TORINO PROCESS SYSTEM MONITORING REPORT: PALESTINE (2023)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DISCLAIMER

KEY TAKEAWAYS

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

- **Access and attractiveness:** Access to initial VET programs in Palestine is relatively smooth, but adult participation in continuous learning, notably through CVET or employment service trainings, is weaker. Although transitioning between parallel tracks in VET and general education is feasible, graduation and advancing to higher education remain challenging. The necessity to pass the high school exam (Tawjihi) seems to hinder permeability in the system. The performance in supporting progression and graduation is mid-range and below the international average. Addressing dropout risks and the challenges faced by students in three-year courses is crucial for promoting VET and adult education programs effectively.

- **Quality and relevance:** The VET system in Palestine performs well in imparting basic skills and competences to youth and adults, aligning with the transition towards green and digital societies. It notably outperforms other countries in providing basic skills to young learners, ensuring a strong foundation of essential competencies like IT and literacy. However, a significant challenge lies in bridging the gap between the VET system and the labour market. The current setup lacks a systemic approach to integrating work-based learning, and the employability of VET graduates is below the international average. The data emphasizes the need for a stronger connection between the education system and the labour market to enhance the applicability and benefit of the skills and competences acquired by learners in their future careers. In a proactive response aimed at aligning education with the demands of the labour market, the NTC endeavoured to establish a national committee for formulating a national qualifications framework.

- **Excellence and innovation:** Palestine exhibits a proactive approach towards forward-looking themes like digitalisation and the green transition, supported by substantial programs enhancing teachers' and trainers' skills and other initiatives in the domain of excellence. However, the VET system is less receptive to innovation compared to other countries, on average. The monitoring data suggests that a greater degree of receptiveness for innovation could further benefit areas like quality, participation, graduation, and access to learning within the VET system. The NTC is actively striving to address this task by integrating modern methodologies, including environmentally conscious practices and digital transformation.

- **System management and organisation:** Participatory governance in VET is an area of solid performance, reflecting a strong tradition of stakeholder engagement. Employer involvement remains a challenge, however. The NTC is actively engaged in bridging gaps within the sector through initiatives such as formulating a strategic plan and establishing organizational structures, including coordination committees and administrative hierarchies. Data availability is an area of concern, tying in with average performance in public accountability and quality assurance. Both findings indicate a need for more reliable mechanisms for accountability and public accessibility to information and quality assurance results. The professional capacity of staff in leadership positions is notably better compared to other countries, possibly suggesting that there are fewer challenges in school leadership quality. Despite this, international exposure for VET professionals and students is low. While current spending on VET and resource allocation may need revisiting for enhanced effectiveness, human resources management and the material base for teaching and learning are reported to be relatively adequate.

- **Quality and reliability of monitoring evidence:** The monitoring results of Palestine are the least comparable of all countries in the Torino Process sample, on average, and they are among the most susceptible to bias in international comparison. Despite these challenges, however, Palestine has a balanced, neutral self-assessment approach towards the performance of its VET system, neither being overly critical nor overly appreciative.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Focus and scope of monitoring

This report summarises the results of monitoring VET system performance in Palestine, initiated in the context of the Torino Process in 2022 and completed in September 2023.[1] "Performance" describes the extent to which the VET system delivers against a targeted selection of national and international obligations (commitments) to learners and other stakeholders in support of learning through life (lifelong learning - LLL). "VET system"[2] refers to the network of institutions, people, policies, practices, resources, and methodologies in a country and the way in which they are organised to provide individuals of any age with the practical skills, knowledge, and competencies needed for specific occupations, trades, or professions.

The focus of monitoring is on the contribution of initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET) to the learning activities of youth and adults in any learning setting (formal and non-formal), undertaken to improve their knowledge, skills, competences, and qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons. The purpose of the Torino Process monitoring exercise is to provide decision-makers, practitioners, and stakeholders with a reliable basis for informed decisions about policy improvement, resource allocation, strategy design, and follow-up analysis in support of lifelong learning, while recognizing the difficult realities of the Palestinian economy under its current territorial status, and acknowledging the efforts of various national institutions and especially the NTC in addressing these realities.

The monitoring framework which underpins this report covers three major areas of commitment to lifelong learners: access to learning (Area A), quality of learning (Area B), and system organisation (Area C). These areas are divided into eight monitoring dimensions: access and participation in Area A; quality, relevance, excellence, and innovation in Area B; and system management/administration and resources in Area C. Within these areas and their dimensions, the Torino Process tracks a total of 30 system deliverables (outcomes)[3] - the extent to which they are being delivered and how equitably they are distributed to thirteen groups of learners according to age, gender, socio-economic background, labour market and migration status, and typical learning setting.

The monitoring provides information in the form of a system performance index (SPI) for each of these outcomes and learner groups they serve, to a total of 82 indices per country.[4] The SPIs can range from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates maximum or best performance. The indices describe VET system performance in formal and non-formal learning settings for youth and adults, females and males, disadvantaged learners, long-term unemployed jobseekers, economically inactive populations, and first-generation migrants.

This report showcases a selection of key monitoring results based on those indices, as follows: overall performance by broad monitoring dimension (Section 2.1), performance by specific area and system deliverable (Section 2.2 and subsections), and performance in support of specific groups of

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

[2] This report may use "VET", "VET system", and "system" interchangeably.

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

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

learners (Section 2.3). The report also provides an international average score[5] for these results for reference purposes, and, where relevant, it showcases disaggregated data used to calculate the system performance indices and information provided by national authorities through the monitoring questionnaire. Links to the full dataset for Palestine, the monitoring questionnaire, the Torino Process monitoring framework and methodology can be found in the third and final section of this document.

1.2 Comparability and reliability of monitoring data

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

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

The monitoring results of Palestine are the least comparable of all countries in the Torino Process sample, on average, and they are among the most susceptible to bias in international comparison. Despite these challenges, however, Palestine has a balanced, neutral self-assessment approach towards the performance of its VET system, neither being overly critical nor overly appreciative, as shown in Figure 1.

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

International comparability of performance results (0=least comparable, 100=fully comparable)
Palestine: 5.3/100   Intl. average: 35.4/100

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Risk of bias regarding system performance (0=highest risk, 100=lowest risk)
Palestine: 8.5/100   Intl. average: 28.9/100

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Tendency to be self-critical regarding system performance (most critical=0, neutral=50, least critical=100)
Palestine: 51.5/100   Intl. average: 52.8/100

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

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

2. MONITORING RESULTS: PALESTINE

2.1 Policy and system performance in 2023: overall results

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

The eight monitoring dimensions mentioned in the previous section are the top layer of reporting in this respect. They capture VET system performance in various domains, the selection of which is aligned with national and international country commitments and reform and development priorities concerning learning. These eight dimensions are described as follows:

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

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

This chapter of the monitoring report outlines the performance of VET in Palestine across the eight dimensions of Torino Process monitoring. The results suggest that, in terms of overall performance,

lifelong learners in the country are poised to benefit from education and training that is receptive to external developments (Dimension B.4, SPI of 71) and is geared towards promoting excellence in VET (Dimension B.2, SPI of 69).
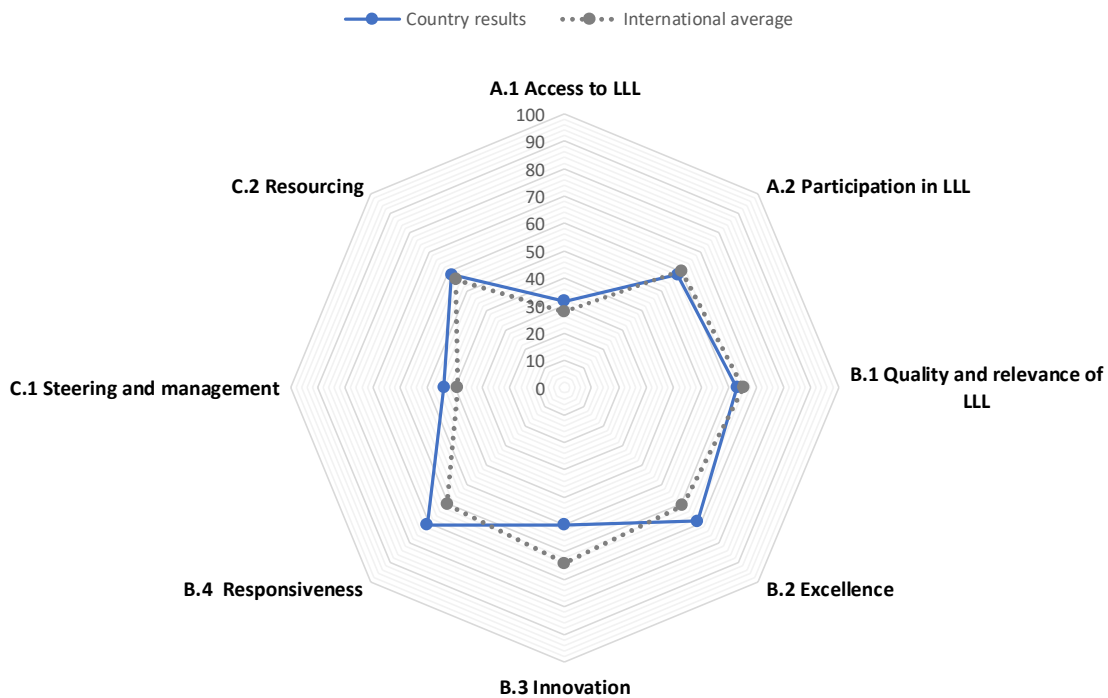
Theoretical[6] index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The capacity of the system to ensure successful engagement in lifelong learning and permeability between various opportunities for learning (Dimension A.2, SPI of 58) is slightly below the average of other countries, as is its ability to secure adequate financial, human, and physical resources (Dimension C.2, SPI of 58). VET fares better in providing quality and relevance (Dimension B.1, SPI of 63), a result that is close to the international average.

However, for potential learners, VET appears to be a less appealing option. With an SPI of 32, access (Dimension A.1) is a domain of weaker policy and system performance, just like in other countries participating in the Torino Process countries. Palestine also faces hurdles in system steering and management (Dimension C.1, SPI of 44) and the openness to innovative practices and

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

solutions to learners emerges as a dimension of relative weakness as well (Dimension B.3, SPI of 50).

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

VET performance in Palestine in the eight monitoring dimensions presented above is driven by 30 policy and system outcomes. It is through these outcomes that the IVET and CVET subsystems work to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders, particularly of youth and adult learners. This section of the monitoring report presents findings about system performance on the level of these deliverables. To facilitate reading and the navigation of content, the section groups the presentation of the 30 outcomes by the three major areas of commitment to learners, which were introduced in the first section of this report: access to learning (Area A), quality of learning (Area B), and system organisation (Area C). Reporting in Area B, the largest by the number of outcomes, is divided into B (1) and B (2).

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

In Area A (Access and participation in opportunities for LLL), the Torino Process tracks the first two monitoring dimensions presented in Section 2.1 – access/attractiveness and participation, with six system outcomes (Table 2).

These outcomes include access to IVET, CVET, and other opportunities for lifelong learning, the vertical and horizontal permeability of the VET system, as well as the prospects of learners in IVET and CVET to graduate and - where relevant – progress to subsequent levels of education and training. The outcomes included under Area A are defined as follows:

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

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

The preceding section underscored the necessity for enhanced focus on access to and participation in the VET system of Palestine. While access to initial VET (IVET) programs is relatively smooth, especially after the completion of the tenth grade, as these programs are offered by a variety of institutions including vocational schools, vocational units within academic schools, and technical

colleges, the participation of adults in learning through CVET or trainings by employment services is markedly weak (Outcome A.1.2, SPI of 10; Outcome A.1.3, SPI of 10). The cost of VET programs is not a hindrance, thanks to the symbolic tuition fees, particularly in governmental vocational institutions. However, geographical and transportation barriers may limit access for individuals in remote or isolated areas.

Learners enrolled in VET can transition between parallel tracks in VET and general education with relative ease if they wish to (Outcome A.2.2, SPI of 75), yet graduation and transition to higher levels of education remain challenging (Outcome A.2.3, SPI of 50). The necessity to pass the high school exam (Tawjihi) to access Technical or General high-level education could impede vertical permeability in the system (Outcome A.2.1, SPI of 50). The government's initiative to establish multipurpose TVET institutions and expand capacity by offering training in the afternoons and evenings for adult training is a step towards enhancing system permeability and efficiency.

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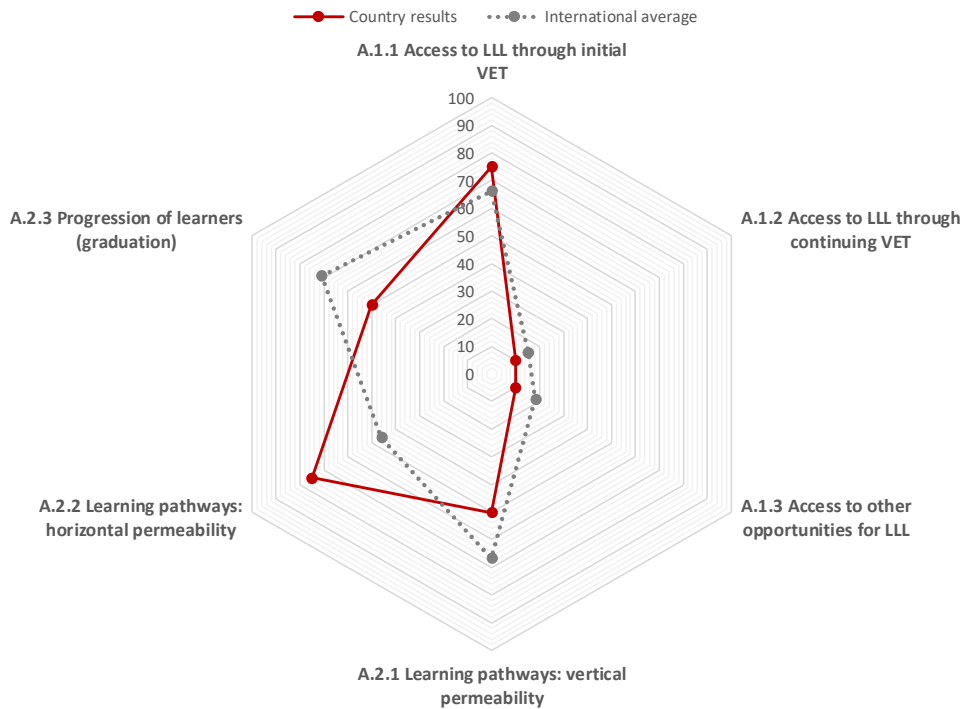
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The risk of dropouts and the challenges faced by students in three-year courses, who exhibit higher repetition rates compared to their four-year course counterparts, necessitate heightened attention. Financial assistance, such as scholarships or grants provided by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Palestine, plays a crucial role in supporting learners to complete their programs successfully. For instance, more than 300 scholarships were recently provided for students who graduated from vocational secondary schools to complete their studies in technical colleges through a collaboration with the Palestinian Telecommunications Company.

The accessibility and attractiveness of CVET programs in Palestine are influenced by various factors including location, time, funding, prerequisites, relevance to the labour market, quality, and flexibility. Despite equal access to education and training opportunities for all individuals, women are less likely to participate in CVET programs, particularly if they have caregiving responsibilities or work in lower-paying jobs. The lack of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) hinders graduates of CVET programs from pursuing further education at successive stages of general education, marking a significant area for improvement.

As learner needs and preferences evolve, a more nuanced approach in delivering and promoting VET and adult education programs is imperative. This includes establishing more higher education within vocational fields, increasing the permeability from TVET to higher education, and ensuring a robust connection between the education system and the labour market to enhance the relevance and attractiveness of VET programs.

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

In the first part of Area B (Quality and relevance of LLL outcomes), the Torino Process follows another two of the dimensions presented in Section 2.1, namely quality/relevance and responsiveness of VET, with a total of eight policy and system outcomes.

These outcomes cover the quality of learning of youth and adults in VET in terms of key skills and competences, the exposure of learners in VET to the world of work, the employability of graduates from IVET and CVET, the availability of career guidance for them, as well as the relevance of learning and training content in VET. Under relevance, the monitoring records the responsiveness of the VET programme offering to demographic, labour market, and socio-economic developments, as well as the inclusion in VET curricula of themes pertaining to the green and digital transition. The outcomes included under Area B (1) are defined as follows:

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

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

The system performance data illustrates a commendable delivery of basic skills and competences to youth and adults in Palestine, aligning well with the transition towards green and digital societies. The VET system in Palestine notably outperforms the average of other countries in imparting basic skills and key competences to young learners (Outcome B.1.1, SPI of 75), as reported by national authorities. The youth engaged in VET are more adept in essential competencies like IT and literacy, crucial for thriving in information-rich societies. Additionally, the adults also exhibits a robust foundation of skills and competences, again according to information by national authorities (Outcome B.1.2, SPI of 90).

The digital and green transitions are well-embedded in the VET programmes (Outcomes B.4.1 and B.4.2, SPIs of 75), aligning with the government and donor objectives. This is evident from projects like 'Greening TVET' and the integration of Know About Business training into the national curriculum, both of which emphasize green skills. The curricula development, spearheaded by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Labour, aims to harmonize qualifications with the labour market needs, integrating entrepreneurial skills, literacy, problem-solving, maths, and digital competencies across all programs.

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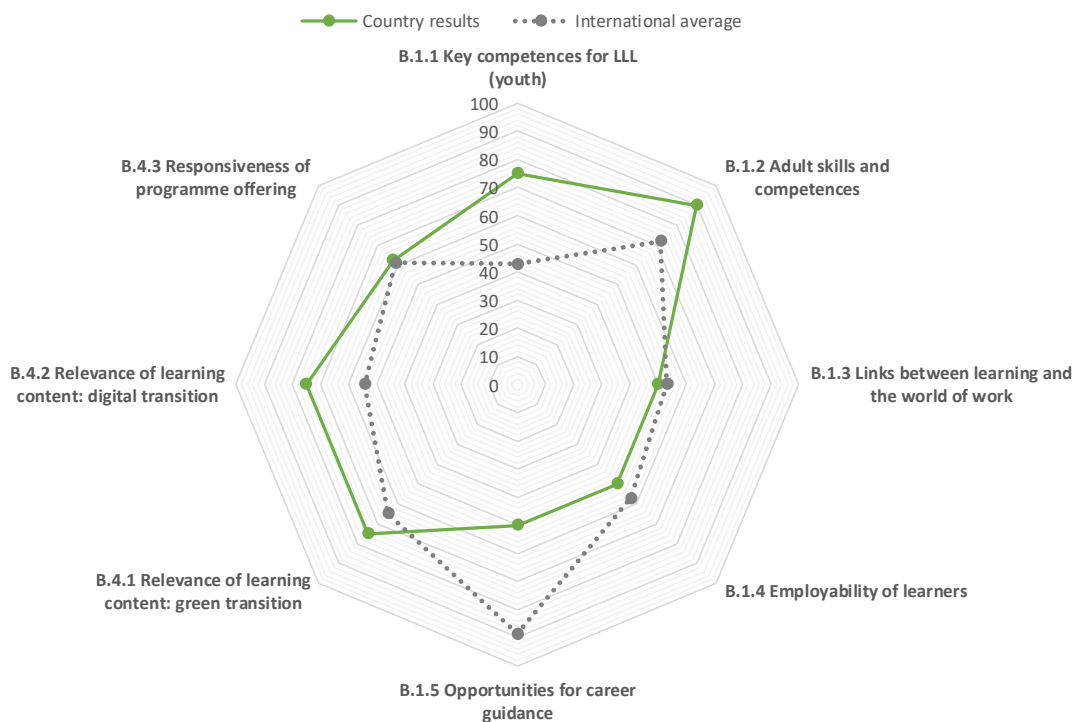
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

However, bridging the gap between the VET system and the labour market poses a significant challenge. The performance of the system in linking the world of work and VET (Outcome B.1.3, SPI of 50) is average, with limited apprenticeship schemes and a lack of a systemic approach to integrating work-based learning (WBL) into the VET offer. Although apprenticeship schemes exist in a few vocational schools, their reach is limited due to a lack of training sites in the private sector.

However, national authorities are working on addressing these challenges - the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Higher Education and the NTC. The implementation of WBL initiatives, supported by Enabel, has seen success with 83 initiatives launched in 2017, fostering agreements between 44 TVET institutions and over 200 companies. This model has been well-received, enhancing the employability of VET graduates.

The monitoring data underlines the need for a stronger nexus between the education system and the labour market to ensure the direct applicability and benefit of the skills and competences acquired by learners in their future careers. The employability of VET graduates (Outcome B.1.4) is below the international average, as is the responsiveness of IVET and CVET to the labour market needs (Outcome B.4.3, SPI of 63). The system also lags in providing adequate career guidance to learners (Outcome B.1.5, SPI of 50). It is important to note, however, that these results are likely influenced by the challenging economic circumstances created by the current territorial status of Palestine, despite the concerted efforts of national authorities and the NTC in particular.

The recently developed Labour Market Information System (LMIS) by the government aims to bridge this gap by providing accurate data on labour market supply and demand, assisting decision-makers, employers, and individuals in identifying current and future skills and specialization needs. However, the LMIS is yet to become functional due to weak stakeholder contributions. The availability of career counselling services, educational advisors, and online resources, including a comprehensive website developed by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, are steps towards aiding students in making informed educational and occupational choices. The continuous efforts to enhance the relevance and attractiveness of VET programs, coupled with initiatives to improve the connection between education and employment, are pivotal for addressing the identified challenges and advancing the VET system in Palestine.

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

In the second part of Area B (Excellence and innovation in support of lifelong learning), the Torino Process monitors two performance dimensions – excellence and innovation, which accommodate a total of eight system outcomes. These outcomes include excellence in pedagogy, learning content, governance, and inclusion into learning, as well as systemic innovation supporting access, participation, quality, and relevance of learning and training. The outcomes included under Area B (2) are defined in Table 4.

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

In the domain of pedagogical excellence and professional development (Outcome B.2.1, SPI of 75), Palestine delivers above the international average. This could be reflective of the broader orientation of VET in the country towards modern, future-oriented themes like digitalisation and the green transition, as previously discussed. Authorities report substantial support aimed at enhancing the skills of teachers and trainers through various programs, ensuring they are equipped with updated skills. The revised TVET strategy of 2010, initiated by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), aims for a unified, demand-oriented Human Resource Development System in Palestine. It underscores pre-service and in-service training for quality delivery of labour market oriented TVET. Various programs have trained over 500 TVET teachers and trainers in the West Bank and Gaza, including the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme under

UNESCO's TVET4Future project. The Passport to Success program (PtS) and the UNDP's TVET program in East Jerusalem have also contributed to skill enhancement.

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

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

This proactive stance may significantly contribute to the excellence in programme content and implementation (Outcome B.2.2, SPI of 75) observed in the country. Authorities report of efforts to improve the content and implementation of IVET and CVET programs through new curricula development and practical learning experiences. The Do TVET GIZ project aims to integrate environmental consciousness in curricula and teaching methodologies, with a pilot greening TVET manual in Nablus Industrial school. The National TVET Commission (NTC), established in 2021, is working towards better financing and governance in the VET system, with a special fund for supporting TVET activities and skills development. The 2017–2022 education sector strategic plan focuses on inclusive enrolment and adapting curricula for students with special needs.

The data further suggests that Palestine pays significant attention to high-quality practices also in the domain of governance and provider management (Outcome B.2.3). The newly established National TVET Commission, alongside its initiatives to form Sectoral Skills Councils, incorporating representatives from diverse stakeholder groups, are examples of initiatives to strengthen the governance framework that align with this finding.

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

While the monitoring results suggest that VET in Palestine is less open and flexible in comparison to other countries in the Torino Process, authorities report of several initiatives and strategies aimed at bridging this gap, as described below. In a proactive response aimed at aligning education with the demands of the labour market, the NTC endeavoured to establish a national committee for formulating a national qualifications framework. The NQF initiative seeks to define and recognize the skills, knowledge, and competencies acquired through various forms of learning, thereby providing a clear and transparent overview of learning achievements. This initiative could potentially enhance the quality (Outcome B.3.3) and relevance of learning (Outcome B.3.4) within the VET system.

FIGURE 5. EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION FOR BETTER LLL - INDEX OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, PALESTINE AND INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE (2023)
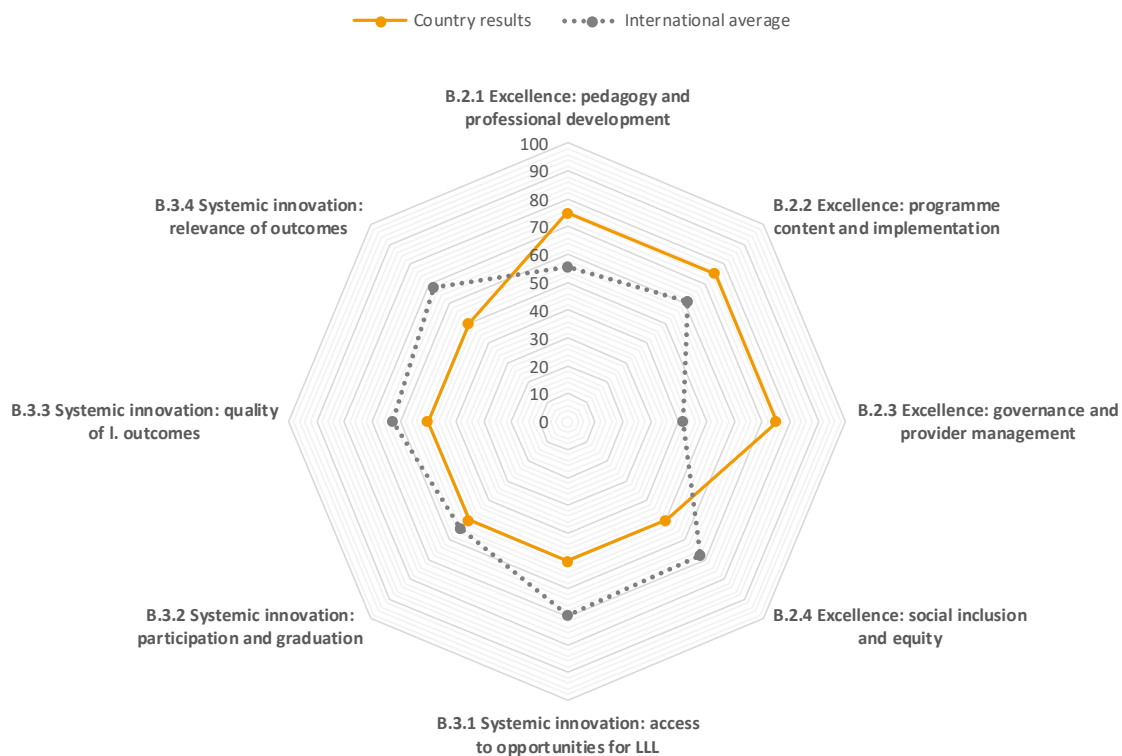
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

Furthermore, efforts are underway to develop a curriculum for work-based learning and apprenticeships, which are designed to provide practical skills and knowledge on the job. This aligns with the aim of improving participation and graduation rates (Outcome B.3.2) and access to learning (Outcome B.3.1). The Ministry of Education is coordinating with private sector institutions to develop this curriculum, which could foster a more innovative and experiential learning environment.

Moreover, the National Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy 2010 outlines the government's priorities for TVET in Palestine, aiming to improve the quality and relevance of TVET, increase access to training opportunities, and enhance the linkages between TVET and the

labour market. The strategy encompasses several policies and systemic innovations like the "Dual System of Vocational Education and Training – Apprenticeship", which combines on-the-job training with classroom instruction, potentially promoting a more innovative approach to vocational education.

Additionally, the establishment of a Skills Development Fund (SDF), to which the NTC has actively contributed, and the engagement with employers to provide work-based learning opportunities are steps towards creating a more responsive and innovative VET system. These initiatives, along with the ongoing curriculum reform, professional development for teachers and trainers, and the implementation of work-based learning initiatives and apprenticeship schemes, are geared towards improving the relevance of learning and training in IVET and CVET for the labour market.

The formation of National Sector Skills Councils by the National TVET Commission and the launch of the first Skills Forecasting Model in Palestine by UNESCO, in cooperation with various ministries and organizations, are also notable efforts towards improving the match between demand and supply on the labour market, which could, in turn, foster a more innovative and responsive VET system in Palestine.

2.2.4 Area C. System organisation

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

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

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

In the domain of participatory governance in VET (Outcome C.1.2, SPI of 75), Palestine has a robust system performance, aligning with its tradition of engaging external stakeholders in consultations and decisions regarding the steering and management of the system. However, the engagement of employers continues to pose a challenge, akin to other ETF partner countries. The NTC is actively engaged in bridging gaps within the sector through initiatives such as formulating a strategic plan and establishing organizational structures, including coordination committees and administrative hierarchies. The NTC has also initiated the establishment of sector skills councils to foster labour market and private sector involvement in skills development, work-based learning, and lifelong learning, which could potentially address this challenge over time.

On the contrary, data availability and the capacity for evidence-informed decisions (Outcome C.1.1, SPI of 20) remain a significant challenge, more so than in other countries of the Torino Process, on average. The NTC, in collaboration with line ministries, has been engaging in international workshops and conferences to monitor and follow up on new international policies and directions in TVET. Additionally, the NTC plans to establish MIS-TVET to unify the database of the TVET system in Palestine, aiming to mitigate data fragmentation. These steps could gradually improve the data availability and evidence-informed decision-making capacity.

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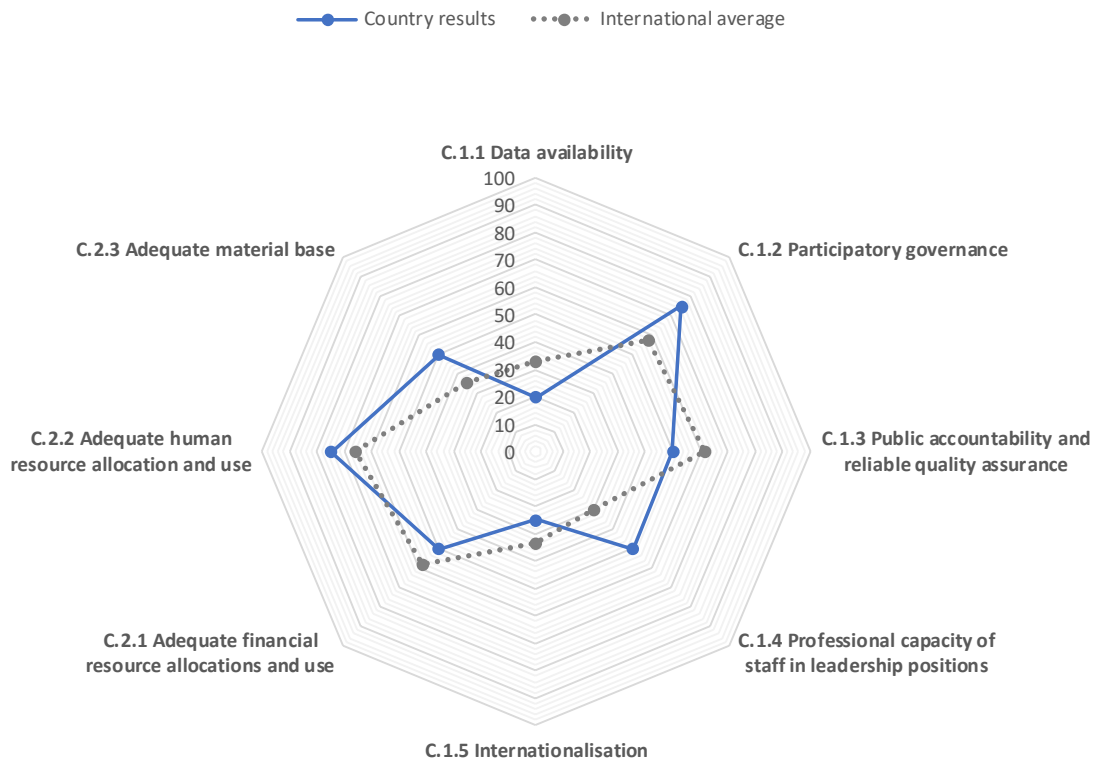
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The average performance in the domain of public accountability and reliable quality assurance (Outcome C.1.3, SPI of 50) suggests a need for more trustworthy quality assurance mechanisms and enhanced public accessibility to quality assurance results. The establishment of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) for licensing higher education institutions and programs, and the draft preparation for AQAC- TVET by NTC, are steps towards improving the quality assurance mechanisms, although a systematic availability and application of qualification standards are yet to be achieved.

The performance in the domain of professional capacity of staff in leadership positions (Outcome C.1.4, SPI of 50) is notably better compared to the average performance of other countries (SPI of 30). The recruitment and retention processes, ongoing professional development opportunities, and support resources for leadership staff are cited as contributing factors to this performance. The Demand-Oriented Vocational Education and Training (DoTVET -GIZ) Programme also aids in developing capacities at the management level regarding various aspects of vocational education and training. However, international exposure for professionals and students in VET remains low (Outcome C.1.5, SPI of 25), although the membership of Palestine in World Skills International since 2015 and participation in World Skills events and competitions is a positive step towards improving that result.

The monitoring results indicate a need for revisiting the current level of spending on VET and resource allocation methods (Outcome C.2.1, SPI of 50) to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. The Skills Development Funds (SDF) and the National School Adoption Program launched in 2021 are initiatives aimed at addressing financial resource challenges. However, the contributions from the private sector remain limited and unsustainable, indicating a need for a regulatory framework to organize private sector contributions.

The material base for teaching and learning in VET is reported to be relatively adequate (Outcome C.2.3), and human resources management is somewhat better (Outcome C.2.2, SPI of 75), particularly concerning the availability, deployment, and career management of teachers and trainers. Various training programs, such as the Know about Business (KAB) program and the Passport to Success PtS Program, have been implemented to enhance the pedagogical, technical, and management skills of teachers and trainers. However, authorities underline that a financial crisis has led to a shortage of trainers in some disciplines, indicating a need for further investment in human resources.

## 2.3 HOW DID POLICIES AND SYSTEMS BENEFIT SPECIFIC GROUPS OF LEARNERS?

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

The next sections provide an overview of how the IVET and CVET subsystems in Palestine perform in a key selection of monitoring dimensions for the following key selection of learner groups: female learners (Section 2.3.1), disadvantaged learners (Section 2.3.2), populations who are long term unemployed, economically inactive, and have a low level of educational attainment (Section 2.3.3), as well as by their country of origin (Section 2.3.4).

2.3.1 Female learners

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

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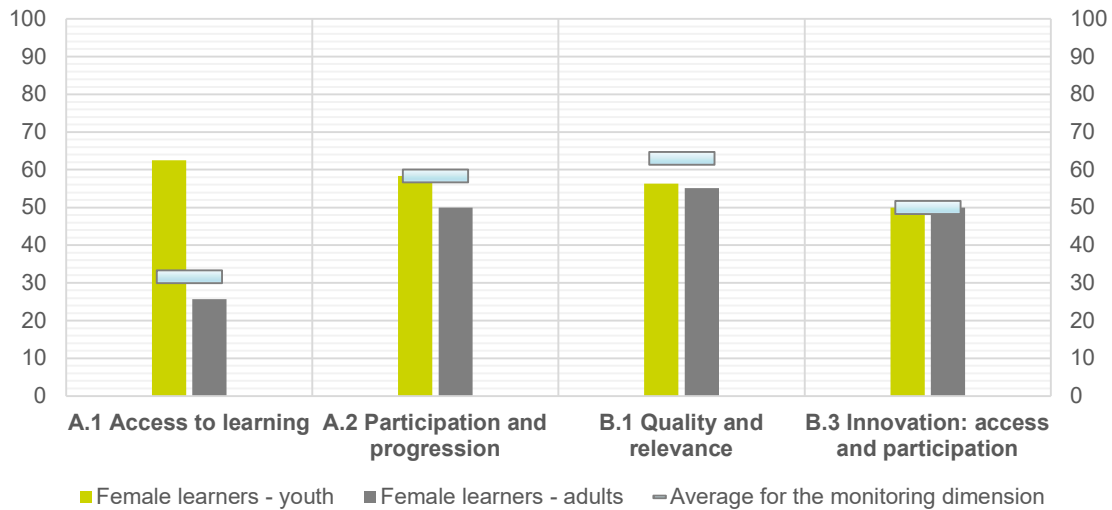
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

In Palestine, the VET system appears to be more appealing and relevant to young women compared to adult women, as tracked in Dimension A.1 - Access. This holds true for IVET and to a lesser extent for CVET. Stakeholders acknowledge that women, especially those with caregiving responsibilities or those engaged in lower-paying jobs, are less likely to participate in training compared to men. Despite this, there is a recognized need to continue efforts to enhance the attractiveness of the VET system for young women as well.

In the domain of quality of learning (dimension B.1), women face certain disadvantages compared to other groups of learners, on average. While females generally outperform males in reading and writing, males exhibit better performance in mathematics and science. Additionally, females tend to engage in learning pathways less relevant to the labour market, possibly due to societal expectations or gender stereotypes that may influence their choice of specializations.

The accessibility to IVET programs post-tenth grade is open to both genders, with the cost of VET programs not being a barrier due to symbolic tuition fees, especially in governmental vocational institutions. However, a shortage of educational, vocational, and technical institutions, particularly in rural areas, and a limited number of specializations offered to females may hinder accessibility and attractiveness. Gender perceptions regarding certain VET programs also contribute to unequal access to certain programs based on gender.

Despite equal access to education and training opportunities, women are less likely to participate in continuing education and training programs, particularly if they have caregiving responsibilities or

work in lower-paying jobs. This could be attributed to factors such as lack of time, financial resources, or awareness about available opportunities. Moreover, gender stereotypes and societal expectations, alongside the availability of programs in traditionally male-dominated fields, may influence the enrolment and completion rates in IVET and CVET programs between genders.

Various initiatives and programs aim to support females in accessing education and training opportunities in non-traditional fields, although these initiatives are still limited. These efforts are crucial to bridging the gender gap in access and participation, especially among adult women, and may require additional innovative initiatives and policies specifically targeting women to bridge this gap.

In general education, the trend of females enrolling and completing primary and secondary education more than males reverses at the tertiary level. This pattern, influenced by gender stereotypes, societal expectations, and the availability of programs in traditionally male-dominated fields, extends into the employment opportunities available to graduates of IVET and CVET programs. For instance, certain industries or occupations traditionally dominated by one gender may create barriers to employment for individuals of the other gender, not due to the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired through IVET or CVET programs, but rather due to societal or cultural biases and stereotypes.

2.3.2 Disadvantaged learners

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

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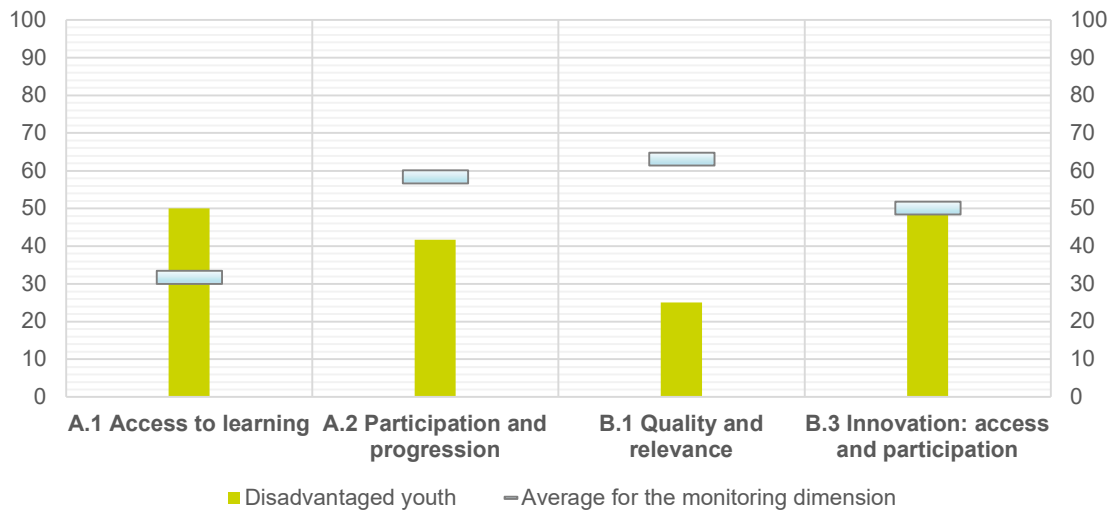
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Source: Torino Process monitoring database

The VET system in Palestine evidently supports disadvantaged youth and is more accessible to this group of learners than to other learners, on average. However, the location of vocational schools mainly in cities and transportation costs can deter enrolment, especially for learners from rural areas. Age restrictions for enrolment in formal IVET programs also pose a barrier.

Upon enrolment in VET programmes, socio-economically disadvantaged learners are less likely to participate in and successfully complete the programmes. Their background also poses a significant barrier to accessing successive stages of education or transitioning between parallel pathways in VET and general education.

The monitoring results regarding participation and progression (Outcome A.2) suggest a VET system that falls short in supporting disadvantaged learners to succeed in their learning pathways. Moreover, the acquisition of basic skills of relevance to the labour market, and the transition from the VET system to the world of work present major challenges for disadvantaged youth (Outcome B.1). Some factors are beyond the remit of VET, however, such as limited financial resources, lack of support from family and community, and lack of information and resources for making informed educational and career decisions.

The efforts towards innovation in access and participation for this group of disadvantaged young people (Outcome B.3) are on par with the national average, however as the previous results suggest, this may not be enough. The weaker system performance in support of this group of young people remains a concern and suggests that there is need for more targeted interventions to enhance their educational and employment outcomes.

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

Section 2.3.3 presents findings about VET system performance from the perspective of three strategically important groups of adults: the long-term unemployed, the economically inactive adults, and those with low or no educational attainment.

FIGURE 9. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF ADULTS WHO ARE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED, ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE, OR HAVE LOW EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, PALESTINE (2023)
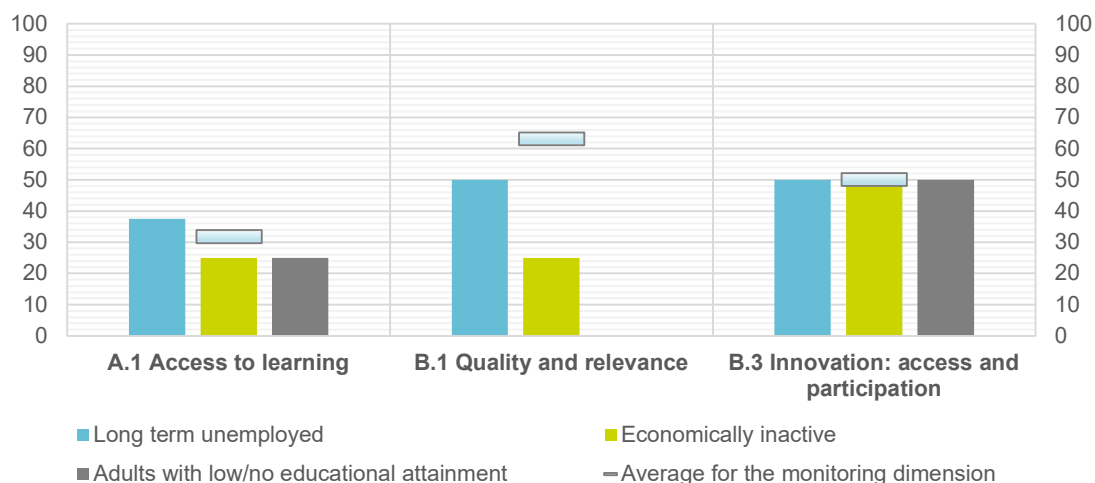
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

The monitoring data shows that the long-term unemployed have an equal chance of accessing learning like any other potential learner irrespective of background. However, for adults with low or no education and for inactive adults, access to learning is a bigger challenge. Although VET is a pillar in the active labour market policies of Palestine, especially for the long-term unemployed, there is a recognized need to reach out and cater for the needs of the low-skilled and the economically inactive (Outcome A.1).

System performance is weaker in support of the labour market transitions of disadvantaged adults (Outcome B.1). Despite efforts to aid learners through mechanisms like the Palestinian Employment Fund, the quality and relevance of training remain problematic. Additionally, a fragmentation in the offering of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) and a lack of coordination may be impacting the efficiency of adult training.

On a brighter note, systemic innovation in access and participation appears to benefit all learners equally. The data does not reveal strong biases against any of the categories described in this subsection. However, there is a discernible need for improvement across these learners' groups and for the total population, suggesting a pathway for further policy refinement and implementation.

2.3.4 Learners by country of origin

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

FIGURE 10. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE IN SUPPORT OF FIRST-GENERATION MIGRANTS IN SELECTED MONITORING DIMENSIONS, PALESTINE (2023)
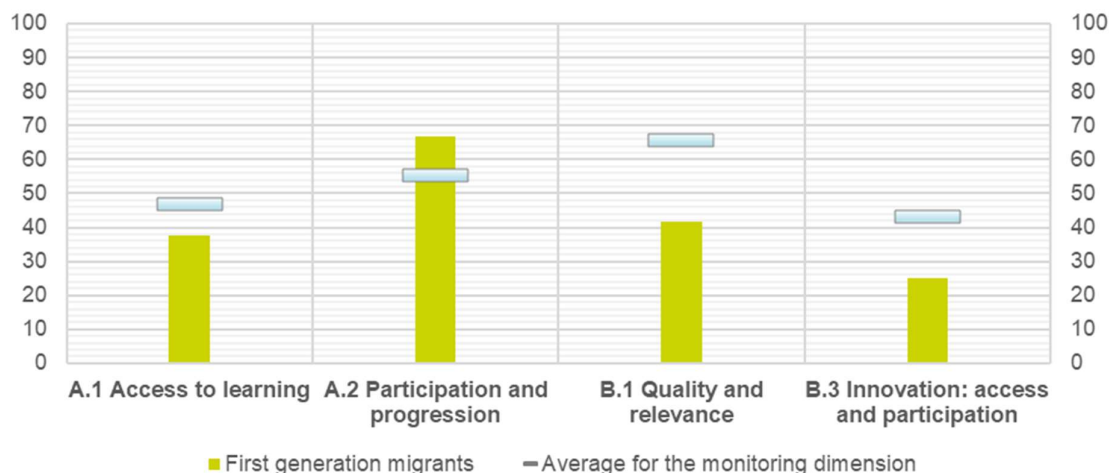
Theoretical index range: min/low performance=0, max/high performance=100

Political circumstances in the country restrict the presence of immigrants from other nationalities. Thus, the system performance in this domain is difficult to assess. Looking at laws and policies, there are not impediments in the access, but success, participation, quality and relevance for this group is difficult to judge.

3. SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCES AND INFORMATION

3.1 Links to background information and data

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

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

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aSzN4HDtkt34eWl9iHC4QtyPtdz15UnV/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true

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

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a5qxPUVfJCSSTympiWNooW3Cdlx5QbhQ/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110154518834912853011&rtpof=true&sd=true

A full technical report about the monitoring framework and process in 2023 can be found here:[7] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FNwIKtlhp4y-Hx02AiFtwJLM8ubQQ7PK/view

General information for the Torino Process as well as the reports and data of other participating countries, can be found here: https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/torino-process-policy-analysis-and-progress-monitoring.[8]

3.2 Definitions, terminological clarifications, methodological limitations

3.2.1 Definitions and terminological clarifications

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

- **Youth:** Population in the official age of entrance and participation in initial VET programmes.
- **Adults:** Population of working age (15+ years of age) not enrolled in initial VET programmes.
- **Disadvantaged youth:** This refers to socio-economic disadvantage and describes youth with access to below-average levels of financial, social, cultural, and human capital resources.
- **Long-term unemployed:** Long-term unemployment refers to the number of people who are out of work and have been actively seeking employment for at least one year.

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[7] Release date for the report is 1 July 2023 upon completion of monitoring for all participating countries.
[8] The Torino Process monitoring reports and data will be released gradually in the period March-May 2023 in the order in which countries submit their evidence and the reports are being finalised with them.

- **Inactive populations:** Adults of working age who are outside of the labour force, meaning that they are neither employed nor registered as unemployed (that is, seeking employment)
- **Lifelong learning:** any learning activity undertaken throughout life, to improve knowledge, skills/competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.
- **System performance:** describes the extent to which the VET system delivers against a targeted selection of national and international obligations (commitments) to learners and other stakeholders in support of learning through life (lifelong learning - LLL).
- **Initial VET:** Vocational education and training carried out in the formal system of initial education (usually upper or post-secondary) before entering working life.
- **Continuing VET:** Formal or non-formal vocational education and training carried out after initial VET and usually after the beginning of working life.
- **Adult education:** Adult education or learning may refer to any formal, non-formal, or informal learning activity, both general and vocational, undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training.

3.2.2 Methodological limitations

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

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

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

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