

# **CENTRES OF VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE (COVES): PROCESSES AND PRACTICES**

Study of working processes and key practices of CoVEs for advancing autonomy and public-private partnerships

This report was prepared by Omnia Education Partnerships Ltd for the ETF.

The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of the ETF and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU institutions.

© European Training Foundation, 2024

Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report has been prepared by the ETF and coordinated by the ETF experts Floriana Folisi and Jose Manuel Galvin Arribas. The study, which examines the working processes and key practices for advancing the autonomy of CoVEs and public-private partnerships (PPPs), was carried out by a team of Omnia Education Partnerships Ltd., consisting of the following experts: Kateryna Furmanets, Anna Lager, Mervi Jansson, Antti Seitamaa and Laura Valojärvi. Peer reviewers: Stefan Thomas and Mounir Baati (ETF).

# CONTENTS

---

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	3
-----------------	---

---

CONTENTS	4
----------	---

---

1. POLICY BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY	5
---	---

---

2. METHODOLOGY	8
2.1 Key objectives	8
2.2 Research framework	8
2.3 Data collection: key criteria and processes	9

---

3. MAIN FINDINGS	11
3.1 Overview of legislation and autonomy of CoVEs in the selected countries	11
3.2 Results of the thematic analysis	14
3.3 CoVE cases	27
3.4 Summary of the findings	45

---

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND WAY FORWARD	46
4.1 PPPs to date: challenges, and lessons learned	46
4.2 Good practice and the way forward	49
4.3 Discussion summary	53

---

5. APPENDICES	55
5.1 Survey questionnaire	55
5.2 Interview questions	62
5.3 Interview clarification table	63
5.4 Table of the interviewees	64
5.5 Glossary	66
5.6 ACRONYMS	67
5.7 References	68

---

# 1. Policy background and rationale of the study

The report contains four sections. Section 1 provides the background and rationale of the study. An explanation of the methodological approach used to conduct the study is set out in section 2, and the results and lessons learned are presented in sections 3 and 4.

This follow-up study picks up where the ETF Network for Excellence (ENE) baseline study (ETF 2021) left off<sup>1</sup>. The latter pioneered an analysis of how centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs) implement their autonomous role in PPPs and of the specificities and benefits of CoVEs working together in PPPs for VET skills development by examining selected case studies from six ETF partner countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia and Türkiye) and two EU Member States (Finland and the Netherlands)<sup>2</sup>.

The ETF Network for Excellence (ENE) is essentially an international network of CoVEs and/or high-quality VET providers, each operating in a specific context. It has been inspired by European policy and practice and, led by initiatives in different EU countries, contributes to the international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme.

The ENE also responds to ETF's experience in working together with its partner countries (PCs) in a move towards VET excellence as a key driver to support VET and Lifelong Learning (LLL) in providing relevant skills for the international labour markets.

As such, the ENE is a unique international network of practitioners in the field of VET excellence. The main services provided by the network include the exchange of good practice between high quality VET institutions (peer-to-peer approaches), the joint development of new methodologies, tools, etc. and opportunities for partnership between the members<sup>3</sup>.

In contrast to the baseline study, which used data collected via a questionnaire to analyse whether and to what extent CoVEs have autonomy and how this can be linked to their experience of public-private partnerships, the current study uses interviews with experts and policymakers to critically examine how PPPs are being established in four selected ETF partner countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia and Türkiye. The country sample and analysis also include Spain, an EU Member State, which nominated CoVEs to be elected to the board of ETF's Network for Excellence (ENE).

The study aims to:

- increase understanding and provide in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of the processes and key practices used by CoVEs to achieve excellence in building relationships with the private sector (while implementing their autonomous status);
- identify the circumstances that have a positive or negative impact on CoVEs' partnerships with the private sector.

These issues were addressed first through desk research and then through qualitative data in the form of interviews with experts. This approach has been instrumental in achieving the ultimate goal of building broader and more meaningful collaborations between public and private actors in the four selected countries.

In 2018, the European Commission (EC) proposed the creation of a European Education Area by 2025 (European Commission, 2018). In this policy context, CoVEs are one of the main policy initiatives proposed by the Commission to enhance economic development at local, regional and national level.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/centres-vocational-excellence-autonomy-forging-public>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/projects-campaigns/projects/vocational-excellence>.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://tvet-online.asia/startseite/networking-for-vocational-excellence-an-international-network-of-centres-of-vocational-excellence-coves/>.

According to this vision, CoVEs bring together ‘a wide range of local partners, including VET providers, employers, research centres, development agencies and employment services (among others), to develop ‘skills ecosystems’ that contribute to regional, economic and social development, innovation and smart specialisation strategies.’ (ETF 2021, p. 11).

According to the European Commission, the concept of vocational excellence entails a holistic learner-centred approach in which vocational education and training (VET)<sup>4</sup>:

- is an integral part of skills ecosystems, contributing to regional development, innovation and smart specialisation strategies;
- is part of research, education, and innovation, working closely with other education and training sectors, the academic community and businesses;
- enables learners to acquire both vocational and key competences through high quality education and training and, underpinned by quality assurance, builds innovative forms of partnership with the world of work, supported by the continuous professional development of teachers and trainers, innovative teaching methods, mobility and internationalisation strategies.

But what exactly are CoVEs? Centres of vocational excellence can be defined as the partnership-based vocational education and training (VET) networks of VET organisations. They form skills ecosystems of excellence and innovation to provide the high level of skills professionals need in the national and international labour markets. They also contribute to the development of national and regional/local economies<sup>5</sup>.

However, the purpose, structure and functions of CoVEs vary greatly in the different national contexts. Differences and similarities are often ‘masked by the use of specific terminology, which can be lost in translation’ (ETF 2021, p. 3).

On the whole, CoVEs could refer to high quality providers of skills that point the way forward for VET. By contributing to regional skills strategies, they promote employment and regional development. CoVEs work closely with employers, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), regional/local governments, research centres, etc. to foster innovation and applied research, promote entrepreneurship, support vocational education and career guidance approaches, the dual (green and digital) transition, social inclusion and/or up-skilling/re-skilling, etc.

In other words, CoVEs are formed by networks of different partners that develop local skills ecosystems at both national and international level. ENE’s experience suggests that four types of CoVEs typically shape its operational approach:

- High-quality independent institution responsible for VET.
- High-quality independent institution responsible for VET that may coordinate the work of other VET providers (has a leading role in the network).
- Cluster consisting of a number of high-quality VET institutions (e.g. at sectoral, regional/local level).
- Ecosystem (platform) comprising, among others, high-quality VET providers, universities, applied research organisations, employers’ associations, research centres, development agencies, employment services, local authorities, etc.

The CoVEs in this study were selected on the basis of recommendations from policymakers working in national ministries of education and, in the case of Spain, a regional education authority. The policymakers selected high-performing VET providers that they felt best represented the efforts to develop PPPs and increase autonomy. For the purposes of this study, all institutions that embody

---

<sup>4</sup> [Centres of Vocational Excellence - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>5</sup> See Galvin Arribas J.M(2020): [https://www.academia.edu/80753883/Centers\\_of\\_Vocational\\_Excellence\\_and\\_Innovation\\_CoVes\\_A\\_new\\_era\\_for\\_Vocational\\_Education\\_and\\_Training\\_VET\\_institutions](https://www.academia.edu/80753883/Centers_of_Vocational_Excellence_and_Innovation_CoVes_A_new_era_for_Vocational_Education_and_Training_VET_institutions).

vocational excellence are referred to as CoVEs, regardless of whether they have been designated as such by public authorities.

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

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

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Key objectives

Overall, this study examines the working processes and key practices of CoVEs in advancing autonomy and public-private partnerships. The study uses a qualitative approach to build cases based on good practices and suggest improvements in working processes. The methodology used makes it possible to identify potential capacity gaps and challenges. These are:

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

### 2.2 Research framework

This study presents 14 examples of public-private partnerships framed within the autonomous status of the 11 selected CoVEs in **Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye and Spain**. Through thematic analysis of the interviews with CoVE representatives and policymakers, the report examines and describes in detail the working processes and practices of the CoVEs in the target countries. The criteria for selecting CoVEs are based on the diversity of the centres in terms of their geographical location and level of autonomy. CoVEs and policymakers were selected based on the nature of the topic, as they both play a crucial role in terms of autonomy and consequently PPPs.

The data collection exercise began with a preliminary survey questionnaire, which was sent to the active members<sup>6</sup> of ETF's European Network of Excellence (ENE) sub-initiative, including new partner countries, such as Ukraine and Spain<sup>7</sup>. This survey was used to identify potential CoVEs to be subsequently interviewed<sup>8</sup>.

The questionnaire phase was followed by sixteen (16) in-depth interviews with CoVE representatives and policymakers from four (4) ETF partner countries<sup>9</sup>. By interviewing selected CoVE representatives and policymakers, the study aims to identify and shed light on the working processes and key practices for advancing autonomy and PPPs and the way in which they are perceived by the different stakeholders. While the analysis focuses on the autonomy granted to CoVEs, the study seeks to explain the structure and nature of the experience of CoVEs with public-private partnerships based on discussions, reflection and experience.

After the interviews, the participants were asked to fill in a table<sup>10</sup> clarifying and describing specific, concrete PPP projects that had led to practical developments at the respective centres (e.g. autonomy and practices relating to PPPs that improve quality, teaching and learning practices, etc.). The purpose of the clarification tables is to understand exactly who and how many people were involved, what their roles were, what actions they took and for how long. The descriptions of good practice cases in section 3.3 are based on these tables.

<sup>6</sup> Azerbaijan, Finland, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Netherlands, Spain, Tunisia, Türkiye and Ukraine.

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see the Section 2.4 Research subjects.

<sup>8</sup> The list of survey questions is presented in the Appendix 5.4 at the Appendices section.

<sup>9</sup> The list of interviewees is presented in Appendix 5.7 at the Appendices section. The list of interview questions is presented in Appendix 5.5 in the Appendices section.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 5.6 in the Appendices section: Interview clarification table.



The main objective of the interviews was to identify potential difficulties and suggest improvements, while capturing how working processes and good practices are implemented on the ground. In addition, CoVEs' processes and practices were examined. This was done to gain a better understanding of the current state of play of PPPs and autonomy in the selected CoVEs.

The thematic analysis, a common method in qualitative research, focuses on identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The aim was to identify distinct themes that 'emerge' from the data. After conducting the survey and the interviews for the study using the methods and tools described above, the data was interpreted and reinterpreted following a search for phrases and themes, which were then grouped to form clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2013).

Through this process, the researchers constructed broadly meaningful interpretations of different events, situations, experiences, and other factors that shape practitioners' understanding of autonomy and PPPs in CoVEs. This process of 'making sense' of data has led to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question. At the same time, specific cases were identified that illustrate good practices and working processes, which can also be used to suggest improvements.

## 2.3 Data collection: key criteria and processes

The main purpose of the preliminary questionnaire was to identify and map out the areas of excellence in CoVEs and inform the selection of interviewees. In addition, the responses to the survey questionnaire were used to supplement the data obtained from interviews as the thematic analysis progressed<sup>11</sup>.

The interviews with CoVE representatives and policymakers were conducted after the survey. They enabled in-depth discussions with different stakeholders about existing good practices that also covered the roles and working processes of the parties involved in the good practice. In addition, the interviews aimed to identify potential challenges and capacity gaps and suggest necessary improvements in the overall functioning of the selected CoVEs.

In addition, the interviews revealed what participants had learned from working with or within CoVEs so far: what factors enabled and drove the process, who was involved in it, and, finally, what education and training outcomes were achieved. The interviews also shed light on how selected CoVEs use key terminology, for example, what different schools mean by 'good practice'. The interviews were conducted remotely and recorded for further thematic analysis.

As mentioned above, the implications and conclusions of the study were drawn from the interviews and the results of the preliminary survey questionnaire, while taking into account the findings of the theoretical framework and previous ETF publications<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, the data research exercise combines the responses to the survey questionnaire (11 respondents) and 16 interviews: 11 interviews with CoVE representatives and 5 with policymakers from the selected countries.

Each interview involved between 1 and 3 participants. The representatives of the participating CoVEs work under professional titles such as headmaster, director, assistant director, teacher and head of studies. The participating policymakers hold senior positions in regional and national VET administrations.

As mentioned above, the study covers the following ETF partner countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye and one EU Member State (Spain). They were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

1. ETF's experience of working with the partner country in the area of VET excellence, with a focus on autonomy and PPPs (as part of ETF's work on governance and funding arrangements);

<sup>11</sup> See Section 3.2: Results of the thematic analysis.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g. ETF (European Training Foundation), Centres of vocational excellence. Autonomy in forging public-private partnerships in vocational education and skills development, (Baseline Study), 2021.

2. the availability and willingness of ETF's partner countries in the ENE to work on the design of a cross-country partnership for knowledge creation and experience sharing;
3. relevance of experience and expertise in VET excellence in the area of autonomy and PPPs, supported by policy developments in selected countries and institutions registered as CoVEs in ENE; and
4. geographical coverage.

**Summary of the respondents and interviews conducted for the purposes of the study<sup>13</sup>:**

COUNTRY	SURVEY	INTERVIEWS	
		CoVEs	Policymakers
Spain	2	2	2 (Castilla y León / Galicia)
Ukraine	2	-	-
Kazakhstan	1	-	-
Georgia	2	3	1
Türkiye	2	3	1
Tunisia	1	-	-
Morocco	1	-	-
Azerbaijan	-	3	1
The total number of interviews	11	11	5

<sup>13</sup> The more detailed information on profiles of the participants can be found in Appendix 5.7.

## 3. MAIN FINDINGS

This section sets out an overview of how CoVEs and autonomy have been conceptualised and legislated in the four countries covered by the study (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Spain and Türkiye). The findings are divided into two sections:

- Section 3.1 presents the results of the thematic analysis for each of the four participating countries, while section 3.3 focuses on the interviews with CoVE representatives and organises the findings in the form of good practice cases.
- Section 3.2 presents fourteen (14) individual cases of PPP implementation in different CoVEs, and information related to project and development activities. A summary of the findings is set out in section 3.4.

### 3.1 Overview of legislation and autonomy of CoVEs in the selected countries

Overall, all participating countries have made significant changes to their VET legislation in recent years. These changes are indicative of increased autonomy for CoVEs, including in the context of more centralised systems. Based on collected data, all four countries seem to be working hard to increase the number of PPPs and make VET more relevant to working life. Thus, autonomy and PPPs are both key elements in the ongoing recent reforms in the selected countries.

#### Azerbaijan: PPP focus on unleashing autonomy

In Azerbaijan<sup>14</sup>, the current legislation provides an overall framework for PPPs with a general description of the obligations of both parties. A Law on Vocational Education, adopted in 2018, provides a policy framework for the organisational, legal, and economic foundations of the country's VET system<sup>15</sup>. A dedicated VET Agency has been established, which is fully subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)<sup>16</sup>. The VET policy roadmap adopted by the government envisages further steps towards the development of PPPs<sup>17</sup>. In addition, the government of Azerbaijan has recently adopted an official document for the pilot programme, which aims to increase the motivation of the private sector to participate in PPPs by covering the salaries of trainers. According to the interviewees, giving more autonomy to CoVEs and VET schools is one of the main policy objectives for the coming years. The government has taken several measures in the last 2 years to prepare CoVEs for more autonomy and to strengthen their capacity for PPPs. However, interviews indicate that this legislative framework needs to be further monitored in order to assess the implementation of autonomy

<sup>14</sup> ETF (European Training Foundation), Azerbaijan education, training and employment developments 2021.

<sup>15</sup> [Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on vocational education.](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the establishment of the State Agency for Vocational Education.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Strategic roadmap for the development of vocational education and training.](#)

## Georgia: A much needed policy framework to support VET centres of excellence

In Georgia<sup>18</sup>, VET institutions do not have the status of CoVEs and the country reportedly does not currently have a law that contains a definition of centres of excellence. However, some VET schools operate independently as centres of excellence and have cooperation agreements with private companies<sup>19</sup>. In addition, a new concept of *hubs* has been introduced<sup>20</sup>. These may be both regional and sectoral and do not necessarily provide general short-term or qualification training, but they do have a specific legislative mandate that extends their autonomy in, for example, areas such as establishing partnerships with the private sector that involve all regional stakeholders in this field.

The autonomy of the hubs is intended to improve regional development in specific sectors. Two international projects are currently transforming several VET institutions into hubs. There are plans to establish up to 10 hubs in the country

In addition, a brand new VET agency, the Skill Agency, has been established following recommendations from the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the Chamber of Commerce<sup>21</sup>. This agency is made up of both government and private-sector stakeholders, and the main policy directions for participation in PPPs are agreed by the board. It is responsible for coordinating cooperation between different organisations (institutions, companies, etc.) and sectoral skills development. It is expected that, as new projects and initiatives are developed within the Agency and with its support, the institution will become the main driver for increasing the value added of PPPs. The Agency will be the main source of main expertise, discussions and recommendations in this process, although the MoES will be the main actor on behalf of the government. Georgia has a general framework for PPPs and some examples of good practice in this area<sup>22</sup>. In 2018, a new law came into force that emphasises the role of the private sector and PPPs, allowing CoVEs to be entrepreneurial and generate their own income<sup>23</sup>. At the same time, however, there is a practical need to adopt additional regulations to clearly define the shared responsibilities of the stakeholders and make partnerships more productive, including clearer terms and conditions for the implementation of the work-based learning programmes.

## Spain: Building regional ecosystems to promote the autonomy of VET providers for effective partnerships with the private sector

In Spain<sup>24</sup> 25, the central government is responsible for the basic legislative framework for VET, in accordance with European Union regulations, recommendations and policies (where applicable). The regions have their own parliaments and regional administrations, which are responsible for implementing national legislation. The national VET system used to consist of two integrated but separate subsystems: education and work, which share the same national qualifications framework. Recently, a new law has been introduced that merges the two subsystems<sup>26</sup>.

There are different types of VET providers in Spain, with varying degrees of management autonomy. Integrated Vocational Training Centres (Centros Integrados de Formación Profesional, CIFP) provide initial and continuing vocational training and are considered by policymakers to be the most appropriate for adapting the CoVE model. Ordinary upper secondary schools also provide vocational

<sup>18</sup> ETF (European Training Foundation), Georgia education, training and employment developments, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> [Centres of vocational excellence. Autonomy in forging public-private partnerships in vocational education and skills development. \(Baseline Study\), 2021.](#)

<sup>20</sup> [A concept for the governance of skills hubs.](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Vocational education 2020-2021 report.](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Guide to Public Private Partnerships in Georgia.](#)

<sup>23</sup> [2018 Georgian law on vocational education.](#)

<sup>24</sup> Spain did not participate in the ENE baseline study (ETF, 2021); therefore, its national policy overview has been compiled based on the policymaker interviews and desk research.

<sup>25</sup> [Cedefop 2019 overview of Spanish VET system.](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Organic Law 3/2022 on the organisation and integration of vocational training.](#)

training. Both have the same education curricula and produce the same qualifications, but the structure, organisation and objectives of the integrated centres (CIFPs) focus only on VET. The integrated centres are particularly motivated to develop public-private partnerships whereas in the ordinary upper secondary schools, VET is only one part of the educational services provided.

Policymakers in Castilla y León and Galicia are trying to expand the network of CIFPs in order to create more PPPs (especially for FP Dual), develop new projects with the private sector and improve the employability of students as well as the capacity and competitiveness of local enterprises.

## Türkiye

In Türkiye<sup>27 28</sup>, significant efforts are being made to develop sectoral centres of excellence as a model for CoVEs<sup>29</sup>. There are about 3 600 vocational education and training schools and centres in the country. About 500-600 of these have been designated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) as Project Protocol Schools, which have additional responsibilities for developing links with the labour market<sup>30</sup>. While ordinary VET centres only report only to the Provincial Employment and Vocational Training Boards, the Ministry has established Project Management Boards and a guardianship system to oversee the Project Protocol Schools. Guardians, also known as 'school sponsors', are representatives of private companies in the vocational schools. They participate in the school's decision-making and are responsible for providing feedback to both the national authorities and to the VET centre on the labour market relevance of the curricula and quality of education and training. The purpose of the Protocol Implementation Boards is to guide the school administration and the curriculum according to the needs of the relevant industries. The purpose of establishing such a structure is twofold: to increase financial and professional support from the private sector and to better align VET with labour market needs (European Commission, 2019). The structure of CoVEs in Türkiye is unique as it is represented by the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges, which is establishing a public-private sector joint management model, in which it will coordinate 81 vocational high schools from all provinces of the country.

The legislation, budget and infrastructure of the Sectoral Centres of Excellence are being developed at a rapid pace by the MoNE.

Three sectoral centres of excellence are currently operational<sup>31</sup> and two more are being established. With the support of the European Union, the MoNE aims to establish 15 sectoral centres of excellence covering 25 occupational areas in the next few years<sup>32</sup>. These centres will be established in provinces that excel in specific vocational sectors (for example, a sectoral CoVE will be established in Marmara where the automotive industry is thriving). The sectoral centres of excellence have more autonomy than normal vocational training centres, although most important decisions are still either made by the Ministry or consulted with it. Sectoral Centres of Excellence as well as their private sector partners are usually asked to communicate their needs directly to the MoNE for further discussion and consideration. At the national level, the cooperation between the CoVE model and the private sector is strong, with the latter providing work placements for students on the basis of the protocol signed with the Ministry of Education. The centres are in regular contact with companies and companies are involved, for example, as sector representatives on school boards. The centres have the advantage of a training committee, where

<sup>27</sup> ETF (European Training Foundation) Turkey education, training and employment developments 2021.

<sup>28</sup> [ETF Country Brief Turkey: Integrated monitoring process of the EU Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabruck Declaration.](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training Through Establishment of Sectoral Centres of Excellence Operation \(IQVETIII\)](#)

<sup>30</sup> In addition, the Turkish system reportedly includes Research & Development schools as well as thematic schools. Despite the translation, there were some difficulties understanding the entirety of the Turkish CoVE system.

<sup>31</sup> For more information on one of the three sectoral centres, see Türkiye Case 2: 'Establishing Pendik Halil Kaya Gedik Metal Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School as a CoVE'.

<sup>32</sup> [Technical Assistance Project for Increasing the Quality of Vocational and Technical Education through the Establishment of Sectoral Centers of Excellence.](#)

professionals from the industry meet and discuss the curricula. The centres organise work placements for students in industry, so the benefits are mutual.

Centres report that students have the opportunity to see and experience workplaces, and companies want the experience of trained students. Companies are reported to provide further support by mentoring the students. The MoNE is responsible for signing protocols with the private sector. These protocols cover the design of new curricula and the development of training programmes in collaboration with private sector representatives. Industry representatives from each sector also participate in the Vocational Qualifications Board of the Qualifications Authority, helping to promote common standards for VET across Türkiye.

## 3.2 Results of the thematic analysis

This section presents the themes that emerged from the research data, bringing together both the survey results and the interviews with policymakers and CoVE representatives. The themes that emerged are listed, followed by a more detailed context, including several quotes from different interviewees to illustrate the findings. The aim is to reveal a dialogue between the policymakers and CoVEs that unfolds the perspectives on the issues raised by both or either side, while at the same time providing a basis for further dialogue.

Although the interviews were semi-structured and data shows that the overarching themes (e.g. autonomy) were typically anchored in the interview questions, the participants cover different dimensions and express multiple nuances that need to be discussed further in order to unfold existing good practices and identify capacity gaps and challenges.

The themes raised by both by policymakers and CoVE representatives in **all countries** are:

1. Autonomy of CoVEs
2. Financial autonomy and possible financing mechanisms
3. Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement
4. Networking, exchange of good practice and experience at the national and international level.

The arguments presented in the different country contexts have similarities and show a common emphasis on these factors.

However, certain arguments were particularly emphasised in certain countries, for example:

### Georgia:

- New legislation recently introduced or under development
- Missing dimensions in legislation
- Motivation of the private sector
- Actors' responsibilities in PPPs.

### Azerbaijan:

- Missing dimensions in legislation
- Competitiveness and attractiveness of VET
- Qualified human resources and the need for training and guidelines

### Spain:

- Competitiveness and attractiveness of VET
- Entrepreneurial mindset.

### Türkiye:

- New legislation recently introduced or currently being developed
- Criteria to be met by VET institutions for the purpose of establishing PPPs
- Qualified human resources and a need for training and guidance.

Looking at the specific points, it is clear that while the core considerations of autonomy, funding, PPPs, and networking are universally shared, certain nuances emerge at the national level. Georgia emphasises legislative developments, private sector motivation and specific responsibilities within PPPs. Azerbaijan has a unique focus on the competitiveness of VET, and the need for skilled human resources and related policies. Spain stands out with its emphasis on promoting an entrepreneurial mindset. Türkiye, on the other hand, places a particular emphasis on new legislation, criteria for PPPs in VET institutions, and the need for qualified human resources and related training guidelines.

### 3.2.1 Azerbaijan

The thematic analysis for Azerbaijan includes research data from four interviews: one with a policymaker and three with CoVE representatives. In this case, complementary survey data was not available as there were no respondents from Azerbaijan.

#### Autonomy and financial independence of CoVEs

One of the issues that both policymakers and CoVEs discussed in their interviews was the autonomy of CoVEs. However, each had a different emphasis within this theme. The policymaker highlighted the recent targets in the legislation aimed at increasing the autonomy of CoVEs:

**‘Our main goal is to give autonomy to CoVEs and VET schools.’ (Policymaker)**

**‘We want like to give as much autonomy as possible to the schools and CoVEs.’ (Policymaker)**

He emphasised that CoVEs should have strong and qualified management in order to benefit from autonomy, which is currently not the case for most of Azerbaijan’s VET institutions, mentioning the need for training and guidelines that would help the CoVEs to implement new practices such as PPPs. While arguing for their capacity to make decisions, the CoVE representatives mentioned some limitations in arranging PPPs:

**‘When you go to the other region to organise an activity, you should always get permission from the national authorities/ministry.’ (CoVE representative)**



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

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

**'We are a state institution. We are funded by the State budget, and we can also earn money on our own.'** (CoVE representative)

**'We have been given a legal status (entity) that allows us to sell our production. But not every vocational school can do this.'** (CoVE representative)

The policymaker addressed the lack of flexibility in financial management and the need to make financial management transparent. He discussed the current problems that CoVEs have in managing their finances and the steps that the Agency has taken to give more financial autonomy to VET institutions:

**'So, now, we are implementing and working on the funding system. For example, the online funding system helps to see how VET schools get support from the government, how they spend the money and what the purpose of this expenditure is.'** (Policymaker)

Overall, autonomy was a positive theme in the interviews with CoVEs and centred on descriptions of CoVEs' capacity in terms of funding and resources, while the policymaker addressed the need for the Agency to do more to provide CoVEs with greater financial flexibility and autonomy.

### **Gaps in legislation and private sector motivation**

Gaps in legislation and private sector motivation were overlapping themes in the interviews with the Azerbaijani representatives. Both the policymaker and the CoVE representative recognise that the private sector lacks motivation/incentives to engage with public authorities, and that some measures should be taken to improve the current situation.



**‘The private sector should have some privileges while they are working with the public. For example, if they give aid or any support to the schools, they should have different kinds of discounts for their support (lower taxes, customs, etc.). Sometimes governments see some risks in such privileges because they can harm competitiveness.’ (Policymaker)**

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

### **Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement and responsibilities of the actors in PPPs**

Both policymakers and representatives of CoVEs recognise the importance of PPPs, as CoVEs have developed new in-demand training and courses that have been adapted to the needs of the labour market. CoVEs are responding to the needs of the labour market:

**‘We know that if we work with a company in our projects, there is a better chance that the students will be employed.’ (CoVE representative)**

**‘At the moment, our public sector is really working with the private sector, and both parties are ready and willing to work. Now is perhaps the right time to find a mutual link, as we are in more favourable circumstances that have been created in the last two to four years. Now is the time to find ways to work together.’ (Policymaker)**

However, understanding of how the PPP model should work is currently lacking in both the private and public sectors. In order to gain a better understanding of how the models and mechanisms can be implemented in practice, pilot projects have recently been launched.

Both the policymaker and the CoVE representatives argue that an important aspect to consider when implementing PPPs is to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all the actors involved and advise that this should be done in advance.

### **Qualified human resources and the need for training and guidelines**

Both policymakers and CoVE representatives emphasise the need for qualified human resources. The CoVE representatives argue that human resources are the most important component of PPP implementation. The policy side is focused on the need for qualified managers in PPP implementation and work to increase autonomy. More training and guidance should be provided to VET institutions to help them organise and implement PPPs on their own:

Policymakers stressed the importance of demonstrating the potential and value of projects to VET institutions. The importance of disseminating successful practices within local professional communities was also highlighted:

**'I think we would like to have a platform to share local experience with other local schools.'** (Policymaker)

### **Competitiveness and attractiveness of VET**

The image of VET is an issue in Azerbaijan, albeit with a different focus. The policymakers emphasise that VET institutions should be attractive to the private sector and that they should be able to compete with other VET institutions. The CoVE representatives discuss the changes in the public image of VET. They look at the question of attractiveness not only from the perspective of the private sector, but also in terms of student enrolment and employability:

**'Our centre became more prestigious. Students came to us knowing that they would definitely find a job.'** (CoVE representative)

## **3.2.2 Georgia**

The themes and the overall context explored in the following subsections cover the perspectives of both policymakers and CoVEs.

### **Autonomy of CoVEs, changes and gaps in legislation**

The theme of autonomy emerged throughout the interviews with the Georgian interviewees and was closely linked to the themes of developing new legislation and gaps in legislation.

Both the policymaker and the CoVE representatives mention the establishment of the new Skills Agency and its role in the development of VET and the implementation of PPPs. The policymaker provides a more detailed description of the concept and emphasises the role of the Skills Agency as the main driver towards PPPs:

**'This organisation was established last year. The Agency will be the main driving force behind PPPs in line with its mandate. For example, it will coordinate cooperation between different organisations/institutions/enterprises and work on (sectoral) skills development. It will be the main actor in the provision and development of vocational qualifications.'** (Policymaker)

The CoVE representatives refer to the Skills Agency as a 'driver' when describing the autonomy of their CoVEs:

**‘A new Skills Agency has been established by the Ministry of Education. It is working to remodel and redesign the entire VET legislation. Its staff comprises mainly VET experts who are working together and considering ways to improve vocational education and training.’ (CoVE representative)**

As far as autonomy is concerned, there are still some unresolved issues:

**‘At the moment, we still have to consult many things with the Ministry of Education and then have them approved. However, the government’s current policy is to decentralise this process and make the colleges more independent and more entrepreneurial to have or generate their own income’. (CoVE representative)**

One of the CoVE representatives raises the issue of the centralised system and suggests that in order to improve the implementation of PPPs it would be beneficial to ‘decentralise’ and give more power to the municipalities, as they have better knowledge and understanding of local needs. Both CoVE representatives and policymakers have acknowledged recent and ongoing legislative changes and argued that these are beneficial to the VET system as they support both PPPs and autonomy.

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

**‘Half of the funding came from the ministry through government programmes related to the establishment of a government-recognised college, and the other half came from the company (co-founder of our CoVE).’ (CoVE representative)**

**‘Most of our activities were funded by the MoES... And we did our best with fundraising. Almost 10 % came from international organisations like the UNDP.’ (CoVE representative)**

Another issue raised by one of the CoVEs is that in their case, regardless of the source of funding, the funds had to be put into the same account and go through the same bureaucratic procedures as public funds.

## **Importance of PPPs, private sector involvement and motivation. Actors' responsibilities in PPPs**

Both Georgian policymakers and CoVE representatives recognise the importance of private sector involvement. Following the adoption of new legislation, the private sector is now represented on the board of the newly established Skills Agency, which is the main driver for PPPs. In this way, the private sector is closely involved in the decision-making process in VET, as expressed in the following quote from a policymaker:

**'The private sector should have the same level of responsibility as the government in policy making and implementation of PPPs at all levels of VET institutions'**  
(Policymaker)

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

**'There was demand and there was supply, and it was our organisation that brought them together.'** (CoVE representative)

**'More young people come to study here because they are immediately employed and get a very high salary. There is a shortage of these professionals in the labour market and they have become very popular.'** (CoVE representative)

Both policymakers and CoVEs recognise that there is currently a lack of motivation for the private sector to participate in PPPs and that some measures should be taken to address this. The CoVEs representatives note that there is a need for better communication and clarity between all the actors involved in the implementation of PPPs:

**Communication was very complicated. There was a lot of information, a lot of companies, a lot of activities, and we had to learn how to present information to other parties in the right way — how to develop programmes that an employer would be interested in. The process of communication ensures that all parties are involved.'**  
(CoVE representative)

## **Attractiveness of VET and sharing experiences nationally and internationally**

Both Georgian CoVE representatives and policymakers recognise the importance of sharing experiences at local level, but with a different focus. The CoVEs representatives address this issue from the perspective of the centre's image, pointing to the need to inform current and future students about projects and opportunities:

**'I would invest a lot of money in recruitment and career guidance to do the PR (public relations) and promotion in order to ensure the right way of communicating with our target audience. People should understand exactly what VET programmes are, because people often have wrong ideas about work placements.'** (CoVE representative)

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

In addition to the themes mentioned above, the CoVEs emphasise the importance of qualified and active teaching and administrative staff who could follow the modernised system and engage with the private sector. The need for qualified human resources and training was noted:

**'I would give more attention to the teaching staff, with more autonomy, to refresh their skills and knowledge, to put more money into the development of teachers and their salaries, to encourage them to teach at CoVEs.'** (CoVE representative)

**'We just pay salaries to our staff and teachers and the salaries are not that high to motivate people to come and work here. If you want to work according to high standards, you should ensure that teachers are well qualified.'** (CoVE representative)

### 3.2.3 Spain

The thematic analysis for Spain includes research data from four interviews: two with policymakers from different regions and two with CoVE representatives. Two responses to the survey were also received from Spain. Survey data will be used to complement the interview data in describing the context of the emerging themes.

#### **Autonomy of CoVEs, financial autonomy and importance of PPPs**

Both CoVE representatives and policymakers recognise that there is still limited autonomy in Spanish VET. Due to their limited autonomy, public training centres find it difficult to carry out collaborative projects that go beyond the purely educational. They cannot enter into direct agreements with companies and the administrative process of entering into an agreement is cumbersome. In addition, training centres cannot hire or fire teachers in the institutions because there is a strict, formal procedure for doing so at the regional level. CoVE representatives have also pointed to the difficult bureaucratic procedures:

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

**‘In Spain, we have a lot of rules. There are rules for everything. And the rules are very strict.’ (CoVE representative)**

With regard to financial autonomy, the policymaker emphasises that under the current legislation, it is not possible to increase private funding for the Integrated Vocational Training Centres (Centros Integrados de Formación Profesional, CIFP). The administrative law on contracts imposes a very clear separation between private and public funding. It is possible for private entities to sign agreements with the administration to work with the centres on an innovation project, but the funding for this must come from the public budget and not from an external source. For example, it's not possible for a private company to pay for teachers to be trained to teach certain skills. There are also restrictions on the use of equipment so that if a company has certain equipment and the centre wants to use it, there has to be an official agreement.

Policymakers encourage especially public centres in particular to participate in calls for projects carried out by the regional authorities or in ERASMUS projects involving cooperation between centres and private companies. Policymakers also consider it essential to increase the number of calls for projects, as this will allow both public and private education centres to develop collaborative projects with sufficient coverage and legal certainty, and without problems in justifying the funding they may receive from private entities.

For one of the CoVEs, the importance of implementing PPPs seems to be justified mainly on financial grounds:

**‘In this vocational school, we have a budget every year to do studies with the students, but this budget is very small. So, if we want to do things better, we need a new budget. And the way to get this money is to participate in these kinds of projects.’ (CoVE representative)**

Representatives from another CoVE have a different view of the importance of PPPs. They argue that students, parents and companies are starting to see the opportunities offered by VET, which is very important for the future. Students' learning processes benefit from the transfer of knowledge and work experience provided by companies. The students involved in these projects improve their personal and professional skills and develop an entrepreneurial attitude. There is also an improvement in the relationship between the educational centre and the companies, which enables the development of new projects with companies. Good relations with businesses increase the attractiveness of the centre, resulting in more students enrolling to study and the centre's prestige continuing to grow. They are also concerned with increasing employability and the overall impact on local society:

**‘Owing to this cooperation between companies and schools and the results it brings, because many of the students who complete their training here have a job, society in general is changing.’ (CoVE representative)**

The policymakers stress the importance of implementing PPPs in terms of employability and supporting the local economy:

**‘If the students do part of their training at the VET centre and another part at the company, they are guaranteed to find a job in the first few months after graduation with a probability of about a 95-96 % . And the remaining 5 % will continue their studies, and not become unemployed.’ (Policymaker)**

PPPs have been intensified through PPPs through cooperation agreements between the education administration and the regional chambers of commerce, industry and services, business foundations and various clusters. This has enabled policymakers to promote the dual training model (FP Dual) and to launch new projects in the field of vocational guidance and applied innovation involving educational centres and businesses.

### **Exchange of good practices and attractiveness of VET**

Spanish policymakers stress the importance of sharing ‘success stories’ and developing mechanisms for transferring experience and practice at different levels. CoVEs representatives emphasised the importance of starting to initiate and implement projects, as this leads to the centre becoming known and makes it easier to work together in the future. Both CoVEs and the policymakers are focused on creating positive changes in the image of VET, especially in terms of students’ employability after graduation.

### **Entrepreneurial mindset**

Both CoVE representatives and the policymakers point to the need for a more entrepreneurial mindset and culture in Spanish VET and working life. PPPs can promote and strengthen an entrepreneurial mindset among students and staff and increase the relevance in VET to working life in response to economic and social changes.

In addition to the above, other themes that emerged from the interviews with policy makers include the motivation of the private sector and the inability of the VET system to adapt to changes over time:

**‘The main challenge for vocational training centres in general in terms of cooperation with the private sector is to find companies that are willing to cooperate in training processes.’ (Policymaker)**

**‘If I have a company or a new industry, a new technology, a new design system, whatever it is, the VET system should be very quick to recognise it and provide**

**teaching or training for it, supplying the company with workers or students very quickly. At the moment we are probably not that fast.’ (Policymaker)**

The CoVEs representatives in the interviews emphasise the need for motivated and qualified teachers, who are open to these changes. The issue of teacher workload and motivation was also raised:

**‘New projects mean more work. The teacher has to spend more hours preparing and developing the project. So, it’s not always easy to motivate teachers because they know that they have to work more when they do these projects. But they know that they are very important for our centre, for its prestige, and for improving our relationship with companies.’ (CoVE representative)**

### 3.2.4 Türkiye

The thematic analysis for Türkiye includes research data from four interviews: a joint interview with two policymakers and three individual interviews with CoVE representatives. There were also two interviewees from Turkish CoVEs. This survey data will be used to complement the interview data in describing the context of the emerging themes.

#### **Autonomy of CoVEs, new legislation and financial autonomy**

The Turkish policymakers argue that there is a general trend towards increased autonomy in Türkiye, especially in the case of integrated sectoral centres of excellence, which are supposed to have more autonomy than ordinary vocational training centres. However, most of the decisions are still taken by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The centralisation of the Turkish education system means that it is very difficult to provide a legal basis for autonomous structures in the centres. One of the CoVE representatives mentions that the changes in legislation have affected the processes in the CoVEs:

**‘There are some new programmes, we create the programmes, the students have a new timetable, and we create a new programme because the system has changed.’ (CoVE representative)**

Decisions in the education system are made at the central level, ranging from the appointment of teachers and principals to the allocation of budgets. The MoNE facilitates work at the local level through the Provincial Employment and Vocational Education Boards, which meet regularly to discuss the current situation and changing needs in the province. CoVEs representatives spoke about different things but generally recognised the problem and limitations of autonomy in the Turkish system:



'We are a project school. Legally, we have more rights to make these kinds of agreements than the other schools. We can choose our teachers and trainers, all these things.' (CoVE representative)

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

In terms of financial autonomy, the policymakers mentioned that the general direction at policy level is to give integrated sectoral centres of excellence control over their own budgets. The use of international funding is also encouraged:

**'When I say autonomy, I mean that sectoral centres of excellence will have their own income. And if they generate their own income, they will be able to decide how to spend that income — the part that they have generated themselves. But full autonomy, as you understand the concept, is difficult to achieve in Türkiye.'** (Policymaker)

CoVE representatives mention that participation in PPPs can affect government budget allocations:

**'We do not have a problem with money at the moment because most things come from the government and if we are short of money, we can raise it from the foundation and the parents. Our expenses are covered by the central budget and the companies we work with.'** (CoVE representative)

**'But we have the private sector supporting us, and if the private sector goes to the ministry and lobbies for us, we can actually get better money from the ministry and the Protocol Executive Board.'** (CoVE representative)

### **Importance of PPPs and private sector involvement**

Turkish CoVEs see the importance of PPPs in terms of employability and funding. Policymakers believe that PPPs increase the overall relevance of VET to working life. Both policymakers and CoVEs hope that the private sector will bring additional resources to the VET system, particularly in terms of the consumables and other materials and equipment needed by the schools. The Ministry signs protocols<sup>33</sup> with the private sector at local and central level. These protocols help the Ministry to design new curricula and develop training programmes together with private sector representatives.

There is a Vocational Qualifications Board and a Vocational Qualifications Authority to help set the standards, with private sector representatives in each area. The Ministry is trying to create a solid organisational basis for further cooperation between the private and public sectors. It is currently establishing a system of 'school sponsors'<sup>32</sup> to improve cooperation with the private sector. The

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of National Education of Republic of Türkiye, Educational Institutions Regulation, 2016.

sponsors are responsible for monitoring the protocols signed with the private sector and ensuring that they are relevant to the needs of the industry. However, many challenges remain: according to policymakers, the private sector is reluctant to provide support, while the public side has a huge need for it:

**‘The private sector is reluctant to provide equipment or support to public schools, that is to State schools. They are not very enthusiastic about it.’ (Policymaker)**

**‘I believe that once the private sector sees the benefits of this new law, it will be much more eager, much more willing to take our students.’ (Policymaker)**

There is uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities of staff and the recruitment process. However, the Ministry’s long-term aim is for the private sector to provide continuous and uninterrupted support to the public sector. The sectoral centres of excellence are the flagships of this new model of public-private partnership.

**‘These flagship companies will be responsible for supporting institutions across the country, but they will not be able to support them financially. The main objective of all projects we have implemented as the Ministry of National Education is to spread good practice throughout the country.’ (Policymaker)**

### **Networking, sharing good practice and criteria for VET institutions**

Turkish policymakers emphasise that the CoVEs model is new and express hope for further development of cooperation and exchange ideas and good practices internationally through workshops, seminars and training events. The CoVEs representatives mention that their network has grown as a result of the implementation of the projects, that their name is well known in the PPP arena, and that it is easier to be involved in new projects. In addition, both CoVE representatives and policymakers argue that the more a school is involved in projects and PPPs, the more likely it is to receive additional funding, especially for staff. As some schools become sectoral centres of excellence, both policymakers and CoVE representatives discuss how the schools are selected for projects or to become centres of excellence. The main criteria mentioned are previous involvement in international activities and expertise. However, there are no concrete procedures and guidelines.

### **Qualified human resources**

Turkish CoVE representatives recognise the additional workload that PPPs place on the staff of CoVEs and the need for qualified and motivated human resources:

**‘As a director, I can feel that that there is an increased workload. The ordinary principals do their routine work and they do not do overtime. But as the director of our**

**centre of excellence, I have to do more. I have to propose extra projects and I have to do new projects all the time.’ (CoVE representative)**

**‘They (teachers) were against the new innovation workshops and the new laboratories — they did not want them. In the end, some of those teachers retired and the remaining teachers started to see the benefits of the new workshops and laboratories and understood that they will improve the employability of students.’ (CoVE representative)**

### 3.3 CoVE cases

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

The CoVE representatives interviewed were typically senior managers working under different titles such as headteachers or directors. They were sometimes accompanied by specific teachers who worked closely with the private sector. Each interview followed a similar structure<sup>34</sup>. Participants were asked to describe examples of projects that had led to good practice in the area of PPPs. Most interviews began with CoVE representatives describing a wide range of activities and collaborations that they had organised and carried out in their centres. They often spent a lot of time contextualising the projects explaining, for example, explaining how the circumstances of their national and regional education systems and economies affected PPPs.

Almost all of the 11 CoVEs had at least one clear example of PPP, and some had two or three. One CoVE provided such a vague description that it could not be made into a clear case and was therefore excluded from the dataset. In total, 14 good practice cases were selected for further study.

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

- Context of the project
- Preconditions and motivating factors
- Description of the practice with actors and roles
- Impact according to the interviewee
- Financial implications
- Required resources
- Barriers to good practice
- Aspect to be considered in future work.

<sup>34</sup> See the Appendix 5.5 at the Appendices section: Interview questions.

### 3.3.1 Azerbaijan

#### AZERBAIJAN CASE 1:

##### Dual VET schemes, Goychay VET Centre

Name of CoVE	Goychay VET Centre
Country and region	Azerbaijan, Goychay
Year established	2008
Main training sector(s)	Agriculture Machinery Hotel and restaurant services

#### Context of the project

The CoVE has recently started to implement what it calls 'dual VET' in cooperation with private companies in order to respond to the need for skilled workers. Dual VET in this case refers to close cooperation with private partners for the purpose of work-based learning, which provides students with new skills through the implementation of modern pedagogical training methods. This is a clear step towards autonomy in Azerbaijan's historically highly centralised education system.

#### Preconditions and motivating factors

The initiative for dual vocational training systems usually comes from the private sector, which has a vested interest in maintaining its competitive edge and improving productivity. The commitment of the main beneficiaries, usually private enterprises, helps to ensure the success of dual VET systems.

#### Description of the practice with actors and their roles

The project aimed to develop a dual VET system and build institutional capacity in order to increase the employability of unemployed adult jobseekers. Another aim, from the perspective of the CoVE, was to increase the competencies of school managers and strengthen cooperation between VET schools and the exchange of good practices. Thirty students were selected to participate in the project, half from Goychay and half from the neighbouring Agsu region. After the selection period, the students (unemployed adults) were interviewed and participated in the training sessions. The managers of the vocational schools responsible for organising the project actively participated in the planning and implementation phases. The managers selected teachers from the Institute of Fruit and Vegetable Growing who wanted to develop their competences. The teachers were mainly involved in the training sessions in order to support the implementation of the training and practical sessions.

#### Impact according to the CoVE interviewed

According to the CoVE representative, the dual vocational training programmes have increased the prestige and attractiveness of the centre among students and job seekers. Through improved cooperation with employers, the CoVE has developed new in-demand training courses based on current labour market needs. As a result, its students have a better chance of finding good jobs after graduation.

Before the introduction of dual vocational training, the courses developed by the CoVE did not take sufficient account of feedback from employers and their real needs. The new philosophy of cooperation has changed this relationship enormously and there is now a new focus on relevance to working life. At present, the centre is very sensitive to the needs of employers and prepares students in line with the requirements of private companies for specific skills.

#### Financial implications

The CoVE is a public institution and one of three key centres under the State Unemployment Agency of Azerbaijan. It is primarily funded by this agency, but its status as a public institution allows the CoVE to access other funding. Currently, about 80 % of its funding comes from the government, while the rest (20 %) comes from its own income, mainly from the tuition fees paid by students for courses and training. The CoVE also plans to raise funds from international donors.

### Required resources

The interviewee emphasises the central role of human resources, i.e., qualified staff in making the good practice a reality. The CoVE also needed good services, modern equipment, materials and funding.

### Barriers to good practice

The development of good practice is hindered by bureaucratic procedures that make it difficult for employers to participate in VET activities. There have also been problems in organising courses and training in other regions because the Centre has to obtain permission from the local authorities. In order to overcome these challenges, it needs to maintain an active relationship with the Ministry, which has given it its mandate and acts as its main supporter.

### Aspect to consider in future work

The Centre would like to increase the opportunities for dual vocational training in different sectors such as tourism and the clothing industry. It would also like to make better use of its own facilities in implementing these programmes.

## AZERBAIJAN CASE 2:

### Dual VET programme & PPP with furniture company, Baku State Industry and Innovation Vocational Training Centre

Name of the CoVE	Baku State Industry and Innovation Vocational Training Centre
Country and region	Azerbaijan, Baku
Year established	2019
Main training sector(s)	Information and communication technology Technology and engineering Manufacturing industry

### Context of the project

The CoVE was established as a result of a public-private partnership between the government of Azerbaijan and private companies from Korea. The facilities were built and equipped by the Korean partner and established as a pilot project for the development of the Azerbaijani vocational training system based on modern Korean curricula. It currently receives State funding and is formally under the supervision of the State Agency for Vocational Education, to which it is required to submit reports on its activities on a regular basis. However, CoVEs are granted with more autonomy than normal VET centres (e.g. to generate income from their activities).

After being established by the Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF), the CoVE has continued to function and expand its activities and is currently involved in several public-private partnerships with national and international companies. The first example of a collaborative project that resulted in a good practice is the establishment of a manufacturing centre for training purposes together with a furniture company. The company provided skilled staff and equipment to set up the new manufacturing workshop at the centre so that students could learn real-world work skills.

The second example is brand new and still in development. Since the beginning of this year, the centre has been testing dual vocational training programmes in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. The centre is a pioneer in this respect, as dual VET is still new in Azerbaijan.

### **Preconditions and motivating factors**

The adoption of the Korean curriculum and the financial and technical support of the Korean private sector are crucial. Since its establishment, the CoVE's central mission has been to develop best practices in cooperation with the private sector to produce better professionals and increase the employability of students.

### **Description of the practice with actors and their roles**

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

The public-private partnership with the furniture company is coordinated by the deputy director, who is responsible for procurement and logistics and monitors the production process and the results achieved. Two teachers, one in charge of the practical part and the other in charge of the theoretical part, are responsible for teaching and the daily support of students in the production process together with the staff of the company.

### **Impact according to the interviewee**

The key stakeholders (students, employers, CoVE staff and the Azerbaijani state) have all been positively impacted by the good practices that developed at the CoVE. In the case of the furniture manufacturing workshop, the employers benefited from a more skilled workforce, the students gained real work experience through the collaborations and improved their access to employment after graduation, and the CoVE helped to create a more positive public perception of vocational education and training. In addition, the good practices have increased the prestige of the CoVE to the extent that it no longer has to go out and find companies to collaborate with, but is instead constantly approached by companies wanting to collaborate with it. This has led to more opportunities for students to go practice their skills in real workplaces. It is still too early to say anything conclusive about the impact of the piloted dual VET programmes.

### **Financial implications**

The CoVE is wholly owned by the State, which provides approximately 80 % of its budget, with the remainder of the funding generated by the CoVE's own activities. The CoVE is able to charge individuals and private and state organisations training fees to attend its 'short courses'. It uses this income to invest in and further develop its activities. The aim is to continue to increase the proportion of income generated by its own activities.

### **Required resources**

Financial and human resources (teachers and managers) were the most important for implementing good practice. Physical and digital resources are also needed in dual VET programmes in industrial locations. These include small costs such as the provision of insurance policies for students, and transport costs for take students to their workplaces.

### **Barriers to good practice**

Some problems were encountered during the piloting of the dual VET programmes. For example, not all of the company trainers are motivated to work with all the students and need more support and training to do so. It was also reported that some of the students minor problems or misunderstandings in relation to their studies at the industrial facilities. In addition, some parents did not want their children to study outside the CoVEs. These problems were reported to have been resolved and there were no other specific barriers.

Another problem was that the government did not provide any financial support to the companies to cover part of the salary paid to students in industrial placements on company premises. This has hindered the development of good practice, as companies are less motivated to invite students for work experience if they do not receive government support and have to pay for the students themselves.

### Aspect to be considered in future work

Based on the initial experience with dual VET programmes, the Centre considers it a priority to coordinate more closely with partner companies in the future. It would also be important to establish clear protocols and procedures for documentation and data collection during dual VET programmes. In addition, the centre needs to find ways to increase the motivation of employers to invite students for work placements, for example through State support.

## AZERBAIJAN CASE 3:

### Curriculum development, Gabala State VET Centre

Name of CoVE	Gabala State VET Centre
Country and region	Azerbaijan, Gabala
Year established	1973
Main training sector(s)	Tourism Agriculture

### Context of the project

The project developed and implemented a new curriculum in cooperation with the private sector. It involved the management and teaching staff of the vocational training centre, officials from the State Vocation Education and Training Agency, and employers from both public and private companies. Curriculum development was overseen by a coordinating council chaired by the largest local employer and approved by the State VET Agency.

### Preconditions and motivating factors

Curriculum development was motivated by the need to respond to the rapid development of advanced technologies and the resulting new requirements for the use of modern equipment in the workplace. In addition, the general economic need to increase cooperation with the private sector and to develop closer links with working life were important motivating factors for the development of good practice. To make the student selection process more efficient, the centre also drew on private sector expertise.

### Description of the practice with actors and their roles

The project was supervised by two deputy directors — one from the tourism sector and one from the agricultural sector. Each sector was further subdivided into three specialisations, or a total of six specialisations (in the agricultural sector: crop production, agricultural services and animal husbandry; and in the tourism sector: chefs, confectioners and receptionists). The deputy directors planned the timetable for the theoretical and practical lessons and made the teaching process flexible. They also acted as coordinators between the master craftsmen and the employers. The assistant directors developed the syllabus according to the curriculum and the characteristics of each specialisation. In addition to the two assistant directors, six teachers (one from each specialisation) applied the curriculum and made the teaching arrangements for the dual VET programme. The teachers were also involved in the development of guidelines for the dual VET programme. After completing the module, the students received practical training through work placements.

Impact according to the interviewee



The good practices developed at the centre have had a positive impact on the students' employment prospects, as they have acquired specialised skills needed in working life. The enrolment rate at the CoVE increased as it became better known to potential students/learners. The centre began to attract students from different regions, including the capital, whereas before it had mainly attracted local students.

### Financial implications

Funding for the centre comes from the State Agency for Vocational Education under the Ministry of Education. This agency purchased the equipment needed to start the good practice project. Collaboration with private companies also resulted in financial contributions: for example, the land needed for the agricultural studies was provided free of charge by a winery. GIZ<sup>35</sup> paid the salaries of the trainers and covered the cost of printing various types of flyers. The CoVE was allowed to generate its own income by selling the products it produced.

### Required resources

The project required human resources. Digital resources were also needed to overcome the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was also increasing cooperation with Turkish partners in the form of teacher and student exchanges.

### Barriers to good practice

The CoVE representatives did not identify any specific circumstances or legislative challenges that have hindered the development of good practice.

### Aspect to be considered in future work

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

## 3.3.2 Georgia

### GEORGIA CASE 1:

Development of new curricula & introduction of new programmes, LEPL College Modus Name of CoVE	LEPL College Modus
Country and region	Georgia
Year established	1999
Main training sector(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agriculture and Forestry</li> <li>▪ Business and Administration</li> <li>▪ Information and Communication Technology</li> <li>▪ Hospitality and Catering, Tourism</li> <li>▪ Technology and Engineering</li> </ul>

### Context of the project

The interviewee described several good practices that are currently being developed at the college, although some of them are still too new to be shared. Work-related training programmes for

<sup>35</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).



underprivileged areas are one of the good practices developed by the college. This is illustrated by the recent construction and establishment of a second building for LEPL Modus College in an area populated by ethnic minorities, particularly Azerbaijanis. This second college offers agricultural training programmes to local residents.

### **Preconditions and motivating factors**

The Georgian government is currently focusing on improving the attractiveness of vocational education and training for students and parents, recognising that there is a high demand for skilled technical and agricultural workers in the labour market. One of the strongest motivating factors for the creation of the new agricultural programmes at the college is that the Georgian government has signed the Association Agreement with the European Union, creating new opportunities for Georgian food products to enter the EU market. These products must comply with EU regulations and standards, which prompted the government to create new agricultural programmes to train more specialists to help companies develop the correct procedures and technologies needed to enter the EU market and improve economic development.

### **The practice description with actors and roles**

The project involved developing new curricula and introducing new programmes at the college. Fifteen people were involved in setting up the project. The college director and the education manager were jointly responsible for the planning and managing of the project. The quality manager designed the programme according to approved standards and framework documents. The finance manager planned the budget and managed the purchase of equipment for the new programmes. The Career Guidance Manager designed and conducted surveys to identify labour market needs and liaised with partner organisations. The PR manager promoted and reported on the programme to local and national media using social media, videos, and photographs. The Mayor of the city chaired the College Board and provided advice, guidance, and support to the programme. There were also three business representatives on the board and several external experts who provided advice and facilitation throughout the process.

### **Barriers to good practice**

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

### **Impact according to the interviewees**

Young people from the local communities are positively impacted by the establishment of the new agricultural programmes, as previously there was no opportunity for them to study agriculture in the Kverno Kartli region, where the second college building 'Marneuli' was built. This rural area is home to a large ethnic Azerbaijani minority. It is very important that students in this region can more easily find work and contribute to the development of the Georgian economy. In the long term, creating new programmes that meet the needs of the local economy also helps to improve the public perception and attractiveness of vocational education and training, especially among parents. Local businesses are also expected to benefit from having agricultural workers with the right specialisations and skills needed to develop their processes to ensure they comply with EU regulations.

### **Financial implications**

All the funding for the centre comes from the government and the newly created Skills Agency. All the funding for the new programmes and the second building will come from the government. Finding sponsorship or donations from the private sector is a top priority for the college but this is just beginning as the government has only recently relaxed bureaucratic regulations and increased CoVE

autonomy, allowing for a more entrepreneurial approach. Once the new curricula were developed and approved by the MoES, the CoVE received funding to purchase modern equipment<sup>36</sup>.

### Required resources

The development of the new agricultural programmes depended on a combination of human, digital and financial resources. The college needed external help to ensure that the new programmes were relevant to the labour market.

### Aspect to be considered in future work

Finding highly qualified and motivated teachers to set up and teach in the new programmes is not easy, but it is crucial for success. Teachers' pedagogical skills need to be improved, and salaries should be increased in order to attract the next generation of qualified and motivated teachers.

## GEORGIA CASE 2:

### Establishing a joint college, the Construct2 College of Construction

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

### Context of the project

The Georgian Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) was approached by BK Construction, a private company seeking advice on how to set up a small training centre for construction workers. The Minister of Education made a counteroffer to the company to set up a joint college. The two parties eventually signed an agreement outlining their contributions: the Ministry would choose a suitable site, which the private company would renovate into a new centre. In order to improve employment opportunities outside the capital, the Ministry chose an old building in Zestaponi that had served as a vocational training centre for 20 years but was in poor condition, which BK Construction agreed to renovate and help pay for equipment and management.

### Preconditions and motivating factors

The key decisionmakers in the process were BK Construction and the Ministry, which had a mutual interest in improving the quality and labour market relevance of VET training in the construction sector in Georgia. The centre was created to help address the labour mismatch in the Georgian economy whereby companies needed skilled workers but could not find them, while many people were desperate to find work. BK Construction attracts students to the centre by offering them financial support in the form of a scholarship and the possibility of employment upon graduation. These benefits are particularly important in attracting students from low-income, disadvantaged backgrounds. They are also important in motivating students to complete their studies. A dormitory has been built next to the centre to improve accessibility and outreach to Georgians from all over the country.

### Description of the practice with actors and their roles

Nearly 200 people were involved in the establishment of the joint college, ranging from BK Construction employees to various government officials. Representatives of the construction company participated in decision-making and organisation, and donated resources. They hired the project manager, who was responsible for organising the CoVE establishment process (including the legal

<sup>36</sup> Other aspects to be further explored and discussed by the ENE network could include: how CoVEs' budgets are determined; procurement of consumables, educational materials and equipment; charging for services (e.g. equipment maintenance); use of internally generated funds; outsourcing or sharing of services (e.g. cleaning, equipment maintenance); teacher salaries and policies on incentives, etc.

framework process), preparing the modules, communicating with the MoES and other national and local policy makers, and managing the construction phase. The company also provided the CoVE with practical trainers and took responsibility for the design of the modules, employing specialist curriculum developers. The company also provided financial support for the renovation of the CoVE and scholarships for students.

Government officials, including from the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the Ministry of Economy (MoE) and the Quality Accreditation Authority (QAA), identified the needs of the CoVE students, facilitated the selection of premises and assisted with the legal requirements and approvals for the establishment of the CoVE. The MoES covered operational costs, and once the curriculum was developed, the QAA approved and authorised the CoVE to operate with the new curricula. The Financial Department monitored expenditure, while the CoVE managers, acting as PPP organisers, assisted with fundraising and monitoring. They played an important role in the government approval process, in the preparation of the study process and in the introduction of the new curricula. External experts assisted with initial curriculum development. Local policymakers supported the establishment of the centre by obtaining the necessary permits and promoting it to the local public.

### Impact according to the interviewees

Both the company and the government have benefited from the collaboration: the short-term programmes offered by the college are an opportunity for the co-founder, BK Construction, to train workers for its specific needs while the long-term programmes serve national and local educational interests. The centre works closely with local authorities to increase student numbers. College graduates are able to find good jobs with the skills they have learned, while companies have a larger pool of skilled workers. The growing employment rate has had a positive impact on household incomes. In addition, the establishment of the Centre and its relevance to working life has contributed to a slow but steady improvement in the public perception of VET and has had a positive impact on students' attitudes and mindsets.

### Financial implications

The MoES chose an old, abandoned VET centre as the site for the college. The private partner BK Construction spent more than 4 million Georgian laris (EUR 1.3 million) on renovations and equipment for the short-term training programmes, and provides scholarships to the students who attend these. About half of the Centre's operating budget comes from the MoES and the other half from BK Construction. The centre offers both short-term training courses that provide skilled workers to the construction company (mainly funded by BK Construction) and long-term courses representing State education programmes (funded by the MoES).

### Required resources

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

### Barriers to good practice

One of the main challenges in attracting students to the centre is the negative public perception of vocational education and training in Georgia. The older generation tends to have a very negative view of VET, but the younger generation is more open. The centre has suffered from the opening of the visa regime between Georgia and the EU, which has led to a high drop-out rate as students are tempted to migrate to EU Member States in search of work. According to the interviewee, the problematic attitude of students towards the education offered by the college is due to the fact that tuition fees are covered by the MoES, meaning that education is free for the students. There is little incentive to apply for a full course of study if a student has even a short-term opportunity to work abroad. Negative public perception is likely to contribute to the high drop-out rate, as students do not see their education as particularly prestigious and have few qualms about leaving in search of better opportunities.

As part of its funding comes from the private sector and part from the public sector, there are also bureaucratic challenges to the functioning of the college. The combination of public and private funding creates problems, for example in obtaining the right materials and equipment needed for training in a timely manner. Recently, however, significant progress has been made.

### Aspects to be considered in future work

Launching a new vocational college requires effective communication with the public. Students and parents need to be convinced that the educational opportunity is worthwhile and will give students a real career advantage. For the centre to function properly, it is important to attract students who are committed to completing their studies. These social aspects of improving VET are easily overlooked when working on technical and bureaucratic arrangements, when ultimately the centre's success or failure depends on students and parents 'voting with their feet'.

Legislative changes are needed to further facilitate collaboration between public and private partners. The director argued that it is important for the centre to be able to work with two separate accounts: one for public funds and the second one for funds received from the private sector. This ensures that public funds are protected while private funds make it easier to respond more effectively to budget needs and changes.

### 3.3.3 Spain

#### SPAIN CASE 1:

#### PPPs with local businesses, CIFP Rio Tormes

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

#### Context of the projects

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

The process of initiating, implementing and learning from these projects has become one of the centre's key good practices. The ideas for projects 1 and 2 came from teachers who wanted to challenge their students by offering more advanced, work-related course content. As there was no money in the centre's normal budget to develop additional content, the teachers applied to the regional authorities for additional AULAEMPRESA funding for specific learning activities. They proposed projects to the director of their centre, who presented their proposals to the regional authorities that then decided which proposals would be funded. In order to increase the credibility of their proposals, the teachers asked companies (in P1 an automotive electronics company and in P2 a large company in the agricultural sector) to share with them the necessary technical skills and materials. The idea for P3 came from the director of the centre who also acted as project coordinator. Project 3 was linked to a larger funding mechanism.

## Preconditions and motivating factors

The centre has a long tradition of working with the private sector. Many teachers at the centre have good relationships with local businesses that are easy to build on. As the centre has a very limited budget, teachers have to use their personal contacts with local businesses to create new opportunities for collaboration and learning. This would not be possible without the teachers' very high level of motivation and professional pride. Teachers are willing to do extra work because they understand that the additional funds the centre receives from these projects ultimately benefit the students by improving the quality of education. It also helps teachers develop their own professional skills. In addition, successful projects also strengthen the centre's good relationship with local authorities.

## Description of the practice with actors and their roles

More than 50 teachers and students were involved to varying degrees in project 1 (building a handmade electronic remote control for a car). Those most involved in the implementation of the project were 3 teachers and 8 students. The project was designed and coordinated by one of the teachers who researched all necessary information to make the project a reality. He also helped students with various tasks throughout the project. Another teacher prepared the necessary documentation for the project and helped the students install the hardware on the vehicles. The third teacher gave clarifications to the students, dispelling their doubts and helping them during the installation and testing phase. The first group of students spent a lot of time developing the project, both installing components in the workshop and adjusting the fuel injection system. The additional work in the electronics department was done by the second group of students.

More than 70 people, including teachers and students, were involved to varying degrees in project 2 (restoration of a tractor). Those most involved in the implementation of the project were 3 teachers and 16 students. The main teacher applied for funding for the project and made all necessary purchases. He coordinated all phases of project implementation and requested help from other teachers. He also selected the groups of students to be involved. The second teacher coordinated the dismantling of the tractor to be restored and handled the electrical system. The third teacher did the painting work. The first group of students was responsible for rebuilding the diesel engine. The second group worked on the power steering and the third group handled the dismantling, painting and electrical work.

Project 3, which taught students about the use of robotics in cinema, involved more than 35 teachers and students, although to varying degrees. Those most involved in the implementation of the project were 2 teachers and 9 students. The director of the centre coordinated and designed the project, researched all necessary information to make the project a reality, and helped the students with different tasks throughout the project. He also made all necessary purchases. The second teacher spent a lot of time with the students, developing the project and preparing the necessary supporting documents. He also purchased items for the project. The students spent a lot of time developing the project and learning things in addition to what they had already learned in class.

## Impact according to the interviewee

Teachers from the centre began to apply to the regional authorities for additional funding to carry out small 'extra' projects in addition to their normal teaching duties. These projects were successful and over time the regional authorities began to approach the centre to see if they would be interested in participating in larger and more challenging partnerships, of which project 3 is a good example.

The organisational culture of the centre means that applying for 'extra projects' has become a routine, day-to-day activity. The knowledge and skills that teachers and students have developed through project work have increased their confidence and given them a sense of pride. The centre has also received new resources and equipment from the projects and has also improved its normal teaching by closely following developments in working life closely and through regular interaction with the private sector.

Although initially small and isolated, projects have grown in frequency, duration and budget over time. The centre now uses the projects strategically to develop its own activities and compete with other



centres in the region. The projects are increasingly interlinked and organised so that they contribute to the wider aim of improving the quality of education that students receive. The scale of the projects has steadily increased, reflecting the recognition by the regional authorities of the centre's ability to exercise greater autonomy in managing larger projects, thereby fostering a mutually beneficial dynamic.

### Financial implications

Projects take time and require money. The centre's small budget forces teachers to seek innovative ways of collaborating with the private sector in order to access additional resources. However, those responsible for initiating and carrying out 'extra' projects are forced to do the extra work without compensation, due to strict regulations that dictate how many hours each teacher must teach per week.

The director tries to help by offering as much flexibility as possible in scheduling classes. However, in the end, however, this is not very much, as all hours prescribed by the regulations have to be taught as planned. So there is still plenty of room to give CoVEs autonomy in certain areas, such as staffing, planning and organisational practices.

### Required resources

Highly motivated and skilled teachers are needed to coordinate, initiate and implement new projects so that all parties (local businesses, students and local authorities) are satisfied. The director supports the teachers in various ways, for example by handling coordination with the regional authorities and informing teachers about new calls for proposals. The projects are based on close collaboration with the private sector, which provides various types of technical materials and know-how, as well as excellent technical facilities for workplace learning. Teachers' professional networks and credibility are very important for building trust and long-term relationships with companies.

### Barriers to good practice

Projects need to be approved by the local authorities, which means that a lot of energy is spent on dealing with bureaucracy and not on productive work. Teachers spend time preparing the documents for submission to the local authorities and then have a lot of paperwork to do in relation to financial reporting. As a result, not all the teachers in the centre want to be involved in 'extra projects' because they see them as too much additional work. The rules governing the number of teaching hours per teacher are inflexible and do not recognise anything other than basic teaching, meaning that the teachers involved in organising and implementing projects still have to do the same amount of teaching as their non-participating colleagues in addition to this development work.

### Aspect to be considered in future work

The interviewees recommend that all centres take up this type of project-based work as soon as possible and learn as they go. Because working life is changing so rapidly, the speed of development is much faster when the reference point is outside of the centre.

## SPAIN CASE 2:

### Dual VET, Colegio Cristo Rey

Name of CoVE	Colegio Cristo Rey
Country and region	Spain, Castilla y León
Year established	1975
Main training sector(s)	Mechanics Electronics Automation

## Context of the project

The interviewees emphasised that not all the projects they carry out in cooperation with companies have automatically resulted in good practices – some simply produce a transfer of knowledge and provide material resources without changing the way things are done at the centre. However, they stressed the importance of developing good practices in response to the recent introduction of the dual modality of vocational training, called FP Dual. For example, the companies they work with have to visit the centre to introduce themselves to the students and explain the technical profiles and skills they are looking for in the student population. In addition, individual visits to the companies are also organised for the students to give them first-hand experience of what a working day in the company is like. This has strengthened the centre's links with the world of work and required adjustments to its day-to-day work.

## Preconditions and motivating factors

The development of good practices in relation to FP Dual is largely based on the training centre's close relationship with local companies. Historically, the centre has built an excellent reputation, which attracts highly motivated and committed teachers and students who wish to achieve professional success and value the high quality learning experience. The school administration also enjoys a great deal of freedom and autonomy in designing and implementing various programmes and projects. The centre's explicit religious educational mission also supports the development of deep relationships between teachers and students. The ethos of the centre is to instil strong moral and ethical qualities in its students, as well as training them to become skilled and well-adjusted workers.

## Description of the practice with actors and their roles

The dual VET project involved 12 teachers, the headteacher, the director of studies and 64 students. The teachers acted as project organisers and selected the companies in which the students would be trained. They designed a training plan to be followed by the companies and monitored students' training. The headteacher and the head of the VET Department coordinated and supervised the project, acting as school representatives at policy level. They also certified and supervised all dual VET projects. The involvement of local policymakers at the beginning and the end of the project was limited to developing financial procedures and requesting reports on project implementation.

## Impact according to the interviewee

Students benefit from knowledge transfer from the participating companies. FP Dual contributes to the integration of students into working life. The students involved in FP Dual projects feel that they have improved their personal and professional skills and developed a more entrepreneurial attitude. Companies benefit because they can find promising new employees through the projects. FP Dual has also led to an improvement in the relationship between the education centre and businesses, making it possible to develop projects with new partners. Good relations with companies increase the attractiveness of the centre, resulting in more students enrolling. Overall, the success of FP Dual has contributed to the growth of the centre.

As well as increasing the number of students at the centre, there has been a general improvement in the public perception of VET in Spain. The Cristo Rey College is one of the reference points for this new and improved VET model because of its strong historical links with the region's working life. Students, parents and companies are beginning to believe in the possibilities of VET. Gradually, the centre is introducing an increasing number of companies to a long-term, high-quality approach to VET. This work attracts both teachers and students to the centre.

## Financial implications

The college receives funding for some of its projects from the regional education authority. In addition, the companies participating in dual vocational training (FP Dual) offer some compensation to the students. In general, however, the companies do not provide direct material or other support to the college. All the money comes from the local government or from the centre's budget. In this sense, companies do not yet fully appreciate the long-term potential and benefits of this form of cooperation.

## Required resources

The development of good practice is financed through additional projects funded by the regional education authority. In addition to the necessary financial resources, the staff of the education centre provide the necessary human resources. The companies are also essential for project implementation.

## Barriers to good practice

Good practice is developed by the management of the centre working together with teachers. This often takes the form of projects that bring in additional funding. However, the projects bring additional administrative burdens and bureaucracy, which increase teachers' workload in addition to their normal teaching duties. Furthermore, companies are not yet sufficiently aware of the benefits to be gained from dual training, which they do not yet see as a long-term investment. As a result, it is the training centre, rather than the companies, that is more interested in initiating cooperation. FP Dual is still new to many private businesses, each company continuing to think about its own vested interest rather than long-term mutual interests. As a result, the companies are not yet providing the centre with the additional resources it needs to improve the quality of training, which means that it has to strike a balance between the students' need for a quality learning experience and the individual companies' interest in recruiting skilled workers. Both sides are still finding out what building a win-win relationship means.

## Aspect to consider in future work

The regulations governing project implementation are perceived as rigid and bureaucratic. The centres are largely unable to influence the way these rules are made as the process takes place between the regional and national education authorities. They are also unable to make adjustments to the system, even where changes would make the process more efficient. In the future, it would also be important for companies to provide some financial support as a sign of their commitment to counter the tendency to undervalue what is given for free.

## 3.3.4 Türkiye

### TÜRKIYE CASE 1:

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

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

### Context of the project

Türkiye has one of the largest plastics industries in Europe. In order to continue to grow and become more competitive, the Turkish plastics industry needs to attract and train new workers. In 2020, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) selected the PAGEV Plastic Technology School as one of its new Project Protocol Schools. The school works closely with some of the largest industrial foundations in the Turkish plastics industry. One example of a good practice developed by the school is the process of training plastic industry workers to act as qualified instructors for students in the new work-based VET system that Türkiye deployed in December 2021. In this new system, students attend school for one day and spend the other four days in a work placement. The private sector needs help from the school to train qualified instructors who can in turn train the new students who enter the workplace.



## Preconditions and motivating factors

The circumstances supporting the good practice are multifaceted. Firstly, it was very important that teachers embraced and committed themselves to the new VET system. Secondly, the interest and motivation of the private sector in developing VET to make it more relevant to working life was also crucial in view of the need for more resources. Finally, the transformation of the school to ensure that it is better able to meet the future skills needs of the labour market required coordination and support from the Ministry of National Education.

## Description of the practice with actors and their roles

Nine members of staff were involved in the project. Coordinators were responsible for the cooperation between the company and the school. The theory teacher gave talks and made presentations during the implementation stage. The course teacher taught practical applications. The school administration supervised the assignments and regional education administrators supervised and coordinated all activities throughout the project.

## Impact according to the interviewee

The development of good practices has increased professionalism and set a higher standard for the quality of education at the school and, by extension, the wider VET system. This has increased the motivation of students to study and work in the plastics industry. The system is becoming more efficient and employees in the private companies are more satisfied with the work of graduates. The new legislation has led to organisational changes in the centre that have also contributed to the development of work-based training.

## Financial implications

As a project protocol school supported by the Ministry of National Education, the vocational training institution receives additional funding from the government. The private sector (more specifically, the largest foundation in the Turkish plastics industry) also provides financial support. The high level of private sector commitment means that, unlike ordinary vocational schools, the PAGEV college does not suffer from a lack of appropriate teaching equipment and facilities.

## Required resources

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

## Barriers to good practice

Although the new, work-based VET system is seen as a major improvement on the previous system, it has not yet been fully accepted by parents. There is also a lack of knowledge about the new system in the other branches of the Turkish education system, which affects its public perception. As it has only recently been introduced, there has not been enough time to properly promote it and raise parents' awareness of it. In addition to parents' lack of knowledge and scepticism about the new work-based VET system, another problem is that the plastics industry itself is largely unknown in Türkiye. Another challenge mentioned by the interviewee is that some teachers and trainers are not sufficiently motivated or well suited to the teaching profession, and dealing with this issue causes many difficulties.

## Aspect to consider in future work

The headmaster argued that more time was needed to prepare and raise awareness among students and parents of the new work-based VET system. There is currently a lack of knowledge about the new system in the other parts of the Turkish education system, which also affects public perception. Informing the public is crucial to changing the perception and image of VET.

## TÜRKIYE CASE 2:

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

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

#### Context of the project

The good practice involves the process of transforming the vocational school, which was established in 2009 by the private company Gedik Holding, into a sectoral centre of excellence in metal technology. The owner of Gedik Holding built and equipped the school and donated it to the public as an act of philanthropy. In 2019, the school was selected by the Ministry of National Education as a sectoral centre of excellence in the field of metal technology (it also specialises in furniture making), due to its close relationship with the private sector. The school has signed a protocol with Gedik Holding as a framework for establishing a public private partnership. The protocol is overseen by the Protocol Executive Board, which consists of a representative of Gedik Holding, the school principal and a director of education appointed by the Ministry as a representative of the central government.

#### Preconditions and motivating factors

There are hundreds of metal technology schools in Türkiye and they all need additional funding. The PHKG receives additional support from the Ministry of National Education and the Protocol Executive Board to cover the cost of new machinery. PHKG's headmaster finds it much easier to secure the necessary budget for his school compared to other schools. The Ministry sees the development work done by the school as a higher priority and, with help from the private sector, the school can easily lobby for more money.

#### Description of the practice with actors and their roles

All students in the school participated in the project. The Protocol Executive Board monitored students' learning outcomes on a regular basis. Project implementation was entrusted to the school's vocational teachers project who also followed the latest technological developments. The headmaster was responsible for policymaking and ensuring smooth cooperation. The industry representative was a main actor in the project, closely following developments in metal technology that shaped both the company's production process and the quality of education at the school. The District National Education Representative acted as legal representative and signed a binding agreement with the government to ensure that the needs of the industry are met.

#### Impact according to the interviewee

After becoming a sectoral centre of excellence the school acquired new high-tech machinery. With all new machines and robots the students are learning to operate, they have more confidence in themselves and their skills. Students are more hopeful about their career prospects after graduation because of the greater likelihood of finding a job in their area of study. The close relationship and direct line of communication with the Ministry has increased the motivation of the school's administration and staff, who have gradually become more ambitious in their activities, even applying for a patent for one of their development projects. The close relationship with the private sector has improved staff professionalism and the quality of education offered by the school. The workload of teachers and administrators has also increased significantly as there are high expectations for staff to continually propose and develop additional projects. There are also higher expectations for teachers

because the school, as a sectoral centre of excellence, is responsible for developing and modelling new ways of improving the quality of education in metal technology.

### Financial implications

The original aim of Türkiye's vocational education reform was to improve the quality of education so that students do not need to be retrained after graduation and entering the labour market. To achieve this, the Ministry originally wanted to shift some of the financial burden of training to the private sector, which would benefit from a skilled workforce. However, the private sector was unwilling to contribute to the costs of the sectoral centre of excellence. The money for the new technology comes from the Ministry's budget, but the private sector is helping the centre to adopt and implement the new technology.

### Required resources

One of the main challenges is that there are not enough consumables (training materials) for the students to work with. In metalwork, it is essential that students have sufficient practice working with real materials to master the skills. Despite the purchase of high-tech machinery, there is currently not enough money for training materials to enable all students to work efficiently.

### Barriers to good practice

The main challenges are related to the internal dynamics of the school. There are disciplinary problems with some of the students and several teachers are reluctant to embrace the changes and innovations that the school is working to introduce. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) wants teachers to be more productive, actively participate in various innovation processes and work closely with the private sector but not all the teachers are enthusiastic about the changes, which require additional training, for example on how to operate the new high-tech machines. The MoNE's increasing demands for professional excellence and innovation from teachers in the new sectoral centre seem to clash with the teachers' own views on their role and status and the purpose of education.

### Aspect to consider in future work

The interviewee argued that the school should have more autonomy to spend its budget freely. Currently, the budget for new machines and the materials needed for training come from different places, which means that there are discrepancies and bureaucracy problems. The interviewee called for better dialogue between the Ministry and the administration of VET schools in order to avoid various problems related to planning and logistics.

## TÜRKIYE CASE 3:

### Establishment of the Samsung Academy and Merih Lifts Academy, Ankara Yenimahalle Şehit Mehmet Şengül Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School

Name of CoVE	Ankara Yenimahalle Şehit Mehmet Şengül Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School
Country and region	Türkiye, Ankara
Year established	1968
Main training sector(s)	Information and Communication Technology Technology and Engineering Electronics, Machinery and Furniture

### Context of the projects

The headmaster presented two public-private partnership projects as examples of good practice at the school: the Samsung Academy and the Merih Lifts Academy. Both projects are based on protocols

signed between the school and private companies under the supervision of the Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The Samsung Academy was established after Samsung contacted the Provincial Directorate of National Education and asked to be matched with a suitable vocational school to set up an academy to train students in the repair of small electronic components. The Academy operated between 2013 and 2019. The Merih Lifts Academy was established after the Turkish company Merih Lifts contacted the school to set up an academy to train students to work in lift maintenance. It was established in 2018 and is still functioning.

### **Preconditions and motivating factors**

The circumstances that supported the establishment of the two academies included the school's good reputation and expertise in the field of electronics and communications, the fact that it is located in a large industrial zone with logistical and technical advantages and, finally, the interest and support of the national and provincial policymakers in initiating collaboration with large private companies.

### **Description of the practice with actors and their roles**

Workshops and labs that are still in use were established while the Samsung Academy operated between 2013 and 2019, with a total of 1 125 participants involved in its work. The Merih Lifts Academy was established in 2018 and has had 183 participants. At both academies, theoretical and practical instructors managed classes, identified workshop needs and participated in pedagogical training. They also organised internships, assisted with job placements and attended regular training courses. Students took part in evening vocational training at the Samsung Academy and in continuing studies at the Merih Lifts Academy.

The studies were organised and supervised by the headmaster, while local policymakers signed protocols and approved the training arrangements for teachers/instructors. Both academies signed protocols, offered financial and educational support, equipped and upgraded workshops, provided instructor training, arranged internships, recruited graduates, met workshop needs, hosted factory tours and provided workwear and token gifts. The Samsung Academy Protocol helped students obtain internships and motivated them in their search for suitable jobs. Merih Lifts also initiated continuous teacher training and has been providing ongoing financial support since the launch of the project.

### **Impact according to the interviewees**

Working with Samsung has helped the school build a better relationship with the Ministry and other private companies. The MoNE brings foreign delegations to the school and uses it to showcase PPPs in Turkish VET. The establishment of the academy has made the school more attractive to students, with the quality of teaching improving and students finding it easier work to find jobs in their field or continue their studies compared to the graduates of other vocational schools. Overall, PPPs have improved the quality of education at the school, bringing it into closer alignment with the official requirements of the Turkish National Qualifications Framework. The teachers have also benefited from in-house training, which the companies provide for the staff. The school is seen as an attractive place to work by teachers who are interested in developing and maintaining their skills.

### **Financial implications**

Most project costs were covered by the private companies, without the MoNE having to provide additional funding. The companies paid for (among other things) the in-house training of staff to learn how to use the new technology. Funding was also provided for workshops. The school paid for some of the equipment from its standard budget from the Ministry and some equipment was donated by the private companies involved. The cost of renovation works was also covered by the private sector.

### **Required resources**

The school is strategically located and has sufficient space for an academy to be built on its premises. It also has a good reputation that attracts students. In terms of human resources, teacher motivation was very important for the success of the collaborative project.

### Barriers to good practice

The main challenge was that some of the older teachers in the school initially resisted the changes brought about by the launch of the academy. Some teachers apparently felt that the new innovator workshops threatened their status as pedagogical experts. The disruption caused by the construction works undertaken to upgrade the centre's technical capacity also contributed to rising tensions. However, as the project has continued for more than a decade, there has been a gradual change in teachers' attitudes, despite some lingering tensions.

### Aspect to be considered in future work

The headmaster expressed regret that the protocols signed between the school and Samsung were coming to an end and that once this happened, there would be no way to continue working together. The school would like to extend the cooperation, but the choice seems to be out of its hands and depends on the binding provisions of the protocol, over which it does not have any control. As the MoNE cannot always pay for new equipment, the school also relies on the private sector for the latest equipment. There were also some technical shortcomings during the construction phase of the laboratories, which could have been avoided with better planning.

## 3.4 Summary of the findings

The results show that CoVEs have established PPPs in very different ways depending on the national, regional and local context. Good practice is being developed in a variety of ways for the overall benefit of students and staff, policymakers and the private sector. Although many of the cases presented above are country-specific, there are a number of common challenges associated with increasing autonomy and public-private partnerships in VET. The autonomy of CoVEs is gradually being introduced and expanded in all four national VET systems, supported by greater transparency and accountability. Greater financial autonomy for CoVEs means that the schools are able to make local management decisions more freely, which contributes to a better standard of teaching and finding innovative solutions to help equip students with skills that are relevant to working life.

These aspects are further explored and discussed in section 4.

The study has confirmed that there is currently no common, globally recognised definition of centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs) which, in their current form, include a wide range of vocational education and training (VET) centres that work or seek to work with the private sector in order to improve students' employability and respond to the skills needs of the labour market. Policymakers in the different countries set different goals for CoVEs and treat them differently in terms of prioritisation of resources and political commitment (ETF, 2021). In some countries they function as the central hubs or development centres for the VET system, while in others there is only a handful of vocational schools providing skills to students.

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

## 4. Lessons learned and way forward

This study critically examines how autonomy and public-private partnerships (PPPs) are being developed in the four selected ETF partner countries. Through expert interviews with CoVEs and policymakers, working processes and good practices for promoting autonomy and PPPs have been identified and highlighted. CoVEs are working hard to build relationships with the private sector in very different social, political and economic contexts.

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

The cases in this study show that, despite challenging circumstances, more flexibility is being introduced into the curriculum and the private sector is becoming more involved in the VET system through collaboration, projects and partnerships. Industry representatives are providing technical and financial support for trainers and students, particularly in the area of dual VET.

Overall, the report presents a picture of several national VET systems in a state of flux, using the European Commission's CoVE model as a beacon to help steer their network of VET providers towards a more rapid response to working life skills for the sake of economic development. There are no quick or easy solutions to increasing autonomy and implementing PPPs effectively, but it is clear that in the countries studied the CoVEs are at the forefront of proposing and implementing more ambitious and effective solutions.

The discussion section is divided into three parts. Subsection 4.1 looks at the challenges faced by the different countries and CoVEs and the lessons they have learned. Subsection 4.2 sets out a summary of some of the good practices that have been developed and suggests a possible way forward. Subsection 4.3 sets out a summary of the discussion.

### 4.1 PPPs to date: challenges, and lessons learned

The countries in the study have shed light on the different steps, levels and mechanisms for implementing PPPs. However, the similarity of the themes that emerged in the thematic analysis of the interviews and the data collected through the questionnaire allows us to address the most common ideas about the challenges encountered and the lessons learned. We would also like to emphasise that the generalisations below are only tentative, especially when considering possible solutions.

The challenges encountered and lessons learnt from PPPs to date fall into the eight categories described below.

#### 1. Towards greater CoVE autonomy

Many of the interviewees described a general trend towards increased autonomy for CoVEs, particularly in terms of management, finance and teaching. This trend is supported by the fact that many countries are in the process of changing their legislation to make this a reality. However, the level of autonomy varies widely between the different countries and different types of VET institutions in the same country. CoVEs appreciate the increased autonomy they have recently been granted and are making good use of it. However, some important limitations remain. The meaning of 'greater autonomy' is also deeply rooted in the context of each country. While in some cases greater autonomy refers to CoVEs being able to manage their own staff or budget, in others the right of CoVEs to sell their own products is seen as a major step forward in terms of autonomy. Progress is therefore



relative. Overall, both policy makers and CoVEs recognise that more autonomy is needed for the success of PPPs.

## 2. Improving the image of VET, making it more attractive and disseminating good practice

One of the main challenges described by the participants is the negative public perception of VET. In some countries, the situation is gradually changing, but the participants emphasise that there is still a lot of work to be done to increase the attractiveness of the VET system in general and improve the image of CoVEs. Policymakers and CoVE representatives want to increase the attractiveness of VET for each group of actors (students, parents, teachers and the private sector). Given the conservative and sceptical attitudes of society towards VET, the participants emphasised the importance of advertising and promoting the new developments in VET policy and highlighting the novel approaches and good practices. There is an urgent need for better promotion, pre-launch marketing and the creation of a positive buzz. The promotion of CoVEs is mentioned as an important lesson learned and should be taken into account in future efforts. PPP implementation and good practices were reported to have had a positive effect on the image of CoVEs.

## 3. Private sector involvement

The role and motivation of the private sector in PPPs is seen as essential. At the policy level, the respondents reported the need to develop mechanisms to increase motivation, deepen involvement and support formulas for initiating further cooperation with the private sector. At CoVE level, participants mentioned the need to pay more attention to better coordinated actions with the private partners and the importance of concluding contracts with clearly defined responsibilities (e.g. guaranteeing students work placements in industry). CoVEs should organise structured events, such as fairs, exhibitions and visits, to bridge the gap between schools and the private sector and make it easier for students to get in touch with companies. Both policymakers and CoVEs consider it essential to try out new models of PPPs and share experiences from different contexts.

## 4. Finances and financial autonomy

This issue was raised by both policymakers and CoVEs. More specifically, it was mentioned that CoVEs have the right to act as entrepreneurs and sell their own products, but the practice is quite new in some countries and does not apply to all VET institutions. Implementing PPPs is one way for CoVEs to raise additional funds. Depending on the country and context, the funding may come from a private company or an international organisation or may be in the form of an additional grant from the public budget. The policymakers encourage CoVEs to participate in calls for proposals, including at international level. On the other hand, some CoVEs have in turn explained that participating in projects is still new and challenging for them (e.g. writing project proposals) due to lack of qualified staff and language barriers. The first steps in initiating a project also typically involve time-consuming bureaucratic procedures and additional workload for CoVE teachers and administrators.

Overall, other aspects of financial autonomy need to be taken into account in order to assess the further progress of CoVEs in this dimension. These include:

- - determination of the CoVE's budget;
- - the proportion of budget spent on infrastructure (e.g. buildings);
- - procuring consumables, teaching materials and equipment;
- - setting the salaries and incremental payments for teachers and administrators.
- - setting fees for learners to participate in specific VET programmes (e.g. adults);
- - service fees to be charged (e.g. for the use of property, sale of services);
- - using internally generated funds;
- - outsourcing or sharing of services (e.g. cleaning, IT maintenance);
- - other.

## 5. PPP for sustainable employment

At the CoVE level, responding to market demands and learning how to adopt new technologies are highlighted as essential aspects to keep up with the level of innovation and possible skills anticipation. It was also reported that curriculum review and modernisation should be undertaken to ensure that courses are in line with labour market needs and innovative technologies. CoVE representatives discussed the need for labour market analysis to be conducted expediently and on a regular basis. The role of the private sector was stressed: it should have a decision-making role in all phases. PPPs are the way to modernise VET education and make it more relevant to working life. It has been reported that the employability of CoVEs graduates increases after the implementation of good practices.

## 6. Qualified management and further training

Both CoVEs and policymakers addressed the need for qualified managers. Good management was explicitly described by one policymaker as a precondition for granting more autonomy to CoVEs — they need to be well managed to be able to cope with their new autonomy and create conditions for easier and more successful implementation of PPPs. As PPPs are a new practice for many CoVEs and their implementation requires staff to take on new responsibilities, it was emphasised that staff should also receive further training to equip them with new skills and attitudes.

## 7. Supporting teacher involvement in PPPs

CoVE representatives have emphasised that qualified and motivated teachers are one of the main drivers for initiating and implementing PPPs. In some cases, the time and work of teachers to ensure that students gain real work experience in enterprises is not recognised, and only the time spent teaching the school curriculum is remunerated. Such a lack of incentives combined with rigid bureaucracy adds to teachers' workload and stress levels, reducing motivation and increasing resistance to system change. It is crucial to recognise the critical role of teachers in developing PPPs. Guidelines should be developed to systematise the PPP process so that more teachers and staff can be involved. Teachers need support and incentives from local, regional and national decisionmakers to encourage their innovative and difficult work.

## 8. Sharing experiences

Participants addressed this issue at different levels and with different actors in mind. CoVEs focused mainly on the national level, stressing that the exchange of good practices should take place between schools presenting and exchanging success stories. They also argued that information on good practices should be shared with potential students and their parents as with local businesses in order to strengthen the role of civil society and increase community engagement. It is important that success stories are presented to wider audiences and not just school representatives. Policymakers are increasingly focusing on the sharing of good practice between schools and within the international community. Workshops, training events, open portals and platforms were mentioned as potential ways to transfer good practices and share experiences.



## Summary of the challenges, and lessons learnt:



## 4.2 Good practice and the way forward

National education systems have different ways of supporting CoVEs in establishing PPPs at local level: sometimes the process was initiated by a private company together with the central government and responsibility was then delegated to local administrations. In these cases, private companies first contacted the national or local authorities, which then passed on the request for cooperation to

specially selected CoVEs. In other cases, PPPs were initiated when teachers at a CoVE came up with ideas for new collaborative projects with private companies. In general, in highly centralised education systems, government officials played a more prominent role in initiating and organising PPPs than in more decentralised systems, where such initiatives were more dependent on local actors. In both centralised and decentralised systems, the main motivating factor for establishing PPPs was the strength of the relationship between the private sector and education stakeholders.

Given the diversity of circumstances, there is no single way forward. However, collected data does provide an opportunity to make a number of general recommendations and observations about what is working:

### 1. The autonomy of CoVEs should be progressively increased to ensure effective PPPs

Even in countries with traditionally highly centralised education systems, policymakers have begun to take steps to give CoVEs more room for self-governance and independent decision-making, supported by accountability practices. This makes sense as skills needs are often localised and can be difficult for national policymakers to accurately measure and predict (ETF 2020). Increasing the autonomy of CoVEs can remove bottlenecks in decision-making and reduce the amount of bureaucratic back-and-forth.

The purpose of autonomy is to foster a culture of trust between local, regional and national actors (World Bank 2015). PPPs act as a kind of barometer of trust, as they inevitably involve relinquishing control over some aspects of education. Local capacity is gradually enhanced by giving CoVEs administrators and staff a sense of ownership of the process of initiating and developing PPPs. In the day-to-day organisation and management of PPPs, administrators are constantly having to make decisions about, for example, human resources management. If teachers and staff are allocated centrally, and local administrators are not empowered to make important decisions, such as hiring and reassigning or dismissing teachers, there is a risk of getting of the process stuck in a rut.

Autonomy must go hand in hand with accountability so that everything that happens in CoVEs and PPPs is lawful and supported by various soft mechanisms. However, improving the quality and relevance of VET to working life through closer cooperation with the private sector should be both a bottom-up and bottom-down process. The establishment of sectoral boards or councils with representation from private stakeholders is an important step but does not negate the need to delegate sufficient autonomy and responsibility to local administrators, who have the best knowledge of the skills needed in their area and potential private sector partners.

### 2. Policymakers and administrators should provide more guidance and support to teachers and trainers in planning and implementing PPPs

Highly motivated and engaged teachers inspire students and support PPPs. In the interviews, human resources and additional funding emerged as the two most valuable assets for CoVEs. Teachers, administrators and CoVEs staff urgently need further training and additional guidance on how to implement PPPs. At the institutional level, practical guidelines and support systems need to be developed on an institutional level so that teachers and administrators can better attract private sector companies and effectively implement collaborative projects. At the national level, some a coordinating body is essential to help link CoVEs with businesses.

Teachers are essential in building and maintaining relationships with local businesses. Teachers help to ensure that the students participating in dual VET schemes and other work-based learning receive appropriate quality and amount of support and instruction. Teachers also have much to offer to the development of the pedagogical aspects of work-based learning. Motivating and retraining high-performing teachers can give CoVEs a decisive advantage over their competitors. Policymakers should create mechanisms that allow teachers to propose projects together with the private sector.

Several participants described how the establishment of CoVEs and PPPs has also led to increased tensions and conflicts between administrators and teachers. Some teachers in the centres reportedly see PPPs as 'extra work' and are reluctant to leave their comfort zone and step out into the world of work. On the other hand, other teachers see PPPs as an opportunity to develop their own professional

expertise. Resolving conflict in the workplace is never easy and requires patience, empathy and dialogue. Introducing incentives is another effective strategy for engaging teachers in VET excellence and CoVE performance. Many mistakes could be avoided if teachers were involved in the process from the beginning. Giving CoVEs more autonomy to manage their staff would be an important step forward in this respect. However, increasing CoVEs autonomy also requires that CoVE administrators and senior management be provided with more professional training opportunities to cope with the new demands. CoVEs need training and support to work effectively with the private sector.

### 3. Additional funding is important, but it is not everything

Budgetary autonomy in CoVEs is important for effective PPPs, as without it the CoVEs are unable to respond quickly to changing circumstances. National authorities have given some of the CoVEs the right to generate an income by selling their own products and services, which is an important step forward.

Nevertheless, several participants have pointed out that the lack of control over their own budgets has led to problems, for example in obtaining the materials needed for training. In centralised systems where CoVEs received their budget directly from the government through different streams, things do not always work efficiently and CoVEs have to constantly apply to the authorities in order to get what they need. While important, strict rules separating public and private funds also make it difficult to work with the private sector when companies that are willing to make much-needed investments in VET are unable to do so because of red tape, leaving both sides frustrated.

National policymakers should be aware that different types of funding instruments are needed to build closer links with the private sector. Smaller projects (costing only a few thousand euros) can help pave the way for larger PPPs involving international funding and coordination between several VET centres and enterprises. Participation in small-scale projects provides an opportunity for establishing contact and working relationships with private companies. Once companies recognise that CoVEs are motivated and competent to handle small projects, it is easier to propose larger collaborations, both to the private sector and national policymakers.

The only way to build up experience in this regard is to start with 'extra' development work, which also helps day-to-day activity in the centres by contributing to the professional competence of teachers and staff and giving students a broader perspective on working life. Smaller projects also require accountability, but the bureaucratic requirements should be proportionate to the amounts spent, so that the extra work required to fill in various forms does not outweigh the actual benefit of the development work done with the private sector.

Many CoVEs had plans to develop their international activities and sign more protocols, contracts and agreements with international organisations, but lacked knowledge of the necessary procedures. CoVE staff need training on how to initiate, participate in and coordinate international activities. Lack of knowledge and experience in the participating countries means that international funding remains largely untapped. Language barriers also prevent local actors from participating in international teacher training workshops and contacting potential partners to develop collaborative projects.

### 4. Dual VET systems are demanding and require a high level of commitment and support from CoVEs and private sector partners

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

Remuneration is crucial to get companies and students involved in the learning process. National education systems should provide incentives for companies to take on students. Students should also be rewarded by the companies as their skills develop and they become more productive.

#### 5. Improving public perception of VET takes time

Successful PPPs help convince both students and parents that VET is worthwhile. The emphasis on developing relevant employability skills and finding a job quickly after graduation is an important motivating factor for both students and parents. CoVEs therefore need to be competitive by both private and public sector standards.

CoVEs were mainly responsible for communicating the importance of VET. National authorities could benefit from taking part in these discussions, as they provide an opportunity to engage in dialogue to get a sense of what students' parents really value and how they perceive VET. The best way to change the poor public image is through a combination of local and national success stories of students finding their own way through VET. Parents need to be better informed about the opportunities offered by CoVEs through dialogue and workshops, and it is important that national authorities are involved in and learn from these discussions.

The streamlined and optimised governance systems that have been developed in CoVEs can serve as important examples for steering and reforming national VET policies. CoVEs can attract new VET students to quality institutions by working together with the private sector. They have a crucial role to play in developing the national economies and increasing employability. By promoting excellence, CoVEs make VET truly attractive to parents, students and employers. The lessons learned in CoVEs can be applied to the whole VET system.

#### 6. The development of CoVEs should also benefit the rest of the VET system

One of the most common justifications for providing additional resources and support to CoVEs is that, once they have improved the quality and attractiveness of training provision, they will help to raise the standards of the so-called 'mainstream' VET centres. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of sharing good practice and transferring excellence in VET. Most VET centres in this study did not seem to function as hubs or network nodes, but rather as isolated entities with special privileges. Platforms exchange with other VET centres need to be established, ranging from workshops and short training courses for administrators and staff to the joint development of common guidelines for setting up and managing PPPs. Experiences that have helped CoVEs to refine their processes need to be shared. CoVEs should also help non-CoVEs to benefit from internationalisation by acting as coordinators bringing together networks of local or regional VET actors and international funding. Excellence and inclusion are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they do require systematic efforts by national policymakers to bridge existing gaps in capacity and improve the overall quality of VET.



## Summary of the good practices and ways forward:



### 4.3 Discussion summary

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

The results of the study show that there is a clear overall trend towards increased autonomy for CoVEs and the establishment of PPPs in the four partner countries. The national, regional and local systems through which autonomy and PPPs are to be achieved are still evolving and require further testing and adjustment. Likewise, the right balance between public and private interests and between trust and control is still being worked out. Local, regional and national actors are all in the process of recalibrating their activities and roles to enable CoVEs to fully embrace their mission and find their proper place within the system.

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

Despite the many challenges identified in this paper, it is clear that the implementation of PPPs has had a dramatic impact on VET systems. PPPs can be seen as a force for reorganising VET systems and their internal processes, improving their relevance to working life and the image of VET in general. There now seems to be a strong consensus on the importance of PPPs and the question is not

whether to do them, but how best to do them. Each country is currently going through a process of finding the right tools and processes for the job. This is likely to happen gradually, one successful partnership at a time. It is therefore essential at this stage that practitioners teach and learn from each other by sharing their experiences and good practice at local, national and international level.

## 5. Appendices

### 5.1 Survey questionnaire

#### Survey for CoVEs

Dear Survey Respondent,

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

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

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

Thank you once again for your kind support.

School information \*

The name of your VET school	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>

Contact information \*

First name

Last name

Email

What is your current position? \*

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

Does your VET school excel in something specific? \*

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

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

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



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

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

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

Which ones of the aforementioned practices specify for:

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

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

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

1.

2.

3.

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

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

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

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

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

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

IVET

CVET

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

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

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

What are your lessons learned from PPPs so far? \*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yes. Please elaborate, how?

\_\_\_\_\_

No. Please elaborate, what is hindering this?

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Are there any final comments you would like to make?

## 5.2 Interview questions

### List of interview questions for the CoVE representatives:

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

### List of interview questions for the policymakers:

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

### 5.3 Interview clarification table

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

## 5.4 Table of the interviewees

COUNTRY	INTERVIEWEE	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES IN THE INTERVIEW	ORGANISATION
Georgia	Policy maker	1	Ministry of Education and Science
	CoVE representative	1	LEPL College Iberia
	CoVE representative	1	Construction College "Construct2"
	CoVE representative	1	LEPL College Modus
Azerbaijan	Policy maker	1	State Agency on Vocational Education under the Ministry of Education
	CoVE representative	1	Goychay VET Centre
	CoVE representative	1	Baku Central state VET centre on industry and innovation
	CoVE representative	3	Gabala State Vocational Education Centre
Türkiye	Policy maker	2	Ministry of National Education Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education
	CoVE representative	1	PAGEV Plastic Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School,
	CoVE representative	1	Yenimahalle Şehit Mehmet Şengül Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School
	CoVE representative	1	Pendik Halil Kaya Gedik Metal Technology Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School
Spain (Castilla y León)	Policy maker	2	Ministry of Education  Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education, Special Education and Educational Equality



COUNTRY	INTERVIEWEE	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES IN THE INTERVIEW	ORGANISATION
	CoVE representative	2	CIFP Rio Tormes
	CoVE representative	2	Colegio Cristo Rey
Spain (Galicia)	Policymaker	2	Ministry of Culture, Education and University Sub-Directorate for Vocational and Technical Education

## 5.5 Glossary

Autonomy	The right of an education provider to self-governance, including independent and accountable decision-making in educational, organisational, financial, staffing and other matters, in pursuit of activity carried out within the scope defined by the law.
Accountability	The fact or condition of being accountable; having the responsibility to report. Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) Centres of vocational excellence in VET contribute to regional development, innovation and/or smart specialisation strategies, including through high quality provision and partnerships. Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) bring together a wide range of local partners, such as providers of vocational education and training, employers, research centres, development agencies and employment services (among others), to develop 'skills ecosystems' that contribute to regional, economic and social development, innovation and smart specialisation strategies (European Commission 2020).
Innovation	Innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations (OECD).
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	A KPI is a measurable value that shows how effectively an organisation is achieving key business objectives. Organisations use KPIs at different levels to evaluate their success in achieving their goals.
Learning environment	The learning environment refers to the different physical places, contexts, and cultures in which students learn. Students may learn in a wide variety of settings and benefit from different resources, such as out-of-school locations and outdoor environments. The learning environment also refers to educational settings and pedagogical approaches that facilitate learning – for example, by holding classes in relevant natural ecosystems, grouping desks in specific ways, using audio, visual and digital technologies, etc.
Soft skills	Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients, among others, that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others and perform well.
Tracer study	A tracer study is a survey of graduates conducted after they have graduated or completed their education. Common topics for a tracer study include questions about study progress, the transition to work, use of the skills learned and current occupation.
Public Private Partnership (PPP)	A mechanism for coordinating action and sharing responsibility between public and private VET stakeholders, with a view to formulate, design, finance, manage or sustain a project of common interest.
Quality assurance (QA)	A QA system aims to ensure that the quality requirements in vocational education and training are fulfilled.

## 5.6 ACRONYMS

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

## 5.7 References

URLs last accessed January 2023.

Cedefop; Fundae. Vocational education and training in Europe: Spain, *Cedefop; ReferNet. Vocational education and training in Europe database*, 2019. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/spain>

Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030), *CELEX, 2021/C 66/01 (OJ C, C/66, 26.02.2021, p. 1)*, 2021. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01))

Creswell, J.W., *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among the Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013.

*Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the establishment of the State Agency for Vocational Education*, 2016. [https://edu.gov.az/uploads/peshe-tehsili/2021/Pes%C9%99\\_T%C9%99hsili\\_uzr%C9%99\\_Dovl%C9%99t\\_Agentliyinin\\_yarad%C4%B1\\_mas%C4%B1\\_haqq%C4%B1nda\\_Az%C9%99rbaycan\\_Respublikas%C4%B1\\_Prezidentinin\\_F%C9%99rman%C4%B1.pdf](https://edu.gov.az/uploads/peshe-tehsili/2021/Pes%C9%99_T%C9%99hsili_uzr%C9%99_Dovl%C9%99t_Agentliyinin_yarad%C4%B1_mas%C4%B1_haqq%C4%B1nda_Az%C9%99rbaycan_Respublikas%C4%B1_Prezidentinin_F%C9%99rman%C4%B1.pdf)

Demas, A. and Arcia, G., *What matters most for school autonomy and accountability: A framework paper, Systems Approach for Better Education Results*, SABER Working Paper Series, No 9, The World Bank, Washington, DC, March 2015. [http://wbfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting\\_doc/Background/SAA/SABER\\_School\\_Autonomy\\_and\\_Accountability\\_What\\_Matters\\_Framework\\_Paper.pdf](http://wbfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/Background/SAA/SABER_School_Autonomy_and_Accountability_What_Matters_Framework_Paper.pdf)

Elliot, M., Fairweather, I., Olsen, W. and Pampaka, M., *A Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (1 ed.). London: Oxford University Press, 2016.

ETF (European Training Foundation), *Azerbaijan education, training and employment developments 2021*, Country report, ETF, Turin, 2021. [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/CFI\\_Azerbaijan\\_2021.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/CFI_Azerbaijan_2021.pdf)

ETF (European Training Foundation), *Centres of vocational excellence: An engine for vocational education and training development*, International study, ETF, Turin, 2020a. [www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-07/centres\\_of\\_vocational\\_excellence.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-07/centres_of_vocational_excellence.pdf)

ETF (European Training Foundation), *Centres' of vocational excellence (CoVEs) autonomy and forging public-private partnerships in VET skills development* (Policy Briefing), 2020b

ETF (European Training Foundation), *Centres of vocational excellence. Autonomy in forging public-private partnerships in vocational education and skills development* (Baseline Study), 2021. [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/coves\\_autonomy\\_in\\_forging\\_ppps.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/coves_autonomy_in_forging_ppps.pdf)

ETF (European Training Foundation), *Country Brief Türkiye: Integrated monitoring process of the EU Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabruck Declaration*, 2022. [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-06/Country%20Brief\\_Türkiye\\_edited.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-06/Country%20Brief_Türkiye_edited.pdf)

ETF (European Training Foundation), *Georgia education, training and employment developments 2021*, Country report, ETF, Turin, 2021. [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/CFI\\_Georgia\\_2021.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/CFI_Georgia_2021.pdf)

ETF (European Training Foundation), *Türkiye education, training and employment developments 2021*, Country report, ETF, Turin, 2021. [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/CFI\\_Türkiye\\_2021.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/CFI_Türkiye_2021.pdf)

Government of State, Ley Orgánica 3/2022, de 31 de marzo, de ordenación e integración de la Formación Profesional. *Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado* [78], March 2022. <https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2022/03/31/3/con>

Government of Georgia. Ordinance *Determining the value of products/paid services created in the educational process by an educational institution established by the state or with state participation, approving the rules and conditions for managing the income received from the mentioned activity*, January 2022. <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/5352408?publication=0>

Ministry of Education and Science in Georgia. *Georgian law on vocational education*, September 2018. <https://mes.gov.ge/uploads/files/kanoni-profesiuli-ganatilebis-shesaxeb-2018.pdf>

Ministry of Education and Science in Georgia, *Vocational education 2020-2021 report*, May 2022. [https://mes.gov.ge/mesgifs/1654088991\\_2022.05.31%202020-2021%20VET%20REPORT.pdf](https://mes.gov.ge/mesgifs/1654088991_2022.05.31%202020-2021%20VET%20REPORT.pdf)

Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Türkiye. *Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training Through Establishment of Sectoral Centres of Excellence Operation (IQVETIII)*, 2021. <http://www.ikg.gov.tr/improving-the-quality-of-vocational-education-and-training-through-establishment-of-sectoral-centres-of-excellence-operation-iqvetiii/?lang=en>

Ministry of National Education of Republic of Türkiye, *Educational Institutions Regulation*, 2016. <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/09/20160901-32.htm>

Ministry of Science and Education of Republic of Azerbaijan. *Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 'Exemplary Form of Work-based learning Contract' Article 3.6.4*, 2018. <https://e-qanun.az/framework/43296>

Ministry of Science and Education of Republic of Azerbaijan. *Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on vocational education*, April 2018. [https://edu.gov.az/uploads/peshe-tehsili/2021/Pes%C9%99\\_t%C9%99hsili\\_haqq%C4%B1nda-Qanun.pdf](https://edu.gov.az/uploads/peshe-tehsili/2021/Pes%C9%99_t%C9%99hsili_haqq%C4%B1nda-Qanun.pdf)

Public Private Partnership Agency of Georgia. *Guide to Public Private Partnerships in Georgia*, 2020. [https://ppp.gov.ge/app/uploads/2020/05/PPP\\_Guide\\_ENG\\_PRINT.pdf](https://ppp.gov.ge/app/uploads/2020/05/PPP_Guide_ENG_PRINT.pdf)

## Where to find out more:

### Website

[www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu)

### ETF Open Space

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

### Twitter

@etfeuropa

### Facebook

facebook.com/etfeuropa

### YouTube

[www.youtube.com/user/etfeuropa](http://www.youtube.com/user/etfeuropa)

### Instagram

instagram.com/etfeuropa/

### LinkedIn

linkedin.com/company/european-training-foundation

### E-mail

info@etf.europa.eu