



CENTRES OF VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE: PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

**Working processes and key practices of CoVEs for
advancing autonomy and public-private partnerships**

Manuscript completed in 09.01.2023

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report has been produced by the ETF under the coordination of the ETF experts Floriana Folisi and Jose Manuel Galvin Arribas. The study has been conducted by the Omnia Education Partnerships Ltd. experts Kateryna Furmanets, Anna Lager, Mervi Jansson, Antti Seitamaa and Laura Valojärvi.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is divided into four sections. Section 1 explains the background and rationale of the study. The methodological approach used in the study is explained in Section 2. The results and lessons learnt are presented in Section 3 and 4.

1.1. Background and rationale

This report is divided into four sections. Section 1 explains the background and rationale of the study. The methodological approach used in the study is explained in Section 2. The results and lessons learnt are presented in Section 3 and 4.

This follow-up study picks up where the ETF Network for Excellence (ENE) baseline study regarding centres of vocational excellence's (CoVEs) autonomy in forging public-private partnerships (ETF 2021) left off. ENE is an international network of practitioners in Vocational Excellence. Good practice exchanges among high-quality VET institutions (peer-to-peer approaches), co-creation of new methodologies, tools (etc.) and opportunities for partnerships among members are the main services provided by the network¹.

Whereas the baseline study used questionnaire data to analyse whether and to what extent CoVEs have autonomy and how it can be linked with experiences of public-private

¹ <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/projects-campaigns/projects/vocational-excellence>

partnerships (PPPs), this study uses interviews with experts and policy-makers to critically examine how PPPs are being established in four selected ETF partner countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Spain and Turkey.

The study aims at increasing understanding, as well as providing in-depth and up-to-date knowledge on the processes and key practices that are CoVEs main inputs for excellence, in terms of building relationships with the private sector. Furthermore, this study uncovers the circumstances that impact, either positively or negatively, CoVEs partnerships with the private sector. Those issues have been tackled via desk research, first, and then qualitative data, as expert interviews. This approach helped to achieve the ultimate goal, which is to figure out how to set up broader and more meaningful collaborations between public and private actors in the future in response to the needs and challenges faced by CoVEs in the selected four countries.

In 2018, the European Commission (EC) proposed the establishment of a European Education Area by 2025 (European Commission, 2018). Centres of vocational excellence are one of the main policy initiatives proposed by the Commission for increasing local, regional and national economic development. According to this vision, CoVEs are responsible for bringing together “a wide range of local partners including VET providers, employers, research centres, development agencies and employment services (among others) to develop ‘skills ecosystems’ that contribute to regional, economic and social development, innovation and smart specialisation strategies.” (ETF 2021, p. 11).

According to the European Commission, the concept of Vocational Excellence entails a holistic learner-centred approach in which Vocational Education and Training (VET)²:

- Is an *integrative part of skills ecosystems*, contributing to regional development, innovation, and smart specialisation strategies.
- Is part of *research, education, and innovation*, working closely with other education and training sectors, the scientific community, and business.
- Enables *learners to acquire both vocational and key competences through high-quality education* that is supported by quality assurance, builds innovative forms of partnerships with the world of work, and is supported by the continuous professional

² Centres of Vocational Excellence - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission (europa.eu)

development of teaching and training staff, innovative teaching methods, mobility and internationalisation strategies.

But what exactly are CoVEs? According to the ETF (2021, p. 3), CoVEs are often represented as the institutions that embody vocational excellence. However, the purpose, structure and functions of CoVEs vary greatly from one context to another. Differences and similarities are often “disguised by the use of specific terminology, which may be lost in translation” (2021, p. 3).

Overall, Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) might refer to high-class skills providers that are showing the way forward for vocational education and training. In contributing to regional skills strategies, they promote employment and regional development. CoVEs work closely with employers, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), regional/local governments, research centres (etc.) to foster innovation and applied research; promoting entrepreneurship, supporting career education and guidance approaches, twin transition (green and digital), social inclusion, and/or up/reskilling (etc.).

In other words, CoVEs are formed by networks of different partners that develop local skills ecosystems at both national and international levels. ENE experience informs that, typically, four type of CoVEs shapes its operational concept:

- ✓ High quality single Vocational Education and Training institution.
- ✓ High quality single Vocational Education and Training institution which might coordinate other VET providers (networker-leading role).
- ✓ Cluster composed by a number of high-quality Vocational Education and Training institutions (e.g. at sector, regional/local level).
- ✓ Ecosystem (platform) composed, among others, by high-quality VET providers, universities of applied sciences, employers, research centres, development agencies, employment services, local authorities (etc.).

However, this study confirms that there is currently no common -worldwide acknowledged- definition of centres of vocational excellence, which encompass a broad spectrum of VET centres working or seeking to form connections with the private sector for the purposes of improving students’ employability and responding to skills needs on the labour market. Countries assign different goals for CoVEs in policy-making and treat them differently in terms of prioritisation of resources and political commitment (ETF, 2021). In some countries

they function as the central hubs or development centres for the VET system but in others they are more or less isolated VET schools providing students with skills.

The CoVEs in this study were selected based on recommendations from policy-makers working in national (and in the Spanish case regional) ministries of education. Policy-makers chose high-performing skills providers that they felt best represented efforts to develop PPPs and increase autonomy. For the purpose of this study, all institutions that embody vocational excellence are referred to as CoVEs, regardless of whether they have been reported as such by public authorities.

Autonomy is usually a component of the CoVE model, since it is thought to be vital for collaborating with private partners. School autonomy has been defined in different ways in the literature, typically emphasising a school's ability to govern its own budget and personnel, with support from a school council (Demas & Arcia, 2015). In this study, autonomy is defined as 'the right of an education provider to self-governance involving independent and accountable decision-making on educational, organisational, financial, staff-related and other matters in pursuit of activity carried out within the scope defined by the law.' (ETF 2021).

Public-private partnerships are also a controversial concept for which there is no single all-encompassing definition (ETF 2021). Many factors are involved in determining how PPPs are set up in any given country. For the purpose of this study, PPPs are defined as mechanisms for coordinating action and sharing responsibility between public and private stakeholders in VET for formulating, designing, financing, managing or sustaining engagements of common interest, with a view to producing results at the level of outcomes (impact) in addition to outputs (ETF, 2020c).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Key Objectives

This study investigates working processes and key practices of CoVEs for advancing autonomy and public-private partnerships. The study takes a qualitative approach, in order to build cases informed by good practices and propose suggestions for improvements in working processes. The research process involved collecting, analysing, and interpreting

non-numerical qualitative data to make sense of practitioners' perspectives, experiences and thinking about PPPs and autonomy. Furthermore, the report identifies potential capacity gaps and challenges. The final objective is to provide an in-depth description of CoVEs working processes in the following interrelated key areas:

- Implementation of policy frameworks regarding autonomy policies and implementation roles of actors involved in this process, in countries and PPPs. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding about the relationship between CoVEs operations/practices and their institutional status.
- Governance and financing of CoVEs linked to their autonomous role and relevant PPP practices.
- The practical processes that CoVEs implement in order to involve the private sector (e.g., mentoring, career guidance, recruitment, scholarships, staff development etc.).

2.2. Research framework

This study presents 14 examples of public-private partnerships framed in the autonomous status of the 11 selected CoVEs in **Azerbaijan, Georgia, Spain and Turkey**. By analysing thematically the interviews with CoVE representatives and policy-makers, the report examines and describes in detail CoVEs working processes and practices in the target countries. The criteria for selecting the CoVEs was based on the diversity of the centres in terms of their geographical location, and their level of autonomy. The selection of those two actors, CoVEs and policy-makers, was due to the nature of the topic, as they both play a crucial role in terms of autonomy and consequently PPPs.

The data collection for this study began with a preliminary survey questionnaire that was sent to the active members³ of ETF's European Network of Excellence (ENE) sub-initiative, including new partner countries, such as Ukraine and Spain⁴. This survey was used to identify potential cases of CoVEs for further interviewing⁵.

³ Azerbaijan, Finland, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Netherlands, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

⁴ For more information, see the Section 2.4 Research subjects.

⁵ The list of survey questions is presented in the Appendix 5.4 at the Appendices section.

The questionnaire phase was followed by sixteen (16) in-depth interviews with CoVE representatives and policy-makers from four (4) ETF partner countries⁶. By interviewing selected CoVE representatives and policy-makers, the study aims at illuminating and identifying the working processes and key practices for advancing autonomy and PPPs – and how they are perceived by different stakeholders. The study seeks to explain the structure and essence of CoVEs experiences with PPPs based on discussions, reflections, and experiences.

After the interviews, the participants were asked to fill in a table⁷ clarifying and outlining specific, concrete projects related to public-private partnerships that had resulted in the development of good practices at their centre. The purpose of the clarification tables was to get a clear understanding of exactly who and how many people had participated in the project, what their roles were, what kinds of actions they undertook and for how long they participated. These tables form the basis for the case descriptions of good practice in the section 3.3. CoVE cases.

First and foremost, the interviews were aimed at mapping out how working processes and good practices are actually realised, while also covering potential difficulties and suggestions for improvement. Furthermore, CoVEs processes and practices were thoroughly examined to create a better understanding of the "deep structure" of PPPs and autonomy.

Thematic analysis is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research. It emphasises identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data in order to witness different themes "emerging" from the data. After conducting the questionnaire and interviews for this study with the aforementioned methods and tools, the data was read and reread and culled for phrases and themes that were then grouped to form clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2013).

Through this process the researchers constructed broadly meaningful interpretations of various events, situations, experiences, and other factors shaping practitioners' understanding of autonomy and PPPs in CoVEs. This sense-making produced a more profound understanding of the phenomenon in question while also generating specific cases that outlined good practices and working processes, from which suggestions for improvement can also be made.

⁶ The list of interviewees is presented in Appendix 5.7 at the Appendices section. The list of interview questions is presented in Appendix 5.5 in the Appendices section.

⁷ See Appendix 5.6 in the Appendices section: Interview clarification table

2.3. Data collection and processes

The primary purpose of the preliminary questionnaire was to identify and map out the areas of excellence in CoVEs, and to support the selection process of the interviewees. In addition, the answers to the survey questionnaire were used to supplement interview data while proceeding to the thematic analysis⁸.

The interviews with CoVE representatives and policy-makers were conducted after the survey. The interviews enabled discussions with different stakeholders about existing good practices, while also covering the roles and working processes of people involved in the good practice. The interviews aimed at revealing potential challenges and capacity gaps, as well as proposals for necessary improvements regarding overall CoVEs operations. Furthermore, the interviews uncovered what participants had learnt while working with or within CoVEs so far; what factors enabled and drove the process to happen; who were involved with it, and, finally, what kinds of outcomes were produced. The interviews also shed light on how selected CoVEs use key terminology, for example, what different schools mean by “good practice”.

Consequently, the interviews were used to collect qualitative process indicators, in order to distribute good working practices and cultures of excellence and innovation in CoVEs. Interviews allowed CoVEs and policy-makers to discuss their experiences in a structured manner, and to identify the sequence of events, key stages, and transitions. The interviews were conducted remotely and recorded for further thematic analysis.

As previously mentioned, the implications and conclusions of this study have been drawn by thematically analysing the interviews and the results of the preliminary survey questionnaire, while also reflecting the findings with the theoretical framework and previous publications by ETF⁹. This analysis phase, where the researcher reads and rereads the data, typically results with themes that are then grouped to form clusters of meaning. The aim of the thematic analysis is to arrive at a more profound understanding of the PPPs in CoVEs, resulting in CoVE cases informed by good practices and relevant working processes, while also providing suggestions for improvements.

⁸ See Section 3.2: Results of the thematic analysis.

⁹ See, e.g., ETF (European Training Foundation), Centres of vocational excellence. Autonomy in forging public-private partnerships in vocational education and skills development, (Baseline Study), 2021

2.4. Research subjects

The research data of this study is a combination of survey questionnaire responses (11 respondents), as well as 16 interviews: 11 interviews with CoVE representatives and 5 with policy-makers from the selected countries. Each interview included 1-3 participants. Participating CoVE representatives work under such professional titles as principals, directors, deputy directors, teachers and head of studies. Participating policy-makers have senior positions in regional and national VET administration.

As previously mentioned, the countries under investigation are: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Spain, and Turkey. The countries were selected according to the following criteria:

1. ETF's experiences working with partner countries in the area of VET excellence focusing on autonomy and PPPs (as part of the ETF's work on governance and financing arrangements),
2. availability and willingness of ETF partner countries in ENE to work on shaping a cross-country partnership for creating knowledge and sharing experiences,
3. relevance of experiences and expertise on VET excellence in autonomy and PPPs, supported by policy developments in selected countries and institutions registered as CoVEs in ENE, and
4. geographical coverage

Overall, the selected ETF partner countries reflect diverse institutional arrangements and socioeconomic contexts. Furthermore, their national policy frameworks highlight the importance of autonomy and PPPs.

All interviews were organised remotely and conducted in English, except the Turkish interviews, where an interpreter was present. The interviews were conducted with both CoVEs upper management (principals, directors, head teachers), and policy-makers from public administration bodies in charge of VET. The policy-makers were selected among the ETF's network of national and regional VET professionals. As previously mentioned, the interviewed CoVEs were selected based on their geographical coverage, but also partly relying on policy-makers' recommendations, and their expression of interest in participating in this study.

Both practitioners and policy-makers were selected to ensure in-depth data about working processes and key practices, as well as to avoid possible blind spots or biases¹⁰.

Summary of survey respondents and interviews¹¹:

COUNTRY	SURVEY	INTERVIEWS	
		CoVEs	Policy-makers
Spain	2	2	2 (Castilla y León / Galicia)
Ukraine	2	-	-
Kazakhstan	1	-	-
Georgia	2	3	1
Turkey	2	3	1
Tunisia	1	-	-

¹⁰ See the appendix 5.7 in the Appendices section for the specific titles and affiliations of the interviewees.

¹¹ The more detailed information on profiles of the participants can be found in Appendix 5.7.

Morocco	1	-	-
Azerbaijan	-	3	1
The total number of interviews	11	11	5

3. RESULTS

This section provides a detailed description of the data and presents the results of this study.

Section 3.1 presents an overview of how CoVEs and autonomy have been conceptualised and legislated in the four countries under investigation (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Spain, and Turkey). The results are divided into two sections:

- Section 3.2 presents the results of thematic analysis for each of the four participating countries, while section 3.3 focuses on the interviews with CoVE representatives and organises the findings in the form of good practice cases.
- Section 3.3 presents fourteen (14) individual cases of PPP implementation in different CoVEs, as well as information related to project and development activities. The results are summarised in Section 3.4.

It is important to keep in mind the interpretive and subjective nature of the results presented in this section. Where possible, direct quotes are provided, and interpretations have been checked with participants afterwards. However, in some cases the processes described by participants in the interviews are more difficult to ascertain with external objective metrics and represent subjective assessments. The qualitative nature of the study forces us to tolerate a higher degree of uncertainty and be modest in our conclusions.

3.1. Overview of legislation, and present state of CoVE autonomy in selected countries

Overall, all four participant countries have made significant changes to their vocational education and training legislation in recent years. These changes have increased CoVEs autonomy also in more centralised systems. Based on the research data, it seems that all four countries are working intensely to increase the number of PPPs, and to make VET more relevant for working life.

Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan¹², current legislation foresees an overall framework for PPP with general description of obligations for both parties. A law on vocational education adopted in 2018 provides a policy framework for the organisational, legal, and economic bases of the country's VET system¹³. A special VET Agency has been created, that is fully subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)¹⁴. The road map for VET policy adopted by the government envisages further steps for PPPs development¹⁵. Furthermore, the government of Azerbaijan has recently adopted an official document¹⁶ for the piloting program that aims to raise the motivation of the private sector to get involved in PPPs by covering the salary for instructors. According to the interviewees, providing more autonomy to CoVEs and VET schools is one of the main policy goals in the

¹² ETF (European Training Foundation), Azerbaijan education, training and employment developments 2021

¹³ Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on vocational education.

¹⁴ Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the establishment of the State Agency for Vocational Education.

¹⁵ Strategic roadmap for the development of vocational education and training.

¹⁶ Ministry of Science and Education of Republic of Azerbaijan. Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on "Exemplary Form of Work-based learning Contract" Article 3.6.4, 2018.

next few years. The government has taken several measures over the last two years to prepare CoVEs for more autonomy and strengthen their capacity for PPPs.

Georgia

In Georgia¹⁷, operating VET institutions do not have CoVEs status and the country reportedly has no law that defines centres of excellence at the moment. However, some of the VET schools are operating independently as excellence centres and have cooperation agreements with private companies¹⁸. Additionally, a new concept of hub centres (hubs) has been developed¹⁹. The hubs are regional and sectoral and do not necessarily deliver general short-term or qualification training programs, but they have a special legislative mandate that widens the autonomy in establishing partnerships with the private sector involving all the regional stakeholders in this sphere. The autonomy of the hubs is supposed to improve regional development in specific sectors. Currently, several VET institutions are being transformed into hub centres within the scope of two international projects. It is planned to establish up to 10 hubs in the country.

Furthermore, according to the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the Chamber of Commerce, a brand-

¹⁷ ETF (European Training Foundation), Georgia education, training and employment developments 2021

¹⁸ Centres of vocational excellence. Autonomy in forging public-private partnerships in vocational education and skills development, (Baseline Study) 2021

¹⁹ A concept for the governance of skills hubs

new vocational education agency called the Skill Agency has been established²⁰. This agency is constituted from both government and private sector stakeholders and the main policy directions of involvement in PPPs will be agreed on by the board. It is responsible for coordinating collaboration between different organisations (institutions, companies, etc) as well as sectoral skills development. It is expected that this agency will be the main driver for growing the added value of PPPs as new projects and new initiatives will be developed within the framework of this agency and with its support. In these processes, the MoES will be the main actor on behalf of the government, but the main expertise, discussions and recommendations will be prepared by the Agency. The Agency will support public-private partnerships and push the private sector to be involved in the whole cycle of CoVEs education.

Georgia has a general framework for PPPs and some cases of good practice in this sphere²¹. A new law came into force in 2018 emphasising the role of the private sector and PPPs and allowing CoVEs to be entrepreneurial and receive their own income²². At the same time, however, there is a practical need to adopt additional regulations for clearly defining stakeholders' shared responsibilities and making partnerships more productive, including clearer terms and conditions for the implementation of the work-based learning programs.

²⁰ Vocational education 2020-2021 report

²¹ Guide to Public Private Partnerships in Georgia

²² 2018 Georgian law on vocational education

Spain

In Spain^{23 24}, the central government is responsible for the basic legislative framework, in accordance with European Union regulations, recommendations and policies where applicable. Regions have their own parliaments and regional administrations, which are responsible for implementing national legislation. The national VET system used to consist of two integrated but distinct subsystems: education and labour, which share the same national qualification framework. Recently a new law has been introduced, which merges the two subsystems²⁵.

There are different types of VET providers in Spain, with varying degrees of management autonomy. Integrated Vocational Training Centers (Centros Integrados de Formación Profesional, CIFP) provide initial and continuous vocational training and policy-makers consider them the most suitable for adapting the CoVE model. Common upper secondary schools also provide VET. They both have the same education curricula and produce the same qualifications but the structure, organisation and goals of the integrated centres (CIFPs) focus only on VET. Integrated centres are especially motivated to develop public-private partnerships whereas in the common upper secondary schools, VET is only one part of the education services provided. CIFPs also have more autonomy regarding collaboration with private businesses and actively seek potential private sector companies for collaboration. Policy-makers in Castilla y León and Galicia are trying to expand the network of CIFPs in order to establish more PPPs (particularly for FP Dual), develop new projects with the private sector and improve students' employability as well as the capacities and competitiveness of local companies.

²³ Spain did not participate in the ENE baseline study (ETF, 2021); therefore, its national policy overview has been compiled based on the policy-maker interviews and desk research.

²⁴ Cedefop 2019 overview of Spanish VET system

²⁵ Organic Law 3/2022 on the organisation and integration of vocational training

Turkey

In Turkey^{26 27}, it is evident that significant effort is being invested in developing sectoral centres of excellence as a model for CoVEs²⁸. There are approximately 3600 vocational education and training schools and centres in the country. Around 500-600 of these have been designated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) as Project Protocol Schools, which have additional responsibility for developing connections with working life²⁹. While ordinary VET centres only report to the Provincial Employment and Vocational Training Boards, the Ministry has established Project Management Boards and a guardianship system to overlook the Project Protocol Schools. Guardians - also referred to as 'school sponsors' - are representatives from private companies in the school's vocational field that take part in the school's decision-making and are responsible for providing feedback to both national authorities as well as the VET centre about working life relevance and educational quality. The purpose of Protocol Implementation Boards is to guide the school administrations and the curriculum according to the needs of the relevant industries. The purpose of establishing such a structure is two-fold: to increase financial and expert support from the private sector and to better align VET with labour-market needs (European Commission, 2019). The structure of CoVEs in Turkey is unique because it is represented by the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges, which is establishing a public-private sector joint management model, in which it will coordinate 81

²⁶ ETF (European Training Foundation) Turkey education, training and employment developments 2021

²⁷ ETF Country Brief Turkey: Integrated monitoring process of the EU Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabruck Declaration

²⁸ Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training Through Establishment of Sectoral Centres of Excellence Operation (IQVETIII)

²⁹ In addition, the Turkish system reportedly includes Research & Development schools as well as thematic schools. Despite the translation, there were some difficulties understanding the entirety of the Turkish CoVE system.

vocational high schools from all provinces around the country. The legislation, budget and infrastructure of the Sectoral Centres of Excellence is being developed at a fast pace by MoNE.

Three sectoral Centres of Excellence are currently functioning³⁰, and two more are being set up. With support from the European Union, MoNE aims to establish 15 sectoral centres of excellence covering 25 occupational fields in the next few years³¹. These centres will be established in provinces that excel in specific vocational sectors (for example by establishing a sectoral CoVE in Marmara where the automotive industry is thriving). The sectoral centres of excellence have more autonomy than normal VET centres, but all of the most important decisions are still either taken by or checked with the Ministry. Sectoral Centres of Excellence as well as their private sector partners are typically asked to communicate their needs directly to MoNE for further discussions and consideration. At the national level, the cooperation between the CoVE model and the private sector is strong, with the latter providing work placements for students based on the protocol signed with the Ministry of Education. The centres have regular communication with companies and companies are included as, for example, sector representatives on school boards. The centres have the advantage of a training committee, on which professionals from industry sit and discuss the curricula. The centres organise internships for students in industry, so the benefit is mutual.

The centres report that students have an opportunity to see and experience workplaces, and companies want the experience of trained students. Companies are reported to provide further support by mentoring the students. MoNE is responsible for signing protocols with the private sector, both at the local and central levels, to strengthen PPPs. These protocols

³⁰ For more information on one of the three sectoral centres, see Turkey Case 2: “Establishing Pendik Halil Kaya Gedik Metal Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School as a CoVE”

³¹ Technical Assistance Project for Increasing the Quality of Vocational and Technical Education through the Establishment of Sectoral Centers of Excellence

address drafting new curriculum and training programs development in collaboration with private sector representatives. Industry representatives from each sector also participate in the Vocational Qualifications Authority's Vocational Qualifications Board, helping promote common standards for VET across Turkey.

3.2. Results of the thematic analysis

This section discusses and presents the themes that emerged from the research data, bringing together both the survey results, as well as the interviews with the policy-makers and CoVE representatives. The emerged themes are listed, followed by a more detailed context, including several quotes from different interviewees to illustrate the findings. Here, the aim is to reveal a dialogue between the policy-makers and CoVEs, unfolding the perspectives on the aspects mentioned by both or one of the sides, while also creating the basis for further dialogue.

Although the interviews were semi-structured, and although the data shows that the overarching themes (e.g., autonomy) were typically anchored in the interview questions, participants cover various dimensions and express multiple nuances that are essential to discuss further, in order to unfold existing good practices and reveal capacity gaps and challenges.

3.2.1. Azerbaijan

The thematic analysis for Azerbaijan covers research data from four interviews: one with a policy-maker and three with CoVE representatives. In this case, there was no complementary survey data available, as there were no survey respondents from Azerbaijan.

The themes that were addressed both by policy-makers and CoVE representatives are:

- Autonomy of CoVEs
- Financial autonomy and possible mechanisms of financing
- Missing dimensions in legislation
- Private sector motivation
- Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement
- Responsibilities of the actors in PPP
- Competitiveness and attractiveness of VET
- Qualified human resources and need of trainings and guidelines

The listed themes and the overall context are explored in the following sub-sections with perspectives both from policy-makers and CoVE representatives. In addition to these themes, a specific theme that was mentioned by only the policy-maker will be examined further: the importance of sharing practices.

Autonomy and financial autonomy of CoVEs

One of the themes that both the policy-maker and CoVE representatives discussed in their interviews was the autonomy of CoVEs. However, they had a different focus within this theme. The policy-maker marked the latest goals in legislation to be directed towards more autonomy for the CoVEs:

“Providing autonomy to CoVEs and VET schools is our main goal.” (Policy-maker)

“We would like to give as much autonomy to the schools and CoVEs as possible.”
(Policy-maker)

He emphasised that CoVEs should have strong and qualified management to be autonomous which is currently not the case for most of the Azerbaijani VET institutions, and mentioned the need of training and guidelines that would help the CoVEs to implement new practices, such as PPPs. The CoVE representatives, while arguing their ability to make decisions, still addressed some limitations when arranging PPPs:

“When you go to the other region to arrange some activity, you should every time get permission from national authorities/ministry.” (CoVE representative)

“There are such companies that say that they want to cooperate, but if the ministry does not allow them, they cannot.” (CoVE representative)

“We notify but we can make a decision at our level as a centre (a CoVE) only if all our steps are within the framework.” (CoVE representative)

“Nonetheless, the agency (State VET Agency) has always approved our decisions.” (CoVE representative)

As to *financial autonomy*, both the policy-maker and the CoVE representative discuss issues related to the financial dimension of autonomy, including various financial mechanisms that CoVEs can implement. However, their focus was slightly different. CoVE representatives mention that in addition to state budget funding, their CoVEs have the right to act as entrepreneurs and receive funding from their other organisations and donors (which is not the case for non-CoVE VET institutions in Azerbaijan):

“We are a state institution. We're getting funds from the state budget, and we can earn money by ourselves as well.” (CoVE representative)

“We have a possibility to have partnership with other organisations and NGOs as well as international donors. At present, we are applying for some EU programs and Erasmus Plus and, if this project is approved, we will have a chance to get funds from them and arrange our activities via international financial support.” (CoVE representative)

“We were given a status (entity); it allows us to sell our production. But not every VET school can do this.” (CoVE representative)

The policy-maker addressed the lack of flexibility in financial management and the need to make financial management transparent. He discussed the current problems that CoVEs

have when managing finances and the steps taken by the Agency towards providing more financial autonomy for VET institutions:

“So, now, we are implementing and working on the financing system. For example, the online financing system helps to see how VET schools get support from the government, how they spend funds, and what is the purpose of these expenses.”
(Policy-maker)

“For example, if they (CoVEs) get any support from the company or get any income before the next year they have to definitely use this money by the end of the current year, otherwise these funds will be called back to the budget of the company. Now we are working on it and we are giving public entities (CoVEs/VET schools) the status in order to save this money for the future.” (Policy-maker)

Overall, in the interviews with the CoVE representatives the theme of autonomy is expressed more positively and revolves around descriptions of what the CoVEs have a right to do in terms of funding and financing. The policy-maker, however, addresses the need for more work to be done by the Agency towards providing more financial flexibility and autonomy for CoVEs.

Missing dimensions of legislation and private sector motivation

Gaps in legislation and private sector motivation were overlapping themes in the interviews with the Azerbaijani representatives. Both the policy-maker and the CoVE representative recognise that the private sector lacks motivation for participating in PPPs, and that some measures should be taken to improve the current situation. The policy-maker argues that legislative changes are required, in order to motivate the private sector to become involved with PPPs. However, he also emphasises that these types of changes must be thought through carefully:

“Private sector should have some privileges while they are working with the public. I mean, for example, if they are giving aid or any support to the schools they should have, for example, different kinds of discounts for their support (lower taxes, customs etc.). For example, if companies are giving the old machine (equipment) to the school for the training free of charge and then if they are bringing a new machine (equipment) from abroad they should have some discounts paying customs.”

Sometimes governments see some risks in such privileges as they can damage competitiveness in the market.” (Policy-maker)

The CoVE representatives mention the issue of providing students with a salary when they are involved in dual VET programmes, arguing that the government could increase private sector motivation by paying part of the students’ payment.

Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement and responsibilities of the actors in PPP

Both policy-makers and CoVE representatives recognize the importance of PPPs. The CoVE representative notes that key stakeholders (CoVE, employers, and graduates) were positively impacted by PPP implementation. Due to improvements in cooperation with employers, the CoVE has developed new in-demand training and courses that have been adjusted to labour market needs. The CoVE representative especially emphasizes the importance of employability and addressing labour market needs:

“We understand that if we cooperate with some company on our projects, there are more chances that the students will be employed.” (CoVE representative)

“We invited them (private and public companies) to participate in the preparation of the curriculum because we need to know what they want.” (CoVE representative)

The policy-maker argues that now is a good time to pilot and start implementing PPPs:

“I think over the last six or maybe eight years, we have had very quick and very good, oriented changes in our public sector. At present our public sector is really working with the private sector, and both parties are willing and ready to work. Now is maybe the right time to find mutual connection as we are under more auspicious circumstances created over the last two-four years. Now it's time to find the pathways for the cooperation.” (Policy-maker)

However, the policy-maker argues that both the private and public sector currently have a lack of understanding about how the PPPs model should work. Pilot projects have been launched recently to get a better understanding of how the models and mechanisms can be implemented in practice.

Both the policy-maker and the CoVE representatives argue that one important aspect to consider regarding PPP implementation is having clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all the actors involved, advising that this should be done in advance.

Qualified human resources and need for training and guidelines

Both the Azerbaijani policy-maker and the CoVE representatives emphasise the need for qualified human resources. The CoVE representatives argues that human resources are the most important thing when implementing PPPs. The policy-maker focused on the need for qualified managers when implementing PPPs and expanding autonomy. He adds that more training and guidelines should be provided for VET institutions to help them organise and implement PPPs on their own:

“We are trying to examine and certify personnel, to define what kind of training they need.” (Policy-maker)

“I think we need to develop the guidelines on these processes (for CoVEs): what kind of presentation you can do, what kind of suggestions you can give to the private sector, who are your stakeholders, how you analyse and find them.” (Policy-maker)

In addition to the themes raised by both parties, there are several consistent themes in the policy-maker interview. In particular, he notes the importance of demonstrating the possibilities and the value of projects to VET institutions. He also emphasises the need to share good practices among local professional communities:

“We need to give CoVEs/VET schools information on future opportunities and perspectives, inform them on what can be changed and give kind of the direction.” (Policy-maker)

“I think we would like to have a platform for sharing the local experience with other local schools.” (Policy-maker)

Competitiveness and attractiveness of VET

Both the CoVE representatives and the policy-maker discuss VET’s image problem in Azerbaijan, although with a different focus. The policy-maker emphasises that VET

institutions should be attractive to the private sector and that they should be able to face competition from other VET institutions. The CoVE representatives discuss the changes in public image of VET after good practices were implemented. They look at the question of attractiveness not only from the private sector perspective, but also from the position of student enrolment and employability:

“Our Center became more prestigious. Students came to us and knew that they would definitely find a job.” (CoVE representative)

“We've got a young school. Over the past six or seven months companies have been mostly calling us and asking for cooperation. There were different types of offers and different types of cooperation to send our students for practice.”

“I think the students' approach also changed because every student or job seeker who comes here, realizes that they will obtain the skills in line with enterprises requirements.” (CoVE representative)

3.2.2. Georgia

The thematic analysis for Georgia covers research data from four interviews: one with a policy-maker and three with CoVE representatives. Additionally, there were two survey respondents from Georgian CoVEs. This survey data will be used to complement the interview data when describing the context of the emerging themes.

The themes that were addressed both by policy-makers and CoVE representatives are:

- Autonomy of CoVEs,
- New legislation being recently introduced or under development
- Financial autonomy and possible mechanisms of financing,
- Missing dimensions in legislation,
- Private sector motivation,
- Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement,
- Responsibilities of the actors in PPP,

- Networking, sharing good practices and experiences nationally and internationally

The listed themes and the overall context are explored in the following sub-sections with perspectives both from policy-makers and CoVE representatives.

Autonomy of CoVEs, changes, and missing dimensions of the legislation

The theme of autonomy was raised throughout the interviews with the Georgian interviewees, and was tightly linked with the themes of developing new legislation, as well as the missing dimensions in legislation. Both the policy-maker and the CoVE representatives mention the establishment of the new Skills Agency and its role in the development of vocational education and training and PPP implementation. The policy-maker provides a deeper description of the concept and emphasises the role of Skills agency as the main driver towards PPPs:

“This organisation was established last year. This agency will be the main driver for PPPs as its mandate is much wider in this direction. For example, it will coordinate cooperation of different organisations/institutions/companies, as well as work on (sectoral) skills development. It will be the main actor in delivering and developing vocational qualifications.” (Policy-maker)

The CoVE representatives refer to the Skills Agency as the ‘driver’ agency, also when describing autonomy in their CoVEs:

“A new Skills Agency was established by the Ministry of Education. And these people are working for remodelling, redesigning all VET legislation. And these are mainly experts of vocational education who got together and are thinking on how to make VET better.” (CoVE representative)

“We are dependent on the MoES and the newly created Skills Agency, which is a new institution, and they have just started to operate in this field and they have very good plans to help colleges to develop and create the policy for colleges.” (CoVE representative)

Regarding autonomy, the policy-maker mentions the steps already taken towards autonomy and the broad future goal of expanding autonomy in CoVEs. CoVE representatives, in turn,

note some existing issues related to autonomy:

“At present we still have to agree and then approve many things with the Ministry of Education. However, the policy of the government now is to decentralise this process and make the colleges more independent and more entrepreneurial to have or generate their own income” (CoVE representative)

“Involvement of the government means bureaucracy. Despite the fact that our founder is a private company, we are subjected to a procurement system and the procurement system is not flexible.” (CoVE representative)

One of the CoVE representatives addresses the issue of the centralised system and suggests that for better PPPs implementation it would be beneficial to “decentralise” and give more power to municipalities since they have better knowledge of local needs. Both CoVEs the representatives and the policy-maker recognize the recent and ongoing changes in legislation and argue that these changes are helping the VET system support PPPs and autonomy.

In terms of financial autonomy and possible mechanisms of financing, the policy-maker argues that the CoVEs have quite extensive financial autonomy and are, for example, allowed to keep international funding for themselves. Interviews with the CoVE representatives indicate that different CoVEs have different sources of funding, with some CoVEs only receiving funding from the government, some trying to access or already receiving private or international funding and some CoVEs receiving major financial support from the private sector:

“Financially, we are dependent on the MoES and the newly created Skills Agency. My college has had zero experience with donors but we are currently working on this issue. We try to communicate with companies and show our best sides, but they are not our donors for now.” (CoVE representative)

“First of all, the best thing was that students were offered financial support within the program. So, it was the company’s goodwill to pay them a scholarship.” (CoVE representative)

“So, half of the finances came from the ministry, what was related to the state programs and establishing the state authorised college, and another half – from the company (co-founder of our CoVE).” (CoVE representative)

“MoES mostly financed our activities... We were doing our best to do fundraising. Nearly 10% came from the grants of international organisations like UNDP.” (CoVE representative)

Another issue that one of the CoVEs brought up is that in their case regardless of the source of funding, funds must be placed in the same account and processed through the same bureaucratic procedures as the public funds.

Importance of PPPs, private sector involvement and motivation and responsibilities of the actors in PPP

Both the Georgian policy-maker and the CoVE representatives recognise the importance of private sector involvement. Due to new legislation, the private sector is represented on the board of the newly-established Skills Agency, which is the main driver for PPPs. In this way, the private sector is closely involved in VET decision making processes, as expressed in the following excerpt by the policy-maker:

“Private sector should have the same level of responsibility in policy making and implementation of PPP as the government at all levels of vocational education institutions” (Policy-maker)

CoVE representatives emphasise labour market needs and the importance of cooperating with the private sector to improve students' employability:

“We had the demand and we had the supply on the labour market and they are finally matched with each via development of our institution.” (CoVE representative)

“More young people come here to study because they are employed immediately and they get a very high salary. The labour market lacks these professions, and they have become very popular.” (CoVE representative)

Both the policy-maker and CoVE representatives recognise that the private sector currently lacks motivation to participate in PPPs and that some measures should be taken to fix this. The CoVEs representatives note that there is a need for better communication and clarity between all the actors involved when implementing PPP:

“The communication was very complicated. Because there was a lot of information, lots of companies, lots of activities, but we needed to educate ourselves how to present information to other parties in the right way, and how to develop programs that an employer would be interested in. The process of communication ensures that all parties are involved.” (CoVE representative)

Attractiveness of VET and sharing experiences nationally and internationally

Both the Georgian CoVE representatives and the policy-maker recognize the importance of sharing experiences on a local level, although with a different focus. CoVEs representatives address this issue from the perspective of the image of the centre and point out the need to inform current and future students about projects and possibilities:

“I would put a lot of finances in recruitment and professional orientation to do the PR (public relations) and promotion in order to ensure the right way of communication with our target audience. People should understand what exactly these programs are, because people often have wrong ideas about the job placements.” (CoVE representative)

“We have a lack of good specialists on the technical level. And we try to attract more young people, and to involve them in agricultural work, technical work and make vocational education more popular and more attractive.” (CoVE representative)

The policy-maker focuses more on the need to share good practices between the schools. In terms of international cooperation, both CoVE representatives and the policy-maker stress the importance of sharing practices internationally and participating in international activities. The policy-maker advises the schools to visit the international arena and get involved in international projects. CoVEs point out that these processes are new for them, and they are still learning and taking their first steps towards international collaboration. One of the CoVEs representatives mentioned that the lack of language skills is one of the main challenges for developing international cooperation.

In addition to the above themes, the CoVEs stress the importance of qualified and active teaching and administrative staff that could follow the modernised system and implement the PPPs. The need in qualified human resources and trainings was noted:

“I would give more attention to teachers' staff, to refresh it, to put more money in teachers' development and their salaries to encourage them to be teachers in CoVEs’.” (CoVE representative)

“I think that people are very important for good services in every sphere in VET education and other activities. The teacher is the core component of our system. Without good teachers it doesn't matter how good we are equipped.” (CoVE representative)

“For example, when the European Union or other donors announce some grant competition, we need to write a proposal for this grant. And we have some lack of capacity for our staff to write such proposals.” (CoVE representative)

“We just pay salaries to our staff and teachers and the salaries are not so high to motivate people to come and work here. When you want to work according to high standards, you should provide very well qualified teachers.” (CoVE representative)

3.2.3. Spain

The thematic analysis for Spain covers research data from four interviews: two with policy-makers from different regions and two with CoVE representatives. Additionally, there were two survey respondents from Spanish CoVEs. This survey data will be used to complement the interview data when describing the context of the emerging themes.

The themes that were addressed both by policy-makers and CoVE representatives are:

- Autonomy of CoVEs,
- Financial autonomy and possible mechanisms of financing,
- Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement,
- Competitiveness and attractiveness of VET
- Networking, sharing good practices and experiences (nationally and internationally)
- Entrepreneurial mindset

The listed themes and the overall context are explored in the following sub-sections with perspectives both from policy-makers and CoVE representatives.

Autonomy of CoVEs, Financial autonomy, and Importance of PPPs

Both CoVE representatives and policy-makers recognize that there is limited autonomy and flexibility in Spanish VET. Due to their limited autonomy, public educational centres find it hard to carry out collaborative projects beyond what is purely educational. They cannot enter into agreements with companies directly and the administrative procedure to establish agreements is tedious. They cannot hire or fire teachers in the institutions since there is a strict, formal procedure for doing this on a regional level. CoVE representatives also note the difficult bureaucratic procedures:

“One of the problems is that we have to do a lot of documents and we spend a lot of time filling forms and documentation for the regional system to justify the project.”
(CoVE representative)

“...in Spain, we have a lot of rules. All things have rules. And the rules are very rigid.”
(CoVE representative)

As to financial autonomy, the policy-maker emphasises that under the current legislation, it is not possible to increase private funding into the Integrated Vocational Training Centers (Centros Integrados de Formación Profesional, CIFP). The contract law of administration dictates a very clear separation between private and public financing. It is possible for private entities to sign agreements with the administration to work on an innovation project together with the centres but the funding for this must come from the public budget, not an external source. It is not possible, for example, for a private company to pay for teacher training so that teachers can teach some specific skills. There are also restrictions on the use of equipment so that if a company has certain equipment and the centre wants to use it, there needs to be an official agreement.

Policy-makers encourage especially public centres to participate in calls for projects carried out by the regional authorities themselves or projects within the framework of the ERASMUS program, which involve collaborations between centres and private companies. Policy-makers also consider it imperative to increase calls for projects because they will allow both public and private educational centres to develop collaborative projects with sufficient

coverage and legal certainty and not have problems when it comes to justifying the financing they may receive from private entities.

For one of the CoVEs the importance of the PPP implementation seems to be justified primarily by financial reasons:

“In this vocational education school we have a budget every year to do studies with the students, but this budget is very small. So when we want to do things better, we need a new budget and the way to get this money is by participating in these kinds of projects.” (CoVE representative)

“The other problem is that our budget is very small. So we always have to look everywhere for a way to get money.” (CoVE representative)

Representatives from another CoVE provide a different view on the PPPs importance. They argue that students, parents, and companies are starting to see the possibilities offered by VET, which is very important for the future. Student learning processes benefit from the transfer of knowledge and working life experience provided by companies. Students in these projects are improving personal and professional competences and developing an entrepreneurial attitude. There is also an improvement in the relationship between the educational centre and the companies, which enables the development of new projects with companies. Good relationships with companies increase the attractiveness of the centre, resulting in more students registering to study and the prestige of the centre keeps growing. They also address increase employability and the general effect on the local society:

“Thanks to this collaboration with enterprises and schools and the results that this is giving because many of the students who finish here have a job, the society in general is changing.” (CoVE representative)

The policy-makers emphasise the importance of PPP implementation in terms of employability and supporting the local economy:

“When the students do some part of their studies in the VET centre and another part in the company, it guarantees something like a 95-96% probability to find a job in the first months after finishing. And the remaining 5% are going to continue their studies, not going to unemployment.” (Policy-maker)

There has been an intensification of PPPs through collaboration agreements between the educational administration and the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Services of the Region, foundations of companies and different clusters, which has allowed policy-makers to promote the dual VET model (FP Dual) and launch new projects in the field of professional guidance and applied innovation in which educational centres and companies participate.

Sharing good practices and Attractiveness of VET

The Spanish policy-makers emphasise the importance of sharing ‘stories of success’ and developing mechanisms to transfer experiences and practices on different levels. The CoVEs representatives emphasised how important it is just to start initiating and implementing projects, as it leads to the centre becoming well-known and makes collaboration easier in the future. Both CoVE representatives and the policy-makers are focused on creating positive changes in the image of VET, especially in terms of students’ employability after graduation.

Entrepreneurial mindset

Both the CoVE representatives and the policy-makers point out that a more entrepreneurial mindset and culture is needed in Spanish VET and working life. PPPs can foster and strengthen an entrepreneurial mindset amongst students and staff and increase working life relevance in VET, in response to economic and social changes.

In addition to the above, other themes that emerged in the policy-makers’ interviews include private sector motivation and the VET system being unable to adjust to changes in time:

“The main challenges of vocational training centres, in general, in relation to cooperation in private sector companies are to find companies willing to collaborate in training processes.” (Policy-maker)

“If I have a company or a new sector, a new technology, a new designing system, whatever, the VET system should detect that very quickly and provide the teaching or the education for that and provide the company with the workers or students as fast as we can. And now we're probably not being very fast like that.” (Policy-maker)

“It's not quick, it's not a question that you only write a new law and things change tomorrow magically. It's a slow process because the mindset of the system and the society needs to change.” (Policy-maker)

The CoVEs representatives in the interviews emphasise the need for motivated and qualified teachers, who are open-minded towards these changes. The question of teacher's workload and motivation were also raised:

“New projects imply more work. The teacher must dedicate more hours to prepare and to develop this project. So, it's not always easy to motivate the teacher because they know that they have to work more if they carry out projects like this. But they know that they are very important to our centre, to the prestige of our centre, and to improve the relationship with the companies.” (CoVE representative)

“I asked the Xunta of Castilla y Leon that they give us hours within the teachers' academic year because these projects demand a big effort from the teachers. Because according to the organisation, this kind of work is voluntary, and they don't give us hours for planning and carrying out these projects. This is a big difficulty.” (CoVE representative)

3.2.4. Turkey

The thematic analysis for Turkey covers research data from four interviews: one joint interview with two policy-makers and three individual interviews with CoVE representatives. Additionally, there were two survey respondents from Turkish CoVEs. This survey data will be used to complement the interview data when describing the context of the emerging themes.

The themes that were addressed both by policy-makers and CoVE representatives are:

- Autonomy of CoVEs
- New legislation being recently introduced or under development
- Financial autonomy and possible financing mechanisms
- Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement

- Networking, sharing good practices and experiences nationally and internationally
- VET institution criteria for PPPs
- Qualified human resources and the need for trainings and guidelines

The listed themes and the overall context are explored in the following sub-sections with perspectives both from policy-makers and CoVE representatives.

Autonomy of CoVEs, new legislation, and financial autonomy

The Turkish policy-makers argue that there is a general trend of increasing autonomy in Turkey, especially in the cases of integrated sectoral centres of excellence, which are supposed to have more autonomy than normal VET centres. However, most of the decisions are still made in the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The centralization of the Turkish education system means that it is very hard to provide a legal basis for autonomous structures in the centres. One of the CoVE representatives mentions that the changes in legislation affected processes in CoVEs:

“There are some new programs, we create the programs, the students have a new schedule, and we make a new program because the system has changed.” (CoVE representative)

Decisions in the education system are taken at the central level, ranging from assigning teachers and school heads to deciding budget allocation. MoNE facilitates work on the local level through Provincial Employment and Vocational Education Boards, which convene on a regular basis to discuss the current situation and changing needs in the province. CoVEs representatives talked about different things but generally recognised the issue and limitations of autonomy in the Turkish system:

“We are a project school. We legally have rights to do these kinds of agreements more than the other schools. We can select our teachers and instructors, all of this stuff.” (CoVE representative)

“We cannot find protocols independently of the Ministry of National Education, you know, we have to get the leadership of the ministry or the ministry or the governor's office.” (CoVE representative)

As for financial autonomy, the policy-makers mentioned that on a policy level, the general direction is towards granting integrated sectoral centres of excellence control over their own budget. The use of international funds is also encouraged:

“When I say autonomy, I refer to the fact that sectoral Centres of Excellence will have their own income items. And if they generate their own income, they will be able to decide how they are going to spend this income, this part of their income. But full autonomy in the sense that you understand - it is difficult for Turkey to achieve.”
(Policy-maker)

“We want them to have their own budget. We want them to run their own projects. As you may know, these sectoral centres of excellence are supported by EU funds, even Erasmus projects support such centres. So, we are encouraging them to make use of international funds.” (Policy-maker)

CoVE representatives mention that participation in PPP can affect the budget allocations from the government:

“We have no problem about money right now because most of the things are coming from the government and if we have a lack of money, we can provide it from the foundation and parents. Our expenses have been covered by the central budget and our enterprises.” (CoVE representative)

“But we have the private sector supporting us and if the private sector goes to the ministry and does lobbying for us, we can actually get better money from the Ministry and the protocol executive board.” (CoVE representative)

“One of the major problems is that there are not enough consumables (training materials) for the students to work with. Although the high-tech machinery was procured, there is currently not enough money for training material for all the students to work efficiently.” (CoVE representative)

Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement

Turkish CoVEs see the importance of PPPs from the perspective of employability and financing. Policy-makers think PPPs increase the overall working life relevance of vocational education and training. Both policy-makers and CoVE representatives hope that the private sector will bring additional resources to the VET system, particularly in terms of the consumables and other materials and equipment needed by the schools. The Ministry is signing protocols³² with the private sector both at the local and central levels. These protocols help the Ministry draft new curricula and develop training programs together with private sector representatives.

There is a Vocational Qualifications Board and a Vocational Qualifications Authority to help set the standards, where private sector representatives in each field are also represented. The Ministry is seeking to create a solid organisational basis for further private and public sector cooperation. Currently, the Ministry is creating a guardian system of “school sponsors”³² to improve cooperation with the private sector. The guardians are responsible for looking after the protocols that have been signed with the private sector and making sure that it is relevant to the needs of industry. There are still many challenges involved: according to the policy-makers, the private sector is not eager to provide support while the public side has a huge need for it:

“The private sector has resistance in providing equipment or support for the public schools, for the state schools. They aren’t very eager to do it.” (Policy-maker)

“I believe once the private sector sees the advantages of this new law, they will be much more eager, much more willing to receive our students.” (Policy-maker)

There is uncertainty over the roles and responsibilities of staff as well as their recruitment process. However, the long-term objective of the Ministry is that the private sector will support the public sector continuously and without interruptions. The sectoral Centres of Excellence are the flagship for this new model of public-private partnership.

“These flagship companies will be responsible for providing support for institutions across the country, but they cannot support them in terms of funding. The main objective of all of the projects we’ve been conducting as the Ministry of National Education is to disseminate good practices across the country.” (Policy-maker)

³² Ministry of National Education of Republic of Turkey, Educational Institutions Regulation, 2016

Networking, sharing good practices and criteria for VET institutions

The Turkish policy-makers emphasise that the CoVEs model is new and expresses hope for further development in collaboration, and sharing ideas and good practices internationally through workshops, seminars, and training events. The CoVEs representatives mention that their network is growing after implementing the projects, their name is well-known in the PPP arena and getting involved with new projects is easier. Additionally, both the CoVE representatives and the policy-makers argue that the more a school participates in projects and PPPs, the better chances it has of getting extra funding, particularly in the case of personnel. As some schools transform into sectoral centres of excellence, both the policy-makers and CoVE representatives discuss how the schools are chosen for the projects or being a centre of excellence. The main criteria mentioned are previous international activities and expertise. However, no concrete procedure and guidelines exist.

Qualified human resources

The Turkish CoVE representatives recognize the additional workload for CoVEs staff brought by PPPs and the need for qualified and motivated human resources:

“As the principals of vocational centres of excellence, we always tell the Ministry that if you're expecting us to be successful then you have to give us some innovative teachers, successful teachers, teachers that are not resisting the system or resisting the innovation.” (CoVE representative)

“As a principal, I can feel that that there is an increased workload. The ordinary principals do their routine work and they do not do overtime. But as the principle of our excellence centre, I have to do more.. I have to propose extra projects and do new projects all the time” (CoVE representative)

“They (teachers) didn't want new innovator workshops to be established, the new labs, they didn't want them. In the end, some of those teachers retired and those remaining teachers, they started to understand the benefits of the new workshops and the laboratories would bring, they understood that the students will be more employed.” (CoVE representative)

3.3. CoVE cases

This section presents fourteen (14) individual cases of PPP implementation in different CoVEs, as well as information related to project and development activities.

Interviewed CoVE representatives were typically upper management working under different titles such as principals or directors. They were sometimes accompanied by specific teachers that worked closely with the private sector. Each interview roughly followed the same structure³³. Participants were asked to describe examples of projects that had led to good practice in the area of PPPs. Most interviews started with CoVE representatives describing a wide range of activities and collaborations that they had organised and carried out at their centres. They often spent a lot of time contextualising the projects and explaining, for example, how the circumstances in their national and regional educational system and economy affected PPPs.

Almost all of the 11 CoVEs had at least one clear example of PPPs, with some having even two or three. Only one of the CoVE representatives provided such vague descriptions that it was impossible to concretize into a clear case and ultimately cut from the data set. A total of 14 cases of good practice were selected for closer examination.

The cases are presented country by country and are described using the following structure:

- Context of the project
- Preconditions and motivating factors
- The practice description with actors and roles
- Impact according to the interviewee
- Financial implications
- Required resources
- Circumstances hindering good practices
- Aspect to take into consideration next time

33 See the Appendix 5.5 at the Appendices section: Interview questions

3.3.1. Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan Case 1:

Dual VET schemes, Goychay VET Center

Name of CoVE	Goychay VET Center
Country and region	Azerbaijan, Goychay
Year of establishment	2008
Main training sector(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Agriculture- Machinery- Hotel and restaurant services

Context of the project

The CoVE has recently begun implementing what they refer to as “dual VET” in collaboration with private companies to respond to the need for qualified workers. “Dual VET” in this instance refers to close collaboration with private partners for the purposes of work-based learning, which provides new working life skills for students through the implementation of up-to-date pedagogical training methods. This marks a clear step towards autonomy in the Azerbaijani education system, which has historically been highly centralised.

Preconditions and motivating factors

The initiative for dual VET schemes usually comes from the private sector, which has a vested interest in maintaining their competitive edge and improving productivity. The commitment of key beneficiaries, typically private companies, helps ensure that dual VET schemes are successful.

The practice description with actors and roles

The project was to develop a dual VET scheme. The goal of the project was institutional capacity-building and increasing the employability of unemployed adults looking for work.

Another goal, from the perspective of the CoVE, was to increase the competencies of school managers and strengthen collaboration among VET schools and share best practices. 30 students were selected for this project, half from Goychay and half from the neighbouring Agsu region. After the selection period, the students (unemployed adults) were interviewed and engaged in the training sessions. The VET school managers that were responsible for organising the project participated actively during the planning and implementation phases. The managers selected teachers from the Fruit and Vegetable Growing Institute who wanted to develop their competencies. Teachers mainly engaged in the training sessions to support conducting the training and practical sessions.

Impact according to the interviewee

According to the CoVE representative, the dual VET schemes have improved the prestige and attractiveness of the centre amongst students and job seekers. Due to improved cooperation with employers, the CoVE has developed new in-demand training courses based on up-to-date labour market needs. Consequently, their students have a better chance of finding good jobs after graduation.

Before dual VET schemes were introduced, the courses developed by the CoVE failed to sufficiently take into account employers' feedback and real needs. The new philosophy of cooperation has changed this relationship tremendously and there is now a new focus on working life relevance. At present, the centre is very attentive to employers' needs and prepares students in line with private companies' requirements for specific skills.

Financial implications

The CoVE is a public entity and one of three key centres under the State Unemployment Agency of Azerbaijan. It is primarily funded by this Agency, but the status of public entity allows the CoVE to also make use of other funds. At present the share of government funding is approximately 80%, while the rest (20%) is its own income, consisting primarily of student payments for courses and training. The CoVEs is also planning to raise funds from international donors.

Required resources

The interviewee emphasises the central role of human resources, i.e., qualified personnel in making the good practice a reality. In addition, the CoVE also required good services, modern equipment, and materials as well as funding.

Circumstances hindering good practices

The development of good practice is hindered by bureaucratic procedures, which complicates employer participation in VET activities. There were also problems with organising courses and training in other regions because the centre must get permission from the local authorities. In order to surmount these challenges, the centre must maintain an active relationship with the Ministry, which has given it its mandate and acts as its main supporter.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

The centre would like to increase the opportunities for dual VET schemes in different sectors such as tourism and the garment industry. The centre would also like to make better use of its own facilities in carrying out these schemes.

Azerbaijan Case 2:

Dual VET scheme & PPP with furniture company, Baku State Industry and Innovation Vocational Education Centre

Name of CoVE	Baku State Industry and Innovation Vocational Education Centre
Country and region	Azerbaijan, Baku
Year of establishment	2019
Main training sector(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Information and communication technology- Technology and engineering- Manufacturing

Context of the project

The CoVE was established as the result of a public-private-partnership between the Azerbaijani government and private companies from Korea. The facilities were built and equipped by the Koreans and established as a pilot project for developing the Azerbaijani VET system based on modern Korean curricula. It currently receives funding from the state and is formally under the supervision of the State Agency on Vocational Education, which it is obligated to notify regularly about its activities. However, the CoVE has more autonomy than normal VET centres and is also able to generate income from its activities.

After being set up by the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of Korea, the CoVE has continued functioning and expanding its operations and is currently participating in several different public-private partnerships with national and international companies. The first example of a collaborative project leading to a good practice is the establishment of a manufacturing centre for training purposes together with a furniture company. The company provided qualified staff and equipment to establish the new manufacturing workshop at the centre so that students could learn real working life skills.

The second example is brand new and still being developed. Since the beginning of this year, the centre has started testing dual VET schemes, in accordance with available laws and regulations. The centre is functioning as a pioneer in this regard since dual VET is still new in Azerbaijan.

Preconditions and motivating factors

The introduction of the Korean curriculum as well as financial and technical support from Korean private companies is critical. Since its establishment, the central mission of the CoVE has been to develop good practices in collaboration with the private sector for training better specialists and increasing student employability.

The practice description with actors and roles

The dual VET project was organised by the deputy director along with four teachers. The deputy director coordinated and managed the entire process and supervised the quality of the learning process. The teachers visited companies' service centres together with students and controlled the daily learning process.

The public-private partnership with the furniture company is coordinated by the deputy director, who is in charge of procurement, logistics and monitoring the manufacturing process

and results. One practical and one theoretical teacher are responsible for teaching and assisting students in the manufacturing process daily together with the company's staff.

Impact according to the interviewee

Key stakeholders (students, employers, CoVE staff and the Azerbaijani state) have all been positively impacted by the good practices that developed at the CoVE. In the case of the furniture manufacturing workshop, the employers benefited from getting more qualified workers, the students received actual working life experience through the collaborations and improved their access to employment after graduation and the CoVE helped generate more positive public perceptions about VET. In addition, the good practices have improved the prestige of the CoVE to the point where they no longer have to go out looking for companies to collaborate with but are being constantly approached by the companies themselves. This has resulted in more opportunities for students to go practice their skills in real-life workplaces. It is still too early to say anything conclusive about the impact of the dual VET schemes that are being piloted.

Financial implications

The CoVE is completely owned by the state, which covers approximately 80% of its budget, while the rest of the funding is generated through the CoVE's own activities. The CoVE is able to charge individuals as well as private and state organisations training fees for participating in their 'short-term' courses. They use this income to make investments and further develop their activities. Their goal is to continue increasing the proportion of self-generated income.

Required resources

Financial and human resources (teachers and managers) were most important for implementing the good practices. Physical and digital resources are also required in dual VET schemes taking place in industrial locations. These include small costs such as providing insurance policies for students, as well as transportation costs for delivering students to workplaces.

Circumstances hindering the good practice

Some problems emerged while piloting the dual VET schemes. For example, not all of the company trainers are motivated to work with all the students and require more support and training for this. Some of the students also reportedly had some small problems or misunderstandings related to their studies taking place in the industrial facilities. Furthermore, some parents did not want their children to study outside the CoVEs. These problems have reportedly been solved and there have been no more specific obstacles.

A further problem was that the Government did not provide any financial support for the companies to cover part of the salary paid to students taking part in industrial practice at the company's premises. This hindered good practice development since businesses have less motivation to invite students for industrial practice if they receive no support from the state and must pay for themselves to train students.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

Based on their preliminary experiences with dual VET schemes, the centre considers it a priority to coordinate more closely with partner companies in the future. It would also be important to establish clear protocols and processes for documentation and data-gathering during dual VET schemes. Furthermore, the centre needs to find ways to increase employers' motivation to invite students for industrial practice at their premises, for example through support from the state.

Azerbaijan Case 3:

Curriculum development, Gabala State VET Center

Name of CoVE	Gabala State VET Center
Country and region	Azerbaijan, Gabala
Year of establishment	1973
Main training sector(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tourism- Agriculture

Context of the project

The project developed and introduced a new curriculum in collaboration with the private sector. It involved management and teaching staff from the VET centre, officials from the State VET Agency as well as employers from both public and private companies. Curricular development was supervised by a coordination council, headed by the biggest local employer and approved by the State Agency for VET.

Preconditions and motivating factors

Curriculum development was motivated by the need to respond to rapid development of advanced technologies and corresponding new requirements for using modern equipment in the workplace. Furthermore, the general economic necessity of increasing cooperation with the private sector and developing closer relations with working life were key motivating factors for the good practice development. The centre also utilised the private sector's expertise to help make student selection procedures more efficient.

The practice description with actors and roles

The project was supervised by two deputy directors - one from the tourism sector and another from the agricultural sector. Each sector was further divided into three specialisations, for a total of six specialisations (in the agricultural sector: crop production, agricultural service, livestock and in the tourism sphere chef, confectioner, receptionist). The deputy directors planned the schedule for the theoretical and practical lessons and made the teaching process flexible. They also functioned as coordinators between masters and employers. The deputy directors developed the syllabus in accordance with the curriculum and characteristics of each specialisation. In addition to the two deputy directors, six teachers (one from each specialisation) applied the curriculum that had been created and organised the teaching for the dual VET scheme. The teachers also participated in writing the guidelines for the dual VET scheme. After the module was completed, students were sent to internships.

Impact according to the interviewee

The good practices developed at the centre had a positive impact on students' employment prospects as they obtained specialised skills needed in working life. The enrolment rate at

the CoVE increased as it became more known amongst potential students/learners. The centre began to attract students from different regions as well as the capital, whereas before it had mainly attracted local students.

Financial implications

The financing for the centre comes from the State Agency on Vocational Education under the Ministry of Education. This agency purchased the equipment that was needed for starting the project that led to good practices. The collaboration with private companies also resulted in financial contributions: for example, the land required for agrarian studies was provided by a wine factory free of charge. The GIZ34 paid trainers' salaries and covered the costs for printing different types of flyers. The CoVE was allowed to generate its own income by selling the products that it produces.

Required resources

Human resources were required for the project. In addition, digital resources were necessary to help overcome the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has also been increasing cooperation with Turkish partners in the form of teacher and student exchanges.

Circumstances hindering good practices

The CoVE representatives did not point out any specific circumstances or legislative challenges that hindered the good practice development.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

The CoVE is planning to repeat the curriculum development process in five-year cycles so that it stays in alignment with labour market needs and new technologies. The plan is to continue making analyses of popular occupations that are not currently included in their course list and make decisions based on discussions with employers and further agreement with the Ministry of Education. In addition, the CoVE would like to invite its employer partners to participate in teaching some of the new modules in the curriculum.

³⁴ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

3.3.2. Georgia

Georgia Case 1:

Development of new curricula & introduction of new programs, LEPL College Modus

Name of CoVE	LEPL College Modus
Country and region	Georgia
Year of establishment	1999
Main training sector(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Agriculture and forestry- Business and administration- Information and communication technology- Hospitality and catering, tourism- Technology and engineering

Context of the project

The interviewee described multiple good practices that are currently being developed at the college, although some of them are still too new to be shared. One of the good practices that the college has developed is working life relevant training programs for underprivileged areas. This is concretized by the recent construction and establishment of a second building for LEPL Modus college in an area populated by ethnic minorities, particularly Azerbaijanis. This second college provides agricultural VET programs to local residents.

Preconditions and motivating factors

The Georgian government is currently focused on improving the attractiveness of VET for students and parents because it recognizes that there is a great demand for qualified technical and agricultural workers in the labour market. One of the strongest motivating factors for creating the new agricultural programs at the college is that the Georgian government has signed the Association Agreement with the European Union, creating new opportunities for Georgian food products to enter the EU market. These products must

comply with EU regulations and standards, which prompted the government to set up new agricultural programs for training more specialists to help companies develop the correct procedures and technologies needed to enter the EU market and improve economic development.

The practice description with actors and roles

The project involved developing new curricula and introducing new programs at the college. Fifteen people participated in setting up the project. The college director and educational manager were responsible for planning and managing the project. The quality manager created the program according to authorised standards and framework documents. The financial manager planned the budget and managed the purchase of equipment for the new programs. The career guidance manager designed and carried out surveys to discover labour market priorities as well as communicate with partner organisations. The PR manager promoted and reported on the program to the local and national media through social media, videos and photos. The mayor of the city was the head of the college executive board and consulted, initiated and supported the program. In addition, there were three representatives from businesses on the executive board as well as several external experts helping with consulting and facilitating throughout the process.

Circumstances hindering the good practices

Despite recent government measures to decentralise the VET system and take steps towards granting more autonomy to CoVEs, bureaucracy is still slowing down the development of good practices. The government provides all of the funding for the college, which is not yet able to generate and retain its own income to supplement the limited budget, although this is supposed to change with the new legislation. Teachers' limited language skills have made it difficult to participate in and benefit from international collaboration.

Impact according to the interviewees

Young people from the local communities are positively impacted by the establishment of the new agricultural programs because prior to this there was no opportunity for young people to study agriculture in the Kverno Kartli region, where the second college building 'Marneuli' was constructed. This rural area is home to a sizeable Azerbaijani ethnic minority. It is very important that students in this region can find work more easily and contribute to developing

the Georgian economy. In the long-term, creating new programs that meet the needs of the local economy also helps improve public perception and attractiveness of VET, particularly in the minds of parents. Local businesses are also expected to benefit from having agricultural workers with the right specialisations and skills needed for developing their processes to meet EU regulations.

Financial implications

All the funding for the centre comes from the government and the newly created Skills Agency. All the funding for the new programs and the second building comes from the government. Finding sponsorship or donations from the private sector is a top priority for the college but this is just getting started as the government has only recently relaxed bureaucratic regulations and increased CoVE autonomy, allowing for a more entrepreneurial approach. After the new curricula were developed and approved by the MoES, the CoVE was provided with funds to purchase modern equipment.

Required resources

The development of the new agricultural programs depended on a combination of human, digital and financial resources. The college needed outside help to make sure that the new programs are relevant for the labour market.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

Finding highly skilled and motivated teachers to set up and teach in the new programs is not easy but it is critical for success. Teachers' pedagogical skills must be improved and salaries should be raised in order to attract the next generation of qualified and motivated teachers.

Georgia Case 2:

Establishing a joint college, 'Construct2' Construction College

Name of CoVE	'Construct2' Construction College
Country and region	Georgia, Zestaponi
Year of establishment	2017
Main training sector(s)	- Construction

Context of the project

The Georgian Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) was approached by BK Construction, a private company seeking advice on how they could establish a small training centre for construction workers. The Minister of Education made a counter offer to the company to establish a joint college together. The two parties eventually signed an agreement outlining their contributions: the Ministry would choose a suitable site that the private company would renovate into a new centre. In order to improve employment opportunities outside the capital, the Ministry selected an old building in Zestaponi that had functioned as a VET centre 20 years earlier but was in poor shape, which BK Construction agreed to renovate and help pay to equip and manage.

Preconditions and motivating factors

The key decision makers in the process were BK Construction and the Ministry, who had a mutual interest in improving the quality and labour market relevance of VET training in the construction field in Georgia. The centre was created to help resolve the labour mismatch in the Georgian economy whereby companies needed skilled workers but were unable to find them while many people were desperate to find work. BK Construction attracts students to the centre by offering them financial support in the form of a scholarship as well as the possibility for employment upon graduation. These benefits are particularly important to attract students' from low-income, vulnerable backgrounds. They are also important for motivating students to finish their studies. A dormitory was constructed alongside the centre to improve accessibility and outreach to Georgians from around the country.

The practice description with actors and roles

Almost 200 people participated in the establishment of the joint college, ranging from 'BK Construction' employees to various government officials. Representatives of the construction company initiated the project and participated in decision making and organising as well as donating resources. They hired the project manager responsible for organising the CoVE establishment process (incl. legal framework process), module preparation, communication with the MoES and other state and local policy-makers as well as leading the construction part. The company also provided the CoVE with practical teachers and took responsibility for designing the modules by hiring special curricular developers. In addition, the company also financially supported the CoVE renovation and paid students scholarships.

Government policy-makers from the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Economy, Quality Authorization Institution etc. identified the knowledge and skills needed by the CoVE students. They helped find the right premises to renovate into the CoVE. They helped with all legal provisions needed to establish the CoVE establishment, including permits. The MoES took responsibility for covering operational expenses of the CoVE. Once the curricula were developed, the Quality Authorization Institution provided its approval and gave the CoVE permission to operate and introduce new curricula. The Financial Department of the MoES supervised the new CoVE's spending while the Quality Authorization Institution monitored educational quality.

CoVE managers and staff acted as organisers and representatives in the PPP. They also helped with donations and supervision. Managers and staff participated in state authorization procedures and helped with all preparations needed for launching the studying process and introduction of newly developed curricula (hiring and teaching the staff, incl. teachers, financial managers, VET system managers, quality ensuring managers, warehouse specialists, HR-managers etc.). In addition to the school staff, outside experts on curricular development were involved in the project, creating the modules for the curricula at the beginning of the CoVE's establishment.

Local policy-makers supported the project during the establishment phase. They gave all the permissions needed on a local level concerning reconstruction, environment, infrastructure and land issues. They also helped with promoting the centre to the local public.

Impact according to the interviewees

The company and the government have both benefited from the collaboration: the short-term programs offered at the college provide co-founder 'BK Construction' the opportunity to train workers for their specific needs while the long-term programs serve national and local educational interests. The centre works closely with local authorities to increase student intake. The graduates from the college are able to find good jobs with the skills they have learnt, while companies have a more qualified workforce. The growing employment rate has been a positive factor for budget incomes. Furthermore, the establishment of the centre and its working life relevance has contributed to a slow but steady improvement in public perception of VET as well as influencing students' attitudes and mindset.

Financial implications

The MoES selected an old, abandoned VET centre as the site for the college. 'BK Construction' spent more than 4 million Georgian Lari (1,3 million €) on the renovation and equipment for the short-term courses. The co-founder private company 'BK Construction' also covers students' scholarships for short-term courses. Approximately half of the budget for managing the centre comes from the MoES and the other half comes from 'BK Construction'. The centre offers short-term courses aimed at provision of the workforce for the construction company (primarily financed by 'BK construction' company) as well as long-term courses representing state educational programs (financed by the MoES).

Required resources

A combination of financial and human resources, including premises, infrastructure, equipment, and materials were all needed to establish the centre.

Circumstances hindering good practices

One of the main challenges for attracting students to the centre is negative public perception of VET in Georgia. The older generation tends to have a very negative view of VET while the younger generation is more open. The centre has suffered from a high student dropout rate, which was attributed to the opening of the visa regime between Georgia and the EU. Students are enticed to migrate to EU countries in search of work. According to the interviewee, students' problematic attitudes towards the education that the college offers are

a result of the fact that the costs are covered by the MoES and education is free for the students. There is not much incentive to apply for studies or finish one's studies if a student comes across even a short-term opportunity to work abroad. Negative public perception likely contributes to the high dropout rate, since students' do not see their education as particularly prestigious and have little qualms about leaving in search of better opportunities.

There are also bureaucratic challenges to the functioning of the college since part of the funding comes from the private sector and part comes from the public sector. The combination of public and private funding causes problems, for example when procuring the right materials and equipment needed for training in a timely fashion. However, significant progress has been made recently.

Aspects to take into consideration next time

Launching a new VET college requires effective communication with the public. Students and parents must be convinced that the educational opportunity is worth taking and provides a genuine advantage in working life. In order for the centre to function properly, it is important to attract students that are committed to completing their studies. These kinds of social aspects of improving VET are easily overlooked when working on technical and bureaucratic arrangements, while it is ultimately the case that the centre works or fails to work depending on how students and parents "vote with their feet".

Legislative changes are necessary to further facilitate smoother collaboration between public and private partners. The director of the centre argued that it would be important to be able to operate with two separate accounts: one for public funds and the second one for funds received from the private sector. This way, the public funds would be guarded while private funding would make it easier to respond to budgetary needs and changes more effectively.

3.3.3. Spain

Spain Case 1:

PPPs with local businesses, CIFP Rio Tormes

Name of CoVE	CIFP Rio Tormes
Country and region	Spain, Castilla y León
Year of establishment	2013
Main training sector(s)	- Automotive technician

Context of the projects

The centre has developed many different projects in collaboration with local businesses in recent years, three of which are outlined below. In Project 1 (P1), students from the Department of Transport and Vehicle Maintenance were given an opportunity to learn applied automotive electronics by building an electronic remote controller for a car by hand with the help of technical knowledge from a private company. In Project 2 (P2), students restored an old tractor by themselves with support from a major agricultural sector company. In Project 3 (P3), the centre collaborated with several other VET centres and a 3D-animation company to teach students about the use of robotics in cinema. P1 and P2 were relatively small projects while P3 was longer and more demanding.

The process of initiating, carrying out and learning from these projects has become one of the most important good practices guiding the centre. The ideas for P1 and P2 came from teachers, who wanted to challenge their students by offering more advanced, working life relevant course contents. Since there was no money in the normal budget of the centre to develop extra content, the teachers applied for extra AULAEMPRESA funding for specific learning activities from the regional authorities. They proposed projects to the director of their centre, who presented their proposals to the regional authorities, which then decided which proposals will receive the funding. To bolster the credibility of their proposals, the teachers asked companies (in P1 an auto-electronics business, in P2 a major agricultural sector company) to share with them the necessary technical skills and materials. The idea for P3

came from the principal of the centre, who also coordinated the project. P3 was connected to a larger funding mechanism.

Preconditions and motivating factors

The centre has a long tradition of working together with the private sector. Many teachers at the centre have good relationships with local companies, and it is easy to build on these connections. Because the centre has a very limited budget, teachers must use their personal contacts with local businesses to create novel opportunities for collaboration and learning. This would not be possible without teachers' very high level of motivation and professional pride. Teachers are willing to do extra work because they understand that the additional money that the centre receives from these projects will ultimately benefit the students by improving the quality of education. It also helps teachers develop their own professional capabilities. Furthermore, the centre's good relationship with the regional authorities is strengthened by successful projects.

The practice description with actors and roles

There were more than 50 teachers and students involved in Project 1 (building an electronic remote controller for a car by hand), although to varying degrees. The most significant involvement came from 3 teachers and 8 students. One of the teachers designed and coordinated the project. He searched for all the necessary information to make the project a reality. He also helped the students with different work throughout the project. Another teacher prepared the necessary documentation for the project. He helped the students install the hardware on the vehicles. The third teacher resolved students' specific doubts and helped them during the installation and testing phase. The first group of students involved in the project dedicated a lot of time to the development of the project, both installing components in the workshop and then adjusting the fuel injection system. The second group took care of the additional work carried out in the electronics department.

The number of people in Project 2 (restoring a tractor) was more than 70, including teachers and students, although with different degrees of involvement. There were 3 teachers with significant dedication and approximately 16 students. The main teacher applied for funding for the project and did the shopping. He coordinated all phases of the project and asked other teachers for help. He also selected the groups of students to be involved. The second teacher coordinated the disassembly of tractor parts for restoration and took care of the

electrical installation of the tractor. The third teacher took care of the painting work. The first group of students took care of the reconstruction of the diesel engine. The second group was in charge of the power steering project and the third group was in charge of the disassembly, painting and electricity work.

Project 3 (teaching students about the use of robotics in cinema) involved more than 35 teachers and students, although with different degrees of involvement. There were 2 teachers and approximately 9 students with significant dedication. The principal of the centre coordinated and designed the project. He searched for all the necessary information to make the project a reality. He helped the students throughout the project with different tasks. He also did the shopping. The second teacher spent a great deal of time with the students developing the project and preparing the supporting documents. He also made purchases for the project. The students spent a significant amount of time developing the project and learning things that were additional to those studied in class.

Impact according to the interviewee

Teachers from the centre began applying for additional funding from the regional authorities to carry out small “extra” projects, on top of their normal teaching duties. These projects were carried out successfully and over time the regional authorities began approaching the centre to see if they would be interested in participating in larger and more demanding partnerships (of which P3 is a good example). The organisational culture of the centre began changing so that applying for “extra projects” became a normal, everyday activity. The knowledge and skills that teachers and students have developed during the projects has increased their confidence and pride. The centre has also received new resources and equipment from the projects and has improved their normal teaching as well because they follow developments in working life closely and have regular interaction with the private sector.

The projects started off small and separate but over time they have grown in frequency, duration and budget. The centre now uses the projects strategically to develop their own activity and compete with other centres in the region. The projects are increasingly interconnected and organised so that they all contribute to the larger goal of improving the quality of education that students receive. The size of the projects has steadily grown as the regional authorities have recognized that the centre is capable of taking responsibility for larger projects, creating a win-win dynamic.

Financial implications

The projects require time and funding. The centre's small budget forces teachers to come up with innovative ways of collaborating with the private sector in order to access additional resources. However, due to strict regulations dictating how many hours each teacher must teach per week, the ones that are responsible for initiating and carrying out the "extra" projects are forced to do the extra work that this entails without compensation. The director tries to help by offering as much flexibility with organising the teaching schedule as possible, but this is ultimately not very much since all the hours dictated in the regulations must be taught.

Required resources

Highly motivated and skilled teachers are required to coordinate and initiate new projects and carry them out so that all parties (local businesses, students and regional authorities) are satisfied. The director supports the teachers in different ways, for example in coordinating with the regional authorities and informing teachers about new calls for proposals. The projects are based on close collaboration with the private sector, which supplies different kinds of technical materials and knowledge and superior technical facilities for learning at the workplace. The teachers' professional networks and credibility are very important for building trust and long-term relations with companies.

Circumstances hindering good practices

The projects require authorization from the regional authorities, which means that a lot of energy is spent on dealing with bureaucracy rather than productive work. Teachers spend time preparing the documents for submission to the regional authorities and afterwards they must also do a lot of paperwork to account for the funds. Consequently, not all the teachers in the centre want to get involved in these kinds of "extra projects" because they consider it to be too much additional work. The norms regulating the number of teaching hours per teacher are not flexible and fail to recognize anything except the basic lessons, meaning that teachers involved in organising and setting up these kinds of projects must still do the same amount of teaching as their uninvolved colleagues on top of this development work.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

The interviewees recommend that all centres get started with this type of project-based development activity as soon as possible and learn along the way. Because working life is changing at such a rapid pace, the speed of development is much faster when the reference point is outside of the centre.

Spain Case 2:

Dual VET, Colegio Cristo Rey

Name of CoVE	Colegio Cristo Rey
Country and region	Spain, Castilla y León
Year of establishment	1975
Main training sector(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mechanics- Electronics- Automation

Context of the project

The interviewees emphasised that not all the projects they carry out in collaboration with companies have automatically resulted in good practices – some simply produce a transfer of knowledge and supply material resources without actually changing the way things are done at the centre. However, they emphasised the importance of developing good practices in response to the recent introduction of the dual modality of Vocational Training called FP Dual. For example, the companies that they collaborate with visit the centre to let students know about them and clarify what kind of technical profile and skills they want from students. Furthermore, students at the centre visit companies individually to learn first-hand what a working day is like in that company. This has strengthened the centre's connections to working life and necessitated changes in their everyday work.

Preconditions and motivating factors

The development of good practices related to FP Dual is largely based on the educational centre's close relationships with local companies. The centre has historically had an excellent reputation, which attracts highly motivated and engaged teachers and students who are committed to achieving professional success and come there for high-quality learning experiences. The school administration also has a great deal of freedom and autonomy in terms of designing and carrying out various programs and projects. The explicit religious educational mission of the centre also supports building deep relationships between teachers and students. Beyond merely educating students into workers for the labour force, the centre has an ethos of transmitting strong moral and ethical qualities.

The practice description with actors and roles

The dual VET project involved 12 tutors as well as the head teacher and the head of studies, with 64 students participating. The tutors functioned as organisers and chose the companies where students do their training. They designed the training plan carried out in the companies and carried out the follow-up for student training. The Head Teacher and Head of Studies of Vocational Education and Training coordinated and supervised the project, functioning as school representatives on the level of policy. They certified and supervised all dual VET projects. Regional policy-makers were only involved in the beginning and end of the project, providing the financial procedures for the projects and requesting the corresponding justifications for them after the project was finished.

Impact according to the interviewee

Students' benefit from the transfer of knowledge from companies. FP Dual helps integrate students into working life. Students participating in the FP Dual projects feel that they are improving personal and professional competences and developing a more entrepreneurial attitude. Companies benefit because they can find promising new employees through the projects. FP Dual has also led to an improvement in the relationship between the educational centre and the companies, which enables the development of new projects with new companies. Good relationships with companies increase the attractiveness of the centre, resulting in more students registering to study. Overall, its success with FP Dual has helped the centre grow.

Aside from the increase in the number of students in the centre, there has been an overall improvement in the public perception of VET in Spain. Cristo Rey is one of the reference points for this new and improved VET because of its close historical connections to working life in the region. Students, parents, and companies are starting to believe in the possibilities offered by VET. Little by little, the centre is introducing more and more companies to a concept of VET that is long-term and high-quality. This work attracts teachers and students to the centre.

Financial implications

The centre receives funds for some of its projects from the regional Education Authority. In addition, companies participating in the dual modality of Vocational Training (FP Dual) provide students with some compensation. In general, however, the companies do not provide direct material or other support to the centre. All the money comes from the regional authorities or the centre's budget. In this sense, companies do not yet fully appreciate the long-term potential and benefits of collaboration.

Required resources

The financial resources for the good practices are obtained through extra projects funded by the regional educational authority. Aside from the necessary financial resources, the educational centre's staff provides the necessary human resources. The companies are also essential for carrying out the projects.

Circumstances hindering good practices

The centre's administration works together with the teachers to develop good practices. Often this development takes the form of projects that bring in extra funding. However, the projects come with extra administrative management and bureaucracy, increasing teachers' workload in addition to their usual teaching tasks. Also, companies are not yet conscious enough about the benefit they can obtain with dual training because they do not understand this process as a long-term investment. Consequently, the educational centre is more interested in initiating collaboration with companies than vice versa. FP Dual is still new to many companies, and each company continues to think in terms of their own individual interests rather than long-term mutual interests. As a result, companies do not supply the educational centre with additional resources to improve the quality of training. The centre

must balance between students' need to get high-quality learning experiences and individual companies' interests to recruit skilled workers. Both sides are still figuring out what it means to build a win-win relationship.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

The regulations governing how projects are carried out are perceived as rigid and bureaucratic. The centres are largely unable to influence or shape how these regulations are created because this process takes place between the regional and national educational authorities. They are unable to make changes to the system even if these changes would make the process more efficient. One of the things that they would like to see in the future is creating projects that involve a greater motivation both in the teachers and in the students. It would also be important in the future that the companies provided even some minor form of financial support as a sign of their commitment since there is a tendency to undervalue that which is given for free.

3.3.4. Turkey

Turkey Case 1:

Training project with private company, PAGEV Plastic Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School

Name of CoVE	PAGEV Plastic Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School
Country and region	Turkey
Year of establishment	2013
Main training sector(s)	- Plastic industry

Context of the project

Turkey is home to one of the largest plastic industries in Europe. In order to keep growing and become more competitive, the Turkish plastic industry needs to attract and train new workers. In 2020, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) selected PAGEV Plastic Technology school to be one of its new Project Protocol Schools. The school collaborates closely with some of the largest industrial foundations in the Turkish plastic sector. An example of a good practice that has been developed at the school is the process of training plastic industry workers to function as qualified instructors for students in response to the new work-based VET system that came into effect in Turkey in December 2021. In the new VET system, students go to school for one day and spend the other four days practising in workplaces. The private sector needs help from the school in training qualified instructors so the instructors can, in turn, train all the new students entering the workplaces.

Preconditions and motivating factors

The circumstances supporting the good practice consist of multiple factors. First, it was very important for teachers to embrace and commit to the new VET system. Second, the private sectors' interest and motivation in developing VET to be more relevant for working life was also crucial since they provided more resources. Finally, the coordination and support from the Ministry of National Education was necessary for transforming the school to better meet the demands of future working life.

The practice description with actors and roles

Nine members of staff participated in this project. Coordinators were responsible for organising cooperation between the company and the school. The theory teacher gave lectures and presentations during the implementation phase. The course teacher taught practical applications. School administration supervised assignments throughout the project. Regional education administrators supervised and coordinated all activities during the project.

Impact according to the interviewee

The development of good practices has reinforced professionalism and set a higher standard for educational quality in the school and, by extension, in the VET system more broadly. This

has led to increased motivation amongst students to study and work in the plastic sector. The system is becoming more efficient and employees in the private enterprises are more satisfied with the graduates' work. The new legislation has resulted in organisational changes in the centre, which also contribute to the development of work-based VET.

Financial implications

As one of the Project Schools supported by the Ministry of National Education, the school receives additional funding from the government. The private sector (more specifically, the largest foundation in the Turkish plastic industry) also provides financial support for the school. The high level of commitment by the private sector means that, unlike normal VET schools, the school does not struggle with getting the right equipment and facilities for education.

Required resources

In addition to financial resources, the good practice also required human resources. Staff must be able to work well and interact in groups, which is particularly important in workplaces outside the institutional culture of the school.

Circumstances hindering good practices

Although the new, work-based VET system is seen as a major improvement to the previous one, parents have not yet fully embraced it. There is also a lack of knowledge about the new VET system in the other branches of the Turkish education system, affecting how it is perceived amongst the public. Since it has been introduced very recently, there has not been enough time to properly advertise and inform parents about it. In addition to parents' lack of knowledge and scepticism about the new work-based VET system, another problem is that the plastic sector itself is largely unknown in Turkey. Another problem that the interviewee mentioned is that some teachers and instructors are not motivated or suited for a pedagogical profession and dealing with this causes many difficulties.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

The principal argued that more time is needed to prepare and inform students and parents about the new work-based VET system. There is currently a lack of knowledge about the new system in the other parts of the Turkish education system, which also affects how it is

perceived amongst the public. Informing the public is critical for changing the perception and brand-image of VET.

Turkey Case 2:

Establishing Pendik Halil Kaya Gedik Metal Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School as a CoVE

Name of CoVE	Pendik Halil Kaya Gedik Metal (PHKG) Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School
Country and region	Turkey
Year of establishment	2008
Main training sector(s)	Manufacturing, production, processing (food, textiles, leather, wood), welding school

Context of the project

Good practice referred to the process that turned the school into a Sectoral Centre of Excellence in the field of metal technology. The school was initially established by the private company Gedik Holding in 2009 as a metal technology VET school. The owner of Gedik Holding had the school built and donated it to the public as an act of philanthropy. In 2019, the school was selected by the Ministry of National Education to be a sectoral Centre of Excellence in the field of metal technology (and also specialising in interior furniture) because of the school's close relationship with the private sector. The school has signed a protocol with Gedik-holding, which is the framework in which public-private partnership takes place. The protocol is supervised by the protocol executive board consisting of a representative from GEDIK-holding, the principal of the school as well as a national education director appointed by the Ministry.

Preconditions and motivating factors

There are hundreds of metal technology schools in Turkey and all of them have a need for additional funding. The PHKG, however, receives additional support from the Ministry of

National Education as well as the protocol executive board to cover the costs of new machinery. The principal of PHGK finds it much easier to secure the necessary budget for his school than the other schools. The development work that is done in the school is considered a higher priority in the Ministry and with the help of the private sector, the school is able to easily lobby for more money.

The practice description with actors and roles

All students in the school participated in this project. The protocol executive board periodically monitored students' learning outcomes. The school's vocational teachers were responsible for applying the project and following the latest technological developments. The school principal was responsible for policy-making and ensuring that collaboration was carried out harmoniously. The industry representative was the main actor in the project, closely following developments in the field of metal technology and shaping both their own production process and the school's educational quality. The district national education representative functioned as a legal representative and signed a legal contract with the government for the needs of the sector.

Impact according to the interviewee

As a result of becoming a sectoral centre of excellence, the school has acquired new high-tech machinery. Students have more confidence in themselves and their competence because of all the new machines and robots that they have learnt how to operate. Students are more hopeful about their professional future once they graduate because they are more likely to end up working in the field that they have studied. The close relationship and direct line of communication with the Ministry has increased the motivation of the administration and staff in the school, which has gradually become more ambitious in its activities, even applying for a patent for one of their development projects. The close relationship with the private sector has improved the level of professionalism and educational quality offered at the school. The workload for teachers and administrators has also increased significantly as there are high expectations to propose and create extra projects all the time. There are also higher expectations for teachers because as a sectoral Centre of Excellence, the school is responsible for developing and modelling new ways of improving educational quality in the field of metal technology.

Financial implications

The original goal of the Turkish VET reform was to increase the quality of education so that students would not need to be trained a second time when they graduate and enter working life. To do this, the Ministry originally wanted to shift some of the financial burden for training to the private sector, which would benefit from better trained workers. The private sector, however, was not willing to help cover the costs of the sectoral centre of excellence. The money for the new technology comes from the Ministry's budget but the private sector supports the centre in adopting and implementing the new technology.

Required resources

One of the major problems is that there are not enough consumables (training materials) for the students to work with. In metal work, it is vital that students get enough practice on real materials to master the skills. Although the high-tech machinery was procured, there is currently not enough money for training material for all the students to work efficiently.

Circumstances hindering good practices

The main challenges are related to the internal dynamics in the school. There are disciplinary problems with some students and part of the teachers are resisting the change and innovation that the school is going through. The Ministry of National Education wants more productivity from teachers and wants them to participate actively in different innovation processes and collaborate closely with the private sector but not all the teachers are excited about the changes, which also require them to get additional training, for example about how to operate all the new, high-tech machinery. The growing demands posed by MoNE for professional excellence and innovation amongst teachers in the new sectoral centre appear to be colliding with the teachers' own thinking about their role and status and the purpose of education.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

The interviewee argued for the need to have more autonomy for the school so that it could spend its budget freely. Currently, the budget for the new machinery and the budget for the consumables needed for training come from different places, which means that there are mismatches and problems due to bureaucracy. The interviewee urged for more dialogue

between the Ministry and the administration of VET schools so different kinds of problems related to planning and logistics could be avoided.

Turkey Case 3:

Establishing Samsung Academy and Merih Lifts Academy, Ankara Yenimahalle Şehit Mehmet Şengül Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School

Name of CoVE	Ankara Yenimahalle Şehit Mehmet Şengül Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School
Country and region	Turkey, Ankara
Year of establishment	1968
Main training sector(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information and communication technology - Technology and engineering - Electronics, machinery, and furniture

Context of the projects

The principal presented two public-private partnership projects as examples of good practice at the school: Samsung Academy and Merih Lifts Academy. In both cases, the projects were based on signed protocols between the school and private companies, under the supervision of the Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The Samsung Academy was founded after Samsung contacted the Provincial Directorate of National Education and asked to be matched with a suitable VET school for setting up an academy to train students in small electronics repair. The Academy functioned from 2013-2019. The Merih Lifts Academy was established after the Turkish company Merih Lifts contacted the school about setting up an academy for training students to work in elevator maintenance. It was founded in 2018 and is still ongoing.

Preconditions and motivating factors

Circumstances supporting the establishment of the two academies included the school's prior good reputation and expertise in the field of electronics and communication, the fact

that the school is located in a large industrial zone with logistical and technical advantages and, finally, the interest and support of the national and provincial policy-makers to start collaborating with large private companies.

The practice description with actors and roles

The Samsung Academy had 1125 participants between 2013-2019. The workshops and laboratories that were established during this time are still in use. The Merih Lifts Academy was started in 2018 and is still ongoing with 183 participants to date.

In both academies, both theory and practical technical teachers were responsible for instruction. They identified needs for workshops and laboratories and vocational training. Teachers participated in pedagogical training courses to better help students work with electronics repair in the Samsung Academy and elevators in the Merih Lifts Academy. Teachers arranged internships and helped graduated students find jobs. Teachers participated regularly in the training courses offered at the school.

Students' role was to participate in learning activities. In the Samsung Academy, students selected from different schools continued their vocational training between 18.00 and 21.00 throughout the academic year. In the Merih Lifts Academy, students participated continuously throughout the school year and their studies.

The School Manager acted as an organiser and was responsible for planning, approving and supervising studies when needed. Regional policy-makers were responsible for signing protocols as well as planning and approving the training of trainers when needed.

Both the Samsung Academy and the Merih Lifts Academy were responsible for signing protocols, providing financial and educational support, constructing and updating workshops and laboratories, organising and conducting instructor training, providing internship opportunities to students, recruiting graduate students based on skills needs, helping meet the current needs of the established workshops and laboratories, hosting students' factory tours every academic year and giving students work clothes and gifts. While the Samsung Academy protocol was in effect, students provided opportunities for internships and motivated students were employed. Merih Lifts provided continuous teacher training at the beginning of the project and has since provided continuous financial support.

Impact according to the interviewees

The collaboration with Samsung helped the school build better relations with the Ministry as well as with other private companies. The Ministry brings foreign delegations to visit the school and uses it as an example of PPPs in the Turkish VET system. The establishment of the academy has also led to the school becoming more attractive to students since the quality of instruction has improved and students have a better chance of finding work in their field and continuing their studies, compared to other VET schools. Overall, the PPPs have improved the quality of education at the school, bringing it into closer alignment with the official requirements in the Turkish national qualification framework. The teachers in the school have also benefited from the in-house training that the companies provide to school staff. The school is considered an attractive place to work for teachers interested in developing and maintaining their knowledge.

Financial implications

The private companies covered most of the costs for the projects and the MoNE did not provide any extra budget for the school. The companies covered (among other things) the in-house training costs for staff to learn how to use new technology and workshops. Some of the equipment was paid for with the standard budget from the Ministry and some of it was donated by the private companies involved. The costs for renovating the physical spaces were also covered by the private sector.

Required resources

The school was strategically located and had sufficient space to allow for an academy to be built on its premises, it had a good reputation, and it was able to attract students. In terms of human resources, teachers' motivation was very important for successful collaboration.

Circumstances hindering good practices

The main challenge was that some of the older teachers at the school initially resisted the changes caused by the introduction of the academy to the school premises. Some teachers apparently felt that the new innovator workshops were threatening their status as pedagogical experts. Disruptions caused by the construction work that was needed to

improve the technical capacity of the centre also contributed to tensions. As the project has been continuing for more than a decade, there has been a gradual change in teachers' attitudes, although there are still some tensions.

Aspect to take into consideration next time

The principal regretted that the protocols that were signed between the school and Samsung were coming to an end and that once the protocol ends, there is no possibility to continue cooperating. The school would like to continue cooperating, but the choice appears to be out of their hands and dependent on what it says in the protocol that binds them, which they do not have control over. The school is dependent on the private sector to get up-to-date equipment since it is not possible for the MoNE to constantly pay for new things. There were also some technical shortcomings during the construction phase of the laboratories, which could have been prevented with better planning.

3.4. Results summary

The results demonstrate that CoVEs have set up public-private partnerships in very different ways depending on national, regional, and local conditions. Good practices are being developed in very different contexts for the overall benefit of students and staff, policy-makers and the private sector. Although many of the cases reflect country-specific characteristics, there are a number of universal challenges related to increasing autonomy and public-private partnerships in VET. CoVE autonomy is gradually being introduced and expanded in all four national VET systems, supported by greater transparency and accountability. By granting CoVEs more financial autonomy, they are able to make localized managerial decisions more freely, which has helped improve pedagogy and come up with innovative solutions to increasing working life relevance.

These aspects will be further explored and discussed in Section 4.

4. LESSONS LEARNT AND WAYS FORWARD

This study critically examines how autonomy and public-private partnerships (PPPs) are being developed in four selected ETF partner countries. Working processes and good practices for advancing autonomy and PPPs have been illuminated and identified through expert interviews with CoVE representatives and policy-makers. CoVEs are working hard to forge relationships with the private sector in widely varying social, political and economic contexts.

A number of common challenges were identified that should be recognisable and relevant beyond the four participating countries. The study deepens our understanding about how different operating environments and levels of autonomy support PPPs in VET and skills development. It would appear that steps are being taken to address the concerns and requests reported by CoVEs in the ETF baseline study (ETF 2021, p. 26), including the need to “bring new industry-oriented companies into the PPP network, create a regional PPP framework, introduce strategic monitoring, create clusters and introducing legislation in order to be able to develop PPPs.”

The cases in this study demonstrate that, despite challenging circumstances, more flexibility is being introduced to the curriculum and private-sector companies are becoming more involved in the VET system through collaborations, projects and partnerships. Industry representatives are providing technical and financial support for trainers and students, particularly in the sphere of dual VET. Overall, the findings in this study paint a picture of multiple national VET systems in a state of flux, utilising the European Commission’s CoVE model as a beacon to help steer their network of VET providers towards faster response to working life skills for the sake of economic development. There are no fast or easy solutions for how autonomy can be increased, and PPPs implemented effectively, yet it is clear that in the countries studied, CoVEs are on the frontline proposing and implementing more ambitious and effective solutions.

The discussion section consists of three parts. Subsection 4.1 looks at the challenges that different countries and CoVEs have faced, as well as the lessons they have learnt. Subsection 4.2 summarises some of the good practices that have been developed and proposes some possible ways forward. Subsection 4.3 summarises the discussion.

4.1. PPPs so far: challenges, and lessons learnt

The countries in the study demonstrated the different steps, levels, and mechanisms for implementing PPPs. However, the similarity of the emerging themes in the thematic analysis of the interviews and questionnaires allow us to address the most common ideas about learnt lessons and challenges. However, we want to stress that the following generalisations are only tentative, particularly when considering potential solutions.

The challenges that were faced and lessons learnt from PPPs so far fall under the following eight categories:

1) Towards greater CoVE autonomy

Many of the interviewees described a general trend towards expanding autonomy for CoVEs, particularly in terms of management, finances and pedagogy. This trend is corroborated by the fact that many countries are in the process of changing their legislation to make this a reality. However, there is a great deal of variation in the level of autonomy between different countries as well between different types of VET institutions in the same country. CoVEs are grateful for the expanded autonomy that they have been recently granted and make use of it. Despite this, some major limitations still exist. How to make sense of “wider autonomy” is also deeply grounded in the context of each country. While in some cases the wider autonomy refers to CoVEs’ being able to manage their own personnel or budget, in another case CoVEs having the right to sell their own products may be perceived as a major leap forward in terms of autonomy. Progress is thus relative. Overall, policy-makers and CoVE representatives both recognize that successful implementation of PPPs requires more autonomy.

2) Improving the image of VET, increasing attractiveness and informing about good practices

Negative public perception of VET is one of the main challenges described by the participants. The situation is gradually changing in some of the countries, but the participants emphasise that there is still a lot of work to do to increase the attractiveness of the VET system in general, as well as improve the image of CoVEs. Policy-makers and CoVE representatives want to increase the attractiveness of VET for every group of actors (students, parents, teachers and the private sector). Due to conservative and sceptical societal attitudes towards VET, the participants emphasised the importance of advertising

and promoting the new directions taken in VET policy as well as outlining novel approaches and good practices. There is an urgent need for better publicity, preliminary marketing campaigns and creating a positive buzz. The promotion work done for CoVEs is mentioned as an important lesson learnt and something to be considered in future endeavours. PPP implementation and good practices have reportedly had a positive effect on the image of CoVEs.

3) Involvement of the private sector

The role and motivation of the private sector in PPPs is considered essential. At the policy level, the interviewees reported the need for developing mechanisms for increasing motivation, deepening involvement and support formula for initiating further cooperation with the private sector. At the CoVE level, participants mentioned paying attention to more coordinated actions with the private partners, along with the importance of creating contracts with clearly defined responsibilities (e.g., guaranteeing students practise positions at industry premises). CoVEs should organise structured events such as fairs, exhibitions and visits that bridge the gap between school and the private sector and make it easier for students to get into contact with companies. Both policy-makers and CoVE representatives consider it essential to try out new models of PPPs and share experiences from different contexts.

4) Finances and financial autonomy

This issue was addressed by both policy-makers and CoVE representatives. The right of the CoVEs to act as entrepreneurs and sell their own products was noted, yet this practice seems to be quite new for some countries and is not applicable for all VET institutions. PPP implementation is a way to bring additional funds to the CoVE. The financing might come from a private company, international organisation or by way of additional funds from the public budget, depending on the country and the context. The policy-makers encourage CoVEs to participate in calls for projects, including international ones. Some CoVEs in turn explained that participating in projects is still new and challenging for them (e.g., writing proposals) due to lack of qualified personnel and language barriers. The first initiating steps for the project also typically include time-consuming bureaucratic procedures and additional workload for CoVE teachers and administration.

5) PPP for sustainable employment

On a CoVE level, responding to market demands and learning how to adopt new technologies are stressed as essential aspects for keeping up with the level of innovation and possible skill anticipation. It was reported that the process of renewing and modernising the curriculum should be done so the curriculum and the courses are kept in line with labour market needs and innovative technologies. CoVE representatives discussed the need to do labour market analysis quickly and regularly. The role of the private sector was stressed: it should have a decision-making role in these stages. PPPs are the way to modernise VET education and make it more relevant for working life. Reportedly, the employability of CoVEs graduates increases after implementing good practices.

6) Qualified Management and Further Training

Both CoVE representatives and policy-makers addressed the need for qualified managers. Good management was explicitly described by one policy-maker as a prerequisite condition for granting more autonomy to CoVEs: in order to handle their new autonomy and create the conditions for easier and more successful implementation of PPPs, CoVEs need to be well-managed. Since PPPs are a new practice for many CoVEs and their implementation requires personnel to take care of new responsibilities, it was highlighted that personnel should also receive further training to be equipped accordingly with new skills and attitudes.

7) Supporting teacher involvement with PPPs

CoVE representatives emphasise that qualified and motivated teachers are one of the main drivers for initiating and implementing PPPs. In some cases, the time and work done by teachers to provide real working experiences for students in companies goes unrecognised and only the time spent on teaching the curriculum inside the school is compensated. Such a lack of incentives combined with rigid bureaucracy adds to teachers' workloads and stress levels, decreasing motivation and increasing resistance to systemic change. It is crucial to recognise teacher' critical role in developing PPPs. Relevant guidelines should be drafted to systematise the PPP process so that more teachers and staff can get involved. Teachers require support and incentives from local, regional and national decisionmakers to encourage their innovative and difficult work.

8) Sharing experiences

Participants addressed this issue on different levels with different actors in mind. The CoVE representatives mostly focused on the national level, stressing that sharing good practices should take place between schools presenting and exchanging successful cases. They also argued that information on good practices should be shared with potential students and their parents as well as local companies in order to strengthen the role of civil society and enhance community engagement. It is important that success stories are presented to a wider audience than just school representatives. The policy-makers focus more on sharing the good practices between schools and within the international community. Workshops, training, open portals and platforms were mentioned as potential ways for transferring good practices and sharing experiences.

Summary of the challenges, and lessons learnt:

- 1 Towards greater CoVE autonomy**

Policy-makers and CoVE representatives both recognize that successful implementation of PPPs requires more autonomy. CoVEs are grateful for the expanded autonomy that they have been recently granted and make use of it. Despite this, some major limitations still exist.
- 2 Improving the image of VET**

Negative public perception of VET is one of the main challenges. The promotion work done for CoVEs is mentioned as an important lesson learnt and something to be considered in future endeavours. PPP implementation and good practices have reportedly had a positive effect on the image of CoVEs.
- 3 Involvement of the private sector**

The role and motivation of the private sector in PPPs is considered essential. Both policy-makers and CoVE representatives consider it important to try out new models of PPPs and share experiences from different contexts.
- 4 Finances and financial autonomy**

The right of the CoVEs to act as entrepreneurs and sell their own products was noted, yet this practice seems to be quite new for some countries and is not applicable for all VET institutions. PPP implementation is a way to bring additional funds to the CoVE.
- 5 PPP for sustainable employment**

On a CoVE level, responding to market demands and learning how to adopt new technologies are stressed as essential aspects. PPPs are the way to modernise VET education and make it more relevant for working life. Reportedly, the employability of CoVEs graduates increases after implementing good practices.
- 6 Qualified Management and Further Training**

Both CoVE representatives and policy-makers address the need for qualified managers. Personnel should also receive further training to be equipped accordingly with new skills and attitudes.
- 7 Supporting teacher involvement**

CoVE representatives emphasise that qualified and motivated teachers are one of the main drivers for initiating and implementing PPPs. It is crucial to recognise teacher' critical role in developing PPPs. Relevant guidelines should be drafted to systematise the PPP process so that more teachers and staff can get involved.
- 8 Sharing experiences**

The policy-makers focus on sharing the good practices between schools and within the international community. However, it is important to share experiences and success stories to a wider audience. Different strategies and modern platforms should be utilized for transferring good practices and sharing experiences.

4.2. Good practices & ways forward

National education systems have different ways of supporting CoVEs to establish PPPs on a local level; sometimes private companies initiated the process together with the government and then delegated responsibility to local administrators. In these cases, private companies first contacted national or regional authorities who then relayed the request for collaboration to specifically chosen CoVEs. Other times PPPs came about when teachers at CoVEs came up with ideas for new collaborative projects with private companies. In general, central government officials in highly-centralised education systems had a more prominent role in the initiation and organisation for PPPs compared to more decentralised systems, where such initiatives were more dependent on local actors. In both centralised and decentralised systems, the strength of the relationship between the private sector and educational stakeholders was the main motivating factor for establishing PPPs.

With such a diverse range of circumstances, there is no single way forward. Yet, the collected data provides an opportunity to make certain general recommendations and observations about what works:

1) CoVEs autonomy should gradually be expanded to ensure effective PPPs

Even in countries with traditionally highly centralised education systems, policy-makers have begun taking measures to give more room for CoVEs to self-govern and take decisions independently, supported by accountability practices. This makes sense as skills needs are often localised and may prove difficult for national level policy-makers to accurately measure and predict (ETF 2020). Increasing CoVEs autonomy can help get rid of bottlenecks in decision-making and reduce the amount of bureaucratic back-and-forth.

The purpose of autonomy is to foster a culture of trust between local, regional and national actors (World Bank 2015). PPPs function as a kind of barometer of this trust, since they inevitably involve relinquishing control of some aspects of education. Local capacities are gradually strengthened by giving administrators and staff at CoVEs a sense of ownership over the process through which PPPs are initiated and developed. In the everyday organisation and management of PPPs, administrators must, for example, constantly make decisions regarding personnel management. If teachers and staff are centrally assigned and there is no way for local administrators to make important decisions such as recruiting and re-assigning or firing teachers, there is risk of becoming stuck in a loop.

Autonomy must be combined with accountability, so that everything that takes place in CoVEs and PPPs is in accordance with the law and supported by different soft mechanisms. However, improving the quality and working life relevance of VET through closer collaboration with the private sector should be done from both bottom-up as well as top-down. The establishment of sectoral boards or councils with private stakeholder representation is an important step but does not erase the need to delegate sufficient autonomy and responsibility to local administrators, who have the best knowledge about the skills needed in their area and potential private sector partners.

2) Policy-makers and administrators should provide more guidelines and support for teachers and trainers in planning and implementing PPPs

Highly motivated and committed teachers inspire students and support PPPs. In the interviews, human resources and financial resources emerged as the two most valuable assets for CoVEs. Teachers, administrators and CoVEs staff urgently need further training and extra guidance on how to implement PPPs. Practical guidelines and support systems need to be developed on an institutional level so that teachers and administrators can better attract private sector companies and implement collaborative projects effectively. On the national level, some kind of a coordinating body is essential for helping connect CoVEs to businesses.

When it comes to building and maintaining relationships with local companies, teachers are indispensable. Teachers help ensure that students participating in dual VET schemes and other work-based forms of learning receive the right quality and quantity of support and instruction. Teachers also have a lot to offer for the pedagogical development of workplace training. Motivating and holding onto high-performing teachers can give CoVEs a critical edge over their competitors. Policy-makers should create mechanisms that allow teachers to propose projects together with the private sector.

Several participants described how setting up CoVEs and PPPs had also led to increased tensions and conflict between administrators and teaching staff. Some teachers in the centres reportedly saw PPPs as “extra work” and were reluctant to leave their *comfort zone* in the centres and step into the world of work. On the other hand, some teachers saw PPPs as an opportunity to develop their own professional expertise. Resolving conflicts in the workplace is never easy and requires patience, empathy and dialogue. However, introducing incentives is also another effective strategy for engaging teachers on VET Excellence and CoVES performance. Many mistakes could be avoided if teachers were engaged in the

process from the beginning. Giving CoVEs more autonomy to manage their personnel would be an important step forward in this regard. However, increasing CoVEs autonomy also necessitates providing CoVE administrators and upper management with more professional training opportunities to handle the new requirements. CoVEs need training and support in order to effectively collaborate with the private sector.

3) Additional financial resources are important, but they are not everything

Budgetary autonomy in CoVEs is important for effective PPPs since without it the CoVEs are unable to react quickly to changing circumstances. National authorities have granted some of the CoVES the right to generate income for themselves from the products and services that they sell, which is an important step forward.

Regardless, several participants describe how their lack of control over their own budgets has resulted in problems, for example with procuring the materials needed for training. In centralised systems where the budget comes to the CoVEs directly from the government through different streams, things do not always work efficiently, and CoVEs must constantly submit requests to the authorities to get what they need. While important, strict regulations separating public and private money also hamper collaboration with the private sector if companies that are willing to make much-needed investments in VET are unable to do so because of red tape, leaving both sides frustrated.

National policy-makers should be aware that different kinds of funding instruments are needed for building closer connections with the private sector. Smaller projects (costing only several thousand euros) can help pave the way for larger PPPs involving international funding and coordination between multiple VET centres and businesses. Participating in small-scale projects creates the opportunity to connect with private sector businesses and establish a working relationship. Once companies recognize that the CoVEs are motivated and competent to handle small projects, it is easier to propose larger collaborations, both to the private sector as well as national policy-makers.

The only way to build up experience in this regard is to get started on this 'extra' development work, which also helps the so-called daily activity in the centres by contributing to teachers' and staff' professional competency and giving students a broader perspective into working life. Smaller projects also require accountability, but the bureaucratic requirements should be proportionate to the amount that has been spent so that the amount

of additional work required to fill in the forms does not outweigh the actual benefit of development work done with the private sector.

Many of the CoVEs had plans to develop their international activities and sign more protocols, contracts and agreements with international organisations but lacked knowledge about the required procedures. CoVE staff needs to be trained on how to initiate, participate and coordinate international activities. Lack of knowledge and experience meant that international funding still remains a largely untapped resource in the participant countries. Language barriers also prevent local actors from participating in international teacher training workshops and contacting potential partners to develop collaboration projects.

4) Dual VET schemes are demanding and require a high level of commitment and support from CoVEs and private sector partners

Although the idea is simple and attractive, dual VET schemes should not be entered lightly. Dual VET requires a very clear delegation of roles and responsibilities between the national government, CoVEs and private partners through contracts and protocols, as well as rigorous documentation and quality control. Stakeholders must be committed to forging long-term partnerships that benefit all involved. Lack of preparation can potentially endanger students' right to quality education and result in a negative impact on public perception of VET. It is therefore important to recognise the correct time to initiate these kinds of demanding collaborative projects, which should be seen as a kind of culmination point or long-term goal whereby public and private partners agree to share the heavy responsibility of educating students together.

Compensation is crucial for getting companies and students to commit to the learning process. National education systems should create incentives for companies to take on students. Students should also receive compensation from the company as their skills develop and they become more productive.

5) Improving public perception of VET takes time

Successful PPPs help convince students and parents that VET is worth pursuing. The emphasis on developing relevant working life skills and finding a job quickly after graduation is an important motivation for both students and parents. CoVEs must therefore be competitive according to the standards of the private sector as well as the public sector.

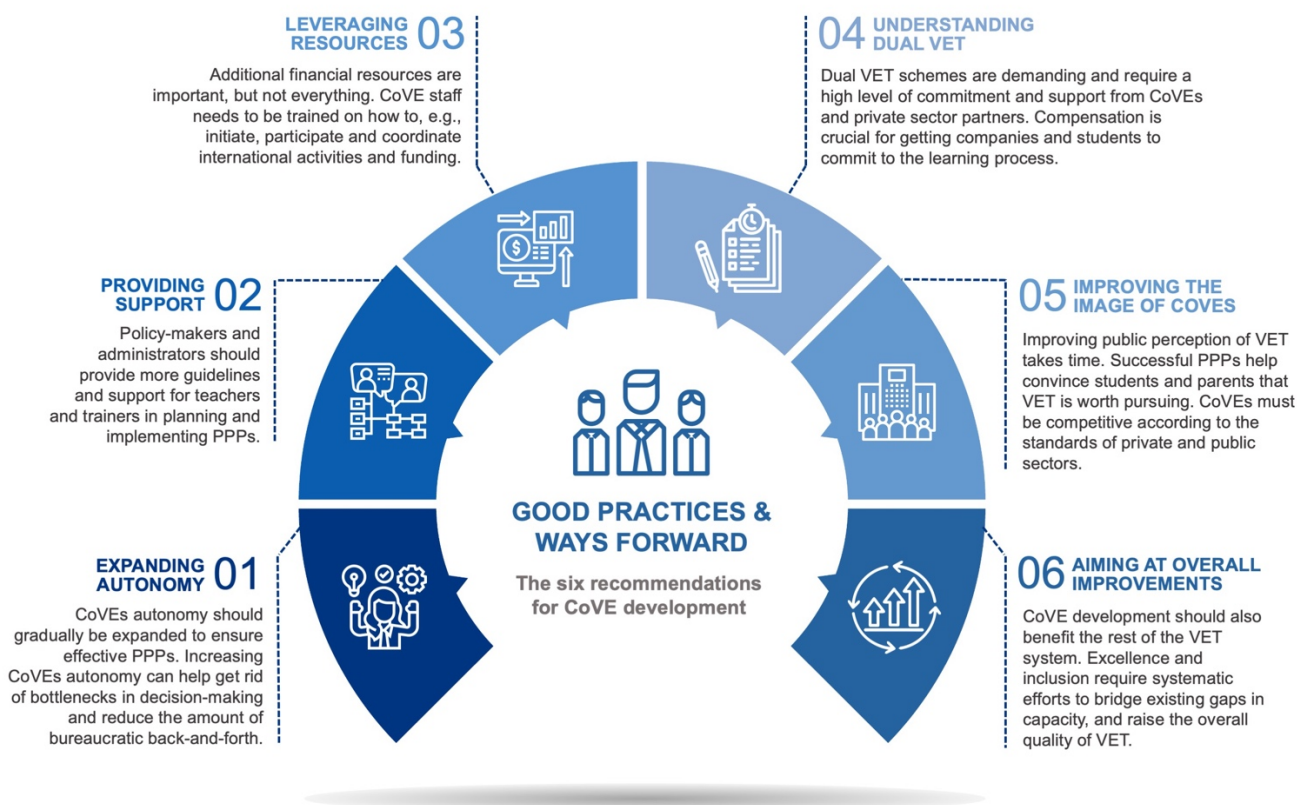
CoVEs were mostly responsible for communicating the importance of VET. The national authorities could benefit from participation in these discussions because they present an opportunity to enter into dialogue and get a sense of what students' parents really value and perceive VET. The poor public image can best be changed by a combination of local and national success stories of students finding their own way with VET. More information needs to be directed to parents through dialogue and workshops regarding the opportunities that have been opened up in CoVEs and it is vital that national authorities are involved in and learn from these discussions.

The rationalised and optimised governance schemes that have been developed in CoVEs can function as important examples for steering and reforming national VET policies. CoVEs can attract new VET students to high-quality institutions by working together with the private sector. They have a critical role to play in developing the national economy and increasing employability. By fostering excellence, CoVEs make VET genuinely attractive for parents, students and employers. The lessons learned in CoVEs can be applied to the entire VET system.

6) CoVE development should also benefit the rest of the VET system

One of the common justifications for providing additional resources and support to CoVEs is that they will help raise the level of so-called 'normal' VET centres once they have improved the quality and attractiveness of education. There is still a long way to go, however, in sharing good practices and transmitting VET excellence. Most of the VET centres in this study did not appear to function as hubs or network nodes but rather as isolated entities with extra privileges. Platforms need to be established for exchanges with other VET centres, ranging from workshops and short training courses for administrators and personnel to the co-creation of shared guidelines regarding the establishment and management of PPPs. The experiences that have helped CoVEs refine their processes need to be shared. CoVEs should also help non-CoVE institutions benefit from internationalization by functioning as coordinators that bring together networks of local or regional VET actors and international funding. Excellence and inclusion are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they require systematic efforts from national policy-makers to bridge existing gaps in capacity and raise the overall quality of VET.

Summary of the good practices, and ways forward:



4.3. Discussion summary

This study confirms that there are still many challenges and issues related to planning and implementing PPPs and expanding CoVE autonomy. In spite of vastly different contexts, all of the countries face similar difficulties. Solutions depend on in-depth, country-specific knowledge. This report provides a broad overview of these challenges and how they are currently being resolved in different ETF partner countries.

The study findings indicate that there is clearly an overall trend towards increasing CoVEs autonomy and setting up PPPs in the four partner countries. The national, regional, and local

systems through which autonomy and PPPs are meant to be achieved are still being set up and require further testing and adjustment. The correct balance between public and private interests and trust and control is still being worked out. Local, regional, and national actors are all in the process of re-calibrating their activities and roles so that CoVEs can embody their mission and find their proper place within the system.

There is no doubt that excellence in VET is best realised through close collaboration with the private sector. In all of the partner countries studied, the potential impact of VET is primarily seen in economic terms. However, the private sector is not yet fully onboard, and there is still a long way to go to reach the full potential of partnering with the private sector.

Despite the many challenges addressed in this paper, it is clear that the implementation of PPPs has affected VET systems drastically. PPPs can be seen as a force for reorganising VET systems and their inner processes, improving their working life relevance and the image of VET in general. It appears that there is currently a strong consensus about the importance of PPPs and the question is not whether this should be done, but how to do it best. Each country is currently going through a process of finding the right tools and processes for the job. This will likely take place gradually, one successful partnership at a time. It is therefore essential at this point to let practitioners teach and learn from one another through sharing their experiences and good practices on a local, national, and international level.

5. APPENDICES

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5.2. List of Acronyms

CoVE	Centre of Vocational Excellence
CIFP	Centros Integrados de Formación Profesional
F.ex.	For example
ENE	ETF Network for Excellence
ETF	European Training Foundation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IVET	Initial VET
CVET	Continuing VET
HR	Human Resources
KPI	Key performance indicator
MS	EU Member State
PC	ETF Partner Country
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PR	Public Relations
R&D	Research and Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Work-based learning
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science

5.3. Glossary

Autonomy	The right of an education provider to self-governance involving independent and accountable decision making in educational, organizational, financial, staff-related and other matters in pursuit of activity carried out within the scope defined by the law.
Accountability	<p>The fact or condition of being accountable; having responsibility of reporting.</p> <p>Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)</p> <p>Vocational excellence in vocational education and training contributes inter alia with high quality provision and partnerships to regional development, innovation and/or smart specialisation strategies. Centre of vocational excellence (CoVEs) bring together a wide range of local partners, such as providers of vocational education and training, employers, research centres, development agencies, and employment services (among others), to develop "skills ecosystems" that contribute to regional, economic and social development, innovation, and smart specialisation strategies (European Commission 2020).</p>
Innovation	Innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations (OECD).
Key performance indicator (KPI)	KPI is a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively an organisation is achieving key business objectives. Organizations use KPIs at multiple levels to evaluate their success at reaching targets.
Learning environment	Learning environment refers to the diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn. Students may learn in a wide

	<p>variety of settings and benefit from different resources, such as outside-of-school locations and outdoor environments. Learning environment refers also to educational setting and pedagogical approaches that facilitate learning—e.g., by conducting classes in relevant natural ecosystems, grouping desks in specific ways, utilizing audio, visual, and digital technologies etc.</p>
<p>Soft skills</p>	<p>Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients, among others, that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others and perform well.</p>
<p>A tracer study</p>	<p>Tracer study is a survey of graduates, which takes place after graduation or the end of the training. Common topics for a tracer study include questions on study progress, the transition to work, use of learnt competencies and current occupation.</p>
<p>Public-private partnership (PPP)</p>	<p>A mechanism for coordinating action and sharing responsibility between public and private stakeholders in VET, with a view to formulate, design, finance, manage or sustain a project of common interest.</p>
<p>Quality assurance (QA)</p>	<p>QA system aims at fulfilling quality requirements in vocational education and training.</p>

5.4. Survey questionnaire

Survey for CoVEs

Dear Survey Respondent,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey, which has been designed by the European Training Foundation (ETF) Network for Excellence (ENE). (More info: www.etf.europa.eu/en/projects/network-excellence).

The survey will be used for carrying out the study Centres of vocational excellence: processes and practices. Working processes and key practices of CoVEs for advancing autonomy and public-private partnerships. The study aims at increasing understanding, as well as providing in-depth and up-to-date knowledge on the processes and key practices that are CoVEs main inputs for excellence, in terms of forging relationships with the private sector. Consequently, the goal is to map out a series of steps in working processes and good practices, while also covering the potential difficulties and improvement suggestions. Furthermore, this study uncovers the circumstances that impact, either positively or negatively, CoVEs partnerships with the private sector, resulting as processes that can affect CoVEs ability to forge broader and more meaningful partnerships with the industry.

Autonomy, in this context, is defined as the right of an education provider to self-govern and take decisions, independently and with accountability, on educational, organisational, financial, staff-related and other matters, in pursuit of activity carried out within the scope defined by the law. PPPs, in turn, are mechanisms for coordinating action and sharing responsibility between public and private stakeholders in VET for formulating, designing, financing, managing or sustaining engagements of common interest, with a view to producing results at the level of outcomes (impact) in addition to outputs. Good practice, in this context, is defined as a best and impactful development practice, with an emphasis on further development once the operations are set up.

Thank you once again for your kind support.

School information *

The name of your
VET school

Country

City

Contact information *

First name

Last name

Email

What is your current position? *

- VET school manager
- VET pedagogical manager
- VET operational manager
- VET teacher
- Other, please elaborate: _____

Does your VET school excel in something specific? *

- Lifelong learning in VET (from IVET to CVET and adult education)
- Smart specialisation (Mobilising Innovation, ecosystems and SMEs)
- Industry 4.0 and digitalisation
- Education-business collaboration and cooperation
- Going green (supporting sustainable goals)
- Pedagogy and professional development
- Social inclusion
- Co-innovation
- Autonomy and PPPs in VET
- Other? Please elaborate: _____

How many private sector partners does your VET centre have? *

- Less than 10
- 10-20
- 21-30

- 31-40
- 41-50
- More than 50

What kinds of practices does your CoVE have with the private sector? *

- Regular cooperation of school management with companies
- Regular cooperation of teachers with companies
- Work-based learning
- Student skills development
- Apprenticeships
- Curriculum development
- Career advice and guidance for students
- Training provision
- Improving quality control
- Research, development and innovation
- Anticipation of skills need
- Other? Please elaborate: _____

Which ones of the aforementioned practices specify for:

- initial training? Please elaborate:
- continuous training? Please elaborate:
- upskilling? Please elaborate:
- reskilling? Please elaborate:
- Other? Please elaborate:

How are the aforementioned practices shaped within sectoral context? Please elaborate:

Considering the aforementioned practices, please indicate max 3 areas (in order of priority) on which you believe your CoVE and country should dig more in-depth? *

1.

2.

3.

What are the main challenges in your CoVEs co-operation with the private sector? *

- Legislation (If yes, please specify) _____
- Central VET policy and training requirements
- Private sector is not interested
- Co-operation is not financed enough
- Co-operation is not part of the curriculum
- Other? Please elaborate: _____

To what extent do you consider the following as challenges in terms of PPPs in your school? *

	Not at all	To some extent	Quite a bit	To a great extent
Poor governance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of skills anticipation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inefficient financing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of autonomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of qualified teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low attraction of VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not at all	To some extent	Quite a bit	To a great extent
Lack of private sector partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low motivation of students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of motivation among teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of learning paths beyond VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor facilities and lack of equipment in VET centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please elaborate the challenges in your CoVEs co-operation with the private sector when it comes to

IVET

CVET

What decisions can be done at centre level, due to current level of autonomy? *

- Decisions on curricula development
- Decisions on vocational programmes offered
- Decisions on development initiatives
- Decisions on student intake for programmes
- Decisions on cooperation with the private sector
- Decisions on finance
- Decisions on VET centre strategies
- Decision on the key performance indicators
- Other? Please elaborate: _____

How do the given circumstances and the level of autonomy of CoVEs impact the PPPs in general? Please elaborate: *

What are your lessons learned from PPPs so far? *

What should be done at the policy level? How should PPPs be supported? Please specify on a scale 1-5 (1 being the least important and 5 being the most important): *

	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing CoVEs autonomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing financial support of PPPs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing dialogue with CoVEs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing dialogue with the private sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting CoVEs in implementing PPPs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other? Please elaborate: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What are the specific circumstances or conditions allowing co-innovation in your CoVE? *

- Joint research and development
- Financial independence
- Piloting new technology
- New training practices
- Autonomy to collaborate effectively with private partners
- Legislation/regulation to clarify and support the role of CoVE in implementing co-innovation.
- Other? Please elaborate: _____

Can part of those conditions be implemented with a limited degree of autonomy? If so, how? Please elaborate: *

Does your CoVE inform and transmit excellence in other VET institutions and national network? *

Yes. Please elaborate, how? _____

No. Please elaborate, what is hindering this? _____

Please provide an example of a good practice in your VET centre with a few sentences. Good practice, in this context, is defined as a best and impactful development practice, with an emphasis on further development once the operations are set up. *

Please describe you CoVE's strategic objectives for PPPs and for improving autonomy? *

How do you plan to develop your VET centre in the following 3 years? What is your CoVE's vision and mission? Please elaborate: *

Please specify what in particular are you hoping to learn under the Network of Excellence? *

Are there any final comments you would like to make?

5.5. Interview questions

List of interview questions for the CoVE representatives:

1. Who were involved in the project that led to a good practice? What roles did they have? Who made decisions related to good practices? (*Good practice, in this context, was defined as a best and impactful development practice, with an emphasis on further development once the operations are set up*)
2. Before, during and after the process: did you work/interact with policy-makers? If so, were they national, regional, or local representatives?
3. What circumstances supported the good practices development?
4. What circumstances hindered the good practice development?
5. What impact did the good practice have? Who was impacted?
6. What changes happened on VET school level after the good practices were implemented?
7. Were there any financial implications at any stage? If so, where did the budget come from?
8. What resources did you need to make the good practice to happen? (Digital or physical interactions with other tools, peoples and/services, materials, financial resources)
9. If you were to repeat the process, what would you do differently?

List of interview questions for the policy-makers:

1. How do the given circumstances in your country and the level of autonomy of CoVEs impact the PPPs in general?
2. What are the lessons learnt from PPPs so far?
3. What do you see as a potential and/or added value of PPPs? How could you move forward?
4. CoVEs Autonomy status & PPP is being implemented in countries mostly without regulation /legislation (except AZE/TUK). Do you think there is a policy trend or policy gap? Did the legislation support *you* with the implementation?
5. What are the main challenges in relation to CoVEs co-operation with private sector?
6. Due to the current level of autonomy, what can be done at the policy level to address these challenges? Do you think in your national context this is feasible? How could PPPs be supported at the policy level?
7. How to increase private and international funding into CoVEs?
8. Regarding further development of autonomy linked to national policies, are there any missing dimensions? Which ones in particular?
9. How can we set up discussions with ETF PCs and policy-makers to support excellence development at VET system level?
10. How could you, as policy-maker, support CoVEs to inform and transmit excellence in other VET institutions and national networks across the country?

5.6. Interview clarification table

<p>The good practice:</p>			
<p>The number of people participating in the project:</p>			
<p>Who participated in the project? For example: theory teachers, practice teacher, school managers, regional policy-makers, local policy-makers etc.</p>	<p>What was the role of this person in this project? For example: decision-maker, organiser, school representative at policy-level etc.</p>	<p>What were the particular actions undertaken by this person?</p>	<p>How did this person participate? How often, how long, during which steps of the project?</p>

5.7. Table of the interviewees

COUNTRY	INTERVIEWEE	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES IN THE INTERVIEW	ORGANISATION
Georgia	Policy-maker	1	Ministry of Education and Science
	CoVE representative	1	LEPL College Iberia
	CoVE representative	1	Construction College "Construct2"
	CoVE representative	1	LEPL College Modus
Azerbaijan	Policy-maker	1	State Agency on Vocational Education under the Ministry of Education
	CoVE representative	1	Goychay VET Centre
	CoVE representative	1	Baku Central state VET centre on industry and innovation
	CoVE representative	3	Gabala State Vocational Education Centre
Turkey	Policy-maker	2	Ministry of National Education Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education

	CoVE representative	1	PAGEV Plastic Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School,
	CoVE representative	1	Yenimahalle Şehit Mehmet Şengül Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School
	CoVE representative	1	Pendik Halil Kaya Gedik Metal Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School
Spain (Castilla y León)	Policy-maker	2	Ministry of Education Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education, Special Education and Educational Equality
	CoVE representative	2	CIFP Rio Tormes
Spain (Galicia)	Policy-maker	2	Ministry of Culture, Education and University Sub-Directorate for Vocational and Technical Education
	CoVE representative	3	Colegio Cristo Rey

Where to find out more:

Website

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<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu>

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www.youtube.com/user/etfeuropa

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instagram.com/etfeuropa/

LinkedIn

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