

# **The GLAD Network for candidate countries**

## **Concept**

# 1. Introduction

## GLAD and the governance of HCD

The **G**overnance **L**earning, **A**ction, **D**ialogues (**GLAD**) initiative identifies and promotes the adoption of those institutional mechanisms that can advance the implementation of human capital development (HCD) policies. HCD cuts across vocational education and training (VET), lifelong skills development, labour market and employment, meaning governments are not alone in governing the sector. They often design and implement HCD policies in collaboration with public agencies, education and training centres, employers' organisations, trade unions, other civil society organisations (CSOs).

Experience shows that when these different actors coordinate and cooperate, public policies deliver better results., institutional mechanisms such as regular dialogue, clarification about roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes, and negotiated agreements imply greater actor coordination and cooperation, and are more effective than occasional or unplanned consultations. Stakeholder collaboration is crucial at the level of projects and programmes, however participatory governance mechanisms can lead to much needed system level improvements.

A core idea of GLAD is that governance is learned, along with the capacities to lead, interact and negotiate, manage and innovate. GLAD was launched by the ETF as a method for:

- policy learning, to facilitate exchanges on established and experimental governance practices to encourage the development of mechanisms for partnerships in HCD;
- networking, to promote collaboration among those who play a role in formal, non-formal, informal learning and provide support to employment, including public and private sectors, social partners, and other civil society organisations (CSOs).

From 2022-2024, GLAD operated in three main ways that will remain as key functions of the evolved initiative from 2025 onwards:

- 1) Delivering thematic webinars on specific aspects of governance, such as institutional models, network governance to influence policy design, and social partnership for the green transition.
- 2) Providing policy advice on issues of common interest such as quality assurance for continuing vocational learning.
- 3) Convening conferences on governance good practices to strengthen advocacy and capacity of key stakeholders including governments and CSOs.

## Development of GLAD

In 2025, GLAD has launched a new strand namely the **GLAD Network for the candidate countries**. The GLAD Network offers:

- A space to discuss ongoing HCD reforms related to the accession process, with the perspective of the candidate countries and governance arrangements that can support the implementation of reform and enable system change at the core.
- A membership model for the candidate countries' representatives who are designated to be ACVT members and alternate members. The tripartite composition of the ACVT is an asset in terms of dialogue between government, business associations, trade unions and other CSOs. This dialogue is a powerful mechanism for cooperation and co-creation.
- An opening to observers including experts and institutions to share knowledge and practices.

In parallel, the wider GLAD Community open to all stakeholders and experts in the HCD domain and in all countries will continue the established tradition of thematic webinars and other digitally-based exchanges.

## 2. The GLAD Network for candidate countries

### Thematic exchanges

The GLAD Network will form **Thematic Sub-Groups**. The content of the sub-groups and choice of participation will be decided by the Network members. The post-Osnabrueck Declaration and the Union of Skills will inform the work of the sub-groups given their strategic and policy relevance; for example, the new Union of Skills envisages the establishment of a high-level steering group to ensure coherence of different policy measures.

The sub-groups will produce **targeted advice and potential proposals for the EU accession** highlighting the key issues and challenges for candidate countries. They will be presented to relevant audiences of decision makers, such as the whole ACVT and/or DGVT group.

Where useful, at the initiative of the members or of ETF, the Thematic Sub-Groups can be joined by **observers**, e.g. stakeholders, experts and institutions from EU and partner countries, European institutions, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), other agencies and organizations.

The Thematic Sub-Groups **time frame** could vary from 12 to 18 months commencing in the second quarter of 2025 with a closing date not later than the last quarter of 2026. The sub-groups will meet every 2 or 3 months depending on needs, while at least once a year the meetings will be in presence.

### Network functioning

The GLAD Network will seek to capture and consolidate advanced thematic knowledge and inspiring practices, and co-designed governance approaches that could be suitable in the current context of the candidate countries.

Important functions of the GLAD Network overall which will mostly coincide with the Thematic Sub-Groups work, will include:

- agenda setting of the whole-Network meetings,
- collecting opinions, when necessary,
- publishing small reports or posts on innovative practices of HCD governance,
- sharing progress of the thematic sub-groups and any other updates,
- any other issue that may arise.

### Proposals for discussion at the GLAD Network opening

The GLAD Network will hold its opening meeting on 15 April, 2025, in Milano and will discuss the following proposals:

- The agenda of the GLAD Network will be steered by 3-5 members who are supported by the ETF. The steering group shall reflect the tripartite composition of the GLAD Network and preferably represent a diversity of countries. The 3-5 members are volunteers, if more than 5 volunteers are available, the Network will vote to select maximum 5 participants in the steering group. The steering group membership will rotate every 12-18 months.
- Discuss a preliminary list of thematic areas of potential interest for the Thematic Sub-Groups and establish a short-list to be submitted to a majority vote. The vote will result in the selection of two themes around which the Sub-Groups will be formed.