TORINO PROCESS SYSTEM MONITORING REPORT: ALBANIA (2023)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Scope of system performance monitoring:** The Torino Process monitoring covers three major areas of commitment to lifelong learners: access to learning (Area A), quality of learning (Area B), and system organisation (Area C). These areas are divided into eight monitoring dimensions: access and participation in Area A; quality, relevance, excellence, and innovation in Area B; and system management/administration and resources in Area C.

- **Access and attractiveness:** Albania outperforms in international comparison in all dimensions of monitoring, except access to opportunities for lifelong learning. Like other countries, Albania is confronted with the challenge of a VET system which remains a less attractive option for prospective learners compared to other options for education and training. Access to and attractiveness of opportunities for adult education are an area in need of particular attention.

- **Quality and participation:** VET learners in Albania are much more likely than their peers in other countries to participate and graduate successfully. They are also much more likely to benefit from education and training which delivers better quality in international comparison, albeit without being overly responsive to external developments and demands, such as those coming from the labour market.

- **Labour market outcomes of learners:** Still, the labour market prospects for youth and adults in VET in Albania remain relatively low. The quality and relevance of learning outcomes of youth is also considerably lower than those of adults and adult learners in the country, who in turn dispose somewhat less than their peers in other countries of the basic skills and competencies commonly conceptualised as essential for thriving in information-rich societies, i.e., IT and literacy.

- **Innovation:** Albania is doing particularly well with innovation in support of access to lifelong learning, quality of learning, and relevance of learning outcomes. However, as in other countries participating in this round of monitoring, the benefits of innovation in these domains are yet to reach a critical mass of beneficiaries in the VET system.

- **System management and organisation:** Albania attaches relatively high priority to VET in terms of human and financial resource allocations, but the VET system – its network of providers in particular – may not always have the capacity it needs to make the best use of these resources in line with the high priority which national authorities attach to VET.

- **Quality and reliability of monitoring evidence:** The monitoring results of Albania are slightly more internationally comparable than those of other countries, on average, but they are also more susceptible to bias in international comparison. Albania also tends to self-assess the performance of its VET system more positively.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Focus and scope of monitoring

This report summarises the results of monitoring VET system performance in Albania, initiated in the context of the Torino Process in 2022 and completed in 2023.[1] "Performance" describes the extent to which the VET system delivers against a targeted selection of national and international obligations (commitments) to learners and other stakeholders in support of learning through life (lifelong learning - LLL). "VET system" refers to the network of institutions, people, policies, practices, resources, and methodologies in a country and the way in which they are organised to provide individuals of any age with the practical skills, knowledge, and competencies needed for specific occupations, trades, or professions.

The focus of monitoring is on the contribution of initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET) to the learning activities of youth and adults in any learning setting (formal and non-formal), undertaken to improve their knowledge, skills, competences, and qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons. The purpose of the Torino Process monitoring exercise is to provide decision-makers, practitioners, and stakeholders with a reliable basis for informed decisions about policy improvement, resource allocation, strategy design, and follow-up analysis in support of lifelong learning.

The monitoring framework which underpins this report covers three major areas of commitment to lifelong learners: access to learning (Area A), quality of learning (Area B), and system organisation (Area C). These areas are divided into eight monitoring dimensions: access and participation in Area A; quality, relevance, excellence, and innovation in Area B; and system management/administration and resources in Area C. Within these areas and their dimensions, the Torino Process tracks a total of 30 system deliverables (outcomes)[2] - the extent to which they are being delivered and how equitably they are distributed to various groups of learners according to age, gender, socio-economic background, labour market and migration status, and typical learning setting.

The monitoring provides information in the form of a **system performance index (SPI)** for each of these 30 outcomes and learner groups, to a total of 82 indices per country.[3] The SPIs can range from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates maximum or best performance. The indices describe VET system performance in formal and non-formal learning settings for youth and adults, females and males, disadvantaged learners, long-term unemployed jobseekers, economically inactive populations, and first-generation migrants.

This report showcases a selection of key monitoring results based on those indices, as follows: overall performance by broad monitoring dimension (Section 2.1), performance by specific area and system deliverable (Section 2.2 and subsections), and performance in support of specific groups of learners (Section 2.3). The report also provides an international average score[4] for these results for reference purposes, and, where relevant, it showcases some of the disaggregated data used to

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[1] The Torino Process is a multiannual review of vocational education and training (VET) in countries in East and South-East Europe (including Turkey), Central Asia, and the South and East Mediterranean region, which the ETF is carrying out in partnership with countries in these regions on a regular basis since 2010. For more information see https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/torino-process-policy-analysis-and-progress-monitoring

[2] Further in the report "outcomes" and "deliverables" are used interchangeably.

[3] In rare cases where evidence is missing, the number of SPIs for a country can be lower.

[4] "International average" refers to the average for countries participating in the Torino Process. At the time of preparation of this monitoring report, the evidence collection for some countries was still ongoing. As additional countries complete the monitoring exercise, the international averages shown in this report may change.

calculate the system performance indices. Links to the full dataset for Albania and the Torino Process monitoring framework and methodology can be found in this document's third and final section.

1.2 Comparability and consistency of monitoring data

The evidence for this monitoring report was collected and analysed in several steps from September 2022 - March 2023. After an initial round of collecting internationally comparable indicators for each of the 30 system outcomes covered in the monitoring framework, the ETF compiled a supplementary questionnaire for national authorities and stakeholders in Albania to gather information about outcomes and groups of learners for which such indicators were missing. The responses to the questionnaire were quantified and integrated with the rest of the monitoring data into a repository of mixed evidence, which was then used to calculate the system performance indices presented in this report.

In addition to messages about system performance, the monitoring delivers information also about the international comparability of results of each country, the extent to which these results may be susceptible to bias, and how self-critical a country is when it reports about its policy and system performance for external monitoring purposes. This is possible because the monitoring methodology foresees the keeping of accurate records about the availability, origin and type of evidence used to calculate the 82 performance indices and corresponding results for each country, including Albania.

FIGURE 1. COMPARABILITY AND CONSISTENCY OF MONITORING RESULTS: ALBANIA (2023)

International comparability of performance results (0=least comparable, 100=fully comparable)
Albania: 42.1/100   Intl. average: 33.6/100

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Risk of bias regarding system performance (0=highest risk, 100=lowest risk)
Albania: 25.5/100   Intl. average: 45/100

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Tendency to be self-critical regarding system performance (most critical=0, neutral=50, least critical=100)
Albania: 75/100   Intl. average: 52.8/100

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

The monitoring results of Albania are more internationally comparable than those of other countries, on average, but they are also more susceptible to bias in international comparison. Albania also tends to self-assess the performance of its VET system more positively, as shown in Figure 1.

2. MONITORING RESULTS: ALBANIA

2.1 Policy and system performance in 2023: overall results

The Torino Process monitoring draws on multiple, often disparate, information sources and data. To facilitate a quick, efficient, and focused communication of key messages despite the diversity of information collected, the reporting of monitoring results aggregates the evidence in ways which facilitate a quick overview of system performance without sacrificing too much detail.

The eight monitoring dimensions mentioned in the previous section are the top layer of reporting in this respect. They capture VET system performance in various domains, the selection of which is

aligned with national and international country commitments and reform and development priorities concerning learning. These eight dimensions are described as follows:

No.	Dimension	Description
1	Access to learning	This dimension captures the degree to which initial VET (IVET), continuing VET (CVET), and other adult learning opportunities to which VET could contribute, are accessible and attractive for learners irrespective of who they are and why they wish to engage in learning.
2	Participation in learning	This dimension captures the likelihood of VET learners to survive and thrive in the education and training system by looking at its vertical and horizontal permeability, that is whether learners can switch between general and vocational pathways and between formal and non-formal learning, as well as whether they complete their learning.
3	Quality and relevance	This dimension captures the extent to which learners in IVET and CVET are provided with basic skills and key competences, whether their learning has exposure to, and is relevant for, employment, and also whether they are provided with adequate career guidance.
4	Excellence	This dimension captures the presence of system-wide policies and measures to promote highest quality practices and results in teaching and training, content design and provision, governance and VET provider management, and equity and social inclusion.
5	Innovation	This dimension captures the presence of innovative practices and priorities on system level in the areas of access to learning, support for successful completion of learning, and quality of learning and training outcomes.
6	VET system responsiveness	This dimension captures the extent to which curricula for youth and adults consider themes of significance for sustainability, climate change awareness, and digitalisation, as well as whether the IVET and CVET systems are responsive to labour market needs, demographic changes, and socio-economic developments.
7	Steering and management	This dimension captures the availability of evidence for informed decision-making, the degree to which governance of VET is participatory, the presence and transparency of quality assurance arrangements, the quality and capacity of staff in leadership positions, and the degree of internationalisation of IVET and CVET.
8	Resourcing	This dimension captures the adequacy and efficiency of human and financial resources in IVET and CVET, and the extent to which the material base for learning and training is adequate, that is – conducive to effective teaching, training, and learning.

This section of the monitoring report presents the system performance of Albania in these eight dimensions of monitoring and system performance (Figure 2).

Albania outperforms in international comparison in all dimensions of monitoring, however, with somewhat low scores in access to lifelong learning. Section 2.2.1 explains in detail the mixed picture behind access to opportunities for lifelong learning: while IVET scores high, the low scores in the attractiveness of CVET system and other opportunities in the form of lifelong learning different from IVET, pull the averages down.

Like other countries, Albania is confronted with the challenge of a VET system which remains a less attractive option for prospective learners compared to other options for education and training. With an SPI of 38, access and attractiveness (Monitoring dimension A.1) is by far the weakest domain of policy and system performance, even though VET in the country is very invested in exploring innovative solutions in support of quality, relevance, and access. In fact, when it comes to the promotion of

innovative practices and priorities in VET, Albania is performing better than other countries by a sizeable margin (Dimension B.3).
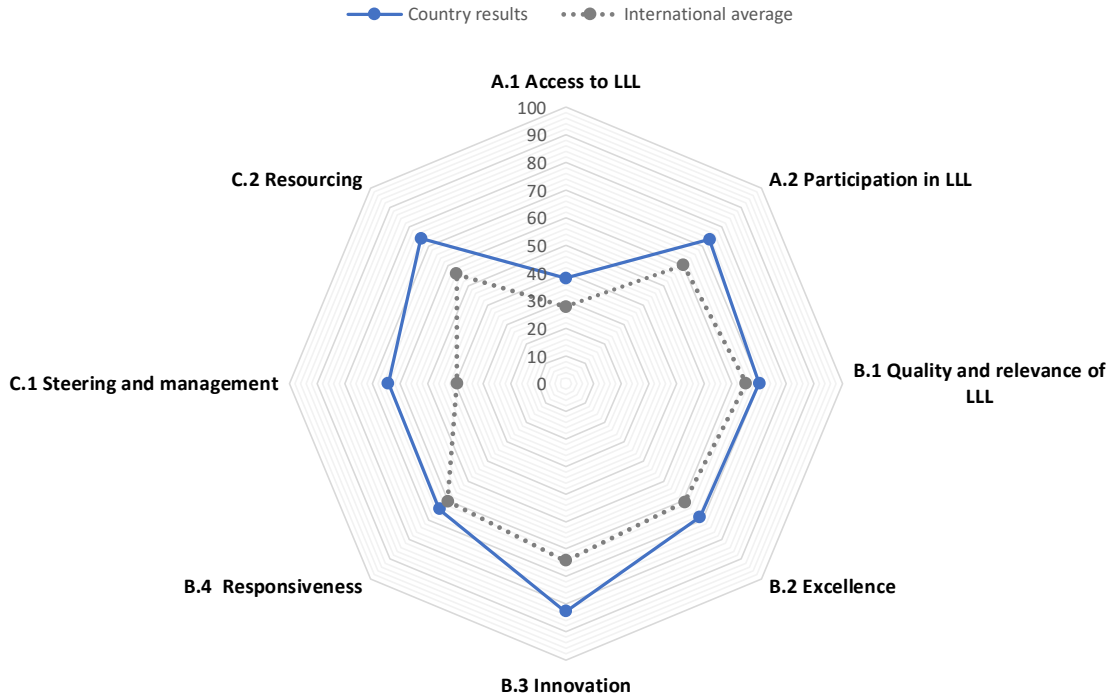
Theoretical[5] index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Once they are enrolled in VET, learners in Albania are on average much more likely than their peers in other countries to participate and graduate successfully (Dimension A.2). They are also likely to benefit from education and training which delivers better quality in international comparison (Dimension B.1), albeit without being overly responsive to external developments and demands, such as those coming from the labour market (see Section 2.2.2 below).

According to the monitoring data, Albania attaches relatively high priority to VET in terms of human and financial resource allocations (Dimension C.2), but the VET system – its network of providers in particular – may not always have the capacity it needs to make the best use of these resources in line with the high priority which national authorities attach to the VET sector (Dimension C1).

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[5] The Torino Process makes a distinction between theoretical index range and index range used for reporting purposes. For reporting purposes, rare instances of extreme values on the low end (SPI < 10) and on the high end (SPI>90) of the index scale are truncated at the upper (10) and lower (90) decile end. This means that the reporting does not discriminate SPI values below 10 and above 90.

2.2 Policy and system performance in specific areas of monitoring and against specific outcomes

VET performance in Albania in the eight monitoring dimensions presented above is driven by 30 policy and system outcomes. It is through these outcomes that the IVET and CVET subsystems work to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders, particularly of youth and adult learners. This section of the monitoring report presents findings about system performance on the level of these deliverables.

To facilitate reading and the navigation of content, the section groups the presentation of the 30 outcomes by the three major areas of commitment to learners, which were introduced in the first section of this report: access to learning (Area A), quality of learning (Area B), and system organisation (Area C). Reporting in Area B, the largest by the number of outcomes, is divided into B (1) and B (2).

2.2.1 Area A. Opportunities for lifelong learning: access and participation

In Area A (Access and participation in opportunities for LLL), the Torino Process tracks the first two of the monitoring dimensions presented in Section 2.1 – access/attractiveness and participation, with a total of six system outcomes. These outcomes include access to IVET, CVET, and other opportunities for lifelong learning, the vertical and horizontal permeability of the VET system, as well as the prospects of learners in IVET and CVET to graduate and - where relevant – progress to subsequent levels of education and training. The outcomes included under Area A are defined as follows:

TABLE 2. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING AREA A: ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

Code	Deliverable (outcome)	Description
A.1.1	Access and attractiveness: initial VET	This outcome captures the degree to which initial VET is an attractive educational choice in comparison with other learning alternatives, and whether that choice is accessible to various target groups of learners.
A.1.2	Access and attractiveness: continuing VET	This outcome captures the degree to which continuing VET is an attractive choice in comparison with other skills development alternatives, as well as whether that choice is accessible to various target groups
A.1.3	Access to other opportunities for LLL	This outcome captures access to other opportunities for lifelong learning not covered by outcomes A.1.1 and A.1.2 and VET, such as active labour market policies (ALMPs)
A.2.1	Flexible pathways: vertical permeability	This outcome strives to capture the vertical permeability of the education and training system vis-à-vis initial and continuing VET, understood as possibility for transition between consecutive tracks of education and training (general and vocational).
A.2.2	Flexible pathways: horizontal permeability	This outcome strives to capture the horizontal permeability of the education and training system vis-à-vis initial and continuing VET, understood as the possibility for transition between parallel tracks of education and training (general and vocational), and between formal and non-formal learning settings
A.2.3	Progression and graduation of learners	This outcome refers to the degree of success (graduation, progression) of learners in VET, for instance in comparison with other education and training alternatives

The previous section of this report discussed that access and attractiveness are dimensions of weaker performance for the VET system of Albania. The more detailed scores in this monitoring dimension (Figure 2) reveal that this finding is driven by the vast discrepancy in access to learning between the IVET and CVET subsystems. Access to initial VET programmes and the attractiveness of these programmes (Outcome A.1.1) are generally considered to be satisfactory. This is an area in which the VET in Albania excels in international comparison by a reasonable margin, perhaps as consequence of active VET policies and suitable legal framework (i.e., initial VET is accessible for all obligatory school

graduates, there are no entrance criteria except for some special schools/programs, no attendance fees, some qualifications are supported by scholarships, etc.).[6]

At the same time, access to CVET programmes remains much lower in terms of system performance (Outcome A.1.2), also lower than the already low score of other countries. Access to CVET and the limited attractiveness of learning opportunities it offers appears to be a shared challenge among many countries participating in this round of the Torino Process.

FIGURE 3. PROMOTING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN OPPORTUNITIES FOR LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, ALBANIA AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)
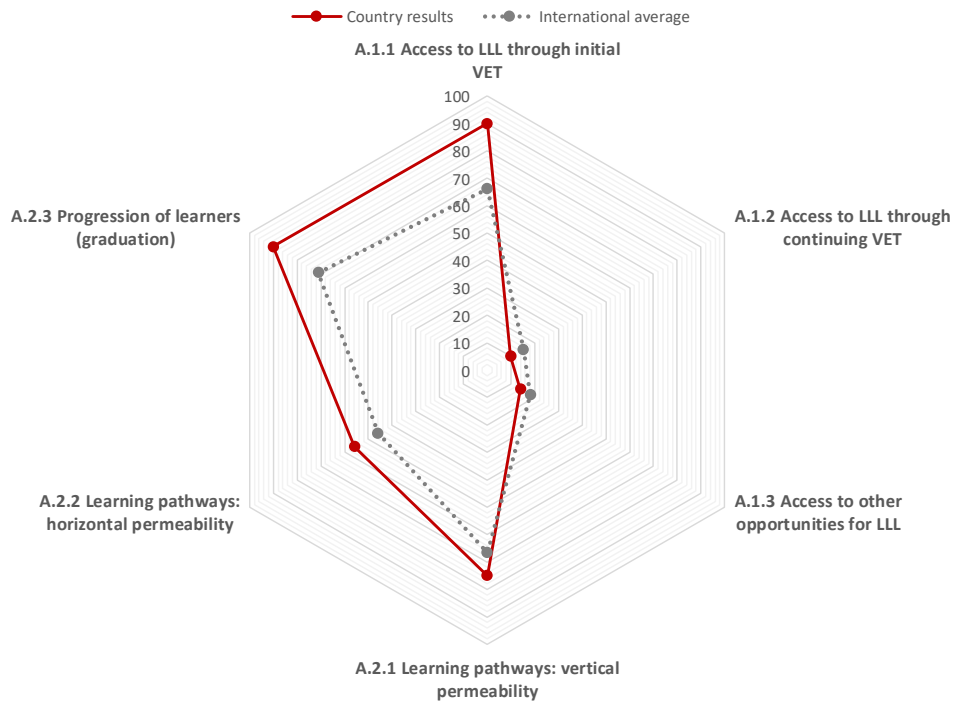
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Low access is also a problem affecting other opportunities for adult learning in Albania beyond VET, such as those created through active labour market policies (Outcome A.1.3). Here too, the monitoring results for Albania are below the average for other countries and although this is an area of weaker performance for all, the combined results for Outcomes A.1.2 and A.1.3 indicate that the access to and attractiveness of opportunities for adult education in Albania are an area in need of attention. Perhaps in awareness of these challenges, recently the Active Labour Market Programs in Albania have been reformed, re-conceptualized and diversified based on the individual-centred approach.[7] The impact of these measurements may better manifest itself in subsequent rounds of Torino Process monitoring.

Young and adult learners who nevertheless enrol in a VET programme can expect to be at a low risk of failure and/or drop-out, as successful progression and graduation are an area of strong system performance in Albania (Outcome A.2.3). Learners who wish to transition to higher levels of education

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[6] Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Albania.

[7] Ibid.

are also more likely to succeed in that than their peers in other countries, on average, as vertical permeability between VET in Albania and the rest of its education system is another area of above average performance (Outcome A.2.1). On the other hand, for learners it may be more difficult to switch between parallel learning pathways in VET and general education (Outcome A.2.2).

2.2.2 Area B (1). Lifelong learning outcomes: quality and relevance

Monitoring Area B (Quality and relevance of LLL outcomes) includes two more of the dimensions presented in Section 2.1: quality (including relevance) and responsiveness of VET. Combined, these two dimensions comprise a total of eight policy and system outcomes. These outcomes cover the quality of learning of youth and adults in VET in terms of key skills and competences, the exposure of learners in VET to the world of work, the employability of graduates from IVET and CVET, the availability of career guidance for them, as well as the relevance of learning and training content in VET. Under relevance on the other hand, the monitoring records the responsiveness of the VET programme offering to demographic, labour market, and socio-economic developments, as well as the inclusion in VET curricula of themes pertaining to the green and digital transition. The outcomes included under Area B (1) are defined as follows:

TABLE 3. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING AREA B (1): QUALITY AND RELEVANCE

Code	Deliverable (outcome)	Description
B.1.1	Key competences for LLL, quality of learning outcomes	This outcome captures the extent to which the education and training system succeeds in the provision of basic skills and key competences for learners in formal education (including IVET), as defined in regular international surveys and international assessments
B.1.2	Adult skills and competences	This outcome captures the extent to which adults in working age dispose of basic skills and key competences, as captured by regular international surveys.
B.1.3	Links between learning and the world of work	This outcome reflects the pragmatic relevance of IVET and CVET programmes through the lens of participation in work-based learning (WBL) and the share of programmes with outcomes/objectives that include a WBL component
B.1.4	Employability of learners	This outcome refers to the labour market relevance of opportunities for LLL as captured through evidence of labour market outcomes of graduates from IVET, CVET, and other forms of LLL with a VET component
B.1.5	Opportunities for career guidance	This outcome strives to capture the timely availability of up-to-date information about professions and education programmes, which information allows prospective and current students in VET to take informed decisions concerning their education and employment paths
B.4.1	Relevance of learning content: green transition	This outcome captures the extent to which curricula for youth and adults consider themes of significance for sustainability and climate change awareness, including "green skills" for sustainable economies
B.4.2	Relevance of learning content: digital transition	This outcome tracks the extent to which curricula for youth and adults incorporate themes concerning digitalisation, and the extent to which learners are provided with basic digital skills as a result
B.4.3	Responsiveness of programme offering	This outcome captures the degree and speed of responsiveness of initial and continuing VET systems to the needs of the labour market and to other changes concerning demography and socio-economic developments

VET in Albania performs better than VET in other countries on average when it comes to the provision of basic skills and key competences to young students (Outcome B.1.1). VET programmes are also reported to provide satisfactory exposure to the world or work (Outcome B.1.3) and opportunities for career guidance are up to date and accessible to learners (Outcome B.1.5).

Nevertheless, the labour market prospects for youth and adults in VET in Albania remain relatively low. In fact, this is one of the domains in which the VET system of the country performs the lowest (Outcome B.1.4). While this is not a problem for some attractive geographical areas,[8] such as the capital

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[8] Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Albania

(Tirana), weaker results can be observed in the other regions/cities, and this clearly puts in evidence the high level of disparity. This is a result that deserves further investigation beyond the scope of this report, to identify the reasons and the possible solutions that may overcome these challenges.

The quality and relevance of learning outcomes of youth is also considerably lower than those of adults and adult learners in the country (Outcome B.1.2) who, in turn, are on par with their peers in other countries regarding the basic skills and competencies commonly conceptualised as essential for thriving in information-rich societies, i.e., IT and literacy.

FIGURE 4. SUPPORTING QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, ALBANIA AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)
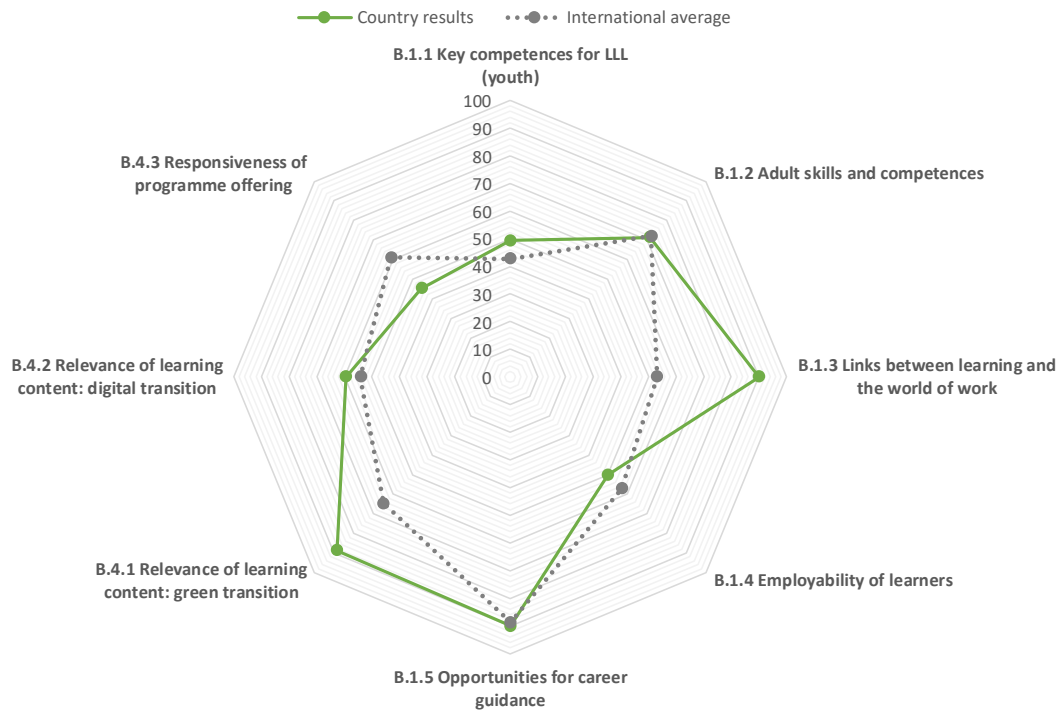
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The Torino Process monitoring framework considers relevance of learning content also in longer-term perspective by looking at the extent to which curricula consider forward-looking, emerging themes such as the digital and green transitions. The VET system and programmes in Albania appears more responsive to forthcoming themes and challenges, such as the green and digital transitions (Outcomes B.4.1 and B.4.2), than it is to more imminent, present-day demands emerging from the labour market and the economy in general (Outcome B.4.3). System performance in terms of responsiveness of programme offering to expectations in that domain is only average, which may be a factor contributing to limited employability of youth graduating from VET.

2.2.3 Area B (2). Lifelong learning outcomes: excellence and innovation

In the second part of Area B (Excellence and innovation in support of lifelong learning), the Torino Process monitors two performance dimensions – excellence and innovation, which accommodate a total of eight system outcomes. These outcomes include excellence in pedagogy, learning content,

governance, and inclusion into learning, as well as systemic innovation in support of access, participation, quality, and relevance of learning and training. The outcomes included under Area B (2) are defined as follows:

TABLE 4. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING AREA B (2): EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

| Code	Deliverable (outcome)	Description
B.2.1	Excellence in pedagogy and professional development	This outcome captures the extent to which excellence in teaching and training is an acknowledged policy priority, as well as the extent to which its implementation is bearing fruit across the education and training system, including in the domain of professional development of teachers
B.2.2	Excellence in programme content and implementation	This outcome captures the results of efforts to promote excellence in the content and implementation of VET programmes, with a specific focus on bringing them closer to the world of work (i.e. through work-based learning), on prioritising greening in curricula and teaching, as well as on promoting excellence in learning.
B.2.3	Excellence in governance and provider management	This outcome captures the results of efforts to promote excellence in the domains of financing, leadership, and governance, as well as the extent to which these examples are systemic or not
B.2.4	Excellence in social inclusion and equity	This outcome captures the results of efforts to promote excellence in the domain of equity and social inclusion in education and training, as well as the extent to which these examples are systemic or not
B.3.1	Systemic innovation: access to opportunities for LLL	This outcome captures the presence of innovative practices and policy solutions in the domain of access to opportunities for lifelong learning.
B.3.2	Systemic innovation: participation and graduation	This outcome captures the presence of innovative practices and policy solutions in the provision of support for participation in (and graduation from) opportunities for lifelong learning, and the extent to which they are systemic (or not)
B.3.3	Systemic innovation: quality of learning and training outcomes	This outcome captures the presence of innovative practices and policy solutions for raising the quality of learning and training in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by learners
B.3.4	Systemic innovation: relevance of learning and training	This outcome captures the presence of innovative practices and policy solutions for raising the labour market relevance of knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by learners

This report defines excellence as the presence of system-wide policies and measures to promote highest quality practices and results in various domains of policy and system delivery across VET. Unlike for other countries in the sample, the average score of Albania in the domain of excellence is exceptionally high in many of the areas covered by the Torino Process monitoring framework, notably in promoting best practices in support of good pedagogy and the professional development of teachers and trainers (Outcome B.2.1), and in programme content and implementation (Outcome B.2.2) (Figure 5).

However, the results in the two other areas of excellence promotion covered by the monitoring – governance and management of providers (Outcome B.2.3), and social inclusion – stand out as only average in terms of system performance. The discussion of reasons behind these findings is beyond the remit of this report, but they seem to be indicative of a broader pattern of weaker performance in system management and access to some forms of VET.

In the context of system performance monitoring within the Torino Process, excellence and innovation represent distinct yet interconnected domains. While excellence refers to the pursuit of highest quality practices and outcomes in various, mainstream domains of vocational education and training policy and delivery, innovation focuses on the presence of pioneering practices and policy solutions within these and related domains. Innovation in the context of monitoring is a proxy for the adaptability, creativity, and forward-thinking approach in the VET system in responding to the evolving needs of learners and labour markets.

The Torino Process monitoring gauges systemic innovation regarding access to lifelong learning opportunities (Outcome B.3.1), participation and graduation (Outcome B.3.2), quality of learning and training outcomes (Outcome B.3.3), and relevance of learning and training (Outcome B.3.4).
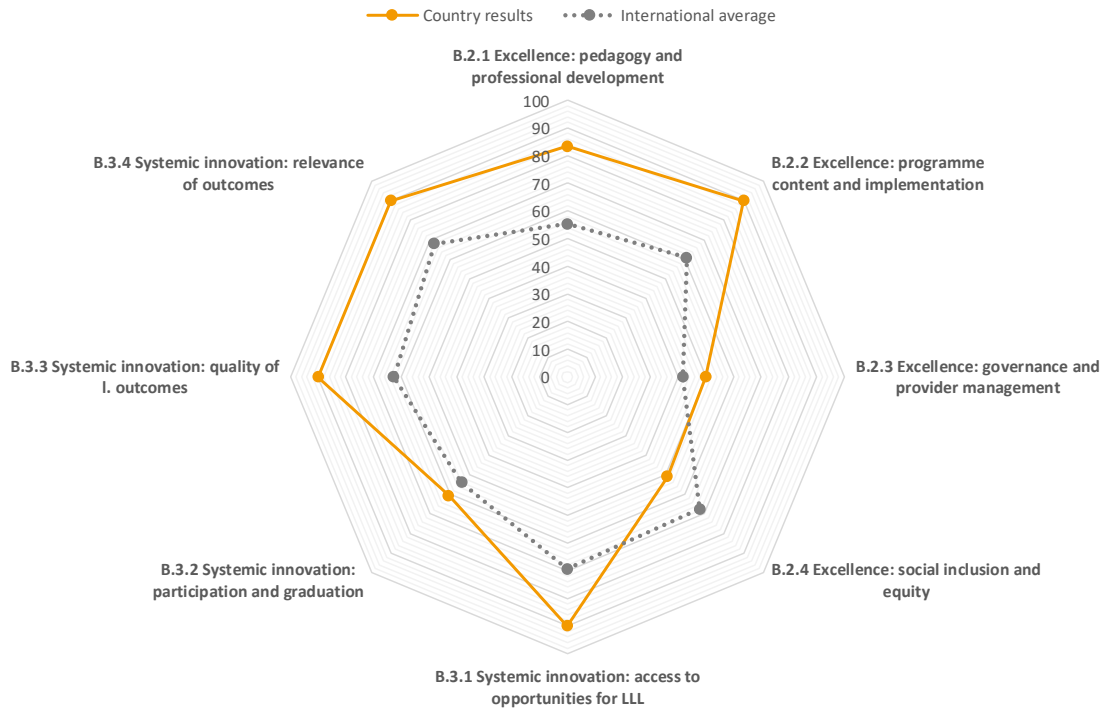
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The emphasis Albania places on innovation is quite consistent between these different outcomes. In fact, systemic innovation appears to be the most successful domain among the eight monitoring dimensions. Albania is doing particularly well with innovation in support of access to lifelong learning (Outcome B.3.1), quality of learning (Outcome B.3.3), and relevance of learning outcomes (Outcome B.3.4). The information provided suggests that priority areas in this domain include the inclusion of lifelong-learning based qualifications in the national qualifications framework, the establishment of a system for the recognition of prior learning, as well as proactive promotion of lifelong learning opportunities.[9] A series of initiatives are put in place to improve innovation in the VET provision for both young people and adults,[10] such as the optimization plan of the VET providers, the accreditation model for VET providers designed by NAVETQ in collaboration with UNDP, etc.).

However, as in other countries participating in this round of monitoring, the benefits of innovation in these domains are yet to reach a critical mass of beneficiaries in the VET system, as suggested by the otherwise lower results concerning access, quality, and relevance/employability that were discussed in the previous sections. Indeed, some aspects of systemic innovation can be further investigated and improved, for example, the country recognizes the role of qualifications framework and the fact that there is still a need for continued progress.[11]

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[9] Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire for Albania
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

2.2.4 Area C. System organisation

In Area C (System organisation), the monitoring framework accommodates the last two dimensions presented in Section 2.1 – steering/management and resourcing, in which the Torino Process tracks a total of eight system outcomes. These outcomes include the availability and use of data for informed decision-making, the involvement of stakeholders in VET policy, provider management, and resourcing, quality assurance and accountability, the internationalisation of VET providers, as well as the availability and use of human and financial resources in VET. The outcomes included under Area C are defined as follows:

TABLE 5. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING AREA C: SYSTEM ORGANISATION

Code	Deliverable (outcome)	Description
C.1.1	Data availability and use	This outcome refers to the availability of administrative and big data as covered by Level 1 of the monitoring framework, participation in large scale international assessments, as well as technical capacity to generate/manage evidence to support monitoring and improvement
C.1.2	Participatory governance	This outcome captures the degree of involvement of the private sector and other external stakeholders in consultations and decisions concerning opportunities for LLL through initial and continuing VET
C.1.3	Public accountability and reliable quality assurance	This outcome tracks the extent to which reliable and trustworthy quality assurance (QA) mechanisms and accountability arrangements are in place which cover learners, teachers, and providers, as well as the extent to which the QA results are publicly available
C.1.4	Professional capacity of staff in leadership positions	This outcome monitors the availability and professional capacity of qualified staff in leadership roles and in other key administrative roles on provider level
C.1.5	Internationalisation	This outcome monitors the degree of internationalisation in IVET and CVET, such as internationalisation of QA arrangements, curricular content, qualifications (i.e. recognition of international credentials, awarding bodies being active beyond their country of origin, etc.)
C.2.1	Adequate financial resource allocations and use	This outcome captures the adequacy of financial resources invested in IVET and CVET in terms of level of investment and allocation, as well as the degree of diversification of funding between public and private sources
C.2.2	Adequate human resource allocation and use	This outcome captures the efficiency of human resource management in terms of availability of teachers and trainers, and the adequacy of their deployment and career management
C.2.3	Adequate material base	This outcome captures the extent to which the material base for learning and training is adequate, including learning and training materials which are supportive of and promote effective teaching, training, and learning

Albania is a strong performer also in this area of VET monitoring, both in international comparison and with respect to the other areas of monitoring covered so far. These results are a clear consequence of the efforts the country has put in place for a successful and efficient management of the VET system

However, two relative weaknesses stand out. One is the availability of reliable and comparable data for planning, policy analysis, and decision-making purposes (Outcome C.1.1), the other is the internationalisation of IVET and CVET (Outcome C.1.5). VET providers, professionals, and decision-makers in Albania struggle much less with these two areas than most other countries, but still, both areas stand out as weak against the backdrop of good results in most other areas in focus of monitoring.

The deficits with data and evidence availability for decision-making and steering of the system are noteworthy because they may prevent the reliable tracking of progress and success with policies in VET and they may also be an impediment to the proper documentation, analysis, and dissemination of otherwise good and helpful practices among peers, nationally and internationally.

Finally, system performance with respect to the adequacy of financial/material and human resources (Outcomes C.2.1 and C.2.2) is relatively high in international comparison, which is also confirmed by

information provided by national authorities about much-needed infrastructure investments in the VET sector, especially in the digital infrastructure.

FIGURE 6. GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND RESOURCES - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, ALBANIA AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)
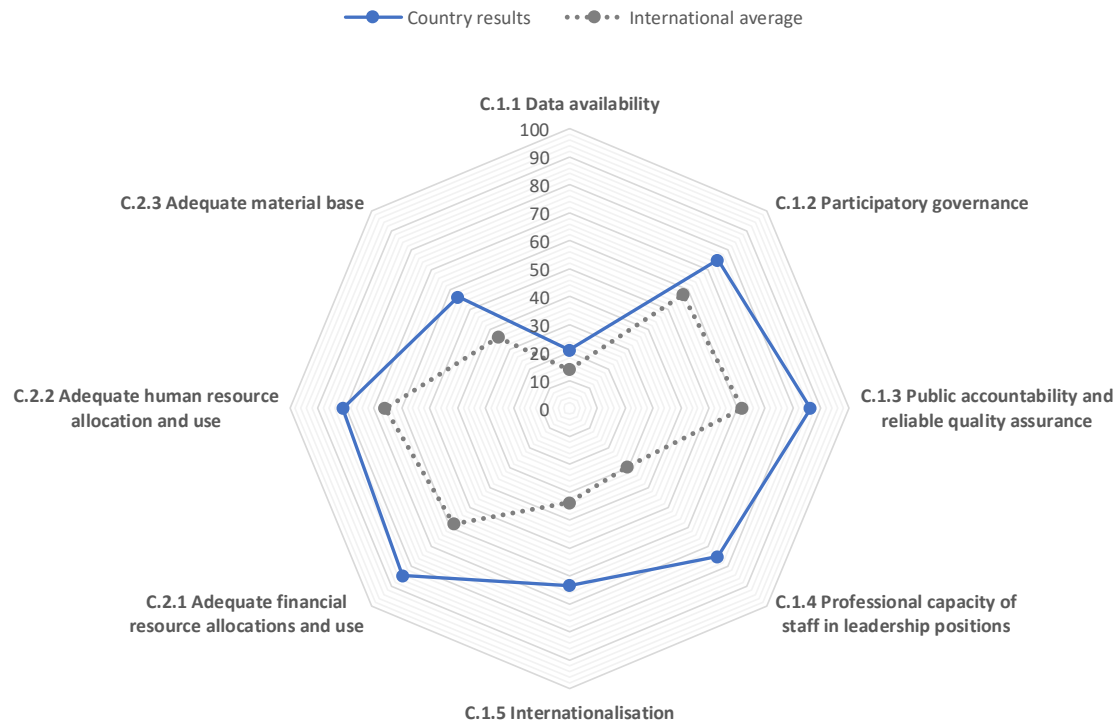
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

However, despite no acute shortages of means and staff, VET in Albania continues to be affected by lower than needed quality of the material base for learning and training (Outcome C.2.3). This suggests that the allocation and efficient use of human and financial resources in VET still remain a challenge.

2.3 How did policies and systems benefit specific groups of learners?

In this round, the Torino Process monitoring looks not only into the deliverables of national VET policies and systems in general but also into the degree to which they address the needs and expectations of present and prospective lifelong learners. The monitoring framework traces how well and equitably system outcomes are distributed to these learners depending on their age and gender, and by features which can be influenced by policy, such as socio-economic disadvantage, labour market status, migration status and learning setting/pathway.

The next sections provide an overview of how the IVET and CVET subsystems in Albania perform in a key selection of monitoring dimensions vis-à-vis a key selection of learner groups: female learners (Section 2.3.1), disadvantaged learners (Section 2.3.2), populations who are long term unemployed,

economically inactive, and have a low level of educational attainment (Section 2.3.3), as well as by the country of origin of learners in VET (Section 2.3.4).

2.3.1 Female learners

This section describes findings about VET system performance regarding access, participation, quality and relevance, and innovation to the benefit of female youth and adult learners in VET in Albania.

Enrolment in VET in Albania favours young women over female adults by a large margin (Dimension A.1 – Access). This could be the outcome of a lower propensity among adult females to become learners due to their family or professional situation, and it is also a consequence of a better-performing IVET subsystem in this dimension of monitoring. National authorities in Albania have introduced affirmative action policies to promote and support access for girls and women in VET programs, for instance by reserving half of all scholarship for girls who enrol in initial VET programmes.[12] Still, the monitoring data suggests that young females emerge as the more successful group in these selection processes than adult women.

FIGURE 7. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF FEMALE LEARNERS IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, ALBANIA (2023)
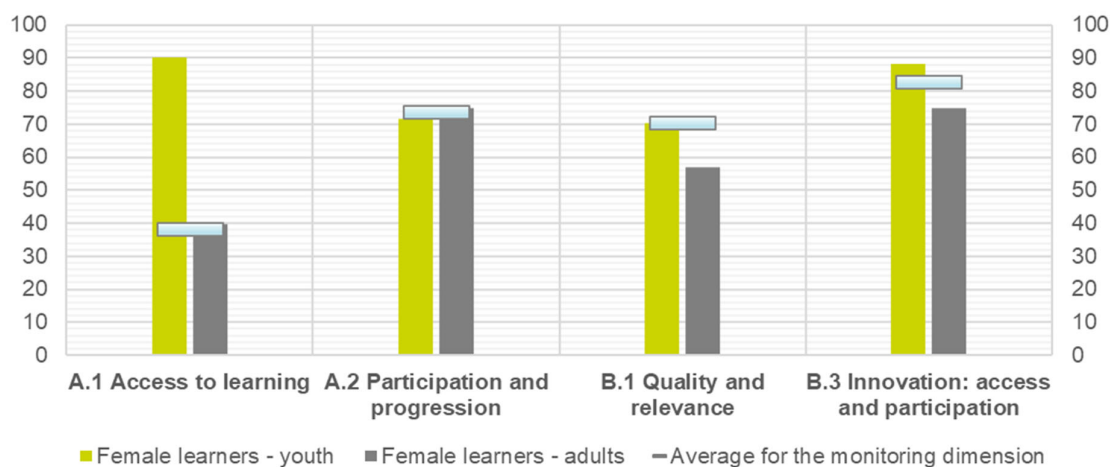
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Once enrolled, adult female learners in Albania are just as likely to participate and graduate successfully as their younger peers, but somewhat less successfully than male learners on average (Dimension A.2 – Participation and Progression). Also, the quality and relevance of the education and training they receive in VET tends to be lower in comparison, mostly because of their lower employability: male graduates are more than twice likelier to find employment that female graduates.[13] To further improve the situation, especially for working age population, legal frameworks on the

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[12] Source: Albania 2023 Torino Process self-assessment country questionnaire.
[13] Ibid.

procedures and practices enabling transition of working-age people from non-formal to formal learning settings need to be consolidated.[14]

In comparison, the capacity of VET in Albania to innovate in some of these dimensions, such as access and participation, is high and does not show a gender bias (Dimension B.3). Innovation in support of access and participation benefits youth and adult female learners equally, but here too, females benefit to a somewhat lesser extent than their male counterparts. It is also noteworthy that there is a huge discrepancy in system performance between innovation in support of access to adult education for women, and the actual rate of access to adult education for this group of learners. This discrepancy may suggest some difficulties with the system-wide scaling up of otherwise promising and effective innovative practices and policy solutions.

2.3.2 Disadvantaged learners

This section describes how well the VET system caters for the needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged youth when it comes to access, participation, and quality/relevance of opportunities for lifelong learning through VET. The section also investigates whether efforts to promote innovation in VET access and participation benefit this specific group of learners in Albania.

FIGURE 8. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, ALBANIA (2023)
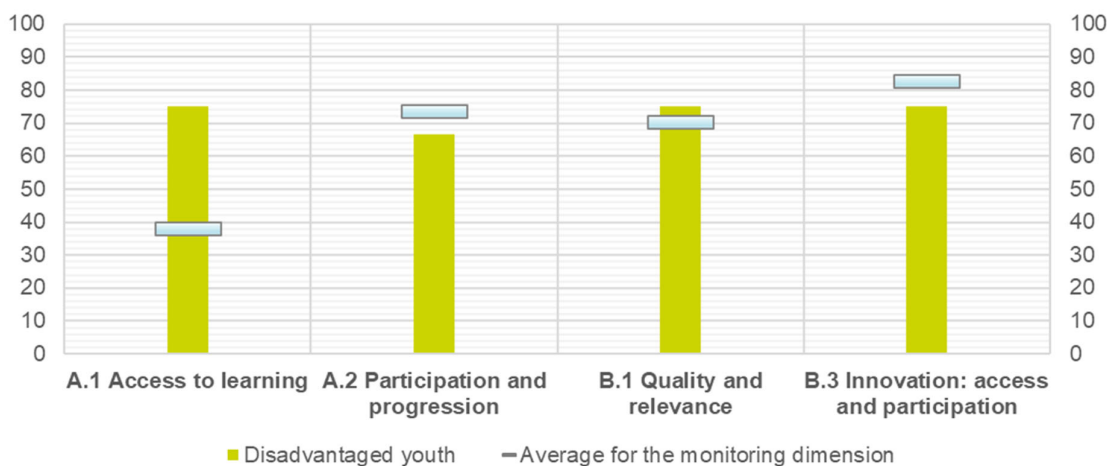
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The monitoring results for this group of learners show that Albania has managed to prioritise inclusion in VET quite successfully, especially for youth at socio-economic disadvantage. Policies and practices of which Albania reports, such as the provision of full scholarships and free educational materials for youth from marginalised groups, have boosted access to VET for disadvantaged youth more than for average learners (Dimension A.1). Once enrolled, disadvantaged youth can expect to benefit from the same level of quality and relevance of VET programmes like all others in VET (Dimension B.1), but this group is also more likely to experience difficulties with its participation in

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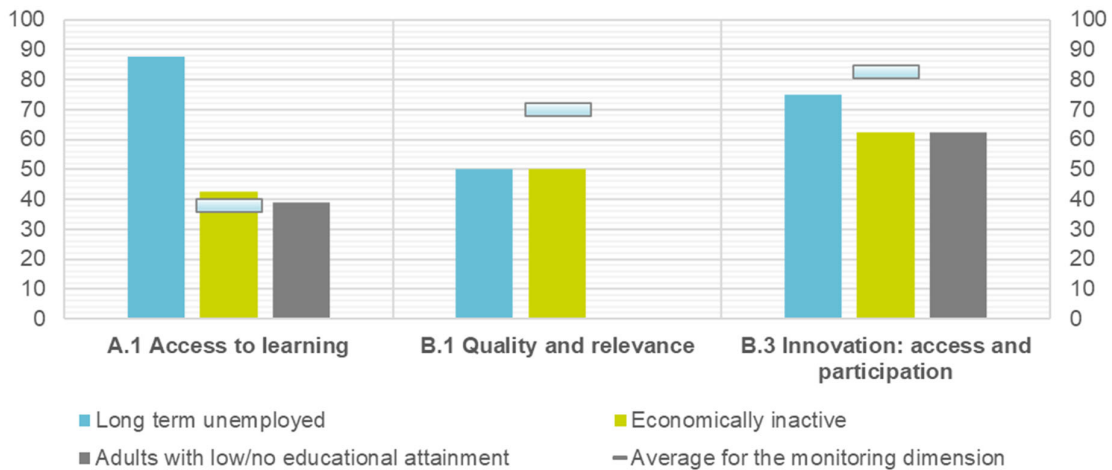[14] Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Albania

learning and progression to subsequent stages of learning, despite the supportive measures by the government.

Perhaps because of the already visible, system-wide impact of measures in support of marginalized groups in VET, the focus of innovation in VET is not primarily on this group of learners (Dimension B.3), but on all learners irrespective of their age or background. Still, the evidence provided by national authorities indicates the need for more systemic innovation in expanding social inclusion for socio-economically disadvantaged youth and the need to successfully complete the initiatives in place (i.e., EU' Youth Guarantee focus on young NEET).[15]

2.3.3 Populations who are long-term unemployed, economically inactive, and have low educational attainment

Section 2.3.3 presents findings about VET system performance from the perspective of three strategically important groups of adults: the long-term unemployed, the economically inactive adults, and those with low or no educational attainment. The selection of monitoring dimensions is narrower compared to the selection discussed in the previous sections as only some of these dimensions are applicable to these three groups of learners.

FIGURE 9. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF ADULTS WHO ARE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED, ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE, OR HAVE LOW EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, ALBANIA (2023)

Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

In its self-assessment questionnaire, Albania reports of the existence of specific programmes for each of these groups and the system performance data collected in this way indicates that these programmes are effective, especially for individuals in need of upskilling or reskilling who are long-term unemployed (Dimension A.1). There are also challenges, especially with prospective learners from rural

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[15] Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Albania

areas, who are reported as having difficulties in reaching CVET centres which are mostly present in populated geographical areas.[16]

However, to the extent evidence is available, it suggests that the quality and relevance of lifelong learning opportunities for these groups of learners is lower than for other learners on average (Dimension B.1), and that they are also less likely to be in focus of efforts and system-wide innovation in support of access and participation.

2.3.4 Learners by country of origin

The final section with monitoring findings discusses performance in the domains of access, participation, quality and relevance, and innovation in Albania for learners who are first-generation migrants.

FIGURE 10. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF FIRST-GENERATION MIGRANTS IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, ALBANIA (2023)

Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100
Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Albania reports that country of origin does count among the noteworthy factors which influence access to learning, the prospects of learners for participation and progression, or the quality and relevance of their learning outcomes. The performance scores seem largely to confirm that as system performance vis-à-vis first-generation migrants does not depart substantially from what VET delivers to all other learners on average. If anything, the limited number of migrants in VET is somewhat more likely to progress and graduate successfully than their peers without a migrant background, and their learning outcomes are more likely to be of above average quality. Together with the small number of first-generation migrants attending VET, this may also explain why efforts to support this learner group in Albania are limited mostly to Albanian language courses.[17]

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Source: Albania 2023 Torino Process self-assessment country questionnaire.

3. SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCES AND INFORMATION

3.1 Links to background information and data

The system performance indices presented in this report were calculated based on a selection of international quantitative indicators for Albania and the qualitative responses of stakeholders where such indicators were missing.

The full collection of quantitative indicators collected for Albania for this 2023 round of monitoring can be found here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1D_zmw_Ab8hljl_b1PEkLPp-bKKYsY2Zx/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true

The full collection of qualitative responses to the country-specific questionnaire for Albania can be found here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DgSwnkY0ljdAtwlXWKOvjHr61qUpVeWo/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true

A full technical report about the monitoring framework and process in 2023 can be found here.[18]

General information for the Torino Process as well as the reports and data of other participating countries, can be found here: https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/torino-process-policy-analysis-and-progress-monitoring.[19]

3.2 Definitions, terminological clarifications, methodological limitations

3.2.1 Definitions and terminological clarifications

This section provides an overview and definition of key terms in the Torino Process monitoring framework.

- **Youth:** Population in the official age of entrance and participation in initial VET programmes.
- **Adults:** Population of working age (15+ years of age) not enrolled in initial VET programmes.
- **Disadvantaged youth:** This refers to socio-economic disadvantage and describes youth with access to below-average levels of financial, social, cultural, and human capital resources.
- **Long-term unemployed:** Long-term unemployment refers to the number of people who are out of work and have been actively seeking employment for at least one year.
- **Inactive populations:** Adults of working age who are outside of the labour force, meaning that they are neither employed nor registered as unemployed (that is, seeking employment)
- **Lifelong learning:** any learning activity undertaken throughout life, to improve knowledge, skills/competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.
- **System performance:** describes the extent to which the VET system delivers against a targeted selection of national and international obligations (commitments) to learners and other stakeholders in support of learning through life (lifelong learning - LLL).
- **Initial VET:** Vocational education and training carried out in the formal system of initial education (usually upper or post-secondary) before entering working life.

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[18] Release date for the report is 1 July 2023 upon completion of monitoring for all participating countries.

[19] The Torino Process monitoring reports and data will be released gradually in the period March-May 2023 in the order in which countries submit their evidence and the reports are being finalised with them.

- **Continuing VET:** Formal or non-formal vocational education and training carried out after initial VET and usually after the beginning of working life.
- **Adult education:** Adult education or learning may refer to any formal, non-formal, or informal learning activity, both general and vocational, undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training.

3.2.2 Methodological limitations

The system performance indices developed in the framework of the Torino Process, are based on a rich methodological framework. This framework relies on various principles and theoretical underpinnings to ensure that the design, implementation, and evaluation of the indices is plausible in terms of theoretical foundations, technical reproducibility, and statistical fitness. The primary aim of these indices is to offer insights that can guide the monitoring of countries and inform their policy planning, not to promote their comparative ranking.

While various options were available during the different phases of the construction of the indices, the final choices represent a series of decisions which were deemed adequate and appropriate to promote reliability and avoid bias, in full awareness that by their very nature, indices like those require constant refinement. Therefore, the construction and calculation of the performance indices will remain an ongoing process to address the following limitations:

1. Refinement of aggregations and analysis: the current version of the indices represents a sub-set of the national systems under analysis. While these are sufficient for the formulation of initial findings, future cross-country analysis will include a larger number of countries with possible alternative (dis)aggregations i.e., at regional or development level, which may also affect the formulas using in the calculation of the indices as well as their values. The methodological framework of the Torino Process monitoring allows for such extensions and refinement without jeopardizing the validity of results which have been released already.

2. Choice of evidence: while the goal of this exercise is to monitor equally the different areas of interest, their dimensions and related outcomes, different countries may rely on a different, country-specific mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators from a predefined list for all countries, as captured by the ICI and BPI metrics described in Section 1.2. This also applies to the last available (reference) year for the quantitative indicators, which may vary between indicators and countries within a five-year limit.