



# COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2019

## LEBANON



## **1. A brief summary of key developments in VET and skills and EU and donor cooperation during 2017–18**

In 2018, Lebanon's first labour force survey was introduced by the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS), with support from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and EU funding. In addition, the Ministry of Labour is working to facilitate young people's access to jobs with actions including the design of an employers' survey to identify skill needs.

The National Strategic Framework for TVET 2018–22 was launched in 2018. The framework confirms the government's commitment to TVET and is a step towards better collaboration between government institutions and stronger partnership with the private sector.

The government plan to restart job-rich growth by 2020, estimated at USD 11 billion, has not been accompanied by international commitments. However, the 2018 Brussels Conference on Supporting the future of Syria and the Region confirmed that economic development in Jordan and Lebanon should be fostered to address the impact of the Syrian crisis. Actions will include enhancing access to vocational training for refugees and host communities and skills matching programmes. The government announced a youth strategy, including vocational training, aligned with private sector needs and targeting 500 thousand young people.

Lebanon will benefit from international financial support. In June 2018, the EU Syria Trust Fund approved a EUR 165 million aid package for Lebanon to support refugees and local communities, bringing the overall value of Trust Fund projects to over EUR 1.4 billion.

Mobility Partnership negotiations with the EU have halted, but should restart with the new government.

## **2. An assessment of mid-term progress towards the ETF's 2020 objective**

### **Specific objective 1: support the EU Delegation in the EU external assistance project cycle for VET and employment**

In 2018, the EU Delegation requested ETF input on VET and employment initiatives and projects.

Specifically, the ETF advised on the technical assistance project for more practice-oriented vocational and technical education (VTE) in Lebanon. It provided input on project outcomes and tested the viability of establishing a sector skills council for the construction and infrastructure sector. It facilitated dialogue on the National Strategic Framework 2018–22 and advised on the TVET action plan. It contributed to the education and training programme for Palestine refugees in Lebanon, implemented by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

### **Specific objective 2: help the Lebanese Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Office develop capacity to support the school-to-work transition**

Following a Ministry of Labour request, the ETF helped prepare the employers' survey in 2017, with capacity building activities on skills anticipation and matching. The survey's concept and implementation steps were established at a coaching seminar in Turin, attended by a Task Force of government and industry representatives.

The Task Force agreed that the objective is to develop an understanding of workforce demand by identifying and analysing companies' vacancies and skill needs to adjust training accordingly. Public and private stakeholders have been fully engaged in the survey, which has also enabled the ETF to expand its network in Lebanon.

The ETF is supervising the final preparation and implementation of an online pilot survey of the manufacturing sector. A national expert is advising the Task Force and the Chamber of Commerce of

Beirut and Mount Lebanon, which is implementing the pilot. The ETF will ensure that the pilot survey complements a parallel face-to-face ILO and UNICEF initiative, to be implemented with the National Employment Office.

### **3. Actions planned for 2019**

#### **Specific objective 1: support the EU Delegation in the EU external assistance project cycle for VET and employment**

In 2019, the ETF will assist the EU Delegation on request. It will support the technical assistance project for more practice-oriented VTE in Lebanon, development of the National Strategic Framework 2018–22 action plan and reengineering of the UNRWA's TVET system in Lebanon.

On request from the European Commission or the EU Delegation, the ETF will support EU-Lebanon bilateral policy dialogue. It will provide inputs to bilateral subcommittee meetings and European Neighbourhood Policy action plan monitoring and deliver annual country fiches to DG Employment.

#### **Specific objective 2: help the Lebanese Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Office develop capacity to support the school-to-work transition**

The results and analysis of the pilot survey will be shared and discussed with stakeholders to design a regular employers' survey in Lebanon. The survey's scope has been chosen to complement the survey designed by the ILO and UNICEF. Results will be compared and recommendations provided accordingly.

ETF intervention is highly appreciated by the Ministry of Labour, which is not so supported by other donors, as the international community's target for employment interventions are mainly Syrian refugees. ETF actions should foster additional support for Lebanese authorities and the private sector from EU or other donors.

The establishment of a public and private stakeholders' Task Force to implement the employers' survey is a unique example of a good practice in a country where coordination remains a challenge. The ETF aims to take advantage of this opportunity to constitute a collaborative governance model for other activities. Key to the sustainability of the ETF intervention is confirmation that the government is committed to using survey results to shape national skills and employment policies.

In 2019, the ETF will launch the fifth edition of the Torino Process. Lebanon will participate and a national Torino Process coordinator has been nominated. Synergy between the Torino Process and assessment of ongoing strategic reforms, especially the National Strategic Framework for TVET 2018–22, will be discussed with national authorities and the international community. The Torino process report and the ETF assessment of VET policies could help identify priorities for the next EU and other donors' programming. It could also serve as the basis for discussions on enhanced donor cooperation in VET.