



# COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2019 UPDATE

## TUNISIA



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

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Tunisia remains a challenge. Despite funding through a training levy and work-based learning legislation, the quality, relevance and attractiveness of VET provision in Tunisia is suboptimal.

In accordance with the 2016–20 National Development Plan, the Tunisian Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (MFPE) has organised VET reform around 14 projects. The main objectives include increasing VET attractiveness, supporting trainers' professional development, involving regional stakeholders, improving data collection and analysis, enhancing monitoring and evaluation and developing entrepreneurial mindsets across the VET system.

In 2018, the MPFE redrafted the country's employment strategy, in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It also helped coordinate international donor support for VET and employment reform by mapping financial and human resources. Human capital development in Tunisia is supported by -amongst others- French, German, Swiss and Italian bilateral cooperation, the ILO and the African Development Bank.

The ETF's cooperation with Tunisia is in line with EU external policy, in which the country is considered a priority. The EU has several ongoing programmes focused on increasing youth employability through education and training.

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

### **Specific objective 1: promote entrepreneurial learning across the VET system**

This objective capitalises on earlier ETF entrepreneurial learning activities, based on the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework. Tunisia's focus on soft skills as a key competence provides an opportunity for ongoing work on entrepreneurship and digital key competences.

In 2018, the initiative was consolidated and integrated into the MPFE. An entrepreneurial training module was developed, 85 VET trainers participated in trainer training and the first students were due to complete their training by the end of the year.

### **Specific objective 2: reinforce VET regionalisation to improve quality and responsiveness to local labour market needs**

The ETF worked with the ministry on the regionalisation component of VET reform strategy. Building on previous results, the ETF provided conceptual and methodological knowledge of VET multilevel governance.

The Regional Initiative to Support Sustainable Economic Development (IRADA) has created the conditions for decentralisation in eight regions, through a project that has been fully operational since the end of 2018. ETF know-how was transferred in practical files and a related workshop at the end of 2018. The files could become working tools to support the eight IRADA platforms.

The ETF advised on VET centre autonomy via a technical assistance and information exchange (TAIEX) workshop in late 2018.

### **Specific objective 3: reinforce monitoring of VET reform implementation**

The ETF has helped Tunisian authorities measure VET reform progress and VET system efficiency. This objective supports the government's prioritisation of VET reform projects and builds on the ETF's work in the previous four editions of the Torino Process, which promoted evidence-based policy analysis.

In 2018, the ETF helped review VET progress indicators, with the support of both in-house and external experts. In the last quarter of 2018, a multi-stakeholder working group was created to accompany this process.

#### **Specific objective 4: support EU external assistance and bilateral policy dialogue**

The ETF supported the EU skills, employment and migration agenda and provided technical input on issues such as regionalisation and qualifications to support the IRADA programme. In the context of discussion on the Mobility Partnership and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, the ETF began a study of employment and employability.

In late 2018, TAIEX workshops with ETF support were planned on VET centre autonomy and skills anticipation and matching. Also in 2018, the MFPE began to map programmes and activities to support VET reform. Building on this initiative, the ETF could help to identify a stakeholders' network, detect funding gaps and seek opportunities to channel resources to priority VET reform areas.

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

#### **Specific objective 1: promote entrepreneurial learning across the VET system**

The ETF will continue to develop entrepreneurship key competences within the framework of soft skills. The training programme will be scaled up and institutionalised throughout the MPFE, with the development of an assessment tool. Results of the continuous professional development survey (2018) may lead to redefinition of entrepreneurship activities to boost trainers' capacity to develop students' soft skills.

#### **Specific objective 2: reinforce VET regionalisation to improve quality and responsiveness to local labour market needs**

The ETF will support the ministry's work on VET governance regionalisation as part of the VET reform strategy. Continued ETF assistance with the IRADA project could include capacity building to help decentralise VET functions, support for public-private partnerships and civil society involvement in VET and follow-up on related areas such as VET centre autonomy.

#### **Specific objective 3: reinforce monitoring of VET reform implementation**

The main policy analysis outputs will include the fifth Torino Process report. The ETF will support VET reform and VET system monitoring by revising sector indicators and aiding data collection. The Torino Process will also be implemented at regional level, namely in the eight regions of IRADA, creating synergies with the implementation of this project.

Updating of the VET quality assurance system will be supported through Tunisia's participation in the ETF Quality Assurance Forum and a peer-learning visit of the forum members to Tunisia.

#### **Specific objective 4: support EU external assistance and bilateral policy dialogue**

The ETF will support the EU Delegation with technical inputs on regionalisation and qualifications, in relation to the IRADA programme.

The ETF may provide input on entrepreneurial learning, based on its earlier work in formulating the Jeun'Action programme or on human capital development approaches supporting other innovation and sector development programmes.

On request of the European Commission or the EU Delegation, the ETF will support EU-Tunisia bilateral policy dialogue with input for bilateral subcommittee meetings and European Neighbourhood Policy action plan monitoring, delivery of annual country fiches to DG Employment and follow up of the Mobility Partnership.

The ETF will advise on issues such as the portability of migrants' skills and qualifications within the context of Mobility Partnership discussions, regional migration and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. The second part of the employment and employability study and a pilot study on the use of big data for labour market matching should provide the necessary input in this context.