

TORINO PROCESS SYSTEM MONITORING REPORT: MOLDOVA (2023)



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The European Training Foundation (ETF) wishes to thank the national authorities of Moldova, Dr Silviu Gîncu, and all national stakeholders for their invaluable contribution and the provision of the accurate and extensive information in support of this monitoring exercise.

This monitoring report was prepared by a team led by Mihaylo Milovanovitch, Senior Human Capital Development Expert and Coordinator for System Change and Lifelong Learning at the ETF. The report follows a proprietary monitoring methodology developed by the same team and is based on evidence collected, processed, analysed, and verified by the ETF and by national stakeholders in Moldova under the overall coordination of Dr Silviu Gîncu as the national Torino Process coordinator for Moldova.

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:** Moldova's VET system is more accessible and attractive in international comparison, but the CVET struggles to attract and provide for the needs of adult learners. While CVET benefits from a favourable normative framework, the network of CVET providers is still small and does not have the capacity needed to deliver as expected. Moldova performs better in international comparison in providing learning opportunities for adults beyond VET, such as through active labour market measures, but some groups of adults, in particular those with low or no education, remain disproportionately disadvantaged in this respect.
- **Quality and participation:** Moldova's education and training system exhibits a higher degree of permeability between VET and general education than other countries. Students in VET typically graduate successfully and seek employment rather than pursuing further education. VET programs in Moldova offer quality and relevant skills to young learners, satisfactory exposure to the world of work, and accessible career guidance.
- **Relevance and labour market outcomes:** Despite better than average quality and successful participation results, VET in Moldova does not guarantee improved labour market prospects for youth and adults, and Moldova faces challenges related to emigration of skilled workers which has an impact on the skills and competences of its adult workforce. In terms of curricula, the VET system performs better in addressing immediate labour market demands than incorporating forward-looking themes like digital and green transitions.
- **Excellence and innovation:** Moldova has transformed some of its VET providers into Centers of Excellence, granting them wider responsibilities beyond the mere delivery of education and training. However, these organizations are still catching up in fulfilling their aspirational goals and so, good practices and solutions in this area are still not sufficiently replicated across the VET system. System performance is moderate in systemic innovation too, especially regarding access to lifelong learning for adults due to structural challenges and resource deficits. Nonetheless, Moldova's VET system excels in promoting successful participation and graduation of learners on all levels.
- **System management and organisation:** Moldova's VET system performance is uneven, struggling with the availability of reliable and comparable data for planning and decision-making. While national data is adequately available, internationally comparable data remains limited. Participatory governance shows mid-range results, with stakeholder communication prioritized but employer involvement in VET management weak. The creation of a new Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research boosts performance in quality assurance and public accountability. Despite relatively high performance in financial/material and human resources, challenges persist in the quality of material base for learning and efficient resource allocation.
- **Quality and reliability of monitoring evidence:** The monitoring results of Moldova are less internationally comparable than those of other countries, on average, and they are also somewhat more prone to bias. However, the self-assessment data provided by national authorities are balanced and steer clear of extreme self-criticism or excessive praise.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Focus and scope of monitoring

This report summarises the results of monitoring VET system performance in Moldova, 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”² 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)³ - the extent to which they are being delivered and how equitably they are distributed to thirteen 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 outcomes and the learner groups they serve to a total of 82 indices per country.⁴ 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

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 This report may use “VET”, “VET system”, and “system” interchangeably.

³ Further in the report “outcomes” and “deliverables” are used interchangeably.

⁴ In rare cases where both qualitative and quantitative evidence is missing, the number of SPIs for a country can be lower.

learners (Section 2.3). The report also provides an international average score⁵ for these results for reference purposes, and, where relevant, it showcases some of the disaggregated data used to calculate the system performance indices. Links to the full dataset for Moldova and the Torino Process monitoring framework and methodology can be found in this document's third and final section.

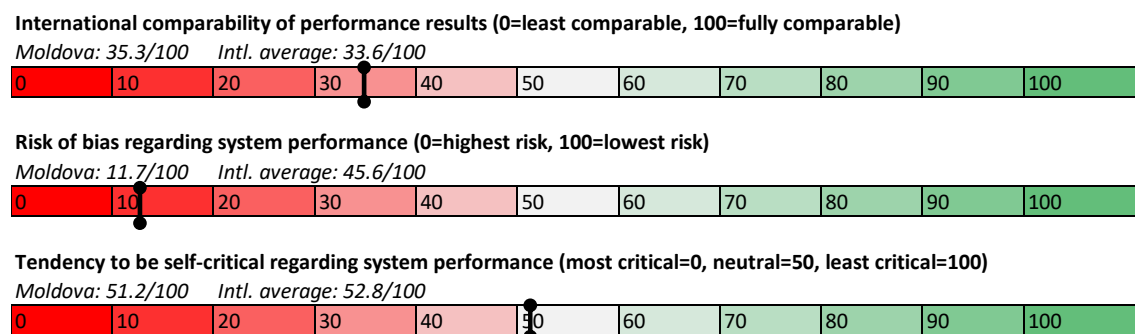
1.2 Comparability and reliability of monitoring data

The evidence for this monitoring report was collected and analysed in several steps from September 2022 until April 2023. After an initial round of collecting internationally comparable indicators for each of the system outcomes and learner groups covered by the monitoring framework, the ETF compiled a supplementary questionnaire for national authorities and stakeholders in Moldova 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 Moldova.

On a scale from 0 (least internationally comparable) to 100 (fully internationally comparable), the overall comparability of monitoring results for Moldova is 35 out of 100, which is slightly above average in international comparison (Figure 1). The international average for comparability of monitoring findings in this round of the Torino Process is 33.6. The monitoring outcomes of Moldova appear considerably more prone to bias in international comparison. However, the performance self-assessment offered by national authorities struck a balanced tone, steering clear of extreme self-criticism or excessive praise.

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



⁵ “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.

2. MONITORING RESULTS: MOLDOVA

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:

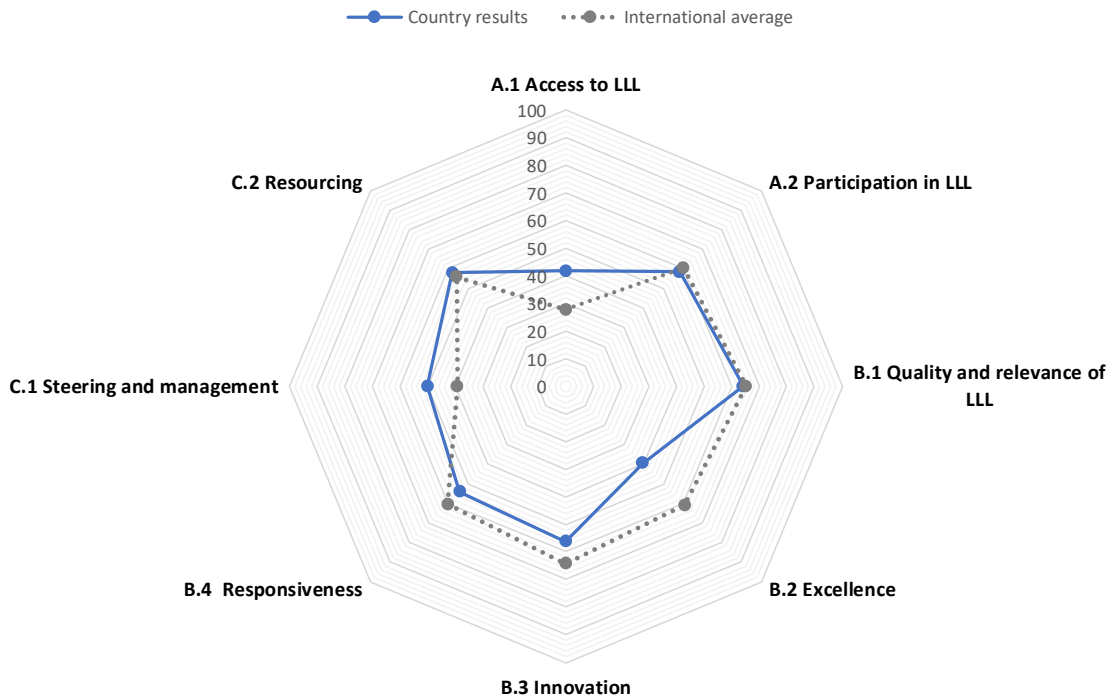
TABLE 1. DIMENSIONS OF POLICY AND SYSTEM PERFORMANCE MONITORING THROUGH THE TORINO PROCESS

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 policy and system performance of Moldova in the eight dimensions of monitoring covered by the Torino Process in 2023.

The findings suggest that VET system performance in Moldova is broadly on par with the average performance of the other countries participating in the monitoring. Although VET in Moldova is more accessible and attractive in international comparison (Dimension A.1), with an SPI of 42, access remains the second weakest domain of VET system performance delivery, outdone only by the limited effectiveness of measures to promote excellence in VET on a system-wide scale (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE BY MONITORING DIMENSION, MOLDOVA AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



Theoretical⁶ index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: [Torino Process monitoring database](#)

Once they are enrolled in VET, the participation and graduation outlook of learners is on par with their peers from other countries. The performance index of Moldova in this dimension is 58, which is close to the average SPI of 60 of other countries in the sample. Furthermore, VET learners in Moldova can expect to benefit from training which delivers better in the dimension of quality and relevance (Dimension B.1) than in any other dimension of monitoring, albeit without being overly innovative (Dimension B.3) or responsive to external developments and demands (Dimension B.4). The evidence suggests that the capacity of the VET system to adequately respond to external changes and demand is slightly weaker in international comparison, although limited flexibility and responsiveness of VET

⁶ 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.

programmes and providers are a shared challenge for most countries participating in the Torino Process.

Against the backdrop of generally moderate system performance across monitoring dimensions, the resourcing of IVET and CVET in Moldova (Dimension C.2) emerges as a domain of stronger results, at least according to official interpretation. The same is true for the steering and management of the VET system (Dimension C.1), which is reported to be at a satisfactory level of performance (SPI of 50), more so than in other countries on average. A further exploration of these findings may reveal important details, which can put these performance scores into perspective. For instance, some of the data behind the results suggest that the perceptions of practitioners in the VET system differ. They point towards staff and material shortages as factors hindering their capacity to provide good quality instruction.⁷

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

VET performance in Moldova 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 outcomes. 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.

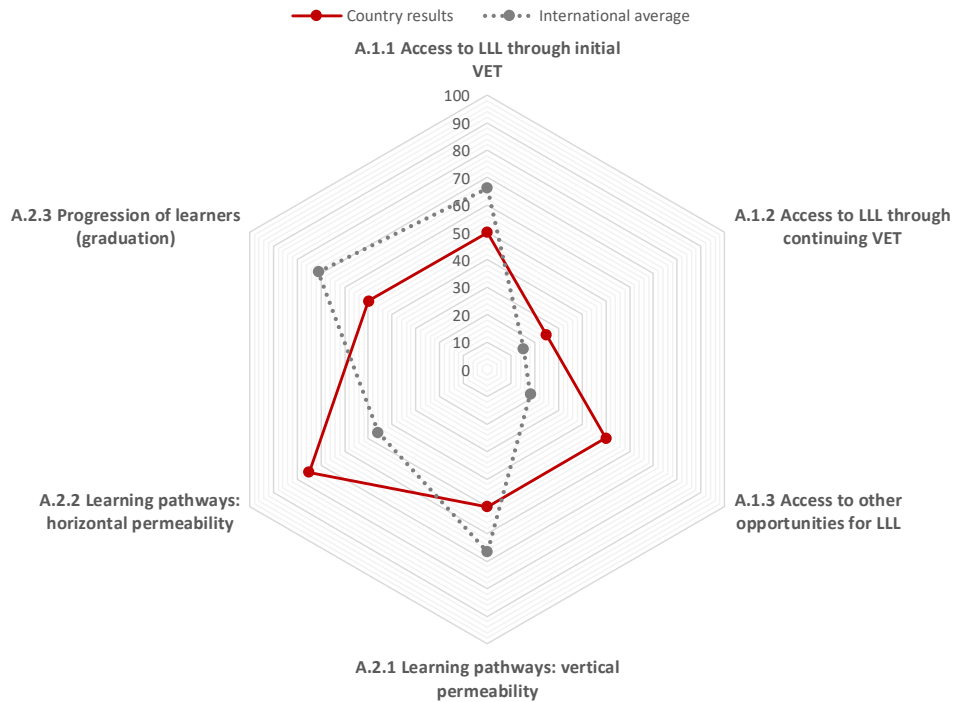
TABLE 2. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING AREA A: ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

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

⁷ Indicators I132 to I136, Torino Process database.

The previous section of this report discussed that access/attractiveness is a dimension of weaker performance for the VET system of Moldova. A break-down of results by specific outcome within that dimension reveals that the lower score is largely due to the struggle of the CVET subsystem to attract (adult) learners (Outcome A.1.2) – a challenge which to a lesser extent affects also initial VET, more so in Moldova than in other countries on average (Outcome A.1.1).

FIGURE 3. PROMOTING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN OPPORTUNITIES FOR LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, MOLDOVA AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

While CVET benefits from a favourable normative framework which promotes opportunities for continuous training for all, the network of CVET providers is still small and does not have the capacity needed to deliver accordingly.⁸ Measures to promote access to initial VET, on the other hand, seem to be focusing mostly on an important, but narrow selection of learners, i.e., vulnerable youth and not so much on promoting access and attractiveness for prospective learners in general.⁹

On the other hand, Moldova is doing considerably better than other countries by providing learning opportunities for adults beyond VET (Outcome A.1.3), such as through active labour market measures (Figure 3) and through clear regulations which describe lifelong learning as sum of formal, non-formal, and informal education opportunities (Figure 3).¹⁰

⁸ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

VET in Moldova demonstrates strong performance in enabling learners to switch between parallel general and vocational learning pathways (Outcome A.2.2). The education and training system delivers a much higher degree of permeability than the systems of other countries, on average. However, VET students in Moldova who aim to transition between successive stages of education to a general education/academic track (Outcome A.2.1), face far greater challenges, unlike their peers in other countries where such progression seems easier. As a result, most students tend to remain in their initial VET courses and attempt to find employment upon graduation, rather than pursuing higher levels of education or other VET programs (Outcome A.2.3).

These findings are aligned with the priorities of the VET system of Moldova, which are to facilitate successful transition into the labour market by ensuring a smooth entry of VET graduates into the workforce,¹¹ rather than to promote a continuation of their educational careers.

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, as shown in Table 3.

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

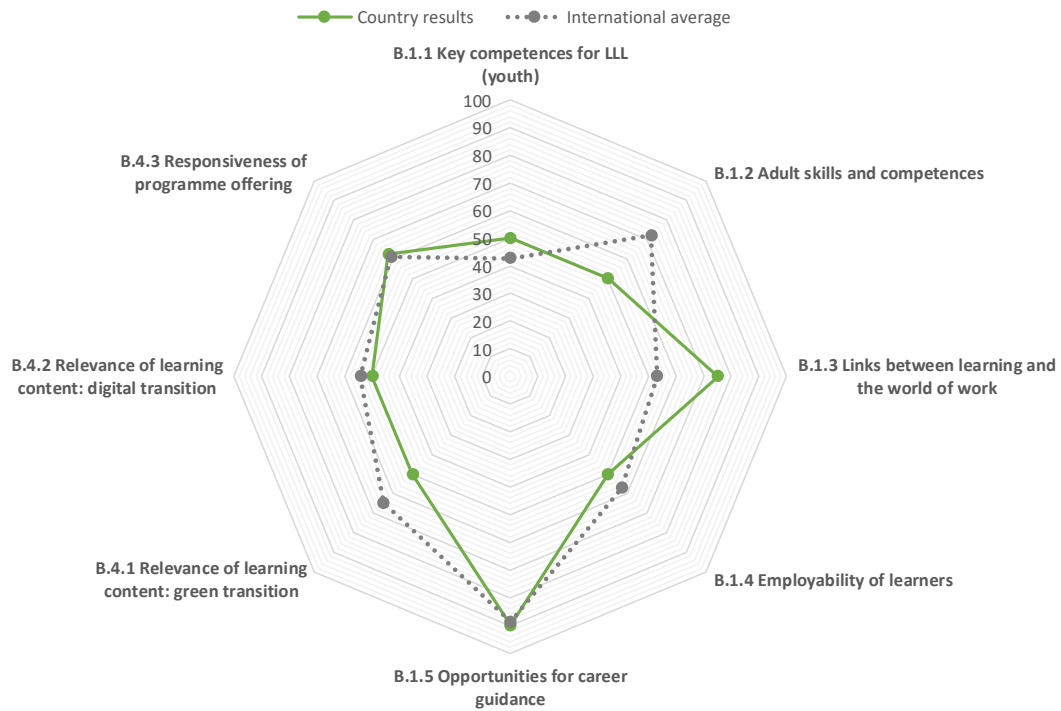
These outcomes cover the quality of learning of youth and adults in VET in terms of key skills and competences, the exposure of learners in VET to the world of work, the employability of graduates from IVET and CVET, the availability of career guidance for them, as well as the relevance of learning and training content in VET. Under relevance on the other hand, the monitoring records the responsiveness

¹¹ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova.

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. T

The quality and relevance of skills that VET in Moldova provides to young learners (Outcome B.1.1) are on par with the quality and relevance of learning opportunities provided to adults (Outcome B.1.2). With an SPI of 50, VET performance regarding quality of learning of youth is almost 10 points higher than the international average. VET programmes are reported to provide satisfactory exposure to the world of work (Outcome B.1.3). Opportunities for career guidance are up-to-date and accessible to learners (Outcome B.1.5). VET in Moldova is also deemed to be somewhat more aware and responsive to labour local market developments and needs (Outcome B.4.3) than VET in other countries on average, most likely due to the recent efforts to monitor and analyse labour market developments and skills needs.¹²

FIGURE 4. SUPPORTING QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, MOLDOVA AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Despite these positive results, VET in Moldova does not necessarily lead to better labour market prospects for youth and adults. Employability of learners (Outcome B.1.4) is the weakest domain of policy and system performance in the area of quality and relevance. Compared to the population in working age in other countries, adults in Moldova also dispose to a lesser extent of the key skills and

¹² Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova.

competences associated with prospects for successful participation in the economy (Outcome B.1.2), perhaps because widespread emigration continues to rob the country of skilled workforce.

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 themes such as the digital and green transitions (Outcome B.4.1 and B.4.2) and incorporate them in the curricula for youth and adults through elements such as digital skills, green skills, sustainability and climate change awareness, etc.

In that dimension of performance, the VET system of Moldova delivers a mixed message. It is doing better in considering more imminent, present-day demands emerging from the labour market and the economy (Outcome B.4.3, SPI of 62) than in considering forthcoming themes and challenges such as the green and digital transitions (SPI of 50, each). System performance regarding to the incorporation of learning content pertaining to the digital transition is close to that of other countries in the Torino Process sample, while it lags regarding the inclusion of content concerning the green transition.

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 eight system outcomes. These outcomes include excellence in pedagogy, learning content, governance, and inclusion into learning, as well as systemic innovation supporting 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

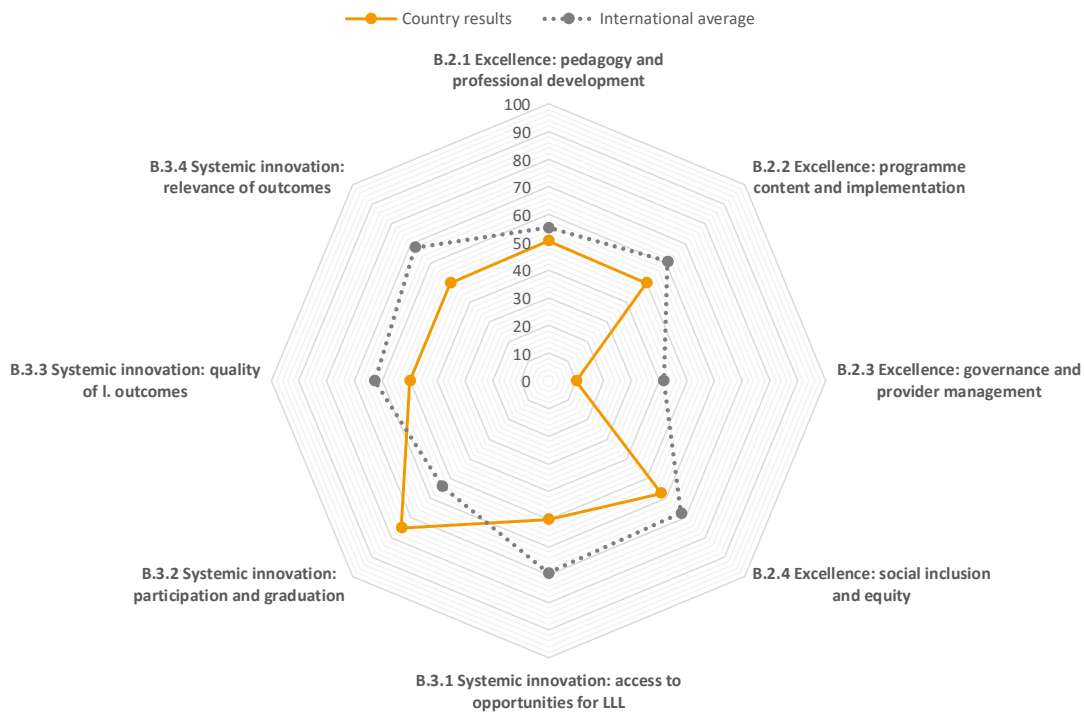
This report defines excellence as the presence of system-wide policies and measures to promote highest quality practices and results in various domains of policy and system delivery.

Moldova has transformed a range of VET providers into Center of Excellence by changing their legal status and institutional organisation. This also includes entrusting them with a wider selection of

responsibilities, which go beyond the mere provision of education and training and include social dialogue with labour market stakeholders, development of new curricula, professional development of teachers and trainers, etc.¹³ However, the evidence provided by national authorities suggests that at the time of monitoring, the ability of these organizations to fulfil their aspirational responsibilities to the benefit of the entire VET system, was in the process of catching up.

This observation is also reflected in the system performance results of Moldova, which remain modest in all domains of excellence tracked by the Torino Process monitoring. The VET system shows below average performance in international comparison regarding pedagogy and the professional development of teachers and trainers (Outcome B.2.1), the system-wide promotion of high-quality practices concerning programme content and implementation (Outcome B.2.2), as well as excellence in support of equity and social inclusion in VET (Outcome B.2.4), which suggests the presence of challenges with the system-wide replication of good practices, solutions, and insights which may be emerging in the VET Centers of Excellence (Figure 5). The gap in this respect is particularly acute with respect to excellence in the domain of governance and provider managements, where system performance is at the low end of the index range (Outcome B.2.3).

FIGURE 5. EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION FOR BETTER LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, MOLDOVA AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

¹³ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova.

VET system performance is moderate also regarding outcomes included under “systemic innovation”, understood as the presence of innovative practices and solutions in support of better system performance in selected domains. With an SPI of 50, progress in the domain of access to lifelong learning (Outcome B.3.1) is low in international comparison as national authorities report of structural challenges and deficits in the availability of human and financial resources especially regarding adult education.¹⁴ System performance is moderate also in the domains of innovation for better quality (Outcome B.3.3) and for greater relevance of learning (Outcome B.3.4). However, in the context of long-standing policies in support of successful transition to the labour market of which Moldova reports,¹⁵ the VET system is doing particularly well with innovation promoting successful participation in learning and graduation of learners (Outcome B.3.2).

2.2.4 Area C. System organisation

In Area C (System organisation), the monitoring framework accommodates the final 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

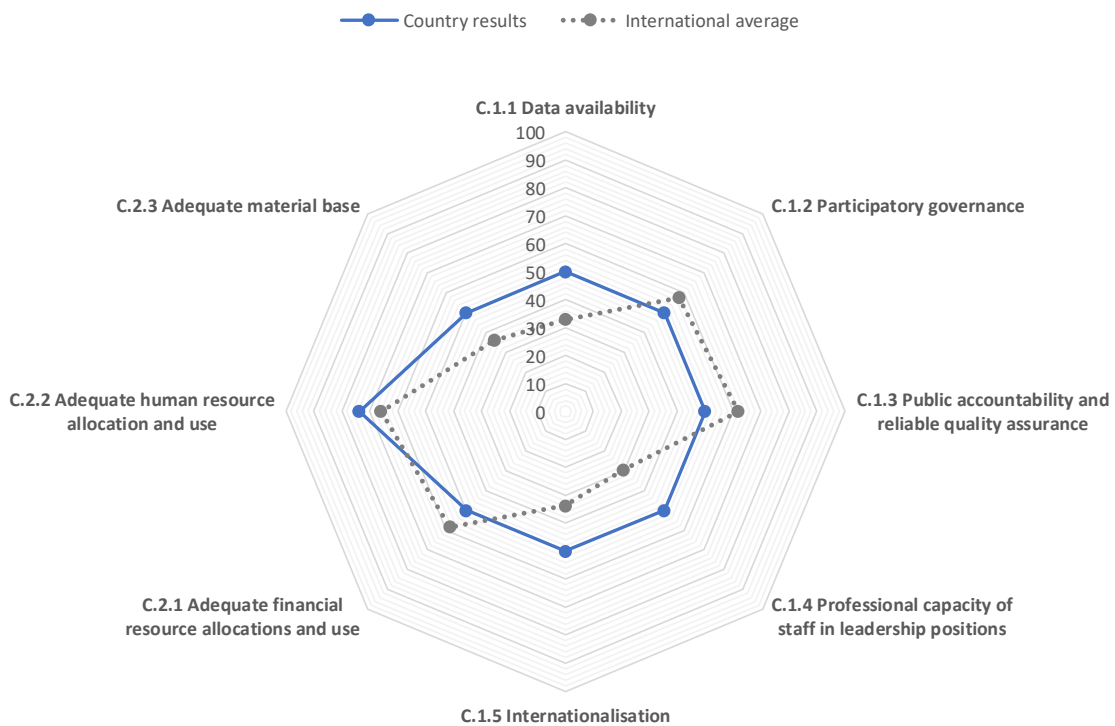
¹⁴ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova

¹⁵ Ibid.

System performance in this area of VET monitoring in Moldova is uneven. Like other countries, the outcome with which Moldova struggles the most is the availability of reliable and comparable data for planning, policy analysis, and decision-making purposes (Outcome C.1.1). VET decision-makers and professionals in Moldova struggle somewhat less than their peers in other countries with scarcity of data, but this is still an outcome with a notably lower performance score compared to all the others.

The evidence provided by national authorities regarding Outcome C.1.1 shows that this conclusion requires some differentiation. The challenge with evidence which the monitoring captured, is limited mostly to gaps in the availability of internationally comparable data, whereas line Ministries in Moldova and their subordinate institutions report of adequate availability of national level data, which they collect regularly through surveys, group interviews, and annual administrative data collections.¹⁶

FIGURE 6. GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND RESOURCES - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, MOLDOVA AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Participatory governance on the other hand (Outcome C.1.2) is a domain in which system operation delivers results in the mid-range of the performance scale. Although the evidence suggests that communication with stakeholders is a regular occurrence and a development priority, the involvement of employers in the steering and management of the VET system remains a weakest link. This finding

¹⁶ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova

is somewhat at odds with the reported satisfactory links and degree of exposure of VET learners to the world of work (Outcome B.1.3) discussed in Section 2.2.2.

The creation of a new Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research and the ambitious mandate it has been fulfilling for some years now is helping boost system performance in the area of quality assurance and public accountability in VET (Outcome C.1.3). This is reflected in the results of Outcome C.1.3. With some exceptions, other countries tend to have weaker performance in this domain, although weaknesses in the internal quality assurance capacity of VET providers seem common to all of them, including Moldova. Another domain in which Moldova outperforms others is the degree of internationalisation of VET.

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 may be a sign that there are no acute, systemic shortages of means and staff. Nevertheless, this is not enough to alleviate the challenges VET in Moldova encounters with the quality of the material base for learning and training (Outcome C.2.3), and with the availability and professional capacity of staff in leadership positions in VET (Outcome C.1.4). These observations suggest that the allocation and efficient use of human and financial resources in VET in Moldova may be a bigger challenge than their availability.

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 Moldova perform in a key selection of monitoring dimensions for the following 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 their country of origin (Section 2.3.4).

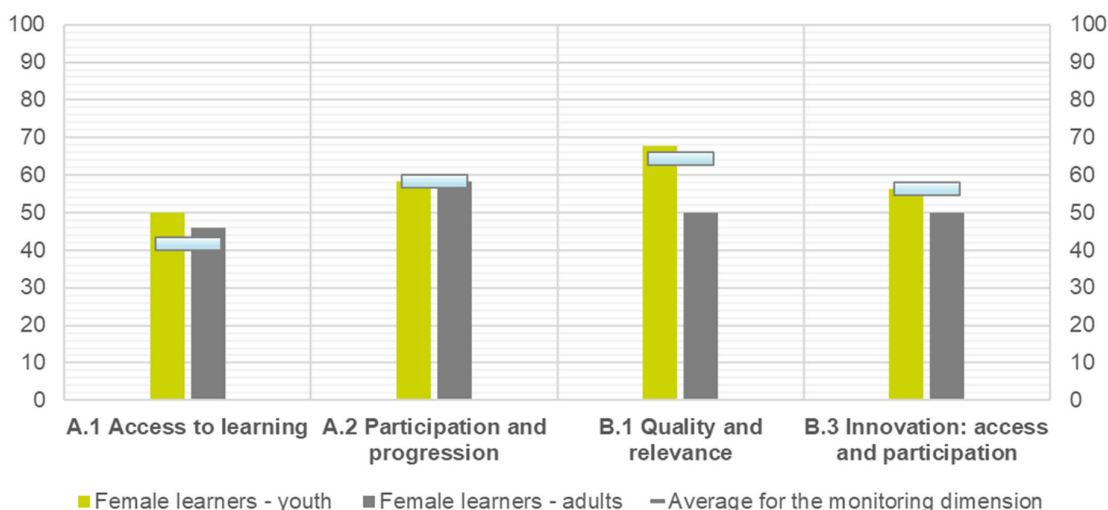
2.3.1 Female learners

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 Moldova.

Despite a marginal advantage for young women, the VET system in Moldova is almost equally accessible for both young and adult females (Dimension A.1) and there is also no significant variation in performance between genders in this dimension of monitoring. The same is true for the prospects of female learners in VET for successful participation and graduation (Dimension A.2) – there is no gender- or age-based variation in system performance and the information provided by national authorities suggests that the absence of gender-based discrimination has been an enduring feature of education and training in the country.

The situation is different in the quality and relevance dimension (Dimension B.1), where young female learners are more likely than their adult peers and more likely than young male learners to possess key competences and labour market-relevant skills.

FIGURE 7. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF FEMALE LEARNERS IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, MOLDOVA (2023)



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

It should be noted though, that the evidence of better employability of female VET graduates is influenced also by their readiness to accept lower-paid jobs when compared to males. While adult females find it more challenging to connect with the labour market system and young males may find it more attractive to find new opportunities abroad, young females may be able to better adjust to the labour market needs and offer more flexibility for them to succeed. This means that employability may not be the most reliable of proxies for the quality of education and training received by this group of learners in VET.

2.3.2 Disadvantaged learners

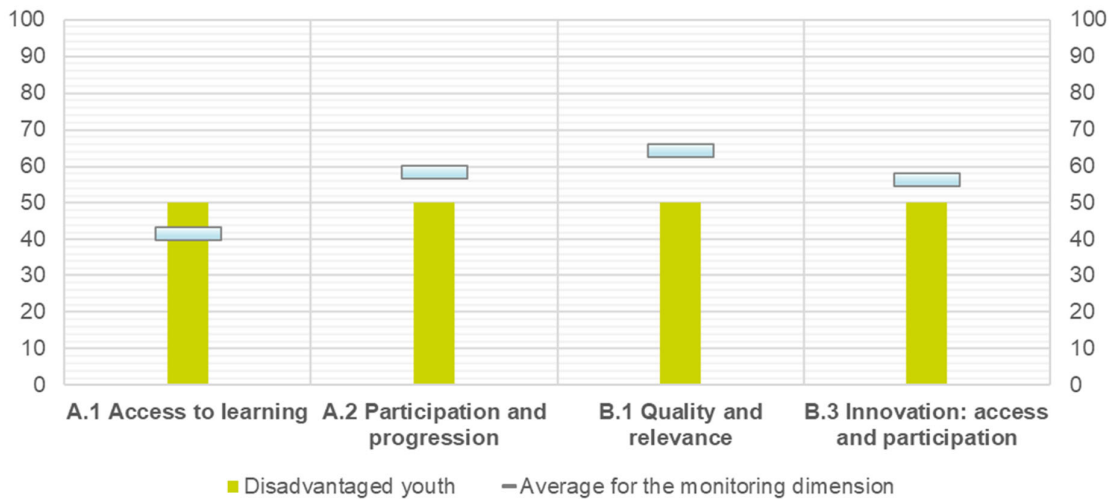
This section describes how well the VET system caters for the needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged youth when it comes to access, participation, and quality/relevance of opportunities for lifelong learning through VET. The section also examines whether efforts to promote innovation in VET access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

The monitoring results show that VET attracts vulnerable groups of learners, which is in line with the introduction of numerous policies and active measures (i.e., scholarships, meal vouchers, etc.)¹⁷ in support of their enrolment in VET (Outcome A.1). Once in the VET system, however, this group of learners faces more difficulties than other learners to progress to subsequent stages of VET and to graduating successfully (Outcome A.2), and there is also a higher probability for disadvantaged

¹⁷ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova.

students to drop out or repeat a year. They are also less likely to reap the benefits of VET training in terms of quality and relevance (Dimension B.1) than their peers who are not from disadvantaged backgrounds.

FIGURE 8. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, MOLDOVA (2023)



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The gap in performance in this dimension is sizeable in terms of performance score (SPI of 50 for the learner group versus an SPI of 63 for other learners on average), but its real-life impact is likely even bigger, as not less than 40% of VET students in Moldova are categorised as coming from vulnerable or disadvantages backgrounds.¹⁸

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

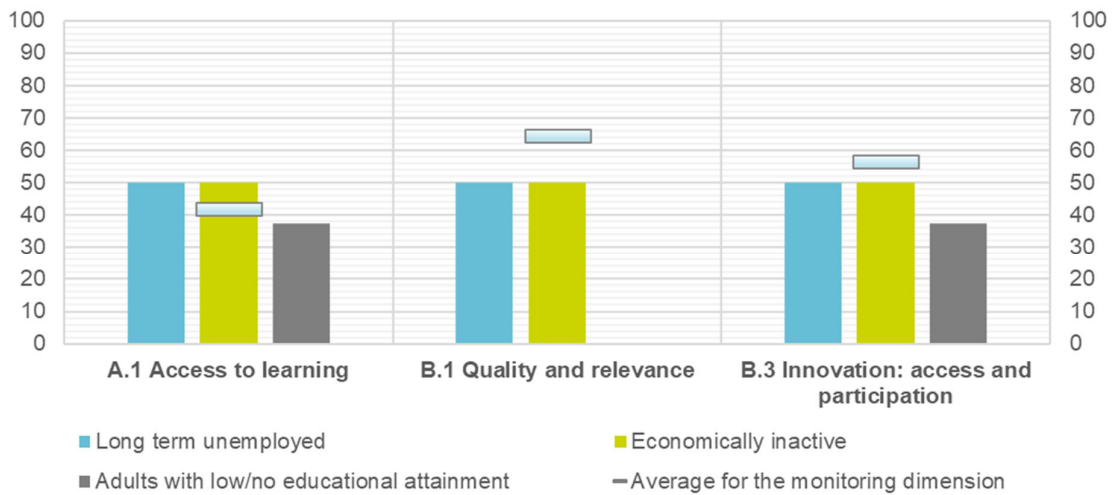
Section 2.3.3 presents findings about VET system performance from the perspective of three strategically important groups of adults: the long-term unemployed, the economically inactive adults, and those with low or no educational attainment. The selection of monitoring dimensions is narrower than the selection discussed in the previous sections, partly because some of these dimensions are not applicable and partly because of missing data.

VET system performance varies between these three groups of adult learners, especially when it comes to access and attractiveness of learning opportunities. While there is a barrage of rather successfully operating measures in support of the long-term unemployed, adults who are without education or with low level of education have considerably less incentive and opportunity to re-engage and participate in learning, as reflected in the lower performance score of the VET system with this

¹⁸ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova.

outcome (A.1) and learner group, and as described in the evidence provided by national authorities.¹⁹ On the other hand, VET performance in support of economically inactive populations is even lower and hampered by the lack of evidence about members of this learner group – their needs and situation and the degree to which they participate in adult education.²⁰

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The VET system delivers less-than-average results also in the domain of quality and relevance of adult education for these groups of learners (Outcome B.1), and they are also not as much in focus of its innovation potential in support of access to and participation in lifelong learning (Outcome B.3).

2.3.4 Learners by country of origin

The final section in a typical Torino Process monitoring report for a country discusses performance in the domains of access, participation, quality and relevance, and innovation for learners who are first-generation migrants.

According to information received by national authorities, the percentage of learners in VET with migrant background in Moldova is negligible and thus, they are not in focus of evidence collection and there are no specific measures regarding access, participation, quality or innovation for first generation migrants. Therefore, this monitoring report does not discuss VET system performance vis-à-vis this group of learners.

¹⁹ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Moldova

²⁰ Ibid.

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 Moldova and the qualitative responses of stakeholders where such indicators were missing.

The full collection of quantitative indicators collected for Moldova for this 2023 round of monitoring can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CHdMZ6v9MHUZ6n0G6F52k5lo0VPQZgpU/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true>

The full collection of qualitative responses to the country-specific questionnaire for Moldova can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CczYljpzknLalkDGQQhviSf8bMRaBCKw/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true>

A full technical report about the monitoring framework and process in 2023 can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FNwIKtlhp4y-Hx02AiFtwJLM8ubQQ7PK/view?usp=sharing>.²¹

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>.²²

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.

²¹ Release date for the report is 1 July 2023 upon completion of monitoring for all participating countries.

²² 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.

- **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.
- **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. 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.