

TORINO PROCESS SYSTEM MONITORING REPORT: MONTENEGRO (2023)



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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 Montenegro under the overall coordination of Ms Zora Bogićević and in cooperation with Mr. Marko Vukašinović and Mr Rajko Kosović.

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:** In Montenegro, initial VET programmes are highly attractive and accessible, supported by a strong regulatory framework. Despite their accessibility, continuing VET programmes require enhancements to be competitive. The majority of these programmes are available only in central, urban locations, which may hamper accessibility. In addition, accessibility of CVET also depends on whether adult education providers wish to obtain a licence for implementation of the programs. The commitment of Montenegro to lifelong learning is commendable, but the system can become more flexible to allow learners to navigate between formal and non-formal learning. However, progress and success within the VET system fall short of international averages. Notably, three-year secondary education sees lower survival rates compared to four-year courses, indicating a risk of dropouts. Therefore, a more nuanced approach is necessary to meet evolving learner needs and reduce dropout rates.
- **Quality and relevance:** In Montenegro's VET system, learners acquire useful skills but face challenges in basic ones like math, science, and reading, notably in three-year vocational programs. Adult education stands out with above-average competences, despite a substantial portion of adults still missing basic skills, affecting their employability. The system has implemented practical training and exhibits significant learner employability, but stronger links between learning and work are needed. Strong career guidance exists, yet there's need for further investment, and a gap in practical experience for graduates. The integration of green skills is commendable, but digital skills enhancement is essential. Despite these issues, the VET system displays flexibility to labour market trends and socio-economic changes.
- **Excellence and innovation:** Montenegro's VET system demonstrates certain degree of excellence in pedagogy and professional development, with room for enhancement, particularly in digital skills. Excellence in programme content and implementation is slightly below international averages, pointing towards a need for innovative realignment of curriculum with societal needs and improved course organization. The country lags behind in excellence in governance and provider management, indicating a critical need for system-wide improvements in leadership, financing, and practice implementation. Systemic innovation, in terms of access to lifelong learning opportunities, is below the international average, highlighting a need for inventive strategies to expand such opportunities. The system's innovation in supporting participation and graduation in lifelong learning is close to that of other countries.
- **System management and organisation:** Montenegro's VET system performance is uneven across different domains. The professional capacity of staff in leadership positions is an area in need of attention, just like ensuring adequate material resources for initial and continuing VET. Despite mandatory training for school leaders, their systematic continuous professional development is absent. Efforts are underway to improve infrastructure and material resources in VET schools. The system is highly accountable and offers transparency to stakeholders, exceeding international averages, but stakeholder cooperation is sub-optimal, suggesting a need for stronger collaboration. Data availability is substantial and closely aligns with international norms, but there are gaps in tracking VET outcomes and adult skills. Montenegro's VET system fares well in terms of internationalisation and the allocation of human and financial resources is promising. However, there is room for better distribution and more efficient allocation of public spending, and for improving the status of teachers.
- **Quality and reliability of monitoring evidence:** The monitoring results of Montenegro are somewhat more internationally comparable than those of other countries, on average, but they are also more susceptible to bias in international comparison. Montenegro also tends to self-assess the performance of its VET system more critically than other countries, on average.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Focus and scope of monitoring

This report summarises the results of monitoring VET system performance in Montenegro, 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 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 learners (Section 2.3). The report also provides an international average score⁵ for these results for

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 evidence is missing, the number of SPIs for a country can be lower.

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.

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 Montenegro and the Torino Process monitoring framework and methodology can be found in this document's third and final section.

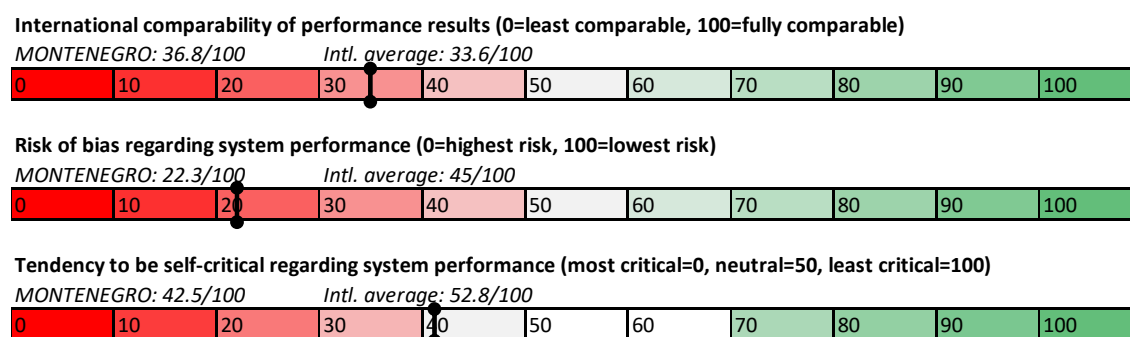
1.2 Comparability and reliability of monitoring data

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 Montenegro 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 keeping accurate records about the availability, origin and type of evidence used to calculate the 82 performance indices and corresponding results for each country, including Montenegro.

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

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



2. MONITORING RESULTS: MONTENEGRO

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

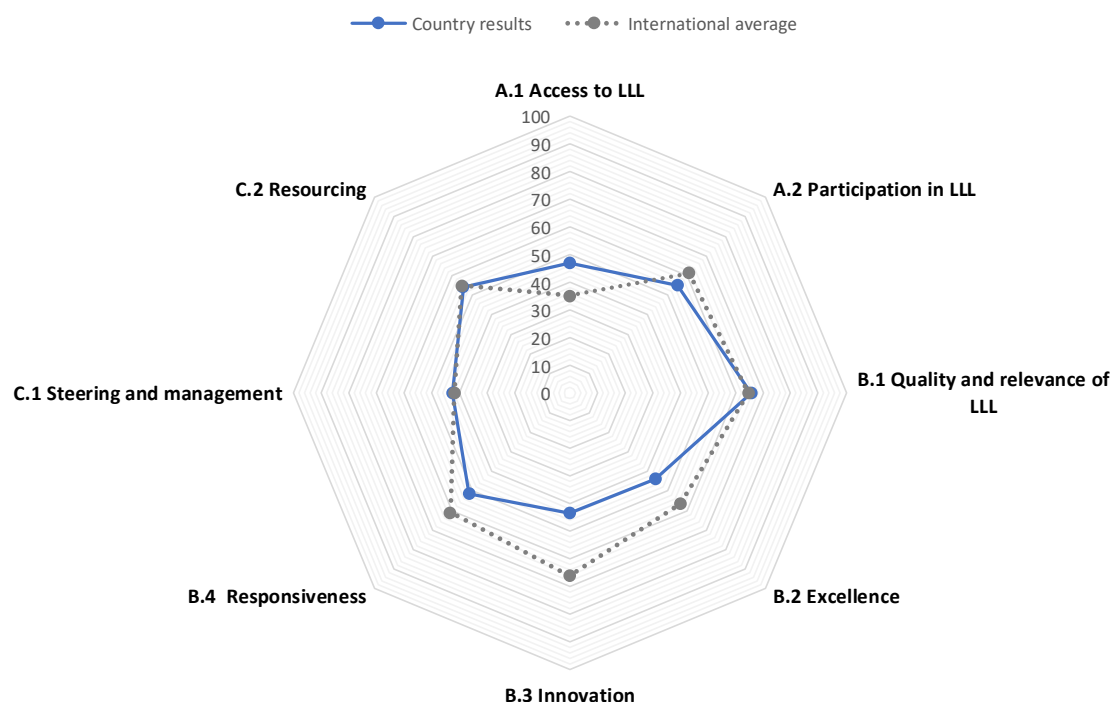
No.	Dimension	Description
A.1	Access to learning	This dimension captures the degree to which initial VET (IVET), continuing VET (CVET), and other adult learning opportunities to which VET could contribute, are accessible and attractive for learners irrespective of who they are and why they wish to engage in learning.
A.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.
B.1	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.
B.2	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.
B.3	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.
B.4	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.
C.1	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.
C.2	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 Montenegro in the eight dimensions of monitoring and system performance.

The findings suggest that in terms of overall performance, lifelong learners in the country are likely to benefit from education and training of quality, relevance, and resourcing that are on par with other countries participating in the Torino Process, and where students have relatively good opportunities to successfully complete their education and training, continue to higher levels of education, or move to parallel tracks of education. The system has challenges regarding excellence in teaching and learning, and in offering innovative practical solutions and policies to learners. The system is

somewhat responsive to the needs of the labour market, and the management and steering of the system remains as well close to the average value.

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



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

Source: [Torino Process monitoring database](#)

Despite being accessible, VET remains an option with limited attractiveness for prospective learners. With an SPI of 47, system performance in the domain of access to lifelong learning (Dimension A.1) is only average. This is despite the fact that the system delivers on par with the results of other countries regarding quality of VET provision and capacity to provide skills of labour market relevance (dimension B.1).

VET seems to respond to the needs of the changing needs of society and the economy, although to a lesser extent than VET in other countries. Similar to other countries participating in Torino Process, the system is relatively resourced in terms of financial, human and material assets. The SPI value remains at 54, close to the international value (56). Staff and material shortages seem not to affect VET in Montenegro to a large extent.

Learners who manage to join a learning opportunity through VET are not guaranteed to also participate in that learning successfully, or to transition to other learning opportunities. Participation in

⁶ The Torino Process makes a distinction between theoretical (full) 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. The international average, on the other hand, is calculated using the full range of the index.

VET (Dimension A.2), understood as the likelihood of learners in VET to progress to other levels and pathways in education and to graduate successfully, underperforms other countries participating in Torino Process.

There are important systemic weaknesses when it comes to excellence and innovation dimensions (B.2 and B.3) and the responsiveness of VET to external developments (B.4). The SPI values in these dimensions are below the average for other countries participating in the Torino Process. System performance regarding the quality of leadership of VET providers, the management of institutions, and the overall steering of the system on different levels of governance, although on par with that of other countries, is relatively low (SPI of only 42).

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

VET performance in Montenegro 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 monitoring dimensions presented in Section 2.1 – access/attractiveness and participation, with six system outcomes (Table 2).

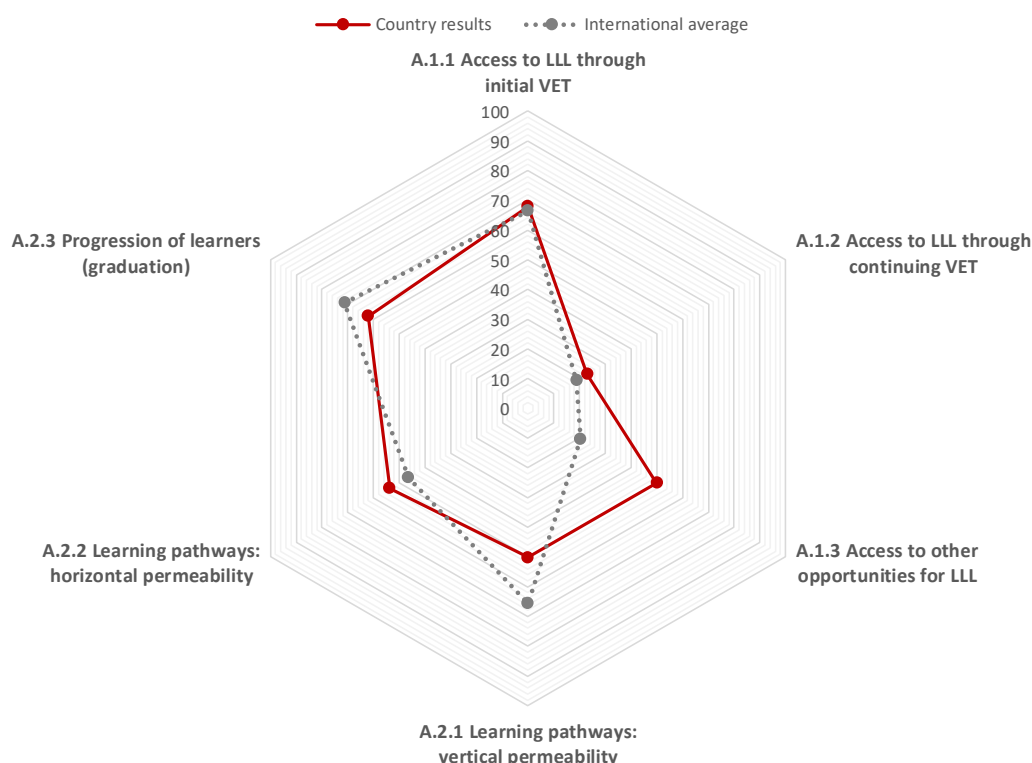
**TABLE 2. POLICY AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES INCLUDED UNDER MONITORING
AREA A: ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION**

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

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:

The previous section noted that access to VET is an area of weaker performance in Montenegro. Once this finding is disaggregated further, it becomes clear that the issue is rather with continuing VET than with initial VET. Initial VET programmes in Montenegro (Outcome A.1.1, SPI of 68) hold substantial appeal, on par with those of other countries participating in the Torino Process, on average. Serving as a popular choice for secondary students, initial VET stands as a competitive and accessible educational pathway. According to national authorities, the robustness of IVET's appeal and accessibility is supported by a well-regulated framework where various institutions, upon meeting the prescribed conditions and obtaining the license for work, can provide adult education.⁷

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

In contrast, continuing VET programmes (Outcome A.1.2, SPI of 23), while performing slightly above the international average in terms of access and attractiveness, require further enhancement to compete effectively with other skills development options in the country. Out of the 115 licensed

⁷ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

providers of adult education recognized by the Ministry of Education, the majority are private institutions, followed by secondary and primary education institutions and several higher education institutions. The geographical distribution of these providers, however, is uneven, with the majority located in the central region of Montenegro, which affects the accessibility of CVET programmes in other parts of the country.⁸

Like in other countries, the commitment of Montenegro to lifelong learning goes beyond traditional VET programmes and encompasses other training options provided in the framework of active labour market policies (ALMPs). The efforts in this domain are notable (Outcome A.1.3, SPI of 50) and are delivering above-average performance compared to other countries. These include the implementation of various adult education programmes since 2017 to develop national professional qualifications, key competences, and skills across various fields, delivered by licensed adult education providers.⁹

In terms of system flexibility (Outcomes A.2.1 and A.2.2), the current system design presents opportunities to make the learning environment even more adaptable in terms of vertical and horizontal transitions. National authorities report of efforts in this respect, for instance through a diverse array of programmes ranging from language courses and digital literacy programmes to professional qualification training.¹⁰

The prospects of learners in VET to progress and succeed within the VET system (Outcome A.2.3, SPI of 62) are better than in many countries participating in the Torino Process, but still below the international average of 71. One particular concern lies in the survival rates for secondary education, especially for three-year secondary education, which are lower than those for primary education. This suggests that more than one-tenth of the enrolled students do not complete this stage. However, the situation is slightly better for four-year secondary education, where survival rates have been between 93% to 94% in recent years.¹¹

While the VET system does aid learners in completing their chosen pathways and transitioning to employment or further education, there may be specific areas and groups of learners that need more attention. This includes the identified risk of dropouts and the challenges faced by three-year course students, who exhibit higher repetition rates than their four-year course counterparts.¹² As learner needs and preferences evolve, there is a need for a more nuanced approach in delivering and promoting VET and adult education programmes.

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

In the first part of Area B (Quality and relevance of LLL outcomes), the Torino Process follows another two of the dimensions presented in Section 2.1, namely quality/relevance and responsiveness of VET, with 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, the monitoring records the responsiveness of the VET

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

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

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 Montenegro demonstrates a notable effort in providing young learners with the necessary skills and competences to thrive in the contemporary economy (Outcome B.1.1, SPI of 51). Though the delivery of quality skills and competences through VET is mid-range and thus has room for improvement, it surpasses the international average, highlighting an area of relative strength within the context of international performance.

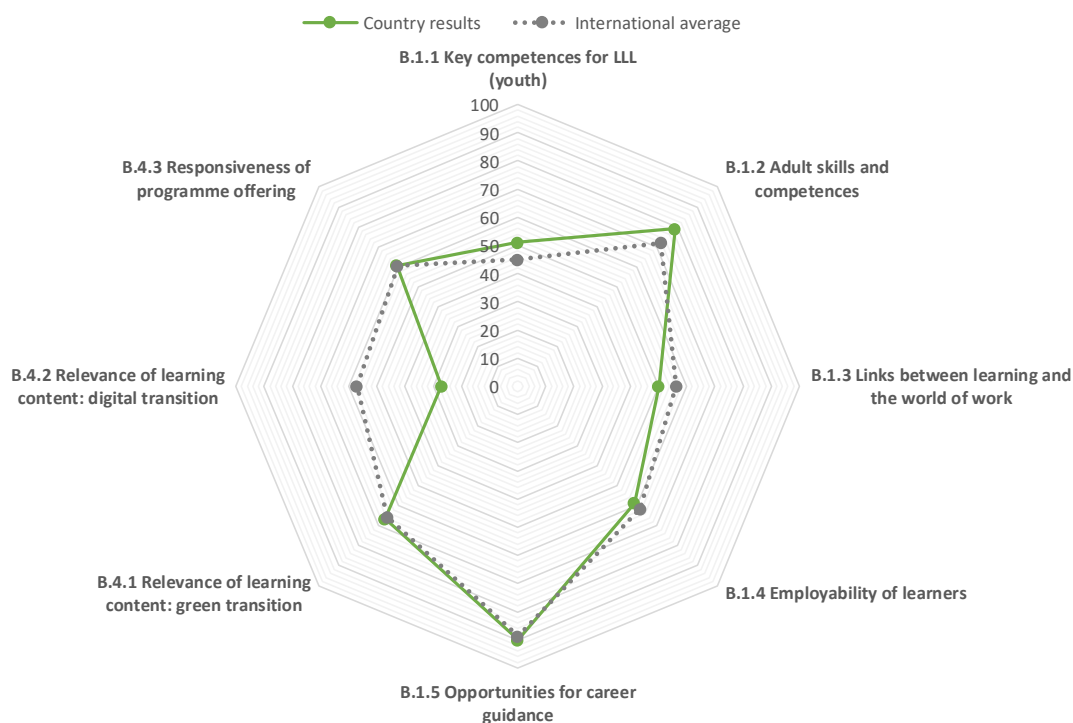
The mid-range performance regarding quality hints at the presence of certain challenges. For instance, a substantial proportion of Montenegrin students are non-proficient in basic skills, such as mathematics, science, and reading. The issue is particularly acute among students in three-year vocational programmes. As such, these students require further opportunities during their secondary education to develop key competencies. In this light, several key competences, especially those concerning basic skills such as mother tongue, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and computer literacy, have been integral parts of the secondary VET curriculum in Montenegro, with a clear emphasis on developing new curricula that further strengthens these competences.¹³

The skills and competences of adult learners on the other hand (Outcome B.1.2, SPI of 79) stands out as a domain of stronger performance, where Montenegro scores considerably above the international average. This reflects a commendable emphasis on adult education and lifelong learning within the Montenegro's VET system. However, it is important to note that national authorities report of various surveys and studies which indicate that a sizeable share of adults in the country still lack

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

basic skills, affecting their employability and ability to contribute to innovative sectors of the economy.¹⁴

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

While there's a need for improvement in establishing more effective links between learning and the world of work (Outcome B.1.3, SPI of 50), the VET system in Montenegro has shown a level of effectiveness in this regard that closely matches the international average. Still, performance is only mid-range, which in turn presents an opportunity for further development to reinforce the presence of work-based learning components within VET programmes and better align learning opportunities with labour market needs.

National authorities report that, to bridge the remaining gaps, Montenegro has implemented practical training as part of its VET curriculum, combining school-based and workplace-based training. The curriculum also outlines the time allocated to vocational practice, though finding enough suitable workplace partners remains a challenge. In addition, an evaluation commissioned by the government recommended stronger involvement and financial incentives for the business sector, and adequate payment and working conditions for students, as key steps towards enhancing the quality and relevance of VET programmes. Work-based learning is most prevalent in three-year dual education

¹⁴ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

programmes, and their implementation shows promising results. Almost 60% of students in these programmes find employment after graduation, according to official information.¹⁵

The employability of learners, particularly within the sphere of lifelong learning and VET (Outcome B.1.4, SPI of 59), is an area where Montenegro is achieving outcomes closer to the average of other countries in the Torino Process. This achievement, however, is tempered by the fact that there's no comprehensive system to monitor the employability of VET graduates and their transitions, which remains a critical area of focus for the future.¹⁶

Like in other countries, career guidance opportunities are an area of strength (Outcome B.1.5, SPI of 90). The availability of up-to-date and timely information about professions and educational programmes allows learners to make informed decisions regarding their educational and career paths. However, challenges persist, such as the need for further investment, and the lack of practical experience among graduates from vocational and higher education, a key area of dissatisfaction among employers, and an issue that has not seen significant progress due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷

In terms of the long-term perspective, VET in Montenegro shows promising results in addressing longer-term strategic developments and needs. The Strategy of VET Development 2020-24, initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2019, aims to improve skills and competences for employability, lifelong learning, inclusivity, and the development of active citizenship. While it speaks of the green economy, skills, and jobs, it remains somewhat general without specific actions and activities envisaged. This strategy highlights the importance of education for sustainable development, climate change awareness, environmental protection, and green jobs in traditional and emerging sectors.¹⁸

While the incorporation of green skills and climate change awareness into the curricula is better than the average of other countries participating in the Torino Process (Outcome B.4.1, SPI of 67), the National Implementation Plan (NIP) until 2025 adds concrete steps towards greening VET programmes. These include the review and design of qualifications in clean energy production, guidelines on greening VET by sector or based on occupation, and transforming VET schools into green schools. There are a few educational programmes entirely designed for green transition – e.g., Environment Protection Technician, while other programmes integrate green transition skills as separate modules, parts of a module or an educational programme.¹⁹

Data from PISA 2018 indicates that about one-third of students in Montenegro are environmentally enthusiastic, with these students outperforming their less interested peers in science by 80 points on average. These results are after accounting for student socio-economic status, indicating the positive effect of environmental enthusiasm on learning outcomes. CVET programmes, on the other hand, appear to be lacking, with only a handful of programmes such as the Insulator, Heating and air-conditioning installer, and Agriculture-related programmes, which could have potential linkages to the green economy. These programs' content would need further analysis to confirm their alignment with green transition goals.²⁰

¹⁵ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

There is also a substantial need for enhancement in the integration of digital skills. The capacity of VET in Montenegro to equip learners with digital skills requires significant improvement (Outcome B.4.2, SPI of 27), highlighting an essential area for strategic focus given the increasing importance of these skills in the digital age. The VET system, however, shows a commendable level of responsiveness to labour market needs and socio-economic developments (Outcome B.4.3, SPI of 61). With a performance on par with the international average, it demonstrates a certain degree of adaptability and alignment with current employment trends and needs.

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 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

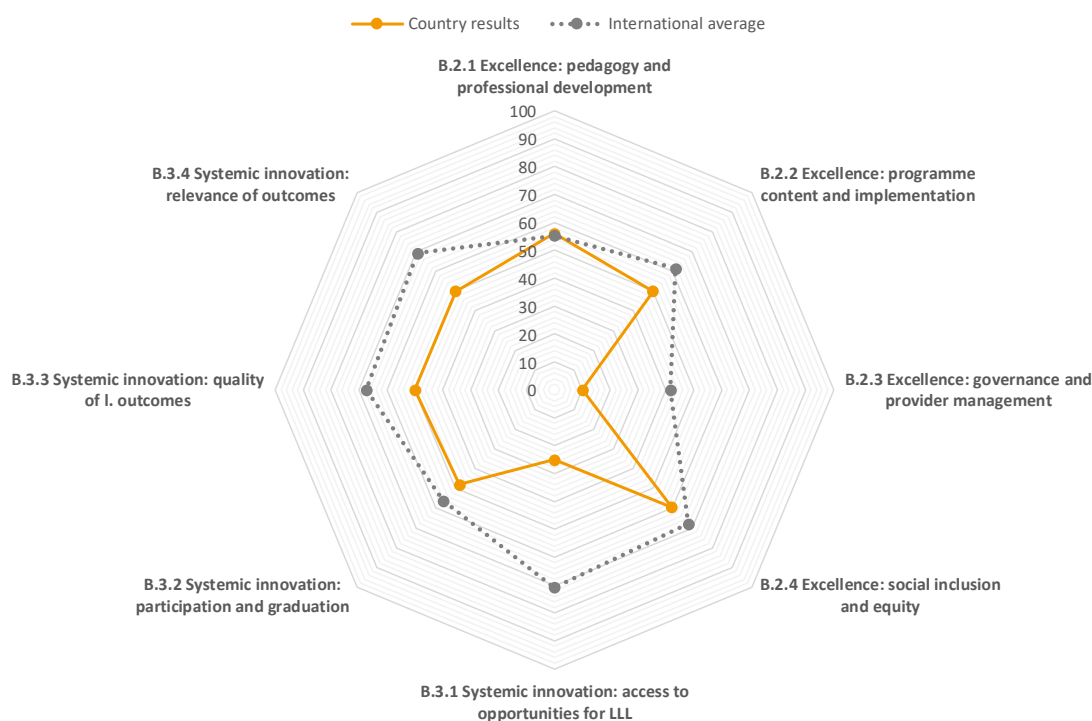
The Torino Process defines excellence as the presence of system-wide policies and measures that promote highest quality practices and results in a selection of key domains of policy and system delivery in VET. The focus is on the measures of excellence in pedagogy and professional development, excellence in programme content and implementation, excellence in governance and provider management, and excellence in social inclusion and equity.

In the domain of excellence in pedagogy and professional development (Outcome B.2.1, SPI of 56), VET in Montenegro aligns closely with the average for other countries in the Torino Process (SPI of 55). This indicates the effective implementation of policies that promote teaching and training excellence across the VET system. For instance, a new catalogue with professional development programmes is available for VET teachers, and the VET Centre, together with 220 education

programme coordinators, identified topics and priorities for updating VET programme in 2021 and 2022.²¹

While this performance is commendable, the score is only mid-range, which indicates that there is substantial potential for further enhancements to fully realise teaching and training excellence across the system. Further enhancements could realize teaching and training excellence across the system, including the further development of teachers' digital skills, which has been identified as a key area for growth.

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

In striving for excellence in programme content and implementation (Outcome B.2.2, SPI of 50), Montenegro's performance is slightly below the international average (SPI of 61). To boost high-quality policies and practices in this domain, the alignment of curriculum to mirror evolving industry trends and societal needs, refining the organization and timing of courses, and tailoring assessment methodologies to reflect stakeholder expectations, are all suggested improvements. For instance, Montenegro is planning to introduce greening in curricula and teaching as part of the 2022-23 Action Plan of the National VET Strategy. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that entrepreneurial competences have been integrated into the new key competence framework that covers the whole education sector.²²

²¹ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

²² Ibid.

Excellence in governance and provider management (Outcome B.2.3, SPI of 10) is an area where Montenegro significantly lags behind the international average (SPI of 42), pointing to a critical need for focused improvement. This result indicates challenges in promoting and achieving excellence in crucial areas such as financing, leadership, and governance within the VET system. The low score also suggests that high-quality practices in these domains, although present, may not yet be systematically implemented across the VET system in Montenegro.

Nevertheless, in promoting social inclusion and equity (Outcome B.2.4, SPI of 60), Montenegro shows encouraging signs, despite still being below the international average (SPI of 68). This suggests a commitment to enhancing inclusivity and equity throughout the VET system, but also that the systemic adoption and effectiveness of policies and practices in this domain of monitoring could still be enhanced.

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.

In the domain of systemic innovation, particularly in enabling access to lifelong learning opportunities (Outcome B.3.1, SPI of 25), the performance of VET in Montenegro lags considerably behind the international average (SPI of 69). This illustrates a need for exploring and adopting more innovative strategies and practices to expand lifelong learning opportunities and their attractiveness for learners, in addition to promising initiatives such as the Entrepreneurial Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020-2024.

Meanwhile, in terms of supporting participation and graduation in lifelong learning (Outcome B.3.2, SPI of 48), VET innovation in Montenegro is closer to the international average (SPI of 54). This suggests that while innovative measures are being applied to foster participation and support graduation, here too there is room for better results.

When looking at how innovative the VET system is in raising the quality of learning (Outcome B.3.3, SPI 50) and how relevant this learning is for work (Outcome B.3.4, SPI 50), Montenegro has scores somewhat lower than the average for other countries (SPIs of 63 and 68, respectively). This indicates the potential for more innovative and forward-thinking strategies to enhance the quality of learning outcomes and their connection with labour market needs.

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

In comparison with other countries participating in the Torino Process, VET in Montenegro presents an uneven performance across several of these domains. Particularly, the system struggles with two outcomes: the professional capacity of staff in leadership positions (Outcome C.1.4, SPI of 25) and the adequacy of the material base in initial and continuing VET (Outcome C.2.3, SPI of 19). These scores fall below the international averages (SPIs of 37 and 41, respectively) suggesting that in Montenegro, there are more pronounced challenges in these areas.

According to information provided by national authorities, the selection process for leadership positions in VET schools in Montenegro does not currently require previous leadership or management experience. Instead, a successful applicant must meet conditions prescribed for teachers or professional associates such as school counsellors, psychologists, or special education teachers, have a license to work at educational institutions, and have at least seven years of teaching experience. Once appointed, heads of VET schools are obliged to complete an adequate type of training and professional development organized by the Bureau for Education Services and Centre for Vocational Education. However, despite the availability of this training, there are no organized and systematic Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities for school leaders once they have completed this course. This lack of leadership qualification and training opportunities, combined with recent political appointments that led to the replacement of a majority of school heads, highlight the challenges facing Montenegro in boosting the professional capacity of staff in leadership positions.²³

To address the shortcomings concerning the material base in IVET and CVET (Outcome C.2.3), Montenegro's VET Strategy 2020-24 includes measure 3.5 for the improvement of infrastructural and material conditions in schools, with activities ranging from the reconstruction of 10 buildings for VET secondary schools, to the procurement of necessary classroom furniture and computer equipment.²⁴

²³ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

²⁴ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

The successful implementation of the measure is critical to ensure that all VET schools are adequately equipped to support the evolving needs of their students.

Despite these challenges, Montenegro's VET system has shown commendable commitment to accountability and the provision of access to evidence to stakeholders (Outcome C.1.3, SPI of 78), surpassing the international average (SPI 62). This implies that the VET system, in general, operates transparently and stakeholders are well-informed about the workings and performance of the system. Educational institutions perform both internal self-evaluations and external assessments, following a specific methodology designed by the Bureau for Educational Services and the VET Centre. Self-evaluation, performed annually for individual areas and biennially in total, helps teachers identify their strengths, weaknesses and set developmental goals. Institutions prepare biennial internal assessment reports, submitted to the Bureau for Education Services.

Externally, the Bureau and VET Centre conduct evaluations at least every four years. The Centre for Vocational Education has also established robust monitoring and evaluation systems for Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET), including learner and employer feedback. Additionally, the 2023 Annual Plan of Adult Education emphasizes quality assurance in adult education, promoting activities such as self-evaluation, program evaluation, participant follow-up, online counselling for employees, and professional training for policy implementers.²⁵

However, it's worth noting that while mechanisms for stakeholder participation exist, the effectiveness of cooperation between different stakeholder groups leaves room for improvement (Outcome C.1.2, SPI of 50, which is below the international average of SPI of 58). This situation creates an impression of a fragmented system which could potentially undermine what is generally accepted as a shared goal among all stakeholders involved in VET: ensuring high-quality education and training for all. Engagement with the world of work is accomplished primarily through the Chamber of Economy and Employers Federation of Montenegro. Furthermore, a consultation process actively involves various stakeholders in policy formulation related to initial and continuing VET, visible in VET governance mechanisms, educational councils, and working groups tasked with designing occupational standards, VET strategies, and action plans.²⁶

Despite clear mandates for all involved institutions, cooperation is often sub-optimal, contributing to the perceived fragmentation. To overcome this, the VET Strategy 2020-24 suggests promoting active participation and shared responsibilities among social partners, fostering local partnerships, and enabling employer-led financing of dual education.²⁷

When considering the domain of data availability (Outcome C.1.1), Montenegro aligns closely with the average performance observed in other countries participating in the Torino Process. The country has access to abundant international data through institutions like ETF, World Bank, EUROSTAT, UNICEF, OECD, and results from assessments such as PISA and TIMSS conducted by the Examination Centre. These data are essential for policy-making in support of VET. Montenegro also committed to using EQAVET indicators, specifically designed for the VET system, and is preparing for the PIRLS by IEA.²⁸

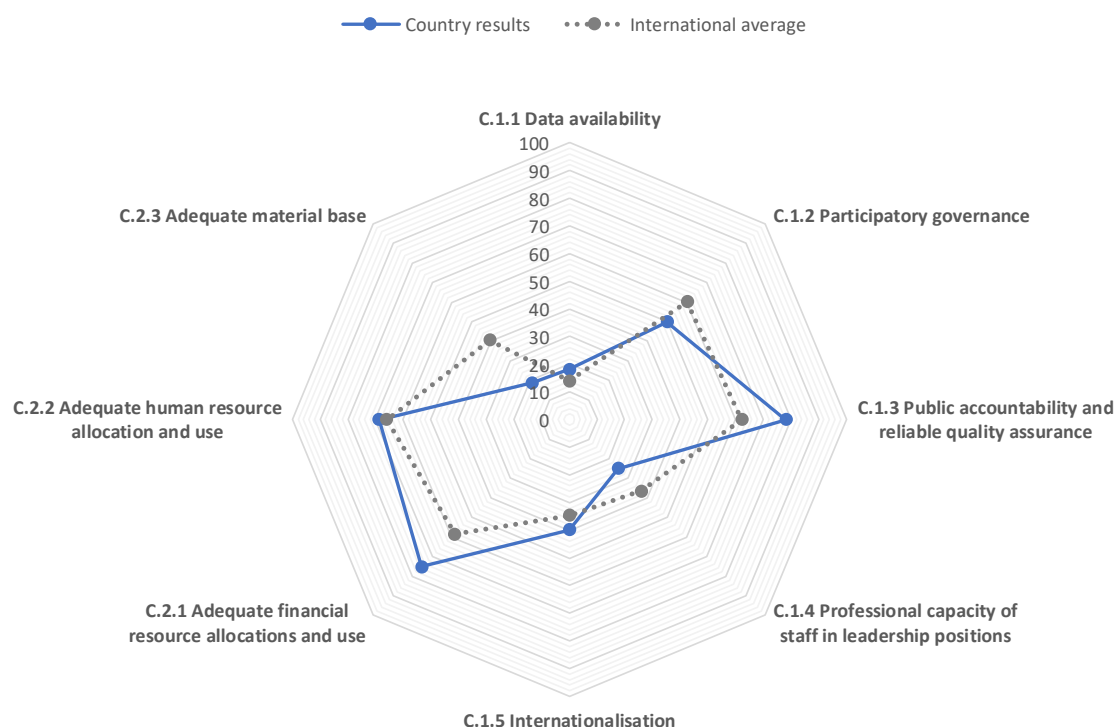
²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Despite established systems monitoring education and labour market data, gaps remain, particularly regarding transition tracking from initial VET to employment and data on adult skills and competencies. The tracking of VET graduate outcomes remains deficient for both IVET and CVET. The Ministry of Education, with ILO's support, has initiated a VET graduate tracking system to address this issue. Furthermore, data on training and CPD activities in companies and enterprises is lacking.²⁹ In general, both international and national data on VET in Montenegro are substantial, yet questions remain on how effectively this data informs decisions, such as enrolment policies aligning with labour market needs.

On a more positive note, Montenegro scores better than other countries, on average, in the area of internationalisation in IVET and CVET (Outcome C.1.5, SPI of 40). This is demonstrated in strategic documents for education where internationalisation is considered a key condition for development, particularly with mobility being its most representative segment. This generally refers to mobility of pupils and students, mobility of teaching staff, as well as improvements of curricula and instruction in foreign languages.

²⁹ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

In this context, national authorities draw attention to the Strategy for Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro 2020-2024. The Strategy emphasizes the importance of schools being trained for the use of EU funds and encourages cooperation with neighbouring countries and Europe in the field of vocational education, for instance through initiatives like the “Regional Challenge Fund” of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), through ERASMUS + and the pilot IPA -Multi-Beneficiary Programme on mobility, and others. The Strategy specifically highlights the need to support the mobility of teachers and students and the promotion of language learning opportunities tailored to the specific needs of vocational education. It also mandates improving international cooperation in the field of vocational education, including the development of occupational standards in cooperation with regional agencies. According to official information, the most notable project implemented in this area is INTERVET WB, which facilitates the expansion of VET students' knowledge by connecting them with other VET students internationally.³⁰

In terms of adequate allocation and use of financial resources (Outcome C.2.1), Montenegro has a respectable SPI of 75, which is notably above the international SPI average of 58. On average, around 4.5% of GDP is allocated to the education sector. While it is beyond the scope of this report to evaluate the adequacy of this allocation, it is important to note that the figure may not capture all stakeholders' perceptions and experiences in the VET system. Also, the structure of the funding might be an issue as a majority of public spending on education is used to cover staff and administrative costs, leaving only a small portion available for improving and investing in education infrastructure.³¹

Montenegro has adequate performance also in the domain of human resource allocation and use (Outcome C.2.2, SPI of 69). This is particularly evident in the teaching profession, which according to official information is quite popular, despite challenges which Montenegro shares with other countries in the region, such as ageing staff, low reputation, etc. The current system requires VET teachers to accumulate 40 hours of accredited professional development activities in a five-year period in order to renew their teaching licenses.

The Strategy for Teacher Training in Montenegro (2017–24) sought to improve initial and continuing development for teachers. Several projects also aim at providing training for VET teachers, especially in the introduction of new curricula or innovative methods of planning and keeping records. However, adult education in Montenegro presents a different challenge. While there are numerous teaching experts, the number of those with initial andragogical knowledge from universities is low, indicating the need for more specialized training for teachers working in adult education.³²

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 Montenegro perform in a key selection of monitoring dimensions for the following key selection of learner groups:

³⁰ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

³¹ Ibid.

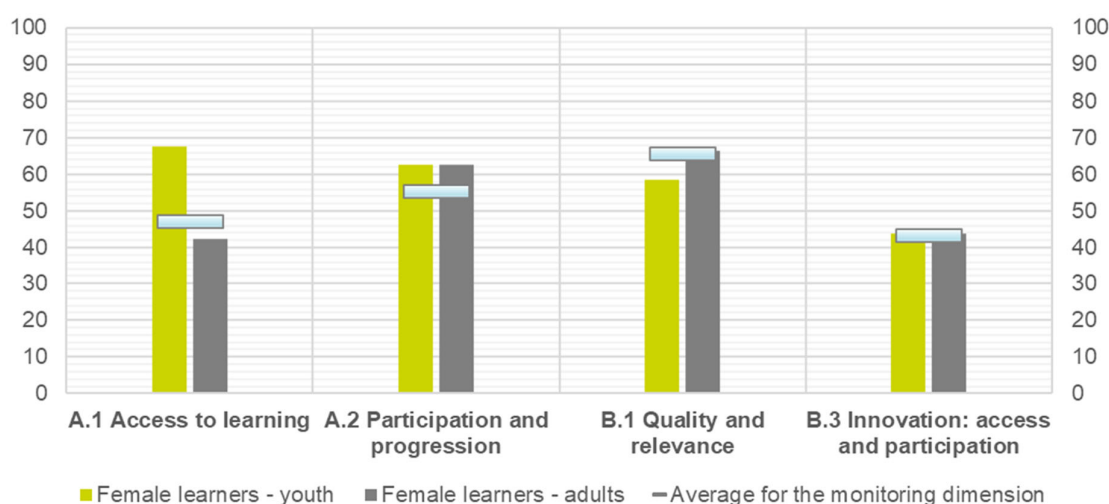
³² Ibid.

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 Montenegro.

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The monitoring results from Montenegro signal a strong commitment to gender equality across all of these dimensions. With initial VET, continuing VET, and other adult learning opportunities accessible irrespective of gender, the VET system in Montenegro ensures parity in access between young and adult females and other learners (Dimension A.1), especially young female learners. There is also no gender-based disadvantage when navigating through the VET system and transitioning between vocational and general education pathways (Dimension A.2), although male learners appear to be at somewhat greater risk of drop-out than their female peers. In fact, in the 2021/22 academic year, of the 662 students who left school, a majority were boys (74%), and most of them were expelled due to violation of school rules. In the meantime, university enrolment and graduation rates show a slight tilt towards women, with more female students from IVET enrolling into universities.³³

Montenegro's VET system upholds its commitment to gender equality also in the domain of innovation in access and participation (Dimension B.3), and in the domain of quality and relevance of education (Dimension B.1). The respective SPI of 66 in Dimension B.1 for adult women is on par with the average performance for this dimension, while the quality of learning of young female students in VET lags behind somewhat. Still, when it comes to key competences that are not specific to VET,

³³ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

such as functional literacy across reading, mathematics, and science as tested through OECD's PISA, girls significantly outperform boys.³⁴

Interestingly, while Montenegro's VET system is largely gender-neutral, the choice of educational pathways and professional qualifications reveals an influence of traditional gendered perspectives on occupations. Women gravitate more towards key competence acquisition programmes, such as foreign language and digital literacy courses, while men dominate in some traditionally male occupations, such as Security Guard. At the same time, female participation is significantly higher in fields traditionally considered female, like Accounting Technician and Teaching Assistant programmes.³⁵

It is noteworthy that, while VET in Montenegro largely succeeds in promoting gender equity across dimensions, the performance results are mid-range in all of them. This signals potential for system-wide enhancements: towards greater attractiveness and accessibility of VET and lifelong learning for all learners, irrespective of gender, age, or learning objectives; towards greater vertical and horizontal permeability; and towards better quality of key competences and skills. The monitoring data also suggest that the VET system could intensify efforts to adopt and disseminate innovative practices and policies aimed at fully engaging both young and adult women in learning, thus fostering even broader participation.

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 Montenegro.

The VET system of Montenegro demonstrates commitment to social inclusion, with strategies aimed at promoting accessible and equitable education for all learners, including policy initiatives such as the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro (2016-2020), with Roma being a group at particular risk and posing specific challenges in terms of access and participation. According to national authorities, these efforts are also evident in the University of Montenegro's approach to offering free bachelor and master studies since the academic years 2017/2018 and 2020/2021 respectively, making education more accessible to socio-economically disadvantaged youth.³⁶

Despite these initiatives, socio-economically disadvantaged youth face specific challenges within this system. These challenges are often exacerbated by factors outside the education system, such as the digital divide highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic when education shifted to online modes, requiring necessary devices and a stable internet connection.³⁷ These socio-economic constraints can result in significant performance disparities in terms of access to learning opportunities, participation and progression (Dimension A.2, SPI of 50), and the quality and relevance of education and training (Dimension B.1, SPI of 25), especially for Roma students.

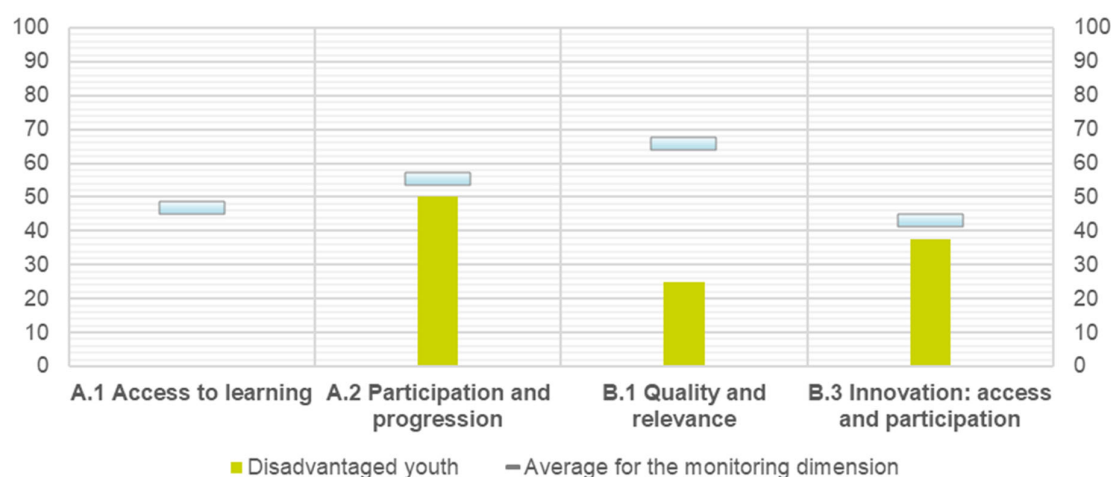
³⁴ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Particularly in the realm of quality and relevance of education, the SPI signals significant obstacles in the pathway from vocational education to the labour market for these learners. PISA 2018 results reveal that socio-economically advantaged students outperformed disadvantaged students in reading by 55 score points, although this gap is smaller than the OECD average. However, it's encouraging to note that 14% of disadvantaged students scored amongst the highest performers in reading within Montenegro.³⁸

Regarding innovative practices (Dimension B.3, SPI of 38), disadvantaged youth lag slightly behind the national average SPI of 43. This implies that while efforts are being made to enhance access, participation, and learning outcomes for this group, further systemic improvements are necessary. Initiatives such as the Activate! Program, which focuses on increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups in the labour market, are steps in the right direction,³⁹ but the targets set up until 2025 are modest and necessitate continued focus and commitment.

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.

about relevance of ALMPs for long term unemployed and excluded once and also the challenge to reach out.

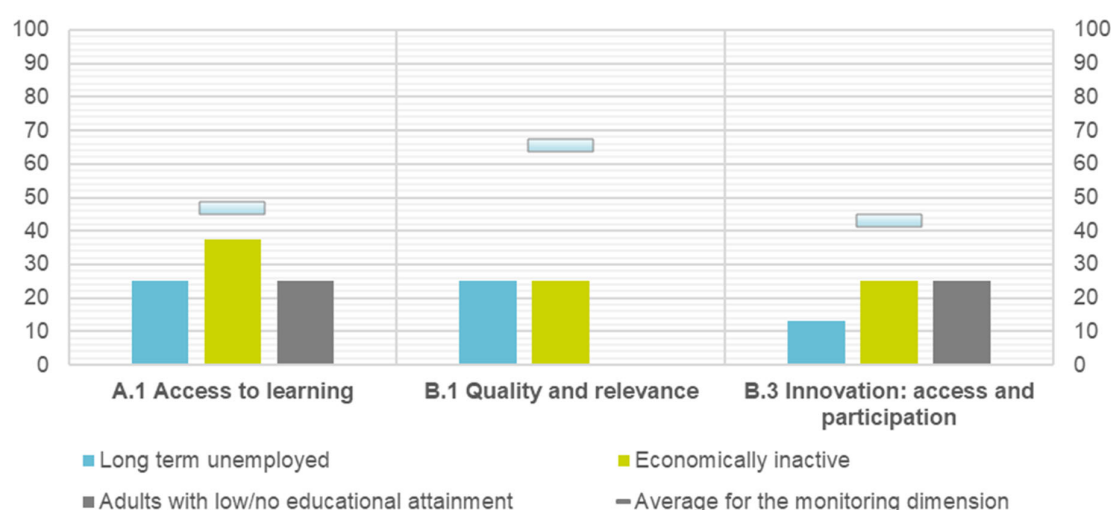
³⁸ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

³⁹ Ibid.

The Torino Process data reveals challenges in providing lifelong learning opportunities to vulnerable adult populations in Montenegro (Dimension A.1), with economically inactive segments suffering from the most significant disadvantage. Despite Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) organised by the Public Employment Service, many learning opportunities cater to those registered with the Employment Agency, leading to a gap in accessibility for economically inactive individuals.⁴⁰

According to official information, in 2023 the Employment Agency of Montenegro plans to implement active employment policy programs for 1,804 unemployed persons to increase their employability and employment. These programs will provide education and training for adults, including 670 unemployed persons through education and training programs, 300 unemployed persons with III and IV levels of education through training programs for self-employment, and another 300 through training programs for work at the employer. However, coverage of ALMPs is relatively low and few programs reach the most vulnerable, despite Montenegro having the highest rate of expenditure on active labour market policies in the Western Balkans.⁴¹

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The relevance of ALMPs for the long-term unemployed is also an issue. Long-term unemployed and economically inactive populations face significant challenges transitioning to the labour market, indicating an issue of quality and relevance in the CVET offer and the ALMPs (Dimension B.1). Furthermore, system performance indicators reveal a notable disparity in access and participation, which is insufficiently supported by the current landscape (Dimension B.3). The impending Youth Guarantee schemes targeting individuals under 30 may bridge some of these gaps, but these strategies do not target older adults.

⁴⁰ Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

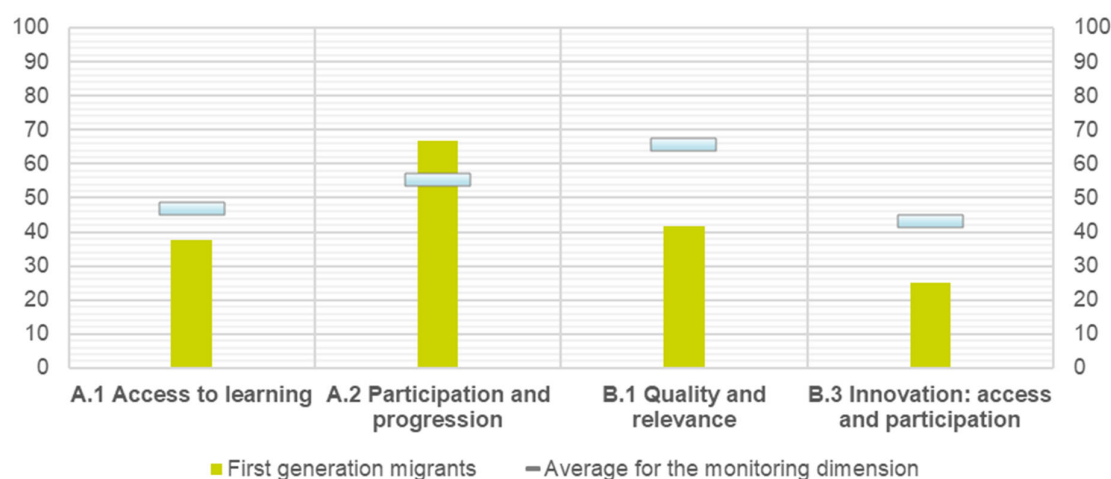
⁴¹ Ibid.

In terms of systemic innovation in access and participation, it seems the current landscape does not sufficiently support any of the groups in focus of this section, marking a notable disparity compared to the average learner (Dimension B.3, SPI of 13 for long-term unemployed, SPI of 25 for economically inactive and adults with low/no education, and the average SPI of 43). Although there isn't a pronounced bias against any of these groups, the system performance indicators reveal that there is considerable room for improvement for these specific learner categories, and for the population at large.

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 Montenegro for learners who are first-generation migrants.

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



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

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

In the context of VET, first-generation migrants present a unique set of challenges and opportunities, including an evident language barrier that poses difficulties for non-native speakers, particularly those who do not originate from neighbouring countries.⁴²

Despite evidence of participation in VET – with 41 foreign learners enrolled in 2022, mostly in foreign languages courses⁴³ – access to learning for migrant learners, while not significantly restricted, is somewhat limited compared to opportunities available to the average learner (Dimension A.1, SPI of 38 for migrants versus an average SPI of 47). While the system allows migrant learners to progress satisfactorily once they are enrolled, more can be done to make initial entry into the VET system more accessible and attractive, possibly through targeted language support initiatives.

⁴² Source: 2023 Torino Process self-assessment questionnaire of Montenegro.

⁴³ Ibid.

The quality and relevance of education provided to learners who are first generation migrants emerge as areas requiring particular attention. Even though being a migrant is not a barrier to accessing education in Montenegro, the VET system has room for improvement in ensuring these learners are adequately prepared for a successful transition into the world of work (Dimension B.1, SPI of 42 for migrants compared to an average SPI of 66).

Lastly, although Montenegro performs well in the domain of participation and progression (Dimension A.2), the capacity of the VET system to support migrant learners with innovative practices and policies that facilitate access to learning needs enhancement (Dimension B.3, SPI of 25 for migrants compared to an average SPI of 43). This may not be a major issue in the domain of participation and progression, where Montenegro performs well already, but it could be a factor hampering progress in promoting access to training opportunities for this group of learners in the country.

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

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

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Tgfn2XqBTs4JfUxo2dl_NK4J4H7o1uDf/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true

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

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Tggsmd6LeGzabQg5MdUR54xnHTkCDXE/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:⁴⁴
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FNwIKtlhp4y-Hx02AiFtwJLM8ubQQ7PK/view>

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>.⁴⁵

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.

⁴⁴ Release date for the report is 1 July 2023 upon completion of monitoring for all participating countries.

⁴⁵ 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.

- **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.
- **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.