

# VET GOOD MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE IN MOLDOVA

**Assessment Report  
Executive Summary**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*VET Good Multilevel Governance* is a model for VET policy-making management based on coordinated action to effectively involve VET public and private stakeholders at all possible levels (international, national, sectoral, regional/local, provider) for objective setting, implementation, monitoring and review. Good multilevel governance in VET aims to reinforce interaction and participation of such stakeholders whilst improving relevance, accountability, transparency, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of VET policies

The ETF has developed a *VET Governance Toolbox* which should be adapted to a country reality and country needs, with a focus on the following components:

- Method for vision building;
- Assessment of institutional arrangements;
- Costing, Budgeting, Financing and Funding;
- Role of Social Partners linking VET policy to Labour Market needs;
- Territorial Governance (sub-national governance dimension);
- Monitoring and assessment of progress in VET multilevel Governance.

Furthermore, ETF defines *Institutional Arrangements* as the organisation of policies, rules, norms and values that countries have in place to legislate, plan and manage the execution of development, the rule of law, the measurement of change, and other such functions of state; and suggests that *Review of Institutional Arrangements* aims to ensure that the policies defined (strategies, regulations, laws, etc.) are backed up by the appropriate capacities to make them realistic. This includes human resources and organisational arrangements, but also financial resources that will make it possible.

In 2019, the Minister of Education, Culture and Research (MoECR) of the Republic of Moldova formally requested the European Training Foundation (ETF) to support implementing multilevel governance approach for assessing VET system in Moldova in the context of the last phase of implementing Moldovan VET strategy.

In this context, the ETF VET Governance Toolbox was agreed to be used for a tailored review of VET system in Moldova, and during the Workshop “*Launching a Policy Discussion on VET & Skills Good Multi-Level Governance in Moldova*” organised by ETF in cooperation with MoECR (18<sup>th</sup> February 2020), main views, ambitions, expectations and other key policy issues for implementing methodological approach on, and review of VET & Skills good multilevel governance in the country were shared and exchanged among high level and other key country stakeholders and ETF.

This Report presents the results of the primary phase of reviewing and assessing institutional arrangements in the Moldovan VET system which was based on the ETF VET Good Multilevel Governance approach (and the tool-box) adapted to the local context with strong consideration of the recommendations made by, and the agreements with, the national stakeholders.

The following types of coordination mechanisms were considered within the review: Legislative – normative-oriented; Institutionalised – policy advice-oriented; Public-Private Partnerships-oriented; Knowledge creation-oriented.

Accordingly, within this phase of the review, the following was addressed:

- National and sectoral (VET-related) *policy and strategy documents* in terms of vision of VET, its development goals and objectives;
- Main *VET-related legal acts* (laws, sub-laws, regulations, etc.) for identifying the established *business processes* and *legal relations* between the bodies involved in VET governance;
- Key *VET actors* at national and sectoral levels, *directly or indirectly involved in VET governance*.

Based on the initial study implemented during the inception phase of the project as well as considering the recommendations of the Launching Workshop, the following VET players were covered by the review:

- A. Governmental Bodies:** Ministry of Education, Culture and Research; Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (MoHLSP); Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MoARDE); Ministry of Finance.
- B. Public Institutions:** Republican VET Development Centre; National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research; Republican Methodical-Instructional Cabinet under MoHLSP; Labour Market Observatory; Methodical Training Centre under MoARDE; Centres of Excellence, Colleges, and VET Schools.
- C. Councils and Committees:** Economic Council to the Prime Minister; National Coordination Council for VET; National Qualification Council; National Council of VET Students; Sector Committees for VET.
- D. Social partners and SCOs:** Chamber of Commerce and Industry; National Confederation of Employers (Patronat); Organisation for small and medium enterprises development; National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova; some individual private companies.
- E. Development partners** (and or their projects): Liechtenstein Development Service; Centre for Entrepreneurial Education and Business Assistance; Austrian Development Agency; World Bank in Moldova; USAID; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; GIZ; Pro Didactica Educational Centre.

The review was implemented *via* mixture of desk research and field work. The desk research was focused on thorough analysis of the national legislation, policy and strategy documents, legal acts defining the scope of authorities and the functions of numerous bodies directly or indirectly involved in the VET governance, the rules and procedures on different VET practices. A certain scope of statistical data on the Moldovan education system and specifically on VET, was also processed.

The field works, due to the restrictions caused by the COVID19 crisis, were carried out in distance, with use of electronic means of communication. In total 38 individual interviews and two group interviews were provided. In total, about 40 organisations and/or their units were considered for this review.

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The main sector policy document, the **Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy 2013-2020**, defined the general objective as: *'Modernise and streamline the VET in order to increase the competitiveness of the national economy, by training competent and qualified workforce, in line with current and future requirements of the market'*; and identified six specific objectives: 1) Restructuring the VET into two levels – secondary and post-secondary and reconfigure the network of institutions by 2017; 2) Ensuring the VET based on competences and adjust it to the labour market

requirements; 3) Increasing the quality of the VET by improving the efficiency of the utilisation of financial means and by creating and implementing the quality assurance system; 4) Scientific, cultural and methodological provision of the VET, so that all curricula are adjusted to the NQF by 2020; 5) Increase the quality of the teaching staff and improving their motivation, so that, by 2020, the entire teaching staff is trained according to the NQF; 6) Increasing attractiveness and access to the VET.

The VET Development Strategy provides a detailed analysis of the challenges facing the sector. *Inter alia*, these include:

- weakness of quality assurance system and the NQF in VET;
- difficulties in adjusting the qualifications to the actual needs of the labour market, incompliance of curricula with its requirements, and inefficiency of developing and publishing teaching and learning materials;
- the necessity of upgrading the skills and capacities of the VET teachers, managers and administrators in line with modern standards;
- an ageing infrastructure (buildings, equipment etc.) of the VET system and inefficiency of its use;
- poor management on the allocation and administration of finances;
- a need to strengthen the role of the social partners, specifically the business community and civil society in the VET policy-making, decision-taking, policy management and service delivery processes;
- limited access to information technologies and poor use thereof in VET.

During the period from 2013 till 2020, considerable achievements in implementation of the VET Strategy and developing this system were registered. Situation in many VET clusters have been improved and some VET practices strengthened. Nevertheless, none of the challenges could be considered as fully or significantly overcome, therefore, the Strategy remained **relevant** during the entire period of validity. Moreover, many of those challenges will most likely remain pertinent also for the next medium-term period.

The **credibility** of the VET policy was also mainly ensured in terms of a) Track record in policy implementation; b) Policy financing; c) Institutional capacity and ownership; and d) Analytical basis and data quality.

Presently, a new National Development Strategy “Moldova 2030” is under elaboration, and the Education Strategy 2030 covering also the VET sector, will be derivative of it. Therefore, the present period selected for this review, seems exceptionally opportune, and the proposed options for restructuring the VET governance and increasing its effectiveness, may be well-timed.

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The VET system in Moldova has a complicated structure with involvement of numerous players both public and non-public. There are many horizontal and vertical links, including administrative and methodological. Some forms of cooperation between the stakeholders are formalised and institutionalised, while others are based on memoranda or similar documents. Although certain non-state actors do participate in VET governance but their role is predominantly consultative, while the decision-making authority almost solely belongs to the governmental bodies.

The VET system of Moldova and its governance are centralised at the national level. No regional or local bodies have tasks in this area. The sectoral dimension is limited to the Sector Committees for

Professional Training, which are composed of social partners' representatives. Those Committees have again consultative role within the corresponding sectors of economy.

There are 89 public VET institutions in Moldova. They are subordinated to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (42 VET schools, 19 Colleges, and 8 Centres of Excellence), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (4 Colleges and 1 Centre of Excellence), the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (6 Colleges and 2 Centres of Excellence), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1 College).

Thus, the above Ministries are directly responsible for VET governance and are accountable to the Prime Minister's Office. The Ministry of Finance participates in the VET governance through different processes of the VET institutions' funding, while other line Ministries have indirect relations to the VET Governance, e.g. through participation in elaboration of qualification standards and modification of the Nomenclature of fields of professional training and specialties.

There are a number of support structures under MoECR, MoHLSP and MoARDE as well as various Councils but the levels of their functionality and the effectiveness are different. The key structure which should ensure social partnership in the field of VET, i.e. National Council for VET Coordination is not functioning since 2017, while the Republican Centre for VET Development is under-staffed and under-funded and in fact, almost non-operational. At the same time Republican Methodical-Instructional Cabinet of MoHLSP and Methodical Centre for Training of MoARDE cannot effectively fulfil their primary tasks, due to the shortage of staff and also because of being loaded by some other ministerial duties.

Of 9 recently established Sector Committees for VET, not all are formalised yet, and some are still non-active. At the same time, there are numerous Social Partner organisations, which are formally involved in different VET processes, in accordance with the corresponding legal acts. A large number of donors are providing considerable assistance to the Moldovan VET system development, and the EU, with its Budget Support, remains the largest among them. Many CSOs are also active in supporting the VET system improvements.

Within this review, structure, tasks and responsibilities, institutional and HR capacities, subordination and accountability, performance, funding and other aspect of all key VET structures and the links between them were identified and described. An inventory of opinions of the stakeholders about different issues was also formed. The next steps (the follow-up phase) will be devoted to the critical analysis of the above issues through:

- Comparative analysis of the Stakeholders' opinions (based on the inventory of opinions).
- Assessing the institutional setup, the VET actors' roles and links, and the effectiveness of communication, cooperation and coordination between them;
- Identifying the strengths, weaknesses and/or gaps in the VET governance system and recommending some options of possible activities targeted at improving its effectiveness and efficiency.

The business processes (including decision taking processes) will also subject be to analysis for such particular VET clusters as: Identification of skills need and defining the VET content of education, including NQF; Occupational and Qualification Standards and curricula; Annual Enrolment Planning (State Order); VET funding and financing: mechanisms, roles, efficiency; Monitoring and Evaluation;

Strategic planning; Social Partnership; Dual Education and WBL; Tracer Studies; Lifelong learning; Quality assurance. Some aspects of the regional/local levels will also be discussed.