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Follow-up on the implementation of the ILO–G20 Training Strategy

Purpose of the document

This document provides information on the work of the Office to extend the outreach of the ILO's conceptual and policy framework on skills development to improve productivity, employment growth and development through the work of the G20 and outlines the follow-up to related conclusions of the recurrent discussion on employment (ILC, 2010). The possible points for discussion in **paragraph 28** are intended to facilitate the debate.

Relevant strategic objective: Create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: Maintained budget allocations and eventual encouragement of financial partnership with other international organizations and mobilizing extra-budgetary resources.

Follow-up action required: None.

Author unit: Skills and Employability Department (EMP/SKILLS).

Related documents: None.

Executive summary

In 2008, the International Labour Conference agreed a conceptual and policy framework linking skills development to improved productivity, employment growth and development.¹ The framework advises countries to sustain this virtuous circle by: matching training to labour market demands, providing opportunities for lifelong learning, and using skills development to drive innovation and thus future job growth. It also cautions that the potential benefits of training are jeopardized in the absence of job-rich growth.

The framework has guided the research, technical cooperation, policy advice and advocacy of the Office, as summarized in the report for the recurrent discussion on employment (ILC, 2010).² The Office drew on this agreed framework when asked by the G20 Leaders at their Pittsburgh Summit (September 2009) to develop a training strategy for their consideration, working with its constituents and in consultation with other international organizations.

This paper shows how the G20 Training Strategy builds on the ILO's conceptual and policy framework to link skills development to employability, productivity and social inclusion, and looks at the ongoing use of the G20 Training Strategy to build cooperation with other international organizations and to support skills for employment strategies of low-income countries (LICs). Finally, the paper proposes how to further capitalize on this work by developing and sustaining a global public-private knowledge-sharing platform on skills for employment. The paper concludes with examples from current work on learning what works and sharing that knowledge, including on training components of crisis response strategies, portability of skills, and policy coherence.

I. Development of the G20 Training Strategy

1. The 2008 ILC conclusions on skills had looked to apply the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), to the policy challenge of improving both productivity and employment. The 2008 conclusions, in turn, provided the foundation for the G20 Training Strategy. The G20 Leaders acknowledged that their framework for strong, sustainable and balanced growth required national policies “to strengthen the ability of our workers to adapt to changing market demands and to benefit from innovation and investments in new technologies, clean energy, environment, health, and infrastructure ... [and that] successful employment and training programs are often designed together with employers and workers.”³

¹ Resolution on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development, International Labour Conference (ILC), 97th Session, 2008.

² ILO: *Employment policies for social justice and a fair globalization: Recurrent item report on employment*, Report VI, ILC, 99th Session, 2010, Ch. 5 “Skills for employability and productivity”.

³ *A framework for strong, sustainable and balanced growth*, paras 44–45, G20 Pittsburgh Summit, 24–25 September 2009, www.g20.utoronto.ca/2009/2009communique0925.html [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].

2. In addition, the Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG–TVET)⁴ facilitated consultations with other international organizations, for example on linking basic education to TVET (UNESCO),⁵ on lessons from national TVET and youth employment policies in OECD countries,⁶ and about other organizations' skills strategies.⁷ ILO participation in the advisory group on the EC strategy: New Skills for New Jobs provided further information from European countries.
3. Recommendations from ILO constituents were gathered through a global dialogue forum on using social dialogue to strengthen sectoral approaches to training⁸ and from the African national employer organizations on entrepreneurship education, TVET accessibility and quality, and partnership between policy-makers, educators and employers.⁹ The ILO–ITC's Meeting of Experts on Skills on Global Training Strategy and Regional Meetings by ILO–CINTERFOR and APEC (all held in March 2010) collected good practices from additional countries.
4. The resulting draft document, *A skilled workforce for strong, sustainable and balanced growth: A G20 Training Strategy*,¹⁰ was endorsed by the G20 Employment and Labour Ministers' Meeting (Washington, DC, April 2010) and the final document was welcomed by the G20 Leaders who called for its implementation at their Toronto Summit in June.
5. The G20 Training Strategy focuses on building bridges between the world of education and training and the world of work. It articulates why a skills strategy is needed, outlines a conceptual framework for such a strategy, and assembles the essential building blocks of a robust training strategy – including the roles of social partners.
6. The vital elements of the G20 Training Strategy are based on the 2008 ILC conclusions, which recommend actions for governments and the social partners across key policy areas, while the consultations for the G20 Training Strategy went further in identifying key building blocks for effective policy implementation (see table 1).

⁴ Members of the IAG–TVET include the ILO, the European Commission (EC), the European Training Foundation, the OECD, UNESCO, the World Bank and the regional development banks.

⁵ UNESCO: Strategy for technical and vocational education and training, 2010–15 (2009).

⁶ EC: *New skills for new jobs* (2010); OECD: *Learning for jobs: OECD policy review of vocational education and training* (2009).

⁷ OECD: Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) at: www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3343,en_2649_33927_34474617_1_1_1_1,00.html [accessed 2 Feb. 2012]. World Bank: Skills Toward Employability and Productivity (STEP) at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTLM/0,,contentMDK:22674396~menuPK:7343794~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:390615,00.html> [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].

⁸ ILO: Global Dialogue Forum, “Upskilling out of the Downturn: Global Dialogue Forum on Strategies for Sectoral Training and Employment Security”, 29–30 March 2010 at: www.ilo.org/global/meetings-and-events/WCMS_125020/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].

⁹ Johannesburg Declaration on Employment and Sustainable Enterprises in Africa, from the High-Level Conference on Employment and Sustainable Enterprises: The Contribution from the African Private Sector to the G20 Debates, Johannesburg, 8–10 April 2010.

¹⁰ ILO: G20 Training Strategy, 2010, at: www.ilo.org/skills/what/pubs/lang--en/docName--WCMS_151966/index.htm [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].

Table 1. Summary of the ILO skills development framework and the G20 Training Strategy

	ILC 2008 framework for skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development	G20 Training Strategy: A skilled workforce for strong, sustainable and balanced growth, 2010
Conceptual framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Match supply to current demand for skills ■ Help workers and enterprises adjust to change ■ Anticipate and deliver skills needed in the future; sustain a dynamic development process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Broad-based good quality general education ■ Matching training to the labour market ■ Continuous learning to enable adjustment to change ■ Anticipating and preparing for the skills needs of the future
Features of the virtuous circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continuous and seamless pathways of learning ■ Development of core skills ■ Development of higher skills ■ Portability of skills ■ Employability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continuous and seamless pathways of learning ■ Development of core skills ■ Development of higher skills ■ Portability of skills ■ Employability
Success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Full involvement of social partners ■ Policy coherence by linking education research and skills development to labour markets, social policy, technology, public services, trade, investment and macroeconomic policies ■ Attention to gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lifecycle perspective of skills development for children, young people and older workers ■ Policy convergence so that skills and employment policies are viewed together ■ Coordination mechanisms to connect basic education to technical training, labour market entry and lifelong learning; communication between employers and training providers; and integrating skills development policies with labour market, social protection, and industrial, investment, trade and technology policies
Recommendations	<p>Recommended areas of action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Skills development at the workplace and along value chains ■ Skills development to help manage global drivers of change ■ Early identification of current and future skills needs to feed into sectoral development strategies ■ Link education, skills development, labour market entry and lifelong learning ■ Skills development for social inclusion of target groups 	<p>Building blocks for effective implementation of national skills policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Anticipating skills needs ■ Participation of social partners ■ Sectoral approaches ■ Labour market information and employment services ■ Training quality and relevance ■ Gender equality ■ Broad access to training and skills utilization ■ Financing training ■ Assessing policy performance

II. Implementation promoted through the G20 Development Working Group

7. Interest in the G20's skills strategy led to many invitations for the Office to present the strategy and its foundations in ILO standards and experience to constituents and to bilateral agencies. Its message on linking training to youth employment is reflected in the work of the G20 Task Force on employment. The potential for the most direct implementation of the G20 Training Strategy, however, is through collaborative work in LICs.
8. At their November 2010 Summit in Seoul, the G20 Leaders declared their determination "... to put jobs at the heart of the recovery, to provide social protection, decent work, and also to ensure accelerated growth in low-income countries". They issued a multi-year action plan on development whose pillar on human resources development (HRD) called on the ILO, the OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank to work together to support LICs in building on the G20 Training Strategy to develop "employment-related skills that are better matched to employer and market needs in order to attract investment and decent jobs".¹¹ The ILO was named coordinator for the HRD pillar.
9. The G20 did not provide financial resources but looked to implement the action plan largely through more coherent delivery of support by the international organizations and through a knowledge-sharing strategy.
10. The HRD pillar comprises two main actions:
 - *Action 1: Development of a set of internationally comparable skills for employment indicators.* The goal is to equip policy-makers with a set of indicators that measures not only skills acquisition but also their use in order to inform the design and monitoring of skills policies. The conceptual framework brings together indicators on skills supply and demand, skills mismatch, and outcomes in terms of employment and productivity. Consultations with international experts and practitioners from LICs will review a proposed set of indicators based on their relevance, feasibility, comparability and timeliness.¹² A final report is expected by the end of 2012 and an actual database may be made available by the end of 2014. Technical advice from the ILO is drawn from the Department of Statistics (STATISTICS) on labour force surveys and from the Employment Trends Unit (EMP/TRENDS) and the Youth Employment Programme on school-to-work transition surveys.
 - *Action 2: Support for a set of pilot LICs to implement their skills for employment strategies.* A few countries were invited to pilot the G20 effort based on the twin criteria of having already asked international organizations for support and of these organizations having mobilized some resources in response. Action plans are being agreed in national tripartite workshops that review the G20 Training Strategy and then set out steps to be taken by ministries and the social partners to accelerate the implementation of national strategies to better link skills to employment (fortifying their building blocks), to improve the collection and use of skills indicators (building on, and providing feedback to, work under action 1), and to improve policy coherence

¹¹ G20 Seoul Summit Leaders' Declaration, 11–12 November 2010, para. 5; and G20 Seoul Summit, Annex II: Multi-year action plan on development, at: www.g20.utoronto.ca/2010/g20seoul.htm [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].

¹² The consultations included an experts' workshop at the ILO–ITC, 6–8 March 2012, sponsored by the Governments of Germany and the Republic of Korea.

(strengthening mechanisms for inter-ministerial coordination).¹³ The action plans set out expectations for coordinated support from international organizations working with the UN Country Team and with bilateral agencies. Reports on action plan implementation at the end of 2012 may lead to recommendations for roll-out to other LIC and middle-income countries.

11. One lesson learned is that the IAG–TVET has been an important asset in sustaining communication among the international organizations and facilitating joint activities.¹⁴ While acknowledging overlapping mandates on skills development and a degree of competition, there has been, on balance, a stronger recognition of complementarities of expertise, of bringing different constituents or stakeholders into national skills policy debates, and of generating new knowledge through sharing experience and joint efforts.¹⁵

III. Knowledge-sharing platform on skills for employment

12. The potential for expanding the outreach of the ILO’s work on skills and employability through the G20 was recognized in the conclusions of the recurrent discussion on employment (ILC, 2010)¹⁶ with a request that the Office expand “its leadership role in skills development, building on the G20 Training Strategy prepared by the ILO, by documenting what works under what circumstances and with what resources, and by improving dissemination of this information, for example, consider the setting up and management of a global knowledge bank on education, skills and lifelong learning including on green growth”.
13. Acting on this request in 2011, the Office held informal consultations, agreed linkages to the broader knowledge-sharing strategy, as approved by the Governing Body, and started preparation of the web infrastructure and prototype framework for a “global public–private knowledge-sharing platform on skills for employment” (Global KSP).¹⁷

¹³ The Governments of Bangladesh, Benin and Malawi have formally agreed to be pilot countries, and Haiti has expressed strong interest. Skills development reforms to improve employability and decrease poverty feature in these countries’ requests to the Office or in their Decent Work Country Programmes.

¹⁴ Production of joint products by the IAG–TVET in 2011 included a report on indicators for assessing TVET, a glossary of TVET terms used by different organizations, and a compilation of activities in North African countries with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts.

¹⁵ The G20 Development Working Group reported that, “We welcome the progress made in the integration of a self-selected pilot of LDCs and value, in that respect, the commitment made by international organizations to better coordinate their efforts to support LICs in enhancing their own national skills development strategies” (para. 26). At: [www.g20-g8.com/g8-g20/root/bank_objects/20111028_REPORT_WG_DEVELOPMENT_vANG\[1\].pdf](http://www.g20-g8.com/g8-g20/root/bank_objects/20111028_REPORT_WG_DEVELOPMENT_vANG[1].pdf) [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].

¹⁶ Conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on employment, ILC, 99th Session, 2010, para. 33.

¹⁷ Work began on the Global KSP in 2011 with regular budget funds and with a tranche of the Regular Budget Supplementary Account funds allocated to the Employment Sector. Testing and implementation work in 2012, and collaboration with ILO–CINTERFOR and ILO–ITC, is funded through a special programme allocation agreed by the Governing Body: GB.312/PFA/2.

- 14.** The objective for the Global KSP is to provide an online resource for policy-makers, social partners, enterprises, TVET institutions, academic institutions and multilateral and bilateral agencies who are interested in learning from each other on how to use skills development to improve employability, productivity, and social inclusion.
- 15.** In comparison to existing websites, the Global KSP offers two main advantages:
- (i) *An unambiguous focus on skills as the bridge from education to the world of work.* This includes, within work, to ease the movement of workers and enterprises from informal activities to the formal economy, and from declining or low-productivity activities and sectors into expanding and higher productivity ones. The focus, thus, is on the pragmatic building blocks outlined in the G20 Training Strategy. Users looking for information on related employment or education issues can find direct links on the platform to the ILO and other sources and to regional databases, networks and compilations of training materials.¹⁸
 - (ii) *Translating complex knowledge and experience into pragmatic how-to policy options that governments, employers, workers and training institutions can use to effect change.* This requires providing different knowledge products for different users. For example, policy-makers might want succinct policy briefs; their advisers might look for international labour standards and national skills policies; employers and workers could search for illustrative case studies; academics might prefer in-depth research papers; activists and advocates might value videos and speeches. In short, the platform would allow users with different degrees of interest to find what they need – what they could put to use.
- 16.** The content of the Global KSP would be organized by the themes of the G20 Training Strategy and its building blocks that correspond to actual policy dilemmas confronting constituents – such as how to anticipate future skills needs or how to finance training.
- 17.** Within those policy questions, knowledge products would be presented according to how skills knowledge is built; from a broad base of individual case studies, to relatively lengthy research reports, to concise policy options – as represented by the levels of a pyramid, knowledge products tend to be shorter at the higher levels (see figure 1). The structure also allows users to “drill down” from policy briefs or research syntheses to the sources of evidence, which could in turn be searchable by region, country or economic sector.

¹⁸ www.oitcenterfor.org/; www.unevoc.unesco.org/snippet.php [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].

Figure 1. Organizational structure of the Global KSP – Building up knowledge to policy options



18. The Global KSP seeks to:

- turn information into actionable knowledge with a focus on pragmatic problem solving through analysis of what governments, workers and employers, as well as other organizations, have found that works;
- facilitate active exchange of experience among constituents and stakeholders; collect and disseminate case studies and other knowledge products directly from enterprises and from trade unions;
- broaden the range of experience made available to ILO constituents through partnerships with other international organizations under the G20 partnership;
- maximize open, public access by choosing platform technologies that maximize accessibility in LICs and that meet standards on accessibility for persons with disabilities. Provide search facilities in English, French and Spanish, and include knowledge products in many other languages;
- synchronize the design of the Global KSP with the Office's web infrastructure in order to contain maintenance costs; and look for ways that the partnerships with international organizations can contribute to its long-term financial sustainability;
- contribute to the Office-wide knowledge-management strategy by compiling national policy documents;
- design from the outset means to monitor the use of the Global KSP and its value to users;

- complement online knowledge sharing with ILO–ITC knowledge-sharing workshops, periodic production of syntheses papers on emerging or contentious issues, web-based communities of practice, etc.; and
- improve and enhance access to ILO–CINTERFOR databank on labour competencies and technical resources.

19. The Global KSP will be built up in stages during 2012, starting with themes and building blocks where there is a critical mass of knowledge products in order to test the prototype and search facilities. An immediate next step is to encourage employers' and workers' organizations and training departments in governments to participate in validating the Global KSP and in populating it with their policy papers and case studies of good practices. One option would be to arrange focus group discussions in Geneva this spring and to create a longer serving advisory board of constituents and representatives of partner international organizations.

IV. Learning what works and sharing that knowledge

20. Examples of lessons on effective skills and employability policies and programmes include the following findings from recent research and technical cooperation programmes.

What are countries learning from training components of their crisis response strategies?

21. The Global Jobs Pact identified skills development as a component of effective crisis response in order to speed re-employment of displaced workers into productive and decent work; to upgrade workers' skills during business downtime, and to train workers for the jobs created by stimulus packages.¹⁹ The Office's review of ten training and retraining programmes during the current employment crisis, based on countries' own monitoring and interviews with key informants, revealed a number of lessons:²⁰

- Cost-effective programmes targeted the workers most affected: low-skilled workers, youth and older workers.
- Pre-training counselling services that matched training to labour-market opportunities and to individuals' training needs improved post-training employment rates.
- Governments are increasingly interested in expanding the use of on-the-job training in order to better tailor training to employers' skills demands and provide opportunities for tacit learning, or application of knowledge. However, public support was required to enable employers to take on trainees during the recession.
- Countries' response capability depended on having programmes in place that could be scaled up quickly by public employment services. In several countries, staff shortages in intake and guidance services created bottlenecks to moving displaced workers into training programmes.

¹⁹ ILO: *Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact*, ILC, 2009, at: www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/98thSession/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].

²⁰ Ellen Hansen: "Preliminary Assessment of Training and Retraining Programmes Implemented in Response to the Great Recession", ILO Employment Working Paper, forthcoming 2012.

- Trade unions and employers' organizations tended to provide a needed perspective on investing in human capital for long-term well-being and economic performance.
- There is a general need to move from monitoring programme implementation to assessing their impact.

How are different systems improving the recognition and thus portability of skills?

22. The conclusions of the Governing Body's discussion on portability of skills (March 2007) asked the Office for further research and guidance on institution-based, apprenticeship and national qualification framework (NQF) approaches to skills recognition.²¹
23. Building on earlier ILO work on NQFs,²² empirical studies in 16 countries on the implementation of NQFs and their impact in the labour market found that, when NQFs were primarily components of education systems, they had not improved communication between trainers and employers and thus had failed to raise confidence in the quality and relevance of qualifications.²³ Overall, paucity of administrative data made it impossible to assess whether the NQFs had improved the recognition of skills acquired informally. Thus, facilitating employer and worker leadership in developing competency standards, especially within industry sectors, and instituting monitoring mechanisms have become key components of ILO technical assistance.
24. In some of the countries studied, NQF implementation was at an early stage and further research is now planned for more extensive review of employers', workers', and training authorities' experience. The Office is also following regional initiatives, such as the regional qualification framework for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the EC Skills Panorama. Other measures found important to improve skills recognition, and thus portability of skills, include strengthening core skills in TVET²⁴ and upgrading informal apprenticeship systems to broaden the recognition of apprentice graduates' capabilities beyond local communities.²⁵

²¹ ILO: *Portability of skills*, Governing Body, 298th Session, Geneva, Mar. 2007, GB.298/ESP/3.

²² Young: *National qualifications frameworks: Their feasibility for effective implementation in developing countries*, Skills Working Paper No. 22 (2005); Tuck: *An introductory guide to national qualifications frameworks: Conceptual and practical issues for policy-makers* (2007); Allais, Raffé, Strathdee, Wheelahan: *Learning from the first qualifications frameworks*, Employment Working Paper No. 45 (2009).

²³ Allais: *The implementation and impact of national qualifications frameworks: Report of a study in 16 countries*. This research was undertaken in collaboration with the European Training Foundation, Turin (2010).

²⁴ Brewer: *Enhancing the employability of disadvantaged youth: A What? Why? and How Guide to core skills*. Core skills are defined in the 2008 ILC conclusions as "literacy, numeracy, communication skills, teamwork and problem-solving and other relevant skills – and learning ability – as well as awareness of workers' rights and an understanding of entrepreneurship as the building blocks for lifelong learning and capability to adapt to change" (para. 6(b)), forthcoming 2012.

²⁵ ILO: *Upgrading informal apprenticeship – A resource guide for Africa*, 2012.

How can countries incorporate skills development in their national employment policies?

25. Many member States are redoubling their efforts to improve policy coherence at the national level, increasingly integrating promotion of skills development, as well as of sustainable enterprise development, in national and sectoral development strategies. The Office's new tools provide some practical ways forward: The *Guide on national employment policies* explains how skills policies and public employment services can help meet employment goals and provides advice on how to assess the performance of these systems. The analytical tools of the *Skills for trade and economic diversification* programme show how to anticipate training and entrepreneurship needs in sectors with export growth potential. The methodology for preparing *Global Jobs Pact country scans* and tools for targeted employment growth also include sectoral approaches to assessing skills needs and training provision.

How are employers realizing the benefits of including persons with disabilities in their workforces?

26. The ILO Global Business and Disability Network is a joint effort between the Skills and Employability Department (EMP/SKILLS) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) to help multinational companies and employers' organizations learn from each other how to hire persons with disabilities and include them in workplace training programmes. The Network promotes the business and human rights cases for hiring persons with disabilities and, as of January 2012, counted 41 multinational companies and 17 employer organizations as members. Its achievements include producing a website (www.businessanddisability.org), two publications,²⁶ convening regional meetings and establishing governance, funding and networking procedures.

How are countries anticipating skills needs for green jobs?

27. Most countries are missing the job creation potential of the transition to the green economy because training programmes have not adequately anticipated the nature of new skill requirements and because environmental and energy policies have not integrated workforce training in their implementation plans. This is a major finding of the report "Skills for green jobs: A global view" which analysed changes in demand for skills and occupations in the transition to the green economy in 21 countries. It drew lessons from good practices on using social dialogue, labour market information systems, and inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to better anticipate and meet skills for green jobs. Further research in partnership with the EC resulted in two global studies on skills and occupational needs in the renewable energy and the green building industries and in a report comparing methods of identifying skills needs for the low-carbon economy. The findings have been disseminated in case studies, synthesis reports, and policy briefs –

²⁶ ILO: *Disability in the workplace: Employers' organizations and business networks*, 2011, and *Disability in the workplace: Company practices*, 2010, joint publications by EMP/SKILLS and ACT/EMP.

exemplifying the array of knowledge products that would target different users with different degrees of interest through the Global KSP.²⁷

V. Possible points for discussion

28. *This document is submitted for debate and guidance. The Governing Body may wish to include the following questions in their discussion:*

- *What are the priorities for further expanding the outreach of the ILO's conceptual and policy framework on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development?*
- *How could governments, workers' organizations, and employers' organizations participate in the global public-private knowledge-sharing platform on skills for employment and populate it with their knowledge products?*
- *How could the Office best continue effective collaboration with other international organizations to broaden delivery of information from their separate perspectives through the Global KSP?*

²⁷ Strietska-Ilina et al.: *Skills for green jobs: A global view*, Synthesis report based on 21 country studies (Geneva, ILO, 2011). All documents are available at: www.ilo.org/skills/projects/WCMS_140837/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 2 Feb. 2012].