying to get premises in another larger building across the road. She wanted to have training facilities for the unemployed there as well.

Livani and Preili area

Livani is a small town in the Preili district, south-east of Riga. The town has a subsidiary office to the Preili centre. The office, consisting of two rooms, is situated in the house of the municipality дума. The office does not have a sign outside the house. The greatest problem of the labour office is that there are no vacancies. About 4 500 persons were registered as unemployed, but at the time of our visit the office had only about 3-4 vacancies. Around half of the unemployed was Latvian, the rest are from the Russian-speaking population. About two-thirds of the unemployed live in the countryside. The office has started to visit the countryside in order to register the unemployed there. Public works and unpaid social works are used as measures. The unpaid social works are especially used in the countryside. The management was worried of what would happen after the 1 July when this measure is to be abolished. The office had a job club in a nearby music school. It had two rooms, which were in good condition with well educated and engaged staff.

Daugavpils, Rezekne and Kraslava

Daugavpils is the second biggest town in Latvia. It is situated in the South, on the boarder to Belarus. During the Soviet time, the town had a military air base and was closed. The majority of population in the area is Russian-speaking. In 1989, only 13 percent of the population in Daugavpils was Latvian. Registered unemployment is high in the city and the nearby regions, 23-28 percent.

The Daugavpils office has around 20 employees. Few of these had attended training with AMS, but participants from Rezekne and Kraslava had been invited to a meeting with the evaluation team. The participants were satisfied with the training. In Rezekne, as a result of the training, they had started to register disabled as unemployed and a first training course for deaf persons was under way. Work with the employers had just started in the region.

Due to the high share of Russian-speakers, people with insufficient knowledge of the state language Latvian are common. According to the Director of the Daugavpils office, they had around 3000 such persons in their register. They hoped to be able to help at least those with a basic knowledge of Latvian.

Ventspils

Ventspils is an important port town on the West coast. The town has a low rate of registered unemployment, 3.1 percent. The labour office is located in a shopping centre and was not allowed to have a sign outside the building. The office has about 6-7 employees. Work is organised in a similar way to that in Swedish employment offices. All the staff had originally taken part in the Swedish training. Now, however, 2-3 had left. The office was quite successful in its work with the local employers. A job club is situated in the same building.

3. Cost Efficiency

AMS-project (BITS 940520, LVA 0681, 1.85 million SEK)

Table III: 1 Cost of activities in the AMS project 1994-1996			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Number of persons directly involved</i>	<i>Total costs (SEK)</i>	<i>Cost/person</i>
A. Forecasting 3*5days seminars + 1 day in Latvia	52	170 127	3 272
B. Management, planning financial control, 3*5days +1*3-days in Latvia	79	96 660	1 224
C. Training of empl officers 2*5-days + 5*1-day in Latvia	125	344 631	2 757
D. Management sem in Sweden 2*5-days study visits	20	196 243	9 812
E. Disabled job seekers 1* 1 day Latvia, 2 study visits (3d+5d) Sweden	20	86 147	4 307
F. Evaluation seminar	20	44 400	2 220
H. Project co-ordination and administration		361 884	
Total	125	1 300 092	4 114

Of a total budget of 1.85 million SEK, only 1.3 million SEK was used, or 70 percent of the budgeted means. Thus, there is economising of 550 000 SEK, or 30 percent of the budget.

This is not due to that project activities have not taken place, or that fewer people have been trained than in other projects. All activities have been fulfilled. Apparently the major reason is that in the budget it was supposed that two Swedish experts would take part in most activities. In reality there has often been only one, Mr Qwarfordt, who is also the main responsible for the project. Strict economising on travelling is another reason. The expert has often used the ferry line to Riga, and when flying always used the APEX alternative.

Thereby we have an average cost per participant in the whole project that is exceptionally low, around 4000 SEK, and well below the average costs per participant in the AMS projects in Russia and Poland (8-13 000 SEK). The project includes about the same balance between activities in Sweden and Latvia as the other projects, however, the costs are significantly less also for activities in Sweden (9 - 10 000) than in other projects (15-17 000).

Table III: 2 Break-down of Costs in the AMS-project 1994-1996				
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Remuneration</i>	<i>Administration</i>	<i>Direct</i>
SEK	1 300 092	565 500	361 884	372 708
Percent	100	43	28	29

Studying the break-down of costs between remuneration of experts, project co-ordination and direct costs, we find that as usual AMS has, compared to Amu, a high level of administration costs, 28 percent, this is in line with the Russian and Polish projects (St Petersburg 29 percent, Poland 26 percent). The proportion between remuneration and direct costs is 43 and 29 percent of total costs.

5. Activities of Other Donors

The impression from the short field visit to Latvia is that Sweden was the first and is still a leading provider of technical assistance in the labour market field. Projects by other donors started later, and from what we heard, the major other countries active in the area are the UK, Germany and Denmark. The UK has provided seminars that had been attended by some of the people we met. Germany has set up job information centres as in Poland.

Computerisation

Denmark has provided the LSES with a labour market information system. However, the LSEB was not totally satisfied with it. According to the former Director General of LSEB, Mr Blazhevich, they had expected to get assistance with a full computerisation of the LSES through this projects. As it turned out, they got only 15-16 computers. Thus, there is still a big deficit of computers for using the information system - the soft-ware requires the latest modern computers - and there had been difficulties in adapting the system to Latvian conditions.⁹ A second phase of the project is now starting and some offices, e.g. the one in Daugavpils, are now in turn to get a computerised system. However, as has been pointed out above, the LSES has a long way to go in this area.

Job clubs

The most visible example of foreign assistance is the so called "job clubs", set up at all the employment offices we visited. These had been established by a PHARE program, and the main Western partner had been Denmark. The idea with the job clubs is that groups of

⁹ Actually, the Swedish computer expert in the AMS project had advised against the acceptance of the Danish solution, and suggested that the Latvian authorities looked at a less sophisticated and technically demanding solution developed by the Lithuanian employment service.

unemployed are selected and have tests and seminars/training during about two weeks. The major aim of the training is to raise the self-confidence and self-knowledge of the unemployed so that a person gets a better idea of what jobs or what kind of training would suit them. They also get information of labour legislation and their rights, and are trained in how to search for jobs, e.g. through role plays, which may be video-filmed and discussed afterwards. The "job club concept" is comprehensive in the sense that it includes nice surrounding and a well-prepared staff.

All the job clubs we saw (in Cesis, Riga Latgale, Daugavpils, Livani, Ventpils) were located in repaired premises, were equipped with new furniture, and equipment such as computers, video-cameras, copy machines, telephone/fax. The contrast to the material base in the labour office next door was striking in all cases. The personnel were well educated, a large part appeared to be psychologists, and specially trained for this work. They could all give a presentation of the job club concept and of the idea of their activities.

At first we thought that the material basis for the job club activities had been provided by the PHARE program along with training of the job club personnel. However, the officials of the LSEB assured us of that the larger part of the financing of premises and equipment was from the social insurance fund. This had been possible since these costs were considered as part of training of the unemployed, which is financed from that fund. The ordinary activities of the labour offices, however, are financed from the state budget, and therefore repairs of the offices do not qualify for funding from the social security fund.

In both Russia and Poland, job clubs are part of the ordinary activities of the labour offices. In the model offices in St Petersburg and Lodz, they had the same (good) standards as the rest of the office and well-prepared staff. Here, they are part of the employment service, but financed in another way, which has resulted in quite other standards than the ordinary employment service.

It is interesting to note that in some of the offices, the job clubs are used for personnel training. Personnel are invited to take part in seminars and lectures for the unemployed and use the equipment. To a large extent our meetings took place in the job clubs since these were the best premises.

6. *New Project Proposal for 1997-1998*

AMS and LSEB have submitted a project proposal¹⁰ to Sida regarding continued co-operation. The new project focuses on active labour market measures and is planned for two years, 1997-1998. The project components are the following:

A. Increasing the knowledge on handling active labour market measures

This component consists of three sub-components:

A1 Organising, financing and evaluating active measures. The target group for this activity are six managers from the Employment centres, 1 from LSEB, and 3 managers from the planned model offices - Riga Latgale, Cesis, and Jurmala. These managers would be taught in management by objectives, financial planning and evaluation of active measures in six 3-days seminars in Latvia and 1 3-days seminar in Sweden. The expected result is that management by objectives would be established throughout the LSES.

A2 Co-operation with external partners involved in reducing unemployment. The target group consists of 6 managers from the central and local level involved in the

¹⁰ AMS, 1996b.

planning of active measures. The managers would be trained in one 5-days seminar in Sweden particularly on how to co-operate with municipalities and other partners in active labour market policy. The training is expected to result in a Latvian strategy for co-operation with external partners in the implementation of active labour market measures.

A3 Handling of labour market information systems. The target group is employees at the computer division at LSEB. The activities would be in the form of two 4-days workshops in Latvia and a one-week study visit to Sweden. The expected results are that the LSEB computer specialists will be able to train their colleagues at the labour offices in the effective use of computerised information systems.

B. Developing the knowledge of the different employment opportunities of men and women on the labour market

The target group for this activity is 15 employees from the LSES and partners (e.g. municipalities, trade unions). The activities are in the form of a 1-week study tour to Sweden and two 4-days seminars in Latvia for developing a pilot program for supporting equal opportunities for men and women on the labour market.

C. Support for developing organisation and methods at three local labour offices

The objective is to establish three model offices in Latvia with well functioning organisation and qualified services for job seekers and employers. The offices identified are Riga Latgale, Cesis, and Jurmala. The target group is the employees and managers of these offices. The activities will be in the form of four 1-week consulting weeks by two Swedish experts at each office. The expected results are that the three offices will be developed into modern employment services.

D. Upgrading the competence of the staff of the Employment Service

This component consists of one theoretical and one practical sub-component:

D1 Developing a Latvian model for internal staff training. The objective is that on the basis of the handbook worked out during the first project 1992-1993, and the model training seminars developed during the project 1994-1996, elaborate a model for basic training of employment officers in placement services and counselling. The target group are instructors from the LSES. The activities will be in the form of a 1-week seminar in Latvia, two-weeks work by two *Swedish* experts in Sweden to elaborate a curriculum, and a 2-weeks seminar in Riga to present and discuss the proposal.

D2 Organising pilot courses for LSES officers. This component aims at putting the curriculum and training into practice.

7. Comments to the New Proposal

The project proposal is well structured and professional. It addresses many of the problems that the LSES has, and all components are in principle of relevance.

However, from our analysis of the needs of the Latvian labour market and the LSES, the proposal only partly addresses the most important needs.

More stress on the need for local resources

A main problem is that unemployment does not seem to be regarded as a high priority problem by the Ministry of Welfare and the government and therefore the LSES is not given enough financial resources to develop. As long as the Ministry of Welfare will not match

Swedish training efforts with economic support for the realisation of the transferred know-how, in terms of premises, modern equipment, increased status and pay for staff, training will have very limited effect.

Thus, we would like to see a strategy for how to come around this problem. It could be in the form of advising/training of personnel at the LSEB of how to negotiate with the Department of Labour motivating the need for resources. It might be that this type of advise/training should be directed to some other level in the Latvian administration. This depends on how the budget process is designed. If this component is difficult to integrate in this particular project, it might be addressed in another project complementing this one. Perhaps the issue could be addressed in a project addressing EU-integration in the labour market field.

Co-operation with other donors or funding agencies

Another strategy would be that AMS (and maybe also Sida) work more actively on interesting other donors to assist in projects in Latvia, alternatively finding other sources of funding for components that Sida cannot finance. The leading role of Sweden and AMS in providing technical assistance for the LSES, might motivate some extra responsibility towards the Latvian partner.

Visible results

We think that there should be more stress on activities that give visible results. That is, issues of working conditions and the image of LSES, both towards its clients (the unemployed and employers) and authorities should be made more explicit in the project formulation. The motivation should not be to satisfy some experts coming evaluating the project in a couple of years time, or to have a "showcase" for Swedish visitors in general, but that it is important for the staff that the development of their competence is matched with concrete developments in their working conditions and surrounding.

Model office

The component C is of great relevance, i.e. the development of one or two model offices.

Although it is evident that it is the Latvian side that chooses the concrete offices, AMS may have explicit criteria for how they believe the model offices should be chosen. In our view, the following indicators may be used:

1. The office should be quite large in terms of staff in order to avoid loss of transferred know-how if a couple of persons leaves. This also implies that the office has a reasonable volume of unemployed and employers to work with. For this reason Riga Latgale or Daugavpils, appear to be more relevant choices than the very small offices in Jurmala or Cesis.
2. The office must have reasonably good premises, and a potential of getting support from other sources than the AMS project to get necessary equipment, furniture, etc. As a start, maybe some of the money that was economised during the previous project could be used for equipment, but in the long run this is, of course, not a solution.
3. The office should have a director who is highly motivated and interested in the project.
4. Also, the unemployment situation may be considered as a choice variable. For instance, one might consider that unemployment should be relatively high, or that the special segregation problems in the Latvian labour market could be addressed since they are present in the area, etc.

Internal staff training

We see the component D1 as most central. The Latvian side must fully understand that they cannot forever substitute the lack of their own staff training with projects with AMS.

Gender and other segregation problems

The gender aspect is, of course, an important aspect of the labour market. As was noted above, most reported vacancies are specified by gender, and the introduction of new thinking in this field is needed, but it will take time. Yet, in the Latvian labour market the other types of segregation, in particular the problems of the large Russian-speaking minority, are of more significance. We would therefore recommend that the element is expanded to address problems of different kinds of minority and vulnerable groups on the labour market, not only the issue of men and women.

IV The Amu Project: Development of Labour Market Training

General Assessment: Diversified project but the importance of training well understood

The project is very diversified and appears to be a continuation of a wide range of different threads started in the earlier project, 1992-1993. The most comprehensive part of the project, which has had concrete effects is the training for trainers of disabled car drivers. In a year, a functioning training has been built up and about 100 persons have been trained and around 10 cars have been rebuilt.

Other parts of the project have been training in vocational guidance, procurement of training, general training in adult pedagogics, in PC usage, and in the restaurant and catering area. The impression is that the importance of training as an active measure is well understood by the LSES personnel and that competitive procurement methods are used. Trainers from institutes having attended seminars and study tours in the restaurant and catering area - mainly cooks - are satisfied with the training they have attended.

1. Institutional Setting

Labour market training is provided by a large number of training suppliers in Latvia. Among them are old traditional vocational schools but also new institutes. Labour market training is financed over the social security fund.

The number of trained persons doubled between 1993 and 1995. In 1993, 3.7 percent of the registered unemployed were trained, in 1995 about 8 percent. Of those expressing willingness to go through retraining, about 50 percent can be offered training courses.¹¹

2. Project Objectives

The general purpose of the project was to "further develop and make the labour market training system more effective, and the development of curricula, adjusted to adult training as well as training in specific perspective areas in particular in Latvia."¹²

The specific project components are:

- A. A two-day seminar in Riga to summarise the results of the earlier project and develop a work-plan for the new project.
- B. A study tour to Sweden for key persons in LSES on analyses of the market for training

¹¹ LSES, 1996, pp. 27-30.

¹² AmuInternational, 1997, p.5.

- C. A course on Career Counselling and Vocational Orientation for key persons from LSES, aiming at increasing the competence in the procurement of vocational training.
- D. Upgrading courses in PC-usage.
- E. General training in adult pedagogics (andragogics).
- F. Sector- oriented training and curriculum development in the restaurant and catering area. Changed to a study tour to Sweden for six senior trainers.
- G. Training of trainers of disabled car drivers.

3. *Project Results*

Like in the AMS project, most effort has been devoted to the training of personnel. The results are mainly in form of an increased knowledge of the importance of training and how to purchase training from different suppliers. The most visible result is the establishment of training for disabled car drivers, which represents a transfer of a whole concept with concrete results.

The market for training

The Amu efforts appear to have resulted in that a large part of the employees in the LSES, both centrally and regionally, have got a good understanding for the market for training. At all the labour offices we visited, there was a special person for sending unemployed job seekers to training courses. The institutes responsible for the training are chosen in a competitive manner in a tender procedure. The LSES announces the courses they want for the unemployed and how many places they need. The training institutes then send in their bids of which courses they may provide, for how many people and at what cost. The most cost efficient alternatives get the tenders. The competition is centralised, i.e. it is the LSEB that finally decides who will provide the training to a certain number.

Career counselling and vocational orientation

Vocational orientation is formally under a separate organisation under the Ministry of Welfare - Centre for Career Counselling and Vocational Orientation. As the LSES it is placed under the Department of Labour. In practice, career counselling vocational guidance officers are found in the labour offices and appear to work as officers directly under the LSES. That is, they are seen as a comprehensive part of the labour office.

The persons having gone through the training with Amu appear to have understood the importance of starting from the needs of the unemployed and his skills. The unemployed go through talks and tests. If the unemployed does not know what he wants he can be referred to a *Job club* (see above) to get more support and a more thorough idea about his abilities and opportunities.

Upgrading courses in PC usage

These courses have been highly appreciated by the LSES personnel. The Head of the Personnel division at the LSEB noted that this was an important contribution to the internal training of the LSES personnel. On the question of whether this kind of training could not be provided locally, the main computer responsible at the LSEB said that, of course, it could, the competence was available, but they did not have time for it, and there were no funds to buy

competent trainers on the local market. Amu has also provided the LSES with about 17 computers, a highly appreciated gift.¹³

The courses also included training in work with the Oracle data base, which Amu organised through a subcontracting firm from St. Petersburg.

General training in andragogics

The effects of this training were hard to assess since the evaluation team mainly met persons from the LSES, not trainers. The trainers we met at *Turiba* and the *First Provisional School*, said they had learnt a lot.

Training in restaurant and catering area

Instead of a methodological development of curricula, this component was changed (on the request of the Latvian side) for a study visit for six senior trainers - mainly cooks - to Sweden. The original idea appears to have been to develop restaurant education in Ventspils at the 20th *Vocational school*. The school had got restaurant equipment from Amu in the first project, and we were shown the equipment that is still in use. The school provides its students with practice in their own cafés and dining rooms. The director was inspired by German vocational schools, and she had been to Germany several times. The vocational school now has a lively co-operation with Västervik municipality.

We met all those having taken part in the study tour - from *Turiba*, the *First Provisional school* in Riga, the 20th *Vocational School* in Ventspils, etc. All the participants were very satisfied, they were impressed by the new and modern equipment and had learnt a lot of new recipes. The effect on the methodological side, however, was hard to see and assess. One of the two trainers at *Turiba* having participated, mentioned that she now tried to combine theory and practice, in accordance with what she had learnt in Sweden, to a larger extent than earlier, in particular for adult students who went through shorter courses.

Training of trainers for disabled car drivers

This training has been addressed to one centre for rehabilitation, located in Jurmala, 20 km West from Riga. Here disabled - physically handicapped usually missing an arm or leg or being partly paralysed - are trained to become drivers since 1995. The training is the result of the co-operation with Amu and up to now, about 100 persons have been trained. Of these about half are now driving cars, according to the specialists at the centre. The major reason for those not driving, although they have got a driving licence, is the costs of acquiring a car.

This project component has consisted of 5 training sessions and a couple of meetings between the Amu specialists from Kävlinge and the Latvian trainers. In addition, Amu has delivered a special car, a Volvo, specially equipped for disabled. The centre in Jurmala reconstructs cars for disabled, up to now around 10 cars have been rebuilt. The rehabilitation centre has training in electronics for disabled. Students having taken part in this training has assisted in equipping the premises for the theoretical training of the drivers.

The training for disabled car drivers is a concrete result of Amu's efforts and it seems that the co-operation has continued after the project was finished.

4. Cost Efficiency

The costs of different components of the project are depicted in *Table IV:1*.

¹³ A gift by AmuInternational. Not financed by BITS.

Amu-project (BITS 941111, LVA 0831, 1.46 million SEK)

Table IV:1 Cost of activities in the Amu project 1994-1995			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Number of persons directly involved</i>	<i>Total costs (SEK)</i>	<i>Cost/ person</i>
Kick-off seminar in Riga	15	70 425	4 695
Study visit to Sweden	8	141 054	17 632
marketing, dev. of voc training			
PC training in Riga	20	60 845	3 042
Training in vocational guidance in Riga	34	189 285	5 567
Training in andragogics in Riga	36	175 789	4 883
Study visit to Sweden for restaurant teachers	6	94 647	15 775
Training of trainers of disabled drivers plus car. Program includes 5 training sessions, the cost per pers and session is 11 371	6 (60)	340 846	56 808
Delivery and installation of PCs., incl training in Oracel		30 000	
Project management and final report		150 000	
Total	125	1 252 891	10 023

Of a total budget of 1.46 million SEK, 1.25 million SEK was used, or 85 percent of the budgeted means. Average cost per participant in the whole project is like in other Amu projects around 10 000 SEK. As usual, it is more costly to take people to Sweden, around 17 000 - 18 000 SEK, while activities in Latvia reach more people and have considerable lower costs per participant, in this case around 5 000 SEK. This is in line with what we found for the projects in Poland.¹⁴ The training of trainers for disabled car drivers has a direct cost per participant of 56 808, but this training has included 5 regular training sessions and the delivery of a car. Thus, counting only the training sessions we get an average cost of 11 371 SEK. According to the consultant 60-100 persons have been trained, and have driving licences, and 8 cars have been rebuilt.

Table IV:2 Break-down of Costs in the Amu-project 1994-1995				
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Remuneration</i>	<i>Administration</i>	<i>Direct</i>
SEK	1 152 891	755 000	50 000	347 891
Percent	100	60	12	28

The break-down of costs in **Table IV:2** shows that AmuInternational has over-head costs of 12 percent, slightly higher than usual. The larger part of the costs is remuneration, 60 percent, and 28 percent is direct costs.

5. *Co-operation with Other Donors*

The LSES did not seem to have any other specific program on labour market training with other donors. The individual schools and institutes have though. For instance, *Turiba* had co-operation with England, and the *Ventspils* school with Germany.

¹⁴ Oxenstierna, Lunderg, Huitfeldt, 1997, p. 21.

6. *Further Co-operation*

The Amu has submitted three new proposals to Sida that were all turned down. The first involved further computer training for the LSES. The second and third involved the Latvian Ministry of Education as partner. One regards the development of a system for adult education in Latvia, and the other was a project on how to organise training for the Russian-speaking population in the Latvian language.

The latter project would be of high relevance for the labour market, since such a large part of the unemployed is Russian-speakers, and many have insufficient knowledge of Latvian that even impedes them to register as unemployed. The impression of the team, while in Latvia, is that the organisation of the teaching of Latvian to Russian-speakers is underdeveloped, and this applies to the methods for motivating non-Latvian speakers to learn the language as well. However, Sweden already lends support to a UNDP-project in Latvia addressing this issue, which appears to have been a strong argument for Sida to turn down the proposal.

V Conclusions and Recommendations

1. *Main Dimensions of the Evaluation*

This report provides an evaluation of the AMS and AmuInternational technical assistance projects with the Latvian State Employment Service (LSES) which have been financed by BITS and Sida between 1994 and 1996. The main dimensions of the evaluation are:

- Achievements of objectives
- Relevance in perspective of the labour market situation and the needs they are intended to serve.
- Efficiency in project implementation
- Reasons for high/low achievements of goals
- Side-effects, positive or negative
- Cost-efficiency.
- Conditions for sustainable effects
- Gender aspects

In addition, the report gives Sida recommendations on the potential of supporting future projects and suggests improvements in project objectives and design with special regard to:

- Relevance of projects with regard to the needs they intend to serve and the potential impact of transfer of knowledge from Sweden.
- Organisational strength and weaknesses of the Latvian counterparts.
- Tangible results for long term development effects
- Possibilities of cost sharing in future projects.

2. *Conclusions of Results of Past Co-operation*

Achievements of Objectives

Both projects show reasonable achievement of objectives. All but one planned project activity (the AMS model office component) has taken place, and it is obvious that people have developed their professional competence, attitudes to work and ways to cope with their jobs. What is lacking are "visible results", such has only been achieved fully in the Amu project on developing training for disabled car drivers. This project element has involved the transferring of a full concept, not only training of personnel.

The lack of visible and concrete results makes projects hard to evaluate. This is not our main concern, however. (Maybe consultants should pay some attention to this fact, though.) Our main concern is that, during our field mission in Latvia, we felt that persons having taken part in training had difficulties realising their knowledge in reality. Our impression

is that the gap between their development, as a result of training, and the lack of change in their working conditions is too large.

Relevance

The labour market projects are of great relevance. The unemployment rate in Latvia is around 20 percent, and only about 25 percent of the unemployed are registered. The regional variation in registered unemployment is great, between about 3 - 28 percent. Sweden plays a major role in the development of labour market institutions in Latvia. Few other donors are active in the field.

Efficiency in the project implementation

The AMS project was well structured and all (except the model office) components have been implemented. The Amu project is diversified but has been highly appreciated by all persons who have participated. The Swedish consultants have been highly qualified.

The organisation of the project activities, on the Latvian side, has been of highest quality. This has been stressed by the Swedish consultants, but it was also confirmed to the evaluation team during the field mission in Latvia. Our program was arranged by the LSEB in an exceptionally efficient and accurate way.

However, the effects of the training provided in the projects, especially the AMS project, are lower than what might be expected, taking into account the quality and efforts obviously spent, because of the lack of development in the working conditions of the staff of the LSES.

Reasons for high/low goal achievement

The main reason for weaker goal achievement, and in particular the lack of "visible" goal achievement is the lack of resources spent by the Latvian government on the development of the regular employment service. Labour market policies have had low priority within the Ministry of Welfare.

We believe that the general economic difficulties of Latvia during the past years, combined with a view that unemployment is a small problem relative to other economic issues, are the main reasons behind this low priority.

However, we also see a lack of assistance to the LSEB in developing arguments and strategies for obtaining resources in the negotiations with the Ministry of Welfare, and higher levels in the economic-political hierarchy. Although resources have been scarce, extra funding has been available for some aspects of labour market policy, e.g. training and job clubs. The extreme lack of resources for the development of labour offices might perhaps have been eased if the question had been addressed properly. But this was not an element in the original project plan.

In addition, the supply of additional resources from other donors, more apt to assist with material support than Sida, has been very poor in the Latvian case. The Swedish side appears to have been passive and not actively sought other sources of funding.

Cost efficiency

The AMS project has been less costly than similar projects in other countries. About 500 000 SEK (or 30 percent of the project budget) has been economised. The main

reason is that several seminars have been conducted by one, instead of two, Swedish consultants, and that travel planning has been strict. Cost for administration and project management is 28 percent, which is in line with other AMS projects, but much higher than for Amu.

The Amu project is reasonable cost-efficient and has a cost structure similar to that in the projects in Russia and Poland. Administrative costs are around 12 percent.

Conditions for sustainable effects

A considerable number of persons have been trained in the AMS project. According to our calculations, 125 persons have taken part in the project activities. This corresponds to around a fourth of the total number of employees in the LSES. Of course, some of the trained people have left, and there are newcomers. Still, our impression is that a lot of know-how has been transferred to a large part of the LSES staff.

The lack of development in working conditions and the discrepancy between "internal" staff development and the "external" office development in general, weaken the effects and make them less sustainable.

The Amu project is very diversified but many the effects of the project - in particular the component with the rehabilitation centre in Jurmala - are concrete and sustainable. Another sustainable effect is that the LSES staff knows how to purchase training, that there is a competitive system for choosing training suppliers in place.

Training in vocational guidance has resulted in that vocational counsellors are available at most labour offices. The training of trainers at different training institutions in the restaurant and catering area appears to have meant a great deal to the individuals, but there are no great effects on the training institutions.

Gender and ethnic aspects

The gender equality aspect is not directly addressed in the projects, probably because it is not a priority on the Latvian side. However, since the major part of labour office personnel is women, women have profited from the AMS-project being its main recipients. Also in the Amu project, women have been the main recipients.

A problem that is much more evident on the Latvian labour market is the ethnic segregation. The projects have not addressed this issue either, although it is evident that the large Russian-speaking minority has higher unemployment rates than Latvians.

3. *Comparisons with the Projects in Russia and Poland*

The major differences in the Latvian project compared to the projects in Russia and Poland are:

- Sweden has played a leading role in providing assistance.
- There are few visible results. In particular, there are no model offices as in Lodz and St. Petersburg
- The Latvian authorities appear to pay much less attention to the unemployment problem than their Russian and Polish counterparts and less resources are given to this policy area, although the Latvian unemployment problem is significant, and much higher than in these countries.
- There are several segregation problems on the labour market. Some groups of the population cannot register as unemployed and get benefits.

4. *Recommendations (R#) for Future Co-operation*

R1 *Relevance of project area*

Unemployment is a considerable problem in Latvia and assistance in the labour market area is of great importance.

Sida is recommended to support well-structured projects in the area of development of employment service and labour market training in Latvia.

R2 *Local resources*

The Latvian side has not been able to match the Swedish training efforts with means to develop the material side of the labour offices. We find that this weakens the short-term effects of the training and is a threat to long-term sustainable effects.

Sida is recommended to demand that this issue is directly addressed in future projects. That is, the Swedish consultant should either give a strategy of how this problem is overcome as an integrated part of a project, or indicate alternative funding sources for components necessary for project implementation but not funded by Sida.

Sida might also consider a more active position towards Latvian authorities in this question.

R3 *Co-operation with other donors*

Sweden has been quite alone in providing assistance in the labour market area in Latvia. This is different to the situation in other countries, e.g. Russia and Poland, where Sweden is usually one of several major donors. This has both positive and negative sides. One negative effect is that there is a lack of donors apt to provide material assistance in the form of repairs of premises or equipment, a form of assistance not funded by Sida.

Sida is recommended to support AMS and the LSEB in developing contacts with other donors who may be interested in joining, supporting, or in other ways contribute to the development of labour market institutions in Latvia.

R4 *The need for examples of a comprehensive concept*

There are few visible effects of the projects, and we find that it is time for focusing on establishing an example of a more comprehensive concept of a modern employment service.

It is recommended that the establishing of one (or two) model offices in the new AMS-LSES proposal becomes the central component of the project. This requires that full support is given to this component by all parties, including Sida.

R5 *Criteria for choosing model offices*

Of course, it is the Latvian side that chooses the office(s). Yet, we believe that AMS should could assist the Latvian side picking the offices. Indicators that seem relevant are, for instance: The number of staff at the office, the number of unemployed and employers served, premises and potential of getting equipment, motivated director, relative unemployment rate.

AMS is recommended to develop some criteria for choosing model offices and assist the LSEB in this decision.

R6 *More focus on employer contacts*

The development of employer contacts - central to the offices' supply of vacancies - is still in an initial phase. It appears that this service of the LSES needs to be developed.

Continued training efforts from AMS should have employer contacts as a prominent component.

R7 Internal staff training

The LSES has so far not developed their own staff training program.

It is of importance that LSES develops its own training program for their staff as indicated in the new AMS-LSES proposal.

R8 Segregation

Different segregation problems are present on the Latvian labour market. One is the segregation between men and women, another between the Latvian and Russian-speaking population.

It is recommended that the component in the new AMS-LSES project on gender aspects is expanded to include a broader range of questions regarding different types of minority and vulnerable groups on the labour market.

R9 Language training

AmuInternational has presented several new proposals to Sida on continued co-operation with the LSES and other partners that have been turned down. One project was on the organisation of language training. Since this issue is already addressed in an UNDP-project, which Sweden supports, the Amu-proposal was rejected.

Sida is recommended to consider support to co-ordination efforts with the UNDP-project on language training, if such proposals would occur from the LSES.

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Appendix

AMS and Amu Projects in Latvia 1994-1996

A1 Terms of Reference

A2 List of Interviewed Persons

Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of BITS/Sida's support to labour market institutions in Latvia

Background

AMS (The Swedish Labour Market Board) and AMU International (the Swedish state-owned vocational training institute) started co-operation with the Latvian Employment authorities in 1992. These projects were then continued and financed by BITS/Sida 1994-1996.

Sida has decided to undertake an evaluation of the achievements to date including to identify whether any motives for continued assistance to the sector are at hand and make an appraisal of the proposed continuation of the previous projects. To undertake this evaluation, Sida intends to recruit an independent consultant (the Consultant). These terms of reference will guide the work to be performed by the Consultant.

Up to this date the support has come to comprise 2 projects at a total cost of SEK 3.310.500. Counterparts in these projects have been AMS and AMU on the Swedish side and the Latvian Employment Board and Ministry of Welfare, Labour and Health on the Latvian side. The projects subject to evaluation are:

1. AMS - BITS decision LVA 0681; Development of labour market institutions, SEK 1.850.000 .
2. AMU - BITS decision LVA 0831; Improvement of employment system, SEK 1.460.000.

The overall goal of the AMS projects is to support the establishment and development of an administrative system for employment services on the central and local level. The project includes: 1) Forecasting, 2) Financial planning and monitoring, 3) Placement services, 4) Management, and 5) Services to disabled. The expected results are better knowledge of employment services and vocational guidance at the local and central level. In particular, assistance to the local offices in Riga, Liepaja and Daugapils should result in concrete improvements. These offices should after the assistance serve as model offices.

The objective of the AMU project is to improve the employment services staff in their ability to analyse the labour market situation and choose relevant training alternatives for the unemployed, and training of trainers in pedagogics for adults. The project also includes a pilot project in labour market training in restaurant services and training of disabled.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation exercise is twofold; firstly to evaluate the relevance, results, cost-effectiveness, sustainability and effects of the support so far provided to the Labour Market Institutions in Latvia. Secondly the purpose is to evaluate/assess the current project proposal for this sector in Latvia.

3. Scope of work

The evaluation should evaluate past co-operation and review the opportunities of continued co-operation. The main dimensions are:

Evaluation of past co-operation

* Achievement of objectives. Achievement of the project goals as defined in the contracts, taking into account possible changes in circumstances.

- * Relevance. The relevance of the project approach, goals and services provided during the technical co-operation in the perspective of the labour market situation and in relation to the needs they intended to service.
- * Efficiency in the project implementation
- * Reasons for high/low achievements of goals
- * Side effects
- * Cost efficiency
- * Conditions for sustainable effects of the projects
- * Gender aspects. Have gender aspects been an integrated part of the projects. If not, what are the reasons.

Opportunities for continued co-operation

- * The relevance of proposed long- and short term objectives and potential impact of the transfer of knowledge from Swedish inputs
- * Organisational strength of and weaknesses of the concerned Latvian organisations
- * Tangible results and long term development effects
- * Need for co-ordination with other institutions and other donors
- * Possibilities of cost-sharing in future projects

In addition the evaluation report should describe the institutional structure, including roles and responsibilities, in the field of labour market policy and labour market training in Latvia. Based on the above findings, the consultant should give Sida recommendations on the potential of supporting future projects and, if relevant, suggest improvement of existing proposals with regard to project objectives, organisation and other aspects relevant for achieving the best development effect.

4. Method of work, Time plan and Reporting

The evaluation should be based on interviews with key persons and participants engaged in project implementation and activities, and on the study of all relevant materials, i.e. BITS/Sida-decisions, project reports, and materials produced in the course of the execution of the projects.

The project is expected to start at the end of May 1997, with interviews with key persons in Sweden and collecting of relevant materials. Then follows a field mission to Latvia, May 26-30, for meetings with key persons in the projects and participants in various project activities. The assignment will be presented to Sida in a draft report in English within 4 weeks after the field visit to Latvia (30 June). The final report should be submitted two weeks after Sida has commented on the first version.

The assignment is expected to take 20 working days for the consultant including preparations in Sweden, work in Latvia, report writing and presentations.

5. Undertakings

The consultant will be responsible to practical arrangements in conjunction with the mission to Latvia. Sida will make available or cause to make available all written material (reports, project preparation documents, project completion reports etc) deemed to be of relevance to the evaluation exercise by the Consultant and Sida.

List of Interviewed Persons

AMS

Mr Ulf Qwarfordt	Director of County Labour Market Board Östergötland
Ms Britta Tener	International Department

AmuInternational

Mr Lars Andersson
Ms Alina Maric

Latvian Labour Market Board (LSEB)

Mr Andris Silins	Director General
Ms Evgeniya Novika	Deputy Director General
Ms Ludmilla Laudama	Senior Desk Officer
Ms Vija Rubina	Head of Foreign Affairs Division
Ms I. Upeniece	Head of Statistical Division

Ministry of Welfare

Ms R. Purina	Under-secretary of State
Mr Georg Kartenko	Head of Department of Labour
Mr Sergey Blazhevich	Former Director General of LSEB

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

Mr Arvils Sautins	Director General
Ms Zaiga Priede	Senior Officer

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