

## EVN

EVN Group (EVN AG) is an Austrian-based producer and transporter of electricity, one of the largest in Europe having over three million customers in 14 countries. The company also operates in water treatment, natural gas supply and waste management business areas.

EVN Bulgaria Group is a part of EVN Group and also covers business activities in the distribution and sale of electricity, heat supply, energy and emissions trading, as well as development of renewable energy projects. The main companies in EVN Bulgaria Group are EVN Bulgaria Elektrosnabdiavane power supply company, EVN Bulgaria Elektrorazpredelenie grid company, EVN Bulgaria Toplofikatsia district heating company. The Group was set up in 2005 with the privatization of the shares in the electricity distribution companies in Southeastern Bulgaria by the Austrian group EVN AG. In 2007, EVN AG acquired also the district heating company in Plovdiv. Since 2012 the Austrian group has been holding 100% of the shares in EVN Bulgaria Elektrosnabdiavane and EVN Bulgaria Elektrorazpredelenie companies.

EVN Bulgaria has a long-standing traditions and a substantial experience in working on internship programmes. The placement scheme at EVN Bulgaria has an around 10-year history during which many good and bad practices have been noted and will be shared for the purposes of this case study.

- **What are the aims and objectives of the project/programme/initiative?**

EVN Bulgaria sees the education stream during an internship initiative as a two way process. Not only is the company aiming to offer an opportunity to the young population to gain some practical experience at an early stage of their education, but also EVN Bulgaria aspires to improve the mentor skills of its employees. The placement schemes main target is to master both the managerial skills of its temporary employees as well as to create possibilities for its own members of staff to improve their skills and knowledge.

Additionally, the internship project at EVN Bulgaria wishes to identify young talent. For the duration of the initiative the company offers a place for the development of some practical skill to complement the already acquired academic knowledge. In the case of successful interning the trainee might be offered an opportunity for a permanent position after graduation. This will benefit both EVN by employee fresh and talented work force but also the students who get a chance for a career development in the electric power industry.

- **What is the structure/model?**

The internships at EVN Bulgaria are separated into two distinguishing groups: summer internship for university students and an ongoing 2-week project for high school students during the academic year. Although both of the internship initiatives are structured similarly, some differences could be brought to attention.

The 3-month summer internship has a flexible model, which includes work for one department of the student's choice and an independent and self-contained project on a topic given by a mentor. The student can be proactive and choose to some extend the task he/she performs. On the other hand the 2-week initiative understandably varies in the responsibilities awarded to students. While the 3-month internship scheme includes work for just one department and the student bares the full responsibility for his/her work, the students on the 2-week placement observe the work of several departments and have limited liability. Additionally, instead of an independent project, the interns of the 2-week placement have the task to prepare an end of placement presentation.

Despite the differences mentioned above the structure of the two placements follows the phases below:

1<sup>st</sup> phase – Induction: The induction day includes overview presentation of EVN what its aims, values and objectives are, complemented by a health and safety and a facilities presentation. This is followed by the allocation of department/s and mentors. The day is concluded by welcoming drink to introduce the students to the informal environment of the company and it is a great opportunity for the students to meet all members of staff.

2<sup>nd</sup> phase – Work with the mentor on ongoing projects of the company: This phase consists of the day-to-day performance of tasks within the allocated department/s.

3<sup>rd</sup> phase – Preparation of the project / presentation: The students are given a time span when they could intensively work on their individual task. During this period the workload on other project is usually minimalized. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase students would present their projects.

4<sup>th</sup> phase – Feedback: On the last day of placement the students have individual feedback sessions with their mentor and group discussion with their team.

- **How does it link with national/regional/local policies?**

N/A – *do the students get credit for the internship in their schools? If yes – it is linked with the national policy to include a period of internship training in the curricula*

- **How do you source students for the internship programs?**

For the 3-month internship EVN Bulgaria advertises to the wide public and accepts application online through appropriate job advertisement websites.

As for the 2-week placement, EVN Bulgaria accepts students from the Vocational School for electrical engineering and electronics Plovdiv.

- **Do you collaborate with other organisations/institutions/individuals?**

The summer internship initiative is an independent project, which EVN Bulgaria organises internally. In contrast, the EVN Bulgaria's 2-week project is in partnership with the Vocational School for electrical engineering and electronics Plovdiv.

- **Have you been in touch with various schools around Plovdiv? If yes, which ones?**

EVN Bulgaria works closely with the Vocational School for electric engineering and electronics in Plovdiv.

- **How many interview stages do you have?**

The students from the Vocational School for electric engineering and electronics in Plovdiv are chosen for the internship on the bases of their academic performance so far. In contrast, for the 3-month summer internship programs the students have to apply by sending a CV and a cover letter. If successful they will be invited to one interview.

- **Who are the target groups?**

EVN Bulgaria aims to employ students with academic background in electric engineering who would like to pursue a career in this industry.

- **How many participants are there?**

The number of participants varies each year according to the quality of the applicants. *Can you give a range?*

- **What are the timescales? I.e. ongoing, one-off, etc.**

The internship schemes at EVN Bulgaria are ongoing, they are advertised once a year for both the 3-month and 2-week project.

- **How is it funded?**

The 3-month internship is paid and the budget is allocated from EVN's profits.

The 2-week placement is unfunded.

- **Monitoring and evaluation of the project. Actors, methodology and tools being used**

EVN Bulgaria conducts feedback team discussions and one-to-one conversation with managers at the end of each internship.

- **Impact of the programme/project/initiative. Define indicators.**

#### **Manager at the company/**

##### **1. Process**

- Which is the process to incorporate student to the company?

On the first day of employment the students have an induction as described above in What is the structure/model?.

- Evaluate the process from 1 to 6, being one totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied (we decided to use 6 marks in order to be able collocate the perceived quality in a positive or negative evaluation)

1          2          3          4          **5**          6

- In case you are not satisfied, could you please propose some improvement areas?

##### **2. Training level of the student**

- Evaluate the training from 1 to 6 regarding to the following issues:

(i) Technical level

1    2    3    4    **5**    6 - It is a requirement for the students to have had some qualification in the electric engineering field.

(ii) IT level

1          2    3    4          **5**    6 – The basic IT skills are required, mostly this includes expertise on Microsoft office.

(iii) Competences to work in a group

1    2    3    4          **5**    6

(iv) Proactivity

1    2    3    **4**    5    6 – The internship aims to develop the students' skills thus EVN Bulgaria expects proactivity towards learning rather than showing creativity.

(v) Independence

1    2    3    4    5    **6** – EVN Bulgaria expects from its students to show motivation to work independently and willingness to accept responsibility as they go through their internship.

(vi) Foreign language

1    2    3    4    **5**    6 – EVN Bulgaria is part of a larger international group thus communication in foreign languages is part of your day-to-day job. For the purposes of the internship scheme the knowledge of foreign languages is not a major prerequisite but it counts as an advantage.

##### **4. Obstacles you find in the process**

Initially EVN Bulgaria would accept students with little education and close to none industry specific knowledge, however this proved to hinder the work process. Thus EVN Bulgaria now tends to employ high school graduates.

## **5. Ways to solve obstacles**

No major obstacles have occurred.

- **What have been the key successes?**

The number of students who choose to accept a permanent position at EVN Bulgaria has increased in recent years, which the company counts as its greatest success connected with the initiative. This has proved to EVN Bulgaria that the hard work to secure a pleasant atmosphere and a place for prosperity for the young population has paid off.

- **Does it lead to a qualification or other progression route?**

The students receive a certificate for participation and reference if requested.