

FOLLOW-UP ON GLAD MEETINGS

Summary of identified issues in the field of VET and LLL governance, and preliminary operational steps by the ETF expert advisor

Background

Two milestones in the GLAD lifespan have been successfully achieved. GLAD kicked off on 30/3/22, and in the following 2 weeks the ETF proposed a platform for dialogue and learning on LLL governance and encouraged participants to suggest topics of interest and specify whether and how they would be willing to engage in GLAD network activities. Five meetings took place with Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Tunisia, while Georgia, Palestine and Serbia have provided written inputs. Based on these consultations, the ETF and participating countries agreed that specific activities should be proposed within a reasonable time.

This is what **co-creation** means. Both a top-down and bottom-up approach to network configuration and development. It is very important to listen carefully to national practitioners, understand challenges and constraints and setting priorities and activities together with them. However, once participants reveal needs and expectations, there must be a solid foundation for future activities that are well-suited for most, if not all interested participants.

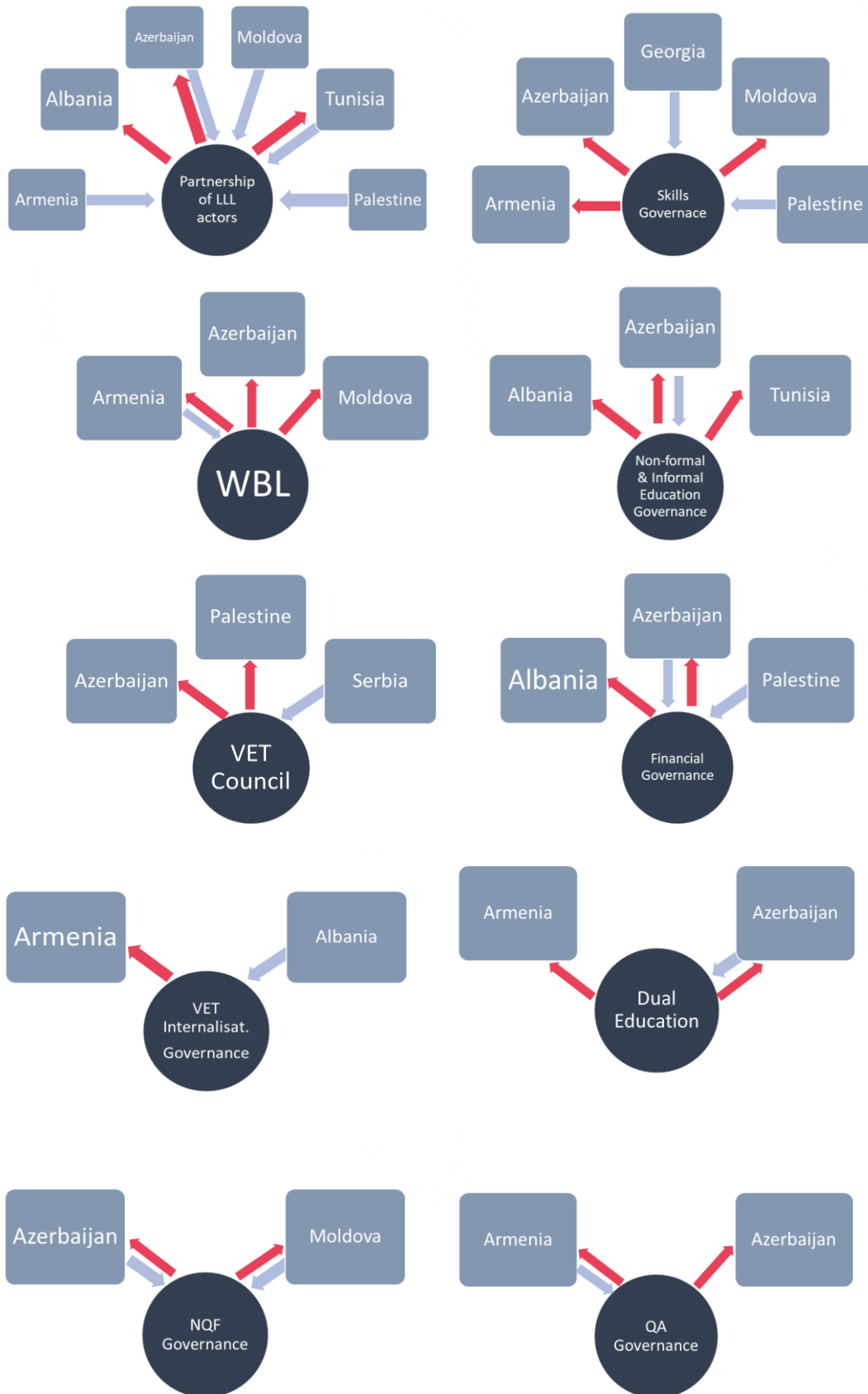
This type of approach allows a network to harvest the progresses and lessons learned in each country, to build on stakeholders' priorities, and to ensure better relevance to reform processes.

Country responses on governance priorities

Below are the common topics suggested by countries in terms of learning and sharing knowledge:

Thematic areas	Armenia	Albania	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Moldova	Palestine	Serbia	Tunisia
Partnership between LLL stakeholders	share/learn	learn	share/learn		share/learn	share		share
VET Council			learn			learn	share	
Governance of Non-formal and Informal Education		learn	share/learn			learn		learn
Dual Education	learn		share/learn					
WBL	share/learn		learn		learn	share	share/learn	
Financial Governance	learn		share/learn			share		
Governance of VET internationalisation	learn	share						
QA Governance	share/learn		learn			learn		
Skills Development Governance	learn		learn	share	learn	share		
NQF			share/learn		share/learn			

Countries' expectations in terms of **LEARNING** ← and **SHARING** → knowledge



The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn from the above findings:

- **Thematic interest varies.** There are in total 10 common thematic areas. Most interest revolves around two thematic areas: Partnership approaches between LLL actors/social dialogue models and Skills Development Governance (5 countries each). Interest in VET Council and other governance bodies, WBL, Skills financing mechanisms, and Governance of Non-Formal and Informal Education followed next (3 countries each). The remaining areas were mentioned by two countries each.
- **Match between availability of sharing practice and willingness to learn.** In all areas there are countries eager to share their experience and countries who perceive they are at the beginning of the learning curve on the same topic. The sharing could also involve EU or international practice.
- **Scope of thematic areas varies.** From very large (ex. Partnership approaches between LLL actors) to very specific (ex. dual education). Therefore, some smaller topics could be easily absorbed by other more encompassing ones, thus reaching a significantly smaller number of thematic areas.
- **There may be overlap with other ETF networks.** Some topics may be covered by other ETF networks, such as the SkillsLAB or the Quality Assurance Forum. The ETF may check whether some issues of interest for GLAD participants are already addressed within specialised networks. As a result, the common thematic areas that refer specifically to Governance may be less than 10.
- **Once the thematic areas are narrowed down, consider setting up 2-3 collaboratives/expert groups/working groups that will engage in learning, dialogue, and action.** As it states, GLAD network must stimulate dialogue and learning, which eventually enable action. Thus, ideally the joint work will materialise in:
 - A knowledge product, for example a policy note with a structure of evidence-informed policy making – problem, objectives, options, impacts, and selection of the best option – one joint policy note per group or one per country. A different option is that participants take stock of joint learning or peer-reviewed practices and draft a paper for a GLAD conference. Civil society representatives or researchers may be willing to engage for international recognition. Involving EU experts beyond ETF must be kept in mind.
 - Dialogues between the diversity of stakeholders – state institutions, social partners and civil society – on identifying a solution to a specific issue, such as new mechanisms, processes that improve collaboration, Pacts for skills, implementing regulations etc.
 - Actions that aim to improve a specific practice, to pilot a new partnership, to conduct action research, etc. On-demand training activities might be considered too.
- **Keep the network “door” open for other potential participants.** With the network activities unfolding, there may be other participants wishing to join. Attract and accept new participants, which fit into network philosophy. Encourage country participants to invite other stakeholders in the network allowing for a more balanced representation when needed.

On the ETF side, the following should be addressed at the onset:

1. **Set internal and external rules for coordination and communication, and assign roles.** The ETF team should manage and support the network through ongoing facilitation, technology, and communication, and handle logistical and administrative details for the smooth functioning. At the same time, roles and responsibilities of network participants should be discussed openly and agreed together.
2. **Maintain realistic expectations about the network potential.** Participants may turn uninterested if their needs are not satisfied. Thus, if they are asked to share what indeed concerns them, they

obviously expect ETF to address most or at least a few of these burning issues. At this stage, having an array of expectations and topics suggested by participants, the ETF and them must decide which ones are to be addressed within the network and how and which ones are to be redirected (to other ETF networks/experts) or dropped. These decisions should be summarised in a network' charter and activity plan. In doing that, three key questions are: *Why was the GLAD network established? What would the network deliver that would not be possible to obtain otherwise? How will it deliver it so that it is rewarding for both the participants and the ETF?*

3. **Secure reasonable financial resources to support network activities.** The absence of financial resources may theoretically jeopardise network activities and lead to participants' disengagement. A reasonable investment of financial resources should be envisaged to support learning, developing joint solutions, and putting them in writing. To consider at least a few face-to-face meetings and peer-learning visits.