



Various Countries

Final Report

EVALUATION OF ETF ACTIVITIES IN IMPROVING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

CPD-17-EVA-06

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List of Abbreviations

CCP	Centre for Competitiveness Promotion (Albania)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DP	Demonstration projects
EC	European Commission
EPAL	ePlatform for Adult Learning in Europe
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
IED	Institute for Educational Development (Albania)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
LuxDev	Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science (Macedonia)
MoSWY	Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (Albania)
MTD	Midterm deliverables
NAVETQ	National Agency of Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PBL	Project Based Learning
QA	Quality Assurance
SEET	South Eastern Europe and Turkey
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VTC	Vocational Training Centres
WB	World Bank
WBL	Work-Based Learning
YES	Youth Employability Skills

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Summary

Objective and methodological approach

The main objective of the evaluation was to assess the methodology and impact of the ETF's work on improving continuing professional development for vocational teachers and trainers in South East Europe and Turkey during the period 2015 – 2017. The evaluation used desk research, semi-structured interviews, field visits (Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro), additional interviews with project leaders, and an online survey to gather information to answer the evaluation questions.

ETF approach to CPD of VET teachers in SEET

ETF's approach to improve the CPD of teachers and trainers in the SEET region is to build up a knowledge base of what constitutes good CPD approaches for VET teachers and trainers. This information is gathered through a variety of methods: surveys, mapping exercises, workshops, qualitative research and literature reviews¹. The knowledge base is used to inform policy discussion and development, e.g. through the Riga Process. In addition, ETF implements small scale projects in the countries to test specific approaches to CPD (demonstration projects). Through these projects, and informed with 'global' level knowledge on CPD, teachers and institutions are capacitated to improve their CPD practices. This in turn might inspire other teachers and institutions, but also national level stakeholders to improve the practice and policies in CPD for teachers and trainers in VET.

The approach is implemented via yearly implementation plans which list the results, activities indicators and budgets. The average yearly budget is around 140,000 Euro (excluding staff costs at ETF).

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of the evaluation, the following conclusions are developed.

- **Conclusion 1: In the light of global and European priorities, working on CPD for VET teachers is relevant in SEET, but it would also be relevant in other regions in which ETF works.**
- **Conclusion 2:** Through the ETF approach to CPD for VET teachers, combining research, networking and small-scale projects, ETF has a continuous engagement with many different stakeholders and possibilities to support policy development and implementation in the country. The ETF activities have in at least half of the countries led to evidenced impact at policy level.
- **Conclusion 3:** ETF, through the approach, has been able to expand the engagement of teachers and VET schools and to support them in capacity building. However, in order to increase VET schools capacity to lead and develop CPD, the implementation modality needs to take into account the hampering framework conditions even more.
- **Conclusion 4:** ETF supported better informed policy formation through its research, project work and - above all - direct advice and guidance. The links between the research conducted and the lessons learned from the demonstration projects can be capitalised to a greater extent.
- **Conclusion 5:** The CPD platform is valued and used as repository more than exchange platform. Other channels (such as newsletters) are used to inform a broader audience on the developments in the CPD project, the CPD platform is supportive to these other channels (for instance through referencing). ETFs support to set up national virtual platforms among teachers is promising but it needs to be clear that ETF's role should be modest in this regard (solely providing information and guidance in the establishment, but not implementing, coordinating these networks).
- **Conclusion 6:** The work on CPD teachers shows a high degree of sustainability in terms of enduring systemic impact on policy discourse and stimulating awareness on CPD. Sustainability is

¹ See ETF (2016), Position paper on continuing professional development for VET teachers and trainers.

more challenging in terms of continuation of the practices after their completion, as it is affected by political, social, economic and other institutional dynamics. Enhanced policy dialogue and networking activities to increase cooperation could further increase sustainability.

- Conclusion 7: The ETF approach on CPD appears to be significantly aligned with its policy advice role in partner countries and it is complementary to what is already implemented by development partners. Rather than being perceived as a “donor” in a traditional sense, the ETF’s added value is regarded as being a “critical friend” in the sense of stimulating reflections and policy discourse on EU priorities on CPD. This is also done by ensuring the adaptation and translation of these priorities into specific political, institutional and socio-economic context of the countries. The Riga conclusions open further opportunities for undertaking and strengthening systemic actions in CPD.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

- A. that ETF expands the scope of its support for CPD and increases its activities in supporting governments (enhancing policy dialogue and networking) to establish favourable framework conditions in which CPD can further develop (supported by the demonstration projects).
- B. to revise the demonstration project approach and make it in general more policy-relevant, and devote more attention to 1) deciding when a demonstration project is relevant given the country context; 2) setting procedures and criteria for the selection and design of the project; and finally, 3) organising the follow-up activities in terms of policy dialogue.
- C. to better position the demonstration projects (from their initiation to their finalisation) in a broader knowledge development framework. The projects need to be compared with other (good) practices and analysed in terms of whether and why they work, for which processes, and in what context (roles, responsibilities stakeholders, governance structures, legal/financial frameworks) so that ETF gathers insight in the working (and non-working) mechanisms of the demonstration projects.
- D. to ensure that research reports and analysis are timely available and accessible in formats that appeal to different stakeholders (full reports, summaries, infographics, translations).
- E. to slowly expand the CPD approach to other countries when it is assessed that a demonstration project could be relevant in the country context. The approach needs to be amended and adapted to the specific needs and context of the country and taking into account the recommendations mentioned earlier (and lessons learned from the past generation of demonstration projects).
- F. to strengthen participatory approaches (study visits, seminars, and workshops) to build trust and increasing working relationships between countries and support this through the platform as well. In this, it is recommended to better tailor the information provision to the specific target groups through newsletters, information bulletins and using the CPD platform as repository.
- G. that ETF further provides advice and guidance on establishing virtual networks and that the establishment of the networks is evaluated when developments are a bit more advanced (in around one or two years).

1 Introduction

1.1 Aim of the Evaluation

The main objective of this assignment, as outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR), was to assess the methodology and impact of the European Training Foundation's (ETF) work on improving continuing professional development for vocational teachers and trainers in South East Europe and Turkey (SEET) during the period 2015 – 2017.

The evaluation looked at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) criteria relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, coherence / complementarity / coordination, and value added. In relation to these evaluation criteria, evaluation questions were developed.²

Figure 1: *(Refined) Evaluation questions*

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions (bold as per ToR, <i>italics proposed by ICON</i>)
Relevance	Is the approach used in the SEET region relevant and to which extent could the approach be replicated in other regions where the ETF works?
Efficiency	To what extent have the different methodologies used by the ETF proven to be effective and efficient methods to model and support the implementation of policies for Professional Development in the targeted partner countries?
Effectiveness	How effective have the ETF actions been in developing the capacities of practitioners and institutions in partner countries to lead, develop and reform professional development for Vocational Education and Training (VET)? How effective is the work of the ETF to support the introduction of web based networks as a mode of professional development for teachers and trainers?
Impact	Has there been better informing of policy formation and review with respect to Professional Development of Vocational Teachers and Trainers as a result of the ETF actions?
Sustainability	<i>How sustainable are the achievements undertaken by the ETF in SEET countries?</i>
Coherence/ Complementarity/ Coordination	To what extent have complementarity and coordination with European Union (EU)-funded and other major donor supported (e.g. World Bank (WB), Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)) projects, in the partner countries been achieved?
Value added	<i>What has been the ETF added value to the continuing professional development of vocational teachers and trainers in SEET countries?</i>

² The TOR propose ten evaluation questions that currently represent the priority interests of the ETF. In addition to questions formulated in the TOR, we proposed one question related to sustainability and one question on Added value.

Conclusions / Recommendations

How can the ETF improve its own strategies and the methods for communication which it deploys to improve policy making and implementation with respect to professional development for vocational teachers and trainers?

Are there alternative solutions or support measures that need to be taken into account for up scaling or for additional impact?

What were the factors of success that should inform ETF future or continued actions with respect to professional development for VET in the partner countries?

Based on the findings of the evaluation and in line with the ETF SPD 2018 – 2020 what realistic actions should the ETF undertake in the field of professional development of teachers and trainers for the period 2018 – 2020?

1.2 Methodological approach

The methodology was developed from discussions within the evaluation team and with ETF staff and consisted of five key activities:

- (1) **Desk research:** The evaluators analysed in detail the available project documents in order to extract information in light of the evaluation questions.
- (2) **Interviews with ETF staff:** In addition to document analysis (based on the documents made available by ETF in the inception phase), a significant share of information, needed to answer the evaluation questions, came from the responsible staff at ETF and in the countries. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the inception phase and the data collection phase.³
- (3) **Fields visits in three SEET countries for in-depth investigation of three demonstrations projects:** Out of the 7 SEET countries, three countries were selected for in-depth analysis. The three SEET countries were determined in line with selected criteria (see below), e.g. considering the preliminary insights emerged during the interviews held in Turin during the inception meeting (e.g. projects considered particularly interesting for the role of the ETF in the region; projects for which mixed or contradictory opinions exist, etc.), as well as the documentation available on demonstration projects. The criteria included (but were not limited to):
 - Projects selected on the basis of seeing potential results and impact; in this respect, as the demonstration projects in 2017 are not yet finalised, the team proposed to study 3 demonstration projects from 2016 in-depth to understand what has been the result and impact of the project and whether there are elements that are sustainable.
 - The selection took into account projects that differ in character and more especially, how the projects relate to national policies. Also, projects were selected that differ in the stakeholder-types engaged.

Based on the selection criteria and information on the countries, the following countries were selected to undergo an in-depth assessment: **Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia**. This selection showed a diversity concerning the selection criteria:

³ Avoiding bias in data collection: It is unrealistic for any evaluation to rule out any bias in the collection of data. Consider the possibility where people provide answers they think the interviewer wants to hear, or try to impress with a skewed answer. The methodological approach therefore ensures that each question will always be collected by multiple ways of data collection or by approaching more than one type of stakeholder. Words of praise or disapproval are for example not quantifiable, or quantifiably 'valuable' and should be cross-checked (triangulated) with data obtained from other sources (desk research, site visits and online questionnaires), to ensure corroboration. Where discrepancies arise, these will be investigated further by means of multiple sources.

- Diverging impressions from ETF: Yes (Albania), No (Montenegro and Macedonia).
- Policy level engagement (low, medium, high): Low / medium (Albania, Macedonia); High (Montenegro).
- Stakeholders engaged (selection should represent a diversity): High involvement of teachers (Albania); Involvement of Chambers of Commerce (Montenegro); teachers involved (Macedonia).

All field missions started with a desk research in which all ETF documentation on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the country and the demonstration project were analysed. In addition, a search was completed on other important country specific documents related to CPD (such as documents from the Government, other donors). Within the 2 days of visiting the country, on average 10 interviews were conducted. In annex 1 a list of the interviewees is presented.

- (4) **Additional interviews with project leaders of the other demonstration projects:** In addition to the three field-missions, in the four other countries the project leaders of the 2016 and 2017 demonstration projects were approached for an interview. In total eight additional interviews took place.
- (5) **Web survey** in the SEET countries targeting all those involved in ETF activities and users of the CPD platform aimed to realize a broader assessment of the ETF initiatives and its role in terms of research expertise, network capacity and projects implementation. The questionnaire was presented in **English, Serbian, Turkish, Albanian and Macedonian**. In total 744 invitations were sent, and 142 people responded (response rate of 19 percent).

The findings from all research activities were analysed and formed the basis of the final report.

1.3 Structure of the report

After this introductory chapter, the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** presents the analytical framework of the evaluation. It outlines the main components of the Theory of Change by identifying how the problem is related to the activities implemented and what kind of results and impact should be expected for the approach to contribute to the objective.
- **Chapter 3** focuses on the analysis of the empirical findings of the evaluation. It assesses the project against the evaluation criteria (relevance; efficiency; effectiveness; impact; sustainability; coherence/complementarity/coordination; value added) and it discusses the extent to which the project met them. Box examples are also provided to highlight potential results and impact of the projects in Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia.
- **Chapter 4** presents the conclusions of the evaluation according to the evaluation criteria and proposes recommendations for the improvement of the ETF CPD approach in the SEET region.

2 Reconstruction of the Theory of Change (ToC)

2.1 Problem Statement

Professional development of VET teachers and trainers has been identified by the ETF as a driver for the improvement of VET systems for two kinds of reason⁴:

- Teachers and trainers are the single most important input in the VET system. Therefore investment in the quality of teachers and trainers can be expected to have a relatively large impact upon VET outcomes as upon all educational outcomes.
- Teachers and trainers are critical to the successful implementation of other reforms, for example, changes in organizations, curriculum, technology and pedagogy.⁵

Furthermore, the contribution of teachers and trainers is becoming more important as VET processes and purposes change, for example, teachers can help to tailor VET provision to the diverse needs of learners. It follows that system reform of VET depends upon the capability and readiness of teachers and trainers to implement reform. Nielsen⁶ argues that teachers and trainers are key change agents and that professional development is at once the means to equip teachers and trainers to carry through change and to empower them to encourage reform.

Vocational teachers' and trainers' work is based on two sets of competences:

- (i) teaching competence and
- (ii) competence related to a specific vocational practice.

Thus, these teachers and trainers must have the knowledge and skill to teach and to participate in the modern practice of the specific occupation. However, changes in working life and the modernisation of vocational education place new demands on vocational teachers' and trainers' competence, particularly as it relates to their work-life experience and vocational competence. They are expected to have a current vocational identity that includes all of the knowledge and skills necessary to proficiently practice their vocation in a way that meets current expectations. Although there is not much research available, the few existing studies⁷ indicate that recruiting and retaining VET teaching staff, who meet the demanding twin requirements of pedagogical skills and practical professional expertise, remains a challenge. The most recent study in this field is 'Teachers and trainers in work-based learning/apprenticeships – Mapping of models and practices' commissioned by the EC.⁸ This study shows that teachers in VET, and especially trainers in VET are in a precarious situation when it comes to how they are covered by legal frameworks and whether there are professionalization possibilities available for them.

The most recent ETF policy documents including the ETF Mid Term Perspective 2014 – 2017 and ETF Programming Document 2017 – 2020 recognise professional development of teachers and trainers in VET as a key strategy to improve the performance of education and training

⁴ ETF (2016), Position Paper on Continuing Professional Development For Vet Teachers And Trainers, P. 13.

⁵ Villegas-Reimers, 2003.

⁶ ETF (2009) E-Learning for Teacher Training: from Design to Implementation. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Handbook for Practitioners.

⁷ For example: 2014. Fejes A, Köpsén S (2014) Vocational teachers' identity formation through boundary crossing. J Educ Work 27:265–283

⁸ See Broek, S.D., Cino Pagliarello, M., de Vreede-Van Noort, R., Vroonhof, P. (2017), Teachers and trainers in work-based learning: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/88780c83-6b64-11e7-b2f2-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

systems. ETF situates its activities on CPD for VET teachers and trainers in a broader context related to stimulating quality assurance in VET and stimulating work-based learning (Strategic Project (SP) VET provision and quality assurance 2015-2017). It focuses its attention to the SEET region.

The ETF's FRAME project revealed that professional development of teachers is a priority across the SEET region.⁹ As communalities in the Skills vision 2020, the FRAME regional report states: "Expand the quality of skills generation systems (including the professional development of teachers and trainers, quality assurance principles implementation) and hence their responsiveness to labour market demands (e.g. promoting work-based learning, entrepreneurial learning)."¹⁰

2.2 From problem statement to change process

Within the SEET region, there is a need to improve the CPD policies for VET teachers and trainers to strengthen the VET provision as a whole. As such there is not so much need for support in policy reform, but to support the implementation of policies on CPD. As indicated in the ETF position Paper, "the ETF seeks to support the use of CPD as one tool, among others, for wider human capital development. The ETF supports stakeholders and actors in partner countries to develop and improve CPD by providing advice, by analysing policy development and by sharing knowledge. The ETF is committed to operating in a way that encourages ownership and participation amongst stakeholders and favours holistic policymaking that integrates different policy objectives and tools."¹¹

ETF's approach to improve the CPD of teachers and trainers in the SEET region is to build up a knowledge base of what constitutes good CPD approaches for VET teachers and trainers. This information is gathered through a variety of methods: surveys, mapping exercises, workshops, qualitative research and literature reviews¹². In addition, ETF implements small scale projects in the countries to test specific approaches to CPD (demonstration projects). Through these projects, and informed with 'global' level knowledge on CPD, teachers and institutions are capacitated to improve their CPD practices. This in turn might inspire other teachers and institutions, but also national level stakeholders to improve the practice and policies in CPD for teachers and trainers in VET.

Hence, ETF within this project sees as mechanism for change the link between knowledge and experimentation: through knowledge-inspired experimentation, groups of practitioners (at different levels) take ownership of the process and will change their practice towards CPD and bring positive change to the VET provision. The ETF approach aims to develop knowledge and capacities in the countries and through this, enables change to occur (on the long term).

2.3 Line of reasoning: from objectives, to activities and results

In order to make the change happen, ETF sets a number of objectives and initiated a number of activities. To improve continuing professional development for vocational teachers and trainers in South East Europe and Turkey during the period 2015 – 2017 ETF targets to realise:

- improvements in the quality and demand-orientation of CPD for Teachers and Trainers in VET
- improvements in stakeholder co-operation for CPD for Teachers and Trainers in VET
- improvements in the capability of policy makers and practitioners to develop CPD

⁹ [www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/EV_2015_Continuing_Professional_Development_\(CPD\)_for_Vocational_Teachers_and_Trainers_in_the_SEET_region?opendocument](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/EV_2015_Continuing_Professional_Development_(CPD)_for_Vocational_Teachers_and_Trainers_in_the_SEET_region?opendocument)

¹⁰ ETF (2014), FRAME: Skills for the Future: Regional Report

¹¹ ETF (2016), Position paper on continuing professional development for VET teachers and trainers, p. 12.

¹² See ETF (2016), Position paper on continuing professional development for VET teachers and trainers.

- development of policy and implementation strategies for sustainable systems of CPD for Teachers and Trainers in VET
- design and implementation of demonstration projects that exemplify concrete methods for enhancing and extending CPD

Related to this, the following sets of outputs are defined:¹³

- (1) **Research:** This concerns the mapping of supply and demand for CPD and CPD survey; providing Policy recommendations on school-based VET; publishing the ETF Position paper on CPD for TVET; drafting regional report on CPD capacities built in SEET; countries implement MTD CPD policy options.
- (2) **Organising events:** In relation to the research conducted and the demonstration projects implemented each year per country an event is organised. In addition, in 2015 a launching event is organised.
- (3) **Networking possibilities:** This concerns setting up teachers networks and facilitating an online platform to share information on CPD in SEET.
- (4) **Capacity development** (in Serbia, ZAVOD) and in support of Riga.
- (5) **Demonstration projects:** these projects have been implemented in two rounds – 2016 and 2017. Project design varies from country to country. Some projects are pure training initiatives (for instance the Critical Thinking in Vocational Education project in Bosnia and Herzegovina), while other include components contributing to structural reforms of the regulatory framework (e.g. the VETtLIS projects in Montenegro). A brief overview of 2016 and 2017 demonstration projects is presented in the annex 2¹⁴.

The overall line of reasoning that underlies the ETF approach, is that supported by networking (at regional, national and practitioners level) and research (global knowledge, regional and national mappings of CPD policies), given the commitment of the countries to the Riga MTD 5 (on CPD) the demonstration projects (in all countries in 2 years), support stakeholders to demonstrate that policies on CPD which are in most cases already in place can be implemented.

That ETF engages in projects focusing on experimentation is not evident. Most of ETFs work relates to more up-stream policy advice and support. There have however been previous experiences with experimentation projects. A particular interesting project concerns the LEARN project. The LEARN project included project based learning at school level. The evaluation concludes that this approach led to impact on how the concerned schools operated in collective competence development at school level, especially in terms of taking initiative without awaiting for approval or directives from the central level. Also, the LEARN project supported networking through which participants were able to “openly and freely” discuss VET policy reforms. This relaxed atmosphere was a clear added value and contrasted with the top-down approach of some larger EU-funded programmes. It has significantly contributed to the eagerness expressed by all the schools visited to continue cooperating with ETF, despite the perceived limited resources of the projects.¹⁵ In addition, the majority of the school directors and teachers¹⁶ „who had been involved in LEARN activities saw themselves as “drivers of change” in the sense that they took pride in participating in new projects.”¹⁷ Finally, some of the LEARN participants stressed that “the project has been an “eye-opener” for them in terms of

¹³ In addition, in 2015 in the activity plan mentioned a 2014-activity, i.e. Local workshop school-based TT in Montenegro (1.6): ETF (2014), VET provision and quality implementation plan – 2015, p. 10.

¹⁴ Source of information: ETF Continuing Professional Development Platform

<https://connections.etf.europa.eu/communities/service/html/communitystart?communityUuid=f189282a-10bb-4071-84b0-3394f4f4b73d>

¹⁵ EPRD (2011), LEARN Project Evaluation Project number: SKS-11-01 Final Evaluation Report, p. 6

¹⁶ Bearing in mind that the VET teacher profession has a low status and remuneration in the countries

¹⁷ EPRD (2011), LEARN Project Evaluation Project number: SKS-11-01 Final Evaluation Report, p. 6

getting a better understanding of how the roles and responsibilities of teachers have changed during the last years.”¹⁸

The evaluation of the LEARN project supports the approach taken in the CPD project: through small-scale projects impact can be reached, at least to the level of the beneficiaries and schools. The LEARN evaluation however also indicates that bringing this to a national level is still challenging, and depending on “external/central support”. The school developing projects undertaken under LEARN “have contributed to this objective. Where the projects were (partly) successful - or even sometimes where they seem to have failed -, they appear nevertheless to have provided a significant contribution to the capacity building of the concerned schools and the collective competence development, by changing mindsets towards the need of reforms and opening to new approaches.”¹⁹

Compared with the LEARN project, the current CPD approach and the demonstration projects seem to make stronger links with policy implementation (showing that, and how policies can be implemented), while LEARN related more to training teachers to get engaged in CPD themselves and have a say in policy reforms.

2.4 Implementation and actors

The approach is implemented via yearly implementation plans which list the results, activities indicators and budgets. The average yearly budget for sub-contracting is around 140,000 Euro. The staff costs are on average 90,000 Euro. Less than 10,000 Euro is spent on travel costs.²⁰ The research and networking activities are mainly implemented by ETF staff. The demonstration projects are implemented by ETF through calls for proposals. The first call (2016) was organised as direct agreement between ETF and the lead partner; the second call (2017) was implemented through a tendering procedure for an intermediary organisation that supported the demonstration projects (administration, management, follow-up and monitoring). The country-lead partners range from governmental bodies (e.g. the Ministry of Education in Montenegro) to higher education institutions (HEI) (Akdeniz University in Turkey) and private companies (e.g. the Irisoft Education in Albania).

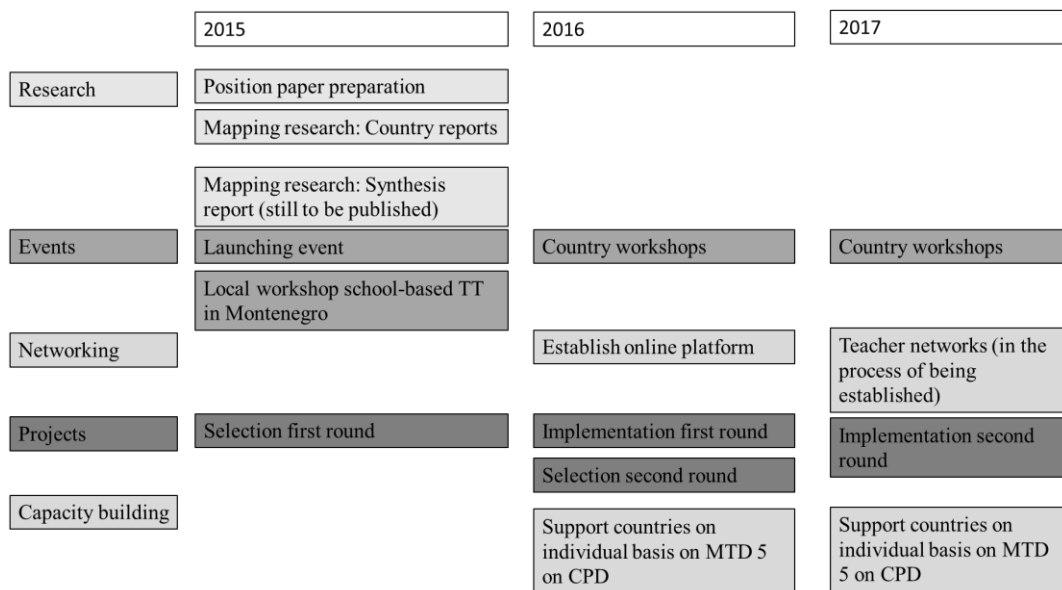
The following figure provides an overview of the activities within the CPD project.

¹⁸ EPRD (2011), LEARN Project Evaluation Project number: SKS-11-01 Final Evaluation Report, p. 7

¹⁹ EPRD (2011), LEARN Project Evaluation Project number: SKS-11-01 Final Evaluation Report, p. 9.

²⁰ See section 3.2 for a more detailed breakdown of costs.

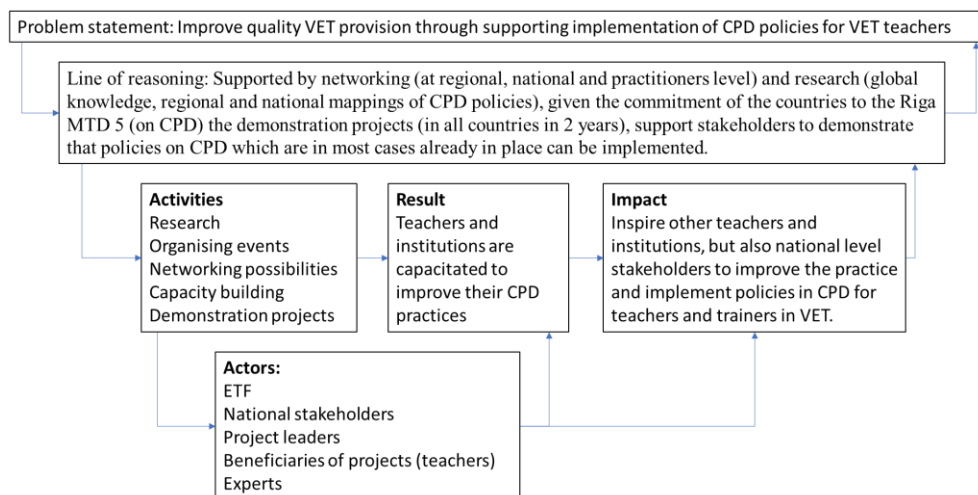
Figure 2: *Overview of the activities within the CPD project²¹*



2.5 Schematic overview of the reconstructed Theory of Change

The following figure provides a schematic of the reconstructed theory of change. It shows how the problem is related to the activities implemented and what kind of results and impact should be expected in order that the approach contributes to the objective.

Figure 3: *Schematic overview of Theory of Change*



²¹ This overview is based on the implementation plans (2015-2017) for the VET provision strategic project. As these implementation plans differently describe the activities, the evaluation team harmonised how the activities are presented.

3 Evaluation criteria

In this chapter the implementation of the CPD project is assessed against the evaluation criteria.

3.1 Relevance

The relevance section is focused on the question whether the CPD project activities are relevant in a global, European, regional and national context.

3.1.1 Relevance of working on CPD in the region and at national level

Continuing Professional Development of vocational teachers and trainers is increasingly seen as a global priority agenda in the field of VET.²² In Europe, in June 2015, ministers in charge of vocational education in EU Member States, Candidate Countries and European Economic Area Countries together with European Social Partners and the European Commission announced a set of five medium term priorities for the field of VET – so called Riga conclusions. The fifth deliverable - “Introduce systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school and work based settings” – confirmed that CPD became a priority of the EU Member States and Candidate Countries as well. In addition, since 2009, the Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) Working Groups initiated by the EC and EU Member States, address the key challenges of education and training systems at both national and European level. The Working Group on Vocational Education and Training (third generation launched for the period 2016 - 2018) covers the theme ‘Teachers and trainers in work-based learning/ apprenticeships’.²³ The work of this Group is underpinned by the study ‘Teachers and trainers in work-based learning/apprenticeships - Mapping of models and practices’.²⁴

In the SEET region, especially the EU agenda and hence the Riga conclusions and the mid-term deliverables, play an important role in assuring the relevance of working on the topic of CPD. From an in-country perspective, the relevance can be assessed as high as well. There is a need to further develop CPD policies and practices in the countries as in all countries the possibilities are far from ideal to assure quality VET provision. See for instance in Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia in the box below.

Albania

CPD of VET teachers is considered an area to further develop. Several documents, amongst others the concept paper by GIZ/ETF/MoSWY (2015), points to the low capacities in management and finances in VET schools and the shortage of qualified VET teachers.²⁵ In addition, there are governmental guidelines to work on CPD for VET teachers. As concluded in the ETF report, “Although the regulation exists formally, it is not, for the most part, implemented. Where there is training it is usually short and does not address the needs of those trained. Training providers have insufficient capacity to conduct training with professional content, especially for vocational teachers

²² See: A key message of the Third International Congress on TVET, met in Shanghai, from 14 to 16 May, 2012, is that professionalizing TVET staff and improving their development, living and working conditions are essential for the quality and effectiveness of TVET; Access to quality and relevant skills development, particularly through Technical and vocational education and training, (TVET) has received renewed policy attention within the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Particularly the target 4c (“By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small islands developing States”) aims to foster the quality of teacher education and training. Based on that, a number of initiatives have been launched by UNESCO and individual countries.

²³ Source of information: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups/vocational-education-training_en

²⁴ Broek, S.D., Cino Pagliarello, M., de Vreede-Van Noort, R., Vroonhof, P. (2017), Teachers and trainers in work-based learning/apprenticeships - Mapping of models and practices. Panteia, EC Brussels.

²⁵ GIZ/ETF/MoSWY, Concept paper on In-service training programme for VET teachers and instructors in Albania, March 2015

and instructors. Until now, this gap has been covered to some extent by donor projects. The vocational schools do not have the budget to take external trainers to achieve CPD in accordance with their needs to compensate for the lack of external provision.”²⁶ The 2016 ETF publication on CPD of VET teachers lists amongst others the following system shortcomings:²⁷

- All VET teachers and many VET instructors have a degree or (advanced) diploma in a technical field, but usually they have not received pre-service training to become a VET teacher/instructor. The resulting lack of pedagogical and didactical competencies is widely recognized as a major weakness. It is believed that there is an urgent need to address the issue of in-service training for the current teachers and instructors in the public VET providers with focus on pedagogical and didactical areas.
- The majority of the training activities are organized and supported (technically and financially) by projects implemented by donors; they are limited to certain institutions or programmes and not sustained beyond the expiry of the projects due to the lack of funding.

Montenegro

CPD of teachers and trainers is considered an important topic to address in order to strengthen the quality and relevance of VET and this is also particularly relevant in consideration of the increase in VET participation rates compared to the past. Moreover, CPD of teachers and trainers is one of the two Riga’s areas (together with WBL) that is considered at the top of the political agenda²⁸. In this respect, one of the objectives is to make teachers’ competences more relevant to labour market needs in order to ultimately improve students learning outcomes and facilitate their employability. The importance of CPD is evidenced in its inclusion in strategic frameworks and national strategies that cover VET but also other forms of education. For example, CPD is considered one of the key areas of the “VET Development Strategy (2015-2020)” and is also included in the “Strategy for general Secondary Education 2015-2020” that stresses the importance of CPD in relation to the development of teachers’ skills. Additionally, the promotion of trainers’ skills is also part of the “Strategy for Adult Education 2015-2025”.

Within this increased focus on CPD, an important area to further strengthen in Montenegro is the involvement of business in CPD together with supplementing CPD with updated information on new curricula and changes in the labour market. As recommended by the ETF “more CPD is needed to be provided in partnership with employers, including CPD on business premises”²⁹. The relevance of CPD and its link with business actors is also well acknowledged at institutional level and manifested in the good long-standing cooperation of the Ministry of Education with the Montenegrin Chamber of Economy. As also stated by the Ministry of Education, “we are seeing more and more collaboration between business and VET [...] this increasing interaction is changing mentality and delivering positive results”³⁰. This suggests that the case of Montenegro is a promising example of relevant support to CPD of teachers and trainers manifested by a good degree of synergy among different stakeholders.

Macedonia

Overall, CPD of teachers and trainers faces several challenges in Macedonia. Even though CPD is sufficiently addressed in several national strategies, such as for instance the VET Strategy 2020 and the draft Education Strategy 2016-2020, several barriers still need to be addressed: limited involvement and cooperation between stakeholders involved in the policy-making process; high reliance on donors for policies implementation; lack of specialised providers of CPD programmes; limited funding and, finally, partial links of CPD with teachers’ needs.³¹ In terms of practical implications, the current state of the art of CPD in Macedonia is insufficiently oriented to improve teacher quality and teaching practices. Related to this, provision of CPD through pedagogical training in new technologies is an important area that requires further development.³² Hence, the ETF work in Macedonia is particularly relevant for national strategies towards addressing the need of improving CPD.

In many countries, there are educational policies that say something about CPD. For instance in Serbia CPD is obligatory. But in many countries, these policies are not sufficiently implemented to ensure that VET teachers indeed work on their professional development.³³ Further focusing on this topic is therefore highly relevant.

An aspect that was mentioned (for instance in Albania, but also Kosovo) is that VET teachers, through donor-supported projects receive one-off training opportunities (see as well Section 3.3 on coherence, complementarity and coordination). These training opportunities are welcomed,

²⁶ ETF (2016), Continuous Professional Development of VET teachers and trainers in Albania, p. 10.

²⁷ ETF (2016), Continuous Professional Development of VET teachers and trainers in Albania, p. 8.

²⁸ ETF (2017), Montenegro, Country Strategy Paper 2017-2020, p. 10

²⁹ ETF (2016), Continuous Professional Development of VET teachers and trainers in Montenegro, p. 14

³⁰ ETF magazine (2016), Interview with the Minister of Education Pograd Boskovic, pp. 4-5

³¹ ETF (2016), Continuous Professional Development of VET teachers and trainers in Macedonia

³² ETF (2017), Macedonia, Country Strategy Paper 2017-2020, p. 12

³³ See ETF (2016), Continuing professional development for vocational teachers: South Eastern Europe: summary.

but are also critically assessed as there is a reduced motivation for teachers to participate. They can improve their competences and skills in a particular (often didactic/pedagogic area), but these initiatives never lead to additional progression for teachers. The gained competences and skills do not lead to career progression or increase of salaries and often these competences and skills are not registered anywhere. In this respect, to motivate teachers to participate, offering CPD should be regarded in a broader perspective involving not only *offering* CPD opportunities; but also ensuring that there are *incentives* to participate; and that there is *need* for learning, given the (changing/demanding) work-tasks the teachers need to conduct.³⁴

3.1.2 Relevance of demonstration projects

Working on CPD is assessed as being of high relevance in the countries. A next question to ask is whether the demonstration projects are relevant, as well as a way to improve CPD policies and provision in the countries. Here the assessment is a bit mixed. In general, the demonstration projects respond to a perceived need. The proposals include evidence of the need for interventions and when they involve teacher training, these courses are based on an assessment of needs. This however is not surprising given that there are limited opportunities and possibilities for CPD altogether in most countries.

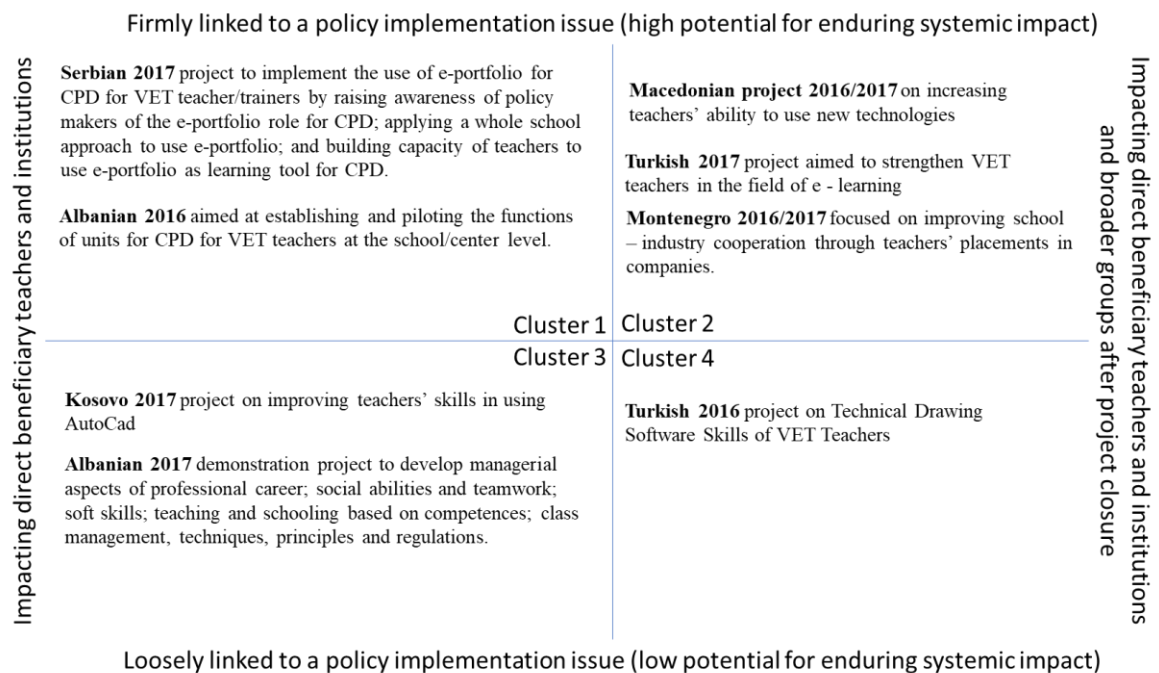
The interviews with the project leaders (during telephone interviews and the missions) revealed that some projects focus more on providing direct training provision to VET teachers without having a clear connection to systemic change; while others clearly test or demonstrate an implementation modality that can be further implemented afterwards. Related to this, the demonstration projects can be clustered according to two dimensions:

- Firstly, the extent to which they are linked to a policy implementation issue (potential for enduring systemic impact). Projects can be firmly linked to a policy implementation issue, meaning that the policy development is at a mature stage and there are concrete questions related to the modality on how to implement specific policies. Projects can also be loosely linked to policy implementation issues, meaning that the policy development is at a less advanced stage and there are still multiple issues to deal with.
- Secondly, the extent to which (besides the direct beneficiaries) it can be expected that broader stakeholder groups will benefit after project closure. Demonstration projects do not necessarily train large numbers of teachers: they should show that a specific modality of CPD can work. It is possible however, that a project demonstrates a practice that is readily useable for broader groups of beneficiaries (such as specific teacher-communities).

The following figure indicates how some of the demonstration projects are clustered with regard to these two dimensions.

³⁴ See for a broader discussion on conditions for work-place learning: Brandi, Ulrik, Iannone, Rosa Lisa (2016), Learning Strategies in Enterprises: empirical findings, implications and perspectives for the immediate future, in: European Journal of Education, Vol. 51, No. 2, 2016.

Figure 4: *Clustering of demonstration projects*



In terms of relevance, the projects in cluster 3 and 4 are often evidenced to respond to a felt need among teachers, but might be less relevant when it concerns assessing them against their contribution to systemic change and systemic provision of CPD in the country. Especially, cluster 3 projects often relate to one-off interventions whereby a group of teachers are trained (often using a cascade model to broaden the group of trained teachers) but when the project stops, no systems are put in place to continuously embed CPD. Hence, these cluster 3 projects are relevant when it comes to impacting teachers and institutions, but show less relevance when it concerns potential impact at systemic level. The cluster 4 project have as advantage that they can have a systemic impact through reaching larger groups of beneficiaries, also after the project is closed. The projects in cluster 1 and 2 might be more relevant in terms of reaching systemic change and responding to a system-need. The box below outlines the relevance of the demonstration projects in Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia.

<p>Albania</p> <p>The 2016 demonstration project had this intention by not focusing on the provision of CPD per se, but by establishing an in-school unit that has the capabilities to organise CPD for their teachers. The expertise of ETF is used in the implementation of the project and to facilitate linkages with the policy level (although the two consultants are closely linked with the policy level as well as they work in NAVETQ and IED).</p> <p>The project fitted well with similar developments in other donor-supported projects to establish school units with other functionalities.</p> <p>The relevance of the 2017 demonstration project can be questioned more when compared to the 2016 one. Here ETF is focusing on providing needs-based training for VET teachers (150). Being valuable in its own right, it can be questioned whether this is something ETF should be doing as it falls in no comparison with what other organisations do on training and it lacks a policy-development implication. Interviewed teachers indicated that one can change a teacher, but if one does not change the system nothing really will happen: if their newly developed competences will not be valued in terms of additional responsibilities and salary, only limited quality improvement will take place. The approach to conduct demonstrations, based on the Albanian experience, seems to be relevant when it provides experience in implementation that can directly feed into the policy development process. Hence it should 'test' the implementation of an idea that can be included in overall policies and through that have a systemic impact.</p>
<p>Montenegro</p> <p>Within the ongoing national strategies and debates to make CPD of teachers and trainers more responsive to the labour market needs by reinforcing the cooperation between the educational and business sector, the Demonstration project (for each of its two phases of 2016 and 2017) is directly connected with CPD needs and priorities. Indeed, its main aim were to support teachers' placement in industry in order to update knowledge and</p>

skills for improving their teaching practices through the establishment, design and delivery of teachers' placements in industry for vocational teachers in Montenegro. Being the first of its type in offering teachers' placements in companies, the project was directly led and managed by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Centre for Vocational Education and the Chamber of Economy; in this respect the demonstration project enjoyed not only of a high level of institutional support but also of a good degree of cooperation among the partners that hence facilitated its positive outcomes. More than during the implementation phase, the role of the ETF was considered particularly relevant in providing guidance and facilitating policy dialogue among the partners.

The demonstration project appears to have been aligned to the national strategies towards the strengthening of VET-business cooperation: it helped teacher to learn and update their knowledge on the latest trends in terms of requirements of the labour market, while also enhancing teachers' quality of teaching and teaching methods. Additionally, the project has also contributed to promote a culture of cooperation between schools and employers through the establishment of better links with schools, which might further facilitate a positive implementation of the incoming introduction of the dual VET system in Montenegro. Finally, the project is also relevant in terms of addressing teachers' recognition of CPD with a forthcoming accreditation of the placements. Indeed, within the licencing obligations of teachers that every 5 years are required to renew their teaching licence on the basis of the credits accumulated (e.g. through participation to conferences, workshops, seminars, etc), the credits acquired through the placements will be formally accredited as CPD (this formal recognition is likely to be done by December 2017 according to a respondent of the Ministry of Education).

On the basis of the experience of Montenegro, the demonstration project is not only relevant as it is aligned with national priorities on CPD but it is also relevant to achieving cooperation with the business sector. To a large extent, this was also due to its institutional endorsement from the Ministry of Education and to the good cooperation with the private sector, namely the Chamber of Economy

Macedonia

The specific focus of the 2016 (and 2017) demonstration project was to cultivate teachers' digital literacy in their pedagogical practice, and in particular training them to the use of the Moodle platform in order to enable them to engage with innovative approaches to assessment and feedback with new technologies. Led by a civic association, the implementation project was closely monitored by the ETF that offered guidance and advice during both its phases.

Aligned with the national strategy of improving CPD provision and teachers' needs, the project can be considered moderately relevant to improving teachers' digital skills but less relevant to stimulate policy discourse on this specific topic due to the lack of participation/support of institutional actors. At the same time, the demonstration project appears to have had a low degree of relevance in addressing school directors at a more systemic level.

In absence of counterfactual, it is not possible to affirm whether a better involvement at institutional level would have perhaps increased the relevance of the project; in this respect, the project seems also to have suffered from political instability, namely a vacuum due to changes in the Ministry of Education that in turn led to unclarity in the definition of competences/support at institutional level.

3.2 Efficiency

The efficiency sector focuses on how the budgets were spent and how the expenditure relates to the activities implemented to support the implementation of policies for Professional Development in the targeted partner countries.

The implementation comes with the following breakdown of resources:

Figure 5: *Breakdown of resources*

	Costs subcontracts	Costs ETF staff	Costs missions	Total costs
2015	€ 186,443	€ 108,636	€ 9,428	€ 304,507
2016	€ 139,170	€ 89,992	€ 5,792	€ 234,954
2017	€ 131,032	€ 81,254	€ 7,510	€ 219,796
Average percentage	60 percent	37 percent	3 percent	

Source: ETF, calculations authors

The costs for subcontracts in 2015 included the contracting of national experts to conduct the national research on CPD of teachers (113,000 Euro) and the organisation of national events. The costs per national event were between 3,000 Euro and 11,000 Euro. It also includes two demonstration projects (10,000 Euro). The subcontracted costs in 2016 are the demonstration

projects and support from Centre for Policy Networking (in total 79,000 Euro) and expertise for setting up virtual networks (36,000 Euro). Finally, two events were supported in Kosovo and Albania (8,245 Euro). In 2017, 33,000 Euro was spending on the virtual networks and 95,000 Euro on the demonstration projects.

With regard the ETF staffs costs, yearly, 4,000 Euro is allocated to maintain the connexions CPD platform. This does not include the content-related work of the ETF staff on the platform. Based on a rule of thumb on platform animation of half a day a week, the estimated costs are 9,000 Euro. This brings the total yearly costs to 13,000 Euro.

The total costs per country per year for running the demonstration projects are estimated as 20,700 Euro. This includes the 10,000 Euro per demonstration project; support from Network of Policy Centres (estimated at 2,500 Euro per demonstration project); support from ETF staff (against a ratio of 610 Euro per 1,000 subcontracted costs) and 500 Euro for mission costs (against a ratio of 50 Euro per 1,000 subcontracted costs). This budget allowed ETF to have running projects in all the countries, broadening the reach of ETF to schools and teachers, building country ownership and engaging with national stakeholders on a continuous basis on the topic of CPD for teachers and trainers.

When comparing the costs for demonstration projects with the costs for national events and subcontracting experts for research it is concluded that the money for demonstration projects is reasonable. This especially in the light of the direct engagement and (potential) impact ETF gains with these projects.

There are in-country differences in efficiency on how the money for demonstration projects is used and what outcomes and results are obtained. In some countries only a few teachers are trained, while in others the demonstration project benefitted more than a hundred teachers in VET. This however is not always an indication of the success of the demonstration project as their objective is not to train as many teachers as possible (as a one-off training), but to facilitate policy development into implementation of CPD systems for teachers.

The evaluation did not encounter indications of outcomes of the virtual network development in the country. Hence, it is not possible to assess the efficiency of these activities.

3.3 Coherence/Complementarity/Coordination and community value added

This section assesses the complementarity and coordination with other major donor-supported projects in the countries and evaluates the extent of the ETF added value to the continuing professional development of vocational teachers and trainers in SEET countries.

To begin with, it has been already widely recognized that the ETF has a strong comparative advantage in the SEET countries that derives from a combination of unique qualities that in turn enables the ETF to foster policy change through several pathways of influence. Indeed, as a report of DG DEVCO stressed, the ETF “has technical knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of different VET and employment policies and strategies; the knowledge of the partner countries’ contexts, policy needs and priorities for implementation; the capacity to fit the EU’s instruments into the context of partner countries”³⁵. Within this capacity of promoting policy coherence and policy integration of the EU agenda, the ETF plays also an important role in relation to donor organisations; for example, within the framework of the Torino process, donors were involved both in the consultation rounds and in the working groups assessing progress and follows-up³⁶. In the SEET regions more specifically, the ETF also positively cooperates with donor organisations; for example, it was involved together with GIZ in the development of the Qualification Framework in Albania and, together with the GIZ and ILO, it

³⁵ DG DEVCO,(2013), TVET and Skills Development in EU Development Cooperation, 2012/308055/1 Final Report, December 2013 , p. 36

³⁶ DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (2016) External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF), p. 66

supported the draft of the new VET legislation³⁷. Similarly, it was involved in Kosovo with reference to the National Qualification Framework process, in which it “provided specific support in the area of validation of prior learning, where no action was being promoted by other stakeholders”³⁸. Hence, this is indicative of a good level of cooperation with donor organisations and it also reveals the ability of the ETF to provide an added value in terms of knowledge expertise.

In the case of Continuous Professional Development as a specific area of policy action, the role of the ETF in the SEET region can be considered quiet recent: indeed, it is mainly in 2015 – and within the framework of the Riga’s conclusions – that a more coherent and structured field of policy formulation and implementation can be ascertained. In this respect, CPD represents an important area of action in the next ETF 2018 workplan.³⁹ Drawing upon the findings of the survey and the field visits, the remaining part of this section focuses on specific donors’ projects and initiatives in the SEET region and on the added value of the ETF. First, the main donor-supported projects in the SEET regions are presented, together with a specific focus on the projects/initiatives conducted in the three countries of the field visits (Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia). Second, the role of the ETF is assessed in terms of its added value in comparison with other donor organisations.

3.3.1 Other donors working on CPD in the region

International and bilateral donors have a long standing presence in the SEET region. In particular, the following donors are very active in the region: the EU/IPA; international donors such as UNICEF and the World Bank and bilateral donors such as USAID, Swiss Contact/SDC, German GIZ, KulturKontakt, LuxDev; British Council; UK Enterprise education network; UNDP. Donors have played a significant role in supporting VET reforms towards modernization and improvement of quality of learning and teaching to promote employability together with enhancing the engagement of local communities through capacity building and training initiatives⁴⁰. For example, USAID has run from 2010 till 2015 the YES project (Youth Employability, Skills Network) in Macedonia aimed at building public-private dialogue to better match the skills required in the labour market with those developed in schools and building the capacity of staff (including teachers) to better deliver training in employability skills⁴¹. It has been estimated that international donors provided about US\$19 million on assistance for VET development and reform in the SEET region over the period from 2010 to 2014⁴², with Germany being the largest donor, with US\$6 million, closely followed by the EU institutions, with an annual average equivalent to US\$5 million. Albania and Serbia, perhaps in virtue of the size of their population, emerge as the countries that have received the largest amount of funding per capita terms⁴³.

With reference to CPD, the following projects can be mentioned:

- Skills Development & Innovation Support Project in Macedonia, financed by the World Bank (24 Mil. USD, 2014 – 2019)⁴⁴; see also box on Macedonia in the next page
- Vocational education and training programme in Albania, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, implemented by GIZ

³⁷[https://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/3E31BDFBD708FA97C1258168004BCABA/\\$file/212194 ETF_COUNTRY_NO TE_Albania.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/3E31BDFBD708FA97C1258168004BCABA/$file/212194 ETF_COUNTRY_NO TE_Albania.pdf)

³⁸ DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (2016) External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF), p. 40

³⁹[http://www.etf.europa.eu/wpubdocs.nsf/0/973A2508B551BBABC12581DE0051B92F/\\$File/GB17DEC011_PD_EN.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/wpubdocs.nsf/0/973A2508B551BBABC12581DE0051B92F/$File/GB17DEC011_PD_EN.pdf)

⁴⁰ ETF (2013), South Eastern Europe, Israel and Turkey: trends, perspectives and challenges in strengthening vocational education for social inclusion and social cohesion

⁴¹ <https://www.usaid.gov/macedonia/fact-sheets/youth-employability-skills-yes-network>

⁴² In the OECD-QWIDS (Query Wizard for International Development Statistics) database, there are no data available for the SEET regions for the years 2016 and 2017: <http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/>

⁴³ Bartlett and Cino Pagliarello (2016); Agenda setting in the Western Balkans, European Journal of Education.

⁴⁴ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P128378/skills-development-innovation?lang=en>

- (2010 – 2017)⁴⁵; that, among its purposes, is also conducting in-service teachers training as well as continuing training in technical subjects
- Support for competence centres in the context of vocational education and training reforms in Kosovo, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, implemented by GIZ (2014 – 2016)⁴⁶; the project also implemented training measures for school teachers and private sector representatives in order to develop competence centres in particularly promising sectors in terms of business development potential
 - Vocational training and employment for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, implemented by GIZ (2016 – 2019)⁴⁷; with reference to CPD, the project foresees in-service training for teaching staff and vocational schools in conflict management and intercultural competence
 - EU KOSVET VI - Development of Vocational and In-Company Training Schemes and Development of Entrepreneurship Scheme in Kosovo, commissioned by the EC.⁴⁸
 - Support to Vocational Education and Training Reform in Kosovo: Establishment of Centres of Competence in Ferizaj and Prizren, commissioned by LuxDev (13.6 Mil. EUR, 2009 – 2017)⁴⁹; the project concentrates on the establishment of two centre of competences (CoC) and also includes curriculum development with the training of trainers and capacity building of CoC staff
 - Professional Development for Education Personnel in Serbia, implemented by the Swiss Development Council (2,9 Mil. CHF, 2010 – 2014)⁵⁰.

Hence, as shown above, it appears that CPD is well covered by donor-supported projects. At the same time, whereas donor interventions have been addressed to actions targeted to support national reforms, enhancing capacity building and knowledge transfer in order to promote employability, the development of integrated strategies towards CPD as an unitary field of action has been less systematic as - it is shown above - it has been embedded as part of larger strategies to improve VET. This is not to say that donors are not involved in CPD; on the contrary they have a significant role as they are often the only organisations that, in virtue of their expertise, research capacity and funding resources, can effectively provide CPD for teachers and trainers.

Overall, the VET sector appears to be well coordinated in the SEET region, even though with some differences among regions and room for improvement. For example, in Serbia there is a significant number of non-governmental organisations and professional associations that implement some projects and programmes for CPD that sometimes are reported to be fragmented due to the absence of a specific goal to follow, whereas in other countries initiatives are regarded as overlapping and fragmented. The box below outlines donors' organization active in the field of CPD in Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia and it briefly summarizes the main projects conducted.

Albania

The VET sectors are heavily supported by development partners. In the area of CPD and competence development of VET teachers, GIZ, Swiss and Austrian partners are most active. Other partners are the Italians, European Union (IPA II) and UNDP. These development partners cover many areas and focus on installing dual systems, develop curricula in specific trades, bring teacher pedagogical competences up to speed (24 days training to get a licence for all in-service VET teachers), and develop school-business cooperation. It is interesting to note that the core idea of the Demonstration project in Albania, namely the 'development unit' (as it is currently mentioned in the new VET

⁴⁵ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/20447.html>

⁴⁶ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/21127.html>

⁴⁷ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/40559.html>

⁴⁸ <http://mda.al/portfolio-items/eu-kosvet-vi-development-of-vocational-and-in-company-training-schemes-and-development-of-entrepreneurship-skills/?lang=en>

⁴⁹ <https://luxdev.lu/en/activities/project/KSV/015>

⁵⁰ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/serbia/en/home/international-cooperation/projects.filterResults.html/content/projects/SDC/en/2002/7F02365/phase4?oldPagePath=/content/countries/serbia/en/home/internationale-zusammenarbeit/projekte.html>

Law) has in that sense many different ‘parents’. Many projects focused on installing some kind of school-level unit related to a specific function (innovation, business cooperation, CPD). However, it was further developed thanks to the specific focus of the ETF project (CPD unit)

Stakeholders indicate that the VET sector is one of the best coordinated sectors and that there is only a limited level of overlap of work. Coordination takes place between the German-speaking development partners (and EU/ETF) in DACH+ (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and European Union); there is a government-driven Integrated Planning Managing Group (IPMG). This is considered a positive development (as the government takes ownership in donor coordination) but not fully functional. ETF (through the country desk) is involved in the coordination of support to the VET system.

Montenegro

Provision of CPD for VET teachers is very dependent on donor projects, with no Montenegrin organisations specialising in providing CPD to VET teachers⁵¹. For example, previous projects have been the project “*Strengthening vocational training in north-east Montenegro*” (2009-2014) conducted by the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency that supported the Centre for Vocational Education in developing a regional VET strategy to identify the occupational profiles required by the changing labour market - more specifically in relation to the tourism and agriculture sectors - and to assist in the development of appropriate training standards, curricula and training materials or the GTZ/GIZ project “*VET reform as a contribution to employment promotion in Montenegro*” (2007–2011), which provided training of teachers in the engineering sector. Other projects include an IPA project of around 1 million Euros funding on the topic of modernization of VET that included educational programmes, seminars, workshops, career guidance and modules for teachers as well. Moreover, there are also Europass and Euroguidance that foresee workshops for teachers and events or for instance other activities conducted by the VET centre in the framework of the EPAL project for adult learning. Similarly, other projects have been conducted by KulturKontakt (on entrepreneurship) and the British Council (on curricula development). Therefore, this suggests that not only the CPD of teachers is a well acknowledged topic but it also seems to suggest that the ETF project is “one part of the cake” within the several initiatives implemented in the region that nevertheless try not to overlap among them⁵²

Macedonia

As in the other SEET countries, the ETF works closely with other donors in supporting capacity building in the VET sector. The main donors in the area of CPD are EU/IPA; USAID; KulturKontakt; Swiss Contact; British Council; and the World Bank. The World Bank in particular is currently running a (five year) TVET project on the reform of four-year VET programmes that also foresees a specific line of activity on capacity building by developing, preparing and conducting training programmes for school managers and teachers⁵³.

Overall, coordination and cooperation are well established: on the one hand, the Ministry of Education and Science ensures coordination among donors through a specific unit that monitors potential overlaps in projects and donors’ initiatives⁵⁴; on the other, the ETF actively cooperates with donors’ organizations by also bringing its added value in terms of policy engagement and long-term expertise in the region.

To summarize, several donors are involved in CPD projects that cover different CDP initiatives and it seems likely that these initiatives will be further strengthened given also the recent focus on CPD.

⁵¹ ETF (2016), Continuous Professional development of teachers and trainers in Montenegro, p. 13 and 28

⁵² The World Bank is supposed to launch a project on VET education in 2019

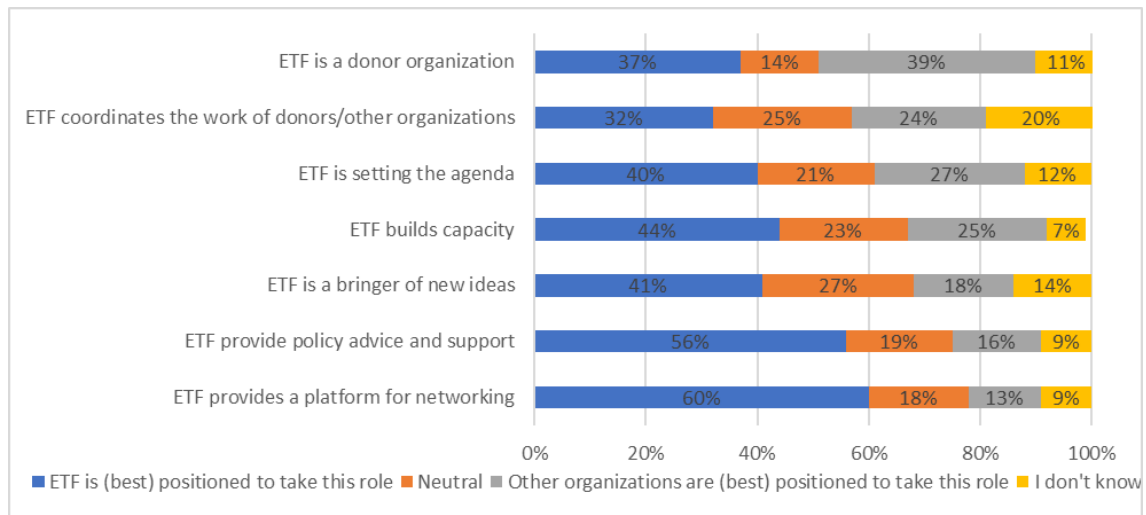
⁵³ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P128378/skills-development-innovation?lang=en>

⁵⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/donor_conference/12_dcf_23_oct_2008_ec_in_country_systems_en.pdf

3.3.2 The role of ETF and its added value

The survey asked whether ETF is best positioned to take up a specific role, or whether other development partners are better positioned to do so. The figure 5 below provides an overview of the assessment of respondents. At first glance, what can be inferred is that most respondents see ETF's role mainly as provider of a platform for networking (60 percent ETF is best positioned); as a provider of policy advice and support (56 percent). Also 'bringer of new ideas' and 'capacity builder' is recognized as strength of ETF. On the contrary, being a donor, coordinator of donor-support and agenda setter is less recognized as a key strength of ETF in CPD.

Figure 6: *The role of ETF in CPD for VET teachers*



Source: survey (N=96)

Therefore, as emerged from the survey respondents and also from the interviews conducted in Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia, the two main dimensions of the ETF's added value role are on the one side, its contribution in providing a platform for networking; on the other, its capacity in offering policy advice and support⁵⁵.

Regarding ETF's contribution in providing a platform for networking, the main aspects that are particularly praised are ETF's research expertise and knowledge transfer capability that help national policy makers and stakeholders to get updated information and relevant documents on the main EU developments in the VET agenda. In turn, this is reported to promote and facilitate collaboration among different individual stakeholders and institutions. For instance, respondents have also stressed the opportunity of "regional binding" that the ETF provides through the organizations of seminars, events and workshops and the additional added value of the ETF is providing updated and constant information on other approaches that are being conducted in other countries. As one respondent noted, "through the documents and through the representatives of the ETF that lead individual projects, you can get insight into the modern directions of education and new ideas for CPD". Hence, bringing together stakeholders from different regions to learn from one another and identify EU and other regional good practices is considered one of the main added values of ETF.

In terms of ETF's role of policy advice and support, the ETF is recognized as a credible actor that can aptly provide policy advice on the EU agenda and research expertise, also in virtue of its long standing presence in the SEET regions since the pre-accession period. Indeed, several respondents have stressed the importance of the ETF in monitoring, suggesting and informing

⁵⁵ It is important to note that the survey is mainly addressed to policy-makers and stakeholders and it does not include, among others, all the teachers that participated to the demonstration projects.

on the priorities of the EU agenda for VET. In this respect, the role of the ETF is better regarded in terms of advising policy makers and being “at the front” of national institutions. As one of the respondents from Albania put it: “In the Albanian context ETF is mostly considered as the EU voice on VET. So, in my opinion its role should be more focused on issues such as setting the agenda, providing platforms, coordinating the work of other organizations, provide policy advice and support, and carry out its own research to accomplish its functions”, whereas a respondent from Kosovo noted that the ETF “should take an even more active role, as it presents EU interests in the field of VET”.

Therefore, what emerges clearly is that the ETF is very well positioned in terms of directly engaging with policy-makers and national stakeholders. For instance, it has also been noted by the respondents that its long term experience in the work of CPD, combined with ETF knowledge of the opportunities and challenges in national contexts, can further facilitate and improve policy making in this area, and especially in those contexts that suffer from fragmented roles and activities in CPD. As one of the respondents stressed “the ETF has the reputation and power to provide change both at the policy level and at the level of CPD practice more than any national organization”. Therefore, this reveals that there is a broad and uniform consensus on the added role of the ETF in shaping CPD developments in the SEET region that appears to be complementary to the role of other donor organisations. These findings are also consistent with the recent external evaluation on the ETF commissioned by the European Commission that notes that the ETF contribution “to partner country developments has been especially strong in respect of governance, systems and policy-making”⁵⁶.

Whereas the involvement of stakeholders - through the creation of networks and exchange platforms - and the support in terms of policy advice are regarded as the two main aspects in terms of added value, the added value in terms of donor organization/donors’ coordination is seen as less relevant. As one respondent put it: “ETF is more a body for research and exchange to support policy development. It is not a major donor and it is not the role of ETF to coordinate donors”. At the same time, with reference to implementation, the limited availability of financial support is also a factor that can affect the ETF’ perception as a donor organization; indeed, several respondents made it clear that financial coverage of activities is an important enabling factor when it comes to CPD.

3.4 Effectiveness

The section of effectiveness assesses whether the activities are conducted as foreseen. A particular focus is on the demonstration projects and the introduction of web based networks as a mode of professional development for teachers and trainers. In this section as well the issue is discussed to what extent the ETF activities broaden the engagement of (different types of) stakeholders.

3.4.1 Activities conducted

As indicated in the Reconstructed Theory of Change, the CPD project envisaged a number of activities. These can be clustered as research and dissemination activities, demonstration projects and online-engagement work. The implementation of the activities within these three clusters is discussed in the following sections.

Implementation of research and dissemination activities

The CPD project took off in 2015 with a regional launch event on CPD on 11th and 12th of March 2015. In preparation, ETF worked on a study on CPD in the region. The purpose of the survey in 2015 was to obtain objective and quantifiable data on the volume, quality and impact of continuing professional development and also to investigate the needs of teachers and trainers

⁵⁶ EC (2016) External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)

of different kinds across the 7 countries. In this study, CPD policies were mapped and large groups of stakeholders (200-500 VET teachers per country) were surveyed. The survey generated over 4,000 individual responses, largely from teachers but with a small number of responses from head teachers (about 100) and instructors (about 300).

The outcomes of the surveys are made available (both a short description and the tables) and partly based on the outcomes, country reports are drafted, validated, published and disseminated in workshops in all countries.⁵⁷ In addition, a regional summary is published. These country reports are used to inform a broader audience and in the selection of demonstration projects.

The synthesis report has however not been published yet. In addition the ETF position paper on CPD for VET teachers and trainers (2016), cannot be found in the public domain. Although consuming quite some budget (more than 100,000 Euro), currently the research-products do not live up to their full potential in yielding impact, especially as the ETF approach for CPD improvement is explicitly based on making available (global) knowledge to inform the policies and initiatives in the region. A further condition for impact in that regard would be that the position paper and the synthesis report are published and disseminated to the relevant stakeholders in the right format.

Implementation of the demonstration projects

The Regional launch event communicated the idea of demonstration projects and already started the process of discussing ideas. Some of the ideas discussed during the launch event have actually been selected as a demonstration project.

For each year, a call for proposals is organised to select the demonstration projects. In 2015 (for demonstration projects 2016 round) there were 42 proposals. 16 of those proposals came from Serbia. The least proposals were received from Turkey and Bosnia Herzegovina (4 each). In 2016 (2017 round), 20 proposals were received whereby eight came from Turkey. From Macedonia only one proposal was received. The proposals are assessed on whether they fit the specific call; whether they are relevant and of sufficient quality (well developed) and whether it is backed by important stakeholders. The 2017 round is administratively supported by Network of Policy Centres, as due to procurement rules, ETF was not able to administer the demonstration project from Turin. The demonstration project round 2016 are all finalized and for some (Kosovo, Turkey and Montenegro) a final evaluation report is available on the CPD connections platform providing a summary of the implementation, dissemination and the challenges encountered.

As discussed in the relevance section, four types of demonstration projects can be distinguished, which differ with regard to effectiveness. Although the demonstration projects in cluster 3 are related to a specifically felt need in the country, it can be asked whether this is the type of project ETF should be doing. In this cluster, the projects might go too much into delivery of CPD instead of demonstrating a systemic approach towards CPD that can be further implemented and developed by national stakeholders (other than private providers offering specific training programmes). The projects in cluster 4 also are seemingly less effective at policy level, but are more effective in setting up structures for CPD that are used more broadly by teachers and institutions. Projects in cluster 1 and 2 are assessed being closer to what ETF should be doing in complementarity to other organisations offering or supporting CPD. These projects are can be effective at policy level, influencing policy implementation discussions and (for cluster 2) make available CPD for broader stakeholder groups or communities. The box below provides a description of the aim and the line of reasoning of some of the demonstration projects, linked to the above-mentioned cluster 1 and 2.

⁵⁷ See https://connections.etf.europa.eu/wikis/home?lang=en-gb#!/wiki/W5d6783a44efb_4f07_b375_e897124cc465/page/Survey

Cluster 1: Albania DP 2016: Establish and pilot the functions of a unit for CPD for VET teachers at the school/center level

The aim of the project was to establish the model (example) of the TT Units responsible for CPD of VET teachers at the school level and to pilot the functions of the Units through demonstration of teacher training activities for the school teachers and instructors, according to their evidenced training needs.⁵⁸ The project was contracted by the Centre for Competitiveness Promotion (CCP) but mostly conducted by subcontracted experts from the VET Agency (NAVETQ) and the IED (Institute for Educational Development)⁵⁹. Both organisations operated (at the time) under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MoSWY). Since September 2017 the responsibility has shifted to the newly formed Ministry of Finance and economy. As pilot school the project selected Vocational School Beqir Çela in Durrës, being one of the largest VE school in Albania, which provides vocational education on different profiles in four levels of NQF: Auto mechanics; Electro mechanics; Thermo-plumbing installations; ICT; ICT post-secondary. This school has had many years of support into the first decade of the millennium from Swisscontact. In addition to Beqir Çela, three other schools participated in the workshops: Multifunctional Vocational School of Kamza, Tirana; Vocational School Petro Sota, Fier; Public Vocational Training Center, Fier. The line of reasoning is that the project shows that it is beneficial for a vocational school to have a CPD unit to assess the training needs, develop a training plan and deliver the training at school level. In Albania, many CPD opportunities for teachers (if existent) are donor-driven and one-off courses contributing to the general improvement of teacher quality but with limited systematic embedment and continuation. With establishing a CPD unit in the school, the schools themselves can, on a more systematic and continuing basis, improve the quality of teacher competences (if regulatory and financial frameworks allow and support the establishment of such school units).

The outcome of the project was the establishment of the CPD unit at Beqir Çela school. This unit consists of a coordinator and 4 other members (all teachers). The project contributed to the enhancement of the teachers competences in conducting Training Needs Analysis (TNA), develop plans and provide training. It also made them aware that at school level training can be provided in cooperation with local companies. This unit remained operational throughout the school year of 2016-2017 and conducted TNA, developed training plans and rolled out trainings. As of the new school year (2017-2018) the activities put too much pressure on the teaching activities and no further activities have been conducted.

In the three other (participating) schools competences have been developed, but at this moment there has been no capitalisation on these competences (no establishment of CPD units in those schools). Following the passing of the VET law and the inclusion of school units in it, GIZ would provide support in their establishment.

In the new VET Law (February 2017), a 'development unit' in the schools is mentioned. This unit combines several functions related to school-business cooperation, innovation, and CPD. The ETF project contributed to the idea of installing units and included the CPD element in the functions of these units. It also showed what operation looked like and helps to inform decisions about costs and posts. The exact formulation of the tasks of the 'development units' and how they will be established (and financially supported) depends on the further implementation of the Law and the formulation of the Bylaws (being currently discussed).

Cluster 2 Montenegro: Building partnership between national educational and business organisations through the establishment, design and delivery of teacher placements in industry

The focus of the demonstration projects for 2016 and 2017 was to support teachers' placement in industry in order to update knowledge and skills for improving their teaching practices. Launched in 2016, and run in 2017 as well, the VETtLIS Project (VET teachers as learners in the industry sector) aims to build partnerships between national educational and business organisations through the establishment, design and delivery of teacher placements in industry for vocational teachers in Montenegro. The purposes of the project are to improve the knowledge of teachers in vocational schools while enhancing the quality of vocational education programmes. In doing so, the project aims to align vocational education programmes with the needs of industry and to support cooperation between educators, employers and educational institutions. Through training, dissemination and steering committee activities, the project aims to reinforce relations between VET schools and the business sector and to improve work-based learning in schools. Additionally, an indirect impact of the project was to enhance school-industry partnership. The VETtLIS project is led by the Ministry of Education for both phases (2016 and 2017). The project partners are The Centre for Vocational Education and the Chamber of Economy⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ See CCP (2015), Project proposal "Establish and pilot the functions of units for CPD for VET teachers at the school/center level" within the call of Proposal for "Demonstration project, CPD for VET teachers ETF, 2015"

⁵⁹ It was indicated that ETF rules do not allow direct government involvement in the project and hence the two consultants had to find a way around this.

⁶⁰ The Centre for Vocational Education is a developmental, advisory and research institution, established to advance vocational and adult education systems and aimed at producing professionals fully equipped for the labour market, education follow-up and life-long learning. The Chamber of Economy is a business association for the economic and overall development of Montenegro. It represents all the companies operating in the region, with an average presence of around 20,000 companies enrolled, mainly Small and Medium Enterprises. The Chamber has successfully undertaken numerous

The budget allocated to the demonstration project was 10,000 Euro (contracted to CCP). In addition to this, ETF staff provided support and was present in meetings. In particular, respondents to the interviews have underlined the excellent support received from ETF staff not only in providing ongoing guidance but also in interacting with the President of the Chamber of Economy to explain the goals of the project and hence in facilitating their participation, that suggests the relevance of the ETF in terms of fostering policy dialogue and improve actors' capabilities. ETF also provided international practice review.

Within the two rounds of the VETtLIS project (two cycles in 2016 and one in 2017) a total of 98 VET teachers have enjoyed placements in companies ranging from different business sectors. The teacher's placements have also led to the establishment of links and connections between VET institutions and business thus creating knowledge transfer to support teachers CPD. In this respect, the Demonstration projects have been effective in the sense of initiating business partnerships with schools and improving awareness for the schools on what employers want/what skills are required by employers and in engaging business actors' with the recent developments in VET, namely the introduction of the dual system. Additionally, a concrete contribution of the demonstration projects can be seen in the already mentioned forthcoming formalisation of the credits acquired with the teachers' placements (moreover, there is an ongoing debate at governmental level whether the teachers' placements could also be regulated in the legislative framework, as for instance is the case of Finland). The project is formally include in the national strategy for teachers.

Cluster 2: Macedonia: Train teachers to engage with innovative approaches to assessment and feedback using new technologies

The main aim of the Demonstration project was to cultivate teachers' digital literacy, seeking to establish a "new concept" by training teachers to engage with innovative approaches to assessment and feedback using new technologies. The project was led by the civic association Harvest of Knowledge founded in 2006. Initially Three VET schools participated in the project: SOU Riste Risteski Ricko from Prilep, SOU Gorce Petrov from Prilep and SOU Naum Naumoski Borche from Krusevo. Training programmes were implemented where teachers were trained in the use of Moodle and video editing. These teachers had to train other teachers in their institutions. As the final report of Macedonia states with reference to the Demonstration project, in November 2016, in the digitalschool.mk platform, there were 1137 active users, 288 courses, 6298 assignments and 2077 quiz questions, with approximately 50 percent of the trained teachers actively using the platform.

Overall, the project contributed to create and strengthen awareness on the importance of applying new digital technologies in the teaching process with the ultimate purpose of increasing students' interest thanks to innovative teaching practices. Indeed, in this respect, communication with students is reported to have been largely improved because of the implementation of new "teaching styles" from the teachers. At the same, some bottlenecks emerged: for instance, challenges linked to the availability of digital equipment in the schools, poor internet connection, the difficulty to cope with teachers' work overload, and the lack of a culture of "sharing materials" among teachers.

The Demonstration project is also running its second phase in 2017. Within this phase, it is foreseen to update the Handbook for the E-school concept and the platform for implementation already created in the first phase, together with continuing with the training of teachers on the use of the platform and the creation of modules. Within this second phase, 8 VET schools with 22 vocations are taking part to the activities, for a total of 426 teachers and 3607 students directly or indirectly involved in the training. At the same time, the demonstration project also links within the ongoing ETF project on the use of virtual networking and digital and online learning (DOL) and hence it seems to have the potential to be embedded in a larger policy discourse regarding the role of digital technologies in improving teaching practices and in creating knowledge sharing as well.

The implementation of the demonstration projects are faced with a number of challenges. These challenges relate often to the presence (or absence) of support at governmental level and limited funding available. This includes as well operational challenges such as a lack of motivation among schools and teachers to participate in the training offered. This last challenge relates to an often felt demotivation among teachers that their engagement in 'yet another donor-supported training' asks them for a (time) investment and in the end they do not gain anything in return: it does not lead to a higher salary and it does not lead to promotion (as schools lack budgets for higher salaries and promotion). Furthermore, taking up additional responsibilities with regard to CPD (for instance training other teachers; organizing CPD in the school) puts pressure on the time they have to spend on their primary task, which is teaching students. These challenges need to be even more taken on board in the design of the demonstration projects.

projects with international partners and it plays a significant role in the reform of the country's educational system. Moreover, the Chamber of Commerce has a longstanding cooperation with the Ministry of Education (since the 2000s) and the Ministry of Education being acknowledged as the Ministry with whom the Chamber cooperates more.

By all project leaders and stakeholders involved in the demonstration projects, the support, guidance and mentoring of ETF staff is considered very valuable. ETF provided critical feedback and detailed suggestions on the project design and implementation, leading to higher quality of implementation, but also to learning effects on the part of the project leaders.

Implementation of the web-based platform activities

ETF established the Continuing Professional Development platform⁶¹. This platform provides information on recent developments on continuing professional development for VET teachers and trainers in the region. It also provides information on European developments and related initiatives. Each country in the region has its own page on which further information is provided on the demonstration projects. A specific page is devoted to the virtual networks and digital and online learning⁶². In total, the platform has 96 members.

Given the number of VET teachers in the region, the participants to the surveys (in 2015, more than 1,500 respondents), and the number of teachers and policy makers engaged in demonstration projects (estimated to be more than 1,200), the total number of registered platform members (96) is not high. This particularly as the CPD platform can be considered a 'project website' for the fourteen demonstration projects. A hampering factor to engage with the teachers is obviously that the platform is in the English language. It can also be questioned whether the activity rate of the members is high. Statistics are not available, but from interviews with project leaders of demonstration projects and beneficiaries and stakeholders in the countries, a very low level of engagement with the platform was recorded. This however has to do with how the platform is intended to be used: it is regarded more a repository which other communication channels can refer to, than a self-standing discussion platform.

In 2017, ETF started in Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey to build upon current capacity and aspirations to develop, extend and enrich Virtual Platforms for VET teachers. To support countries, besides the country-specific activities, a draft guidance document is developed⁶³ and a webinar organized (28th February 2017). The box provides a description of related activities in Montenegro.

Montenegro: establishing virtual platforms

In Montenegro, the ETF has recently started to explore potential initiatives to be conducted beyond 2017. In this respect, it has launched a project on "*Pathfinding for professional development for VET teachers through virtual networking and digital and online learning*" aimed at supporting the development of effective and sustainable virtual communities for the professional development of vocational teachers and conducted with the purpose of mapping out the state of the art regarding the use of virtual networks to foster the CPD of teachers and trainers⁶⁴. In order to assess what kind of actions can be implemented, a recent workshop held in October 2017 has focused on three issues: (i) making participation in networks more attractive; (ii) ensuring quality of digital materials, (iii) how to support the network.

The evaluation did not conduct an assessment on the (potential) effectiveness of virtual platforms. What is essential (as discussed as well in the draft guidance document) is that there is

⁶¹ <https://connections.etf.europa.eu/communities/service/html/communitystart?communityUuid=f189282a-10bb-4071-84b0-3394f4f4b73d>

⁶² https://connections.etf.europa.eu/wikis/home?lang=en-gb#!/wiki/W5d6783a44efb_4f07_b375_e897124cc465/page/Virtual%20networks%20%26%20digital%20and%20online%20learning

⁶³ Kommers Piet, Stanley, Julian (final version forthcoming), Guidance on web-based professional networks for vocational teachers: <https://connections.etf.europa.eu/wikis/form/anonymous/api/wiki/33401b6a-3cf0-4238-afd2-3db031c82219/page/2cb9da60-399a-42a0-b60c-177aa18b4863/attachment/9969ba06-cb51-4d6d-8418-70cb17868c93/media/GUIDANCE%20ON%20WEB-BASED%20PROFESSIONAL%20NETWORKS%20FOR%20VOCATIONAL%20TEACHERS%20draft%20feb%2028%202017.docx>

⁶⁴ Dimovska, S. (2017), (ETF) Strategic project on VET provision: Continuing Professional Development of VET Teachers and Trainers / Pathfinding for professional development for vocational teachers and trainers through virtual networking and digital and on line learning (DOL) in Montenegro – Deliverable 1: Record of interview and online searches and summary of findings.

country ownership and long-term engagement. ETF should only facilitate the start of such initiatives, but cannot be involved in implementing and running the networks.

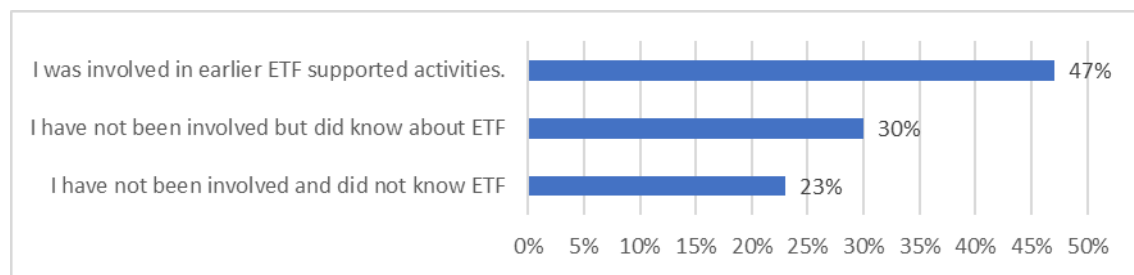
3.4.2 Broadening the engagement of ETF with stakeholders

The project had as implicit aim as well to widen the engagement of different types of stakeholders with the ETF. Through the demonstration projects, ETF should have been enabled to engage more with stakeholders at the practice level, namely teachers and trainers in VET. Based on the overview of participants in 2016 demonstration projects (around 600), the total direct participants in two years is estimated to be 1,200.

When extrapolating the survey outcomes, 43 percent of them is (also⁶⁵) teacher; 33 percent is (also) teacher trainer and 20 percent is (also) consultant. 13 percent is a policy maker at national level and 15 percent is an education expert in an international/development organization.

Of the respondents to the survey nearly a quarter had never been involved with ETF, and did not know about ETF (see figure 6). This suggests that the demonstration projects were able to extend the network of people ETF engages with.

Figure 7: *Involvement with the work of ETF before the earlier mentioned activities?*



Source: survey (N= 110)

Concerning those people that had never heard of ETF, most of them are indeed teachers (19) and teacher trainers (11) (see figure 7). Also those who were not involved but knew about ETF can mostly be found amongst those groups. The involved people are the consultants, policy makers and education experts in other organisations. Again, this suggests that the project was able to reach out to groups that normally would not work with ETF.

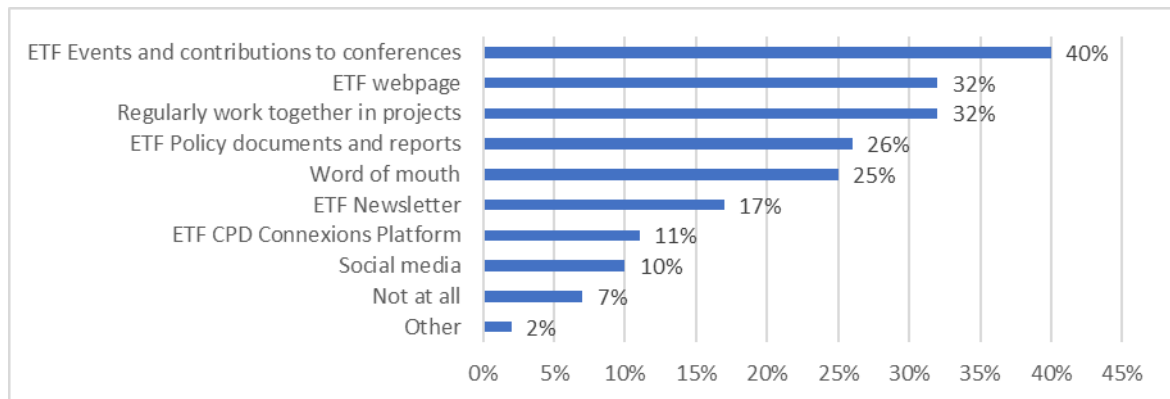
Figure 8: *Involvement with ETF's work: breakdown in different stakeholder groups*

	I have not been involved and did not know ETF	I have not been involved but did know about ETF	I was involved in earlier ETF supported activities.
Teacher	19	13	11
Teacher trainer	11	17	12
Employer (company)	0	1	2
Employee in a company	0	1	2
School director	3	1	5
Consultant / researcher	2	7	19
Policy maker at national level	0	4	13
Education expert in an int.org.	3	6	10
Representative of teachers	1	3	2

As communication channels of how the respondents were informed about ETF's work, ETF events and conference contributions were mostly mentioned (40 percent) (see figure 8). In addition, also the ETF website and regular project work was mentioned by one-third of the respondents. The newsletter, CPD connections platform, social media were not often mentioned (by less than 17 percent).

⁶⁵ As people can have different roles, in the survey it was possible to select up to 4 'roles'. Most common combinations concern 'teacher' and 'teacher trainer' and 'consultant' and 'education expert'. Also 'employer' and 'school director' were selected a number of times.

Figure 9: How were respondents informed of ETF's work in CPD for VET teachers? (check all that apply)



Source: survey (N= 127)

3.5 Impact

This section discusses to what extent ETFs interventions led to impact. It will look at the main achievements of the interventions and at which activities are assessed as being most effective in developing the capacities of practitioners and institutions.

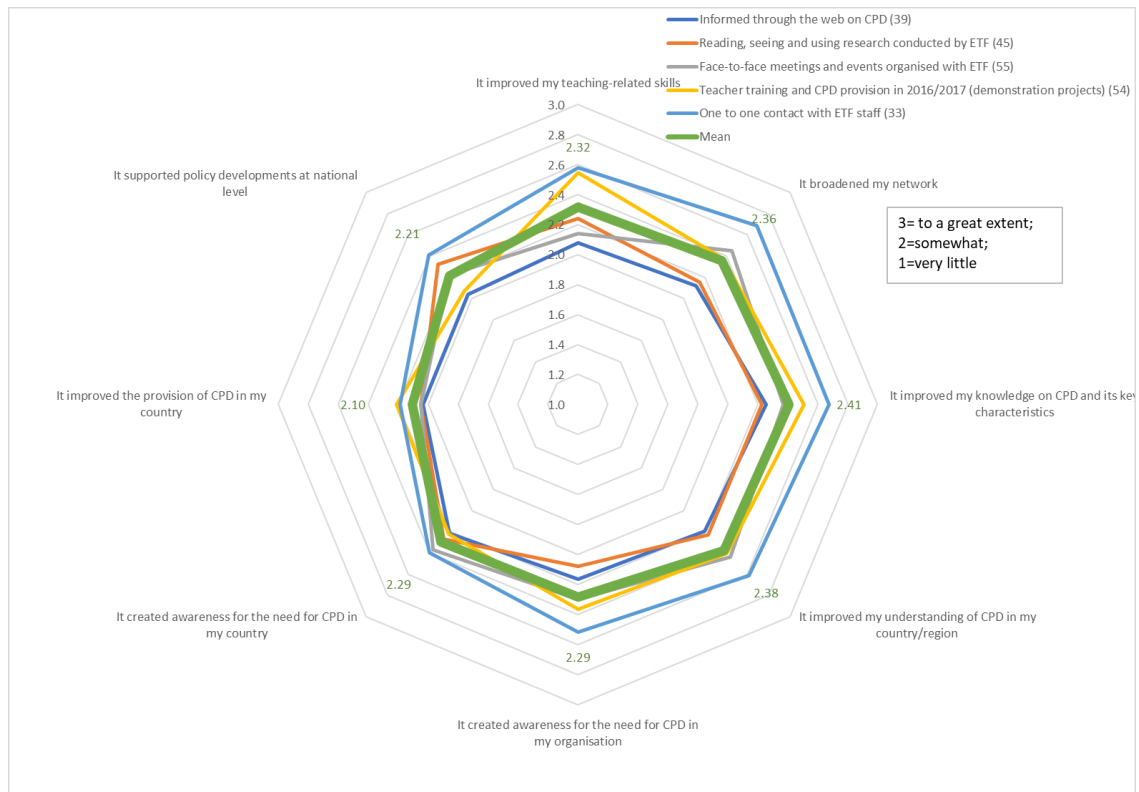
3.5.1 Main achievements of ETFs interventions on CPD for VET teachers in SEET

As highlighted in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change, impact of the approach towards CDP is indicated to inspire teachers and institutions, but also national level stakeholders to improve the practice and implement policies in CPD for teachers and trainers in VET. Hence, impact can be situated at the level of the teachers, institutions and policy level. With regard to the latter, impact can lie in for instance motivating heads and teachers to work on CPD; build capacity of teachers and heads to organise CPD; sensitive teacher communities (for instance in a specific subject) to take ownership in organising CPD amongst themselves; building capacities of (VET) agencies in organising CPD.

Within the CPD project, as described in Chapter 2, the following (broad) types of activities are carried out: 1) one to one contact with ETF staff; 2) each other training and CPD provision in 2016/2017 (demonstration projects); 3) face-to-face meetings and events organised with ETF; 4) Reading, seeing and using research conducted by ETF; 5) informed through the web on CPD.

These activities are presented and (shortly) discussed in order of being assessed as 'having most' to 'having the least' impact (see figure 9). The survey respondents were more positive about that ETF's work improved the own knowledge on CPD and its key characteristics; that it improved the individuals' understanding of CPD in the country/region; and that it broadened the individual network (see figure 9, green 'mean' line). The average assessed impact for all ETF activities shows that most impact is attributed to individual level (score between 2.32 and 2.41); awareness for the need of CPD at institutional level and national level was scored at 2.29. Supporting policy developments are scored at 2.21. Improving CPD provision was scored lowest at 2.10. Still this means that respondents assess that ETF activities had 'somewhat' impact on improving CPD provision.

Figure 10: *Overview of judged impact of ETF's activities*



Source: survey (N= 226 assessed activities, based on 127 respondents)

The quantitative survey findings are confirmed by the open answers and the interviews at country level. Here below some statements are presented from the open answers to the survey showing that ETF activities mainly contributed to improving knowledge levels; network building; capacities of key stakeholders; and awareness raising:

Statements of respondents on impact at national level:

- ETF helped implement local policies in line with international standards and any support so far has reflected on results.
- ETF is beneficial in the information provided across the Region; in respective of comparative studies and research and information on good practice approaches.
- ETF in general is very useful in raising awareness and forming a favorable opinion on reform. It then promoted the regional and international cooperation of my country
- The expertise of ETF specialists was helpful in the implementation of vocational education and training policies.
- Increase capacities of different stakeholders and improve their capability in our common work
- It contributed to awareness of vocational education. Helping vocational education stay on the agenda
- ETF establishes contacts and links with decision makers in education policy and thus has a greater potential to influence the application of different programs and / or change education policy in the domain of the CPD (much higher than national experts when education policy does not consult them). The ETF has an approach to strengthening human capacities with full respect for all socio-cultural specifics, which is the only approach that can have an effect (as opposed to offering ready-made solutions). Changes in teacher behavior towards better quality teaching are slow, but they are also visible.

When assessing at country level (country missions), the impact is first and foremost seen in ETF being a critical friend and keeping governments in line with EU priorities:

- In **Albania** for instance, there is general agreement among development partners that ETF's role is important in **keeping the Ministries "on track" with European priorities and ideas**. With the Riga conclusions and MTD on CPD, it is clear that any

policy advice from ETF in this area will be seriously considered by the government. This being said, the new VET Law is a framework Law, recognising the school development units and which does not provide the details on whether and how CPD can be more firmly embedded in the institutional structure of the VET sector.

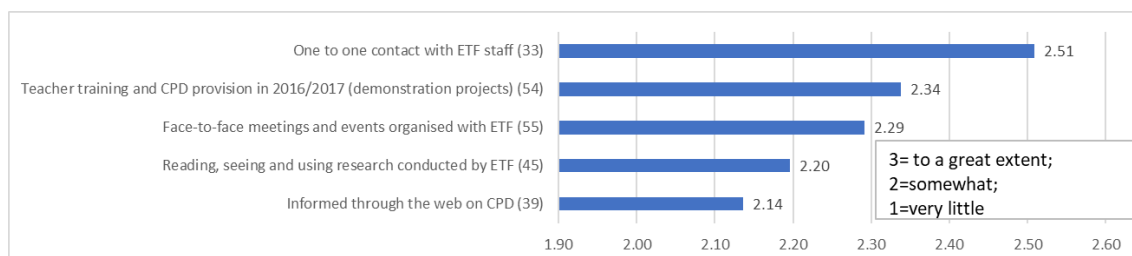
- In **Montenegro**, there is a general consensus that, since 2015, the approach of the ETF in the region has contributed to raise awareness and stimulate capacity building on CPD. In this respect, the ETF is considered to be **“the best partner”** and **“a critical friend”** that helps the Ministry of Education not only to be aware of problems but also how to analyse and evaluate the situation with reference to CPD, as for instance was mentioned regarding teachers placements and the analysis of key competences of teachers. In addition, ETF is also considered to have an impact on CPD by bringing “its name in terms of reputation as international actor”.
- CPD in **Macedonia** is exposed to several challenges and this is particularly true with reference to implementation. From policy reforms at system level, to provision, horizontal and vertical interaction among stakeholders, quality assurance and training needs, CPD is defined by the respondents as being “in urgent need of reform”⁶⁶. In this respect, the impact of the ETF is particularly relevant in terms of **guidance and policy advice on how the EU’s priorities can be translated and adapted in the national context**, as is the case of the Riga Mid-Term deliverables and the two priorities – WBL and CPD – indicated by the Macedonian government. Within this context, the ETF provides an important contribution to motivate policy change and provide focused support on policy priorities.

The evaluation found that the ETF approach to CDP development had impact in all countries on the level of teachers and institutions. The demonstration projects improved skills of teachers and led to learning on what modalities for CPD delivery might work. The impact at policy level is not evidenced in all countries. At least four countries (Albania, Montenegro, Turkey, Serbia) show developments at policy level that can be (partly) attributed to the demonstration projects and related ETF activities.

3.5.2 Assessment of impact of specific types of activities

For assessing **which types of activities have been most effective**, the survey asked those involved in a specific type of activity to indicate whether that activity had an impact at individual level; CPD provision; and policy developments at national level. The respondents generally indicated that ETF’s work is between ‘somewhat’ and ‘to a great extent’ generating impact as shown in figure 10 below.

Figure 11: *Overview of judged impact of ETF’s activities*



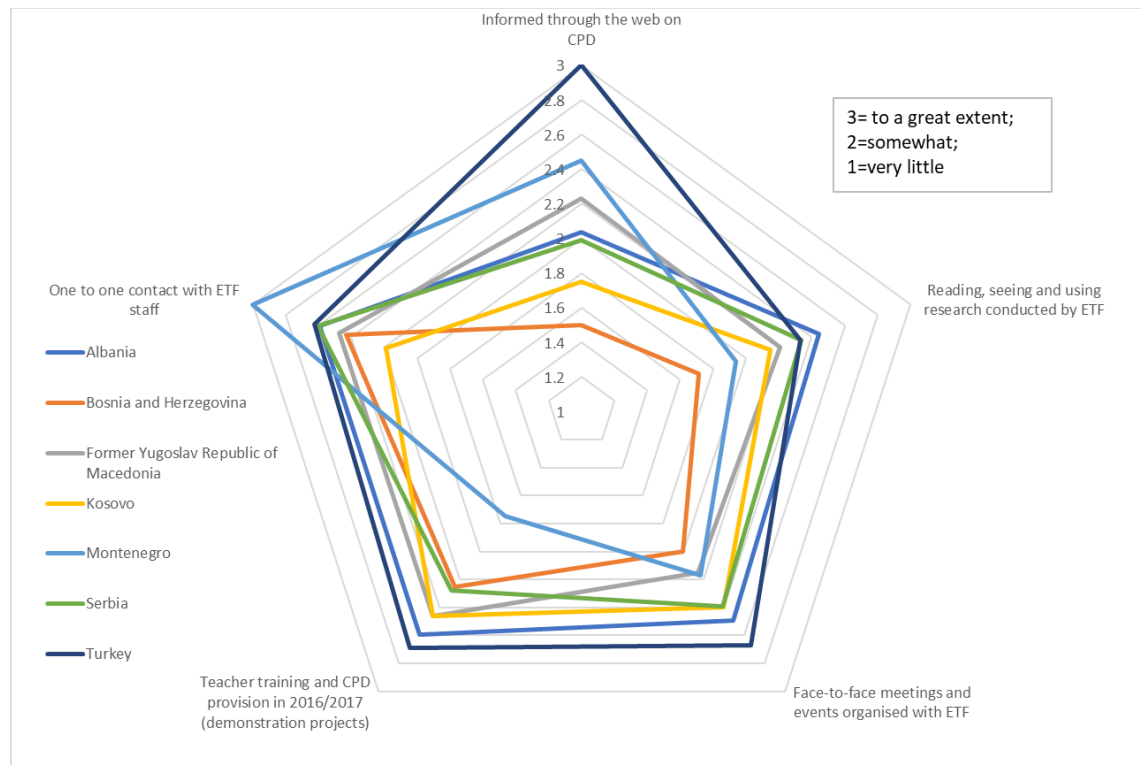
Source: survey (N= 226 assessed activities, based on 127 respondents)

The assessment of how the ETF activities had impact can also be broken down to country level (see figure 11). From this exercise it can be concluded that in Turkey the assessment of the web-information is very positive, just as the face-to-face events and demonstration projects. In

⁶⁶ ETF (2016), Continuous Professional Development of VET teachers and trainers in Macedonia., p. 47.

Montenegro, the one-to-one contact was most positively assessed. Compared to the other countries, Albania had a higher appreciation of reading and using ETF research. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo in general, the assessment was less positive. The Montenegrin demonstration projects received a low score as well (below 'somewhat').

Figure 12: *Overview of average judged impact of ETF's activities per country*



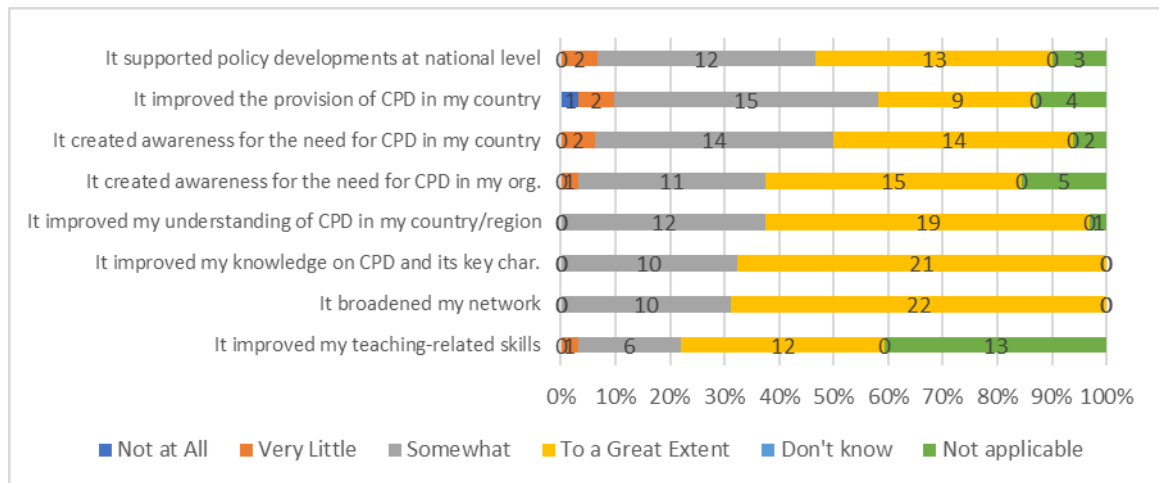
Source: survey (N= 226 assessed activities, based on 127 respondents)

In the following sections, the impact of different types of activities is looked at more closely.

Impact of one to one contact with ETF staff and face-to-face meetings and events organised with ETF

One-to-one contact with ETF staff is assessed as having most impact on the respondents of the survey (see figure 12 below). When looking at the survey results, 33 respondents assessed the one-to-one contact with ETF staff. Two-third (22) indicated that it broadened their network and that it improved the knowledge on CPD and the key characteristics (21). Also it improved the understanding of CPD in the country/region (19). Slightly less positively assessed is the national impact at CPD provision (9), however this impact is obviously more difficult to reach.

Figure 13: *Judged impact of one to one contact with ETF staff*



Source: survey (N=33)

This picture is confirmed by the interviews as well. The interviewees refer to the good mentoring and critical feedback received from ETF staff that impacted the implementation of the demonstration projects. Also, interviewees indicated that ETF is valuable for communication reasons as it makes connections between stakeholders at different levels and – with the EU agenda – as ETF’s leverage can stimulate discussions and debates at different levels on CPD.

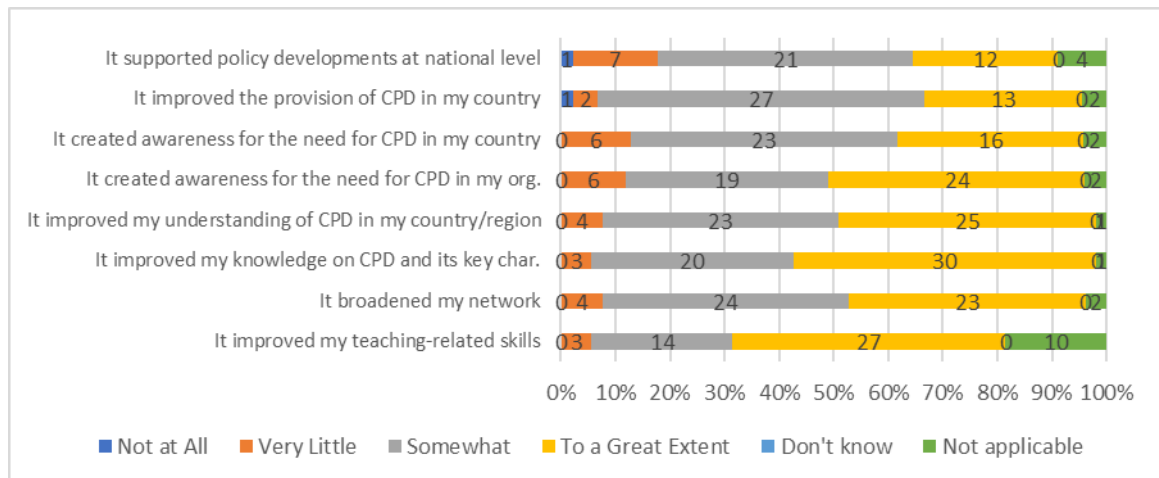
Related to the one-to-one contact, the survey also assessed face-to-face meetings and events organized with ETF. In the framework of the CPD project this concerns the Belgrade kick-off conference and national events where ETF staff was present. The assessment shows slightly less positive outcomes compared to one-to-one contact. The main impact areas are that it improved understanding of CPD in the country and region (27 of the 55 respondents) and that these activities broadened networks (25 of the 55). The least impact was indicated on improving CPD provision in the country (14 out of 55).

The interviews mention the importance of ETF staff attending national meetings and events, as in these events the added value of ETF shows: ETF has the ability to connect all levels of stakeholders to each other and – with the EU agenda behind – can push stakeholders at all levels to make a move towards improving CPD policies and provision. Also for other development organisations, ETF’s presence is important in meetings as they can better link up with EU developments and find between the development organisations find common ground to work together.

Impact of teacher training and CPD provision in 2016/2017 (demonstration projects)

In the survey 54 respondents reflected on how the demonstration projects had an impact (see figure 13). Most positive was that it improved the own knowledge on CPD and the key characteristics (30: to a great extent). For half of the respondents (27) the demonstration projects also improved the teacher-related skills to a great extent. For slightly less than half these projects improved the understanding of CPD in the country (25) and it created awareness for the need for CPD in my organization (24). The impact on national-level impact indicators was less positive, but these impacts are also more challenging to achieve. 12 respondents indicated that the projects supported policy developments at national level to a large extent and that the projects improved the provision of CPD (13 respondents).

Figure 14: *Judged impact of teacher training and CPD provision in 2016/2017 (demonstration projects)*



Source: survey (N=54)

One respondent indicated that the demonstration project in CPD of VET teachers and instructors drew the attention of all relevant policy making institutions to the need of having CPD coordinators in VET providers. This suggests a national agreed systemic approach towards CPD provision in the countries. Additionally, from the interviews at country level, the following main achievements (which seemingly can have a systemic impact) were identified:

Albania 2016:

Within the 2016 demonstration project around 15 teachers were capacitated to establish a school unit directed to organising CPD. The activities led to training on around another 15 teachers. At school level, the project showed the value of having a school unit. Through the close involvement of national level stakeholders and (Ministry) institutions, the project also, at national level, contributed to seeing the relevance of establishing school units. These school units are considered to be able to play an important role in systematically contributing to CPD for VET teachers; also given the emphasis on (financial) autonomy of VET schools as expressed in the new VET Law (further details on this aspect are however lacking).

The **major achievement** of the CPD project in Albania is that in the new VET Law the 'development unit' is included (without further specifications). One of the functions that is envisaged for this unit is to focus on CPD. This aspect was put forward through the 2016 demonstration project. Development partners, such as Swisscontact and GIZ were, and still are interested in further implementing these development units.

The **enabling factors** for achieving this result are that the 2016 demonstration project did not do something new, but tested a concept (school unit) that is developed in another context with slightly different functions) already. Secondly, the consultants involved also work at the NAVETQ and IED and are closely involved in the preparation of the new VET Law and the development of the Bylaws. Thirdly, there is close cooperation and commitment within the 2016 demonstration project with other development partners such as GIZ (indicated already at the start that it would be interested to further implement these school development units once it is in the legal framework on the basis of the experiences with the ETF project and participated in events around the demonstration project).

Montenegro 2016/2017:

The Demonstration projects (2016 and 2017), on teachers' placement in industry appears to have been very successful in terms of:

- (i) promoting a consistent awareness on VET-business cooperation;
- (ii) establishing policy dialogue among stakeholders,
- (iii) having concrete policy impact within the ongoing national Strategy for teachers education;
- (iv) having sustainability in terms of project ownership;
- (v) direct benefits for teachers and improvement of their teaching practices.

Findings suggest that the demonstration projects can have an impact when they enjoy ex-ante scope conditions, namely policy engagement at governmental level and cooperation schemes with public and private stakeholders. The impact of the ETF can be maximised when its policy advice and expertise capacity fits with existing institutional willingness to reform.

It is also important to underline the originality of these demonstration projects, as it is the first time that in Montenegro CPD takes place through teacher's placements in companies. In this respect, the main enabling

factor has been the institutional endorsement and concrete support of the Ministry of Education; as reported by the respondents, without the Ministry's support, "the project could not have taken its shape". Indeed, given the voluntary nature of schools and business' actor's participation, the role of the Ministry has been considered essential to facilitate the participation of schools. At the same time, the Ministry of Education has been recognized to have positively fostered the rise of a "VET culture" by involving stakeholders, business actors and overall creating positive conditions for enabling the collaboration of different actors. An example in this sense can be considered the proactive relationship with the Chamber of Economy that cooperates with the Ministry of Education since the beginning of the 2000s and is involved in several working groups on VET on a daily basis. This also suggests that the Ministry of Education's support is not linked to the role of individual national stakeholders but it is more systematic in providing continuity to policy initiatives.

Some challenges have also been underlined by the interviewees and in particular that there is not enough capacity for accepting students in companies, need of a more close cooperation between the VET centre and the bureau of education, availability of funding for CPD (but in the next year a new budget line will be devoted to CPD).⁶⁷

In general, when referring back to the clusters of demonstration projects, the potential for impact at system level is assessed as being highest for those in cluster 1 and 2 (firmly related to a concrete policy implementation issue) and lesser in cluster 3 and 4 (loosely linked to a policy implementation issue). At teacher' and institutional level however, the impact of cluster 3 and mainly cluster 4 and 2 can be high as well.

Impact of being informed through the web on CPD and reading, seeing and using research conducted by ETF

The activities that are assessed in the survey as having the least impact concern the knowledge development and dissemination activities. A reason for this is that these activities (especially reading, seeing and using research) call for a less active participation compared to one-to-one engagement or participation in a demonstration project.

Concerning reading, seeing and using research, the survey indicates that a bit over one-third of the respondents judge the impact on policy developments and on creating awareness for CPD to be large (18). The impact on the CPD provision was less positively assessed (10). Also the impact on improving teaching-related skills is assessed as low (11 to a great extent; 15 as somewhat, 2 very little and 1 not at all). This being said, ETF's analytical work is valued highly at more up-stream policy levels. Without a precise analysis and cross-country comparison, it is impossible to understand what needs to be done in the countries on CPD and on working towards the Riga conclusions. Without knowledge about the state of play in CPD in a country, ETF will lose its credibility as being a champion for CPD. This knowledge of ETF (staff) on CPD is, by many stakeholders assessed as a key added value in country discussions on CPD.

There is a danger that some analytical work might be repetitious with regard to what other development organisations are doing when preparing their interventions. See for instance the work of GIZ in Albania in preparation of their in-service training programme for VET teachers and instructors in Albania⁶⁸.

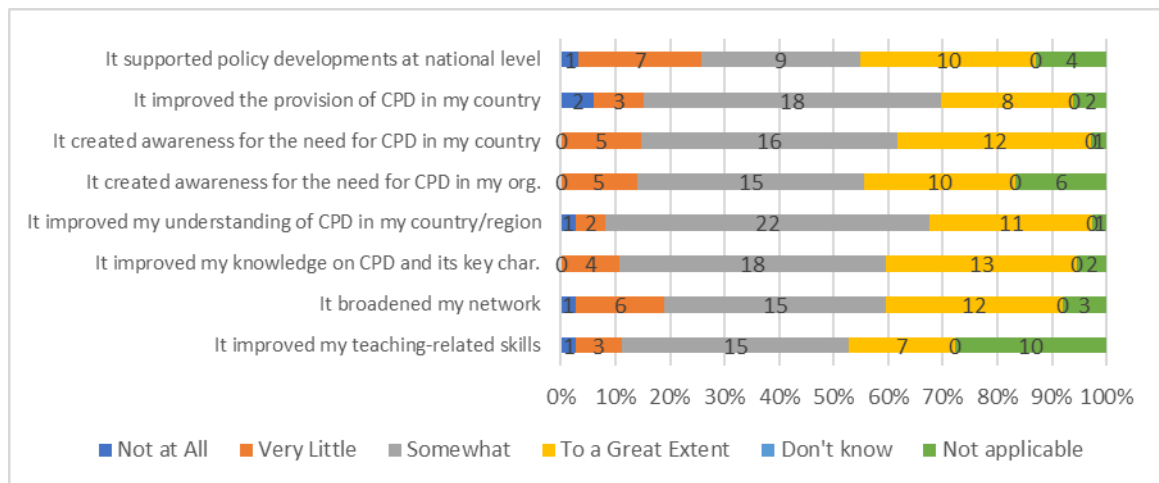
The **web-based activities of ETF** are more critically assessed in both the survey and the interviews (see figure 14). In this, the evaluation only takes into account the Connections CPD platform, not the currently established virtual networks. Of the 39 respondents of the survey that assessed this activity, only one-third indicated that it improved knowledge on CPD (13); and 12

⁶⁷ The role of the ETF is considered important for not only providing policy (in)-formation but also for strengthening policy development through its expertise, as also evidenced by the recent (December 2016) inclusion in the new budget of a specific item on CPD and as demonstrated by the commitment of the Ministry of Education regarding the recognition of the credits. In other words, though the funding of the demonstration projects has been an important enabling factor for the implementation of the project, what appears to be the main impact of the ETF in the region, and hence could be further strengthened, is its role as a key catalyst to enhance policy engagement for CPD. To put it differently, and by bearing into mind the active support of the Ministry of Education in the two cycles of the Demonstration projects, the impact of the ETF can be maximised when its policy advice and expertise capacity fits with existing institutional willingness to reform.

⁶⁸ GIZ/ETF/MoSWY (2015), Concept paper on In-service training programme for VET teachers and instructors in Albania, March 2015

indicated that it broadened the network. Especially the impact on improvement of CPD provision is considered low (only 8 indicated to a great extent).

Figure 15: *Judged impact of being informed through the web on CPD*



Source: survey (N=45)

From the interviews and country missions, the Connexions platform is hardly used by stakeholders and especially teachers. Obviously, the project leaders of the demonstration projects do provide information for the platform, once in a while upload material, and check what others are doing, there is not an active community being built to exchange opinions, materials and views on CPD in SEET. The platform is in that sense more seen as a helpful library, a one-stop-shop where relevant information related to the demonstration projects is stored. See for example the assessment on how the platform is used in Albania and Montenegro (textbox below).

<p>Albania</p> <p>The platform is not actively used by teachers. Those stakeholders involved in the demonstration projects, uploaded materials during the project implementation, but did not use them afterwards. They are also not used for cross-country exchange of experiences with demonstration projects in the SEET region.</p> <p>The introduction of web-based networks for CPD of VET teachers by ETF is not seen as effective. Teachers do not seem to make use of the CPD platform. Currently, it also seems that there are multiple efforts to establish online communities. The 2017 demonstration project (through Irisoft) is promoting the sharing of teaching materials between VET teachers; the 2018 demonstration project seems to look at social media as a sharing tool; Swisscontact is – with more resources, and a thorough strategy – trying to establish subject-related networks of VET teachers to develop a sharing culture. Further developing these initiatives as part of an ETF strategy should be reconsidered.</p>
<p>Montenegro</p> <p>Regarding the web platform, one of the teachers who participated in the project makes a great use of it, for watching online conferences, follow seminar, exchange knowledge in the region, stimulating ideas, whereas a representative of the Ministry indicated the platform was an important tool to disseminate and exchange knowledge and grasp information: “if I need a document, I can ask and read it”.</p>

3.6 Sustainability

The section on sustainability deals with the question on how sustainable the achievements undertaken by the ETF are in SEET countries.

3.6.1 Sustainability of project outcomes

There can be little doubts that the role of the ETF is of primary importance in promoting the EU-VET and CPD related agenda in the SEET region, and a wide range of positive results has

been achieved in this respect. By directly engaging with national policymakers, the ETF promoted stakeholders' participation and awareness for CPD. It also provided policy advice on how to better translate EU priorities on CPD (e.g. Riga conclusions) by taking into account the institutional settings of each country. However, the issue of sustainability is more complex to evaluate. Besides the issues already mentioned of an existing gap in several countries between legislation and implementation, other aspects emerged during the evaluation stage. Below, we discuss sustainability under two dimensions. The first dimension relates to the sustainability at project level, namely the continuation of practices being conducted during the demonstration projects. A second dimension relates to the sustainability at policy level, i.e. the enduring systemic impact of what is demonstrated in the projects.

Concerning the sustainability at project level, this dimension refers to the continuation of practices after their completion. As it emerged from the field visits, there is mixed evidence whether the practices will continue after their completion. For instance, on the one hand the CPD unit set up during the demonstration project in Albania in the Beqir Cela school is no longer operational, on the other hand, the CPD unit is included in the VET law as a function of the development unit with also potential financial resources provided by donors. Hence, there is no direct continuity, but if the VET law is implemented, the practice can be continued in a few years. Similarly, it is not entirely clear whether the demonstration project in Macedonia will continue, as there are some challenges with reference to IT equipment and the funding of the web-domain that hosts the moodle platform and the relevant teaching material. However, teachers are engaging in several efforts to overcome these technical constraints. More certain in this respect is the continuation of the project in Montenegro, as the government has not only inserted the teachers' placements in the VET law but it has committed to continue the practice of teachers' placements in companies, with a potential future ownership given to the VET centre in cooperation with the Chamber of Economy. However, what matters in this respect is that the lack of continuation (and, hence, the issue of sustainability) is not that much of a weakness of the demonstration projects as such. The demonstration projects should demonstrate that a practice/modality works and through this can inspire further policy implementation. The lack of direct continuation can have many different reasons lying largely outside the realm of influence of the project. It can relate to a lack of timely follow-up at policy level; a lack of political will – such as for instance in Macedonia – or instead a favourable political commitment (Albania and Montenegro) or shifting priorities; or that the project did not prove that the modality is in fact a desired implementation modality or to the project being linked to the capacity of individual actors in executing it. In addition, sustainability at project level is also linked to existing framework conditions, as for instance teachers' formal recognition of the credits acquired during the initiatives.

In other words, sustainability at project level should not be considered an issue, given that it seems to be linked to contingency factors that are ultimately beyond the responsibility of the ETF. Moreover, we could also consider sustainable the lasting impact of the initiatives on teachers and the substantial benefits derived from a distinct contribution of 12 months of practices, training of practitioners and publications of tools and outcomes that will most likely promote capacity building among teachers and schools (as for instance in Macedonia, Kosovo, Turkey, Serbia). In this sense, it can be said that, even though the demonstration projects are not sustainable in the traditional convention of the term, they can nevertheless complement ongoing and parallel policy activities.

Concerning the sustainability at policy level, and hence the enduring systemic impact of the projects after their completion, the assessment of the evaluation is positive for most of the countries, given that – though at different degrees – the demonstration projects have largely contributed to concrete policy change or to raise policy awareness and stimulate policy discourse on the importance of CPD (and this can also be inferred from the choice of CPD as one of Riga's MTD). For example, the demonstration project in Montenegro appears to have had a positive and sustainable impact, as evidenced in the forthcoming formalisation of the

credits acquired during the placements and the establishment of sound relations between school and enterprises. In this respect, the project presented an “immediate” sustainable element at the level of VET institutions, teachers and companies but it also enjoyed a promising long-term sustainability in the sense of leading to policy change. Strongly supported by the Ministry of Education, the project has also enjoyed great visibility among the media and public opinion; in this respect, the high level of promotion has not only impacted on stimulating awareness of the importance of doing practical training with reference to CPD but it has also helped school directors and business actors to see the initiative in a more proactive way overcoming potential challenges (for example, it has helped school directors to be more flexible in replacing the teachers while they undertake placements). This suggests that the enduring systemic impact of the projects after their completion is more likely to be sustainable in those projects in which the government has a greater voice in the design and commitment to conduct the activities. At the same time, beyond the top-down mechanism of sustainability seen with Montenegro, it can also be noted a bottom-up mechanism in action, namely demonstration projects that are locally designed and managed but that can also increase knowledge and awareness at policy level by contributing to foster policy discourse (as for instance it has been reported for **Macedonia**, with one of the respondents noting that, even though the project lacked of political commitment, it has nevertheless contributed to enhance policy discourse on CPD and the importance of new technologies in teaching).

Overall, the issue of sustainability is significantly challenging in the context of the SEET region and this is particularly relevant when it refers to small-scale activities addressed to individuals or VET providers that do not enjoy political will. In these respects, sustainability is enhanced or instead limited by the level of engagement of stakeholders at national level, thus suggesting the importance of involving policy-makers in the preliminary stages of a project through policy dialogue that can in turn facilitate sustainability. At the same time, existing framework conditions and availability of technical equipment are two additional factors that further impact on sustainability.

3.6.2 Country ownership

Similarly to the evidence emerged regarding sustainability, the issue of ownership is difficult to assess as well. In principle, ETF’s privileged role in terms of reputation, knowledge expertise and policy engagement, significantly promotes the ownership and involvement of policy makers and VET stakeholders in assessing their own priorities. Indeed, as put by some survey respondents, in comparison with other donors, ETF policies “are more versatile and in line with the needs and features of each country” and “the ETF has possibility to have a complete picture about needs for CPD for VET teachers and trainers”. Hence, in this respect, the ETF contributes to fostering domestic ownership and to engage stakeholders in the policy-making process.

Regarding the specific initiatives undertaken with the demonstration projects, the issue of ownership appears more limited when it comes to implementation. An exception in this sense was the Montenegrin project. Indeed, as reported by the interviews, it seems likely that the project will continue in the absence of the ETF support and it will be run by the VET Centre under the institutional support of the Ministry. In this respect, the VET centre appears well organized to run it while simultaneously enjoying “push” factor from the Ministry of Education. Additionally, ownership (or a potential for it) can also be seen in terms of the extent to which the projects generated results that strengthened local actors or partners. For example, this might be the case of the second phase (2017) of the demonstration project in Albania, in which the private partner Irisoft (specialised on computer training in a wide range of software) might benefit from the products and contacts generated by the training activities. It can also be the case of Turkey (2017 phase) where the results, such as training materials and networks created, will be more likely to be taken on board within a broader project on platform development.

To conclude, when referring to sustainability of the demonstration projects, a distinction needs to be made between the sustainability at project level and sustainability at policy level in the sense of promoting enduring systemic impact. Whereas the former dimension is less likely to be sustainable, given a plethora of contingent factors that cannot be foreseen or directly tackled by the ETF, the latter dimension is the one that has more promising potential to occur. Indeed, the demonstration projects – though a different extent – seem to have positively promoted and raised awareness on CPD and on the need to bridge the gap between legislation and implementation. Related to this, the demonstration projects have also positively impacted on enhancing domestic actors' ownership and on strengthening teachers' practices through networking and sharing materials.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The evaluation provided an assessment of the implementation against the evaluation criteria. Related to the evaluation criteria, there are a number of specific questions which had to be answered on the basis of the knowledge and understanding gained throughout the evaluation. The conclusions are developed taking into account the specific evaluation questions.

Conclusion 1: In the light of global and European priorities, working on CPD for VET teachers is relevant in the SEET, but as well in other regions in which ETF works.

The Riga conclusions and mid-term deliverables make working on CPD relevant in the European context, and hence in the region. In addition, CPD is globally acknowledged as a priority area for quality VET (and for improved labour market outcomes of the education system). Finally, CPD is highly regarded as a topic in need of urgent interventions that can in turn improve the quality of VET. It is also related to other emerging topics such as more integration of work-based learning and cooperation between education institutions and businesses. Thus, the ETF approach for CPD of VET teachers is based on a relevance that exceeds the regional perspective and therefore could also be relevant in other regions in which ETF operates.

Conclusion 2: Through the ETF approach to CPD for VET teachers, combining research, networking and small-scale projects, ETF has a continuous engagement with many different stakeholders and possibilities to support policy development and implementation in the country. The ETF activities have in at least half of the countries led to evidenced impact at policy level.

According to the reconstructed ToC, the overall line of reasoning that underlies the ETF approach is that through networking (at regional, national and practitioners level) and research (global knowledge, regional and national mappings of CPD policies), and within the commitment of the countries to the Riga MTD 5 on CPD, the demonstration projects (in all countries in 2 years), support stakeholders to demonstrate that policies on CPD - which are in most cases already in place - can be implemented.

ETFs approach in CPD for VET teachers in the region should be seen as constituting a single process: through providing knowledge, networking, and initiating small projects, CPD policies and practices will be supported in their implementation and further development. In this respect, the demonstration projects play a critical role. These projects are based on country/stakeholder ownership and when the “right” projects are selected - namely those that are closely related to solving a policy implementation issue, or those whose impact can be extended to a broader set of stakeholders (thus going beyond the direct beneficiaries) - they, despite being small, are more likely to have a systemic potential impact. The demonstration projects combined with ETF’s knowledge, guidance, and networking abilities, can positively feed the policy debates and hence contribute to promote policy change. This approach seems to be effective in having impact at policy level in at least more than half of the countries (such as Albania, Montenegro, Turkey, Serbia). In the other countries, the impact is more positioned at the level of (broad groups) of teachers and institutions.

The efficiency of the demonstration project approach should not be assessed against the sub-contracting costs 10,000 Euro, but it should take into account as well the ETF support costs. The total costs per project are therefore 20,700 Euro. Despite this still limited funding, ETF gains a direct involvement in CPD policy implementation, from the ground-level to policy level.

The approach seems to work, but could be improved. Aspects to improve concern:

- The selection of projects: The focus should be on selecting as many as possible projects that relate firmly to a policy implementation issue, thus increasing the potential for enduring systemic impact.
- The dissemination and follow-up of project results: the demonstration projects are small and last normally one year (some have been extended by another year). They should show that a particular policy can be implemented. After finalising the project, there should be a possibility for the more promising ones to continue some dissemination activities to ensure that a larger policy impact is assured⁶⁹.

Conclusion 3: ETF, through the approach, has been able to expand the engagement of teachers and VET schools and to support them in capacity building. However, in order to increase VET schools capacity to lead and develop CPD, the implementation modality needs to take into account the hampering framework conditions even more.

The ETF approach allowed ETF to work across the entire spectrum of CPD from VET teachers to governmental policy makers. It broadened the engagement on stakeholders and beneficiaries that normally would not be involved in ETF activities (such as VET teachers). Teachers have benefitted directly from CPD (mainly cluster 2 and 3 demonstration projects), or are now involved in setting up more systemic structures for CPD in schools, regions and the country (cluster 1 and 2). Indeed, the respondents of the survey assessed the impact at individual level highest: It broadened networks, improved teaching-related skills, improved knowledge on CPD.

The support and expertise of ETF is highly valued and appreciated by the project leaders of demonstration projects, schools and teachers involved, and policy makers. It is indicated that the interactions with ETF staff are learning experiences for the participants.

Whether beneficiaries are sufficiently capacitated to lead, develop and reform CPD is dependent on the existing framework conditions for engaging in CPD (salaries, career progression, time available for CPD). In many countries, the existing framework conditions are not conducive for stakeholders at school level to further implement CPD policies and they do not incentivize teachers' participation in CPD. Therefore, reforms at national level need to address the need to create a better institutional environment to set up structures at regional and school level. This reform process includes providing the budgets for schools and teachers to make autonomous decisions on CPD. Still, there are hampering conditions (e.g. salaries, administrative workload and credit recognitions) for capacitated persons to take action. The demonstration projects and related ETF interventions could take into account these conditions even more.

Conclusion 4: ETF supported better informed policy formation through its research, project work and - above all - direct advice and guidance. The links between the research conducted and the lessons learned from the demonstration projects can be capitalised more.

The ETF research in 2015 contributed to better information on CPD in the countries. The research was made available through country reports and a regional summary paper. The research formed input for the selection and the development of the demonstration projects. The personal expertise, knowledge and understanding of national systems of VET and CPD of ETF staff are positively valued by stakeholders at all levels in terms of support to policy formation and implementation

Given this positive assessment of the role of research, there is however potential for even more informed policy decisions also because part of the research work is not yet made available, or is not readily publicly available, or it is made available in formats tailored to different stakeholders needs. This concerns the synthesis report of the survey and the position paper which includes also the results of practices in other (European) countries.

⁶⁹ For example, the demonstration project in Montenegro has been widely disseminated through media and press releases and this has been reported to have greatly improved the awareness on the importance on CPD.

The ETF approach is built on the combination between research, networking and the small-scale projects. It is however not clear what is the contribution of the demonstration projects to the knowledge development. This is due to that the demonstration projects are not always well positioned and cross- compared with other existing practices in other countries; and because there is a lack of analysis on what makes demonstration projects work. In the future (when there will be fourteen finalised projects), analyses need to be conducted on what is working, why are they working and what are the conditions under which they work, and how do they compare to similar initiatives in other countries?

Conclusion 5: The CPD platform is valued and used as repository more than exchange platform. Other channels (such as newsletters) are used to inform a broader audience on the developments in the CPD project, the CPD platform is supportive to these other channels (for instance through referencing). ETFs support to set up national virtual platforms among teachers is promising but it needs to be clear that ETF's role should be modest in this regard (solely providing information and guidance in the establishment, but not implementing, coordinating these networks).

The CPD platform is valued and used as a project website (library) rather than a platform on which stakeholders exchange ideas and views. In total, there are 96 members. Visitor data is not available and the interviews with project leaders indicate that the usage of the platform is low ("add material when asked"). What the platform does provide and what is valued, is that it offers a single place where all the information of the CPD project is available. In other communications (i.e. newsletters, one-to-one communication), the CPD platform is therefore often referred to (both by ETF and project leaders) as a resource to find more information.

The evaluation did not assess the effectiveness of the newly introduced web-based networks for professional development for teachers. This initiative only started in 2017 and no indications are available that these virtual networks are already operational. Some demonstration projects however include virtual means of cooperation and exchange between teachers (for instance in Turkey and Albania). Although these networks are seen as a good model, stakeholders also warn that teachers in the countries are not always accustomed to share practices, lesson plans, curricula. There are many dispositional barriers related to sharing your own work with peers (is it good enough?) also related to the lack of a "sharing culture" among teachers. In addition, establishing and maintaining virtual platforms is a demanding task that needs a long-term commitment. Finally, other development partners (with larger budgets and ongoing presence in the countries) are discussing similar initiatives. Given these concerns, ETF is advised to continue provide knowledge and guidance in establishing virtual networks, seek synergies with other development partners, but should be careful in being directly engaged in implementing and running networks.

Conclusion 6: The work on CPD teachers shows a high degree of sustainability in terms of enduring systemic impact on policy discourse and stimulating awareness on CPD. Sustainability is more challenging in terms of continuation of the practices after their completion, as it is affected by political, social, economic and other institutional dynamics. Enhanced policy dialogue and networking activities to increase cooperation could further increase sustainability.

The ETF has a significant impact in promoting the EU CPD-related VET agenda and in providing policy advice in relation to how to best translate and adapt EU priorities in national contexts, as is the case with the Riga conclusions and the enhanced importance of CPD in the SEET regions. Therefore, the ETF, by acting as a key catalyst for policy change in virtue of its long-term presence in the SEET regions, research expertise, and networking capacity, reaches a high degree of sustainability when it comes to policy engagement related to CPD.

However, sustainability becomes more challenging in terms of the extent to which the implementation of the initiatives is included in a broader comprehensive process of CPD reform at system level. Even though the demonstration projects appear to have had an impact on

beneficiaries in terms of new knowledge gained and networking opportunities, their impact in terms of sustainability is mixed. Evidence from the evaluation suggests that sustainability is challenged by political and institutional factors barriers that might weaken the sustainability of the demonstration projects. There are barriers that need to be addressed in order to enhance sustainability, such as:

- political will to provide continuity for the initiatives, political instability that might affect potential successful outcomes;
- degree of coordination among partners;
- lack of framework conditions with reference to formal recognition of CPD initiatives;
- teachers' motivation to change and CPD being of benefit for teachers in terms of salaries and career progression;
- inadequate infrastructure (e.g. IT equipment);
- funding support.

The evaluation has shown that the most effective demonstration projects in terms of sustainability have been characterized by a combination of three elements:

- (i) strong political support at implementation level;
- (ii) fit with pre-existing countries' agenda on CPD;
- (iii) high degree of coordination and cooperation among the partners.

Thus, the impact of the CPD approach appears to be more sustainable when the proposed/chosen interventions match countries' needs while enjoying political will to promote change. Hence, sustainability can be increased by involving a higher number of political and institutional actors in the implementation and delivery of demonstration projects through a balanced approach between policy dialogue and networking initiatives to enhance cooperation and build partnerships.

Conclusion 7: The ETF approach on CPD appears to be significantly aligned with its policy advice role in partner countries and it is complementary to what is already implemented by development partners. Rather than being perceived as a “donor” in a traditional sense, the ETF’s added value is regarded as being a “critical friend” in the sense of stimulating reflections and policy discourse on EU priorities on CPD. This is also done by ensuring the adaptation and translation of these priorities into specific political, institutional and socio-economic context of the countries. The Riga conclusions open further opportunities for undertaking and strengthening systemic actions in CPD.

The ETF has a strong comparative advantage in the SEET region due to its combination of expertise of national VET contexts; privileged interaction with policy-makers and stakeholders; and policy (in) formation on EU priorities on CPD through networking and coordination activities. International and bilateral donors implement several projects and initiatives in the field of CPD but these initiatives are fragmented and often included within broader projects to support VET modernization and hence less embedded within a systemic and unitary action for CPD. In comparison with other development partners, the ETF displays a complementary role that is developed through engaging in policy dialogue and providing expertise on EU CPD priorities and in this sense its role goes beyond a donor-oriented perspective.

The findings of the evaluation suggest that, - within the framework of the enhanced attention for CPD at European level (together with its recognition as one of the main priorities to address in the SEET region), and given the wide consensus on the added value of the ETF as reputational actor in creating knowledge transfer - there are several opportunities for the ETF to further expand its role as an “implementation actor”. On the one hand, this will enable the ETF to act as a “bridge” between policy formulation and implementation. On the other, the active participation and contribution towards CPD approaches and initiatives can improve ETF associated research activities and strengthen its knowledge base by gaining further insights on issues and practical challenges related to CPD in the region.

4.2 Recommendations

The evaluation suggests the following recommendations:

- A) The work on CPD is highly relevant at global, European, regional and national level (conclusion 1). With the demonstration projects, ETF is able to work on initiatives that have a strong national ownership. The approach to CPD development however is not sufficiently able to tackle some of the barriers for sustainable further development of CPD (conclusion 3 and 6). In order to increase the national level impact of the demonstration projects (i.e. showing that a particular approach to CPD is implementable in a country), at the same time, more needs to be done in ensuring the right conditions for implementation. **It is therefore recommended that ETF expands the scope of its support for CPD and increases its activities in supporting governments (enhancing policy dialogue and networking) to establish favourable framework conditions in which CPD can further develop (supported by the demonstration projects).** This relates to formal recognition of CPD initiatives; CPD being of benefit for teachers in terms of salaries and career progression; ensuring funding support for CPD provision and teachers having time available for undertaking CPD; and improving infrastructure (e.g. IT equipment).
- B) While ETF through the demonstration projects can strengthen its role as “implementation actor”, it should however avoid engaging in activities for which development partners have more capacity to intervene. (Conclusion 7). This impacts on how ETF implements the demonstration project approach. **It is in this light recommended to revise the demonstration project approach and make them in general more policy-relevant, and devote more attention to 1) decide when a demonstration project is relevant given the country context; 2) set procedures and criteria for the selection and design of the project; and finally, 3) organise the follow-up activities in terms of policy dialogue.** This can be done by conducting demonstration projects more selectively. Criteria to decide when a demonstration project could be relevant given the country context and the policy cycle related to CPD need to be developed.
- C) The demonstration project-approach can be further strengthened by embedding the project more in a research framework (both to inform more the *design* of the projects; and to assess the *contribution* of the projects to knowledge development on what works for whom, under which conditions. (Conclusion 4). **It is therefore recommended to better position the demonstration projects (from their initiation to their finalisation) in a broader knowledge development framework. The projects need to be compared with other (good) practices and analysed in terms of whether and why it works, for which processes, and in what context (roles, responsibilities stakeholders, governance structures, legal/financial frameworks) so that ETF gathers insight in the working (and non-working) mechanisms of the demonstration projects.**
- D) The CPD project gathered a lot of valuable insights in how CPD is organised in the countries and information on international best practices that can inform this regional project. Part of the research and its interesting insights are however not publicly available and this leaves a potential being unmet. **It is therefore recommended to ensure that research reports and analysis are timely available and accessible in formats that appeal to different stakeholders (full reports, summaries, infographics, translations).**
- E) The approach to CPD development in SEET through research, networking and small-scale projects is promising (conclusion 2, 7). CPD is high on the global and European agenda (conclusion 1). This creates possibilities to further expand the approach to other regions and partner countries. The approach however needs to be clearly tailored to the specific context of the country. **It is therefore recommended to slowly expand the CPD approach to other countries when it is assessed that a demonstration project could be relevant in the country context. The approach needs to be amended and adapted to the specific needs and context of the country and taking into account the recommendations**

mentioned earlier (and lessons learned from the past generation of demonstration projects).

- F) The CPD approach combines research, small-scale projects and networking (conclusion 2). Previous recommendations focused on strengthening the research and the project parts. In addition to this, as the CPD project is a *regional project*, the networking part can also be strengthened, especially when it comes to cross-border networking and learning. **It is therefore recommended to strengthen participatory approaches (study visits, seminars, and workshops) to build trust and increasing working relationships between countries and support this through the platform as well. In this, it is recommended to better tailor the information provision to the specific target groups through newsletters, information bulletins and using the CPD platform as repository.**
- G) The evaluation did not conduct a full assessment of the establishment of virtual networks. Conclusion 5 indicates that ETFs support to set up national virtual platforms among teachers is promising but it needs to be clear that ETF's role should be modest in this regard (solely providing information and guidance in the establishment, but not implementing, coordinating these networks). **It is therefore recommended that ETF further provides advice and guidance on establishing virtual networks and that the establishment of the networks is evaluated when developments are a bit more advanced (in around one or two years).**