

Final Report

Evaluation of Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Skills development in ETF partner countries

CPD-15-EVA-02

submitted to the
European Training Foundation, Turin

December 2015

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Executive summary

Background and objective - evaluation of ETF's work in EL and ESD

The European Union (EU) has increasingly recognised the importance of entrepreneurship and Small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), not only to improve competitiveness, and therefore, contribute to economic growth, but also as the main source of job creation and fundamental factor for social cohesion. In line with this approach, one of the key milestones in recent developments has been the approval of the *Small Business Act* (SBA) in 2008 (EC COM, 2008: 394 final). Entrepreneurial learning and business skills also appear in the policy framework *Education and Training 2020*, covering formal, non-formal and informal entrepreneurial learning and business skills, in primary, secondary and university education, as well as in relation to vocational education and training (VET). The update of VET policies launched in 2010 by the EC made 'education for entrepreneurship' an explicit key area to work in (EC COM 2010: 296 final).

In line with the European agenda, entrepreneurial learning and business skills development has been a priority area of ETF's work for many years. ETF's latest Midterm Perspective 2014-2017 gives special attention to shared learning of know-how and good practice in enterprise and entrepreneurship skills, with participation of policy makers and the education and training community.

The objective of this evaluation is the assessment of the effectiveness and impact of ETF's work on Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Skills development in partner countries during the period 2010 – 2014. The evaluation will consider relevance; efficiency; effectiveness; impact; sustainability; coherence / complementarity; and community value added.

The evaluation was carried out based on a mixed method approach which allows for a sound data analysis and subsequent triangulation of evaluation findings. Methods included desk research; interviews with the ETF staff; a web survey among stakeholders; six in-depth country studies; analysis and synthesis; and a capacity building workshop at ETF.

Objectives of ETF's work in EL and ESD

Throughout the period 2010-2014, ETF's work on EL and ESD was driven by the European Commission's initiatives to increase attention to small businesses, starting with the adoption of the framework of the Euro-Med Charter for Enterprise assessment (human capital dimensions, adopted in 2004) and followed by the SBA assessment at a later stage.

Summarised over the years the objectives of the ETF in EL and ESD are to provide assistance to the EC; to support countries in their SBA assessment, review and monitoring of policies; establishing country ownership for EL and ESD; to provide additional country-specific assistance; stimulate good practice exchange and to promote entrepreneurship for specific groups (women, youth).

The line of reasoning behind ETF's work in the period 2010-2014 is establishing a policy-enabling environment for entrepreneurial learning & enterprise skills in partner countries to support competitiveness and employment. ETF seeks to achieve this objective by providing a framework of indicators and levels of maturity on which Partner Countries (PCs) can progress in their work on EL and ESD in a coordinated (regional) approach. PCs voluntarily participate in these assessments (SBA assessment), but receive support and guidance from ETF. In addition, countries can request additional support on specific indicators. The key assumption behind the effectiveness of this work is that country stakeholders show ownership of the SBA assessment. In addition, the work relates to the broader SME agenda of countries, involving other organisations such as Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

ETF activities in EL and ESD

The ETF's work in entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills consists of the following activities:

- **SBA assessment:** This activity consists in elaborating the indicators of human capital dimensions of the SBA in collaboration with the partner countries and independent experts. This involves, among others, the following tasks: periodic field missions for data collection, scoring, bilateral discussions, data analysis, report writing, publication and dissemination.
- **Country-specific activities:** In some cases, partner countries may request specific policy advice from ETF, or some extra assistance which goes beyond policy advice, requiring ETF's involvement in capacity building projects, strategy definition or policy implementation.
- **Knowledge sharing at regional level:** In line with ETF's mandate, this area of action includes knowledge exchange and good practice systematization and dissemination, both at the regional and cross-regional level.

Progression on the SBA assessment 2010-2015

ETF's main activity in the field of EL and ESD, the SBA assessment is performed under regional frameworks and demands a similar deployment of activities in all cases.

Comparing the situation around 2010 and 2015, it can be concluded that ETF partners have made a significant progress in EL and ESD policies during the period under evaluation, though that progress differs between regions. The improvements of the Eastern partnership in EL and the Balkans countries in ESD as measured by the SBA assessment were decisive, coming to an increase of 41% respectively 38% in the corresponding SBA indicator. Compared to these developments, the overall improvement of the SEMED countries (12%) and more specifically its progress rate of 5% in ESD appear to be rather low. When looking at progress rates country by country in this region, some frontrunners are also found (Palestine and Algeria), but the average rates are lowered by negative progress in certain countries (Israel, Egypt and Tunisia). The case studies performed in the Mediterranean region shows during the period under evaluation shows how much the work of ETF in this policy area is conditioned by contextual factors, such as political instability. Economic contextual factors were also considered relevant with regards to the relevance and ownership of this program.

It can also be stated that there is a positive relation between country specific support provided by ETF and countries' progress in the SBA indicators. The countries receiving tailored advice by ETF have made an average progress of 42% in SBA indicators, while the average rate for countries not receiving tailored support counts for a 23%.

Assessment against evaluation criteria

In general, ETF's work on EL and ESD is considered relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable. The table below provides a final assessment of the ETF interventions and ETF's work in general related to the evaluation criteria, based on the documents and data gathered and reviewed during the assignment (five point scale, running from negative (1√) to positive assessment (5√)).

	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact / sustainability	Coherence / Complementarity and Community value added
SBA assessment	√√√√	√√	√√√√	√√√√	√√√√
Country-specific activities	√√√√	√√	√√√√	√√	√√√√
Knowledge-sharing at regional level ¹	√√	√	√	√	√√
EC support	√√√√	√√√√	√√√√	√√	√√√√
General assessment of ETF work in EL and ESD	√√√√	√√	√√√√	√√√√	√√√√

This positive assessment is the result of a number of factors for success that underlie ETF's work. The following general factors have been identified as success factors:

- **Information provision and clear objectives:** ETF is able to provide useful information and put the ETF work and the work of national stakeholders in a framework having clear objectives and a clear direction.
- **Level of expertise:** ETF is able to mobilise quality experts and the level of expertise of ETF itself is considered high as well.
- **General attitude of ETF and its experts:** ETF is considered reliable, unbiased and trustworthy. ETF is approachable for direct support. ETF is able to organise events very flexible. ETF is working in a flexible non-bureaucratic way.
- **Quality of support and coherence between activities:** ETF's reports, comments, contributions and interventions are considered of high quality. ETF staff is able to point to interesting development in other countries in the region and in Europe.
- **Long-term involvement and knowledge of country:** ETF has a long-term involvement in the subject area and ETF staff (especially the country manager) is familiar with the country specifics and key stakeholders.
- **Reputation of ETF:** ETF has a good reputation related to EL and ESD, especially supported by the importance of the SBA assessment and based on interventions in other areas (for instance support in developing qualifications frameworks).
- **Cooperation with diverse stakeholder groups:** ETF is able to bring together different stakeholder groups.

¹ Excluding the Good Practice Initiative.

ETF specific interventions tend to be successful when the following factors are fulfilled:

- Creating **ownership** amongst national stakeholders to work on self-identified weaknesses in the SBA assessment.
- Combine technical assistance with **capacity building**. The technical assistance is not considered a one-off service, but through building capacities within the stakeholder organisations, technical assistance might not be required in the future.
- Benchmarking and periodical assessment in the SBA assessment creates both a **learning and a competitive effect**: Countries want to improve and show results to neighbouring countries.

Conclusions and recommendations

The following conclusions are provided based on the analysis of gathered information:

- **Conclusion 1:** ETF's work in EL and ESD, especially the SBA assessment, is considered relevant and effective at PC level.
- **Conclusion 2:** Other ETF type of interventions, such as the additional country support and knowledge sharing activities, are also positively evaluated, although there are some limitations with regard the Good Practice initiative.
- **Conclusion 3:** ETF is valued for bringing institutional stakeholders together, however more needs to be done to systematically involve end-beneficiaries such as employers, entrepreneurs, students, education providers and teachers.
- **Conclusion 4:** ETF's work in EL and ESD is well embedded in ETF but could focus more on evaluation and accountability of interventions.
- **Conclusion 5:** ETF's work in EL and ESD is complementary to what other organisations do but there is room for improvement: the SBA assessment could be better used as set a general framework for other donors to design and implement their activities.
- **Conclusion 6:** At partner country level, EL and ESD is often interpreted and used in a conceptual narrow way and not in combination of the two as a continuum covering both education and the world of work. By this, the potential to reform the relationship between education and the labour market is weakened.
- **Conclusion 7:** Knowledge management in the field of EL and ESD is insufficient to position ETF as a knowledge hub.

Related to the conclusions, here below recommendations are provided to guide the work of ETF in the future work on EL and ESD:

Recommendation 1: To continue to further strengthen the effectiveness of the SBA assessment by:

1. Introducing more follow-up activities to keep the SBA on the agenda in-between assessments by providing country-specific recommendations and stimulate the development of action plans, and reporting mechanisms;
2. Stimulating that national stakeholders invite other international organisations to align their interventions to the SBA follow-up activities;
3. More actively drawing lessons from how PC's improved their SBA assessment scores and distribute those lessons to PC's facing similar issues in/between the regions.

Recommendation 2: to bring policy and practice closer together and increase the impact and learning effect of ETF actions in EL and ESD by strengthening the involvement of under-represented stakeholders, such as employers and (future) entrepreneurs, training institutions, schools and teachers.

Recommendation 3: To improve the knowledge base for stakeholders working in EL and ESD, conceptually clarify the concepts individually and in a lifelong learning perspective and more strongly push for a holistic approach to EL and ESD.

Recommendation 4: In order to increase accountability and learning effects of ETF supported interventions:

1. Strengthen the design of interventions by taking into account lessons learned from previous interventions in the same area;
2. Further develop the monitoring and evaluation capacity in the PC's.

Recommendation 5: To strengthen the Good Practice Initiative by:

1. Clarifying the line of reasoning on how the identification of the good practices leads to policy developments;
2. Bringing the good practice initiative to a higher level, providing compendia, more analysis, identifying success factors;
3. Investigating the potential of the scorecard to be used as quality framework for training providers.

List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BC	British Council
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG GROW	Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EDA	Enterprise Development Agency
EE	Eastern Europe
EL	Entrepreneurial Learning
ESD	Entrepreneurial Skills Development
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
JAS	Junior Achievement Serbia
MFPT	Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment

MTP	Mid-Term Perspective
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PC	Partner Country
SBA	Small Business Act
SEECEL	South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning
SEET	South Eastern Europe and Turkey
SEMED	Southern and Eastern Mediterranean
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
TNA	Training needs assessment
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational education and training
WB	World Bank
WP	Work Programme

1 Background and aim of the evaluation

1.1 Political and institutional background

The European Union (EU) has increasingly recognised the importance of entrepreneurship and SMEs, not only to improve competitiveness, and therefore, contribute to economic growth, but also as the main source of job creation and fundamental factor for social cohesion. In line with this approach, one of the key milestones in recent developments has been the approval of the *Small Business Act (SBA)* in 2008 (EC COM, 2008: 394 final). Its aim was to improve the overall approach to entrepreneurship and promote SMEs through the establishment of a new policy framework. More recently, the *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan* (EC COM, 2012: 795 final) has been conceived to promote entrepreneurial development in Europe.

Since Lisbon 2000, the EU policy framework reflects an economic development approach, strongly based on human capital development and knowledge generation, which implies special focus on entrepreneurial and business skills. Currently, in a similar way the EU 2020 strategy puts central attention to youth education and an agenda for new skills and jobs. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is also selected as one of the eight EU key competences for lifelong learning (EU, 2006²).

It is of strategic importance to acknowledge the linkages between the frameworks of enterprise and industry, on the one hand, and between training and education, on the other. Entrepreneurial learning and Enterprise skills, as a transversal concept can be found in the core of both frameworks. The SBA and the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, part of the enterprise and industry policy framework, both underline the importance of education and training.³ While the SBA puts special emphasis on upgrading skills and all forms of innovation, including better access to exchange programmes, additional training, research and development measures, and internationalisation, among others, the mentioned Action Plan has an explicit pillar on entrepreneurial education and training to support growth and business creation.

Entrepreneurial learning and business skills also appear in the policy framework *Education and Training 2020*, covering formal, non-formal and informal entrepreneurial learning and business skills, in primary, secondary and university education, as well as in relation to vocational education and training (VET). The update of VET policies launched in 2010 by the EC made ‘education for entrepreneurship’ an explicit key area to work in (EC COM 2010: 296 final).⁴

In line with the European agenda, entrepreneurial learning and business skills development is a priority area of ETF’s work for many years. ETF latest Midterm Perspective 2014-2017 gives special attention to shared learning of know-how and good practice in enterprise and entrepreneurship skills, with participation of policy makers and the education and training community. In the new ETF framework, entrepreneurial and enterprise skills gain importance and become an explicit thematic priority. The work of ETF will be centred on: i) training for young entrepreneurs, b) training and mentoring for women entrepreneurs and c) improved skills for growth enterprises, at the cross-regional level and in the individual partner regions. ETF’s work and activities on the human capital dimension of the SBA also include cooperation with DG GROW, DG EMPL and DG NEAR.

² Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning [Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006]: sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

³ Entrepreneurial learning is also mentioned in the context of the EU Development Agenda, especially for the Neighbourhood region and Central Asia, COM (2011) 637 final.

⁴ Another key policy reference can be consulted, in: Rethinking Education, COM (2012) 669 final.

1.2 Aim of the evaluation and research questions

As stated in the ToR, the objective of this evaluation is the assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the ETF work on Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Skills development in partner countries during the period 2010 – 2014, however some SBA assessments have been completed in 2015 and have been taken into account in order to measure the country scores at the end of 2014. Since the ETF is one stakeholder among others to promote entrepreneurship and enterprise skills development, the impact of its work will be analysed in the context of a contribution analysis. Rather than aiming to establish if the analysed intervention determined the observed impact, this kind of approach analyses how the intervention –as one of the key factors- contributed towards perceived effects. This qualitative analysis is applied to all potential key causal links.

The ToR proposed a framework with eight evaluation questions that currently represent the priority interests of the ETF. Following the EU/OECD-DAC criteria⁵, the evaluation team has grouped the evaluation questions per evaluation criterion. In addition to this, the team has added few evaluation questions (in italics) which were considered to be crucial and add value to the evaluation findings. In Annex D a comprehensive evaluation matrix per evaluation criterion is outlined.

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions
Relevance	To what extent is the ETF strategy and instruments on entrepreneurial learning and Enterprise skills relevant according to partner countries' needs, priorities and policies.
Efficiency	To what extent are the human and financial resources allocated to Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Skills activities utilised efficiently and are they adequate to achieve the objectives as laid out in the relevant ETF MTP and Work Programmes?
Effectiveness	How have the indicators for the SBA Dimension 1 (Entrepreneurial Learning and Women's Entrepreneurship) and Dimension 8 (SME skills) assisted ETF's partner countries in bringing forward Entrepreneurship policy agenda? How far have the different ETF actions at national, regional and corporate level met the objectives in the Annual Plans 2010-2014? <i>To what extent can unintended effects be reported (positive and negative)?</i>
Impact	How far has ETF been a conduit for the engagement of ETF partner countries in the broader policy agenda and specifically in policy implementation in entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills? To which extent has ETF enhanced the capacity of partner country institutions and other stakeholders in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing policies in the areas of entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills?
Sustainability	<i>To what extent is the action politically, institutionally and financially supported?</i> <i>To what extent does the action have the support of target groups, such as the training and education community, SMEs and SME associations, universities, entrepreneurship centres, etc.?</i>
Coherence/ Complementarity	To what extent has synergy and coordination with EU-funded and other major donor-supported (e.g. ILO, UNESCO) projects in the partner countries been achieved? <i>(Can be linked to efficiency,</i>

⁵ See Joint Evaluation Unit (2006): Evaluation Methods for the European Union's External Assistance. Methodological Bases for Evaluation. Volume 1. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. 49-52.

	<p><i>effectiveness and/or impact</i></p> <p>How effective has the ETF been in ensuring synergies among its actions at national, regional and corporate level? (Can be linked to efficiency and effectiveness)</p>
Community value added	<p>What has been the ETF added value to the entrepreneurial learning agenda?</p> <p>Is there a comparative advantage between countries where ETF has been working on a country specific basis vs. those where the main focus has been the SBA assessment and the good practice activities?</p> <p>To which extent are the activities between the SBA assessment and the good practice component linked? (<i>Can be linked to effectiveness</i>)</p>

Figure 1: Evaluation questions, according to DAC evaluation criteria

1.3 Research methods used in the evaluation

The evaluation was carried out based on a mixed method approach which allows for a sound data analysis and subsequent triangulation of evaluation findings. Here below the applied research methods are shortly discussed.

Desk research

The desk research forms an integral part of the evaluation. The evaluators analysed the documents in order to extract information in light of the evaluation questions as stated in the evaluation matrix. They took into account ETF corporate literature, country specific documents and other relevant documents developed by other organisations or research groups. Also, ETF internal databases and monitoring information is taken into account. Annex A provides an overview of the literature consulted in the framework of this evaluation.

Interviews with the ETF staff

Interviews with ETF staff are conducted mainly in the inception phase and at the beginning of the field phase. However, in addition to the interviews at set the scene also after the data collection (field visits and survey) interviews with ETF staff were conducted to receive information on specific issues. Annex B. provides a list of the ETF staff member interviews in the framework of this evaluation.

A web survey among two groups of stakeholders

The data collection was conducted by means of web survey and six in-depth country studies. Where the survey provides a broad picture of what interventions have taken place, in what context, for what purpose and with what intended outcomes; the site visits provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics at work in a particular country that explains whether and how a set of the ETF interventions has impacted the developments with regard EL and ESD. Both the survey and the in-depth country visits were aimed to find out what the key determinants of success of ETF interventions were at PC level.

Contact details were provided by ETF country desks and this list was further complemented with the contact details of receivers of regular news on ETF's work on EL and ESD. In total around 3,000 people received an invitation to participate in the survey. In total 140 people responded to the survey, the average response per question is around 120. The survey targeted two stakeholder groups:

1. Those stakeholders that work on Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development and who actively collaborate with ETF in the partner countries (47% of the respondents).

2. Those stakeholders that are involved or interested in Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development but do not work directly with ETF in the partner countries (53% of the respondents).

More than half of the respondents indicate that they are involved in EL and ESD, meaning that they have a (shared) responsibility for the policy field. A quarter of the respondents responded from the perspective of the EU. Dominant reference countries concern the SEET countries. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries are the least represented in the survey. 38% of the respondents indicate to be affiliated to governmental organisations; 16% represents an education provider and 12% is working for a development organisation. Employer organisation (9%); research institute (6%) and civil society (4%) are less represented. Annex C displays the survey questionnaire.

Conducting six in-depth country studies

The aim of the country studies was to deepen the understanding of what ETF did in the countries and what was the impact of these interventions. The countries for in-depth assessment were selected on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- Regional representativeness: two countries per region (SEET, SEMED, and EE)
- Instrumental representativeness: a country benefiting from specific support by ETF and one benefitting only from the SBA assessment and follow up, plus ordinary participation in regional activities, was selected in each region.
- Institutional and economic context: The two countries selected for the same region, have a similar institutional and economic context in order to effectively compare different ETF's approaches. Cross-regional comparisons facilitated the understanding of contextual variables and their influence in the outcome from similar ETF's intervention.

Following consultation with the ETF and additional literature study, the following six countries were selected to be studied in depth:

Regions	Country-specific support	
	Yes	No
EE	Georgia	Armenia
SEET	Montenegro	Serbia
SEMED	Lebanon	Tunisia

Figure 2: Country selection

During the site visits the topics that were studied in depth are similar to the topics included in the survey. The difference consists in analysing the interrelationships between the different topics to better understand what works in which circumstances. For this purpose, the evaluators conducted four research tasks: 1) Conduct a desk research on available documentation on the state of play, projects, conferences, route-maps, etc.; 2) Interview 7-9 stakeholders (National authorities; Employers' representatives; Education sector representatives; Other stakeholders (advising bodies; other donor organisations)⁶; 3) Discuss preliminary outcomes with the ETF country managers (via skype); and 4) Draft a concise country fiche. On average per country 10 interviews were conducted.

Analysis and synthesis

⁶ For the Lebanese case, it was decided to conduct the interviews with relevant stakeholders via skype due to the political instability in the country.

The data gathered is analysed according to the evaluation matrix. After the field phase, the experts investigated the whole body of evidence gathered during the field phase and made an overall assessment in line with the evaluation questions. By making use of different (types of) sources of data collection, the assessment phase consisted of a critical triangulation of evidence found. In order to arrive at conclusions, the judgement criteria (based on the evaluation matrix) were used.

2 Intervention logic of ETF's work on EL and ESD

An overarching intervention logic for the period 2010-2014 has not been developed by ETF. In line with the ETF Mid-term perspectives 2010-2013 and 2014-2017, within the period 2010-2014, for each year an own project plan with a logframe was developed, which included slight differences from year to year. In order to outline ETF's intervention logic in the field of ESD and EL and to illustrate how objectives, inputs and outputs are expected to lead to relevant outcomes and long term impacts, an overarching intervention logic is reconstructed.⁷

2.1 Objectives of ETF's work in EL and ESD

Throughout the period 2010-2014, ETF's work on EL and ESD was driven by the European Commission's initiatives to increase attention to small businesses, starting with the adoption of the framework of the Euro-Med Charter for Enterprise assessment (human capital dimensions, adopted in 2004) and followed by the SBA assessment at a later stage.

ETF's work in EL and ESD is not directly linked to a specific problem existing in partner countries⁸, it more generally responds partly to broader socio-economic issues such as unemployment and the lack of job creation and social exclusion especially for young people through lack of paid employment. As indicated in many ETF documents on EL and ESD, building a more entrepreneurial culture and supporting entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses can have a positive impact on a country's economy in terms of competitiveness and jobs.⁹ In addition to high unemployment rates and lack of competitiveness in the partner countries, "a lack of engagement by education authorities in promoting entrepreneurial learning, and particularly entrepreneurship as a key competence"¹⁰ does not stimulate the development of EL and ESD in the PCs.

The ETF Mid-term perspective 2010-2013 identified Enterprises and human capital development: education and business partnerships as one of the three core themes. This theme focuses on four main strands: Firstly, creation, management and sharing of knowledge and skills in enterprises (in both the public and the private sector), particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. Secondly, support to enterprise development with a focus on entrepreneurship skills and learning. Thirdly, education and enterprise partnerships to support the transition from school to work. Lastly, building the capacities of

⁷ In this sections, the intervention logic of ETF's work in EL and ESD has been described and positioned in a broader context in terms of "why, what, who, when, and how, that link each element to the larger intervention to provide a clearer understanding of the change process." (see: Van Stolk, C., Ling, T. and Reding, A. (2011). Monitoring and evaluation in stabilisation interventions: Reviewing the state of the art and suggesting ways forward. RAND Europe, prepared for DFID Stabilisation Unit. Taken from: Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding 'Theory of Change' in international development: a review of existing knowledge, p. 7. Cited from: Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding 'Theory of Change' in international development: a review of existing knowledge, p. 13). In order to assess the intervention logic, a framework with a number of key questions is applied inspired by the literature on theory of change (see Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding 'Theory of Change' in international development: a review of existing knowledge (LSE). The intervention logic is assessed in terms of how it addresses specific problems encountered; which are the assumption behind the logic; where does it want to make a change and who is involved and; what are the internal and external risks.

⁸ The Evaluation of the mid-term perspective indicates the following concerning whether the work on EL and ESD is focusing on particular challenges in the countries: "the need to promote projects that are also comparable at regional level, together with the need to meet some of ETF's internal obligations have led to the support of some initiatives that are not considered as top country priorities, such as the entrepreneurial learning project in Lebanon, which was essentially delayed due to an initial lack of ownership and in Serbia where the competent authority was not eager to provide evidence of ownership." Agora'2000 (2012), Mid Term Evaluation of the ETF MTP 2010-2013, p. 18.

⁹ See for instance EL and enterprise skills (Wprn: WP15-40-18-EL): http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/PRJ_WP15_40_18_EL

¹⁰ See Terms of Reference for this evaluation project.

enterprise representatives, employers and employees as well as other civil society institutions for their active participation in defining and implementing policy, as well as monitoring and evaluating in the context of lifelong learning.

In the Mid-term perspective 2014-2017, the aim of ETF's work in EL and ESD is to establish a "Policy-enabling environment for entrepreneurial learning & enterprise skills in partner countries to support competitiveness and employment."¹¹ Despite this being the recurrent theme throughout ETF's work, a shift is noticeable in the aim of the ETF's work in EL and ESD; where in the years 2010-2013 the aim was to develop and improve EL and ESD, in 2014 the aim was to "develop the capacity of partner country institutions and other stakeholders in developing, monitoring and reviewing of policies in the areas of entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills, including increased policy ownership, implementation and accountability."¹² An interesting aim mentioned in 2011 more or less disappeared in later WPs discussing ETF's position in EL and ESD: "The implementation plan [...] works particularly towards consolidating ETF's position as an international reference point for expertise in the area of entrepreneurial learning."¹³

In 2010 the ETF launched the first round of the Torino Process which is 'a periodic, participatory analysis of VET systems and policy progress'¹⁴. Every two years, ETF's partner countries are encouraged to undertake an evidence-based assessment of their VET policies with ETF's methodological guidance while main features of the assessment exercise are country ownership of the process and participation of a broad range of stakeholders¹⁵. Apart from the fact that the approach chosen by the Torino Process is similar to the SBA assessment approach, both processes are thematically partly interlinked as entrepreneurial learning is seen as one key priority to enhance creativity and innovation in VET¹⁶.

Summarised over the years the objectives of the ETF in EL and ESD are to provide assistance to the EC; to support countries in their SBA assessment, review and monitoring of policies; establishing country ownership for EL and ESD; to provide additional country-specific assistance; stimulate good practice exchange and to promote entrepreneurship for specific groups (women, youth).

2.2 Line of reasoning and assumptions behind

Given this baseline, the line of reasoning behind the ETF work in the period 2010-2014 is establishing a policy-enabling environment for entrepreneurial learning & enterprise skills in partner countries to support competitiveness and employment. It does this first of all through providing a framework of indicators and levels of maturity on which PCs can progress in their work on EL and ESD in a coordinated (regional) approach. PC's voluntarily participate in these assessments (SBA assessment), but receive support and guidance from ETF. In addition, countries can request additional support on specific indicators. The key assumption behind the effectiveness of this work is that country stakeholders show ownership of the SBA assessment. In addition, the work relates to the broader SME agenda of countries, involving other organisations such as OECD and EBRD.

¹¹ See: Entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills 2014 – 2017: Implementation plan 2014 (WP2014).

¹² See: Entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills 2014 – 2017: Implementation plan 2014 (WP2014).

¹³ See: Entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills 2011: CRO-ENT WP11-10-15 (WP2011).

¹⁴ See ETF: THE TORINO PROCESS: EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, page. 1. Available at:

[http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/108BEF28722AF822C12578AB003277D4/\\$file/The%20Torino%20Process%20-%20Evidence%20Based%20Policy%20for%20VET.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/108BEF28722AF822C12578AB003277D4/$file/The%20Torino%20Process%20-%20Evidence%20Based%20Policy%20for%20VET.pdf)

¹⁵ ETF 2013: Torino Process. Moving skills forward. Background Note, page 1. Available at:

[http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/0E0E8EC74224F755C1257B650045EF29/\\$file/Torino%20Process%20-%20background%20note.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/0E0E8EC74224F755C1257B650045EF29/$file/Torino%20Process%20-%20background%20note.pdf)

¹⁶ ETF 2013: Torino Process. Moving skills forward. Background Note, page 2. Available at:

[http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/0E0E8EC74224F755C1257B650045EF29/\\$file/Torino%20Process%20-%20background%20note.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/0E0E8EC74224F755C1257B650045EF29/$file/Torino%20Process%20-%20background%20note.pdf)

The policy-enabling environment is also advanced by stimulating exchange between policy level and operational level stakeholders in the country and by developing a framework for the exchange of good practices in EL and ESD. An issue encountered throughout the years working on EL and ESD is however that it remains difficult to reach impact: It is easier to support policy development and assist in drafting policy papers, but whether something actually changes in the provision of VET programmes and whether teachers are aware of EL as a transversal competence to be taught in the curriculum is difficult to assess. One reason for this is the distance between the policy makers responsible for EL (which are not necessarily the ministries responsible for VET) and the operational level (VET providers and teacher education providers). The same applies to the dimension of ESD. For this reason thoughts have been given to stimulate bottom up policy making based on identification of good practices and dialogue between policy and operational level. The assumption behind the effectiveness of this work is that good practices are indeed a way to stimulate policy dialogue.

2.3 The intervention logic of ETF’s work on EL and ESD

In all ETF activities, based on the organisational objectives of ETF, two main directions can be distinguished, namely firstly, support to PCs in improving their policies (in this case on EL and ESD); and secondly, supporting EU institutions and actors (most importantly the European Commission and External Action Service) in deploying external policy instruments in the PCs (in this case on EL and ESD). The two directions are however closely related and mutually inform each other. The following figure provides an overview of the reconstructed intervention logic for 2010-2014.

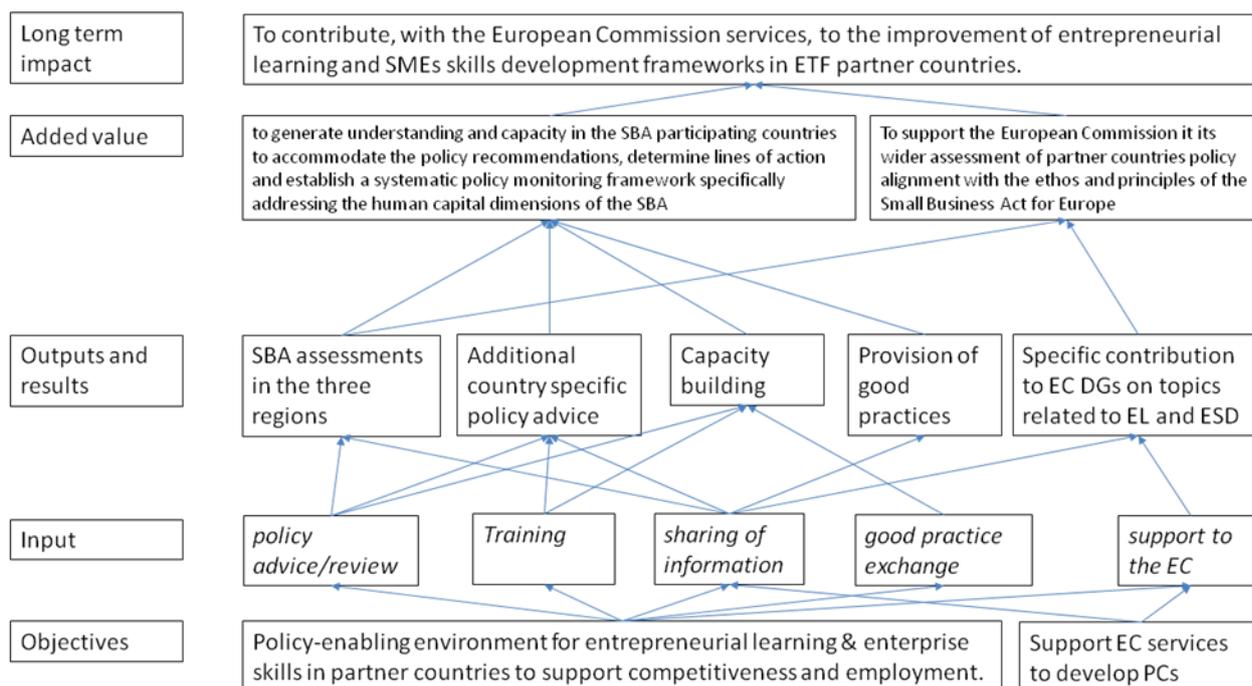


Figure 3: Reconstructed intervention logic EL and ESD work 2010-2014

3 Baseline, ETF activities and progression in EL and ESD

This chapter provides a description of the baseline against which ETF activities took place (Section 3.1). After this, the different types of ETF activities are presented (Section 3.2) and finally, the progression of the countries in the fields of EL and ESD is discussed. Hence, this chapter firstly will illustrate how the intervention logic worked out in practice (referenced to Chapter 2) and secondly, it will provide the background for the assessment of ETF's work in relation to the evaluation criteria (Chapter 4).

3.1 Baseline and context for ETF's intervention in EL and ESD

ETF's work in EL and ESD needs to be positioned in the specific PC context. In this section, the maturity of the EL and ESD policy frameworks around 2010 is discussed as a baseline against which the effectiveness of ETF's work is assessed. At the beginning of the period under evaluation, around 2010, the policy frameworks for EL and ESD in most of ETF's partner countries could be described as immature¹⁷. As per the SBA assessments summarized in the following table, on a 1 to 5 scale, PC's policies addressing the human capital dimensions of SME's development scored on average 2.11.

Regions	EL	ESD	Overall
SEET	2.48	2.00	2.29
SEMED	1.74	2.35	2.04
EaP	1.81	2.10	1.96
Cross-regional average	2.05	2.18	2.11

Figure 4: Baseline of human capital indicators in the SBA assessment: Maturity levels. Regional average¹⁸. Source: Own elaboration. ETF data

There were obviously some differences among the three partner regions of ETF, whereby on average the SEET region scored better than SEMED and EaP, but the differences were often more pronounced *within* regions. In the following paragraphs, further information on the context and the baseline for ETF's intervention is provided by region, looking at countries' particularities¹⁹.

¹⁷ Since ETF and its partner organizations have issued two assessment for every region, the first of each assessment, which was performed between 2008 and 2012, can be used as a baseline reference for the period under evaluation (2010-2014). The assessments provide a measure of the "maturity levels" of every PC from a policy making perspective. It scores countries with 5 points when matching a previously agreed description of maturity (e.g. the EL policy framework is improved by means of evaluations), while 1 point rating indicates that the element to be considered does not even exist (e.g. there is not an EL strategic framework agreed with stakeholders). Rating with 2, 3 or 4 points means that the country's status is somewhere in between.

¹⁸ 2008 report on the Euro-Mediterranean Charter of Enterprise, 2009 SBA assessment for the SEET region, 2012 assessment for the Eastern partnership. The scores provided by ETF are synthesized here in arithmetic averages and may differ slightly with the weighted averages presented in the reports.

¹⁹ Cross-regional comparisons may be misleading because of the use of different indicators in each regional assessment.

3.1.1 The Mediterranean region: weak policy bases for EL and ESD development, and growing political instability

In general terms, the SBA assessment report²⁰ considered the policy framework for EL in all Mediterranean countries to be weak. Tunisia was presented in the 2008 report on the Euro-Mediterranean Charter of Enterprise as the best performer of the region, followed by Egypt²¹. Algeria, Lebanon and Palestine stood in the last position, receiving the minimum score in all EL indicators.

When taking ESD into consideration, the best and worst performers were the same as for EL, but an intermediate category of countries arose: Morocco and Jordan, having a weak policy framework for EL but being in a similar position with the regional champion with regard to ESD (i.e. Tunisia). Algeria, Lebanon and Palestine appeared clearly as the most difficult contexts, being “at an initial phase of evolution with regards to SMEs (not only in human capital policies) with open issues on policy coordination and assignment of tasks” (EC *et al.*, 2008).

An indicator-by-indicator analysis, as per the figure 5 (page 21), shows that the main weakness of the Mediterranean region faced by ETF during this period had to do with the key idea of the SBA about EL. These countries have a relatively good score in non-formal learning and good practice exchange, but their policy framework and the integration of EL in the secondary schools score negative. In ESD, the initial position was more favourable while enterprise training portrayed the major weakness.

Unfortunately, during the 2010-14, the insecurity and political instability, a major obstacle for policy development in any field, has worsened in countries like Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, and extended to other countries like Tunisia and Egypt. However, as unemployment and poverty were a catalyst for most of the political crises in the region, these topics were gaining focus in national policy agendas. As at least few countries recover from insecurity and instability, the focus of economic policies is enhanced towards goals clearly linked to the SBA, i.e. job creation, wealth creation, equitable access to resources, overcoming informality, etc.

3.1.2 The Eastern partnership: nations in transit with diverse economic structures

The Eastern partnership countries have a common feature in terms of institutional context. All countries of the region all inherited strong administrative structures and public services from the Soviet era, and therefore possess a better basis for policy development in general terms. However, some contextual differences may condition the implementation of the SBA agenda. Those differences are of a political and economic nature.

On the one hand, democratic development may condition the attitude towards participation and the way users' needs and practitioners' experience are taken into account in the policy cycle, which is something several SBA indicators take into account. On the other hand, different economic structures may result in different degrees of interest in SME development and individual entrepreneurship by governments. Half of Azerbaijan's economy, for instance, relies on oil and gas extraction and related services, and in Belarus and Ukraine economic activities in exploiting mineral resources are central. These countries tend to rely more on big, often state-driven, companies and less on SMEs.

Although heterogeneous in terms of economic structure, when compared to the Mediterranean region, the Eastern partner countries tended to be a more homogeneous partner region for EL and ESD. Still, the average scores were rather low in all countries, regardless their democratic and economic modernization, with the remarkable exception of Georgia, approaching a level of maturity 3 (figure 5).

²⁰ 2008 report on the Euro-Mediterranean Charter of Enterprise.

²¹ Apart from Israel, which is not a direct beneficiary of ETF's EL&ESD activities.

When presenting the scores indicator by indicator, the differences between the regions become more visible, which can be partly traced back to the stronger administrative structures and public services in the Eastern partnership region. For instance, in EL, the Eastern partner countries tend to score better in policy frameworks and partnerships, than in non-formal initiatives and good practice exchange.

3.1.3 The Balkans: a region under a strong influence of the EU policy agendas

Policy making in the Balkan countries is often driven by EU agendas, as a result of the countries' target to accede the European Union. This presumably favours the endorsement and implementation of the SBA. Besides, the EU financial and technical assistance, once the region was stabilized, has helped to build capacities for policy making in general terms, so the particular policy developments for EL and ESD could be framed within larger institutional and economic reforms which are a first priority for governments and civil societies in the region.

In line with the above considerations, Croatia, a country that acceded the EU in 2013, ranked first in the 2009 assessment and was the only partner country reaching a maturity level of 3 at that time. The majority of the countries in the region were ranked around a 2 point average, despite of their economic or institutional context (even Kosovo gets 2.45 and ranks second). The case of Bosnia-Herzegovina seems to be a remarkable exception for this as the particular institutional setting of this country is hindering policy development in this and many other fields²².

Indicator by indicator, the Balkan countries show relatively better results in formal elements of the policy making cycle, than in non-formal initiatives, and they are the only region having a better policy framework for EL than for ESD.

²² According to the EC (2014:1), in Bosnia and Herzegovina, “the lack of any effective coordination mechanism on EU issues continues to negatively affect the country’s interaction with the EU. Political tensions within the Council of Ministers related to the division of competences across different levels of government have continued. This has been compounded by the complexity of the institutional arrangements in the country. (...) The political actors involved have been unable to agree countrywide strategies required for Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance in sectors such as energy, transport and environment. This has led to a substantial reduction of funding in these areas and a refocusing on assistance that benefits citizens directly”.

Euro-Mediterranean Charter of Enterprise (2008)								
	Israel	Tunisia	Egypt	Morocco	Jordan	Lebanon	Palestine	Algeria
Entrepreneurial learning	3.00	3.00	2.10	1.50	1.20	1.10	1.00	1.00
1.1.1 Policy Framework	2.00	3.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.1.2 Good Practice Exchange	3.00	3.50	2.50	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.00	1.00
1.1.3 Non-formal Learning	5.00	2.50	4.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.2.1 Lower Secondary Education	2.50	3.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.2.2 Upper Secondary Education	2.50	3.00	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00
Enterprise skills development	4.00	2.50	3.40	2.10	2.30	1.50	1.60	1.40
8.1.2 Availability of training	4.50	3.50	4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.50	1.00
8.1.3 Start-up training	4.50	2.50	2.00	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	2.00
8.1.4 Enterprise training	3.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
8.1.5 Enterprise growth	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
8.1.6 Access to international markets	5.00	2.50	4.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Average	3.50	2.75	2.75	1.80	1.75	1.30	1.30	1.20
Eastern partnership (2012)								
	Georgia	Azerbaijan	Armenia	Ukraine	Moldova	Belarus		
Entrepreneurial learning	2.88	1.88	1.75	1.38	1.75	1.25		
1.1 Policy Partnership	4.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00		
1.13 Policy Support Framework for WE	3.00	2.50	2.50	1.50	3.00	1.50		
1.4 Non-formal Learning	1.50	2.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.50		
1.5 Good Practice Exchange	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		
Enterprise skills development	2.63	2.00	2.13	2.38	1.75	1.75		
8.1.1 TNA (Training needs assessment)	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00		
8.1.3 Quality Assurance	3.50	2.00	2.00	3.50	1.00	2.00		
8.1.4 Training for Start-up Firms	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00		
8.1.5 Training for Enterprise Growth	3.00	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.00		
Average	2.75	1.94	1.94	1.88	1.75	1.50		
SEET region (2009)								
	Croatia	Kosovo	Montenegro	FYRM	Albania	Serbia	B&H	
Entrepreneurial learning	3.33	2.83	2.92	2.25	2.33	2.17	1.50	
1.1.1 Policy Elaboration	2.50	3.00	3.50	2.00	2.00	1.50	2.00	
1.1.1 Policy Partnership	4.00	3.00	4.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	
1.1.2 Policy Support Resources	3.00	3.00	3.50	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	
1.1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation	2.00	2.00	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	
1.1.4 Good Practice Exchange	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	1.50	
1.1.5 Non - formal EL	4.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.50	0.50	
Enterprise skills development	3.00	1.88	1.63	2.25	2.00	2.13	1.13	
8a 1.1 TNA (Training needs assessment)	2.50	2.50	2.50	1.50	2.00	2.50	1.50	
8a 1.3 Quality Assurance	3.50	2.00	1.00	3.50	2.00	3.00	2.00	
8a 1.4 Start-ups	2.50	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.00	1.50	1.00	
8a 1.5 Enterprise Growth	3.50	2.00	1.50	2.00	2.00	1.50	-	
Average	3.20	2.45	2.40	2.25	2.20	2.15	1.35	

Figure 5: Human capital indicators in the SBA assessment for the MENA region, first edition . Maturity levels. Average for human capital dimensions (1 and 8a). Source: Own elaboration. ETF data.

3.2 ETF's activities in EL and ESD

The ETF's work in entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills consists of the following activities²³:

- **SBA assessment:** This activity consists in elaborating the indicators of human capital dimensions of the SBA in collaboration with the partner countries and independent experts. This involves, among others, the following tasks: periodic field missions for data collection, scoring, bilateral discussions, data analysis, report writing, publication and dissemination.
- **Country-specific activities:** In some cases, partner countries may request specific policy advice from ETF, or some extra assistance which goes beyond policy advice, requiring ETF's involvement in capacity building projects, strategy definition or policy implementation.
- **Knowledge sharing at regional level:** In line with ETF's mandate, this area of action includes knowledge exchange and good practice systematization and dissemination, both at the regional and cross-regional level.

Besides, there are some activities that cannot be categorised under the three headings. For instance, the participation by ETF in the Euro-Mediterranean Working Group on Industrial Cooperation can be seen as a different activity in the field of EL and ESD, which would be framed in the support mandate given to ETF by the EU Institutions. Moreover, ETF is also involved in conceptual work in collaboration with other international organizations, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Although no evidence of the direct connection between this and the countries progress under the SBA framework was collected, the important of this networking and conceptual work – though not central in programming and reporting documents - must not be underestimated. During the period under evaluation for instance, the inter-agency conceptual activity has led to the adoption of the shared definition of entrepreneurial learning.

The following are examples of ETF's activities framed under the ETF's work on EL and ESD.

	EL	ESD
1. SBA assessment	2014 SBA assessment in the Eastern partnership	
2. Country-specific support	Key competence and curriculum developments. Lebanon 2010 - 2015	Workshop on SME skills with GIZ, Algeria 2014
3. Knowledge exchange	Call for good practices on EL in the VET system	EAP Regional key competence conference 2013

Figure 6: Examples of ETF's activities framed under the ETF's work on EL and ESD

Between 2011 and 2014, according to the Financial and Procurement Unit of ETF, the following resources were allocated to the EL and ESD work: human resources accounting for 1,256,362 Euro,

²³ The evaluation team has reviewed different types of ETF's documents containing information on EL and ESD at activity level: Annual Activity Reports (Annual Activity Report 2010, Analysis and Assessment (GB11DEC009); Annual Activity Report 2011, Analysis and Assessment (GB/12/DEC/003); Annual Activity Report 2012, Analysis and Assessment (GB/13/DEC/003); Annual Activity Report 2013, Analysis and Assessment (GB/14/DEC/004); Annual Activity Report 2014, Analysis and Assessment (GB/14/DEC/004)); Working Programs (WP) (ETF's Work Programme 2010 (GB09DEC021); ETF's Work Programme 2011 (GB11DEC001); ETF's Work Programme 2012 (GB11DEC013REV2); ETF's Work Programme 2013 (GB12DEC009_REV1). Work Programme 2010 Entrepreneurship and enterprise skills (CRO ENT 2010-11); Enterprise and entrepreneurship; Implementation Plans (Implementation Plan 2011 (CRO-ENT WP11-10-15); EL and SME Skills Implementation Plan, WP year 2012 (Enps-EL-WP12-20-15); EL and SME Skills WP 2013 (ENPS-EL-WP 13-20-15), plus the ETF Community of Practice "Enterprise and Entrepreneurship" WP 2012, all of them provided by the evaluation unit. Monitoring fiche for EL EE 2011, Monitoring EL COP 2013, Monitoring EL COP 2014, SEMED EL 2011 Self-Assessment, Monitoring SEMED EL 2013, Assessment SEMED EL 2014). The activities described in these documents may not be structured in the same way as in this report.

staff missions for 135,745 Euro, and other financial commitments for 247,692,73 Euro. Unfortunately, these figures cannot be broken down into the three types of activities listed above. Although, the financial system includes two fields for analytical information (project and activity), the way they are used only allows reports which cover either the entirety of the EL team activities, or very specific short term activities.

Here below the three types of ETF activities in the field of EL and ESD are described in more detail.

3.2.1 Carrying out the SBA assessment

The aim of the SBA assessment is to benchmark the countries in each partner region in order to stimulate further development in the related policy areas. In the SBA assessment ETF is focusing on the human capital dimensions of the Small Business Act (SBA):

- Dimension 1. Entrepreneurial learning (EL): Entrepreneurial learning is defined as all forms of education and training, formal, and non-formal, which contribute to an entrepreneurial spirit and behaviour, with or without a commercial objective. The SBA assessment looks at various aspects of the policy framework for EL, such as non-formal learning activities, or dissemination of good practices, but many indicators responds to the rationale to integrate EL as a key competence in the formal educational system, such as, policy framework, or EL in secondary education.
- Dimension 8.a. Enterprise skills development (ESD): The first sub-dimension of the dimension 8 of the SBA - Enterprise skills and innovation – looks at policies and practices aiming at the development of human capital and their impact on SMEs. Aspects considered are the availability of training, its relevance to SME needs, the quality of training provided and how well it is targeted at both new and growing enterprises.

The assessment follows a pre-described pattern: self-assessment, external assessment by an independent expert, comments from ETF and a national workshop. As of 2015, a new element was piloted to conduct peer reviews in the Balkans (see box below).

In the Balkans, a new peer review mechanism has been introduced in the last round of assessments, involving a partner country in the interviews and analysis. This was very well received in Serbia and Montenegro. It is considered a valuable contribution to the process as it contributes to increased learning effects by exposing one country not only to its own assessment but also to that of a neighbour country. While the mechanism requires further efforts from the partner countries, it increases the ownership of the assessment.

Figure 7: SBA assessment and peer review

The line of reasoning behind the SBA assessment is that governments' self-assessment and discussion with stakeholders on strengths and weaknesses will lead to improved policy plans. This mechanism has proven to be effective in most of the cases.

Serbia, for instance, progressed in all indicators between 2009 and 2012²⁴. According to the people interviewed during the case study, the different tasks of the SBA assessment (self-assessment, comments from ETF and a national workshop) provoked discussion among national stakeholders, and led to improvements which were recorded in the following assessment. The score for indicator 1.5 on non-formal EL, for instance, improved from 1.5 to 4 between 2009 and 2012. This was a consequence of the establishment of the EL Council, which also improved the score on the EL strategy indicator, and on the one on national partnership.

²⁴ The countries in the SEET region cooperated already under the charter since 2006 on EL and ESD and piloted the first SBA assessment in 2009. Unfortunately, at the time of drafting this report (September 2015) the scores for 2015 were not known yet.

Similarly to Serbia, stakeholders in Montenegro consider the SBA assessment to be an incentive for participatory policy analysis and planning. The best example of this was the establishment of a working group on the human capital dimensions which conducts the self-assessment, and leads the EL strategy development. This body was positively scored by the national partnership indicator of the SBA. Interviewees indicate that bringing together all national stakeholders is a very important mechanism in policy development in Montenegro. Other features of the SBA highlighted as factors for this success were the benchmarking side effect of the process, the regularity of the assessment, and the way national ownership embeds all the process.

Even in the cases in which the SBA assessments do not trigger a transformative process, as in Tunisia during 2010-14, ETF has succeeded to increase key actors' awareness about entrepreneurial learning and positioned itself as a reference in the field. When Tunisia decided to enhance its policy focus on EL in 2014 and 2015, OECD and ETF were considered to be the most relevant actors in this field.²⁵

This could also be the case of Armenia in the near future. Despite of the overall maturity of the country in EL – mostly linked to non-formal programs run by a national agency under the umbrella of the Ministry of Economy – still many indicators show room for improvement, especially those related to the formal educational system. The majority of the interviewees demonstrated to be aware of that, and advocated the integration of EL in the different levels of the educational system.

The main limitation about the SBA assessment is that it might trigger changes that are more formal than real. Three years after the positive improvement recorded by Serbia, the above-mentioned developments have however been proven to be non sustainable in some cases: the EL Council is dissolved and the EL strategy was never (or better not yet) published. Similarly, the score the partnership indicator for Montenegro was lowered because around 2012, the National Partnership on Entrepreneurial Learning was weak and existed mainly on paper.

Some interviewees in Lebanon also raised this issue from a completely different perspective. Lebanon scored lowest in the region according to the SBA ranking and the aspect was raised that the policy framework might be underscored because of the lack of formality of some of the achievements, and the difficulties of the administration to collect documents in proof of their maturity.

In most cases in which a gap between awareness and formal commitment on the one hand and actual implementation on the other was identified interviewees mentioned a lack of will at the Ministry level as a potential bottleneck often linked to electoral cycles and changes of Government.

One critical point can be raised related to the adequacy and the robustness of the indicator system. The maturity levels presume a single pattern of policy evolution, which is not the only way to make progress for some interviewees. For instance, if a Mediterranean country includes entrepreneurship as a key competence in secondary schools, it would have reached a level 5 of maturity in the SBA indicator number 2. However, this indicator demands a previous discussion on national policy (level 2), and presumes a pilot phase reaching a 5% of the schools.

Also, some negative comments have been collected about the room for subjectivity, inherent to qualitative indicator systems like this.

²⁵ See country specific support in Tunisia in the following section

3.2.2 Country-specific activities

The countries receiving additional ETF support during the period under evaluation were the following:

Country	Activity
Belarus	Support to key competence developments with World Bank
Ukraine	Support to TNA (Training Needs Assessment) developments
Albania	EL National Action Plan 2015
B&H	EL National Action Plan 2015
FYRM	Partnership building 2014-2015
Kosovo	EL National Action Plan 2015
Montenegro	Partnership building 2014-2015
Algeria	Workshop on SME skills 2014 with GIZ
Jordan	Workshop on SME skills 2014 with GIZ
Lebanon	Key competence and curriculum developments 2010 – 2015
Tunisia	National good practice system development and strategy building 2014 and 2015

Figure 8: List of countries receiving additional ETF support in 2010-2014: Source ETF.

The interventions analysed in the six selected countries were clearly framed under the rationale of the SBA, and related to specific indicators of its assessment framework. In Georgia, for instance the National VET Council (NVETC) was supported in line with the SBA indicator 1.1; a project on a modular approach to VET, although not only related to the SBA, addressed the mainstreaming of EL in the entire VET system; and a very specific project in partnership with the employers' organization addressed the lack of TNA (see box below, figure 10). In Montenegro, the low score in the TNA indicator in 2009 also led to a specific project on that issue, in collaboration with the Montenegrin Employers Federation, and the national VET centre. Later on, two different initiatives raised ETF's support for an EL strategy and a national partnership on EL.

Lebanon has also received additional ETF's advice on EL in the framework of a country-specific project during a long period (2010-14) in addition to the support of other international actors like the ILO or UNESCO. The ETF project, although not identified as a result of an SBA assessment, was aligned to the central idea of the SBA dimension 1, and aimed at integrating EL in VET and general education secondary schools, and successfully concluded a pilot phase targeting a 10% of the country educational centres.

It is also remarkable that country-specific interventions are not very demanding in terms of financial resources: in Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to some extent, also in Belarus, Georgia, and Ukraine, very few resources (around 1,000 Euro per country) were allocated in three years, and still these countries benefited from specific ETF's advice. This indicates that country advice is very efficient, although more information on time spent by ETF's HR would be needed in order to confirm this.

However, the case studies also highlighted some room for improvement in this activity. First, country-specific interventions are not always effective in terms of SBA scores. The intervention on TNA in Montenegro did not raise its score in this specific indicator, and the long and intense advice given in Lebanon on EL does not correspond to the country's last position in the regional ranking.

Second, in countries like Armenia (which is actually making more progress than other countries in the region receiving extra support) ETF's local counterparts' did not seem aware of the possibility of receiving specific advice following to an assessment. Therefore it seems that the possibilities of country-specific projects could be better explored in some countries like Armenia.

Third, the possibilities of this activity are not clear in terms of topics and tools either. While the range of advisory services is quite comprehensive including expertise on strategy definition, facilitation of multi stakeholder dialogue, good practice identification, technical assistance during pilot projects etc., and this portfolio of services is not clear to national stakeholders. In addition to this, the scope of topics raised by the SBA assessments seems to be rather large and it could be considered to prioritise on few key topics. (For example, in the field of EL, ETF is in a good condition to specialize integration in the VET system, while in the field of ESD, the priority for the EU could be skills for internationalization). In any case, ETF could enhance guidance and understanding of the role of country-specific activities by clarifying whether ETF provides specific advice on EL and ESD topics on the one hand or whether ETF advice is designed in a broader context focussing on educational topics which need to address certain goals of the SBA.

The SBA identified the lack of a systematic approach to TNA as a weakness in Georgia's ESD. This weakness was acknowledged at national level and especially within EDA (Enterprise Development Agency). Georgia lacks the experience and knowledge to develop such a system and more broadly lacks the methodological knowledge on employer surveying. The aim of the ETF intervention is in the first place to support in the development of a systematic TNA mechanism. As a second objective, the ETF intervention build capacity within EDA to conduct employer surveys.

In the TNA project, EDA is the main actor, however many stakeholders from industry are involved in the development, such as employer associations, industry representatives and chambers of commerce to provide contact details of employers. ETF provides technical assistance.

The following steps indicate how the felt need turned into an ETF intervention and will lead to the TNA mechanism:

- 1) Need for TNA discussed within EDA and acknowledged by the Ministry of Economy
- 2) Discussed with ETF staff who indicated that it is good idea to focus on this issue
- 3) Official letter from EDA to ETF stating what is needed
- 4) Acceptance of the request by ETF
- 5) Discuss time table between EDA and ETF
- 6) ETF developed terms of reference for hiring an external consultant
- 7) 2-day workshop with 20-30 stakeholders in Georgia. ETF was present
- 8) EDA works on two profiles (hospitality and paper production) to serve as pilot for the TNA
- 9) ETF comments on them
- 10) The selected ETF expert will work on drafting the mechanisms for surveying (questionnaire etc.)
- 11) Stakeholders are involved to reflect on the mechanism
- 12) The EDA Business Service Centre (3/4 call centre employees) will gather the information
- 13) EDA, together with the ETF expert will analyse the data and draw lessons.

It needs to be emphasised that although many steps are mentioned, the time period is very short (from step 1 to 8 is conducted in around 3 months.²⁶ The project started in Spring/Summer 2015, three years after the SBA 2012 identified TNA as a weakness. The reason for this late start is that first EDA had to be established (started in 2014).

The line of reasoning behind the ETF intervention is that ETF technical assistance is provided upon request from the country. The ownership of the TNA is therefore always in the hands of EDA; it will be their model. EDA acknowledged the lack of experience and knowledge to work on the TNA and was in need to specific expertise from other countries, something ETF could deliver.

The ETF resources devoted to this intervention concern the contracting of an external expert, attendance to a number of meetings and time of ETF staff members.

As the project is ongoing, nothing can be reported on outcomes and results. It is however expected that the work will lead to a higher score on indicator 8a1.1.

Figure 9: A systematic approach to TNA (training needs assessments)

3.2.3 Knowledge sharing at regional level

Encouraging exchanges of experience, through publications, meetings, and other appropriate means, makes part of ETF's functions according to its establishing Regulation, and inspires policy makers when pursuing abstract goals, such as promoting entrepreneurial mind-sets or responding to SME's needs of human resources. During 2010-14, ETF has led or participated in the following knowledge-sharing activities:

²⁶ NB: At the time of writing (September 2015) the process is at step 8.

Various conferences related to EL and ESD were organised:

- EAP platform 2 conference/laboratory: Tomorrow's women entrepreneurs: insights for innovative policy and practice in human capital development in the EU's Eastern Partner region (Rome, 25-27 November 2014). The aim of this intervention/laboratory is to provide a policy-practice interface through peer learning and regional cooperation. The key target group of the laboratory includes policy makers, training providers and policy advocates in the area of women's entrepreneurship. The laboratory is organised jointly by the European Commission and the ETF, in cooperation with EBRD and ILO. The event in Rome is hosted by the Italian Ministry of Economic Development²⁷. The conference brought together stakeholders from 20 EU and EaP countries. The conference – as voiced by one of the participants – provided knowledge and experience from other countries on the topic and that knowledge is used to inform policy development and awareness raising.
- Dissemination of the Romanian experience on evidence-based policy making in human resource development under the FRAME initiative.
- A regional conference on partnerships for meeting the skills demand in changing economies, framed under the Eastern Partnership Platform 2, which promotes the regional policy dialogue and exchange of experience and practice on skills matching, etc.
- EAP platform 4 conference: Entrepreneurship key competence: policy and practice in the Eastern Partnership region (Chisinau, 11-12 June 2013). The aim of the conference was to discuss in detail the EU key competence policy and how it could be adapted in the context of Eastern Partner countries. Thus, the conference debate focussed on entrepreneurship as a key competence within the formal education and non-formal learning, and was investigating into the ways to build national and regional capacity for promotion of life-long entrepreneurial learning policies and practice. The event was organised jointly by the European Commission, the Republic of Moldova and the ETF. The conference brought together close to 100 practitioners and policy makers from six Eastern Partnership countries as a follow up of the 2012 SBA assessment.²⁸

In South East Europe, regional cooperation in entrepreneurial learning is institutionalized in the SEECEL, which offers a web-based platform to promote sharing of good practices, publications, workshops, etc.

The GP initiative which is presented as ETF's main activity with regards to EL knowledge exchange, consisted first in international exchanges among EU and partner countries practitioners, and has evolved towards the set up of a system for collecting, scoring and disseminating good practices. The work on criteria definition, including a scorecard, has been concluded and two international calls have been launched.

The interviews and the survey showed that ETF is particularly well known in PCs for its conveying capacity, both in the context of the SBA assessment and in the context of VET issues. In the Eastern partnership, they specifically mentioned the laboratory on women entrepreneurs, while in the Balkans, the SEECEL initiatives and services were often mentioned, and perceived sometimes as another ETF project. In the contrary, only few comments on the good practice initiative were collected, which is understandable given the stage in which this activity is at the moment. With regards to the financial resources employed, unlike the country-specific advice, knowledge exchanges at regional level demand a significant amount of financial resources, which is understandable given the cost of gathering people at a regional level. This is the case of the good practice initiative, which has absorbed 43% of the non-labour costs of the EL team between 2011 and 2014 (105,355 Euro), followed by another regional activity, the High Level symposium on teacher development held in Istanbul in 2011

²⁷ ETF et al (2014), Conference paper: Eastern Partnership platform 2 international women's entrepreneurship laboratory. With the support of 2014 Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union Rome, 25-27 November 2014.

²⁸ ETF et al (2013), International Conference on Entrepreneurial Learning: Entrepreneurship key competence: policy and practice in the Eastern Partnership region, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova 11-12 June 2013.

(77,427 Euro). The amounts allocated to Jordan and Israel, for instance (over 12,000 Euro) are motivated by international exchanges like those related to the GP initiative.

The evaluators have concerns on the good practice initiative.

- This firstly concerns the line of reasoning behind the initiative and whether the methodology and scoreboard developed are actually fit for purpose. The quality of the work is high, but more fundamentally: the practice that inspires one person is not necessarily the practice that is of the highest quality. The scorecard and methodology developed might lead to selected practices that are bright shining stars, but not reachable for most stakeholders in the PC's.
- Secondly, the evaluators found that there are mismatched expectations on the side of the applicants. For a number of them it is not clear what the Good Practice initiative is aimed at and what is their benefit when being selected.
- Thirdly, the pilot phase is not actually a pilot phase as the approach is not piloted, the approach and scorecard are developed. The pilot did not result in an evidence base to assess whether the line of reasoning is actually correct.
- Fourthly, related to the first concerns mentioned, keeping in mind the objective of the initiative the costs of the initiative might outweigh the projected benefits. A lot of work has been done piloting the scorecard; launching pilot calls for good practices; and inviting selected good practices to discuss elements of the methodology to select good practices. It remains to be seen in what way the good practices inspire policy makers to initiate reforms.
- Fifthly, the stakeholders in a few good practices were not aware of such practices and considered other good practices were very random and not clear for transformation to other contexts.

ETF could consider clarifying the expected outcomes of this initiative and its timeframe.

Also, given the lack of connection between this activity and the SBA, it could consider to look for good practices among the countries and topics which are receiving the highest scores in the assessment (i.e. the experience of Armenia in women entrepreneurship, given its score in that specific indicator of the SBA, could be shared with the rest of the countries. The same applies to skills for internationalization in Israel, and policy partnership for EL in Georgia).

3.3 Progress on the SBA indicators

Given the baseline described in section 3.1, and the scores of the most recent assessments, it can be concluded that ETF partners have made a significant progress in EL and ESD policies during the period under evaluation. As per the following table, which takes into account only indicators that were included in the last and the previous assessments, this progress represented an average regional rate of 24%.

	Maturity level			Progress		
	EL	ESD	Overall	EL	ESD	Overall
SEET	3,08	2,75	2,95	25%	38%	29%
SEMED	2,11	2,48	2,29	22%	5%	12%
EaP	2,56	2,71	2,64	41%	29%	35%
Regional average	2,63	2,63	2,63	28%	20%	24%

Figure 10: Progress in the SBA Human Capital Indicators by region. Maturity levels (1-5 scale) and progress (%). Source: Own elaboration. ETF data

The improvements of the Eastern partnership in EL and the Balkans countries in ESD were decisive, coming to 41% and 38% respectively. Compared to these developments, the overall improvement of the SEMED countries (12%) and more specifically its progress rate of 5% in ESD appear to be rather low. When looking at progress rates country by country in this region, some frontrunners are also

found (Palestine and Algeria), but the average rates are lowered by negative progress in certain countries (Israel, Egypt and Tunisia).

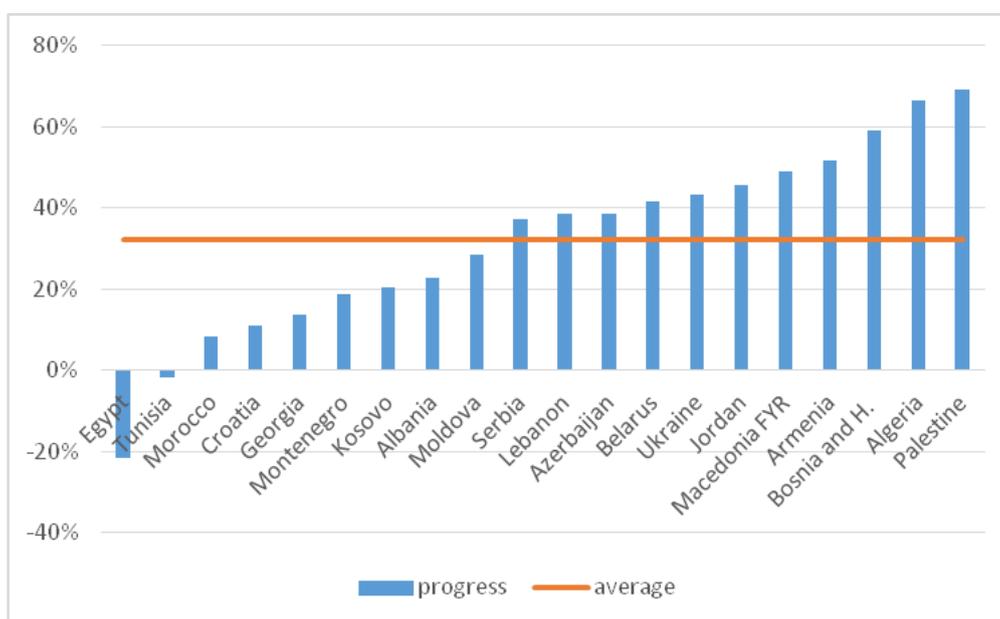


Figure 11: Progress in the SBA Human Capital Indicators by country. Progress (%). Source: Own elaboration. ETF data

There is a group of countries that are an exception to the positive outcomes of the SBA assessment. The group is formed by Egypt and Tunisia, and to a lesser extent Morocco, countries that have gone through an exceptional situation of political instability as a result of the Arab Springs, which resulted in changes of regime in Egypt and Tunisia, and a constitutional reform in Morocco.

A second group of countries formed by Croatia, Montenegro, and Georgia, have made a relatively low progress (under 20%). These three countries were ranked very high in the maturity scale at the beginning of the period under evaluation.

It is also remarkable, that during the last years, progress made related to the indicator framework has taken several countries to a level 3 of maturity²⁹, mainly in the Balkans region but also Georgia and Armenia, while the Mediterranean is clearly the least developed region in the field of EL and ESD, according to the SBA indicators.

²⁹ In the last assessments, new indicators have been added in all regions, which makes that the scores provided here for every country can differ from those in the SBA report. While we present 4 countries over a level 3, the report present only 3 (Croatia and Macedonia FYR). From an evaluation perspective, we take into account those variables that can be tracked all along the period under analysis.

Countries	EL	ESD	Total general
Croatia	4.08	2.75	3.55
Macedonia FYR	3.58	3.00	3.35
Georgia	3.00	3.25	3.13
Israel	2.30	3.70	3.00
Serbia	3.00	2.88	2.95
Kosovo	3.00	2.88	2.95
Armenia	2.75	3.13	2.94
Montenegro	2.83	2.88	2.85
Tunisia	2.90	2.50	2.70
Albania	2.67	2.75	2.70
Azerbaijan	2.50	2.88	2.69
Ukraine	2.75	2.63	2.69
Jordan	2.60	2.50	2.55
Moldova	2.25	2.25	2.25
Palestine	2.20	2.20	2.20
Bosnia and H.	2.17	2.13	2.15
Egypt	1.60	2.70	2.15
Belarus	2.13	2.13	2.13
Algeria	1.70	2.30	2.00
Morocco	1.70	2.20	1.95
Lebanon	1.90	1.70	1.80
Total general	2.58	2.62	2.60

Figure 12: Scores in the SBA Human Capital Indicators by country and dimension. Maturity levels (1-5 scale) . Source: Own elaboration. ETF data

ETF's main activity in the field of EL and ESD, the SBA assessment is performed under regional frameworks and demands a similar deployment of activities in all cases. So, in order to understand how additional involvement by ETF results in higher progress in partner countries, the previous data has to be put in relation with country-specific activities performed by ETF.

As per the following table, in general terms, there is a positive relation between country specific support provided by ETF and countries' progress in the SBA indicators. The countries receiving tailored advice by ETF have made an average progress of 42% in SBA indicators, while the average rate for countries not receiving tailored support counts for a 23%.

However, the positive effects of this type of activities are not so clear when looking at specific countries. Armenia, for instance, a country with a dramatic progress of 52%, proves that the SBA framework can be effectively applied without specific support by ETF, and Georgia, proves that additional support may not result in higher progress rates. A similar question can be raised about Montenegro and Serbia³⁰.

³⁰ These four countries were amongst the six selected countries for in-depth analysis.

Specific ETF's support	Progress rate	No specific ETF support	Progress rate
EaP:			
Ukraine	43%	Armenia	52%
Belarus	42%	Azerbaijan	39%
Georgia	14%	Moldova	29%
SEET:			
Bosnia and H.	59%	Macedonia FYR	49%
Serbia	37%	Albania	23%
Montenegro	19%	Kosovo	20%
SEMED:			
Algeria	67%	Palestine	69%
Jordan	46%	Morocco	8%
Lebanon	38%	Tunisia	-2%
		Israel	-14%
		Egypt	-22%
All partner countries <u>with</u> additional support	41%	All partner countries <u>without</u> additional support	23%

Figure 13: Comparative overview of SBA progress related to additional support from ETF

Unfortunately, with the financial information available we cannot put in relation degrees of country-specific support and degrees of progress in the SBA, as it would be misleading. At a first glance, there is no correlation between the effort made by the EL department of ETF in a partner country, and its progress in the SBA (see table below), and in some cases like Israel, it seems even counterproductive. However, as explained previously in this report, some of the amounts may be inflated by knowledge exchange events in which the country where money is allocated is not necessarily the country benefiting from it (Israel, for instance, is rather an exporter than an importer in good practices).

Region	Country	Expenditure			SBA progress
		Commitments	Missions	EUR	%
EaP	Armenia	11,144	2,063	13,207	52%
EaP	Moldova	9,868	1,268	11,136	29%
EaP	Azerbaijan	8,953	1,243	10,197	39%
EaP	Belarus	8,495	1,606	10,101	42%
EaP	Georgia	8,495	1,520	10,014	14%
EaP	Ukraine	8,036	1,370	9,406	43%
MED	Jordan	13,174	1,105	14,279	46%
MED	Israel	3,041	9,535	12,577	-14%
MED	Morocco	6,866	5,265	12,131	8%
MED	Egypt	4,757	5,147	9,903	-22%
MED	Algeria	7,976	1,807	9,783	67%
MED	Palestine	4,757	1,820	6,576	69%
MED	Lebanon	1,440	5,134	6,574	38%
MED	Tunisia	3,202	2,060	5,262	-2%
MED	Syria		2,098	2,098	
SEET	Serbia	5,814	9,509	15,323	37%
SEET	Turkey	2,151	10,872	13,022	
SEET	Bosnia and H.	8,090	1,141	9,232	59%
SEET	Montenegro	1,075	7,096	8,171	19%
SEET	Kosovo	6,243	1,637	7,879	20%
SEET	Albania	6,364	1,020	7,384	23%
SEET	FYR Macedonia	2,151	2,266	4,417	49%

¹ Self-assessment 0-3 by the EL team. Source: questionnaire

² Staff mission expenditure and non-HR commitment allocated to specific partner countries

³ SBA progress (see figure)

Figure 14: Linking financial resources and policy progress

According to the survey launched during this evaluation, the progress in EL and ESD policies which is captured by the SBA indicators is also perceived by ETF's actors and stakeholders. As a matter of fact, this survey suggests a better situation than the SBA assessments does. As an example of this, the following graph shows that 29% of the respondents see their country actually implementing an EL policy in order to meet objectives agreed after discussion, and an additional 12% see that such policies are even improved by monitoring and evaluation. This would match the description of maturity levels 4 of 5 in the SBA assessment, while the average SBA score for EL is 2.63³¹.

³¹ Perceptions might be motivated by the visibility of specific policy actions, while the SBA looks at the overall policy.

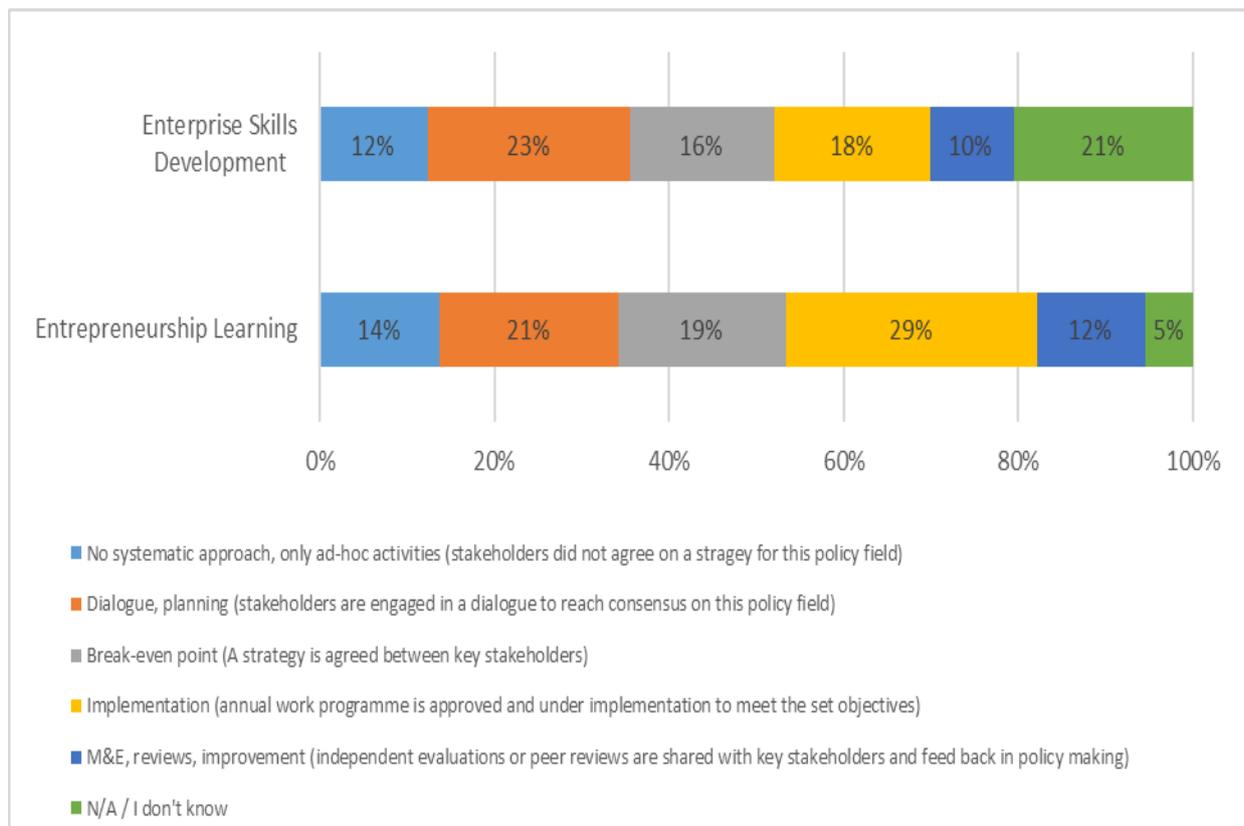


Figure 15: Please indicate which description best characterises the stage of change in Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development in your country (N=134)

4 Assessing ETF's work against evaluation criteria

The previous chapter provided an overview of the starting position related to EL and ESD in the PCs, ETF's activities and the progression achieved on SBA indicators in the period 2010-2015. In this chapter, against the background of context, activities and progress, the work of ETF is assessed in relation to the evaluation criteria: relevance (Section 4.1); efficiency (Section 4.2); effectiveness (Section 4.3); impact and sustainability (Section 4.4); and coherence, complementarity and community added value (Section 4.5). In the final section (Section 4.6), a final assessment is provided together with key factors for success and indications for improvement.

4.1 Relevance

The section of relevance discusses to what extent the ETF strategy and instruments on Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development are relevant according to partner countries' needs, priorities and policies. As indicated in the description of the intervention logic, ETF's work in this area responds to broader socio-economic issues and this is felt as very relevant in the different country contexts. ETF's strategic documents and annual work programmes are sufficiently flexible to adjust to changing needs and arising opportunities for interventions. This approach can be assessed as a strength and a weakness of the ETF EL and ESD strategy at the same time. It can be considered to be a strength as the flexibility allows for close alignment with the needs of the PC's. It can be seen as a weakness as interventions can appear ad hoc, opportunistic, and a potentially detached from the higher strategic objectives. However, this potential weak aspect of the approach is limited as the SBA assessment has the power to position the specific interventions in a broader policy framework. In addition, the SBA ensures continuity in working on EL and ESD topics and improves institutional/community memory: interventions and policy development is based on prior experiences and interventions.

Overall, ETF's strategy and work on EL and ESD are relevant taking into the account the need of Partner Countries. The respondents from the PC's participating in the survey confirm the relevance of ETF's work. Figure 15 indicates that most respondents agree with the statements concerning relevance. They agree that ETF's work in the area fits within the broader policy context (51% to a great extent) and a similar percentage considers EL and ESD to be a key priority in the country (49% to a great extent, 36% somewhat). In addition, ETF is focusing on the right topics (40% to a great extent) and to country specific challenges (38% to a great extent). The issue on which respondents agree with the least is whether ETF interventions are sufficiently tailored to country-specific needs (29% to a great extent, 45% somewhat).

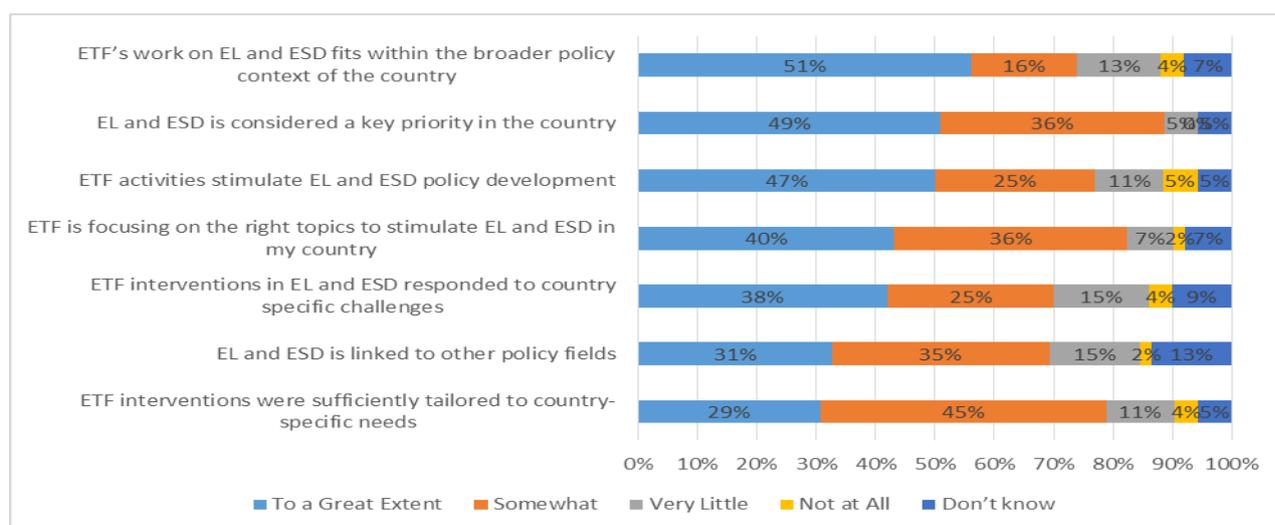


Figure 16: Please assess the extent to which ETF activities on Entrepreneurship Learning and Enterprise Skills Development are relevant in your country. Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ETF's interventions (N=55)

The survey findings can be further illustrated by examples from the country visits on the relevance of working in EL and ESD:

The SBA assessment is linked to the **Armenian** Government vision, aiming at the economic transition towards an open and dynamic economy, based on individual's initiatives and human capital. The low levels of unemployment, high level of migration, informality and inactivity are partially a result of the limited capacity of the Armenian economy to provide business and job opportunities. Focusing on EL and ESD therefore is very relevant in the Armenian context. Given the challenges **Georgia** is facing, EL and ESD is considered to be a very relevant field to work on. Economic growth is expected from new companies and from existing companies to grow. Both require knowledge, skills and attitudes related to entrepreneurship and further development of the human resources. In **Montenegro** Entrepreneurial Learning is regarded as a priority. As the country is highly dependent on SMEs, the economy is in need of the (further) development of entrepreneurial culture and spirit. In **Tunisia**, it clearly matches the new regime's focus on tackling unemployment, while in Lebanon it is seen as a way to stop emigration and brain drainage. In **Serbia**, EL and ESD are not seen as a key priority in Serbia, despite high levels of youth unemployment and the lack of entrepreneurial culture in the country. A crucial factor in any implementation of policies in this direction seems to be the Ministry of Education. However, the pace of reforms in the education sector in general is considered to be slow in reforms and the Ministry does not seem to have the political commitment to speed up this process.

Other ETF PC's faced contextual challenges hampering the policy attention to EL and ESD. This concerns the Arab Spring and subsequent turmoil and the Ukraine crisis. In Tunisia, only recently in 2013, a more systematic approach to EL and ESD could be launched as a consequence of the democratic revolution.

The level of relevance of the key main ETF instruments on EL and ESD differs. While the survey and the country analysis' indicate a positive assessment on the relevance of ETF's interventions, the level of relevance appears to differ between the types of interventions (as categorised and described in chapter 3):

- In general, the **SBA assessment** is considered very relevant. For instance in Montenegro the SBA assessment functions as a mirror to identify key weaknesses that need addressing. Also in the more challenging Serbian context (with regard keeping EL and ESD as a priority), the SBA assessment is relevant to keep EL and ESD on the agenda.

- Besides the SBA assessment, also the **country-specific interventions** are considered relevant as these address specific development issues for EL and ESD. These interventions increase the relevance of ETF's work when being strongly linked to weaknesses identified in the SBA assessment, as it is the case in Georgia and Montenegro. The link with the SBA assessment strengthens the line of reasoning behind specific interventions. The box in Section 3.2.2 on TNA in Georgia provides an example of how a specific intervention was selected based on the SBA assessment.
- **Knowledge sharing interventions and conferences** contribute to capacity and network building and are regarded as a way to keep specific topics on the agenda. The relevance of the Good Practice initiative is difficult to assess as it has only been launched recently (2015).

An issue that could receive more attention in the PC's is to further conceptualise EL and ESD. In most countries, EL is well conceptualised (it is clear what it is about), but ESD remains rather vague for quite some stakeholders. Is it about start-up facilities, training need analysis, provision of training for entrepreneurs, providing training for employees? What skills development are we taking into account (entrepreneurial competences, general work competences, technical competences)? Whose responsibility is it to provide training (State, public educational institutions, private providers, employers themselves)?

Related to this, in most PC's EL and ESD could be seen more as a continuum in a lifelong learning perspective. In many countries, EL and ESD are dealt with separately, whereby the Ministry of Education is responsible for improving EL in schools and the Ministry of Economy is responsible for providing support to enterprises. Strengthening EL and ESD requires systematic action at the continuum that runs from general education to growing businesses.

4.2 Efficiency

The section on efficiency discusses to what extent the human and financial resources allocated to Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Skills activities are utilised efficiently and whether they are adequate to achieve the objectives as laid out in the relevant ETF MTP and Work Programmes. The evaluators have found some difficulties in using financial information as an input to an efficiency assessment, but the question was addressed during the interviews and the survey³².

The survey indicates that ETF's human capacities are generally considered strong (both at a national and regional level), however the respondents are very critical towards whether ETF has the financial resources to have an impact at national and regional level. More than 40% of the respondents voiced their doubts whether ETF resources are sufficient to have impact at regional and national level.

³² Although ETF provided a budgetary execution at a very early stage of the evaluation, after several exchanges, it was not possible to obtain a relevant activity breakdown of the expenses of the EL team. A country breakdown was obtained, but it missed HR expenses, which were reported in a different manner.

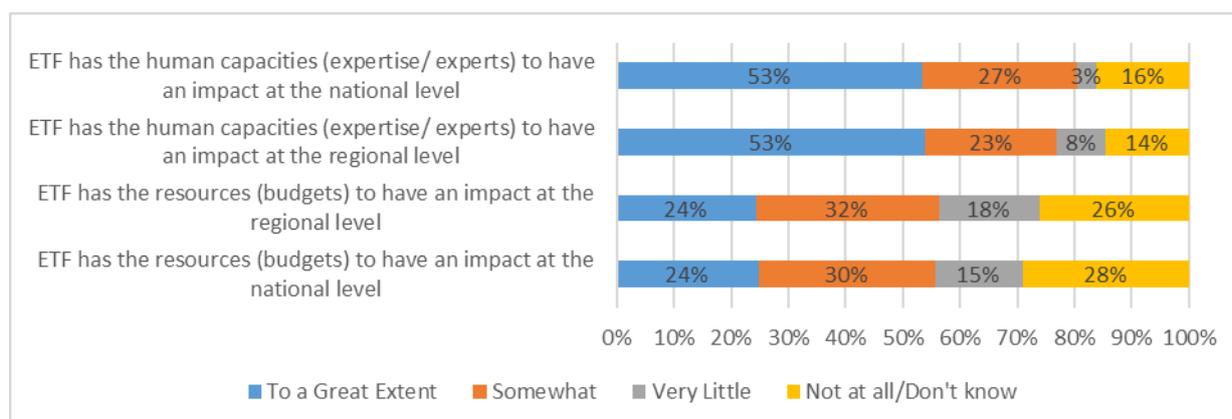


Figure 17: Please indicate the extent to which you can agree with the following statements concerning the role of ETF in Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development. Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ETF'

When looking more specifically at the SBA assessment, besides organising workshops and meetings jointly with other donors and governments, ETF staff conducted the validation of the self-assessment. In some cases, it was highlighted that despite of the limited resources, the national officers involved in the assessment received more assistance by ETF than in other dimensions of the SBA. This information, when put in relation with the effects triggered by the SBA assessment, indicates that ETF's work has been efficient.

More in terms of a qualitative assessment, it can be said that the SBA assessment, while having a limited financial involvement of ETF (a number of missions, time-investments of ETF staff and sometimes an external consultant), it can be considered to be an important driver for policy design, development and, more modestly, policy implementation. In **Georgia** for instance, with limited resources and applying a very strong mechanisms in the SBA assessment (benchmarking countries on the basis of validated self-assessment), ETF is able to create national ownership to work on the identified weaknesses in EL and ESD. Through targeted support, ETF is thereafter able to provide strategic guidance to stakeholders. Also in **Lebanon**, the ETF interventions are considered to be efficient in relation to other support received in the framework of the SBA, as the interventions allow for improving the entrepreneurship spirit, leadership and embedding of EL in VET. The human resources allocated to the SBA assessment are regarded as sufficient to support the country. In **Armenia**, the SBA assessment is performed efficiently despite of the complexity of its indicators, and some criticism about its room for subjectivity³³. In the **SEET region**, the SBA assessment is accompanied by SEECCEL from this year onwards, who will be more and more in a leading role in the next SBA assessment as agreed with ETF.

There are indications from the country studies and the annual reports that the additional interventions, such as country-specific interventions and knowledge-sharing activities are carried out within budgetary frameworks and mostly within the proposed time-frame. The evaluators did not come across major deviations in this regard.

One issue which should be considered is whether the investment in the Good Practice initiative will lead to results in the end. The approach taken seems to be a rather time consuming one and it could be

³³ Regarding the robustness of the system, some external observers claim that there is room for subjectivity, but the ones more directly involved explain that the procedures are so demanding and clear, than in practice, this risk is under control. As a matter of fact, in the case of Armenia, the Government's self-evaluation and the one from an independent expert, provided almost the same results.

questioned whether the heaviness of the approach is in line with the final objective of sharing good practices: what ETF has developed so far is in fact a model of what constitutes a good training provider. In **Serbia**, respondents indicated that the Good Practice application form is too administrative for what the organisation can benefit from being selected reducing appetite to participate.

Finally, it must be stated that the efficiency of the program could have been better assessed with thorough financial information structured in accordance to ETF’s strategy. At corporate level, this indicates that the financial units at ETF and the EL team could be better connected and this would improve the program at least with regards to its accountability.

4.3 Effectiveness

This section on the effectiveness of ETF’s work in EL and ESD concerns to which extent the different ETF actions at national, regional and corporate level have met the objectives in the Annual Plans 2010-2014. Before making this assessment, this section will first assess how the indicators for the SBA Dimension 1 (Entrepreneurial Learning and Women’s Entrepreneurship) and Dimension 8 (SME skills) have assisted ETF’s partner countries in bringing the Entrepreneurship Policy Agenda forward. Secondly, the section will discuss to what extent ETF reached the objectives as summarised for the period 2010-2015.

The survey results (see figure 18) indicate that almost 40% of the respondents find that the SBA assessment pushes to a great extent progression in EL and ESD in the PC’s. No difference is reported with respect dimension 1 or dimension 8. However, a large percentage (30%) of respondents felt unable to assess how the indicators were effective in assisting PC’s pushing the EL and ESD agenda.

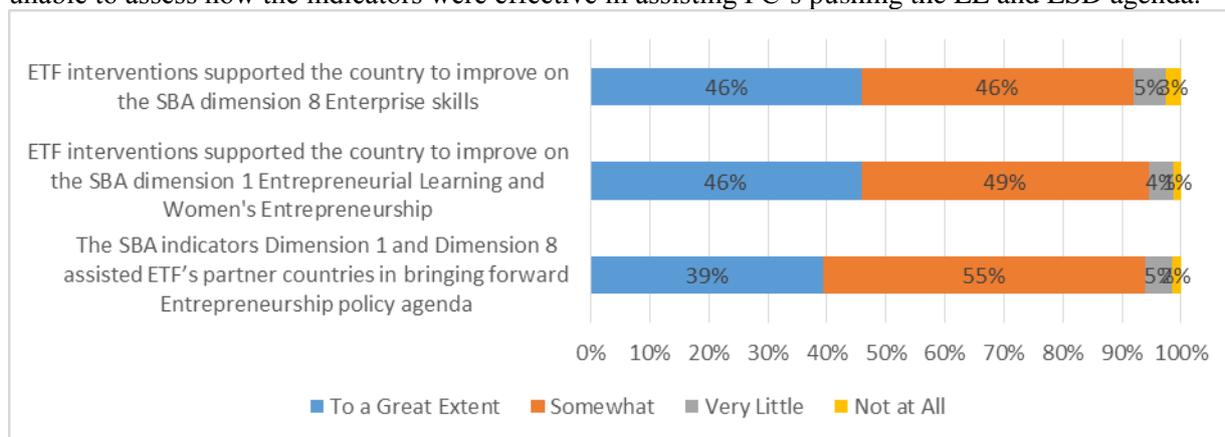


Figure 18: Please assess the extent to which SBA (Small Business Act) progression activities are effective in the Partner Countries. Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ETF's interventions (N=106, 30% indicated 'don't know')

The country studies confirm the positive assessment of the effectiveness of the SBA assessment. Despite difficult country contexts, through the SBA assessment, EL and ESD is positioned as a priority. SBA positions EL and ESD as a priority by providing a common language for stakeholders and by bringing different relevant stakeholders together; and while being voluntary benchmarking process, stakeholders see the importance of investing in the SBA assessment.

The work of ETF on EL and ESD in general (not only focussing on the SBA) is valued for a number of reasons. The survey indicates that ETF is effective in bringing together stakeholders (57% to a great extent); engage different stakeholders (55% to a great extent); and improve the policy dialogue (49% to a great extent). Result areas on which respondents are less positive concern that ETF work led to improved monitoring and reviewing of policies (27% to a great extent; 27% very little, not at all, do

not know) and also whether ETF work was effective in putting EL and ESD on the national policy agenda (32% to a great extent; 27% very little, not at all, do not know).

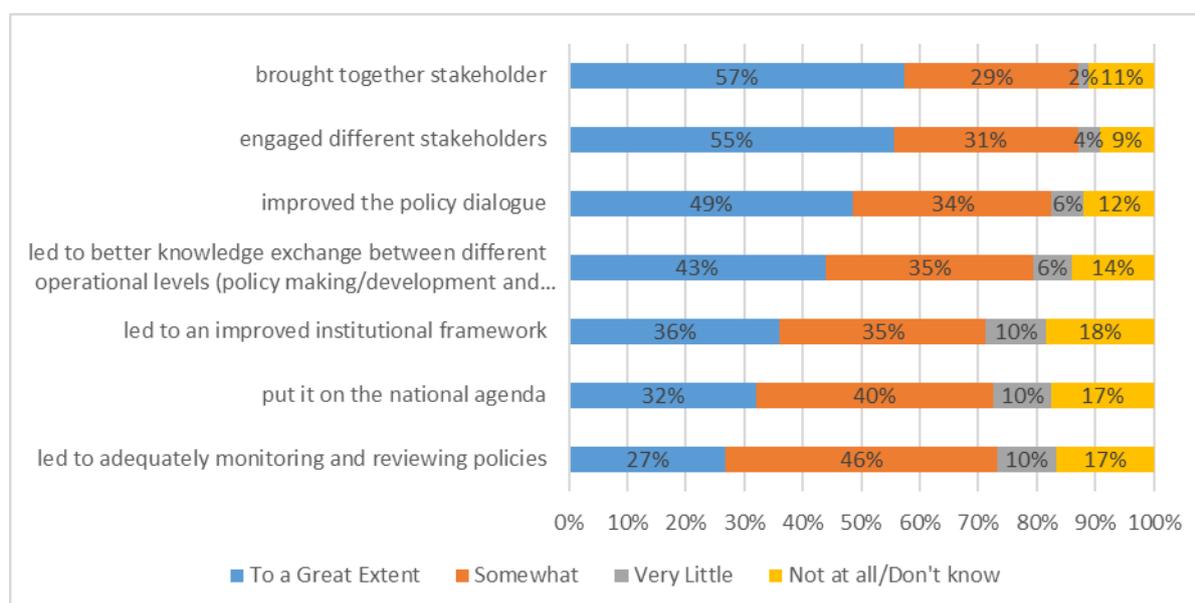


Figure 19: In the field of Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development ETF interventions in the ETF Partner Countries have: Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ETF's interventions (N=109)

These survey findings are partially confirmed by the country studies. Also here the emphasis is on bringing stakeholders together and engaging them, in addition, often reference is made to putting EL and ESD on the policy agenda. Here below illustrations on the effectiveness of ETF's work are provided from the countries visited:

- In **Georgia**, the SBA assessment has put EL and ESD on the agenda in Georgia and it is included as priority in the 2013 VET strategy.
- In **Montenegro**, the SBA assessment led to new projects in a number of cases. The Skills for growth and enterprises 2009-2010 project was launched as a direct consequence of low scores on TNA. The re-building of the National Partnership directly relates to key weaknesses identified in the system. In that way the country specific intervention contributed directly to addressing main weaknesses in the system.
- In **Serbia**, the SBA assessment is regarded as a very important process to identify weaknesses in the system. Key recommendations from previous SBA assessment have recently been included in different strategic plans (for instance SME strategy and Youth strategy).
- In **Tunisia**, the SBA assessment has helped the Tunisian Government to launch a more systematic approach on EL only after the 2013 assessment and probably because the Government's priorities had changed in relation to the situation in 2008, and as a consequence of the democratic revolution. ETF and its main local counterpart, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment (MFPE), may need to review the national good practice initiative as a mean to design a proposal for a national model for EL in the VET system in two months, and look at other sources of evidence about policy performance, including lessons learnt from less successful experiences. As part of the ESD in Tunisia, the currently existing narrow knowledge and skills base in employers needs to be reviewed by the Ministry with an aim to develop further the enterprise and entrepreneurial competencies.
- **Lebanon** has run a project aiming at integrating EL in VET and general education secondary schools, and successfully concluded a pilot phase targeting a 10% of the country educational

centres. The project, aligned to the SBA, was supported by ETF in coordination with other international players like the UNESCO, the ILO and the Italian Cooperation.

In line with the objectives of ETF's work in EL and ESD (as summarised in chapter 2), the following table provides an assessment, based on the survey results, country studies and document analysis to what extent ETF was effective in reaching those objectives.

Objective (summarised from work programmes)	Assessment to what extent ETF reached the objective in 2010-2014 (not at all, very little, to some extent, to a large extent)	Explanation
to provide assistance to the EC	to a large extent	<p>At the level of the PC's ETF worked closely with EU Delegations in the PC's to design programmes/projects and to assist with expertise in specific occasions and events (national workshops, conferences, trainings). The role of ETF in general (especially the country desks) is valued a lot.</p> <p>At institutional level, ETF works closely with the EC on policy developments related to EL and ESD (such as the SBA) and ETF participates in European events on the issue.</p>
to support countries in their SBA assessment, review and monitoring of policies	to a large extent	The survey data and the country studies indicate the relevance and effectiveness of the SBA assessment in bringing stakeholders together and putting EL and ESD on the agenda. There are no negative signals about the support provided by ETF: ETF effectively supports PC's to conduct self-assessments, do peer review (and be subject to peer review) and accept the final ratings as included in the SME policy index reports.
to establishing country ownership for EL and ESD	to some extent	The work of ETF, especially the SBA assessment, contributed to establishing ownership amongst stakeholders, but still this is a challenging issue, especially when it comes to implementation. In many countries the momentum gained during the process of the SBA assessment is easily lost in favour of more pressing policy challenges.
to provide additional country-specific assistance	to some extent	The country specific support of ETF is valued a lot. Although the scope of interventions is not enormous (usually limited technical assistance and a limited number of missions), interventions are considered to be of high quality, involving the right experts and expertise, flexible and tailored to specific needs. The interventions seem to work better when tightly linked to the SBA assessment. A negative aspect of this type of activity is that less than half of the PC's benefitted from this service.
stimulate good practice exchange and to promote entrepreneurship for specific groups (women, youth)	Very little	<p>The good practice exchange takes place mainly by means of publications (inform), and conferences organised on for instance Women Entrepreneurship. Also the SBA assessment includes an indicator on good practice exchange.</p> <p>The expected results as stated in the ETF work programme 2014 related to the Good Practice Initiative includes "a virtual peer review platform for good practice in entrepreneurship and enterprise skills, with first</p>

catalogue of quality assured good practices.”³⁴ As of end of 2015, this envisaged result was not realised.

Figure 20: Assessment to what extent ETF was effective in reaching the objectives as summarised in Chapter 2

With regard to specific interventions, beneficiaries indicate to be satisfied and that ETF activities meet the expectations. 54% of the respondents indicate that their expectations were to a great extent being met and 40% indicates that this is somewhat the case.³⁵ In the implementation of ETF activities, 42% found the planning and work plan of the intervention excellent; 40% said the same about the provision of information after the intervention (feedback). Less positively (but still very positive) assessed were the clarity of roles of those involved in the intervention (excellent 28%) and the provision of information prior to the intervention (excellent 32%).³⁶

4.4 Impact and sustainability

This section seeks to assess to what extent ETF’s work in EL and ESD has led to sustainable changes in the PCs. It discusses the main results of ETF’s work and, how ETF’s work is embedded politically and institutionally in the countries and in which areas ETF’s work had impact.

The ETF work is targeted first and foremost on developing stakeholder capacities to develop EL and ESD in their country. This is done through the SBA assessment and review of countries’ self-assessments; the specific capacity building activities related to the SBA assessment and related to specific topics (e.g. women entrepreneurship). Secondly, ETF’s role is to bring stakeholders into dialogue with each other. This is one aspect of the regional work and is the aim of the good practice exchange.

The SBA assessments indicate a progression on most indicators and in all regions in the period 2010-2014 (See Section 3.3). The country reports show that progress is achieved in between SBA assessments. Countries improve their systems with regard the EL and ESD, but challenges that remain concern stakeholder involvement (mainly employers), teacher competences for teaching EL and maintaining momentum on working on EL and ESD. For instance in **Armenia**, many of the issues raised in the 2012 assessment have been addressed in the following years (e.g. women entrepreneurship), and additional resources could be mobilized from other donors (e.g. the Asian Development Bank). Progress has been made in different policy aspects taken into account by the SBA indicator system (impact), indicating that the SBA assessment might be a good tool to stimulate policy development in favour of SMEs. In **Georgia**, the government actions taken after the SBA assessment (introduction of modular approach in VET, including one module on entrepreneurship; introducing EL in general education; working on TNA, skills mismatch, social partnerships etc.) slowly improve the situation on the ground. However there prevail also concerns that employers are not sufficiently involved, that the plans on paper do not translate into reality and that the developed modules on EL are too theoretical. In addition, it remains to be seen how teachers are trained to provide the courses (both in general education and VET). In **Montenegro**, the outcomes of ETF’s projects (for instance establishing the National Partnership) are positively assessed by the stakeholders: projects are seen as joins results, ownership is created and ETF was able to bring all relevant stakeholders together. Still, issues remain, mainly in the area of implementation. For instance, there is a need for a more systematic approach to enterprise skills development (courses, training) requiring the development of courses, including e-courses and the training of trainers. In **Serbia**, despite including EL and ESD in strategic policy plans, the implementation however remains at high policy levels and is weak in practice. Even more, since the 2012 SBA assessment the EL Council has

³⁴ ETF (2013) ETF work programme 2014, p. 39.

³⁵ Survey question: Did the interventions meet your expectations? (N=52)

³⁶ Survey question: How do you assess the implementation of ETF interventions in terms of: (N=53)

been dissolved and the intended EL strategy has not been finalised. Consequently, the impact of ETF’s work in EL and ESD is difficult to measure.

When assessing the impact, it should also be mentioned that different contextual factors can contribute or respectively hamper the potential level of impact ETF activities can have.

For instance, it is evident that the political instability is a major bottleneck for countries’ progress in the SBA scale of maturity. Tunisia is probably the best example of this and can reflect the situation in most of the countries of the region. Even Lebanon, which shows a higher progress rate, can be considered a challenging case, as its starting position was very low, and from a relative point of view, it even deteriorated during the last years. It has lost two positions, and now stands at the very bottom of the regional ranking. Algeria, on the contrary, has been the Mediterranean country with the highest progress rate, and probably the most stable one.

The degree of progression also depends on the starting position of countries as expressed in the SBA assessment around 2010. It is easier to progress from level 1 to level 2 than from level 3 to level 4 as the emphasis shifts from policy dialogue and design to development and implementation. In the Eastern partnership region, Armenia’s progress has been much more pronounced than Georgia’s. This can be mainly explained by the fact that, in the baseline year 2012, Georgia’s scores were already at a high level, meaning that the next steps were implementing policies developed.

Another relevant contextual factor to endorse and implement the SBA is closer approximation to the EU. This is especially remarkable in the case of Georgia, within the Eastern partnership region, while this factor applies to all countries in the Balkan region. In Tunisia and Lebanon and also in Armenia where the approximation to the EU is not so relevant, the Governments might see the SBA in its all dimensions as a way to identify financial assistance programs. This produces a generally favourable position towards the overall agenda, but drives policy planning efforts towards the dimensions in which policy implementation is receiving financial support. In the case of Tunisia, all the dimensions except for dimension 1 and 8a.

Due to the manifold contextual factors, it is difficult to clearly demarcate what is the impact of ETF interventions on the progression SBA indicators and other results and effects encountered in the country studies (such as gained capacities in policy development). In order to shed some light on this, the survey data indicates in which areas ETF interventions supported developments. The survey (see figure 21) indicates that ETF interventions led to more attention to EL in education (57% to a great extent) and that ETF established a more entrepreneurial culture in general (40% to a great extent). 36% of the respondent indicated that ETF work improved the assessment of training needs of enterprises to a great extent. The development of teachers in the field of entrepreneurship and the improvement of training offered to enterprises is not seen as a key area of ETF support (respectively 30% and 23% to a great extent).

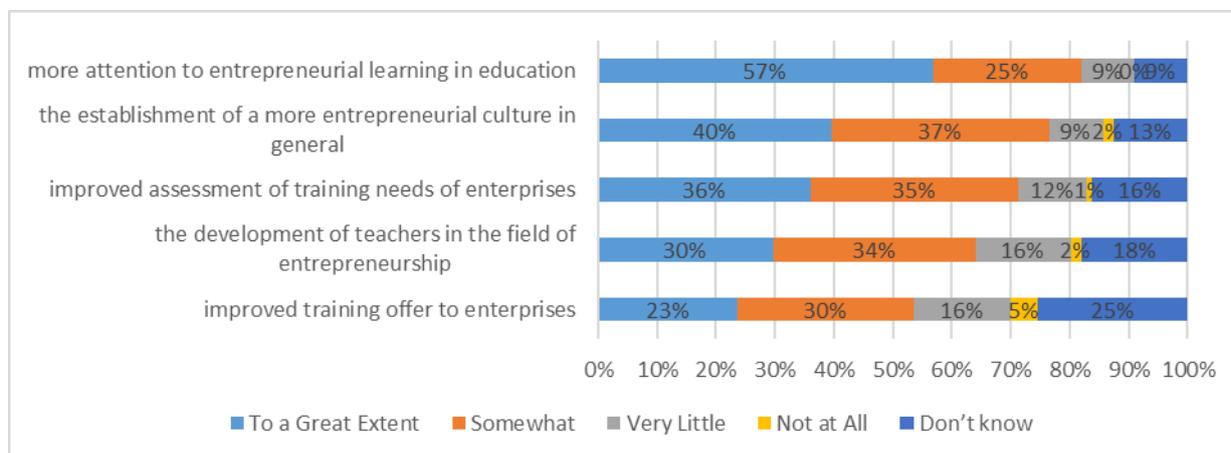


Figure 21: ETF interventions supported: Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ETF's interventions (N=111)

Another survey question (see figure 22) deals with the question in which areas ETF interventions contributed to increasing capacities of stakeholders. Overall policy making, implementation and monitoring capacities have been more pronouncedly gained related to EL compared to ESD. For both EL and ESD gaining competences in policy making is mentioned more often than policy implementation and monitoring.

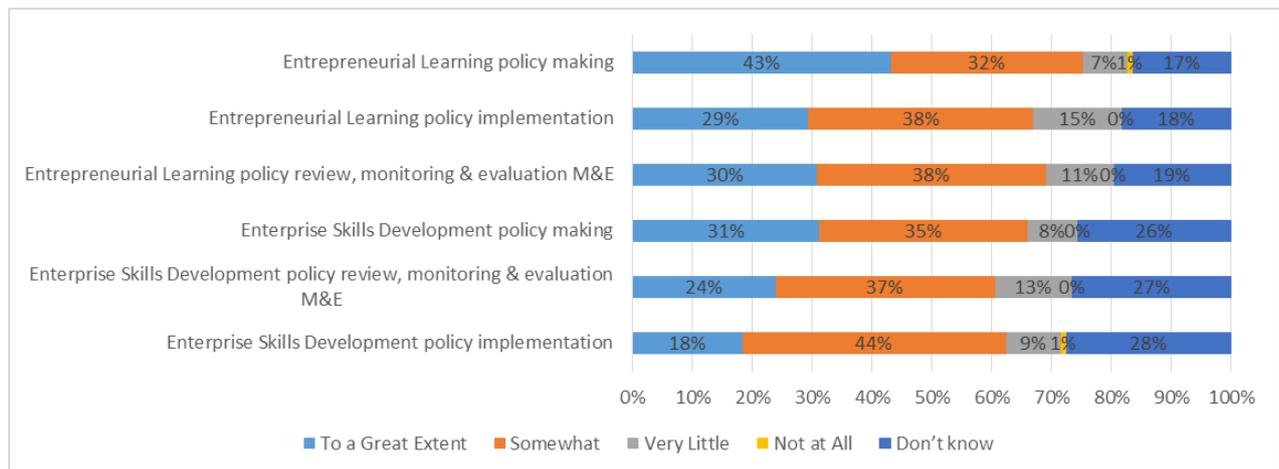


Figure 22: ETF interventions contributed to increased capacities in: Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ETF's interventions (N=109)

Due to the commitment and involvement of many stakeholders, both at national and international level, in the SBA assessment, ETF’s work on EL and ESD sets the ground for sustainable development in these fields. The mechanism of the SBA assessment per se ensures that the topics stay on national priority lists. In addition, due to the repetitive nature and the consequent learning effect, the topics might gain in importance in the PCs. There are however regional differences: in the SEET region, also due to the involvement of SEECCEL and the national commitment of PCs to SEECCEL, EL and ESD is firmly embedded in policy making and implementation. In the Eastern Partnership, the embeddedness is less stable, relying more on the willingness and priority agenda of the individual countries: there is less peer pressure than in the SEET region. In the SEMED region, it is not evident that EL and ESD remains on the political agenda in between SBA assessments.

4.5 Coherence/Complementarity and Community value added

A last set of evaluation criteria concerns the coherence of ETF’s work at different levels and the complementarity/ community added value of interventions compared to what other organisations are doing.

To start, the role of ETF is valued by stakeholders participating in the survey. 73% sees ETF as an important player in the field of EL and ESD, ETF plays an important role as provider of information (69%) and is a reliable cooperation partner (68%). It is valued less positively whether ETF is an authority (44%) and whether ETF is setting the agenda (38%).

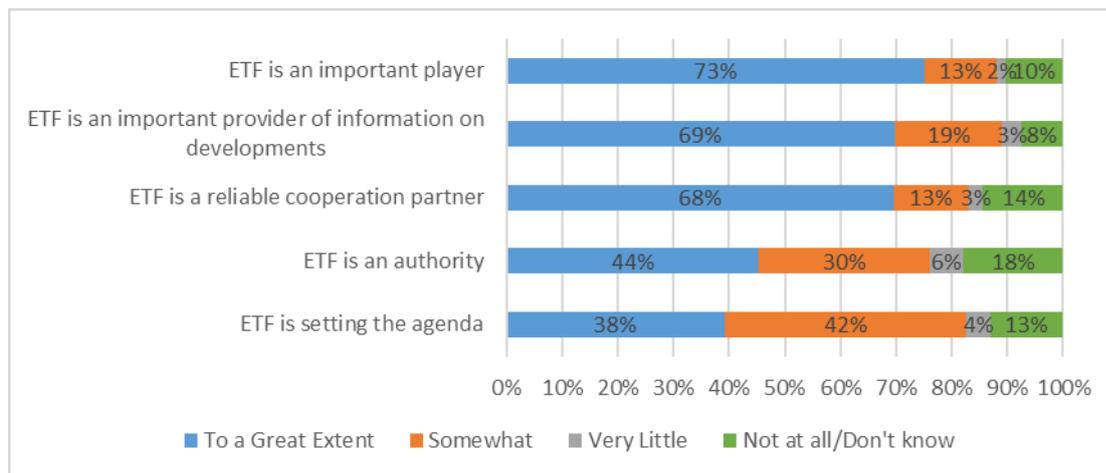


Figure 23: Please indicate the extent to which you can agree with the following statements concerning the role of ETF in Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development. Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ETF'

Stakeholders in the PCs do not regard ETF as a donor organisation. It is perceived as an organisation that has long-term commitments with the key stakeholders in the field of education and labour market. In Georgia for instance, ETF is not seen as a donor organisation, but as a technical assistant and sounding board for mainly government organisations. In that way, it contributes in its own way to the development of the VET system and EL and ESD specifically. It plays a different role than other (donor) organisations. In Montenegro ETF is seen by most stakeholders as an organisation that is not project oriented but always has a long-term vision in mind. It is felt that ETF is there to stay and will always support the country.

The respondents of the survey indicate (see figure 24) a positive attitude towards how ETF cooperates with other organisations; 60% indicates the ETF cooperated effectively with the European Commission and 44% indicates that ETF cooperates effectively with other international organisations (including donors) in reaching objectives. Concerning ETF's work at regional (multi-country) and national level, a majority perceives a strong synergy between the levels (51%) and 49% agree that ETF's approach has been consistent over the years. Concerning complementarities, 47% of the respondents indicate that ETF is somewhat focussing on issues that others do not. Hence stakeholders do see a certain overlap in which topics ETF and other organisations cover.³⁷

³⁷ This is affirmed by another question in the survey: To what extent is there synergy between ETF interventions in Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development and other organisations? Of those respondents who knew, 34% indicated that to a great extent ETF is focusing on issues that others do not and 41% is indicated that that is somewhat the case.

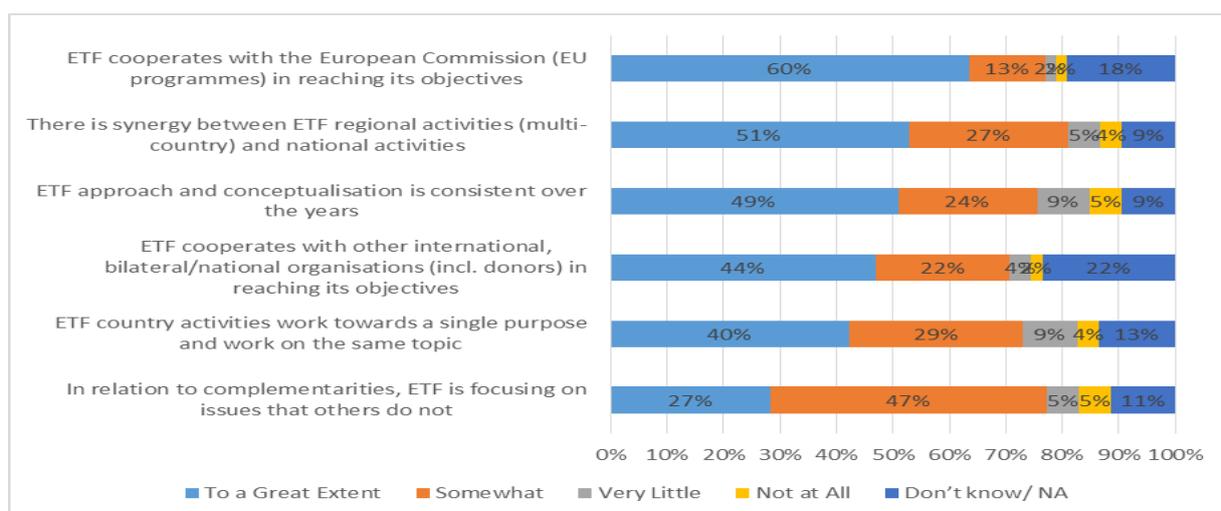


Figure 24: Please assess the extent to which ETF activities in Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development are coherent (also with activities from other organisations) Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ET

A thematic overlap is not seen as a problem in none of the countries visited as each organization has its own approach and focus areas. In **Montenegro**, as there are not so many donors active and because ETF has a very specific relationship with all stakeholders involved in EL and ESD, ETF directly adds value and works complementary to national and international stakeholders. The situation in **Serbia** is slightly different, as besides the SBA assessment, ETF is not very visible in Serbia on EL and ESD. Other organisations such as SEECCEL, Junior Achievement Serbia (JAS) and the British Council (BC) position themselves more on the forefront. Stakeholders however very clearly know what kind of assistance is provided by ETF. Donor organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) indicate that there is room to enhance joint initiatives and programming to increase impact.

There is little indication that ETF, in the field of EL and ESD, is effectively and continuously cooperating with specific other organisations such as UNESCO, ILO, WB, ADB, GIZ, BC etc. as only few examples could be identified in the field. There is evidence of some effective donor cooperation in **Lebanon** where ETF got involved in policy implementation at a pilot phase. The project was a particularly a good example of donor coordination as it involved different international actors, and divided their labour based on previous experience and added value. It was born as a joint initiative between ETF and the Italian Cooperation and included the ILO and UNESCO. The Italian cooperation provided financial assistance, ETF expertise in VET and EL integration in the curricula, the ILO provided training methodologies on EL like (Know About Business), and the UNESCO focused on curricula adaptation. In **Armenia**, funds have been mobilised from other organisations to work on issues identified in the SBA. This indicator role (identifying where other organisations could work on) is valued by other international organisations.

According to the country studies, the agencies funding or channelling funds for program implementation - ILO, the ADB, the ERDB, the EU Delegation and bilateral/national organisations such as GIZ, USAID, Italy and France – can more easily incur in certain duplications than ETF, which has a very clear niche linked to the SBA agenda and does not overlap with others' activities.

In general, there is great trust in what ETF is doing. When asked whether ETF is best positioned to take up certain roles related to EL and ESD (or whether other organisations are better positioned), for all roles, respondents indicate that ETF is better positioned than others (see figure 25). The highest scoring roles are received for policy advice; platform for networking; and knowledge developer/manager. Donor coordination and donor organisation are roles that are the least associated with ETF. The country studies indicate that donor coordination should be a task of the governments themselves, not of an external agent.

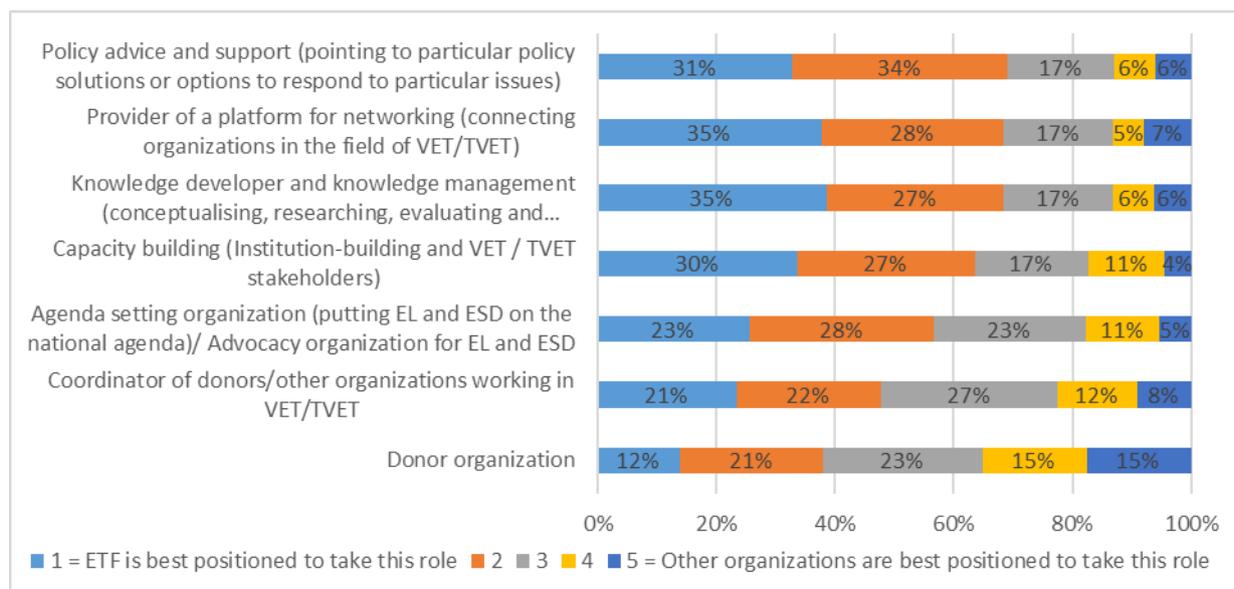


Figure 25: In your view, is ETF best positioned to take up the following roles, or are other organizations better positioned in the field of Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development? Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development

Given these roles (policy advice, networker), and the importance the SBA assessment has in the PCs, it is clear that ETF adds value to the EL and ESD agenda in the PC’s. One aspect that was mentioned in some of the countries is that while other organisations focused on a range of issues, ETF’s had a continuous focus on of EL and ESD over the years. This continuity is valued by stakeholders. However there is also some evidence that there might be room to enhance joint initiatives with other organisations such as joint conferences, events, small-scale projects, matching expertise and donor-funds etc.

4.6 Final assessment, factors for success of ETF interventions and indications for improvement

In general, ETF's work on EL and ESD is considered relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable. The table below provides a final assessment of the ETF interventions and ETF's work in general related to the evaluation criteria, based on the information provided and analysed in the previous sections and chapters (five point scale, running from negative (1√) to positive assessment (5√).

	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact / sustainability	Coherence / Complementarity and Community value added
SBA assessment	√√√√	√√	√√√√	√√√√	√√√√
Country-specific activities	√√√√	√√	√√√√	√√	√√√√
Knowledge-sharing at regional level ³⁸	√√	√	√	√	√√
EC support	√√√√	√√√√	√√√√	√√	√√√√
General assessment of ETF work in EL and ESD	√√√√	√√	√√√√	√√√√	√√√√

Figure 26: Assessment of ETF interventions in EL and ESD and ETF work on EL and ESD in general against evaluation criteria

The positive assessment is the result of a number of factors for success that underlie the ETF work. The country studies and survey³⁹ results list the following more general factors:

- **Information provision and clear objectives:** ETF is able to provide useful information and put the ETF work and the work of national stakeholders in a framework having clear objectives and a clear direction.
- **Level of expertise:** ETF is able to mobilise quality experts and the level of expertise of ETF itself is considered high as well.
- **General attitude of ETF and its experts:** ETF is considered reliable, unbiased and trustworthy. ETF is approachable for direct support. ETF is able to organise events very flexible. ETF is working in a flexible non-bureaucratic way.
- **Quality of support and coherence between activities:** ETF's reports, comments, contributions and interventions are considered of high quality. ETF staff is able to point to interesting development in other countries in the region and in Europe.
- **Long-term involvement and knowledge of country:** ETF has a long-term involvement in the subject area and ETF staff (especially the country manager) is familiar with the country specifics and key stakeholders.

³⁸ Excluding the Good Practice Initiative.

³⁹ The response to the question "To what extent are the following aspects factors for success of ETF activities in your country?" shows that information and knowledge transfer is mentioned the most as a factor for success (71% to a great extent), followed by clear objectives and strategy (65% to a great extent) and Cooperation with diverse groups of stakeholders (63% to a great extent).

- **Reputation of ETF:** ETF has a good reputation related to EL and ESD, especially supported by the importance of the SBA assessment and based on interventions in other areas (for instance support in developing qualifications frameworks).
- **Cooperation with diverse stakeholder groups:** ETF is able to bring together different stakeholder groups.

There are also a number of specific factors which are mentioned in relation to success of specific ETF interventions:

- Creating **ownership** amongst national stakeholders to work on self-identified weaknesses in the SBA assessment.
- Combine technical assistance with **capacity building**. The technical assistance is not considered a one-off service, but through building capacities within the stakeholder organisations, technical assistance might not be required in the future.
- Benchmarking and periodical assessment in the SBA assessment creates both a **learning and a competitive effect**: Countries want to improve and show results to neighbouring countries.

Besides these factors for success, there are also aspects that could be taken into account for future work on EL and ESD by ETF. The survey indicates that 65% of the respondents find that ETF could to a great extent be more visible in the field of EL and ESD. Also cooperation with other international organisations, focus on direct expertise inputs to support policy implementation and promotion of regional comparisons and benchmarking are considered important areas where ETF could strengthen its profile. On the issue whether ETF should solely focus on the SBA assessment, the respondents disagree (see figure 27).

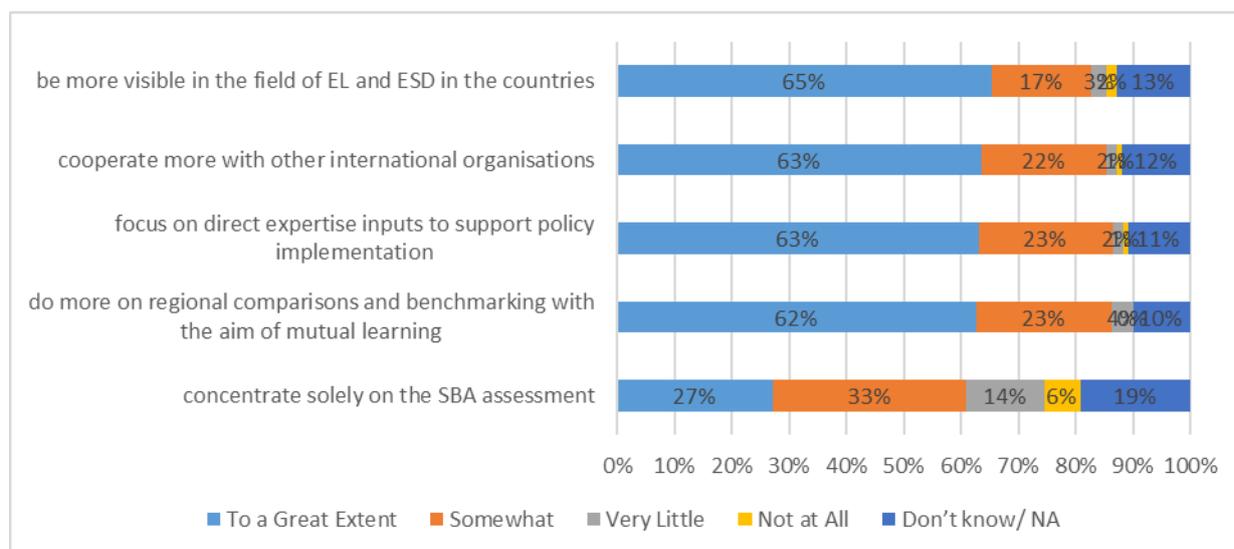


Figure 27: For ETF's future work in Entrepreneurial Learning and Enterprise Skills Development, ETF should: Source: Survey Entrepreneurial Learning and Skills Development: Evaluation of ETF's interventions (N=111)

5 Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the previous chapters, it can be concluded that ETF's work on EL and ESD can be considered to be successful. In the following, a number of key conclusions and recommendations are developed on how ETF's work in the field of EL and ESD could still be refined and improved in the future to further make use of its favourable position.

5.1 Conclusions

The conclusions are structured as follows: first an overarching conclusion is formulated; after which the conclusion is further explained. The conclusions developed will feed into the recommendations in Section 5.2.

Conclusion 1: ETF's work in EL and ESD, especially the SBA assessment, is considered relevant and effective at PC level.

At PC level there is general satisfaction with ETF's contribution to EL and ESD. ETF's work is valued for being of high quality, flexible, authoritative and able to bring together different stakeholders. Despite different country contexts, the general portfolio of ETF interventions in EL and ESD are considered relevant and effective. The key driver for this is the structured approach in the SBA assessment taking place in all regions and most PCs.

The SBA assessment is the cornerstone of ETF's work in EL and ESD as it provides the framework to support evidence-based policy making in the PCs. In many PCs the consecutive SBA assessment led to putting EL and ESD on the agenda; brought stakeholders together; initiated policy developments; and – to a lesser extent – led to implementation and monitoring/evaluation. The SBA assessment is valued for allowing to see progress over the years without losing the flexibility to adjust to emerging and changing needs and insights on how the assessment can be improved, both in terms of indicators as in terms of the methodology for assessment. One of the main achievements of the SBA assessment is that countries, participating on a voluntary basis, are willing to invest time and resources in the assessment; allow comparisons with their neighbouring countries; and finally that it leads to putting EL and ESD on the policy (education) agenda. In the SBA assessment more specific country-specific recommendations could be provided, paving the way for national stakeholders and other (international/donor) organisations to define new interventions in line with the SBA assessment.

Although the SBA assessment is the cornerstone, stakeholders indicate that solely focusing on the SBA assessment is not sufficient to drive policy development: additional interventions are needed. It is perceived that between the different rounds of SBA assessment, ETF is only visible in the PCs to a certain extent, at least in those countries which are not supported by country-specific activities in the field of EL and ESD.

Conclusion 2: Other ETF type of interventions, such as the additional country support and knowledge sharing activities, are also positively evaluated, although there are some limitations with regard the Good Practice initiative.

The SBA assessment provides an effective framework for identification and implementation of needed additional interventions. It maps the context in which interventions take place, determines the objectives and areas of impact, and allows seeing how an intervention led to progress on pre-determined indicators. The line of reasoning behind country specific interventions linked to the SBA assessment is therefore very clear.

This is less the case for interventions that are not directly based on an identified weakness in the SBA assessment. The knowledge sharing at regional level is also mainly supported through the SBA assessment. Topic-specific conferences and events at regional level and publications of ETF on EL and ESD add less clearly to the knowledge base of policy makers, but support other important groups of stakeholders in entrepreneurial communities. In addition, the portfolio of other services than the SBA assessment is not clear to all national stakeholders.

Hence, the country interventions based on weaknesses identified in the SBA assessment seem to be more effective, sustainable and create more stakeholder involvement/ownership than one-off interventions not directly linked to a nationally voiced demand. It remains difficult to see how the Good Practice initiative will lead to the results as stated in the 2014 work programme. This not due to the lack of quality, rather the line of reasoning is not supported by evidence. The scorecard and methodology developed might lead to selected practices that are bright shining stars, but not reachable for most stakeholders in the PC's. It needs to be emphasised that the developed scorecard is much more than a selection tool for good practices. It is in fact an evidence-based, theoretical guideline of what constitutes a quality training provider. This dimension of the scorecard could be further developed and pushed as a general quality framework for training providers, allowing them to progress on the identified dimensions.

Conclusion 3: ETF is valued for bringing institutional stakeholders together, however more needs to be done to systematically involve end-beneficiaries such as employers, entrepreneurs, students, education providers and teachers.

Although ETF is valued for bringing together different groups of stakeholders, these stakeholders involved are mainly stakeholders at government, at institutional or representative level. Typically, ETF interventions involve different Ministries (Education, Employment, Youth); VET councils / Quantifications authorities; Employers' organisation/ chamber of Commerce. There are positive examples of countries where ETF has established good relationships with employer organisations, but this is not the general rule. There are still concerns that the labour market side is still not well represented in ETF interventions. These stakeholder groups (in the countries visited) are partly critical towards the government policies in EL and ESD and are often not sufficiently involved or even informed about policy developments and ETF support.

Another issue is that end-beneficiaries such as students, entrepreneurs, schools and teachers are not sufficiently involved and targeted in ETF-supported interventions. This relates to the high policy level at which ETF interventions usually are related to. The Good Practice Initiative is an interesting approach to build bridges between Ministries and training providers; i.e. between policy and practice.

Conclusion 4: ETF's work in EL and ESD is well embedded in ETF but could focus more on evaluation and accountability of interventions.

The work of ETF in EL and ESD is in line with the Mid-term perspectives (2010-2013 and 2014-2017). In addition, the annual work programmes make clear what ETF will focus on in the coming year and the EL and ESD team works in line with the annual work programmes and generally conduct the activities as planned. Again, here, the SBA assessment adds to the structured approach of ETF in the area as it allows identifying country-specific pathways for development in relation to SBA indicators. The project pipe-line (i.e. how project get selected) commences with a formal request from the PC after which ETF will reply. The evaluation team has not identified cases where a request was turned down (probably request never come at the formal stage when ETF envisages difficulties consenting to them).

It remains unclear why certain countries did receive support and others did not. It seems that it is more a matter of stakeholders being aware of the possibility than a strategic deliberate choice by ETF

to focus on specific countries. This supports the finding that some of ETF's work lacks a broader strategic objective and that is more opportunity driven.

The fact that ETF country specific interventions are based on a request from the PC (be it discussed and aligned with ETF) and related to the SBA assessment, involving different groups of stakeholders, allows the interventions to have a favourable starting point to yield results and impact. The flexibility and approachability of ETF in general, and the country desk and EL and ESD experts in specific, is considered by the stakeholders from PCs one of the key factors for success. The downside is that the interventions are more ad hoc from a strategic point of view and have a limited (read country-confined) impact.

Accountability and monitoring and evaluation of ETF supported interventions is a general weakness in ETF's work in EL and ESD. The evaluators found evidence that interventions started based on earlier intervention without these being evaluated and assessed.

Conclusion 5: ETF's work in EL and ESD is complementary to what other organisations do but there is room for improvement: the SBA assessment could be better used as set a general framework for other donors to design and implement their activities

The evaluation concludes that there is hardly evidence of overlap in the work of ETF in EL and ESD and other organisations. ETF has a specific position in the landscape of technical assistance and policy support of being a direct counterpart of the government, a link to the EU funding opportunities and a centre of expertise on EL and ESD and VET in general. In general in EL and ESD, the involvement of other organisations is relatively limited. If they work on EL and ESD, other organisations, either work on slightly different topics; operate at different (implementation) levels; or work with other national counterparts (schools and employers). The work of ETF is generally firmly linked with the EU agenda (for instance on the SBA) and the national programming (for instance IPA). ETF experts (country desks and subject specialists) provide valuable contributions.

In the SEET region, SEECCEL more and more takes over more practical and conceptual work from ETF, however, ETF still remains an important support for policy development.

In some countries, ETF cooperates with other organisations takes place but there are indications that ETF could do more in terms of joint programming and providing a framework for action for other donors through elaborating on country specific recommendations and a national action plan as follow up of the SBA assessment.

Conclusion 6: EL and ESD is at PC level often interpreted and used in a conceptual narrow way and not in combination of the two as a continuum covering both education and the work of work. By this, the potential to reform the relationship between education and the labour market is weakened.

The 2015 Cross Country report on the Torino process indicates that "Entrepreneurial learning, understood as a learning framework that engages students, governments and the private sector in fostering entrepreneurship as a key competence, is a powerful source of competitive advantage for learners in any segment of the education system, and one that is still largely underdeveloped in the partner countries."⁴⁰ This statement is supported by the findings from the country visits. Entrepreneurial learning is, when integrated in the education sector, focussing on integrating entrepreneurial competences into the curriculum and does not necessarily lead to a framework to engage students, governments and the private sector. Despite there being positive examples from PC's,

⁴⁰ ETF (2015), Torino Process 2014 a cross-country report. Moving skills forward together; trends, challenges and successes in vocational education and training in the ETF partner countries, p. 23.

in general, the way EL and ESD is conceptualised and used in the PC's does not live up to the full potential for reform of the relationship between education and the labour market.

ETF could push for more innovative ways that are proven to be effective to teach entrepreneurship such as simulation companies, student companies and direct contact of students with entrepreneurs instead of an often seen approach whereby entrepreneurship is broken down into small components and spread across the entire curriculum. Here a key question remains: does the latter really lead to a more entrepreneurial attitude?

Conclusion 7: Knowledge management in the field of EL and ESD is insufficient to position ETF as a knowledge hub

ETF's important knowledge intensive and conceptual work in relation to EL and ESD and in particular the work on the SBA assessment, developing indicators and further conceptualising the concepts of EL and ESD remains difficult to access for stakeholders and to review in a synthetic way. The ETF website does not provide a consistent platform where international stakeholders and PC stakeholders can easily learn from past experiences and learn from the conceptual clarifications developed by ETF staff and experts. In addition, the in the pilot identified good practices are not easy to be found, limiting the potential for them to inspire others. The lack of a quality knowledge exchange platform hampers the visibility of ETF and the position of ETF as a centre of expertise in EL and ESD.

5.2 Recommendations

Related to the conclusions, here below recommendations are provided to guide the work of ETF in the future work on EL and ESD. In relation to each recommendation, suggestions are provided for action at the relevant level (PC level, regional level, corporate (ETF) level and for cooperation with others).

Recommendation 1: To continue to further strengthen the effectiveness of the SBA assessment by:

- 1. Introducing more follow-up activities to keep the SBA on the agenda in-between assessments by providing country-specific recommendations and stimulate the development of action plans, and reporting mechanisms;**
- 2. Stimulating that national stakeholders invite other international organisations to align their interventions to the SBA follow-up activities;**
- 3. More actively drawing lessons from how PC's improved their SBA assessment scores and distribute those lessons to PC's facing similar issues in/between the regions.**

In the field of EL and ESD, the SBA assessment provides an effective mix of self-assessment, involvement of different Ministries, peer-review, benchmarking to stimulate national stakeholders to work on EL and ESD. In order to further strengthen the role and the effectiveness of the SBA assessment the following measures can be taken at country, regional and corporate level:

- Introduce more follow-up activities on the SBA assessment. Provide country-specific recommendations and stimulate the development of action plans, annual work plans or a reporting mechanism to keep the SBA on the agenda in-between assessments.
- Stimulate that national stakeholders invite other international organisations to join the SBA follow-up activities. The country-specific recommendations can provide a good starting ground for collaboration and planning of technical assistance projects. Hence, stimulate (or allow) other organisations' to align/adhere to the messages of the SBA assessment, including the European Commission.
- ETF could more actively drawn lessons from how PC's improved their SBA assessment scores and distribute those lessons to PC's facing similar issues in the regions but also

between regions. The learning potential of the SBA assessment can be strengthened in this way.

Recommendation 2: to bring policy and practice closer together and increase the impact and learning effect of ETF actions in EL and ESD by strengthening the involvement of under-represented stakeholders, such as employers and (future) entrepreneurs, training institutions, schools and teachers.

ETF's work is targeted at a high policy level (SBA assessment, developing EL strategies, establishing systems to assess training needs, etc.). The evaluation identified a lack of close involvement of the specific groups of key stakeholders to whom all interventions on EL and ESD are targeted. This concerns first and foremost the employers and (future) entrepreneurs. Secondly, this concerns the training institutions, schools and teachers. Increasing their involvement in the ETF interventions could increase the learning effect at policy level and increase the impact at the practical level as it brings policy and practice closer together. The good practice initiative is an interesting initiative in this regard trying to bridge policy and practical levels. As it is only launched in 2015, it remains to be seen whether it is able to connect different levels.

In order to increase the participation of end-beneficiaries, the following measures can be taken at country, regional and corporate level:

- ETF could encourage the involvement and consultation of end beneficiaries in policy development (ETF country specific interventions) and even in the SBA assessment.
- ETF should in the area of EL and ESD focus more on establishing cross country and cross regional networks of communities of practice (schools, entrepreneurs, teachers / trainers) to allow sharing of relevant practices at implementation level
- ETF could, together with other international organisations, establish a network of young entrepreneurs in the different regions.
- ETF could be more active on supporting the training of teachers to teach EL through the development of guidelines, handbooks, teacher training manuals, etc. In addition, ETF could push this issue more in the framework of IPA (in SEET), or work with other organisations and programmes.

Recommendation 3: To improve the knowledge base for stakeholders working in EL and ESD, conceptually clarify the concepts individually and in a lifelong learning perspective and more strongly push for a holistic approach to EL and ESD.

Given ETF's long involvement in EL and ESD in the PCs, ETF is in a good position to function as a knowledge hub for national stakeholders and persons working on the subject. In order to strengthen ETF's position in this regard and better support national stakeholders with relevant knowledge (conceptually, policy, implementation, practices and lessons learned), a number of actions can be taken:

- ETF could provide a systematic approach to develop EL and ESD across the entire continuum covering general education, VET, higher education, start-up, growth and internationalisation. The SBA assessment could stimulate a more integrated approach for EL and ESD.
- ETF could draft some more conceptual publications on EL and ESD in which ETF conceptually clarifies the concepts and provides a vision for future work (what are key trends, developments, good practices/approaches?) ETF could conduct more synthetic analytical work on connecting the work of team members in the field of EL and ESD to further develop the thinking on EL and ESD and inspire stakeholders.
- ETF could better facilitate knowledge sharing and knowledge availability, maybe even through an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based platform. There is a

need to bring all relevant information at country and regional level in one place in order to improve policy development. The ETF website⁴¹ could better link different country and regional initiative to the SBA assessment to allow stakeholders to see where there might be interesting practices and lessons to be learned.

Recommendation 4: In order to increase accountability and learning effects of ETF supported interventions:

- 1. Strengthen the design of interventions by taking into account lessons learned from previous interventions in the same area;**
- 2. Further develop the monitoring and evaluation capacity in the PC's.**

The evaluation found that ETF activities and previous similar interventions are not always evaluated, hampering the accountability of interventions and – more importantly – decreasing chances for mutual and policy learning. The following points for action could support strengthening this area:

- ETF country specific interventions need to be based on a quality evidence base. In the planning and selection of interventions, the lessons learned from previous interventions in the same area need to be taken into account.
- The ETF country specific interventions need to be designed and implemented with a monitoring and evaluation activity to strengthen the accountability and allow lessons to be learned.
- ETF could focus on further developing the monitoring and evaluation capacity in the PC's. Here, the SBA assessment and the Torino process could go hand in hand to develop a culture of continuous self-assessment and peer review.

Recommendation 5: To strengthen the Good Practice Initiative by:

- 1. Clarifying the line of reasoning on how the identification of the good practices leads to policy developments;**
- 2. Bringing the good practice initiative to a higher level, providing compendia, more analysis, identifying success factors;**
- 3. Investigating the potential of the scorecard to be used as quality framework for training providers.**

The Good Practice initiative has not yet proven that it has the potential to stimulate reforms and policy developments. Given the recommendation to build bridges between policy and practice, the good practice initiative could play a role. The following points for action could support strengthening this area:

- ETF could further expand the aim of the scorecard to a general quality framework for training providers and stimulate training providers to use this framework for self-assessment and identification of their learning needs.
- ETF should do more to bring good practice initiative to a higher level, providing compendia, more analysis, identifying success factors etc. This could strengthen ETF's position as knowledge hub on EL and ESD.

⁴¹ In general, the reader and user friendliness of the ETF website could be improved. It contains a lot of EU and technical terminology and might not always appeal to people working in VET. In addition, finding relevant information on the website remains challenging.

- The good practice initiative needs to be better communicated as there is some confusion about the role of the initiative and what beneficiaries actually benefit from it.

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