



# HIGHLIGHTS 2016

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is an EU agency under Heading 4 of the EU budget: Global Europe. The ETF helps 29 countries surrounding the European Union make the most of their human capital through the implementation of democratic and economic reforms to vocational education and training and labour market systems, thus reinforcing the rule of law, economic governance and competitiveness and transparency in policy making. The ETF contributes to a more stable and prosperous neighbourhood, which benefits both the EU and partner countries. By projecting the EU's human capital development policies, including the New Skills Agenda, outside its borders, the ETF actively contributes to the EU as a global actor, as well as to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. By encouraging partnership, dialogue and ownership, the ETF helps countries develop a culture of lifelong learning so that they can harness the potential of their people for brighter and better futures.

## GETTING ORGANISED FOR BETTER QUALIFICATIONS

Skills are a global currency, and internationally recognised qualifications make that currency convertible. Through the development of mutual trust and recognition of qualifications, the ETF facilitates mobility, including legal, circular migration. The ETF works with 18 countries to modernise qualifications using national qualification frameworks (NQFs) as a policy instrument. In the candidate and potential candidate countries this includes referencing to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), to make qualifications visible, comparable and transparent.

Full implementation of NQFs is a challenge for many partner countries. The ETF has developed a toolkit providing practical support on getting organised for better qualifications. It focuses on four pillars (legislation, stakeholder involvement, institutional arrangements and quality assurance). In Ukraine, the ETF provided support to the government for the introduction of an NQF. The government adopted an action plan in December.

Validating non formal and informal learning is a component of modern qualification systems and helps to link qualifications more closely to labour market needs. In Kosovo, the ETF helped the National Qualifications Authority with capacity building in its preparations to implement recognition of prior learning to enhance employability of citizens. The ETF continues to cooperate with Cedefop on qualification system analysis including a joint study on learning outcomes in VET qualifications in EU and EU neighbourhood countries.

## SCHOOL TO WORK THROUGH WORK BASED LEARNING

Work-based learning allows learners to acquire skills in real working environments. Besides helping to smooth transitions from school to work, it gives employers access to people with the skills they need. This makes VET more relevant and attractive, while helping to bridge skills gaps and tackle youth unemployment.

The ETF has been working with partner countries to strengthen the capacity of policy makers, VET providers and employers to implement up-to-date work-based learning policies. In the Eastern Partnership and Kazakhstan, the Skills Connexion initiative mapped the environment and identified schemes that can be scaled up. More dialogue between stakeholders leads to better work based learning schemes and improved quality and relevance of skills.

The topic was also on the agenda of a debate in the European Parliament in October organised by the Delegation for Relations with the Maghreb countries and the Employment and Social Affairs Committee with representatives from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as well as the ETF and the European Commission.

Promoting work based learning is one of the medium-term deliverables of the Riga Conclusions that outlined the VET agenda for the coming years. The ETF provides specific support to candidate and potential candidate countries, including targeted capacity building actions and peer learning, as well as participation in the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

# ETF HIGHLIGHTS 2016

## ANTICIPATING AND MATCHING SKILLS

Better skills intelligence brings many benefits. Better understanding of current and future skills needs makes for more relevant skills development and better informed career choices. The ETF helps partner countries build capacity to collect and use labour market information, and deploy methodologies and tools to better align skills supply with labour market needs.

An example of this is the 'Make it Match' project (part of the Eastern Partnership Platform II Work Programme for 2014–17) which targets national employment observatories in Eastern Partnership countries. A skills matching network that includes participation of Member State bodies fosters knowledge sharing and peer learning on the development of skills intelligence approaches.

In parallel with regional activities, the ETF supported country-specific activities in Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

## MONTENEGRO DEVELOPING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

Promoting entrepreneurial learning in education and VET encourages more people to become entrepreneurs but also leads to a more entrepreneurial workforce. It therefore plays an important role in Montenegro's new industrial strategy with the overarching goal of increasing competitiveness and job creation.

The ETF supports partner countries in the development of the human capital dimension of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA), including entrepreneurial learning. In doing so, the ETF also helps stakeholders share good practice as a way of reducing costs and promoting innovation.

In Montenegro, the National Partnership for Entrepreneurial Learning, a public-private partnership of government

departments, business organisations and education led by the Ministry of Education, launched a good practice initiative following the SBA assessment, based on the ETF methodology.

Montenegro has recently been recognised in a European Commission study (Entrepreneurship in Education – 2016 edition) as a leader in entrepreneurial learning. National good practice in entrepreneurial learning has also been recognised by Euroskills.

## TUNISIA SCALING UP

Strengthening the skills and employment opportunities of citizens, especially young people, is the focus of the ETF's work in Tunisia. The country suffers high youth unemployment, yet employers struggle to find people with the right skills. The government's response includes regionalisation to build stronger links between business and education and make VET more relevant to local labour market needs.

The ETF is supporting the government in this goal, notably through capacity building to empower local stakeholders to tackle local needs together, thereby improving the effectiveness and efficiency of VET governance.

The approach is paying off. A pilot project in Gabès to improve the employability of young people is now being replicated in Karouan and Mahdia. This experience informed the EU-funded IRADA Programme (budget €32 million) that aims to boost regional development by improving the quality and relevance of VET to create better opportunities for young people. The ETF contributed to the design of the programme and will support its implementation.

The Torino Process, the ETF's biannual evidence-based assessment of progress in VET had been conducted at regional level in Medenine, Gabès and Sfax.

Job creation will also come from entrepreneurship and the government recognises the importance of developing the entrepreneurial mind-set of its citizens. The ETF has been working with the Ministry of VET and Employment since 2014 to engage policy makers, training providers and social partners



in the development of entrepreneurial learning with the aim of embedding it in the curricula of all VET schools, so that students develop entrepreneurial skills that can be used in employment or in setting up a business.

## UKRAINE DECENTRALISING VET

Vocational education and training plays an important role in supporting economic growth in Ukraine. The ETF has been working with the Ministry of Education and Science on restructuring and reorganising the VET system to make it more responsive to new opportunities and equip learners with skills to find quality jobs.

Rolling out the Torino Process across 25 regions has enabled regional analyses on the supply and demand of VET. In parallel, the ETF has provided expertise to support decentralisation, focusing on the different roles and responsibilities at national, regional and local level, how VET systems and policies are financed and the role of public-private partnerships.

The ETF will continue to build the capacity of stakeholders at regional and national level so that VET reforms are sustainable and stem from a discussion agenda between regional and local partners that has VET and skills at the centre.

## CENTRAL ASIA MEASURING PROGRESS IN VET

All countries in Central Asia are using the Torino Process to measure progress in VET through self assessment.

In Kazakhstan, the process has fostered cooperation between different stakeholders to develop a unified holistic vision of VET and identify future priorities, including improving social inclusion, widening access to free education and addressing regional imbalances in training opportunities.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Torino Process has helped to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to provide a framework for the collection and analysis of information that is essential to the implementation of reforms.

In Tajikistan, the process has enabled VET leaders to understand the importance of professional standards and, in turn, the importance of continuous professional development for VET teachers and trainers as part of the reform process.

In Uzbekistan, the Torino Process deployed focus groups to investigate different aspects of VET, such as enrolment and curricula, and highlight potential efficiency gains in upper secondary education.

Peer learning at regional level has also been a valuable component and stakeholders have been able to share learning and investigate issues that affect all countries in the region.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2016 (%)\*

Activity completion rate (Rate (%) of completion of the activities of the ETF Work Programme: No of activities of the completed vs. planned)	94.07** 95.77	Submission of work programme/single programming document to the European Commission on time (%)	100 100
Average vacancy rate (% of establishment plan posts filled by 31/12)	99 98	Implementation of commitment appropriations	99.99 99.89
Timely payments (% payments executed with the legal/contractual deadlines)	91.3 85	Cancellation of payment appropriations	0.45+ 1.85
Implementation of audit recommendations % of internal audit recommendations implemented by the agreed deadline	100 95	Rate of outturn (Payments in year N and carry-forwards to year N+1 as % of total funding in year N)	99.99 98.51

\*2015 figures in italics

\*\*achieved by 31 December 2016, planned to be 100% by 30 June 2017

+ estimate



# LOOKING AHEAD 2017

## SYSTEM WIDE AND SYSTEM DEEP STRATEGIC PROJECTS



### SUPPORT TO EU ASSISTANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF EU EXTERNAL POLICIES

The ETF provides, on request, expertise and technical advice to the EU institutions, including EU Delegations for the different phases of the EU external assistance programming cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) as well as to country level policy dialogue, in particular through regional platforms.

In 2017, the ETF will contribute to 16 EU projects with a total value of approximately €400 million in 13 countries.



### POLICY ANALYSIS AND SYSTEM WIDE PROGRESS MONITORING (TORINO PROCESS)

The final stage of the fourth round of the Torino Process will take place in 2017. Results validated at national and regional level, as well as an international level by the international community and EU. In June 2017, national and international stakeholders, as well as from the EU, will draw conclusions from this round.

The outcomes of the Torino Process inform evidence-based policy making in partner countries and underpin the rationale for ETF interventions. Outcomes also influence EU policy and actions from other donors.



### VET GOVERNANCE

The ETF's VET governance project seeks to support the reform of VET governance systems in order to ensure more effective, efficient and relevant policy outcomes.



### VET PROVISION AND QUALITY

The strategic project on VET provision and quality aims to support the improvement of the quality and availability of VET so as to provide people with skills that meet employers' and society's needs.



### QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALIFICATION SYSTEMS

Supporting the development of qualifications and qualification systems is a way of helping partner countries to improve so that people have clear and trusted way to demonstrate their competences.



### EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND MOBILITY (INCLUDING SKILLS AND MIGRATION)

The strategic project on employment, skills and mobility supports countries to develop effective employment and labour mobility policies, with a particular focus on skills, to lead to better functioning and more inclusive labour markets.



### ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING AND ENTERPRISE SKILLS

Developing entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills and supporting entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses can have a positive impact on a country's economy and society.