

RUSSIA

COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2017-20

2018 UPDATES



Contents

Country strategy paper 2017-20	1
A. Country Context	3
B. VET and skills in the country: overview, progress and mid-term priorities	4
C. EU and other donors support in VET and skills	5
D. ETF mid-term intervention strategy in the country	5
E. 2017 Action plan	6
F. 2018 Updates	7

A. COUNTRY CONTEXT

In March 2014, the EU suspended the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. On 17 June 2016, the Council extended restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia until 23 June 2017. Cooperation at a technical level continues and education and research have been identified as an area to be developed between the EU and Russia. University cooperation and academic mobility also exist in particular through the Erasmus Plus programme.

Russia has a population of more than 143 million inhabitants, with a negligible growth rate over the past years. The old-age dependency ratio has been rising¹ and, at the same time, the ratio of the youth population (aged 15-24) to the working age population has been decreasing².

The Russian economy of the Russia has slowed down recently and in 2015 the annual GDP growth was negative (-3.7%). The economy is service-based, with two thirds of GDP generated by this sector. At the same time, industry is still rather strong, contributing one third of GDP³.

The employment rate is high, reaching 75.1% for the 20-64 age group in 2015, yet lower for women (69.8% in 2015). At the same time, the unemployment rate is very low – around 5% in 2015. Still, unemployment among young people aged 15-24 is three times the overall unemployment level⁴. Moreover, about 12% of the young population was not in education or training in 2014, suggesting some difficulties in the transition of young people from education to the labour market.

Looking at the educational structure of the population, Russia is a relatively skilled country, where almost 60% of population had tertiary education in 2015⁵. However, if we consider the results from the PISA international skills assessment in 2012, the performance of one fifth of 15 year-old students in Russia was weak in all three testing areas, i.e. reading, mathematics and science. Yet, the results indicate some improvements in comparison to the results of 2009 exercise⁶.

In Russia, the percentage of students who participated in vocational programmes was 53% of all students enrolled in upper secondary education in 2014⁷, pointing to an important position of VET within the education system.

Human resource development is the starting point for the Russian 2020 strategy. Most of the focus on education is on general and higher education, though it includes the modernisation and internationalisation of VET. Since summer 2012 the Federal Ministry of Education and Science has a department for VET policies responsible for legislation, policy development and monitoring in relation to its federal competences.

Russia comprises 83 federal regions, which differ in the degree of autonomy they enjoy. The provision and funding of VET is mostly decentralised to the regions. The decentralisation of VET is an attempt to cope with the fact that Russian regions have different needs. The regions have unequal means and

¹ World bank, WDI database

² Russian Federation Federal State statistics Service

³ World bank, WDI database

⁴ Russian Federation Federal State statistics Service

⁵ Russian Federation Federal State statistics Service

⁶ OECD

⁷ UNESCO UIS

interests to maintain and develop VET so there is a risk that the quality of VET will be diversified and that the idea of a federal educational space will be lost.

Russia intends to address the shortage of qualified personnel through a comprehensive modernisation of VET governance, resources and quality assurance in order to ensure better provision of VET. This process includes restructuring the network of VET institutions in the regions.

The mismatch of skills is a problem: this has been a message from Torino Process report and also from the European Business Association representing the enterprises active in Russia. Since 2008, the National Agency for Qualification Development engages the employers in the methodological discussions on qualification and in the design of qualifications themselves.

B. VET AND SKILLS IN THE COUNTRY: OVERVIEW, PROGRESS AND MID-TERM PRIORITIES

During the last three years, despite a challenging economic situation, some key actions have been taken in the field of VET, such as:

- design and implementation of a road map for the implementation of measures aimed at improving secondary vocational education;
- development of a system for monitoring the quality of secondary vocational education at regional and federal level (see section D);
- development of continuing education for adults;
- development of mechanisms to share information among young people about the potential of self-development, provision of support for scientific, creative and entrepreneurial activity.

The Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, under the coordination of the National Agency for Qualifications Development, continues to develop professional standards, their actualisation, adaptation and implementation. The implementation and maintenance of professional qualifications assessment and the training of regional experts are ongoing.

The VET Strategy envisages stronger public-private partnerships and enhancing their role in planning, organising and delivering VET; engaging NGOs in VET governance and internationalising VET.

Russia implements the WorldSkills competition at regional and national level, in order to develop professional competences, increase the prestige of highly skilled personnel and demonstrate the importance of competences for the country's economic growth and success.

Country priorities for VET reforms are related to the creation of a shared space for VET methodology development (methodological guidance; teacher training, including internships); to the development of mechanisms for implementing public-private partnerships at the federal, regional, and institutional levels; and to promote inclusive VET.

The main ETF stakeholder is the VET Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, which is the counterpart for the ETF activities, which focus on strengthening VET policy analysis and monitoring progress at regional level.

C. EU AND OTHER DONORS SUPPORT IN VET AND SKILLS

Russia is not a beneficiary of technical assistance from the EU. Cooperation at technical working level continues but is low priority. ETF activity is welcome because it provides opportunities to learn about European experience and good practice.

Russia profiles itself at international level as a partner and donor. Many EU countries have bilateral cooperation with Russian education institutions and there are lot of examples of student exchanges between Russian colleges and European VET schools / institutions.

The ILO implements two technical cooperation projects: 1. Training strategies in the framework of work under G20; and 2. Project Partnership for Youth employment in the CIS, supported by Lukoil.

The National Training Foundation is managing a five-year World Bank programme for VET development at regional level on VET modernisation in order to help VET providers respond to the territorial labour market requirements. There is a very high difference in VET development between the regions.

G20: Until the end of 2013, Russia chaired the Group of Twenty Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors. Under the G20 programme, the ILO implements a project on training strategies, which finished its inception phase in January 2012. The implementation phase started in February 2014 in three ETF partner countries (Tajikistan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan), but with a different focus. The Skolkovo school in Moscow contributed with the development of training materials for managing VET institutions.

D. ETF MID-TERM INTERVENTION STRATEGY IN THE COUNTRY

In the context of ETF corporate initiatives, Russia will participate in the Torino Process: the system-wide policy analysis and monitoring progress exercise implemented by the ETF on a periodic basis. The 2017-20 period will cover the closure of the 2016 round and the implementation of the fifth round in 2019. The specific modalities for national implementation in 2019 will be agreed according to the 2016 results and the specific development of the monitoring processes in the country. In between the two rounds, the ETF will continue its policy dialogue with all countries on policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring through VET monitoring forums at regional and international levels.

In Russia, the Torino Process is seen as a tool for improving the efficiency of VET policy development, monitoring and implementation and in 2016 the process is implemented also at regional level, covering Marii-El, Orenburg, Moscow, St Petersburg and Leningrad oblast. Based on the experience in the regions this time, in 2019 more regions maybe involved.

In addition, the newly developed system for monitoring the quality of secondary vocational education at regional and federal level has been developed on the basis of principles and indicators of the Torino Process and piloted in three regions.

E. 2017 ACTION PLAN

In 2017, the ETF will advise the Ministry of Education on the development of the monitoring system to track progress in the regions based on the Torino Process analytical framework.

F. 2018 UPDATES

1. Short update on key country developments in the field of VET and skills and on EU and donor cooperation

The Russian Federation is addressing the skills gaps and skills shortages through a comprehensive modernisation of VET governance, resources and quality assurance in order to ensure better provision of VET. The skills mismatch nevertheless remains a problem: this has been a message from the Torino Process report and also from the European Business Association representing the enterprises active in Russia. Since 2008, the National Agency for Qualification Development has played a role in occupational standards development.

The VET decentralisation to the Regions aims to cope with the fact that Russian regions have different needs. At the start of the decentralisation, there were apprehensions that as the regions have unequal means and interests to maintain and develop VET, the quality of VET would be at risk. However, a certain homogeneity in the VET quality provision of the federal education space has been maintained.

Since 2014, an important actor in the reform process has been the National Council for Qualifications Development established by the Presidential Decree that, together with sector qualifications councils serves as a bridge between the world of work and education. Under the aegis of the National Council the development of occupational standards is well under way (over 1,000 occupational standards in use), and methodologies to integrate the requirements of the occupational standards in VET and higher education standards and curricula have been developed and used.

The enhanced interaction between the labour market on the one hand and education and training on the other has resulted in the growing awareness of a need to diversify qualifications. To this end applied bachelor qualifications have been introduced in higher education that are in fact close to level 5 of EQF. Also the legal framework has improved (e.g. new competence-based VET standards are regularly updated to follow the labour market development); systemic VET -enterprise cooperation is progressing, currently an analogue of the ECVET system is under development.

Due to the Law "On independent assessment of qualifications" adopted in 2016, every citizen is entitled to have their skills assessed and recognized. This development is conducive to fostering recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

2. Assessment of the progress towards achievement of ETF mid-term objectives and results with horizon 2020

The ETF activities in Russia are only related to the implementation of the Torino Process. The implementation of the last round can be assessed successfully. It was implemented at regional level in Marii-El, Orenburg, Moscow, St Petersburg and Leningrad district. The participation of the Russian stakeholders at the Conference in Torino in June 2017 opened to the possibility to have also other regions involved in the next round, like the Republic of Bashkortostan and the Republic of Tatarstan.

2018 Action Plan

Bridging activities for the next Torino Process round with sub-national and cross sub-national capacity building for the sub-national level actors on policy analysis (on-line activity) and kick off of TRP 2019-2020 round in Q4 2018 with the coordinators meeting. In 2019, the national consultation will take place with new features which will be the result of the preparatory work of 2018.

A call for expression of interests to the regions to participate in the next round of the Torino process is planned.