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ACTIVATING REGIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COUNCILS TOGETHER

THE CASE OF UKRAINE

VET GOVERNANCE

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PREFACE

This paper, prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, provides an example of how to support policy dialogue among national and regional vocational education and training (VET) stakeholders, including social partners, on regulations aimed at activating the professional mandate and mission of regional VET councils. It draws on an original project, which aimed at shaping regulatory and methodological guidelines to support the activation of regional VET councils in Ukraine.

The paper intends to inspire the countries that might decide to decentralise VET policy making and to enhance the roles of regional actors. It provides examples of experience in the field of regional VET councils in selected countries – three European Union (EU) Member States (France, Italy and Slovakia) and one European Training Foundation (ETF) partner country (Kazakhstan).

This paper has been written by J. Manuel Galvin Arribas (ETF specialist in governance and lifelong learning), Rodion Kolyshko (national expert) and Hans Schustereder (international expert), in close cooperation with the Vocational Education and Training Department of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science.

The paper builds in particular on the outcomes of several semi-structured interviews with selected regional VET council members in three regions of Ukraine – Kyiv, Lviv and Rivne. The draft paper was presented and discussed at the international conference ‘Regional governance of VET skill policies and system in Ukraine: What role and responsibilities for regional VET councils?’ in Lviv (25–26 October 2017).

The ETF and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science wish to thank all those who have provided support and advice during the consultation and design process of this paper.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are currently two main dimensions of VET decentralisation in Ukraine: financial and organisational¹. The financial dimension is mainly oriented towards the transfer of powers and responsibilities for financing the VET network to the regional level through local (oblast and cities of oblast subordination) budgets. The financial dimension is complemented by the organisational component of VET decentralisation. This means that local authorities are responsible not only for the proper financing of the existing VET network of the region (which, according to the latest documents on VET in Ukraine, is outdated, inefficient and often not oriented towards local labour market needs), but also for efficiently managing a new ecosystem from a multilevel perspective (ETF & MoES, 2017).

Within the organisational dimension of VET decentralisation, several aspects also further affect the governance of VET financing (e.g. optimisation of the regional network of VET institutions, property ownership, 'regional order' for the training and deployment of qualified personnel, development of modern educational and occupational standards and curricula that are tailored to local labour market needs, and the formation of public–private partnerships for VET development).

This paper addresses the following dimensions of regional VET councils: (i) nature and mission/mandate; (ii) general performance principles; (iii) composition, both functional and structural, including the stakeholders involved; (iv) powers of the councils; (v) regional VET council partnerships for the regional and national labour markets; and (vi) good governance. This includes behaviour principles, rules of procedure, communication and dissemination policies.

The nature of regional VET councils derives from the general policy of decentralisation steered by the Government of Ukraine. Transferring the powers to develop and maintain a regional (oblast) network of VET institutions from the central to the local level of governance has led to the establishment of these consultative bodies, which are designed to allow representatives of different (multiple) stakeholders to interact.

The main objectives of the regional VET councils address the management of working processes for VET policy implementation: (i) to discuss with a broad range of stakeholders ways of developing priorities for the VET network in a particular region; and (ii) to generate and deliver executive advice on the implementation of VET policy in respective administrative-territorial units, in particular regarding changes to the network of VET institutions, their level of financing, and the directions and financing of skilled workers' education and training through VET.

Among other objectives, such a multilateral platform should establish and maintain a broad and inclusive social dialogue (not only between trade union and employer representatives, but also on a tripartite or even a multipartite basis) to design, adopt and implement VET policies at the regional level to promote the acquisition of relevant knowledge and vocational skills as required by the regional labour market.

Regional VET councils are collective bodies with approximately 20–25 members (councillors). Stakeholders should be represented by an equal number of members. The members should represent at least five categories of stakeholders: regional (oblast) state administration, regional (oblast) representative body, VET institutions, employers and trade unions.

¹ From a VET multilevel governance perspective, these dimensions are related to the capacities needed for effective institutional, informational and fiscal decentralisation.

The board should consist of at least one plenipotentiary representative from each stakeholder that participates in the composition and activities of regional VET councils. The president of the regional VET council is – ex officio – on the council's board.

Regional VET council members can convene in two types of meetings: the general assembly and plenary meetings. Members are appointed for a term of three years (with the right to be reappointed for a second term). Members of regional VET councils work on a voluntary basis.

The organisational structure may be as follows:

- president – an appointed or elected member of the council who represents the council, signs the decisions and coordinates the work of the council;
- 'small council' – a body consisting of a balanced number of members (for example, one from each stakeholder group) that coordinates the council's activities between its plenary meetings;
- secretariat – a technical body that assists council members to exercise their duties properly.

The functional structure may consist of the following:

- permanent committees (as described in the Regulation of the Regional VET Councils), for example: 'On the regional order for teaching and training of skilled workers' and 'On the monitoring of the effectiveness of the regional VET network'; other committees can be set up according to the decision of council members;
- ad hoc working groups that function on a temporary basis and are established by a council decision.

The general performance principles of regional VET councils should be based on these two structures. The organisational structure refers to the active participation of members, processes, constant improvement, evidence-based decision making, and stakeholder engagement. The functional structure relates to the role of VET in regional socioeconomic development, the level of innovation used in VET and the level of attractiveness of VET in the region.

The regional VET councils may fulfil the following functions, among others: (i) request a forecast of needs in relation to the qualified skilled labour force at the regional level; (ii) approve the decisions of the local authorities on the implementation of the vocational educational policy within a lifelong learning perspective; (iii) formulate drafts of decisions regarding changes to the VET network; (iv) promote the establishment of public–private cooperation for VET development in the region; and (v) promote the creation and sharing of knowledge on VET issues to improve local VET expertise and the capacities of the regional VET network in the international context.

In order to formulate the necessary recommendations and to elaborate decisions, the regional VET councils interact with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Regional Development and other authorities, as well as representatives of social partners and employers in the region. When interacting with the above-mentioned bodies, a regional VET council sends an official request for information. Regional VET councils should be subject to the procurement legislation of Ukraine and their financial discipline is subject to internal and external audit. The most relevant good governance principles for regional VET councils are (i) relevance; (ii) effectiveness; (iii) subsidiarity; and (iv) proportionality, transparency and accountability (ETF, 2013). The regional VET councils should have an internal communication and dissemination policy.

All these issues are illustrated in this paper using carefully selected examples for every chapter, providing methodological support for the proper establishment of regional VET councils. The examples

illustrate the means, processes and algorithms to be used by members of the councils, as well as local authorities and other stakeholders, in order to increase the competitiveness of their region's VET system and to make it an innovative driver for the local economy.

The selected international experiences in the field of regional VET councils relate to three EU Member States (France, Italy and Slovakia) and one ETF partner country (Kazakhstan)².

Kazakhstan – The regional VET councils are responsible for a wide range of tasks, from analysing labour market needs to supporting VET students and graduates in finding work placements and employment. Each council is headed by the head of the regional administration. The number of members is not regulated, but at least one third of the members are representatives from industry. The VET department of the regional administration supports the council in its administrative work. The councils have been involved in the approval of VET educational standards. They do not have decision-making authority. The lack of robustness of the country's VET policy and the resultant rather general mandate of the councils is perceived as a problem.

France – In the course of the decentralisation of the VET system, two types of regional VET council have been established: (i) the Regional Committee on Employment and Vocational Education and Orientation (RCEVEO); and (ii) the Joint Inter-professional Regional Committee on Employment and Training. The RCEVEO is the more important institution in terms of social partnership and VET policy, and has a strong diagnostic, advisory and deliberative function. The functioning of the RCEVEO is regulated by its respective regulation. It has no budget, but does have access to the human and administrative resources of the organisations whose staff members are represented on it. The law provides detailed provisions on the composition of the RCEVEO. It has the power to install commissions in fields where research is needed or that need particular attention. The RCEVEO is expected to cooperate closely with other state agencies.

Italy – The mandate of the regional VET councils ranges from the coordination of planning of VET policies to their evaluation. Councils can install permanent or temporary commissions. They have no budget, but, in some regions, members are entitled to a daily allowance from the regional government. Councils make the minutes of meetings and consultation publicly available, although in some regions, there is concern about the transparency of the work of the regional VET councils. They are close to being a sub-structure of the regional councils, with only consultative functions and no responsibility for the implementation and/or evaluation of VET policies.

Slovakia – Regional VET councils play a key role in forecasting training needs and approving training programmes and the number of students to be admitted. Employer representatives on the regional VET council assess VET student examinations. Therefore, employer organisations participate in the award of professional qualifications. In its planning activities, each regional VET council is expected to make use of the findings and recommendations of the State School Inspection. One issue of concern is the lack of reliable data provided by employer representatives.

All these insights could contribute to effective policy discussions for the further implementation of a future regulatory framework and inspire capacity-building support for effective performance of regional VET councils, as these councils will have a key role to play in making both the organisational and financial dimensions of VET decentralisation in Ukraine more effective in the years to come.

² At the international conference held in Lviv (25–26 October 2017), the Romanian case on Regional Consortia was also shared among participants.

INTRODUCTION

This paper has been prepared in the framework of the ETF-supported project ‘National and international expertise to support the development of organisational and functional-methodological guidelines for regulating status and implementation of mandate and working activities of regional VET councils in Ukraine’.

The paper is the result of a fruitful cooperation between the ETF and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MoES) since 2016, which aimed to address the reforms necessary for a relevant and attractive decentralised system of vocational education and training (VET). Since 2015, the VET system has been one of the priority areas of the country’s political, administrative and financial decentralisation. This prioritisation creates considerable challenges and opportunities for the country’s VET system.

This has already been analysed in depth in the ETF-MoES Green Paper (ETF & MoES, 2017) and widely acknowledged by high-level policy makers and practitioners in a policy forum in April 2017 (ETF, 2017a). Apart from other ETF, national and international sources, the paper builds in particular on the analysed outcomes of several semi-structured interviews with selected regional VET council members in three regions of Ukraine (Kyiv, Lviv and Rivne). The paper’s design has also been guided by the results of specific discussions in Lviv (14 June 2017) and the results of the international conference ‘Regional governance of VET skill policies and system in Ukraine: What role and responsibilities for regional VET councils?’ (25–26 October 2017, Lviv).

The paper is in two parts. Chapter 1 suggests key components of a regional VET council regulation and the organisation of the work of the councils. It also provides concrete examples illustrating how parties can work together on implementing such a regulatory framework in order to further organise and activate the working dynamics of regional VET councils in Ukraine. Chapter 2 comprises a cross-analysis of the policy practices of three EU Member States (France, Italy and Slovakia) and one ETF partner country (Kazakhstan). These examples can inform the policy and practice of regional VET councils in Ukraine.

There are currently two main dimensions of VET decentralisation in Ukraine: financial and organisational³. The financial dimension of VET decentralisation is primarily oriented towards the transfer to the regional level of powers and responsibilities for financing the VET network through local (oblast and cities of oblast subordination) budgets.

The financial dimension is complemented by the organisational component of VET decentralisation. The local authorities are responsible not only for the proper financing of the existing VET network of the region (which, according to the latest analysis of the state of play of VET in Ukraine, is outdated, inefficient and often not oriented towards local labour market needs), but also for its efficient management (ETF & MoES, 2017).

Within the organisational dimension of VET decentralisation, several aspects further affect VET financing. These include the optimisation of regional networks of VET institutions, property ownership, the ‘regional order’ for the training of qualified personnel, the development of modern educational and occupational standards (and curricula) tailored to local labour market needs, and the formation of public–private partnerships for VET development.

³ From a VET multilevel governance perspective, these dimensions are related to the capacities needed for effective institutional, informational and fiscal decentralisation.

Taken together, these aspects form the notion of good multilevel governance of a VET network in the region, the central element of which should be specific mechanisms created for proper decision making in VET governance at the local level – the regional VET councils.

Regional VET councils are a relatively new mechanism for Ukraine. They were mentioned for the first time in the draft law on VET in Ukraine presented by the government in October 2015, and were referred to as ‘regional councils of VET stakeholders’. Further development of this draft law was postponed until the adoption of the Law of Ukraine on Education (which was planned for September 2017). As of November 2017, the development of the draft law on VET in Ukraine was still ongoing.

In the Ukrainian context, the name ‘regional VET council’ stems from a letter from the MoES to regional state administrations in April 2016, which included guidelines for the establishment and the main functions of regional VET councils (MoES, 2016). The MoES proposed that the councils should be established by the local (oblast) state administrations as consultative bodies according to the Law of Ukraine on Local State Administrations.

The main objective proposed in this letter is to ‘approve decisions on the implementation of the educational policy of the respective administrative-territorial unit (units), in particular regarding the changes of the network of vocational education and training institutions, the amount of their financing, directions and financing of skilled workers by education and training by VET institutions’.

Since each regional VET council, once established, is likely to engage in different areas and show different levels of activity, there is a need to regulate the work of the councils. This need has led to the design of this paper, which captures the mission, composition, scope of activity, working procedures, good governance principles and other aspects relating to the work of the councils.

The paper aims to contribute to building a shared dialogue, a common understanding, and greater clarity and cooperation among VET stakeholders in Ukraine regarding the mission and functioning of the regional VET councils, with the councils’ work and recommendations in the field of policy and planning being of particular importance.

1. EXAMPLE OF REGULATORY AND METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL VET COUNCILS IN UKRAINE

1.1 Main regulatory provisions for regional VET councils

Preliminary dispositions

- The regional VET councils are advisory-consultative bodies that are to be established by regional (oblast) state administrations according to the provisions of the Law of Ukraine on VET⁴ and the Law of Ukraine on Local State Administrations.
- The main objectives of the regional VET councils are (i) to discuss with a broad range of stakeholders ways of developing priorities for the VET network in a certain region; and (ii) to generate and deliver executive advice on the implementation of VET policy in respective administrative-territorial unit(s), in particular regarding changes to the network of VET institutions, their level of financing, and the directions and financing of skilled workers' education and training by VET.
- A governmental resolution with the preliminary name 'On the Typical Regulation of the Regional VET Council'⁵ should describe all technical aspects and operational procedures of regional VET councils.

Nature of regional VET councils

- The nature of regional VET councils derives from the general policy of decentralisation in the country, which is steered by the Government of Ukraine. One of the main consequences of the implementation of such a policy in the field of VET has been the transfer of the regional system of VET financing to regional authorities at the level of oblast and cities of oblast subordination. There is no special provision on coordination mechanisms of regional VET councils with lower administrative and local self-governance levels.
- Up to now, no other function of VET governance (setting up the network of regional VET institutions, appointment of VET institutions' directors, property, etc.) has been transferred to the local level. This has caused a number of dysfunctions and misunderstandings between the MoES, regional authorities and VET institutions (in particular since 2016). A further transfer of powers on VET governance is expected with the adoption of the new Law of Ukraine on VET.
- The transfer of the powers for the development and maintenance of a regional (oblast) network of VET institutions from the central to the local level of governance has led to the establishment of consultative bodies composed of different stakeholder representatives. Such bodies should advise on the development of the regional VET system and assume joint responsibility for the decisions taken by local authorities.

Mandate of regional VET councils

- The regional VET councils are intended to be advisory-consultative bodies, primarily to local state administrations in the sphere of governance of the VET network at regional level, and to other stakeholders on issues relating to the functioning of the regional VET system.
- Initially, the regional VET councils were designed as multilateral platforms where the interests of at least five categories of stakeholders were represented: (i) regional state administration; (ii) regional representative body; (iii) employers' associations; (iv) trade unions' associations; and (v) VET institutions and/or their associations.

⁴ To be developed by a working group established under the Parliament of Ukraine.

⁵ To be developed by the MoES of Ukraine.

- Such a multilateral platform should establish and maintain a broad, inclusive social dialogue (not only between trade union and employer representatives, but also on a tripartite or even a multipartite basis) to design, adopt and implement VET policies at the regional level with the aim of promoting the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are in demand on the regional labour market.
- All stakeholders will have equal representation in the regional VET council structure.
- Regional VET councils should exercise their duties in close cooperation with the local state administration and local representative bodies, as well as with representative bodies of the lower administrative levels (districts and amalgamated territorial communities).
- There could be policy dialogue issues that will require sustainable cooperation with central executive bodies (ministries, agencies). The list of issues that require such cooperation can be established only after the mandate and functioning of the regional VET councils are clearly specified.
- Regional VET councils are collective bodies with 20–25 members (councillors). All stakeholders should be equally represented (see second bullet above).
- The large number of members on regional VET councils makes it necessary to structure the councils from both an organisational and a functional perspective.

Organisational structure:

- one president – the deputy head of the oblast state administration who coordinates the economic block of functions, and who represents the council, signs the decisions and coordinates the work of the council;
- two vice-presidents (one representing employers and another the department of education and science of the oblast state administration);
- a secretariat – a technical body that assists the council's members to exercise their duties properly.

Functional structure:

- permanent committees (these can be set up under the Regulation of the Regional VET Councils), for example, on the regional order for teaching and training of skilled workers and on the monitoring of the effectiveness of the regional VET network; other committees can be set up according to the decision of council members;
 - ad hoc working groups that function on a temporary basis and are established by a council decision.
- One of the most important tasks of the regional VET councils is to coordinate the opinions and views of the main stakeholders of the regional VET system and to turn these into a socioeconomic driver for the development of the respective region. This task should be realised through the functions laid out in Section 1.3 (Competences of regional VET councils). The councils should initiate a policy dialogue through negotiation and deliberation, in particular between public and private actors.
 - Another key task of the councils is to elaborate a joint position for all or the majority of stakeholders on the main aspects of the regional VET network. In terms of decision taking, both the majority and consensus models (and their respective advantages and disadvantages) should be considered.
 - The question of accountability of the regional VET councils deserves due consideration. There are several dimensions of a council's accountability. The first is accountability to the stakeholders who are represented on the council through its members (corporative accountability of the council members). The second is the personal accountability of every representative to the stakeholder that has delegated them. The third is the general accountability of the council to the regional community (*public* accountability to citizens). Another aspect is the quality of the council's performance.

Example 1.1 Delivering a general plan for VET in the region (2019–2021)

Issue	Formulate strategic planning aimed at transforming the role of VET as a key enabler of social, economic and regional development for the promotion of innovation, entrepreneurship and employability opportunities for young people and adults in the region.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse the political, legislative and socioeconomic context of VET in the region, as embedded in national and international scenarios that are relevant to Ukraine.• Identify strategic goals for the regional VET council based on complex labour market intelligence for the region, analysis of education and labour legislation, and socioeconomic analysis of the region.• Determine both strategic and operational working lines around which VET policies will support system development to face key regional challenges and national goals in the field of employment, growth, innovation and entrepreneurship.• Identify governance and financing tools and resources for implementation of the plan, including a proposal for the monitoring and evaluation of implementation.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activate secretariat and working committee functions (evaluate potential contracting of external expert support).• Facilitate discussions, for approval in the council general assembly, focusing on how to run an informal and formal consultation strategy and networking processes (by making use of the knowledge and experience of council members).• Involve and coordinate a dialogue at the national level and with regional companies/industry and VET networks in the region: organise interviews and the necessary working meetings and visits.• Nominate peer reviewers at the different levels to confirm the results and the final document.• Interact regularly with key media players during key phases of the process.
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ETF Torino Process 2016 reports (and network).• Official national and regional statistics (e.g. labour force survey, data on graduates from higher education and VET institutions, number of vacancies).• Sector studies and other available surveys, company reports.• Law on Education and other legislative documents of different governmental structures.• Social partners and other relevant civil society actors (reports, statements, figures, etc.).

General performance principles of regional VET councils

- The general performance principles of regional VET councils should be set out in the Typical Regulation of the Regional VET Council and should be the same for all regional VET councils in Ukraine.
- The general performance principles of regional VET councils should have two dimensions: organisational and functional.
- The functional performance principles include (i) the role of VET in regional socioeconomic development; (ii) the level of innovation(s) used in VET; and (iii) the level of attractiveness of VET in the region.
 - The role of VET in the socioeconomic development of a region can be determined by several indicators, such as the percentage of the skilled labour force engaged in the economic development of the region, the percentage of VET graduates working in companies within three years of graduation, and the percentage of VET students participating in work-based learning (including dual forms of education).
 - The level of VET innovation(s) can be measured using indicators such as the percentage of up-to-date equipment used in VET institutions and the number of innovative solutions produced by VET graduates and students that are used by businesses in the region.
 - The attractiveness of VET at the regional level can be assessed based on the number of secondary school graduates enrolling in the VET institutions in the region.

- The organisational performance principles include (i) active participation of members; (ii) process approach; (iii) constant improvement; (iv) evidence-based decision making; and (v) stakeholder engagement.
 - Active participation of members implies that having competent, empowered and engaged members at all levels of the regional VET council is essential for enhancing its capability to create and deliver value. To manage the council effectively and efficiently, it is important to involve all members at all levels and respect them as individuals. Recognition, empowerment and enhancement of competence facilitate the engagement of council members in achieving the council's quality objectives.
 - The process approach enables regional VET councils to achieve consistent and predictable results more effectively and efficiently, as activities are understood and managed as interrelated processes that function as an integrated system.
 - Constant improvement of the activities of regional VET councils is essential for maintaining and increasing the level of performance and for responding to internal and external changes.
 - Evidence-based decision making in a regional VET council's activities implies taking decisions based on the analysis and evaluation of available data and information. This often involves multiple types and sources of inputs, as well as their interpretation, which can be subjective. It is important to understand cause-and-effect relationships and potential unintended consequences. The use of well-researched and well-analysed evidence leads to greater objectivity and more confidence in decision making.
 - Stakeholder engagement allows interested parties to influence the performance of an organisation. Sustained success is more likely to be achieved when the council establishes, maintains and manages active relationships with all of its stakeholders to optimise their impact on its performance.
- Regional VET councils should be given the opportunity to identify additional performance principles.

Example 1.2 Drafting a set of principles for delivering a quality assurance policy to support a performance-based approach for regional VET councils

Issue	Organise a transparent and competent discussion on elaborating and advocating a set of principles for delivering a quality policy to support a performance-based approach for regional VET councils.
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse different approaches to the identification of performance principles for regional VET councils. • Elaborate and present a quality assurance policy for regional VET councils. • Design an advocacy campaign aimed at stakeholders with the aim of presenting the quality assurance policy and performance principles. • Identify the resources needed for the elaboration and presentation of the quality assurance policy and performance principles at the regional level.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate members of the regional VET councils as well as external experts and identify performance principles. • Organise discussions (both internal and external) to present and discuss possible principles. • Involve professional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (e.g. Association of Quality of Ukraine) to check the quality assurance policy and performance principles.
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETF Torino Process 2016 reports (and network). • Documents of the European Organisation for Quality. • Sectoral studies and other available surveys, company reports, etc. • International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) materials.

1.2 Composition of regional VET councils

President and vice-president(s): functions, rights and responsibilities

- The president and vice-presidents of the regional VET council are responsible for fulfilling their tasks and functions.
- The president of the regional VET council is the highest official of the council, and is one of the deputy heads of the oblast state administration who coordinates the economic block of functions.
- The president of the regional VET council:
 - represents the regional VET council to third parties, including state authorities, local self-government bodies and international organisations;
 - convenes council meetings, and organises the preparation of materials and proposals for consideration by the council;
 - presents the candidatures of vice-presidents to the council;
 - appoints the head of the secretariat of the regional VET council;
 - organises the work of the regional VET council and bears personal responsibility for the implementation of its decisions;
 - signs decisions taken by the council.
- The president of the council has the right to transfer part of his or her powers to one of the vice-presidents.
- The president of the council has the right to make decisions on other aspects of the council's activities that are not within the competence of the council.
- The vice-presidents of the regional VET council coordinate their work with the president of the council on the current affairs of the council.
- The vice-presidents of the regional VET council are appointed by the president of the council following the proposal of the employers' stakeholder group and the department of education and science of the oblast state administration.
- The president of the regional VET council determines the division of responsibilities between the vice-presidents.
- The vice-presidents of the regional VET council represent the council in all institutions, enterprises and organisations, taking into account the requirements established by these guidelines within their authority.
- Each vice-president of the council has the right to contact the president of the council with a request to convene the council if questions arise that, in his/her opinion, require consideration and decision making by the council. Each vice-president has the right to pass to the president of the council his/her proposals and recommendations on the activities of the council.
- In the absence of the president of the council, in the cases of business travel, illness or holiday, as well as his/her early retirement, the president's duties will be performed by one of the vice-presidents appointed by the council. The appointment can be made either at the council meeting or by consulting members via e-mail. In this case, the vice-president appointed by the council has the right to carry out all actions on behalf of the council within the competence of the president of the council, as determined by the guidelines, for the period decided by the council.

Example 1.3 Coordinating the publication of public decisions of regional VET councils

Issue	Make the process of dissemination of information on the decisions taken by the regional VET council transparent and efficient.
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elaborate clear and simple rules for the dissemination of decisions.• Select relevant and trusted sources of information for dissemination.• Set up mechanisms to follow up the response to the dissemination of information.
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entrust the secretariat with the preparation of a draft of the rules for dissemination of official information from the council.• Ask the secretariat to make a preliminary selection of regional media to which information is disseminated.• Organise personal meetings with selected media to consult on the methods and technical issues relating to the dissemination of decisions taken by the council.
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reports on the media environment in the region.• Web resources.

Members of regional VET councils: nomination, profile requirements, rights and responsibilities of councillors

- Regional VET councils consist of 25 members⁶ who represent at least five categories of stakeholders equally: (i) regional (oblast) state administration; (ii) regional (oblast) representative body; (iii) VET institutions; (iv) employers; and (v) trade unions.
- Where appropriate, the representatives of VET institutions, employers and trade unions are appointed by the corresponding associations that unite representatives of these stakeholders at the regional (oblast) level. If there is no proper association representing the interests of corresponding stakeholders at the regional (oblast) level, the stakeholders in the regional (oblast) administration take the measures necessary to persuade representatives of corresponding stakeholders to organise themselves in order to appoint their representatives to the regional VET council. If there are several associations representing the interests of corresponding stakeholders at the regional (oblast) level, the regional (oblast) administration asks these associations to unite and appoint their agreed representatives to the regional VET council.
- The stakeholders and their associations take full responsibility for the appointment of their representatives to the regional VET council.
- The members of the regional VET council are appointed for a term of three years, with the right to be reappointed for a second term.
- The members of the regional VET councils exercise their duties on a voluntary basis.
- While selecting the representatives of stakeholders and their associations for the regional VET council, stakeholders can establish requirements for the professional competence of their representatives on the council. The general requirements for professional competence of regional VET councils might include (i) professional experience in VET development; (ii) a degree in educational sciences; (iii) pedagogical experience; (iv) participation in national and international projects dedicated to VET functioning; and (v) knowledge of recent trends in VET development and experience with the drafting of legal provisions. The stakeholders can establish their own requirements for their representatives in the regional VET councils.
- Stakeholders are fully responsible for the internal procedures relating to the selection and appointment of their representatives on regional VET councils. The procedures should be clear and transparent. At the request of the council, a stakeholder should present the requirements for its representatives' profile (if any) and report on the procedures for their selection and appointment.

⁶ Final membership to be discussed.

- Members of the regional VET council are obliged to:
 - execute the decisions of the council and the board of the council;
 - ensure the performance of their duties, fully and in a timely manner, in accordance with the provisions of these guidelines;
 - contribute to achieving the goals and objectives of the council;
 - take part in the activities and development of the council, if necessary; provide assistance to the council;
 - participate in the work of the bodies, commissions and committees of the council.
- A council member has the right to:
 - participate in all meetings and sessions of the council;
 - have full access to the information necessary to execute his/her duties that the council possesses;
 - submit requests, claims and other forms or documents to the council, its governing bodies, and regional (oblast) authorities;
 - present at the council meetings the position of the stakeholder that appointed him/her to the council;
 - leave the council according to the procedures set up by the stakeholder that appointed him/her.

Example 1.4 Competences of council members in relation to their roles as stakeholder representatives and policy makers

Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the activities of the relevant stakeholder for more than three years. • Experience of participation in VET development on behalf of the stakeholder (e.g. co-participation in common projects).
Policy maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the core interests of the stakeholder in VET development in the region and ability to promote them (e.g. good communication skills). • Thorough understanding of the problems relating to VET development in the region. • Experience of preparing policy and legal documents. • Thorough knowledge of VET trends and developments of VET at the regional, national and EU levels.

Types of committees/commissions: names, composition, functions, main activities

- The regional VET council has the right to establish working bodies: working groups and committees. The rules of procedure of committees established by the council are designed by the committees and adopted by the council at its meeting.
- The committees of the regional VET council are established upon the decision taken by the council at its meeting. The committees are permanent working bodies of the council. The committees on the regional order for teaching and training of skilled workers and on the monitoring of the effectiveness of the regional VET network have to be formed within the regional VET council.
- The committee on the regional order for teaching and training of skilled workers is responsible for the full and multilateral analysis of the data that forms the basis of the regional order for labour force for the demands of the regional economy. It is also responsible for the development of the draft proposals for the priorities for labour force training, its extent in terms of occupations and its distribution among the VET institutions of the region. To formulate the proposal on the regional order for teaching and training of skilled workers, the committee has the right to use actual data on regional labour potential development, in particular the labour force survey, and data on the number of higher education and VET institution graduates, the number of vacancies, etc.
- The committee on the monitoring of the effectiveness of the regional VET network is responsible for analysing the efficiency and effectiveness of the regional VET network's functioning. It is also obliged to develop recommendations on the optimisation of the regional VET network.

- Other committees can be formed by decision of the regional VET council.
- The committees are made up of members of the regional VET council. The council decides on the number of members of the committee, but the minimum number of committee members should not be less than three.
- The committees have the right to invite experts, representatives of NGOs and local self-government bodies to participate in their meetings.
- The regional VET council has the right to establish working groups on an ad hoc basis. The number, names and composition of such working groups is defined by the council.
- Committees and working groups of a regional VET council may invite experts on different subjects to provide expertise or consultations.

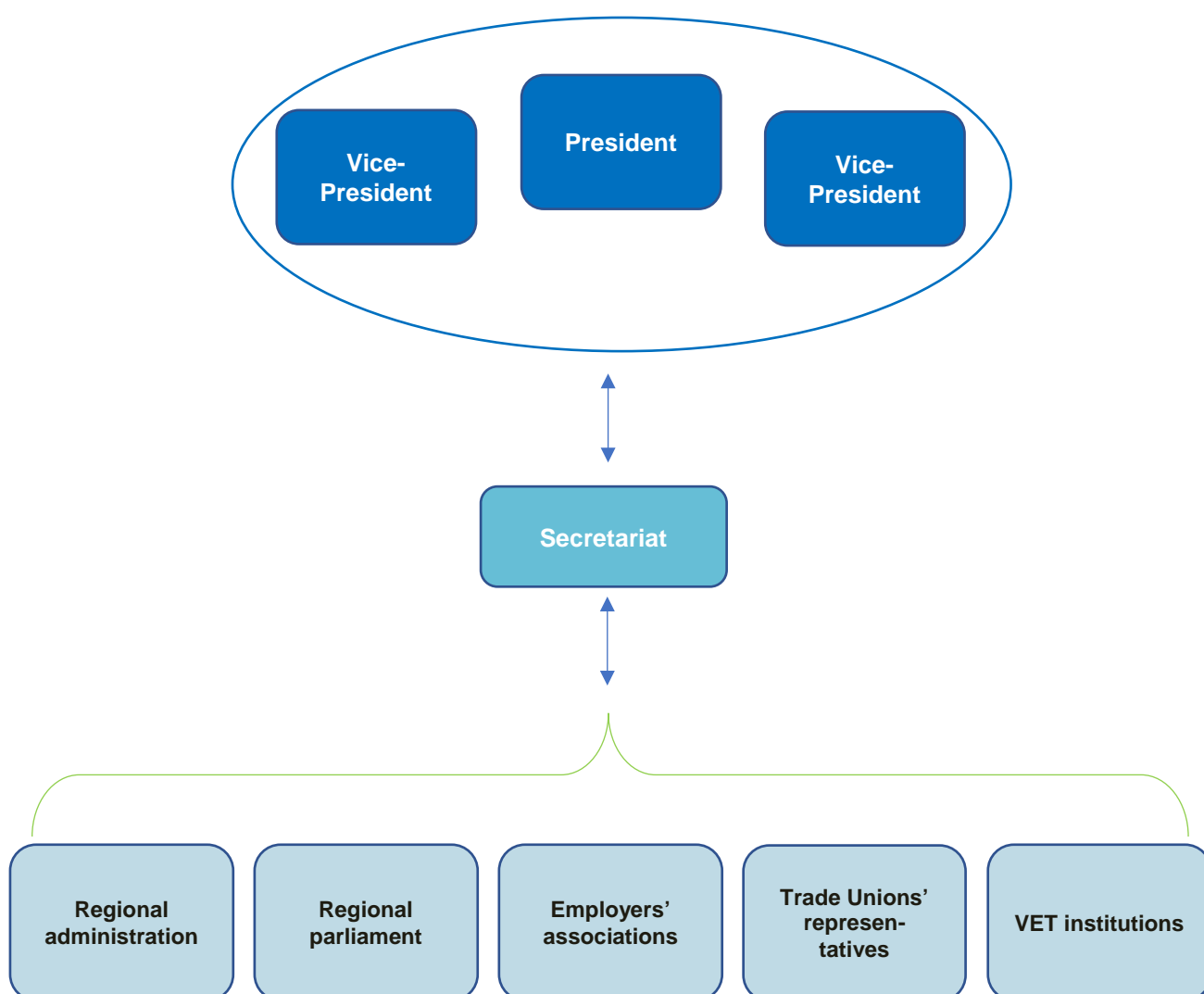
Secretariat: formation, structure and functions

- The secretariat of the regional VET council provides organisational, technical and informational support for the activities of the council as well as its governing and working bodies.
- The rules of procedure of the secretariat, its structure and its staffing are approved by the council.
- The secretariat of the regional VET council is coordinated by the head of the secretariat.
- The head of the secretariat of the regional VET council is appointed, for example, by the president of the council for a term of three years, with the right to reappointment. The head of the secretariat of the regional VET council:
 - convenes meetings of the regional VET council, its committees and working groups at the request of the president, vice-president (in cases where the president cannot exercise his/her duties), heads of the committees and working groups;
 - organises and controls the secretariat's adherence to the legislation of Ukraine and decisions of the council;
 - hires and dismisses from work, in accordance with the procedure provided for by labour legislation, employees of the secretariat, and decides on their promotion and disciplinary actions;
 - issues orders to employees of the secretariat on issues that fall within its competence;
 - carries out other functions relating to ensuring the activities of the secretariat.
- The tasks of the secretariat of the regional VET council are:
 - organisation of work in strict adherence to the requirements of the legislation by the regional VET council;
 - information and reference support for the activities of the presidents, vice-presidents and members of the regional VET council;
 - preparation and holding of meetings of the regional VET council;
 - Organisation of record keeping and archiving of the documentation of the regional VET council in accordance with established rules;
 - technical support for the activities of the regional VET council;
 - contracting of experts to provide expertise or consultation;
 - performance of other tasks provided for by the provisions of the secretariat.

Example 1.5 Publishing terms of reference (ToRs) for hiring experts to support the activities of regional VET councils

Issue	Formulate, agree/approve and publish the terms of reference for external experts to support the activities of regional VET councils.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and specify the need to find experts to support the activities of regional VET councils.• Initiate the process of ToR development, and establish a working group.• Discuss the first draft of the ToRs produced by the working group.• Ask council members to make amendments/proposals to the draft ToRs.• Discuss the proposals/amendments made by council members.• Agree on the final draft of the ToRs.• Gain approval of the ToRs from the council.• Publish the ToRs in regional and national (if needed) media.

Example of regional VET council organigram



1.3 Competences of regional VET councils

The regional VET council has the following competences:

- To order forecasts of the needs for a qualified skilled labour force at the regional level and to consider the results of such forecasts for developing proposals for the formation of a regional order for the teaching and training of skilled workers.
- To approve the decisions of the local authorities on the implementation of a vocational educational policy within a lifelong learning perspective of the respective administrative-territorial unit (units), in particular regarding the optimisation of the VET network, the level of financing, the priorities for VET development in the region and the numbers of students.
- To formulate drafts of decisions for the authorised bodies on the implementation of educational policy of the respective region (oblast), in particular regarding changes to the network of VET institutions, their level of financing, and the directions and volumes of training of personnel by the VET institutions.
- To analyse the content of vocational training and match it to regional and cross-regional labour market needs, promoting cooperation by VET institutions with enterprises in the region.
- To make VET attractive for young people and adults by providing active professional orientation (career guidance) campaigns at the regional level, using such tools as media, professional excellence competitions, and mechanisms to allow transfer from the VET sphere to higher education.
- To identify the needs of adults (in the 45+ age group) in terms of successful employment skills and conduct an advocacy campaign among VET providers, NGOs and communities to encourage participation in lifelong learning mechanisms through regional and cross-regional cooperation.
- To promote innovative solutions in teaching and training in VET schools, combining them with the popularisation of work-based learning forms of education and training, including the dual system of training.
- To coordinate the activities of the regional VET network and stakeholders' activities aimed at the development of the regional VET network.
- To develop proposals for providing financial support to vocational schools, to promote research, to attract investors and implement international projects, and to identify other extra-budgetary sources for the development of VET for the labour market.
- To promote different mechanisms for cooperation between VET providers and employers in order to implement innovative solutions.
- To develop proposals for reforming and improving the system of training, retraining and professional development of employees.
- To organise knowledge-creation and knowledge-sharing events, in particular seminars, courses and other events to support the development of the regional VET network and the capacities of its institutions for the advancement of VET in the region.
- To participate in national and international networks and cooperation projects by involving VET institutions, their associations and other stakeholders that operate at the regional (oblast, district/rayon) level.

The regional VET council has the right to extend its competences with the approval of the regional (oblast) authorities.

Example 1.6 Proposal for a legal act for quality training of the labour force in the region

Issue	Identify, formulate and present the draft legal act for quality training of the labour force in the respective region.
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify and regulate the sphere of quality training of the labour force in the respective region.
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identification of the regional needs for quality training of the labour force based on a labour market survey and on data on the number of higher education and VET institution graduates and the number of vacancies.Establishment of a broad working group that comprises not only members of the council, but also representatives of civil society and experts.Development of the draft legal act.Broad discussion of the draft with all members of the council and other stakeholder representatives.
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Existing draft legal acts in comparable fields.International examples.ETF Torino Process 2016 reports (and network).Sectoral studies and other available surveys, company reports, etc.Law on Education and other legislative documents of different governmental agencies.EU and other international sources (EQAVET, Cedefop Refernet, national and regional governments of EU Member States, etc.).

1.4 Regional VET and labour market governance: partnerships

- The regional VET council works in close cooperation with the regional (oblast, rayon/district) state administrations and local representative bodies. In some cases, the council invites representatives of local amalgamated communities (gromadas) for consultations.
- The regional VET council's decisions have recommendatory status. The council has the right to take decisions on its own initiative and then approach stakeholders, particularly the regional (oblast, rayon/district) state administrations and representative bodies, with a request to take such decisions into consideration.
- In order to formulate the necessary recommendations and to elaborate decisions, the regional VET council interacts with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Regional Development and other authorities. If it is necessary to interact with these bodies, the regional VET council sends an official request for information.
- The regional VET council may interact with stakeholders and their representatives that are not included in the council's structure. In particular, the council can address VET institutions and their associations, employers and their associations, sector skills councils, unions, professional NGOs and other stakeholders that operate at the regional (oblast, district/rayon) level.
- The regional VET council has the right to establish contacts and realise different forms of cooperation with the regional VET councils of other regions.
- The regional VET council may initiate the establishment of private–public partnership mechanisms in the region (oblast) between VET institutions, regional, national and international employers and companies, local authorities and other civil society actors that form the VET community according to the legislation of Ukraine. While the regional VET council should not be a part of a public–private partnership agreement, it should exercise general oversight over its implementation.
- The regional VET council provides communicative and organisational support to initiatives between foreign and Ukrainian investors in the field of VET.

Example 1.7 Proposal for a cooperation agreement between the regional VET council and sector associations in the region

Issue	Establish a cross-institutional link specifically oriented towards cooperation with sector associations.
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain up-to-date data on occupations needed in the respective sector on the regional labour market.• Gain a better understanding of the gaps between education programmes and labour market needs.• Popularise work-based learning in VET among the businesses of the region.
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive relevant information on the active sector associations present in the region through the secretariat.• Identify web resources and publications in which sector association representatives have communicated their interests in qualified personnel.• Develop a draft memorandum with sector associations that addresses, inter alia, the following: data on the medium-term needs of the industry in the respective professions and qualifications, improvement of career guidance activities, support in updating the material and technical base of VET institutions, providing opportunities for practical placements in the workplace, collaborative work on improving the content of curricula, developing occupational standards, etc.• Identify and prioritise the needs of regional VET councils to cooperate with regional sector associations.• Understand the form of the possible agreement with sector associations (memorandum, agreement) and elaborate the draft agreement between the regional VET council and the respective sector.• Select the most relevant sector associations in the region.• Organise a meeting with representatives of the selected sector associations to discuss possible cooperation.• Invite the participants of the meeting to comment on the draft document; set a deadline for comments.• Aggregate the amendments and comments; prepare the final draft before signing.• Sign the document.• Organise a press conference.
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Web resources of regional sector associations and other media sources.• Draft agreements.• European and national social partner organisation resources.

1.5 Good governance principles and management of meetings

Good governance principles

The regional VET council should respect the following principles in its work (ETF, 2013): (i) relevance, (ii) effectiveness, (iii) subsidiarity and proportionality, (iv) transparency, and (v) accountability.

- Relevance means the responsiveness of all actions and decisions of the regional VET council to the needs of the economy, society and learners. This principle is demonstrated when:
 - the economic role of VET is supported, e.g. by anticipating/matching skills needs and linking these to more competence-based curricula;
 - the social equity role of VET is supported, e.g. by opening up access to learning and accreditation to wider groups, or expanding VET;
 - the innovative role of VET is supported, e.g. by introducing sustainability skills or entrepreneurial skills and/or key competences;
 - decisions and policy documents adopted by the regional VET councils respond to learner and labour market needs, e.g. by introducing more flexibility, linking formal and informal sectors and developing more outcome-based approaches.

- Effectiveness means delivering VET policies in a timely fashion and on the basis of clear objectives, assuring quality, learning from experience and producing expected outcomes. This principle is demonstrated when:
 - regular feedback shows that current governance systems at the regional level support VET provision and the implementation of reforms at both regional and national levels;
 - achievement of regional development goals and a range of broader regional policies are supported;
 - goals are formulated in response to shared concerns and identified regional policy gaps;
 - quality assurance mechanisms operate or are developing and help to improve the quality of decisions taken by the regional VET councils;
 - procedures for regional VET network development are recognised to be efficient in that they provide good value for money.
- Subsidiarity and proportionality mean that decisions on regional VET network developments are taken at the most appropriate level to support performance in VET policy making. This principle is demonstrated when:
 - decisions are taken at the most appropriate level to optimise VET policy implementation in the region;
 - roles and responsibilities of stakeholders do not conflict and do not leave gaps in the policy-making process.
- Transparency means that regional VET councils document their practices and activities in a manner that is available to and understood by staff and appropriate stakeholders. This principle is demonstrated when:
 - VET regional policy agenda setting, formulation, implementation and review are open processes that engage the identified stakeholders;
 - policy dialogue is coordinated and supported by relevant documentation, reports, guidelines, etc.;
 - management information systems and other data meet the governance needs of the stakeholders;
 - the recordkeeping system accurately and completely records the activities of the regional VET councils;
 - the recordkeeping system is itself structured in a lawful and appropriate manner.
- Accountability means that roles, functions and responsibilities of both the regional VET council and its members are clearly defined and that their practices comply with the established standards. This principle is demonstrated when:
 - VET regulating practices comply with standards, regulations and procedures and are agreed by different stakeholders;
 - responsibilities, roles and functions are defined clearly and take into account the outcomes expected by users and stakeholders;
 - decision makers assess and respect the contributions and recommendations of the different stakeholders.

Example 1.8 Briefing on the general public consultation process driven by regional VET councils in cooperation with other stakeholders

Issue	Raise awareness among the regional community, stakeholders and authorities of the results of the public consultation process.
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate to the regional community and stakeholders the way in which the regional VET council provides consultations on VET development in the region.• Demonstrate the degree of unanimity within the regional VET council in the presentation and interpretation of the results of the consultation of the general public.
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the secretariat to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify the most appropriate statistical agency at the regional level to support the public consultation process with relevant statistic data;• conduct preparatory work among members of the council concerning the questions and problems to be addressed both in public consultations and in statistical research;• find external expert(s) for the verification of results of statistical research and the public consultation process.• Conduct research, and receive and discuss with other stakeholders research results and their analysis.• Prepare a short briefing on the results of the research.• Organise and conduct briefings for (i) stakeholders, (ii) regional authorities, and (ii) regional media (one briefing or separate briefings for the three groups).
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ETF Torino Process 2016 reports (and network).• Official national and regional statistics (e.g. labour force survey).• Sector studies and other available surveys, company reports, etc.• OECD, World Bank, UN capacity-building tools/documents.

Management of meetings of regional VET councils

- The usual way for a regional VET council to convene is in a meeting. At its meetings, the regional VET council:
 - takes decisions on appointing new members; controls the procedures for their appointment;
 - hears the report of the council's president;
 - takes decisions on changes to the network of VET institutions, their level of financing, and the areas and extent of the training of personnel by VET institutions;
 - adopts rules for managing working committees;
 - discusses and adopts priorities for the council's activities for the following year.
- A meeting of the regional VET council requires the presence of at least two-thirds of its members.
- Decisions of the general assembly are taken by a simple majority of the council members present. In the case of an equal distribution of votes (50:50), the president of the council has the deciding vote.
- Council meetings are convoked at least once a month at the initiative of the council president, or the vice-president who replaces the president.

Example 1.9 Key aspects of the development of the annual activity report of regional VET councils

Issue	Formulate strategic planning for analysing and accounting for the working activities of the regional VET council (within a year).
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the role and place of the regional VET council in regional decision-making cycle.• Measure the effectiveness of the regional VET council's activities.• Analyse the financial sustainability of the regional VET council and formulate proposals.
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the secretariat:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to collect and prioritise programme documents and decisions taken by the regional VET council;• to check that the regional VET council's proposals and/or decisions are included in the programme documents of the regional authorities.• Prepare the draft of the report, share it with the relevant stakeholders and collect amendments and comments.• Amend the initial draft in line with the comments and opinions of the respondents, and finalise the draft.• Facilitate discussions to approve the annual report of the regional VET council in the council general assembly.
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documents of the regional VET councils dated within the reported period.• Documents and decisions taken by the regional state administration and representative bodies in the sphere of VET.• External opinions and comments on decisions taken by the regional VET councils.

Internal communication and dissemination policy

- In terms of internal communication and dissemination policy, the regional VET council should:
 - have an internal communication policy that (i) informs all members and stakeholders about draft decisions of the council, fully and in a timely manner; (ii) guarantees all members the right to express their opinions on draft decisions; and (iii) ensures that such opinions are communicated to all council members;
 - have a dissemination policy that specifies the types of council information to be disseminated, and the conditions for its dissemination.

Example 1.10 Main issues in proposing a menu of public document resources for regional VET councils

Issue	Identify, discuss, present and adopt a list of the main issues relating to public document resources (repository) for regional VET councils.
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse issues and problems that the regional VET council has considered during the specific period of its functioning.• Study the types of issues and problems considered and categorise the documents relating to issues that were presented, discussed and adopted.• Elaborate a concept for the discussion and presentation of the main issues for approval by the council.• Making public the documentary resources of regional VET councils.
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the secretariat and working bodies of the council to present the main issues relating to their activities within a specified time period.• Ask stakeholders to prepare and present a list of the main issues that they considered, but that were not considered by the regional VET council.• Correlate both lists with the priorities of regional development, the number of students in the regional VET system and other relevant performance criteria.
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Official national and regional statistics (e.g. labour force survey).• Programme documents of the government, and of national and regional administrations.• Sector studies and other available surveys, company reports, etc.• Legal documents at the national and regional levels.• ETF Torino Process 2016 reports (and network).

2. POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN EU MEMBER STATES AND ETF PARTNER COUNTRIES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the experience of selected countries – Kazakhstan (partner country), France, Italy and Slovakia (Member States) – in relation to regional VET councils. The selection of the four countries has been guided by the following criteria.

- The countries selected should include one from the Commonwealth of Independent States that is considered to have a well-developed economy.
- One country should be a neighbour of Ukraine.
- The selected countries should include other EU and Western European countries.
- Information about the countries needs to be available and accessible (i.e. in a language that the author of this paper can understand).

The information about the regional VET councils that is presented meets the following criteria (based on ETF and MoES, 2017).

- It is relevant to the context in Ukraine.
- It is from a country with a decentralised VET policy.
- It is from a country where the need for capacity building of regional stakeholders is at least implicitly recognised.
- It is presented in a clear and concise manner.
- It follows the structure of Chapter 1 of this paper and is therefore easy to relate to the relevant information in that chapter.

The information covers the following areas relating to regional VET councils:

- the main regulatory provisions of regional VET councils:
 - nature, mission/mandate;
 - budget;
- the composition of regional VET councils:
 - members;
 - councillors and other types of members: nomination, profile requirements, responsibilities and rights;
 - types of committees/commissions: names, composition, functions, main activities;
 - secretariat;
- regional VET and labour market governance: regional VET council partnerships;
- good governance of regional VET councils: behaviour principles and rules of procedure:
 - applying good governance principles: transparency, accountability and anti-corruption policy;
 - types and modes of delivering decisions;
- critical aspects and matters of concern.

In the text, 'X' is used whenever there is no regulation, rule or information on the respective aspect.

The presentation of individual aspects of regional VET councils is followed by examples of structures of regulations of regional VET councils. The conclusions and recommendations for Ukraine at the end of the chapter are intended to stimulate the discussion about regional VET councils in Ukraine and facilitate the drafting of guidelines.

Note on terminology

Different countries use different terms to refer to VET. In this text, 'VET' or 'vocational education and training' is used regardless of the official terminology of the country whose experience is described (e.g. 'technical and vocational education' in Kazakhstan). In the text, the names of national institutions and documents are translated into English. In the section 'Consulted resources', all institutions and documents are given in their original language.

Since laws and institutions of a particular country are mentioned in the respective country section, the name of the respective country is omitted in the translation of the law or institution (e.g. 'State Programme for ...' instead of 'State Programme for ... of the Republic of Kazakhstan'). For the sake of brevity, the term 'council' is frequently used instead of 'regional VET council'. The term 'regional council' denotes the administrative body of a region, not the regional VET council.

2.2 International policy practices: country overviews

In the following brief overviews, distinctive features of the regional VET councils in the four selected countries (one EU Member State and three ETF partner countries) are presented.

Kazakhstan

Regional VET councils are responsible for a whole range of tasks, from analysing labour market needs to supporting VET students and graduates in finding work placements and employment. The council is headed by the head of the regional administration. The number of members is not regulated, but at least one third of the members are representatives of industry. The VET department of the regional administration supports the council in its administrative work.

The council has been involved in the approval of VET educational standards. The council does not have decision-making authority. The lack of robustness of the country's VET policy and the resultant rather general mandate of the council is perceived as a problem.

France

In the course of the decentralisation of the VET system, two types of regional VET council have been established: (i) the Regional Committee on Employment and Vocational Education and Orientation (RCEVEO); and (ii) the Joint Inter-professional Regional Committee on Employment and Training. The RCEVEO is the more important institution in terms of social partnership and VET policy. It has a strong diagnostic, advisory and deliberative function, and its functioning is governed by the respective regulation.

The RCVEO has not budget, but it does have access to the human and administrative resources of the organisations whose staff members are represented on it. The law provides detailed provisions on the council's composition. The council can install commissions in fields where research is needed or which need particular attention. It is expected to cooperate closely with other state agencies.

Italy

The mandate of the regional VET councils ranges from the coordination of planning of VET policies to their evaluation. The councils can install permanent or temporary commissions. They have no budget, but members in some regions are entitled to a daily allowance from the regional government. Councils make the minutes of meetings and consultation publicly available. However, in some regions, there is concern about the transparency of the work of the councils. The regional VET councils are close to being a sub-structure of the regional councils, with only consultative functions and no responsibility for the implementation and/or evaluation of VET policies.

Slovakia

The regional VET councils play a key role in forecasting training needs and approving training programmes and the number of students to be admitted. Employer representatives in the regional VET council determine the questions of final exams of VET students. Therefore, employer organisations participate in the award of professional qualifications. In their planning activities, the regional VET councils are expected to make use of the findings and recommendations of the State School Inspection. One issue of concern is the lack of reliable data provided by employer representatives.

2.3 Selected aspects of regional VET council policy practices

The information in the tables below is based on a desk study of documents relating to regional VET councils in Kazakhstan, France, Italy and Slovakia. The amount of available information on a particular aspect varies significantly from country to country. An effort has been made to present country information in approximately the same depth.

Table 2.1 Main regulatory provisions of regional VET councils

Legal status	
Kazakhstan	According to the State Programme for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education 2008–2012, the regional VET council is considered one of several mechanisms for ensuring cooperation in the field of VET.
France	There are two types of regional VET council: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Committee on Employment and Vocational Education and Orientation (RCEVEO),• Joint Inter-professional Regional Committee on Employment and Training. These two regional committees were introduced with the 2014 Law on Vocational Training, Employment and Social Democracy. This law made the organisation and financing of professional education and training the responsibility of the regions ⁷ .
Italy	Law 845/78 on Vocational Training of 15 March 1997 made mandatory the establishment of consultative councils composed of social parties and local institutions. In each region, a regional law establishes tripartite regional commissions (TRCs) and interinstitutional commissions.
Slovakia	There are eight regional VET councils. They constitute one element of the VET coordinating and advisory mechanism. They were established with the 2008 Education Act. The chair of the self-governing region makes the regional VET council its advisory body and approves its statutes.
Nature, mission/mandate of regional VET councils	
Kazakhstan	There are 16 regional VET councils. Their overall goal is to ensure the supply of qualified personnel for the regional labour market. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analysing regional labour market needs;• supporting graduates from regional VET institutions to find work placements and employment. Their main tasks are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure the participation of employers in the regional management of the VET system;• contribute to the development of occupational standards;• coordinate efforts to ensure the regional supply of trained personnel;• develop proposals for regional studies by occupations;• make recommendations to the National VET Council;• conduct lifelong learning activities for the unemployed.

⁷ This paper includes only information about the RCEVEO, since it is the equivalent of the regional VET councils of the other countries presented here.

The State Programme for the Development of Education and Science for 2016–2019 foresees a strengthening of the work of the regional VET councils.

Almost 50% of new standards have been officially endorsed by employers through the councils.

France

The RCEVEO:

- exercises a diagnostic function by studying, following and evaluating policies for ensuring the coordination between political stakeholders involved in vocational education and in employment, as well as for ensuring the coherence of vocational education programmes in the region;
- using a nationally approved methodology, drafts annual reports on the actions taken in regard to employment and vocational training and orientation; the use of a nationally approved methodology allows consolidation of data at the national level and comparison between the regions;
- expresses its opinion on different regional conventions relating to the coordination of employment and vocational training and orientation, programmes of the regional public VET service, the regional VET policy, and the quality standards for bodies participating in the regional public careers service for orientation.

Thus, the mandate of the RCEVEO is both executive and consultative in nature.

In more concrete terms, this may involve engagement of the RCEVEO in aspects relating to needs analysis, multiannual programming, financing of training, professional orientation and quality control.

The working modalities of the RCEVEO and its bodies (office, commissions and others) are stipulated in its internal rules and regulations. This allows the functioning of the RCEVEO to be adjusted according to the needs in the regions and the capacities of its members.

Italy

The mandate of the TRC is specified in the respective regional laws on vocational training. In the majority of cases, the TRC is responsible for:

- making suggestions on the cooperation between public and private partners and the alignment of employment and training policies;
- following up regional training and employment policies;
- providing consultation on regional policies in education, vocational training and employment, as well as their implementation.

In more concrete terms, this may involve engagement of the TRC in aspects relating to regional vocational training, apprenticeships, the training of jobseekers, in-service training, needs analysis, multi-year planning, the regulatory framework, the financing of training, and the quality of training.

The TRC functions according to its internal rules and regulations. It can establish permanent or temporary sub-commissions.

Slovakia

Councils are responsible for the key elements of VET governance.

- They play a key role in forecasting and analysing skills demand on the labour market and the implications for VET training, in particular with regard to the necessary number of study places in VET programmes.
 - They design an annual regional VET strategy on behalf of the respective self-governing region.
 - They contribute to the shape of educational offerings in VET institutions to improve labour market matching.
 - They participate in the design of curricula.
 - They represent employers in final exams and therefore contribute to the award of vocational qualifications.
 - They can recommend the opening or closing of a VET institution.
 - They provide assistance in the training of in-company trainers for students' work placements.
-

Funding of regional VET councils

Kazakhstan	X
France	The RCEVEO does not have its own budget and its members do not receive compensation. However, the state and the regional council provide funding indirectly for expenses incurred in the course of its work by providing their resources for various kinds of activities of the RCEVEO, including the preparation of meetings.
Italy	The TRC does not have its own budget. A major part of its work is done by the secretariat. In some regions, its members are entitled to daily allowances, which are allocated by the regional government.
Slovakia	X

Table 2.2 Composition of regional VET councils

Members

Kazakhstan	<p>According to the State Programme for the Development of Education until 2020, the regional VET council promotes the development of social partnership at the regional level. The council comprises the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the head of the <i>akimat</i> (regional body of executive authority), who heads the regional VET council; • other representatives of the <i>akimat</i>; • representatives of VET institutions; • representatives of major companies; • representatives of employers' organisations. <p>At least one third of the members of the council are from industry.</p>
France	<p>The RCEVEO comprises the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two co-presidents (the regional prefect and the president of the regional council); • two vice-presidents (one representative of trade unions, one representative of labour unions); • director general of the decentralised service for vocational training of the Ministry for National Education; • rector of the academy (national Ministry of Education); • regional director of the Ministry of Agriculture; • regional director of the Ministry for Youth, Sports and Social Cohesion; • another representative as appointed by the regional prefecture; • six persons appointed by the president of the regional council; • six representatives of trade associations; • six representatives of labour unions; • three representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chamber of Occupations and Trade and the Chamber of Agriculture (one each). <p>In addition, there are non-voting members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • six to nine persons from employment agencies, VET institutions and other relevant agencies.
Italy	<p>A typical TRC would have the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a president (e.g. a minister of the region with competence in vocational training or the president of the commission for vocational training at the regional council); • six representatives of trade associations; • six representatives of employees of the most important sectors of the economy in the region. <p>Depending on the region, the following organisations may also be represented in the TRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the regional councillor on equal opportunities between men and women; • associations working for the social and occupational inclusion of individuals with a disability.

These organisations may be represented in the TRC on a permanent basis or only in individual meetings. They sometimes have only a consultative function without the right to participate in votes. Individual experts may be engaged for specific tasks. Typically, the TRC has 8 to 12 members.

Slovakia	<p>Council members are appointed from among the representatives of the institutions coordinating VET for labour market purposes, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the self-governing region; • the district office in the regional seat of the self-governing region; • the local office for labour, social affairs and family in the regional seat; • regional chambers of professional/employer organisations and the employers that contribute to regional employment development; • employee representatives; • the founders of secondary schools within the self-governing region.
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Councillors and other types of members: nomination, profile requirements, responsibilities and rights

Kazakhstan	X
France	X
Italy	The representatives of trade associations and labour unions are appointed by their organisations.
Slovakia	X

Types of committees/commissions: names, composition, functions and main activities

Kazakhstan	X
France	The RCEVEO has at its disposal specialised commissions to cover specific needs, such as the evaluation of VET institutions, competence development in VET institutions and the quality of VET institutions. These commissions carry out research and other activities that precede decisions.
Italy	Subcommittees may examine specific regulatory or thematic issues.
Slovakia	X

Secretariat: formation, structure and function)

Kazakhstan	Secretarial assistance is provided by the head of the <i>akimat's</i> VET department.
France	<p>The RCEVEO has an office that prepares its meetings and follows the work of the commissions. Like the RCEVEO, the composition of the office is quadripartite. The RCEVEO appoints a permanent secretary. The RCEVEO is entitled to a secretariat, which comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representatives of the state and the region; • regional representatives of labour unions and professional organisations of employers represented at the national and inter-professional level. <p>The function of the secretariat is specified in a special decree.</p>
Italy	As a rule, there is a permanent secretary, which would typically be the regional councillor of the regional government.
Slovakia	X

Table 2.3 Regional VET and labour market governance: regional VET council partnerships

Kazakhstan	<p>Regional VET councils cooperate with other institutions (regional VET departments, sector councils, national agencies) in VET quality assurance measures. One concern about this cooperation is that it may lead to conflicts over different interpretations of quality.</p> <p>The State Programme for the Development of Education and Science for 2016–2019 foresees increased cooperation between the national, regional and sector councils for VET development.</p> <p>In East Kazakhstan, the regional VET council is involved in the design of a human resources development policy.</p>
France	<p>The RCEVEO makes use of the methodological recommendations of its national counterpart, the National Committee on Employment and Vocational Education and Orientation.</p> <p>The RCEVEO is represented on the national committee through the regional council. The RCEVEO and the regional economic, social and environmental council exchange information on their respective activities. In the majority of regions, some members of the RCEVEO are also members of the latter council.</p> <p>The president of the regional council (as head of the RCEVEO) and the representative of the state in the region, with the employment agency, the regional representatives of local missions for the professional and social inclusion of young people and the bodies specialising in the professional inclusion of individuals with a disability, sign a regional multiannual coordination agreement on employment and professional orientation and training. The agreement comprises provisions in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a coordinated mobilisation of policy tools in the fields of employment and vocational training of the state and the region in view of the local employment situation and within the national employment policy; • participation in regional public orientation activities; • activity in the regional public service for vocational training; • modalities for the assessment of the actions taken.
Italy	<p>Generally, regional VET councils do not engage in specific interinstitutional partnerships. However, they can request the collaboration and support of other institutions or groups to conduct analyses and studies of specific issues.</p>
Slovakia	<p>The council is expected to use the findings of the State School Inspection.</p>

Table 2.4 Good governance of regional VET councils: behaviour principles and rules of procedure

Applying good governance principles: transparency, accountability and anti-corruption policy	
Kazakhstan	X
France	X
Italy	<p>The minutes of meetings and consultations are available through the website of the regional VET council.</p> <p>In some cases, internal regulations of the TRC foresee the exclusion of members who are absent from meetings without justification.</p>
Slovakia	X
Types and modes of delivering decisions	
Kazakhstan	Regional VET councils do not have decision-making authority.
France	X
Italy	Regional VET councils do not have decision-making authority, but they may decide to express their opinion on specific issues. This opinion is subject to a vote and is decided by a simple majority.
Slovakia	X

Table 2.5 Critical aspects and matters of concern

Kazakhstan	There is concern that the overall VET policy is not sufficiently robust and, thus, that the responsibilities of the different actors of the VET system are not specified sufficiently well. This includes the regional VET councils.
France	The efficiency of the RCEVEO depends on a number of factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the fact that the prefect and the president of the regional council are political figures and, hence, that the efficiency of the RCEVEO depends on their political willingness and attitude;• the internal rules and regulations of the RCEVEO and the definition of clear responsibilities of the involved parties;• the composition and level of proactiveness of the secretariat.
Italy	The TRCs operate in a complex institutional context in which the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders are not always clearly defined, depending on the region. The regional councils appoint TRCs as advisory committees. Hence, the influence of social partners (employers and employees) is limited. Information about the results of the work of the TRCs is not always publicly accessible and not all TRCs have a communication channel (e.g. a website). The information made available (e.g. minutes of meetings) is sometimes of limited value since it allows no conclusion about the work and the debates that preceded the meeting.
Slovakia	The quality of the contribution of employers to VET strategies (which constitutes a key task of the council) depends to a large extent on the quality of their data. The problem with both a lack of relevant data and underdeveloped research is transparently visible from the failure of employers to deliver valid and relevant 'plans for labour market needs'. There is concern about the inefficiency of cooperation in the council, which results, in part, from a weak link between policies and research (e.g. due to a lack of capacities and expertise for research). Forecasting models and survey techniques are not effectively used due to a lack of data, know-how and financing.

2.4 Key outcomes of the work of the regional VET councils

The mandates of regional VET councils in the four countries taken together produce the following functions:

- diagnostic and analytical function,
- advisory and consultative function,
- executive function.

When performing a function, the council produces one or several outcomes. Table 2.6 presents all the outcomes that result either explicitly or implicitly from the mandates of the regional VET councils of the four countries. Outcomes from more than one function are listed under the primary function from which they result.

Table 2.6 Outcomes of the work of the regional VET councils

Diagnostic and analytical function	Advisory and consultative function	Executive function
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of VET and employment policies • Opinion on developments in VET and employment policies • Opinion on quality standards • Needs analysis • Forecasts of skills demands • Analysis of skills demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for national council • Proposals for regional VET studies • Recommendations on the opening or closing of VET institutions • Advice on the supply of qualified personnel • Advice on coherence of VET programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation between social partners • Implementation of decentralisation process • Lifelong learning activities • Assistance in training of in-company trainers • Contribution to occupational standards • Contribution to training programmes and plans • Contribution to a coordinated VET policy • Contribution to a regulatory framework

2.5 Examples of regulation structures of the regional VET councils

Italy (Calabria region)

The regulation has the following structure:

- Appointment and duration
- Meetings
- Quorum
- Activities of the council
- Discussions and voting
- Commissions and working groups
- Secretariat

France (Rhône-Alpes region)

The internal regulation of the regional committee for employment, training and career guidance (Comité régional de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'orientation professionnelles – Crefop) has the following structure:

- Preamble
- Subject of the regulation
- Council presidency
 - presidency
 - vice-presidency
- Office
 - tasks
 - organisation and operation
 - invitation of experts and other actors
 - expression of opinions of members
- Council
 - functioning
 - invitation of experts and other personnel
 - expression of opinion of members

- Commissions and working groups
 - commissions
 - working groups
- Permanent quadripartite secretariat of Crefop
- Adoption and modification of the internal regulation

France (Pays de la Loire region)

The internal regulation of the Crefop office has the following structure:

- Preamble
- Subject
- Presidency
 - president
 - vice-president
 - governance of the committee
- Office
 - tasks
 - organisation and functioning
 - presidency
 - periodicity of meetings and agenda
 - meetings
 - permanent secretariat
 - invitation of qualified experts and other actors
 - expression of opinion of the members
 - quorum
 - modalities
 - request for a written opinion
- Approval and modification of the internal regulation

2.6 Conclusions and recommendations for Ukraine

The following conclusions and observations are based on the information that has been received and studied for the above overview of various aspects of regional VET councils in Kazakhstan, France, Italy and Slovakia. They do not apply to the same extent to each of the above countries.

The resulting recommendations are generic. Some will be more relevant to Ukraine than others. However, all of them should be considered in order to avoid major shortcomings in the design of legal provisions and other documents relating to the work of the regional VET councils in Ukraine. The term 'legal provision' is used generically to refer to all documents regulating the work of regional VET councils.

Table 2.7 Conclusions and recommendations on regional VET councils in Ukraine

Conclusion/observation	Recommendations
<p>1. The regional VET councils are the result of a decentralisation process in the VET system. They are one of several means of achieving better training results. They are not an end in themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure proper understanding of the fact that the regional VET council is the result of an administrative process that was triggered by considerations relating to the quality of training. • Ensure that the regional VET council is perceived not as just another institution or administrative structure, but as a body that plays a key role in the VET system.
<p>2. The regional VET councils are one element in a horizontal and vertical structure. Their mandate should be coordinated with the mandates of the other elements in this structure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure awareness of the fact that the regional VET council is embedded in a horizontal and vertical structure with other councils. • Ensure proper coordination of the regional VET council's function with those of other councils, such as the national VET council and sectoral councils.
<p>3. Regional VET councils are partly composed of members of other structures. They tend to be headed by the head of another administrative structure. This is likely to have implications for their functioning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are no conflicts of interest. • Ensure that the implications are positive, e.g. that the regional VET council benefits from the professional and proactive attitude of its members who are also part of other structures.
<p>4. Regional VET councils are made mandatory by a national law and established by a decree, while their functioning is regulated by internal rules and regulations. The latter are tailored to the specific needs of the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure proper coordination of the legal provisions relating to the regional VET council. • Ensure that legislation relating to the functioning of the regional VET council guarantees minimum requirements and standards for all councils. • Ensure that legislation allows for enough flexibility to meet regional labour market requirements. • Ensure that legislation allows for enough flexibility in terms of the requirements for the members of a particular regional council.
<p>5. Although regional VET councils have a variety of tasks requiring special skills, little or no attention has been given to the training and capacity building of their members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the legal provisions foresee training and capacity building for members of the regional VET council. • Identify needs for training and capacity building for members of the regional VET council⁸. • Create training opportunities and ensure that they are in line with the needs identified.
<p>6. Deliberation and consultation are key functions of the regional VET councils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the legal provisions adequately reflect the deliberative and consultative role of the regional VET council. • Ensure that the legal provisions specify in which areas the regional VET council has a deliberative and consultative function and what the outcomes of this function are expected to be.
<p>7. The regional VET councils tends to have no budgets of their own, but use the administrative and human resources of the organisations whose staff are among their members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the regional VET council has no budget, the legal provisions need to guarantee its access to the administrative and human resources of other structures.

⁸ The identification of needs for training and capacity building for members of regional VET councils should be given due attention, since the quality of the work of the councils depends on the professional qualifications and attitudes of their members.

<p>8. National legislation includes little information about the nomination, profile requirements, and responsibilities and rights of members of regional VET councils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the legal provisions (national or regional) specify nomination procedures, profile requirements, and responsibilities and rights of members of the regional VET council.
<p>9. The efficiency of the work of the regional VET councils depends on a number of factors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the factors influencing the efficiency of the work of the regional VET council are identified. • Ensure that the regional VET council benefits from potential positive influencing factors. • Ensure that the influence of potential negative factors is limited.
<p>10. A clear definition of the mandate of regional VET councils is a precondition for their effective performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the mandate of the regional VET council is specific and clear. • Ensure that the regional VET council is not overburdened in terms of the resources and capacities of its members. • Avoid a long list of tasks for the regional VET council.
<p>11. Little information is available about types and modes of delivering decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the legal provisions include specific and clear information about how decisions are to be taken.
<p>12. Little information is available about the cooperation between regional VET councils and other bodies, institutions and structures. However, cooperation does take place on an informal level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential areas of cooperation with other bodies, institutions and structures. • Assess the potential of each area of cooperation for creating synergies. • Ensure that the legal provisions include relevant information on such cooperation.
<p>13. Little information is available about the types of committees/commissions that are to support regional VET councils and provide them with expert knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that legal provisions foresee committees/commissions and specify their role. • Ensure that the legal provisions include information about the requirements for committee/commission members.
<p>14. Little information is available in relation to the good governance of regional VET councils, although transparency, accountability and anti-corruption are important aspects of their work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the legal provisions include specific information about all aspects relating to the good governance of the regional VET council.
<p>15. Little information is available about the evaluation of the work of regional VET councils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that criteria for the evaluation of the work of the regional VET council are in line with its mandate. • Ensure that the criteria are specific and measurable. • Decide on the intervals at which evaluation is to take place. • Ensure that evaluation results are used in a constructive manner to help the regional VET council improve its work. • Ensure that the legal provisions include all necessary information about evaluation.

ACRONYMS

Crefop	Comité régional de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'orientation professionnelles (regional committee for employment, training and career guidance)
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RCEVEO	Regional Committee on Employment and Vocational Education and Orientation
ToRs	Terms of reference
TRC	Tripartite regional commission
VET	Vocational education and training

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