

COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2019 UPDATE

MOLDOVA



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

In 2018, the Centre for VET policy implementation was reorganised. VET policy reform is guided by the VET Development Strategy 2013–20, which aims to modernise vocational and technical education to increase economic competitiveness. Some VET schools merged and 12 new training centres of excellence were created.

In 2017, the government passed education and training legislation, including laws on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and sector skills committees' activities. Work continued on updating the classifier of occupations based on international standards, new nomenclature for professions and specialisations, quality assurance mechanisms for qualifications and recognition of qualification procedures. The new employment promotion law (June 2018) fosters active policies to increase employability through training.

EU budget support (EUR 25 million) ended in 2017, with the last disbursement blocked due to the critical situation of democracy. A new EU twinning project on VET is planned for 2019–21.

GIZ, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Austrian Development Agency and the Liechtenstein Development Service created an international donor committee that supports dual education. The ETF contributed by developing methodology for quality assurance in work-based learning. The United Nations Development Programme assisted the youth skills observatory, while the International Labour Organisation supported the National Employment Agency (NEA).

In July 2018, the World Bank approved an Economic Governance Development Policy Operation for Moldova (USD 30 million) to support structural reform, higher education development and the NEA.

2. An assessment of mid-term progress towards the ETF's 2020 objectives

In 2018, the ETF supported the new Ministry of Education, Culture and Research. It provided advice and capacity building for staff of NQF and lifelong learning departments on learning-outcomes-based qualifications, draft regulation on non-formal and informal learning and development of the National Register of Qualifications.

The ETF assisted the new Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection with the Labour Market Observatory. In 2018, with ETF support, the NEA prepared a draft regulation on the observatory's tasks and staff and the ministry drafted a partnership agreement to coordinate observatory functions. A data inventory was compiled and a two-level partnership structure was created for the observatory with ETF support. The ETF organised a three-day training programme for staff of the observatory and other institutions. The focus was types of labour market information and analyses and how to measure skills mismatches and conduct labour market forecasting in Moldova.

The ETF helped sector skills committees in their role, in accordance with the new law. It focused on members' ability to act as interlocutors in the qualification development and revision process, so that the committees can become reliable bodies at sectoral level.

All the above actions were in line with EU and Moldavian policy and considered the main needs of local institutions to enhance policy development and implementation.

During 2018, the ETF helped the EU Delegation to design a new VET twinning project scheduled for mid-2019. To complement national policy development and avoid overlaps, the twinning project was designed in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education's VET department and the EU high-level adviser on education.

New members of the stakeholders' network were contacted immediately and involved in ETF activities. The ETF aims to establish synergies among stakeholders through common activities for sector skills committees, ministries and other relevant actors.

The priority of the ETF's mid-term intervention strategy 2017-20 is to provide policy advice, establish synergies within qualifications, skills anticipation and VET policy development to help Moldova implement its VET strategy. The ETF strategic orientation in Moldova has been fully confirmed.

3. Actions planned for 2019

All ETF actions will be in line with the 2017–20 strategic orientation and based on previous results. ETF support for the EU Delegation will focus on VET reform implementation, in cooperation with ministries and EU education and employment advisers.

The ETF will provide input for the EU Delegation during implementation of the VET twinning project (2019–21) and will help formulate a new twinning project on modernisation of the public employment service. It will support EU-Moldova policy dialogue by delivering annual country fiches to DG Employment, assisting bilateral subcommittees and following up the Mobility Partnership.

In 2019, Moldova will review VET policy in the fifth round of the Torino Process, which will be relevant as government reorganisation has brought new actors to the VET and skills development policy sector. The ETF will summarise the results in a country assessment.

Specific objective 1: support implementation of the NQF and sectoral skills committees

In 2019, the ETF will continue to support the NQF department in the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research. The aim is to assist in the implementation of recognition of prior learning and validation of non-formal and informal learning and advise national policymakers and stakeholders on qualifications reform.

The ETF will help build the capacity of sector skills committees so that they can provide evidence-based information on skills needs in each economic sector, draft and circulate regular sector reports and improve coordination.

Specific objective 2: support development of a systematic and coordinated approach to skills anticipation

The ETF is supporting the development of skills intelligence and matching to fill skills gaps. In 2019, it will help the Labour Market Observatory to become operational in labour market skills analysis.

Specific objective 3: advise on VET innovation and integrated regional development

It was clear at meetings with other donors that their main area of cooperation is dual education including work-based learning. Therefore, the ETF will only participate at donor meetings on this area to share information and results. The ETF will provide support on work-based learning if requested by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research's VET department.

The ETF plans to pilot a key competence curriculum in one school.