

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2024

EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION

In pursuance of FR 2018/1046, FFR No 2019/715¹

¹ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 122, 10.5.2019, p. 1).

“There is no more powerful tool for social mobility than education... Emulating the ETF, the EU must have a vision of its own future to be shaped with the external world on topics where we have things in common... My vision is for education to have a bigger role rooted on universal values and local contexts, and for the ETF to do more, to be bigger and to be more influential.”

Li Andersson, MEP, Chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee,
European Parliament, November 2024, Turin

“We need a Union of Skills rooted in cooperation and adaptivity, stressing how visionary it has been in the 1990s to establish an agency supporting not EU countries, but the Union’s neighbours... we need to be visionary and practical while building the skills that will shape the Union of Skills and the next 50 years.”

Mario Nava, Director General of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion,
November 2024, Turin

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THE ETF IN BRIEF

The European Training Foundation (ETF) was established by Council Regulation No. 1360 in 1990, later [recast as No. 1339](#) in 2008. As the EU agency dedicated to human capital development in countries outside the EU, the ETF operates in the context of EU external relations policies. It works at both country and regional levels in the EU Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions, and Central Asia, and contributes to African continental programmes. The ETF provides policy advice and support to 28 partner countries² and EU Delegations, guiding the transformation of education, training and labour market policies and systems to enhance social wellbeing, stability and prosperity in the countries surrounding the EU.

The ETF monitors and reports on the status and priorities of skills policies and system performance in the countries where it is active. It gathers forward-looking insights, thematic expertise and country intelligence to ensure evidence-based, participatory policy development, and effective project and programme design. Its expertise spans areas like:

- Modernisation of qualifications and their comparison and referencing with the European Qualifications Framework.
- Anticipation and analysis of skills gaps and labour market needs using both quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Work-based learning and enterprise engagement in skills development.
- Labour mobility, key competences, quality and excellence in education and training.
- Policies for inclusion and innovation in teaching and learning.

With over three decades of experience, the ETF is recognised as a leading centre of expertise in education, labour and policy development. It works closely with the European Commission, the European External Action Service, and EU Delegations to support policy dialogue and programme implementation. Additionally, it collaborates with other EU bodies and agencies to support EU priorities, such as the green and digital transitions.

At the core of the ETF's mission is lifelong learning, key to skills development, innovation, employability and active citizenship. Recognised by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the European Consensus on Development, lifelong learning is essential for sustainable growth, social inclusion, prosperity and stability. It also plays a key role in peacebuilding and migration governance across the EU's wider neighbourhood.

The ETF is governed by a Governing Board, chaired by the Director General of DG Employment. The Board includes one representative from each EU Member State, three European Commission representatives, three non-voting experts appointed by the European Parliament, and three observers from the ETF partner countries.

² Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion of the Kosovo declaration of independence), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine (this designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the EU Member States on this issue), Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. ETF activities are in line with the EU positioning in these countries. ETF support to Belarus takes place in the context of Secretariat General (SG) note of 01/03/2022, Ares (2022)1502984. Also, in the context of the aforementioned note and EU Council Decision 2022/428 amending regulation 833/2014, and subsequent acts, the ETF has ceased to support Russia, which, until further notice, is no longer considered a partner country.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Activity Report showcases the successful implementation of the ETF's 2024 Annual Work Programme³, marking the fourth year of the ETF 2027 strategy. The ETF reaffirmed its resilience and preparedness, demonstrating strong capacity to anticipate and respond to challenges. This success is attributed to its deep country and thematic intelligence, strategic partnerships and networks, adaptability, and ability to navigate the complex geopolitical landscape.

A landmark year: the ETF's 30th anniversary and strategy midpoint

In 2024, the ETF marked its 30th anniversary and reached the midpoint of its 2027 strategy implementation providing an opportunity to reflect on its achievements and set future ambitions. The mid-term review of the 2027 strategy validated the ETF's impact over three decades, reinforcing its contributions to partner countries, EC services and global stakeholders. Beyond acknowledging past successes, the ETF engaged with its networks to co-create a vision for the next 30 years.

The ETF as a strategic EU asset

The ETF played an important role in supporting EU investments in human capital, policy dialogue, financial programmes and knowledge sharing. It actively supported partner countries in their progress towards EU candidate status, including Global Europe and the international dimension of the EU Skills Agenda. The European Year of Skills provided a platform to deepen collaboration with neighbouring countries, promoting greener, digital and more inclusive societies.

The ETF continued to shape labour markets and workforce transformation, ensuring that skills development meets future opportunities and mitigates emerging risks.

Strengthening partnerships and global impact

Within the Team Europe approach, the ETF reinforced its collaboration with EU Member States, supporting human capital development and engaging with international financial institutions on 'policy first' investment strategies. It helped modernise education, training, and labour market systems in partner countries, increasing their resilience to shocks and promoting flexible lifelong learning systems. Despite global crises, including conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, the ETF maintained its relevance by adapting its workplan and responding effectively to emerging needs.

The 2024 cross-country monitoring report was widely disseminated through a new web-based gateway, further strengthening the ETF's role as a knowledge provider. Voluntary contribution projects increased stakeholder engagement, trust and visibility, amplifying the ETF's impact and reach within the EU and globally.

³ This Consolidated Annual Activity Report has been prepared in accordance with art.13 of the ETF regulation and art.48 of the ETF FR and in the format defined by the EU Agencies Network in cooperation with the Commission.

The ETF's work in Ukraine

The ETF deepened its long-standing cooperation with Ukraine, supporting the modernisation and connectivity of the education and labour market systems for economic growth, development and recovery. Since the onset of the Russian war, the ETF has provided policy support for reskilling and upskilling temporarily displaced adults, helping national authorities and training providers in the EU to develop micro-credential training and assessment methodologies. This has enabled the adaptation of short, professional learning experiences from the EU, ensuring high-quality vocational training opportunities for Ukrainians.

The ETF has also supported the integration of Ukrainians into EU labour markets by aligning learning resources with advanced European trends and facilitating the recognition of their qualifications and skills. Additionally, it has played a key role in comparing the Ukrainian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and supporting the development and implementation of a Joint Action Plan to align the two frameworks in close collaboration with the European Commission. Recognising the important role of skills in Ukraine's reconstruction, the ETF has developed a comprehensive plan to support the country's workforce development efforts, maintaining close coordination with the Ukrainian authorities and the European Commission. This initiative will further assist Ukraine in its EU enlargement endeavours.

In response to Ukraine's request, the ETF launched a capacity building programme in June 2024 to help decision makers and stakeholders to devise an integrated policy approach for young people not in employment, education or training, reflecting the EU Youth Guarantee recommendation. This initiative is being implemented in close consultation with the European Commission and coordinated with other international and European actors. A dedicated ETF Task Force⁴ continues to oversee these efforts, ensuring alignment with both European Commission priorities and Ukrainian national objectives.

Highlights of 2024

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAJOR EU AND GLOBAL INITIATIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Important role in the European Year of Skills, reinforcing the importance of lifelong learning and workforce transformation.▪ Skills Alliance for Ukraine, ensuring education and training reforms align with EU accession requirements, including support for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee to promote youth employment and inclusion.▪ Presence in global forums, notably at COP29, contributing expertise on green skills, sustainability, and the twin digital and green transitions.	VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Work on skills anticipation and labour market intelligence to help partner countries align education with labour market needs.▪ Strengthened the Centres of Vocational Excellence network for better cooperation between institutions and enhancing training programmes.▪ Skills development reforms in multiple regions, including the setting up of Regional VET Centres in Moldova and North Macedonia.	COLLABORATION UNDER THE TEAM EUROPE APPROACH <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reinforced cooperation with EU Member States, focusing on joint investments in human capital development.▪ Partnered with international financial institutions to integrate 'policy-first' approaches into major skills investment projects.▪ Worked closely with regional actors to ensure an integrated approach to lifelong learning and workforce resilience.	POLICY AND RESEARCH IMPACT <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Published cross-country monitoring reports, providing evidence-based recommendations for education and labour policies.▪ Delivered strategic foresight studies, helping shape future EU and international skills policies.▪ Conducted policy reviews influencing national qualifications frameworks and workforce training across multiple regions.
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⁴ The ETF's Ukraine Task Force works closely with local actors to coordinate actions in line with the Ukraine Action Plan and EU priorities, ensuring alignment with EC services. Its support for a Youth Guarantee in Ukraine takes a systemic, inclusive approach, linking ministries, businesses, NGOs, and youth representatives. This holistic model, grounded in evidence, connects current and future skills needs. Coordination with national stakeholders, the EUD, and EC services ensures relevance and coherence. Building on its long-term engagement, the ETF also proposes a similar contextualised Skills Guarantee framework as part of the EU's broader Skills Alliance.

Reflecting on the past and envisioning the future

Over the past three decades, the ETF has played an important role in expanding the EU's influence in skills and labour market development. This success is driven by its dual thematic and geographical expertise, long-term partnerships, and engagement with key stakeholders at national, regional, EU, and international levels.

In 2024, the mid-term review of ETF's 2027 strategy highlighted significant progress in fulfilling its mandate. The ETF's comprehensive approach to skills development, anticipation of emerging trends, in-depth expertise, and advisory support for partner countries and European Commission services were widely recognised. Its effective partnerships, impactful service delivery, and a differentiated approach have ensured alignment with EU policies and priorities, as well as those of its Member States. The ETF has demonstrated its ability to deliver across both subsidy-based and voluntary contribution projects.

An analysis of the evolving human capital development landscape and the increasing diversity of HCD actors confirms that the ETF is well-equipped to adapt to rapid shifts in the world of work and learning. It remains responsive to demographic changes, geopolitical dynamics, socioeconomic developments, environmental challenges, and technological disruption.

To enhance its impact, the ETF has developed an outcome-driven theory of change, outlining four strategic goals. This framework guided internal reorganisation and the creation of a roadmap with strategic indicators to ensure the successful implementation of its 2027 strategy. As part of this transformation, in 2024, the ETF introduced a two-layer management structure, ensuring all employees are one step away from management. Emphasis was put on strategic leadership, people and talent, enhanced teamwork and empowerment, connectors within the organization, and a flatter managerial hierarchy.

Throughout 2024, the ETF fulfilled its mandate by delivering impact to partner countries, Commission services and HCD actors. It proactively adapted to external changes and engaged with key stakeholders to shape its future positioning.

The 2024 foresight activities and high-level panels explored the intersection of skills, geopolitics, global education, technology, the future of learning, and the colours of the economy. These highly participatory discussions involved young people, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Their findings⁵ were debated in expert panels during the November 2024 Governing Board meeting and the ETF's 30th anniversary activities in Turin. Five key themes emerged:

- **Equal and inclusive access to quality education and lifelong learning**, addressing inequalities, promoting global citizenship and epistemic and intergenerational justice.

⁵ Policy briefs stemming from the high-level conversations and foresight workshops on geopolitics, global education and colours of the economy can be found here: [30 Years of the ETF: building skills for Europe's future](#).

- **Education for peace and resilience**, integrating education into peacebuilding, aid and development to strengthen social cohesion, rebuild communities in conflict areas, and support long-term transformation.
- **Collaboration and preparedness**, promoting inclusive partnerships to tackle global challenges and equip young people with future-ready skills for evolving human capital and labour markets.
- **Expanding future skills beyond traditional learning**, incorporating cultural, media and futures literacies, alongside skills for sustainable living, mobility and social intelligence, bridging traditional and indigenous knowledge with intergenerational skills.
- **Balancing anticipation with evidence-based policy making**, using participatory approaches to navigate geopolitical shifts, drive investment in education, bring the Union of Skills to life, and ensure partner countries' integration into the EU Education Area.

These findings reinforce the ETF's role as a forward-looking and analytical institution, capable of delivering contextualised and evidence-based policy advice. Its expertise is tailored to the unique needs of countries and EC services, adding value to the international dimension of human capital development.

Through strategic media engagement and influencer outreach, the ETF's visibility and reputation were strengthened during its 30th anniversary activities, further solidifying its role in shaping the future of work and the skills. Insights gathered in 2024 will inform the ETF's long-term vision and strategy, which will align with the forthcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-34), to be finalised in 2026.

[Delivering impact: integrating the ETF global knowledge hub, monitoring and assessment, and policy advice](#)

In 2024, the ETF's work on the Youth Guarantee was a major highlight. The ETF supported the development of Youth Guarantee implementation plans in the Western Balkans and facilitated national reforms to reduce the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs). This work extended across the ETF's partner regions, including Ukraine, the Western Balkans, EaP countries, SEMED and Central Asia, as well as in collaboration with national authorities and UNICEF Thailand under the motto 'from Kyiv to Bangkok'.

The ETF's experience on the Youth Guarantee, combined with its long-standing support to Ukraine, played a key role in its engagement in the Skills Alliance announced by Germany's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development during the 2024 Berlin conference for Ukraine's recovery (URC). As part of developing and presenting EU positions on skills for the conference, attended by Volodymyr Zelensky and Ursula von der Leyen, the ETF addressed pressing recovery challenges, particularly structural unemployment and skills shortages in critical sectors. Putting to good use its expertise, the ETF contributed to policy solutions for integrating Ukrainians into the labour market, working closely with the European Commission – DGs EMPL and NEAR in particular.

Shaping the future through the European Year of Skills

As the European Year of Skills concluded in 2024, the ETF strengthened its policy advice and intelligence-sharing, ensuring alignment with EU priorities. Through its global knowledge

hub, the ETF engaged partners and stakeholders through interactive initiatives that explore solutions for the green and digital transitions. Key activities included:

- Monitoring and assessment of skills gaps, enabling evidence-based policy development.
- Organising *ideathons* to capture the voices of educational stakeholders to generate innovative ideas.
- Engaging with Young European Ambassadors to highlight skills as a tool to address both local and global challenges.
- Promoting skills mobility through the recognition of qualifications and talent partnerships, reinforcing the ETF's role in shaping inclusive and sustainable societies.

These efforts enhanced the ETF's visibility as a leader in skills development, strengthened regional security and prosperity, and supported the EU's strategic interests.

The ETF's insights from 2024 shaped critical policy recommendations for a future-ready workforce:

- Embed green and digital competences into curricula, aligning with labour market needs and recognising informal and non-formal education.
- Strengthen collaboration between traditional education providers and emerging actors to shape policies for evolving job markets.
- Encourage diverse partnerships to deliver relevant skills and equip for the future.
- Prioritise the continuous professional development of teachers.
- Expand access to quality lifelong learning through reskilling, upskilling and work-based learning.
- Empower grassroots initiatives to adopt a green mindset and promote local solutions to global challenges.
- Promote inclusive education and training to ensure no one is left behind.

The ETF's monitoring and assessment, and policy advice played a key role in shaping these recommendations, ensuring that ETF partner countries and regions remain equipped for future skills demands.

Global leadership in green skills and sustainability

The ETF strengthened its role as a global knowledge hub by:

- Publishing a joint study with UNICEF on youth perceptions of climate action, launched at COP29.
- Presenting at five panels at COP29, positioning the ETF as a global reference for skilling for the green transition.
- Conducting studies on gender, disability, and active labour market policies in fragile and (post)conflict contexts, directly influencing policy support for Ukraine, EC services, and partner country reforms.

Enhancing skills recognition and vocational excellence

The ETF's policy advice and monitoring frameworks provided targeted support to National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs):

- Contributing to the Global Inventory of NQFs.

- Advising on NQF policy development, including its integration into the Palestinian EQF white paper.
- Collaborating with the EC to enhance ESCO, improving skills recognition and supporting talent partnerships.

The ETF's global knowledge hub also supported vocational excellence by:

- Monitoring VET reforms and skills trends, focusing on green skills and digitalisation in teaching and learning.
- Developing self-assessment tools and ecosystem frameworks for Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs).
- Publishing Green Skills Red Alert, which offers a model for vocational education to support the just transition.

Country level impacts included:

- Moldova: CoVEs are now central to VET governance, underpinned by newly adopted ambitious legislation.
- North Macedonia: ETF-supported reforms led to the establishment of Regional VET Centres (RVETC), aligned with the Education Strategy 2018-2025.

In 2024, the ETF's work on the Youth Guarantee, skills anticipation for the green transition, and contributions to the European Year of Skills expanded its global recognition. This led to everlasting impacts and reforms across ETF partner countries and regions.

Advancing digital inclusion and agri-food skills development

The ETF helped to strengthen digital inclusion through:

- Policy advice and assessment via DERF, READY, SCAFFOLD, SELFIE and SELFIE for teachers.
- Expanding the impact of SCAFFOLD, now available in 13 languages and printed in nine partner countries, as well as China.

ETF sectoral monitoring and intelligence sharing also contributed to:

- Skills development in the Western Balkans agri-food sector, aligning with EU acquis Chapter 25.
- Policy recommendations for smart specialisation, leading to the ETF's analysis being incorporated into Albania's Growth Plan at the request of the Prime Minister's Office.
- Ongoing support for Albania's primary curriculum based on ETF findings.
- Mainstreaming the green transition in social dialogue agenda.

The ETF further advance policy dialogue on the green and just transition by:

- Engaging social partners in structured discussions on industrial relations, employment, and training needs.
- Using monitoring and assessment tools to explore how the twin transition affects labour markets and skills development at both national and sectoral levels.

The ETF's integration of its global knowledge hub, monitoring and assessment and policy advice in 2024 reinforced its role as a key driver of skills reforms across EU partner countries and beyond. Through a combination of evidence-based recommendations, partnerships, and policy interventions, the ETF has strengthened education and training systems, workforce development and economic resilience, ensuring a future-proof skills eco-system.

Expanding reach and impact through voluntary contribution projects

In 2024, the ETF successfully expanded its reach and impact by implementing voluntary contribution projects, reinforcing its global visibility and positioning. These projects enable the EU to extend its influence, while the ETF used its country and thematic expertise to design comprehensive support packages. The ETF also played an important role in connecting stakeholders and decision-makers across partner countries, EU Member States and European Commission Services.

Strengthening global trust and recognition

The ETF's voluntary contribution projects in 2024 expanded the EU's reach and impact while reinforcing the ETF's global recognition and leadership. Through its expertise in vocational excellence, qualification frameworks, TVET reform and labour market policy development, the ETF effectively supported partner countries in:

- Strengthening national education and skills systems.
- Enhancing policy frameworks to improve employability and economic growth and competitiveness.
- Promoting cross-regional collaboration for sustainable skills development.

These initiatives strengthen the ETF's role as a strategic broker and trusted advisor, ensuring that skills development remains at the forefront of economic and social transformation worldwide.

In 2024, ETF's voluntary contribution projects enabled the EU to expand its reach and impact, as well as ETF's global recognition and positioning.

Promoting vocational excellence: Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)

The ETF strengthened its Service Level Agreement with DG EMPL through:

- Full implementation of ISATCOVE, reinforcing its leadership in vocational excellence.
- Development of new resources to further support CoVEs, enhancing the ETF's role as a global reference in skills development.

Expanding the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQFII)

The ETF continued its work on ACQF II, contributing to:

- Establishing an AU-wide network to support national progress based on qualifications frameworks.
- Recognition of ACQF II's achievements by priority countries and regions.

- Development of national policies and guidelines for:
 - ✓ Comprehensive NQFs.
 - ✓ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (CATS).
 - ✓ Integration of micro-credentials into NQFs, offering lifelong learning opportunities.
- Peer learning initiatives, increasing self-confidence and ownership among NQF working groups.
- Greater mutual trust among national authorities, facilitating qualifications recognition and mobility for learners and workers.

Strengthening skills and qualifications in Central Asia: the DARYA initiative

The EU Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia (DARYA), a contribution agreement with DG INTPA, facilitated:

- Regional cooperation on skills and qualifications, increasing awareness of EU and ETF tools.
- Expansion of the SCAFFOLD methodology, enabling the creation of standardised training formats for educators across all five Central Asian countries.
- Capacity building efforts, reaching thousands of educators and promoting innovative teaching practices.

Supporting TVET and labour market reforms in Egypt.

The ETF played a key role in shaping TVET and labour market reforms in Egypt, providing:

- Technical support, policy advice, coordination to improve education quality and labour market structures.
- Engagement with the private sector ensuring skills development aligns with Egypt's economic and social needs.

Key highlights include:

- Supporting the EU4YES Initiative, contributing to the agreement for a €45 million funding contribution.
- Enhancing quality assurance in TVET, improving labour mobility and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Modernising Egypt's job classification system, drawing inspiration from the European ESCO model.
- Skills development in the renewable energy sector, supporting the creation of a Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Renewable Energy, as part of a capacity-building initiative.

Supporting education reforms in Eastern Europe

The ETF contributed to the EU programme 'Supporting Education Reforms and Skills in the Eastern Partnership Region (SER)', despite political and contextual challenges in Moldova and Armenia.

Key achievements include:

- Using the RED methodology for diagnostic assessments, generating valuable data to shape policy decisions.

- Facilitating peer learning and education policy exchanges across all EaP countries, including:
 - ✓ Evidence-based policy discussions policies in Turin.
 - ✓ A flagship event in Finland and Estonia on teacher management and education reform.
- Adapting SER programme activities in Ukraine to align with its EU membership application priorities.
- Identifying capacity-building needs in Armenia and Moldova, ensuing strategic support for education policymakers.

Strengthening agricultural skills in Rwanda

The ETF completed skills supply and demand analysis of Rwanda’s agricultural sector following at the request of the EUD in Rwanda. Based on its findings, the ETF provided:

- Targeted policy recommendations in labour market policies, sector economic policies, and education and training policies.
- Support for agriculture-related TVET provision, laying the groundwork for TVET Centres of Excellence to:
 - ✓ Deliver high-quality technical skills.
 - ✓ Contribute to regional economic development and growth.

Collaborating and delivering through strategic partnerships

In 2024 and according to its strategy, the ETF strengthened its strategic partnerships to enhance delivery, maximise impact and further align with EU priorities. New and more in-depth collaboration included:

- Formalised action plans with Cedefop, Eurofound and ELA.
- New partnerships with the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES) and the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG).
- Renewed partnership with UNIMED and ongoing negotiations with the EUI and the EIB.

The ETF also expanded its cooperation with EU agencies and networks, leading two inter-institutional working groups on:

- Green missions and events under the Greening Network.
- Sustainable procurement under the Procurement network.

Key collaboration initiatives in 2024

The ETF launched new important partnerships on emerging priorities including:

- Cybersecurity with ENISA.
- AI procurement with EFSA.
- SUMMA preparations with EU-OSHA.
- Digital innovation (‘Chatty’) with ELA.
- Futureproofing evaluations with foresight through the PDN network, presented at the European Evaluation Biennial Conference.
- Accounting services provided to EU OSHA under an ongoing Service Level Agreement.

Collaborations in policy advice and skills development:

- Youth Guarantee implementation plans in the Western Balkans working with the EC, ILO, UNICEF and partner country stakeholders.
- Capacity development workshops with ITC ILO, UfM, and DG GROW (on recognition of qualifications).
- Peer exchanges with SME stakeholders.

Joint research and publications

The ETF partnered with key institutions for evidence-based policymaking, including:

- UNICEF – joint publications for COP29 and an analysis of youth perceptions on career guidance.
- Cedefop – collaboration on the European Skills and Jobs Survey.
- Eurofound – contribution to the e-survey on living, working and learning in the EU and neighbouring countries.
- Western Balkans – participation in the EC-IPA project on working conditions surveys and tripartite social dialogue seminars.

The ETF also delivered:

- A foresight event on the colours of the economy with ITC-ILO in Turin.
- A high-level panel and foresight workshop with EUJ in Brussels on geopolitics, education and skills.
- A high-level panel on global education with participation of UNESCO and OECD.
- A futures literacy workshop on the future of learning.

Strengthening the ETF's role in global skills governance

The ETF was appointed Chair of the InterAgency Working Group on Skills Mismatches, collaborating with ILO, UNESCO, Cedefop, DG EMPL, and OECD. Additionally:

- It participated actively in inter-agency working groups on work-based learning and career guidance and counselling.
- It collaborated with ALLDigital, the EU Academy and Youth@Work to disseminate the Scaffold cards.
- It jointly launched a new version of ESCO with the EC, alongside NQF developments with Cedefop.

Expanding knowledge sharing and peer learning

The ETF led on key peer learning initiatives, including:

- An annual peer learning event on VNFIL co-hosted with French Alpa.
- Knowledge exchange on agri-food skills in the Western Balkans, forming a regional skills network to tackle labour shortages.
- Collaboration with Eurofound, Cedefop and EEA to mainstream the green and just transition into the social dialogue agenda.

The ETF's voluntary contribution projects further expand its impact through:

- Collaboration with EfVET, EVBB and EVTA in IntVE.
- Cross institutional, ministerial and EU Member State involvement in DARYA.

Engaging with International Financial Institutions (IFIs)

Recognising the growing role of IFIs in EU external action, the ETF established a structured approach to cooperation, focusing on:

- Aligning skills investments with EU strategies under the EU Global Gateway and the EFSD+.
- Bringing development banks together to ensure the sustainability of their investments in partner countries.
- Co-organising a high-level IFI engagement event with DG NEAR at the Berlaymont in Brussels, leading to a joint publication on skills investments.

Expanding skills development and policy innovation

In 2024 the ETF deepened existing partnerships and forged new collaborations, reinforcing its role in EU external relations and global human capital development by:

- Expanding cooperation with EU Member States under a Team Europe approach.
- Strengthened cooperation with IFIs, particularly the EIB.
- Delivered technical assistance and education system monitoring for EU Delegations.
- Enhanced policy alignment and leveraged EU investments to maximise impact.

The ETF's 2024 partnerships accelerated digital transformation, sustainability and impact-driven delivery aligned with EU and EU Member States priorities, positioning the ETF as key player in the HCD landscape in the context of EU external relations policies.

These efforts have positioned the ETF as a key player in skills development and policy innovation, further embedding it in global and EU policy frameworks.

Expanding ETF preparedness

In 2024, the ETF strengthened partnerships, expanded cooperation with EU Member States and financial institutions, and provided technical assistance to EU Delegations. By aligning policies and making the most of EU investments, it reinforced its role in global skills development. At the same time, it made progress in digital transformation, sustainability and anticipatory planning, engaging key stakeholders to shape the future of education and skills.

The ETF also focused on attracting and retaining talent, ensuring institutional resilience and diversity. Through strategic intelligence and innovation, the ETF continues to enhance its global positioning and preparedness for future challenges.

Driving digitalisation and cybersecurity

The ETF made significant progress in digital transformation, aligning with the EC regulations through:

- Consolidation of a corporate planning and monitoring system, improving efficiency and flexibility.
- Innovations in data and AI, including piloting new ETF-GPT ('Chatty') tools.

- Integration of EC tools: ARES, EU sign, PPMT, SYSPER, and preparations for the rollout of MIPS in 2025.
- Ensuring complementarity with Microsoft 365 Copilot, and other AI applications (including the ETF literature review AI), improving workflow efficiency.

Strengthening green and sustainable operations

The ETF made progress on its sustainability agenda, achieving:

- EMAS registration and ISO 14001 certification renewal.
- Green certification of its new printer service provider.
- Sustainable commuting initiatives, preparing for bike-friendly certification.
- Migration to cloud-based systems (e.g. TESTA, reducing CO2 emissions).

The ETF also led EU-wide initiatives on:

- Green and socially responsible procurement, hosting the first-ever procurement seminar in Turin.
- Publishing a handbook on socially responsible procurement.
- Embedding sustainability in EUAN agencies' diversity and inclusion action plans.
- Developing CO2 calculation frameworks aligned with the GHG Protocol.
- Archiving key ETF documents in the EU historical archive in Florence.

Nurturing a culture of innovation and anticipation

The ETF advanced in embedding innovation and anticipation by:

- Anticipating the retirement wave initiated in 2024 by identifying future skills needs and attracting talent from a wider and diverse community, whilst retaining talents in house.
- Further building anticipatory and strategic intelligence to shape the future of education and skills, while improving ETF's global positioning and preparedness for the future.

In 2024, the ETF advanced its digital transformation, sustainability and anticipatory planning by strengthening its strategic intelligence and innovation to improve its global positioning and preparedness for the future.

Implementation of the ETF's annual work programme – main achievements of 2024

In 2024, the ETF delivered on its annual work programme, supporting both Commission services and partner countries. Achievements are structured according to the ETF 2027 strategy, which focuses on skills relevance and anticipation, skills development and validation, and the performance and quality of education and training policies.

These objectives are implemented through three core services: global knowledge hub, monitoring and assessment, and policy advice, which are fully integrated across ETF projects to maximise impact and value for stakeholders. To align with Commission priorities and to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ETF reinforced its cross-cutting themes in greening, digitalisation, gender and inclusion, and migration.

In 2024, the ETF delivered significant impact across its strategic objectives, reinforcing its role in EU external relations and global human capital development. It strengthened skills relevance and anticipation, skills development and validation and the performance and quality of education and training policies. The ETF played a key role in supporting labour market policies, migration, and lifelong learning, while contributing to green and digital transitions through research, peer learning, and policy guidance.

With an unwavering commitment to innovation, collaboration, and impact, ETF continues to drive education and skills development, ensuring its work remains aligned with EU priorities and global education trends. More details on the ETF's operational achievements can be found in Section 1 and in Annex 1.

Skills relevance and anticipation

The ETF supports partner countries in anticipating and monitoring skills demands at national, sectoral and regional levels by generating new evidence and developing modern labour market information systems. Through policy advice the ETF enhances qualifications frameworks, skills validation, micro-credentials and the modularisation of curricula. It also plays a key role in EU labour mobility and migration policies, helping address skills mismatches, tackling the root causes of migration, as well as supporting talent partnerships and labour mobility.

In 2024, the ETF strengthened its global recognition in green skills, playing a key role at COP29 and launching a peer learning initiative in the EU Education Area. The ETF was also appointed chair of the AIG on skills anticipation and matching, reinforcing its expertise in the field.

The ETF SkillsLab network and live foresight events provided insights into platform work and future skills needs. Additionally, the ETF's engagement in the Skills Alliance for Ukraine was widely recognised, supporting in developing a Youth Guarantee approach tailored to (post)war conditions and EU accession. This is testament to the ETF's successful prior involvement in the design and implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the Western Balkans.

Key studies on gender, disability and active labour market policies (ALMPs) helped shape further support for Ukraine and other partner countries, while the ETF's joint e-survey with Eurofound provided new insights into NEET support strategies across the ETF's geographical remit.

The ETF's expertise in recognition and qualifications was further reinforced in 2024:

- A new version of ESCO was launched in collaboration with the EC.
- Moldova developed a state-of-the-art qualifications database compatible with the EU learning model, linking qualifications to ESCO occupations.
- Tunisia and Morocco began developing qualifications databases and aligning occupational classifications with ESCO after engaging with the ETF.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine made progress in referencing their qualifications frameworks to the EQF.
- ETF policy advice was incorporated in the Palestinian NQF White Paper, contributing to skills recognition in EU migration policies.

- The ETF's work on the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF II) supported the development and implementation of NQFs, digital credentials and governance structures to improve skills mobility across Africa.
- In Central Asia, the ETF conducted a feasibility study on qualifications cooperation, launching employment and tracer surveys and creating a multilingual qualifications glossary to support regional skills integration through DARYA.

Skills development and validation

The ETF promotes innovation in teaching and learning for both young and adult learners in formal, informal and non-formal learning environments. The ETF also promotes vocational excellence through its ETF Network of Vocational Excellence (ENE). In addition, the ETF supports work-based learning, career guidance, reskilling and upskilling, working closely with businesses and industry.

In North Macedonia, the ETF played a key role in VET reform, supporting the creation of Regional VET Centres, while in Moldova, CoVEs became central to VET governance, aligning with new legislation. The ETF's work on the internationalisation of vocational excellence was also showcased at COP29 and in the European Year of Skills, highlighting the role of the green transition in VET.

The ETF's self-assessment tools, developed in collaboration with the EC, reinforced country intelligence on vocational excellence. Research and good practice in innovation in teaching and learning, digitalisation and green skills were widely shared, with tools such as SELFIE, SELFIE for teachers, DERF, and SCAFFOLD enabling knowledge uptake across partner countries, the EU and beyond, including China.

In Central Asia, the SCAFFOLD methodology was used to train thousand educators, improving teaching practices across the region.

The ETF also expanded its work in the Western Balkans agri-food sector, connecting it with the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. Through peer learning, the ETF facilitated regional cooperation on skills shortages, ensuring sustained skills development in the sector. Findings from this work have already translated into joint EU funding applications under ERASMUS+, Horizon Europe and EIT.

The ETF's analysis of smart specialisation skills in Albania was integrated into the country's growth plan, reinforcing the ETF's influence on national economic strategies. Meanwhile, the SME index for the EaP region was completed and published by the OECD.

Performance and quality of education and training policies

The ETF helps countries monitor and improve the effectiveness of their education and training systems by using monitoring and assessment data to guide EU investments and partner country reforms.

One of 2024's highlights of the year was the publication of the Cross-Country Monitoring Report on Education, Skills, and Employment: Trends for Development 2024, which demonstrated the value of the ETF's evidence-based intelligence. The Torino Process completed its biennial monitoring, launching a new web gateway for easy access to its findings.

The ETF also delivered key studies and reviews, including:

- Osnabrück deliverables and migration fiches.
- Country fiches and policy reviews to inform EU interventions.
- Social dialogue initiatives, mainstreaming the green and just transition agenda.

The ETF's advocacy for adult learning resulted in nine Ukrainian cities joining UNESCO's global network of learning cities, helping implement Ukraine's law on adult education and supporting post-war recovery and EU integration.

The ETF also facilitated engagement with youth, employers, ministries, EU Member States, and the EC, strengthening education governance structures in Central Asia and other partner regions.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) – 2024 performance

The ETF exceeded its performance targets across most of its functional areas:

- Commitment rate: 99.77% (target 98%).
- Timely payment rate: 94.1% (target 90%).
- Outturn rate: 97.24% (target 96%), demonstrating the ETF's capacity to absorb funds effectively.
- Achievement of planned activities: 95.69% (target 90%), with 85.87% (target 80%) completed on time (both well above the target).
- Audit recommendations implementation: 100%, confirming the ETF's commitment to strong governance.

The cancellation of payment appropriations stood at 3.11%, slightly above the 2% target. This was due to an unexpected negative salary adjustment following a considerable decrease in the *coefficient correcteur* for Italy, which resulted in a late availability of funds. Despite this, the ETF adapted quickly, ensuring a high level of programme delivery which absorbing most of the budget effectively.

The ETF successfully managed staffing transitions maintaining 75.74% of staff in operational roles despite a high number of retirements. The vacancy rate was 3% at the end of December, below the 5% target with a structured recruitment plan in place for 2025.

The ETF's financial discipline, operational efficiency and sound management were reflected in its 2024 KPIs, demonstrating its continued relevance, adaptability to geopolitical challenges, and responsiveness to EU and partner country needs. The comparative table of the 15 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can be found in Annex 1.

Key conclusions on financial management and internal control

In line with its governance framework, the ETF conducts its operations in full compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, ensuring transparency, accountability and adherence to high professional and ethical standards. To achieve its policy, management and operational objectives, the ETF applies a set of internal control principles and corporate KPIs based on international good practice and the requirements of the EU Financial Regulation.

The 2024 annual review of internal controls and organisational performance confirmed a high level of compliance, demonstrating the effective functioning of the systems in place as well as organisational performance. The results of the 2024 assessment showed that the internal

controls worked as intended and were overall effective at mitigating the risks involved. This is supported by the results of audits and assessments⁶.

The ETF also conducted systematic evaluations of its functions, service delivery, outputs, and impacts, complemented by regular analysis of control results, audit observations, and recommendations from the Internal Audit Service and the European Court of Auditors.

These assessments provided management assurance on the effectiveness of controls and risk management measures (see PARTS II, III & IV for further details). In addition, they support the assessment of the maturity and stability of the agency, and its solid internal controls system.

In conclusion, ETF management has reasonable assurance that internal controls are functioning as intended, risks are being monitored and mitigated, and continuous improvements are being implemented. The Director, in her capacity as Authorising Officer, has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

⁶ The ETF has one 'very important' open recommendation from the IAS audit of 2024 on digitalisation and review of internal processes. The ETF is already implementing actions to address the issues, with full implementation expected in 2025.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ETF'S ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME – HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YEAR (PART I)

This section summarises the ETF's achievements in 2024, the fourth year of implementing its 2027 strategy. It outlines how the ETF supports the Commission services and partner countries by integrating its three core services across nine operational activities. The section also highlights the links between ETF operations and the broader objectives of the von der Leyen Commission.

Contribution to the objectives of the Commission through four transversal themes



To align its work with EU priorities, the ETF reinforced its focus on these four cross-cutting themes in 2024.

In the area of **greening**, the ETF analysed the impact of the green transition on employment, skills, and qualifications, supporting partner countries in shifting towards greener economies. This work aligns with the [European Green Deal](#) and its [Just Transition Mechanism](#).

In **digitalisation**, the ETF examined how digital transformation affects jobs, skills, and societal dynamics, reinforcing alignment with [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#) and the [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#).

Recognising that the green and digital transitions are not gender-neutral, the ETF integrated **gender** and **equality** considerations into its work. Specific attention is given to addressing structural inequalities in human capital development, in accordance with the [European Consensus on Development](#) and the [EU Gender Action Plan III](#).

In **migration**, the ETF contributed to EU migration policies by analysing the role of skills in addressing the root causes of migration, supporting talent partnerships and enhancing the recognition of qualifications within EU mobility frameworks in line with the [European Dialogue on Skills and Migration](#), the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) and the [Global Approach to Migration and Mobility](#).

Across the ETF, there has been increased attention to analysing **greening** economies and the associated skills required, both today and in the future. Additionally, the ETF facilitated the engagement and mobilisation of social partner representatives, ensuring that the green and just transition was mainstreamed in the social dialogue agenda. The ETF's recognised expertise in green skills deployment in low- and mid-income settings led to further requests from partner countries, donors, and European Commission services. A key highlight was the

peer-learning initiative for the *EU Education Area Working Group on Green VET*, reflecting the ETF's growing influence in shaping sustainable skills development.

Another highlight of 2024 was the ETF's participation in COP29 in Azerbaijan, where it contributed to five panels and presented two flagship publications: a joint study with UNICEF on youth perceptions on climate actions and the *Green Skills, Red Alert*. The ETF's growing recognition as a leader on green skills led to increased collaboration with partner countries and EU services, including a peer-learning initiative on the topic.

The ENE green initiative engaged over 450 participants in social dialogue to advance green transitions, while a youth consultation on green competences in Central Asia, conducted in partnership with UNICEF, provided valuable insights. As part of GLAD, the ETF hosted a 'Building Green – Together!' webinar, which explored the role of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) in the green and just transition. The webinar was held alongside COP29 with contributions from the European Environment Agency (EEA), UNESCO-UNEVOC, and the UN Environment Programme Copenhagen Climate Centre.

As part of the European Year of Skills, the ETF also organised a series of *ideathons* to collect stakeholder perspectives on integrating green and digital competences into curricula. The fourth ETF Green Skills competition attracted 315 applications from 53 countries, underscoring the growing global emphasis on sustainability. Additionally, the Green ACQF pilot project, launched in collaboration with the All Africa Students Union (AASU), along with a green skills demand dashboard, reinforced the ETF's commitment to supporting green workforce development.

At the SkillsLab flagship foresight event the ETF explored the concept of the different colours of the economy, examining how future developments and labour market shifts will shape skills demand. The event anticipated the possible evolution of key sectors, including in the green economy, gold (digital) economy and the silver (aging and inclusion) economy. It also covered areas such as the blue economy (marine industries), the yellow (or desert) economy, the orange (creative industries) economy, and white (healthcare) economy.

In **digitalisation**, the ETF provided policy advice on digital inclusion through initiatives like DERF, READY, SCAFFOLD, SELFIE and SELFIE for teachers. These tools, combined with case studies from the ETF's Creating New Learning (CNL) research on innovation in teaching and learning, enabled the delivery of tailored, evidence-based policy advice. The resulting knowledge was taken up by partner countries and beyond, supporting reforms and strategic decisions in education and training systems.

The ETF also supported partner countries in building capacity and strengthening governance. It contributed to operationalising platforms referencing NQFs to the ACQF, recognising prior learning, and designing new qualification profiles to support economic integration and mobility. As a result, countries participating in ACQF II have made progress in developing and implementing their NQFs and related policies.

ETF coached partner countries and supported both Talent Partnerships and EU candidate countries in developing digital systems to facilitate the comparison and recognition of skills and qualifications. In 2024, Moldova launched a state-of-the-art qualifications database compatible with the European Learning Model and linking qualifications to ESCO occupations. Tunisia agreed to develop a similar database with the support of the EU PASE

project, alongside aligning its national classification system with ESCO. Morocco, following a study visit to Italy and the ETF, has initiated plans to classify occupations and skills.

Through DIGI ENE, the ETF supported peer learning on digital teaching and learning among ENE members, promoting collaboration and the exchange of good practice. These efforts contributed to the development of transnational partnerships and reinforced ENE's capacity to support the digital transition.

The ETF also contributed to cross-border initiatives in the Western Balkans involving EU institutions and regional stakeholders. Notable activities included efforts under Erasmus+, Horizon, and EIT Food to develop a B2B digital platform and establish a network of digital academies focused on education for digital agriculture. These initiatives strengthened the region's digital ecosystem and supported skills enhancement for the future of work.

The ETF also made progress on its **gender and inclusion** efforts by conducting studies on gender, disability, and Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) in fragile contexts. These findings informed its support to Ukraine and broader reforms in partner countries, while simultaneously providing input to EU services and EUDs. A joint peer-learning event with EC TAIEX addressed labour market (re)integration of people with disabilities, reinforcing the ETF's commitment to inclusive employment policies.

In the area of **migration** and qualifications, the ETF contributed to the latest version of ESCO, enhancing the comparability and recognition of skills and qualifications. It played a key role in Talent Partnership roundtables, emphasising the importance of qualification recognition in EU migration policies. It also completed and disseminated its Osnabrück deliverables, which included migration country fiches, and policy reviews.

Delivering impact through three core services



In 2024, the ETF continued to deliver its three core services – global knowledge hub, policy advice and monitoring and assessment – through an integrated approach that enhances the impact and coherence of its operational work.

As a **global knowledge hub**, the ETF offered opportunities for peer learning, knowledge co-creation and transfer, enabling structured engagement and joint action among partner countries, European Commission services, EU Member States, and other stakeholders. The ETF's contribution to five panels at COP29 demonstrated its growing recognition as a global reference on green skills.

The translation of SCAFFOLD into 13 languages and its rollout EU and partner countries—including Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan - highlighted the uptake of ETF-developed tools. The ETF piloted a team-based approach in selected Kazakh and Kyrgyz education and training providers and developed deeper insights into how such approaches can be integrated into national systems.

Studies on gender, people with disabilities, and active labour market policies in fragile contexts were used to shape ETF support to Ukraine, inform reforms in partner countries, and provide inputs to EU services and delegations. The ETF's work on skills anticipation and matching strengthened its contextual knowledge on platform work, which was praised during a live peer learning foresight event co-organised with the ITC-ILO.

The ETF also developed a practical how-to guide for setting up career guidance services in vocational schools and contributed to the operationalisation of the global knowledge hub in the framework of Inter-Agency Group on Career Guidance and Counselling (IAG CGC). Meanwhile, the ACQF network advanced the sustainability and knowledge sharing efforts in Africa and within the African Union, supporting the broader vision of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 'Africa We Want'.

In parallel, the ETF has taken on an increasingly strategic role as a connector and facilitator between international development banks and skills development actors. By linking these stakeholders and promoting the integration of human capital considerations into investment plans, the ETF is helping to ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of development financing. Working closely with European Commission services, the ETF is identifying opportunities to embed skills dimensions into wider reform processes supported by international financial institutions.

In its **policy advice** function, the ETF contributed to the Global Inventory of NQFs, supported the development of the Palestinian EQF white paper, and provided tailored policy advice on qualifications frameworks for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt and Türkiye. The ETF supported Albania's smart specialisation strategy, at the request of the Prime Minister's office, through skills analysis that fed into the country's Growth Plan. It also provided policy advice on skilling up the Western Balkans agri-food sector and contributed to the implementation of Chapter 25 of the EU Acquis on science and research. In doing so, the ETF supported the EU accession process by promoting cooperation among local institutions and EU Member States. In Rwanda, ETF policy advice contributed to laying the foundation for establishing TVET Centres of Excellence.

The ETF also implemented an e-survey on working and learning in the EU neighbourhood in partnership with Eurofound and provided policy advice to support young people not in employment education or training (NEETs). Further intelligence on active labour market policies in fragile contexts enabled the design of more effective employment and skills development programmes. Joint work with the European Commission, the ILO, UNICEF, and key country stakeholders helped shape Youth Guarantee implementation plans in the Western Balkans and extended the ETF's policy outreach to countries such as Thailand.

In its **monitoring and assessment** role, the ETF published the 2024 cross-country monitoring report and completed the biennial Torino Process. The findings and outputs were disseminated via a new online gateway, making evidence more accessible. The ETF

continued its collaboration with DG EMPL and Cedefop through the EQF Advisory Group and monitored NQF progress in enlargement countries. In Egypt, the ETF provided expertise in the TVET reform process, contributing to the €45 million EU-funded initiative by ensuring technical content alignment with broader education and labour market reform objectives.

Additionally, the ETF's work to engage and mobilise social partners helped embed the green and just transition within social dialogue agendas, ensuing follow-up and monitoring over time. The ETF's achievements in 2024 demonstrate its commitment to supporting partner countries and EU priorities through expertise, collaboration and strategic foresight. By using its three core services – global knowledge hub, policy advice and monitoring and assessment – the ETF has contributed meaningfully to the green and digital transitions, inclusion, migration, and broader policy development. In doing so, it is not only shaping the future of skills development across the EU and its neighbourhood, but also reinforcing long-term competitiveness by aligning human capital development with economic transformation.

Geographical coverage and reach

Geographically, the ETF further strengthened its engagement across partner countries in the EU Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions, including: South-Eastern Europe and Türkiye (SEET), Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED), Eastern Partnership (EaP) and Central Asia (CA).

In the Enlargement region, the ETF's work is guided by the EU Enlargement Policy and the [Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance](#). In the EU Neighbourhood region, the ETF operates under the [European Neighbourhood Policy](#), including the Joint Communication on a renewed partnership with the [Southern Neighbourhood](#) and its [economic and investment plan](#). In the East, the ETF's work supports the [Eastern Partnership \(EaP\)](#) policy, the [Eastern Partnership post 2020 agenda on resilience and inclusion](#), and the [new Deal for Youth](#). The [new EU Strategy for Central Asia](#) is the basis for the ETF's operations in that region.

South-Eastern Europe and Türkiye

In SEET, ETF enabled the participation of SkillsLab network members in the Regional Reshaping Work Conference, organised with CENTAR, a public policy research centre from Serbia. The event explored transformative shifts in platform work and impacts on workers, businesses and societies in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

The ETF also continued its longstanding support for the Youth Guarantee developments in the Western Balkans. Together with the European Commission, it involved all regional policy makers and stakeholders in design and implementation process, sharing expertise through exchange with EU Member States. An ETF advocacy campaign in the region focussed on updating legislation and governance for adult learning as part of the EU accession process. Its relevance was highlighted at an international conference in Brussels by the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee.

In Albania, the ETF supported the operationalisation of participatory governance mechanisms ensuring the involvement of social partners and civil society. The ETF's skills for smart specialisation analysis in Albania concluded in 2024 with its recommendations incorporated into the country's Growth Plan.

The hand-over of the 'skilling up the Western Balkans agri-food sector: digitalising and greening' project to BioSense, a Serbian-based research centre, progressed in 2024. A flagship networking event also expanded the regional network to include participants from Eastern Partnership countries, enabling joint initiatives with EU Member States submitted for funding under ERASMUS+, Horizon Europe and EIT.

The ETF expanded collaboration with the European Commission, the EU Council, and Cedefop to develop the four countries in the EQF Advisory Group that have not yet referenced their frameworks to the EQF, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. Targeted policy advice was also delivered to Bosnia and Herzegovina for the development of a national qualifications framework, and to Türkiye for the organisation of TAIEX event.

In North Macedonia, the ETF supported the training of validation practitioners, leading to the launch of a pilot scheme for the validation of non-formal and informal learning by the regional VET centres. In line with its 2018-25 Education Strategy, North Macedonia also initiated broader VET reforms, with ENE providing support from 2024.

In Montenegro, the ETF played a key role in the development of a new Education Strategy and Action Plan, helping to define a financial framework for its sustainable, long-term implementation in support of the country's EU accession ambitions.

Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

In SEMED, the ETF extended its support for Youth Guarantee initiatives and strengthened its strategic partnership with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), co-organising two workshops on platform work and the future of work.

Comprehensive reviews of career guidance and counselling systems were conducted in several countries in the region to support national reforms and regional learning, including in the framework of the new EU Y-NEET regional programme.

Following the ETF's policy advice and coaching, Tunisia agreed to develop a qualifications database with EU PASE support and to align its national classification system for occupations and skills with ESCO. Morocco also began preparations to classify occupations and skills after a study visit to Italy and the ETF.

A report on Algeria's qualification system and VNFIL was completed to support greater international transparency of VET qualifications. ETF policy advice also shaped the Palestinian NQF White Paper, while its key ETF presentations at the Talent Partnership roundtables in Morocco and Egypt underlined the role of qualifications and skills as central to EU European migration policy.

The ETF contributed to the EU4YES Initiative by supporting the formulation of a €45 million contribution agreement and provided technical assistance for quality assurance in TVET in Egypt. It also contributed to labour market reform through inputs to the modernisation of Egypt's job classification system, inspired by the ESCO, and helped establish a Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Renewable Energy as part of a capacity-building programme.

In 2024, the Torino Process policy review was launched in both Egypt and Palestine. The ETF continued supporting the Palestinian Authority throughout the year, including collaboration with the National TVET Commission and partners such as GIZ and Enabel.

Palestine also ran the Torino Process Level 2 activity and received support on qualifications and employment.

In Gaza, since the onset of hostilities, the ETF has been collecting data on the impact of the crisis on human capital development and maintaining dialogue with local stakeholders. It is working with the National TVET Commission, UNIMED, and others to explore how education continuity can be ensured for VET and technical students and to prepare for post-conflict skills reconstruction.

Eastern Partnership

In the Eastern Partnership, the ETF supported Youth Guarantee development, notably in Ukraine, helping stakeholders to prepare for future deployment in preparation for EU accession. An ETF-led adult education campaign in Ukraine supported professional retraining and social reintegration priorities for post-war recovery and EU integration.

The ETF worked with nine Ukrainian cities in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities to promote citizen engagement and identify priorities for recovery and integration. In Moldova, the ETF's advice and coaching contributed to the creation of a qualifications database aligned with the European Learning Model and ESCO. Moldova's CoVEs also played a growing role in VET governance, supported by ENE and Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD).

The ETF finalised the SME Index for the Eastern Partnership (published by the OECD) and completed the Torino Process policy review for Georgia. The ETF also collaborated with the EC, the EU Council and Cedefop to support EQF referencing readiness in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, with Georgia and Ukraine submitting formal readiness declarations.

In Armenia and Moldova, the EU programme supporting education reforms and skills made significant progress. This included diagnostic assessments using the RED methodology and peer learning events on teacher development. The ETF contributed to capacity building in teacher management, vocational education legislation, education statistics, and school network optimisation.

Central Asia

In Central Asia (CA), the ETF supported Youth Guarantee efforts and led regional studies on new forms of work, establishment and employer surveys, and tracer studies piloted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The ETF developed a multilingual glossary and mapping of national qualifications and conducted a feasibility study on regional cooperation in the qualifications sphere. The SCAFFOLD tool was introduced across all five Central Asian countries in national languages and Russian. Thousands of educators were reached through SCAFFOLD training courses, which were also incorporated into the workplan of Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Education and Science and included in continuing professional development of teachers in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The DARYA network continued to strengthen practitioner exchange, while cross-institutional and ministerial engagement expanded – especially with the High-Level Group of Vice Ministers of Employment and Education, and with regional employers and EU Member

States. Collaboration with UNICEF on green competences continued, alongside regular engagement with development partners such as the EBRD and ADB.

Africa and the African Union

In Africa, the ETF supported EQF comparison exercises with Cape Verde NQF and South African Development Community qualifications framework. Under ACQF II, the ETF helped countries develop policies and guidelines for NQFs, recognition of prior learning (RPL), credit accumulation and transfer systems (CATS) and micro-credentials.

The ETF organised peer learning and training to build capacity among NQF authorities. New instruments and dashboards are now accessible via the ACQF and QCP websites, promoting knowledge exchange, transparency and visibility. As a result, participating countries have strengthened ownership and confidence in driving NQF, RPL, and CATS development.

ACQF II helped build mutual trust and understanding, facilitating recognition of qualifications and fair mobility of learners and workers. It also enhanced national and international visibility of qualifications authorities across the continent.

In Rwanda, the ETF completed a skills supply and demand analysis in the agricultural sector. Based on this, the ETF proposed a tailored mix of policy measures across labour market, economic and education domains to address the challenges of a shrinking primary agricultural workforce amid growing agriculture-related business.

The ETF worked closely with the Rwandan government to lay the foundations for new TVET Centres of Excellence, aiming to deliver high-quality training and contribute to regional development planning.

These efforts reflect the ETF's capacity to respond flexibly to new European Commission priorities and engage beyond its traditional country portfolio. The ETF's cooperation with the African Union aligns with the broader EU-Africa partnership frameworks including the Joint Communication "[Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa](#)", the [Africa-EU partnership](#), the new [Africa Communication](#), the [Communication on the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#), and the [African Continental Qualifications Framework](#). This demonstrates the ETF's agility and strategic relevance in global skills development.

Strategic communications

In 2024, the ETF delivered six high-impact communication campaigns aligned with its strategic goals. These campaigns' key themes including the future of skills, green skills, using evidence for education reform, EU neighbours and beyond, skills for all, and the role of educators and learners.

A major highlight was the ETF's contribution to the European Year of Skills, particularly in promoting green and digital skills development in the EU's neighbouring countries. Through a series of *ideathons*, the ETF brought together around 300 stakeholders – ranging from young people and educators to business experts and policy makers – to explore what skills are needed for a more sustainable future. In total, the ETF organised 68 online events, 18 hybrid events and 58 in person events under the European Year of Skills banner.

These events place strong emphasis on modernising curricula and ensuring continuing professional development for teachers and trainers, as well as strengthening ties between education providers and employers. Participants also called for accessible reskilling and upskilling opportunities, aligning learning with labour market needs to support the green and digital transitions.

The ETF also partnered with DG NEAR's Young European Ambassadors on the #MySkills4You initiative, producing a series of 16 vlogs that amplified the voices of young people from countries from across the neighbourhood – from Morocco to Moldova. These personal stories highlighted the importance of skills in addressing local and global challenges.

Additional efforts included dedicated campaigns on digital and green skills, a fully online publication on green skills, and active promotion of mutual recognition of qualifications and Talent Partnerships. Through this, the ETF supported the creation of more inclusive and resilient societies and contributed to the EU's vision of a 'ring of friends' – stable and skilled neighbouring countries that contribute to regional security and prosperity.

Social media engagement reflected this strategic outreach. LinkedIn followers amounted 31,406 in 2024, with page views quadrupling from 7,180 in 2023 to 29,241 in 2024. Instagram followers increased from 4,000 in 2023 to 5,525 in 2024. Notably, the ETF also experienced significant growth in followers and engagement on YouTube and Telegram, demonstrating increasing demand for in-depth and audiovisual content. In total, in 2024 the ETF engaged 7,814 stakeholders, 89% of whom are primary stakeholders.

The ETF also marked its 30th anniversary with a comprehensive communication campaign celebrating its mission and legacy. In collaboration with EU institutions and delegations (i.e. NEAR, EMPL, EEAS, EU Delegations), the ETF ensured active media participation and side distribution of content. A dedicated press kit – including multimedia materials and tailored messaging – helped maintain coherence across all coverage

Strategic media partnerships with Politico Europe and Torino Magazine expanded the ETF's visibility among EU policymakers and regional audiences. As part of its outreach, the ETF hosted seven journalists (from Albania, Egypt, Moldova, North Macedonia, Türkiye, and Ukraine) and five influencers (from Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kosovo*, and North Macedonia) to amplify coverage and audience reach in the partner countries.

The ETF also organised a welcome event and media briefing to introduce its direction, alongside facilitating exclusive interviews between ETF staff and invited journalists.

These efforts resulted in 13 feature articles published across eight countries with an estimated total audience reach of over 16.5 million across the EU and its neighbouring countries. Coverage themes ranged from future skills and education reforms to human capital development, migration, media literacy, and digital transformation. Importantly, the ETF's reputation was boosted by the independent voices of journalists and influencers, whose testimonials reinforced the ETF's credibility as a thought leader in education and skills.

Overall, the ETF's strategic communications approach, built on earned media, partnership building, and digital storytelling, the ETF strengthened its positioning as a key actor in skills

development, increased engagement with regional stakeholders, and amplified its influence on the future of work.

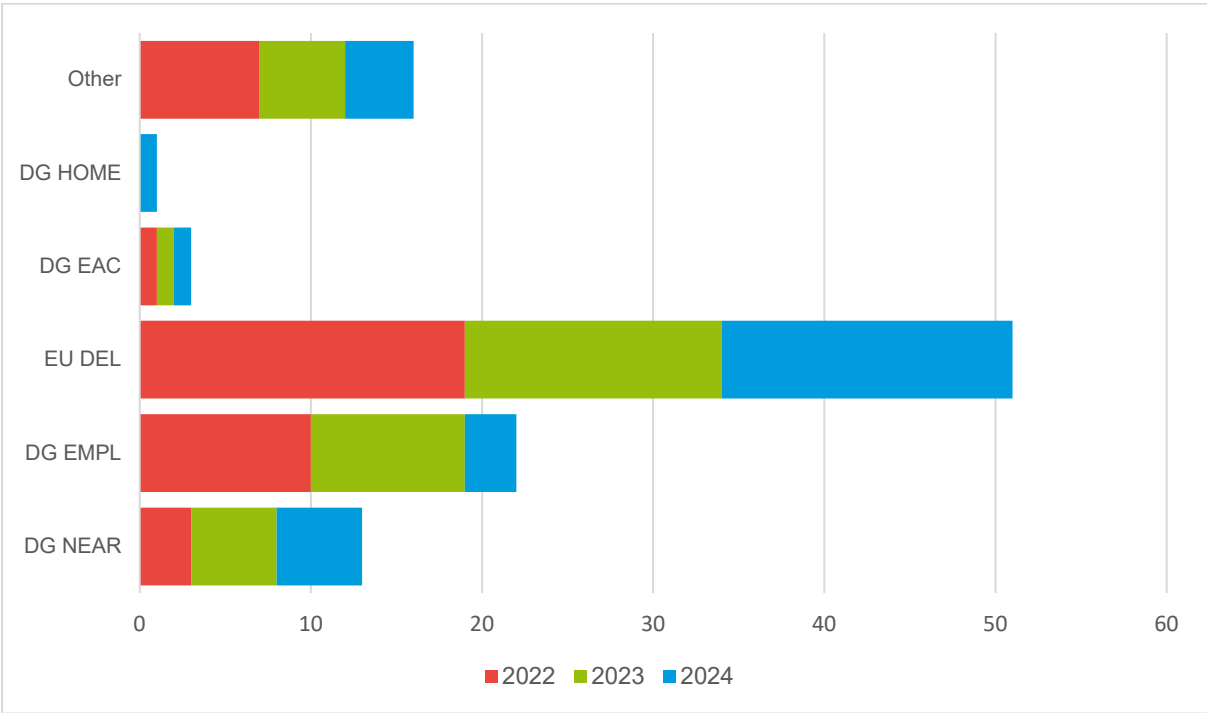
Capping off a year of impactful engagement, the fourth round of the Green Skills Award highlighted the ETF's role in promoting skills development for green and sustainable labour markets. These awards further demonstrate the ETF's commitment to shaping the skills agenda in response to the challenges of our time.

EU requests in 2024

In 2024, the ETF received 31 new requests from European Commission services and EU Delegations. Most of these focused on policy dialogue at national and regional levels (15), followed by support across different phases of the project cycle (7). EU Delegations accounted for most requests (17), highlighting the ETF's continued role as a trusted partner in external cooperation.

Requests from DG EMPL (3) slightly decreased from the previous year, while those from DG NEAR (5) and DG EAC (1) remained stable. Notably, 2024 also saw a new request from DG HOME (1), reflecting the ETF's growing relevance across a broader range of EU priorities.

Trends by requestor 2022 – 2024



The geographical distribution of requests showed limited variation between regions, although a notable concentration came from South-Eastern Europe and Türkiye (17 requests), reflecting the region's high strategic priority and the intensity of ETF engagement.

Most unplanned requests consisted of comments and briefings, which were managed using internal resources. As a result, there was no need for additional allocation of operational budget or missions.

Despite the challenging geopolitical context – including continued fragility in some partner countries, the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and the crisis in Gaza – the requests covered multiple EU external assistance objectives, especially in policy dialogue, programming and project cycle management, both at national and regional levels.

The ETF also continued to provide ongoing support for the monitoring of large-scale EU-funded interventions. The volume and complexity of EU requests are expected to increase in the coming years, reinforcing the value of ETF's thematic and country-based expertise as a unique asset for EU external action.

Overall, the ETF contributed to different stages of programme implementation in 2024, linked to a total EU investment of €289.7 million, with ETF's direct input supporting €188.4 million of this amount. The ETF's direct costs amounted to €144,268 for planned requests and €79,476 for unplanned, ad hoc support.

Strategic objectives translated into activity areas

The ETF 2027 strategy promotes a holistic approach to human capital development and lifelong learning, grounded in the principles of partnership and differentiation. It defines three strategic objectives that reflect ETF's added value for beneficiaries and stakeholders. These objectives are delivered through a combination of the ETF's three core services – global knowledge hub, policy advice, and monitoring and assessment – and their associated delivery mechanisms, which are operationalised via the ETF's activity areas.

In 2024, the ETF's operational activities generated knowledge, assessed the performance of learning systems, and provided policy advice for EU services, partner country stakeholders, and international organisations and donors working in the field of human capital development. This work was carried out in line with EU policies and the priorities of the Commission.

The year demonstrated how combining the ETF's core services allows the institution to serve both the European Commission and partner countries, while also advancing its own digital, green and anticipatory maturity. This was demonstrated through the delivery of the strategic objectives through its 2024 annual work programme, which is implemented through its nine activity areas.

This section outlines the main achievements of each activity, presented from an impact-oriented perspective. It focuses on the ETF's contributions to reforms in partner countries and to broader EU policy goals. Further details and a full narrative for each activity area in 2024 are available in Annex 15.

1.1 Skills demand analysis

The aim of this activity area is to establish a sustained community of experts who co-develop and exchange knowledge, while conducting regular and in-depth analysis on changing skills

demand in transition and developing countries. The goal is to promote stronger attention and greater investment in monitoring shifts in labour market needs, ultimately informing education and training policies and strengthening the implementation of lifelong learning approaches.

This work supports partner countries in using labour market information systems more effectively through the application of digital tools and innovative methodologies to analyse trends and anticipate future skills needs. In 2024, the ETF contributed to policy dialogue and skills development at national, sectoral and regional levels through its analytical outputs and stakeholder engagement.

Table 1: skills demand analysis main achievements in 2024

Objective

To ensure that labour market information systems in partner countries benefit from wider use of digital tools and innovative methodologies to anticipate and identify skills needs and improve skills matching.

Outcomes

- Analysis of labour market dynamics, trends, and skills needs (including gaps and mismatches) informed national, sectoral and regional policy dialogue, as well as skills investments and development policies in partner countries and within the EU.
- Experience, knowledge and good practice on skills anticipation mechanisms and tools were systematically gathered and shared among a growing network of experts, promoting a culture of skills anticipation and matching across partner countries.

Main achievements in 2024

- Knowledge products completed and shared: 8.
- Relevant international events contributing to dissemination, outreach and policy dialogue: 14.
- Stakeholders accessing ETF-developed methodological tools: 229.
- SkillsLab network engagement in selected activities: 384.

2024 Highlights

- Live foresight event co-organised with ITC-ILO on the different colours of the economy, exploring future labour market dynamics across sectors.
- Regional conference on platform work, highlighting shifts in employment models and related skills needs.
- ETF been appointed as chair of the Inter-Agency Group on skills mismatches, including anticipation and matching.
- Global recognition of the ETF as a reference on green skills and the green transition in the EU neighbourhood.
- High-level participation at COP29, reinforcing the ETF’s role in international skills dialogue.

1.2 Active labour market policies and transition measures

This activity area aims to support learners, jobseekers, workers, and future graduates in partner countries by helping them better navigate labour market changes, understand employers’ evolving demands, and identify relevant skills development opportunities. It focuses on identifying and supporting policies and measures that facilitate transitions - from school to work, and from unemployment to employment, particularly through work-based learning, career guidance and counselling, and tailored support for youth and vulnerable groups. The overarching goal is to contribute to fairer and more inclusive societies.

Table 2: active labour market policies and transition measures main achievements in 2024

Objective

To support partner countries in improving active labour market policies, employment services, career guidance and counselling, and work-based learning to enhance labour market inclusion for young people and adults.

Outcomes

- Increased policy buy-in on the effectiveness of ALMPs and public employment services (PES) in responding to socio-economic change and supporting inclusion and fairness.
 - Increased collaboration and peer learning on the skills dimension of ALMPs, in the light of evolving labour markets, the twin transitions, and the need for more flexible and inclusive development and matching systems.
 - Strengthened career development systems and services as a core component of lifelong learning.
 - Reinforced work-based learning systems through policy dialogue, peer learning, capacity building and international cooperation.
 - More consolidated approaches to youth employability and adult learning embedded in partner country policies.
-

Main achievements in 2024

- Partner countries advised on ALMPs, WBL, CGC policies and youth employability programmes: 16 (with multiple policy areas in several countries).
 - Partner countries advised on gender responsive employment & transition policies: 10.
 - Policy dialogue inputs delivered to EU institutions: over 20.
-

2024 Highlights

- All Western Balkan policy makers and stakeholders engaged in the design and implementation of the Youth Guarantee supported by the ETF's policy exchange expertise with Member States.
 - Assistance provided to Ukraine to prepare for a Youth Guarantee adapted to (post)war conditions and EU accession.
 - Joint implementation of the EU neighbourhood e-survey on working and learning with Eurofound.
 - Tailored policy advice for supporting young people not in employment education or training across the ETF's geographical remit and Thailand.
 - Targeted studies on gender, disability, and ALMPs in fragile contexts informed ETF support to Ukraine, broader reform efforts in partner countries, and inputs to EU services and delegations.
 - New intelligence on ALMPs in fragile and (post)conflict environments enabled the ETF to build capacity in partner countries to design more effective employment and skills development programmes.
-

1.3.a Modernisation of qualifications and establishment of qualification systems

This activity area supports the transparency and comparability of qualifications, inclusive skills development policies, and broader access to lifelong learning opportunities. By promoting innovation and modernising qualification systems, the ETF helps partner countries shift from traditional, formal education models to more flexible systems that embrace lifelong learning and skills for the future.

Table 3a: modernisation of qualifications and establishment of qualification systems
main achievements in 2024

Objective

To support countries in modernising qualifications and qualification systems to enhance lifelong learning, employability, and competitiveness.

Outcomes

- Qualification systems increasingly enable the validation and recognition of lifelong learning outcomes, supporting mobility and lifelong learning.
- Access to qualifications is improved through interoperable and linked databases, including the integration of micro-credentials and stackable qualifications.
- Partner countries develop closer links with the EQF; several countries initiate or continue referencing and comparison processes.

Main achievements in 2024

- Partner country progress:
 - ✓ Countries referencing or comparing NQFs to EQF: 1 SADC QF country compared with EQF; and 4 countries referencing (Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Georgia).
 - ✓ Countries establishing or updating national qualifications databases: 4 (Moldova, Ukraine, Egypt and Morocco).
 - ✓ Countries where NQFs progressed in at least one criterion: 4 (Serbia and Montenegro progressed, Türkiye reached operational stage, and Moldova advanced. Currently Serbia is considering review).
 - ✓ Countries with increased qualifications listed in national databases has grown: 6 (Albania*, Georgia*, Moldova, Serbia*, Türkiye* and Ukraine; *evidenced growth from 2022-24).
 - ✓ Priority countries with regulatory frameworks for the validation of formal and non-formal learning: 10 (Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Albania pending final adoption).
- ETF knowledge uptake:
 - ✓ Guidelines for comparing third countries / regional NQFs with the EQF: drafted and submitted to EQF Advisory Group experts.
 - ✓ Training package for establishing qualifications databases: under development (to be completed in Q2 2025) and already in use in Ukraine and Moldova.
- Countries engaged in recognition / validation and digitalisation networks:
 - ✓ Countries working on establishing and linking qualifications databases: 4 (Ukraine, Moldova, Tunisia and Morocco).
 - ✓ Countries engaged in the VNFIL network: 19 (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

2024 Highlights

- ETF reinforced its recognition in the field of skills and qualifications through a qualification data needs survey and sustained engagement in international networks.
 - A new version of ESCO was launched with the EC.
 - As a direct result of the ETF's work, Moldova now has a state-of-the-art qualifications database aligned with the European Learning Model and linked to ESCO.
 - Tunisia committed to developing a qualifications database and aligning its national classification system for occupations and skills with ESCO.
 - Morocco is preparing to classify occupations and skills following a study visit to Italy and the ETF.
 - The ETF contributed new intelligence and capacity building to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – countries in the EQF Advisory Group not yet referencing their frameworks.
 - The ETF's NQF country intelligence contributed to the Global Inventory of NQFs.
 - ETF policy advice was incorporated into the Palestinian NQF White Paper.
 - ETF presentations at the Talent Partnership roundtables reaffirmed the central role of qualifications and skills recognition in European migration policy.
-

1.3.b African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF II)

This voluntary contribution project financed through the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe), runs from April 2023 to December 2026. Its aim is to enhance mobility and lifelong learning opportunities for African youth by improving comparability and transparency of qualifications, supporting the recognition of skills and diplomas, strengthening mutual trust, and facilitating information sharing between qualifications frameworks and systems across the continent.

Table 3b: African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF II) main achievements in 2024

Objective

To contribute to improved mobility and lifelong learning opportunities for African youth, by strengthening the comparability and transparency of qualifications, supporting the recognition of skills and diplomas, and promoting mutual trust and cooperation across African qualifications systems.

Outcomes

- Strengthened capacity development and networking of African NQF institutions and stakeholders at national and regional levels.
- Targeted support for the development and implementation of NQFs and related policies.
- Reinforced implementation capacity of the ACQF through enhanced governance, operationalisation of the qualifications and credentials platform, referencing of NQFs to the ACQF, a continent-wide campaign on the recognition of prior learning (RPL), and the design of new common profiles of qualifications to support economic integration and mobility.

Main achievements in 2024

- Training workshops delivered: 7 continental, 1 regional and 8 country workshops/webinars.
- Priority countries and Regional Economic Communities (REC) engaged:
 - ✓ 11 countries supported in NQF, RPL and CATS development.
 - ✓ 2 REC engaged.
 - ✓ 18 capacity development workshops, including 12 country-focused events.
- ACQF Advisory Group meetings: 2 with 1 inception document developed outlining the organisational and legal status of the ACQF network.
- Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP): official launch completed, with documentation available on the ACQF website.
- NQFs referencing to ACQF: 8 in total (5 began in August and 3 in October).
- RPL campaign: continental survey completed with responses from 28 countries.
- Training and knowledge products:
 - ✓ RPL forum for practitioners (onsite and online).
 - ✓ Handbook on RPL (available in English, French and Portuguese).
 - ✓ ACQF handbooks on micro-credentials and implementation of qualifications in national catalogues.
 - ✓ 3 technical notes on the complementarities between the Addis Recognition Convention, NQFs and ACQF.
 - ✓ Green Dashboard analysing labour market demand for green skills.
- Common occupation profiles:
 - ✓ Development of methodology for common occupation profiles, including scope, data sources, and selection criteria.
 - ✓ Launch of the Skills Data Focus platform on the ACQF website with dashboards on online job ads, green skills, and comparative occupational profiles.
 - ✓ Creation of common profiles for 20 occupations accessible through dashboard.
- Number of involved countries in working groups: 21.

2024 Highlights

- National policies and guidelines for NQF, RPL, CATS and micro-credentials in NQFs across participating countries.
 - Peer learning and training activities enhanced knowledge and capacity of NQF authorities.
 - Increased self-confidence and ownership among national working groups and commissions guiding NQF, RPL, CATS policies.
 - Higher national and international visibility for qualifications authorities and participating agencies.
 - Strengthened mutual trust and cooperation among countries, improving the conditions for fair mobility of learners and workers.
 - Launch of new instruments and dashboards on the ACQF and QCP platforms, supporting transparency, information sharing, and implementation of NQF, RPL and CATS policies.
-

1.4.a Vocational excellence provision models

The ETF's Network for Excellence (ENE) is inspired by a European Commission-led initiative to establish Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) across EU countries. Its purpose is to promote excellence and innovation as drivers for skills provision models, particularly vocational skills for employment from a lifelong learning perspective. The initiative seeks to address quality, inclusion, innovation and relevance by re-thinking institutional collaboration and adapting skills provision to labour market needs.

Unlike other ETF networks, ENE serves not only as a platform for co-creating and sharing knowledge, capacity building, and policy support, but also as the main delivery mechanism for this activity area. CoVEs operate within their local contexts, enabling VET institutions to respond rapidly to economic and societal shifts, including the digital and green transitions, and to act as drivers of innovation and growth.

The ETF also plays a key role in advancing the international dimension of the CoVE initiative (1.4 b), aligned with its mandate to strengthen relations between the EU and neighbourhood countries in human capital development. ENE is the foundation for building an international network of CoVEs.

Table 4a: vocational excellence provision models main achievements in 2024

Objective

To enhance skills provision and inspire innovation through Centres of Excellence serving as hubs, models or catalysts for systemic change.

Outcomes

- Increased policy buy-in regarding the systematic contribution of Centres of Vocational Excellence in diverse national contexts.
 - Strengthened collaboration on dimensions of excellence through the ETF Network for Excellence.
 - Contributions to the international dimension of VET within Erasmus+, international partnerships and regional policy priorities.
-

Main achievements in 2024

- ENE members engagement: 84% of new members actively participated (36 out of 43 registered in 2024).
-

- Peer learning activities: 5 face-to-face events; 9 webinars (5 under GRETA, 3 under DIGI ENE, and 1 under Social Inclusion); and 18 coaching sessions (3 per CoVEs under ENTRE COVES).
- Partner country participation in ENE initiatives: 4 (ENTRE COVES, Social Inclusion, DIGI ENE and GRETA).

2024 Highlights

- Completion of coaching on the ENTRE COVES ecosystem engagement tool.
 - Improved understanding of CoVEs' strengths, challenges and contextualised solutions among network members.
 - Active participation at the vocational excellence forum in Lyon.
 - Definition of the roles of CoVEs in the green and just transition during a dedicated event alongside COP29.
 - Upgrade of ENE members' expertise in digital learning and collaboration opportunities.
 - CoVEs in Moldova play a formal role in VET governance, as established by national legislation.
 - Continued ETF support to VET reform in North Macedonia via the establishment of Regional VET Centres in line with the country's education strategy.
 - Full alignment of ENE priorities with emerging EC priorities.
-

1.4.b International dimension of centres of vocational excellence: building a strong international cooperation dimension on vocational excellence

This activity area supports the international dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence through a Service Level Agreement (SLA 2) with DG EMPL, running from April 2023 until April 2025.

Table 4b: international dimension of centres of vocational excellence main achievements in 2024

Objective

To implement and strengthen international cooperation between Centres of Vocational Excellence.

Outcomes

- Ensure continuity with the previous agreement by building on accumulated knowledge and collaboration with relevant partners.
 - Promote the use of self-assessment tools and highlight vocational excellence through the Quality Award / Label.
 - Support policy making and implementation through shared knowledge and evidence.
-

Main achievements in 2024

- Support services delivered:
 - ✓ 79 CoVEs received coaching for ISATCOVE.
 - ✓ 4 participated in piloting the Vocational Excellence Certificate.
 - ✓ 200 webinar participants.
 - ✓ 17 ETF-supported participants at the vocational excellence event organised by EFVET, EVTA and EVBB.
 - ✓ 30 ETF-supported participants at the Forum on Vocational Excellence.
 - Networking, collaboration and resource tools:
 - ✓ Website fully operational as the central hub for support services and ISATCOVE-aligned resources.
 - ✓ 'Cookbook' and knowledge packages under development and aligned with the ISATCOVE criteria.
-

- ✓ E-library launched with over 350 mapped resources, fully aligned with ISATCOVE criteria.

2024 Highlights

- Over 35% of planned CoVEs participated in the first and second waves of ISATCOVE (79 centres versus an original plan of 50).
 - Launch of centralised e-library on vocational excellence.
 - Website fully operational as the central entry point for all support services and ISATCOVE-aligned resources.
 - Development of ETF country intelligence based on ISATCOVE data, to be launched in early in 2025.
 - Ongoing negotiations for a follow-up Service Level Agreement (SLA 3) with DG EMPL to further support the international dimension of CoVEs.
-

1.5 Innovative teaching and learning

This activity area, delivered through the ETF's Creating New Learning (CNL) project, aims to expand the knowledge hub in the field of human capital development in transition and developing countries. It positions the ETF as a central reference point for partner countries, offering sector analysis, policy advice and capacity development, and support for EU programming and monitoring. The initiative develops and applies tools, guides and methodologies to create new learning opportunities for both practitioners and policy makers. It also draws from a rich repository of good practice worldwide.

Table 5: innovative teaching and learning main achievements in 2024

Objective

To encourage the development, implementation and dissemination of innovative teaching and learning practices, contributing to more effective and inclusive education and training systems within a lifelong learning perspective.

Outcomes

- Greater policy buy-in for reforms that place innovation at the heart of teaching and learning as a driver of equity and quality.
- Enhanced capacity of countries to co-create new pedagogical approaches by promoting collaboration through communities of practice.
- Practical applications of innovative tools and practices – including EU digital tools for educators – support dialogue and inform policy advice at local, regional, national and EU levels.

Main achievements in 2024

- Engagement and dissemination:
 - ✓ CNL community engagement: 1,573 registered practitioners; 1,328 participants in CNL events / webinars.
 - ✓ Research outputs: 20 case studies and a cross-case analysis report available online on OpenSpace.
 - Tool deployment:
 - ✓ SELFIE follow-up implemented in Moldova, Armenia and Western Balkans.
 - ✓ SELFIE for teachers piloted in Albania and North Macedonia, with two case studies published in partnership with DG JRC.
 - ✓ READY model adapted for Israel and used to guide Ukraine's teacher professional standards formally adopted in 2024.
 - ✓ SCAFFOLD disseminated nationally in six partner countries, including Central Asia and Ukraine.
-

- ✓ DERF embedded in the RED methodology and applied in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova.
- ✓ Continued support for micro-credentials in Ukraine, aligned with the EU Learning Model; the ETF's model was considered in the development of a new national teacher certification model and used to map 20 VET standards to ESCO.

2024 Highlights

- Reinforced country intelligence through SELFIE, SELFIE for teachers, DERF, and CNL case studies.
 - Expanded policy advice and international uptake of SCAFFOLD, including dissemination in China and Central Asia.
 - Deepened delivery partnerships, and continued support to Ukraine.
-

1.6 Engaging enterprises in skills development

This activity area supports the greater involvement of enterprises in skills development in partner countries, with a focus on innovation, productivity and competitiveness, especially from the perspective of SMEs. It aligns with broader transitions in the economy, particularly the digital and green transitions, which are reshaping skills needs and placing new demands on smaller businesses.

Table 6: engaging enterprises in skills development main achievements in 2024

Objective

To support the development of skills-focused strategies for enterprises, including in regional and sectoral development, with an emphasis on enabling a just and fair twin transition.

Outcomes

- Engagement of business intermediaries and trade unions in supporting SME skills development for digital and green transitions, particularly in agribusiness in the Western Balkans.
- Strengthened capacity of intermediary bodies and trade unions to scale and improve the quality of enterprise-focused skills development services.
- Enhanced collaboration between VET, higher VET, continuing VET and innovation actors to meet evolving enterprise needs.

Main achievements in 2024

- Network participation: 125 SMEs and intermediary organisations from the Western Balkans, 14 from Eastern Partnership countries.
- Cross-border collaboration: 6 EU-partner country peer learning partnerships; 5 joint initiatives submitted for EU funding under ERASMUS+, Horizon Europe and EIT.
- Stakeholder feedback:
 - ✓ High levels of satisfaction with knowledge relevance and applicability: all participants at the November 2024 networking event in Novi Sad reported they were likely or very likely to apply the knowledge gained (average rating: 3.7/4)
 - ✓ At the December 2023 event in North Macedonia, over 96% of participants rated it as useful (average rating 3.8/4).

2024 Highlights

- Continued hand-over of the 'Skilling up the Western Balkans agri-food sector: digitalising and greening' initiative to BioSense, a Serbian based research centre.
 - November 2024 flagship networking event in Serbia expanded participation to EaP countries.
 - Submission of joint network initiatives for EU funding through ERASMUS+, Horizon Europe and EIT.
-

- Finalisation of skills for smart specialisation in Albania, with ETF recommendations incorporated into the national Growth Plan following a request from the Prime Minister's office.
- Completion and publication of the SME Index for the Eastern Partnership on the OECD website.
- Three new requests received for 2025 to support primary curriculum updates based on project findings.

1.7 Lifelong learning policies and system change

This activity area supports partner countries in developing inclusive, open and flexible lifelong learning systems. The ETF provides knowledge co-creation through policy dialogue and mutual learning, as well as through monitoring systems and tools that provide timely, evidence-based policy advice. At its core, this work focuses on delivering actionable country intelligence and developing innovative methods of gathering and using such intelligence in response to demand.

Table 7: lifelong learning policies and system change main achievements in 2024

Objective

To provide policy support to partner countries through monitoring, policy reviews and diagnostics, and thematic innovation, aimed at building effective and inclusive lifelong learning systems through change.

Outcomes

- Reliable, relevant system monitoring data collected, analysed and disseminated.
- Evidence-based insights and recommendations to support policy implementation and implementation.
- Expanded knowledge base on system change to support policy dialogue and advice from a lifelong learning perspective.

Main achievements in 2024

- Evidence of policy uptake:
 - ✓ Policy reviews and migration deliverables: all policy reviews and deliverables related to migration and country fiches finalised as planned, strengthening evidence-based policy dialogue.
 - ✓ Cross-country monitoring report uptake: the 2024 cross-country monitoring report again ranked among the ETF's most downloaded publications, highlighting stakeholder interest and continued relevance.
- Country fiches delivery: 20 country fiches were developed and delivered in Q1, enhancing ETF country-specific intelligence base.
- KIESE data publication: the KIESE dataset and analysis were finalised and published online in Q3.
- Osnabrück and VET Council monitoring briefs: 5 country briefs were produced in line with the Osnabrück Declaration and the EU Council Recommendation on VET, supporting EU-level policy coherence.

2024 Highlights

- Release of the 2024 cross-country monitoring report.
- Completion of the 2023-24 biennial Torino Process monitoring.
- Launch of new web-based gateway to access all Torino Process deliverables.
- Timely delivery of policy reviews and outputs related to the Osnabrück initiative, migration and country fiches

1.8 Quality assurance and governance mechanisms

This activity area promotes participatory governance system-level cooperation between government, private sector, and civil society to enable the transition from traditional education and training systems to high-performing, lifelong learning-oriented human capital development frameworks. The ETF contributes through integrated policy advice on governance, quality assurance and financing mechanisms.

Table 8: quality assurance and governance mechanisms main achievements in 2024

Objective

To support conditions at system level for effective transitions from education and training to lifelong learning.

Outcomes

- Greater understanding and use of participatory governance mechanisms – particularly those related to quality assurance and financing.
- EU-funded programmes in partner countries informed by the ETF's expertise in governance, quality assurance and financing.
- Quality Assurance (QA) Forum members actively advising national authorities and supporting implementation of QA mechanisms in selected countries.

Main achievements in 2024

- GLAD and QA Forum engagement:
 - ✓ GLAD participation increased to 481 members (up from 357 in 2023).
 - ✓ QA Forum members were actively involved in peer visits to Armenia and Serbia, as well as contributed policy advice to Tunisia.
- Civil society engagement: civil society organisations were actively involved in policy dialogue in Moldova, Ukraine and Albania.
- Social partner participation: the ETF facilitated the involvement of social partners across several thematic areas:
 - ✓ Youth Guarantee in Albania.
 - ✓ Human capital development in Moldova.
 - ✓ Adult learning in Ukraine.
 - ✓ Tripartite exchange in the Western Balkans.

2024 Highlights

- Support provided to nine Ukrainian cities in joining the UNESCO global network of learning cities, advancing community engagement and post-war recovery priorities
- Mobilisation of social partner representatives, contributing to mainstreaming the green and just transition in social dialogue
- Expanded collaboration with internal and external partners, particularly civil society organisations (CSOs) and facilitation of tripartite exchanges.
- Key focus areas included: Youth Guarantee, adult learning, resilience, quality assurance of formative assessment, and diagnostic tools for evaluating QA systems in VET.

1.9 DARYA – Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia

The DARYA project supports youth employability in Central Asia through a systemic approach focused on inclusive and labour market-relevant skills development for young people. It is structured around three thematic areas: (i) evidence and analysis of education and training outcomes and skills needs; ii) stakeholder-driven flexible and permeable approach to qualifications at national and regional levels; and iii) inclusive teaching and learning based on learning outcomes relevant to the labour market.

Table 9: Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia (Darya) main achievements in 2024

Objective

To contribute to post-Covid recovery in Central Asia by improving the employability of young people through inclusive and labour-market oriented skills development.

Outcomes

- Improved evidence base on skills needs and increased use in skills development systems and employment services.
 - Greater use of stakeholder driven flexible and permeable qualification approaches at national and regional levels.
 - Increased adoption of inclusive teaching and learning approaches based on learning outcomes.
 - Enhanced stakeholder involvement in skills development at national and regional levels.
 - Strengthened regional dialogue, cooperation and peer learning.
-

Main achievements in 2024

- Skills needs analysis piloted: Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan undertook employer surveys; tracer studies were piloted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, with dissemination planned for 2025.
 - Qualification pilot preparations: all five Central Asian countries participated in preparatory activities for national and multi-country qualifications pilots, with development due by Year 5.
 - Innovative teaching and learning tools: SCAFFOLD introduced in all five countries to support key competence teaching and authentic learning.
 - Stakeholder dialogue and coordination: all five countries nominated national DARYA coordinators and engaged in regional steering committees and the High-Level Group.
 - Regional cooperation agreed: all countries confirmed commitment to regional strategic cooperation during the December 2024 High-Level Group meeting.
-

2024 Highlights

- Regional study on new forms of work.
 - Employer surveys and tracer studies piloted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
 - Development of a multilingual glossary and mapping of national qualifications systems.
 - Feasibility study on regional cooperation on qualifications.
 - SCAFFOLD introduced in five national languages and Russian.
 - Practitioners empowered to exchange via the DARYA network of institutions.
 - Several thousand educators reached out through SCAFFOLD events.
 - SCAFFOLD included in Kyrgyzstan's 2025 VET workplan.
 - SCAFFOLD modules developed for CPD training in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
 - High-level cross-ministerial and employer engagement.
 - Cooperation with UNICEF on green competences.
 - Continued collaboration with EBRD and ADB.
-

1.10 Responding to the new EU policy and geographical priorities

This activity area allows the ETF to retain flexibility to react to evolving EU policy priorities and strategic needs, including support beyond current partner countries or themes. It aligns with the Commission opinion encouraging adaptability to new thematic and geographic areas. In 2024, this work included engagement in Egypt, Rwanda, and countries in the Eastern Partnership.

Table 10: responding to new EU policy and geographical priorities main achievements in 2024

Objective

To respond to evolving global and EU priorities and advance the EU agenda on skills and human capital development.

Outcomes

- Greater promotion of the EU on skills and human capital development agenda
 - Responsiveness to European Commission needs across new thematic and geographical areas.
 - Strategic partnerships established in line with the Team Europe Initiative.
-

Main achievements in 2024

- Expanded country engagement: the ETF delivered on EU requests beyond its usual geographical scope, including support to the EU Delegations in Rwanda and Egypt, and an agreement with DG NEAR on an education reform initiative in the Eastern Partnership.
 - Strategic partnerships and high-level dialogue
 - ✓ Strategic partnerships: Government of Rwanda and the Rwanda Development Board; the EU Delegation to Egypt, the Egyptian labour and education ministries, GIZ, EBRD, AFD, and others.
 - ✓ High-level dialogue: Ministers and deputy ministers under the SER programme.
-

2024 Highlights

- Skills supply and demand analysis for Rwanda’s agricultural sector aligned with Vision 2050.
 - Proposal of integrated skills development approach for Rwanda covering the labour market, economic, and education and training policies.
 - Conceptualisation of TVET Centres of Excellence in Rwanda and training delivered to the Rwanda Development Board.
 - Provision of intelligence and expertise on vocational education systems to support a €45 million contribution agreement for TVET reform in Egypt.
 - ETF support to TVET reform in Egypt helped align skills development with the country’s economic and social needs.
 - Support to the modernisation of Egypt’s job classification system in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour (MOL).
 - Coordination of multilateral dialogue for the EU4YES initiative and establishment of a Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Renewable Energy.
 - Support to quality assurance mechanisms and qualifications transparency to enhance labour mobility and lifelong learning in Egypt.
 - Diagnostic assessments using RED methodology in Moldova and Armenia, involving data collection, analysis, and stakeholder consultations.
 - Peer learning events in Turin focusing on the use of evidence in education policy planning, monitoring and evaluation (May 2024).
 - Peer learning on teachers and educators as key actors of reform, including pre-service education, professional development, remuneration, and career management.
 - Successful flagship event in Finland and Estonia with participation from all EaP countries.
 - Adjustments to ETF activities in Ukraine on areas highlighted to align with the EC opinion on EU membership: modernisation of VET legislation, education statistics, and optimisation of school networks.
 - Progress in identifying capacity development needs in Armenia and Moldova based on RED outcomes.
-

MANAGEMENT (PART II)

This section explains how the ETF delivered the achievements described in Section 1. It covers all elements of the agency's governance as well as human and financial resource management, including follow up actions from audits and evaluations.

2.1 Governing Board

The ETF Governing Board (GB) is responsible for adopting key institutional documents, including the annual work programme, the annual estimate of expenditure and revenue, the establishment plan, the definitive budget, the annual activity report, procedural and financial rules. It has the authority to appoint, dismiss or extend term of office of the director.

The GB is chaired by the Director General of DG EMPL. In 2024, there were meetings in June and November. The Board adopted 15 decisions in 2024, including the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023, the Annual Accounts 2023, the Annual Work Programme 2025 and the Budget 2025.

In addition, DG EMPL organised and chaired two Structured Dialogue (SD) meetings between the Commission/EEAS members and observers, and the ETF management. At these meetings the ETF's draft Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023 and Annual Work Programme 2025, the list of EU requests, the findings and actions addressing the IAS audit, and options for ETF premises post-2027 were discussed.

In 2024, the GB also approved the ETF's new organisational structure, following the mid-term review of its 2027 strategy. This approval came alongside a series of "next generation conversations" and foresight workshops, which engaged hundreds of stakeholders in co-creating a vision for the ETF's strategic positioning post-2027 and the next multiannual financial framework 2028-34.

Ahead of the Governing Board meeting in November, DG EMPL convened the Troika meeting with representatives of the current, past, and future EU Council Presidencies to discuss the content of the GB meeting alongside DG NEAR and ETF colleagues.

Throughout the year, the ETF reinforced bilateral engagement with EC services through regular exchanges outside the formal SD and GB meetings. These included more frequent interactions with core geographical DGs (e.g. DG NEAR, DG INTPA), the EEAS and thematic DGs closely linked to the ETF's mandate (DG EMPL, DG EAC, DG HOME, DG JRC, among others).

2.2 Major developments

In 2024, the ETF maintained its strong support for partner countries – including those pursuing EU candidate status and those facing compounded fragilities – by helping them advance their education and training systems towards lifelong learning. This was achieved through tailored policy advice, context-sensitive solutions, and long-term engagement. At the same time, the ETF continued to adapt to external geopolitical shocks, including the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the war in Gaza and broader fragilities in the EU neighbourhood, demonstrating its ability to remain relevant and responsive in times of crisis. A key highlight of the year was the ETF's ongoing support to Ukraine, which remained central to its operations.

The ETF facilitated the integration of Ukrainian refugees into EU labour markets by supporting the development of learning resources aligned with European trends and assisting in the recognition of qualifications and skills. It also contributed to the comparison between Ukraine's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), working closely with the EC on a Joint Action Plan. In close coordination with the Ukrainian authorities and the Commission, the ETF developed a broader plan to support Ukraine's reconstruction, recognising the essential role of a skilled workforce and contributing to the country's EU enlargement efforts.

The ETF participated in the Ukraine Recovery Conference (UCR) 2024 in Berlin. The conference addressed urgent recovery challenges, such as structural unemployment and skills shortages in critical sectors. A major highlight was the announcement of the Skills Alliance, which unites over 50 international organisations, partner countries, and private sector stakeholders to provide training and upskilling opportunities for young people, women, veterans, and displaced individuals. The ETF's involvement resulted from a comprehensive support proposal for reconstruction, based on feedback and active involvement in pre-conference events in Germany and Ukraine.

Later in the year, Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science launched the ETF/EU Academy and supported a teacher professional development course: "Scaffold: Bringing key competences into the classroom" as part of the New Ukrainian School reform. Designed to train national trainers, the course awarded certificates based on a micro-credential template developed by the ETF for Ukraine under the UA re-emergency project.

The ETF placed significant emphasis on internal institutional development in 2024. This was driven by the Strategy 2027 mid-term review, the results of the Staff Engagement survey in 2023, and other evidence collected, including benchmark studies, one-to-one meetings between staff and the director, and regular evaluations and audits. Developments focused on four key areas: strategy, organisational structure, processes, and people and leadership. Participatory methods were widely applied, including targeted staff group consultations and an exhibition for all staff to participate and comment. The work was led by an internal working group consisting of Staff Committee nominated members and management team members.

As a result, the mid-term review 2027 was completed defining four strategic goals for ETF as its strategic drive, recalibrating the organisational structure to support these goals, and emphasising principles such as strengthened strategic leadership, focus on people and talent, enhanced teamwork, connectors within the organization, and a flatter managerial hierarchy. The change process aimed to increase ETF's impact and future capacity to address complex issues efficiently, and the new structure fosters a more integrated link between planning and programming through four strategic goals: global knowledge hub on human capital development, asset to EU and Member States, long-term reference and support to partner countries, and reference EU agency. Ultimately, it reflects a focus on delivering impact for partner countries, EU services, EU Member States, the wider human capital development (HCD) landscape, EU agencies, and ETF staff.

Throughout 2024, the ETF strengthened its partnerships and networks, co-creating solutions with partner countries and aligning with national priorities. ETF's contributions in areas such as skills development, validation, curricular reform, transition policies, education quality, and VET

were widely recognised and valued, reaffirming the ETF's role as a long-term partner and reference point.

The above developments acknowledge that the ETF continues to act as an 'EU compass' in a wider stakeholder landscape. This includes its commitment to being an asset for the EU and its Member States, supporting EU policies through networks and initiatives, policy nodes, and studies and analysis. In 2024, special attention was given to Talent Partnerships and Erasmus+, with a focus on countries like Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt.

Participation at COP29 in Azerbaijan was another milestone. Green and digital transitions remained prominent themes throughout 2024, supported by the use of EU tools like SELFIE. The ETF also placed renewed emphasis on inclusion, gender equality, and social equity in its partner countries.

The ETF's work extended from 'Kyiv to Bangkok', particularly on the Youth Guarantee, green skills foresight, and contributions to the European Year of Skills, all of which enhanced its global visibility. The ETF also initiated a strategic foresight process, engaging stakeholders to shape its future role and positioning.

The ETF's voluntary contribution projects enabled the EU to broaden its influence, with the ETF using its expertise to design and implement comprehensive, country-tailored interventions. As a broker, the ETF successfully connected decision makers and stakeholders from partner countries, EU Member States and the European Commission.

Partnerships played an important role in delivering customised solutions, scaling impact with key donors and social actors, and advancing digital and sustainability maturity. Through peer learning and collaboration with other EU agencies, the ETF ensured the effective use of resources while aligning with EU priorities. These partnerships enhanced the ETF's value proposition and reinforced its role in the EU's external policy landscape.

Overall, in 2024, the ETF advanced its preparedness through experimentation, evidence-based analysis, and innovation. Its exploration of AI led to tailored tools, contributing to its digital maturity. Its sustainability efforts positioned the ETF as a model among EU agencies. Greater global recognition helped attract and retain talent, while a strengthened anticipatory culture enabled it to engage with partners, beneficiaries, and thought leaders to shape its future strategic positioning.

2.3 Budgetary and financial management

Of the €23,807,037 available as the EU contribution, the ETF committed 99.77% in 2024 (compared to 99.85% committed in 2023), paid 93.45% (compared to 95.85% in 2023) and performed eight budgetary transfers (six in 2023), therefore maintaining the excellent level of previous years with indicators well beyond targets.

In addition to the EU Contribution, as highlighted in Table 11 below, the ETF has received and implemented €4,979,600 through Service Level and Contribution agreements:

- €13,665 – Service Level Agreement (SLA) with EU-OSHA for sharing accounting services (started in July 2022, continuing).

- €1,305,935 – Contribution Agreement (CA) with DG INTPA for ACQFII (second phase of the project on African Continental Qualifications Framework), second instalment (€5m for 4 years, started in 2023).
- €2,000,000 – Contribution Agreement with DG INTPA for DARYA (Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia), third instalment (€10m for 5 years, started in 2022).
- €450,000 – Contribution Agreement with DG NEAR for EGYPT TVET (EU Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Education and Technical Education TE 2.0 strategy – TA4TE), first instalment (€0.5m for 1 year, started in 2024).
- €1,210,000 – Contribution Agreement with DG NEAR for SER NDICI/2023/450-824, first instalment (€2.5m for 3 years, started in 2024).

These positive budget results show the effect of the changes introduced in the organisational structure and the ETF's capacity to absorb voluntary contributions.

Table 11: Budget management

Budget	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Overall ETF Budget (EU Contribution) (€)	23,807,037	22,627,956	21,726,000	21,300,000	20,957,000
Additional revenue (€)	4,979,600	5,865,000	3,130,000	102,739	

In 2024, the ETF maintained its strong record of financial discipline, with a commitment rate of 99.77%, underscoring its high standards of budget management. Table 12 below outlines commitment and payment rates by title. Notably, the 2024 figures reflect an exceptional one-off commitment relating to the agency's onboarding to SUMMA (the new EC financial system set to replace ABAC). Although this onboarding fee was committed in 2024, the corresponding payment will be made in 2025, in accordance with instructions from DG BUDG.

Table 12: Commitment and payment rates by title

Budget 2023	Available Budget (€)	Committed (€)	%	Paid (€)	%
Title 1 - Staff	15,546,609	15,542,944	99.98%	15,322,119	98.56%
Title 2 - Infrastructure	2,538,767	2,525,476	99.48%	1,844,029	72.63%
Title 3 - Operational	5,721,662	5,684,417	99.35%	5,081,972	88.82%
Grand Total ⁷	23,807,037	23,752,836	99.77%	22,248,120	93.45%

Transfers

In 2024, the ETF carried out eight budgetary transfers, enabling it to adapt to evolving challenges and opportunities. These included additional funding made available by the EC, the reallocation of resources following negative salary adaptations late in the year, temporary staffing requirements, and infrastructure improvements.

Through dynamic and continuous monitoring of operational budget impacts, the ETF maximised the implementation of its work programme. This allowed the inclusion of new

priorities that were initially unfunded, resulting in the full absorption of available resources. In fact, operational funds from the subvention increased by 32%. The overall amount transferred was 8.1% (compared to 3.0% in 2023).

Payment times

In 2024, the ETF processed 94.1% of all payments in due time; a slight decrease from the 95% recorded in 2023. Of the 982 payments made, only 54 were processed after the due date. This decline was primarily due to the substantial volume of funds made available at the end of the year from negative salary adjustments, which required increased commitment transactions during a period typically focused on payments.

Amount returned to the EU budget (or budget outturn)

The 2024 budget outturn amounted to €737,987.51 representing 3.10% of the EC contribution - a higher figure than previous years (0.36% in 2023, 0.29% in 2022, 0.4% in 2021). While commitment appropriations were almost fully consumed, the outturn was again due to the late arrival of additional funds from salary adjustments. Although the ETF was able to absorb these funds, many of the activities were launched late in the year, pushing related payments into 2025.

Carry forward and RAL 2024-25

The carry forward for Titles 1 and 2 remained stable compared to the previous year (5.0% in 2024 versus 2.9% in 2022-23) reflecting effective alignment between administrative operations and the annual payment cycle. Under Title 3, the RAL (*reste à liquider*) stood at 44.6%, close to the 46.6% recorded in 2023-24).

Table 13: Budget implementation overview

Budget 2024 implementation	Title	Budget 2024	Committed in 2024 (%)	Paid in 2024 (%)	To be paid in 2025 (CF + RAL) (%)	of which:		
						Done in 2024 pending payment	To be implemented in 2025	
							Planned	Delayed
Admin (Titles 1 and 2, CF)	T1	15,546,609	99.98%	98.6%	1.4%	0.6%	0.7%	0.1%
	T2	2,538,767	99.48%	72.6%	26.8%	11.8%	13.4%	1.6%
	T1+T2	18,085,376	99.91%	94.9%	5.0%	2.2%	2.5%	0.3%
Operational (Title 3, RAL)	T3	5,721,662	99.35%	54.7%	44.6%	29.7%	11.4%	3.5%
	T3 – pre-2024	2,080,798		93.7%				
Overall ETF		23,807,037	99.77%	85.3%	14.5%	8.8%	4.6%	1.1%

Cancellation and carry overs from 2023

At the end of 2024, the cancelled carry overs amounted to €80,795 – an increase compared to €49,784 in 2023. This rise was primarily linked to conservative end-of-year estimates for the actual cost of training, missions, temporary staff and utilities.

To reduce the amount of cancelled appropriations, the ETF implemented several targeted measures such as:

- Budget reallocation – Among the reserved activities eligible for additional funding, preference was given to those with a lower risk of carry over and a higher likelihood of payment within the financial year.

- Appropriation management – Title 3 appropriations were implemented as differentiated appropriations, generating "Reste à Liquider" (RAL) rather than carry forward; unpaid RAL does not lead to cancellation of appropriations provided the payment appropriations allocated for them are re-assigned to other ongoing payments.
- Re-evaluation of commitments – in the final months of the year (usually December), open commitments were reassessed to ensure that only the necessary amounts are carried over.
- Risk assessment – For commitments with greater uncertainty (e.g. missions, events, utilities), a calculated approach was taken to commit only the most likely expenditure. This occasionally led to small additional commitments in the following year (N+1).

Inter-institutional tenders and service level agreements

Throughout 2024, the ETF actively pursued synergies with other EU institutions through a tailored assessment of procurement opportunities. It participated in 49 inter-institutional contracts and had 10 service-level agreements with other EU bodies. Additionally, two ETF-managed contracts from 2023 remained open to other agencies.

2.4 Delegation and sub-delegation

In 2024, the ETF's Director, as Authorising Officer (AO), delegated financial responsibility to Delegated Authorising Officers (DAOs) for the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024, which included delegations to one head of Department and five Heads of Unit. Following the GB approval of the new organisational structure from 1 July 2024, the DAO delegations were reassigned to six newly established Heads of Unit. This ensured a streamlined with a limited number of staff holding financial delegation, aligned with the ETF's new organisational flows.

All Sub-Delegated Authorising Officers (SDAOs) and DAOs signed a Declaration of Assurance for their respective areas. No reservations were reported in 2024.

2.5 Human resource management

In 2024, the ETF made significant progress under the four pillars of its HR 2027 strategy:

- **Attracting and deploying:** Efforts focused on enhancing the institution's attractiveness with measures to improve gender and geographical balance and anticipate future needs through a long-term recruitment plan. Timely and inclusive selection processes were ensured, including improvements to branding and accessibility for candidates with disabilities. Vacancy communications were analysed for clarity and outreach, and digital platforms were used to attract a wider, more diverse talent pool.

The ETF completed three recruitment procedures to establish reserve lists for administrative assistants (FG II), project officers (FG III) and HCD experts (AD 7 A selection process was finalised for a managerial role (AD 9) to lead the new People and Talent Unit, while another was launched for a cybersecurity and information security specialist (AD 7). A new call for trainees was also prepared.

- **Managing and retaining:** Emphasis was placed on staff engagement and managing the full employee journey, from onboarding to outboarding, in line with the people performance management model and career management framework.

Turnover due to retirements picked up in 2024, with new hires onboarded to ensure continuity. Six interim staff were selected and integrated. With staff engagement dropping to 51% in 2023 (from 56% in 2020), this remained a priority area throughout the year.

- **Growing and development:** Continuous development was supported through targeted learning initiatives aligned with long-term skills needs. Specific attention was given to knowledge transfer from retiring staff to ensure institutional continuity.
- **Caring and valuing:** Staff wellbeing was a priority. ETF further embedded diversity and inclusion principles across all HR processes. Activities included a staff day on health and safety, a re-run of the “respect” workshop, and preparation for the 2025 Stress & Wellbeing Survey.

Several major developments shaped HR operations in 2024:

- Strategic HR workshops for the management team provided an aligned understanding of the regulatory framework, and a space for strategic orientations in the people management processes.
- The ETF career management framework is inspiring other EU agencies, with Eurofound adapting it to their needs and Cedefop presenting it to their management team.
- The mid-term review of the 2027 Strategy, which led to internal structural adjustments and creation of new positions including the creation of a dedicated People and Talent Unit.
- A record number of retirements in ETF history, leading to a significant turnover of staff.
- More clarity on staffing issues linked to voluntary contribution agreements from a legal and staff regulation perspective.

Amid these changes, ETF’s focus remains on:

- Providing maximal opportunities for internal move and development for current staff.
- Ensuring staffing decisions are made strategically and with corporate oversight from the management team to support ETF’s mission, strategic goals and long-term sustainability.
- Strengthening the ETF’s role as a centre of expertise while recognising the contribution of all colleagues.

In terms of missions, their number, duration and average cost appear stabilised after new work modalities were implemented following the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2024, partner countries regain the first place in the destination chart, with top four being Egypt, Moldova, Serbia and Albania. Additionally, the Service Level Agreement with EEAS on missions’ security was finally signed in 2024 following four years of negotiation. ETF is one of the agencies pioneering this kind of agreements. Furthermore, ETF joined an interinstitutional procurement for mission security measures with an external provider, providing training and ad-hoc awareness raising campaigns on missions’ security to staff and management.

In the area of digitalisation of HR processes, procurement of services linked to invigilated tests as well deployment of the EC mission management tool (MiPS+) brought efficiency both in the recruitment and mission management processes.

The ETF mid-term review of its strategy 2027 and its associated recalibration enabled a shift in organisational culture towards improved communication and participation, with staff being integral to the overall process. In a nutshell, it triggered open dialogue and enhanced

transparency and cross-functional collaboration. It also strengthened ownership of decisions and empowerment, greater sense of shared responsibility and stronger leadership involvement and recognition. Important in this process was to provide continual learning, support and professional development, as well as to ensure an iterative process so that staff can become the driving force behind organisational transformation.

Business Continuity Plan

In 2024 the ETF undertook a deep review of its Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan, which was subsequently adopted by director decision. The review process considered the new regulations on information and cybersecurity in addition to lessons learnt from previous experiences. The resulting plan is robust and adapted to the needs of the ETF.

2.6 Strategy for efficiency gains and innovation

In 2024 the ETF continued to identify opportunities to introduce efficiency gains in its operations. This took place in line with its strategy mid-term review and associated recalibration, including an integrated and holistic approach to monitoring performance. Improvement actions are identified on an annual basis through the assessment of the effectiveness of internal controls, annual performance assessments, risk assessment, audits and evaluations, and an action plan is prepared in line with the ETF's 2027 strategy.

A review of the resource allocation is done annually during the planning process. For human resources the aim is to increase the numbers and level of staff allocated to operational activities through reallocation of duties, staff mobility and training. At the end of 2024, the ETF had 76% of its statutory staff allocated to core operational activities (from 70% in 2017) and 64.5% allocated to operational programme management and implementation activities (from 56.28% in 2018). This demonstrates that the restructuring of the ETF brought about the rebalancing of line management, thus rationalising its organisational structure to deliver core services.

Aligned with its 2027 strategy, in 2024 the ETF instituted an organisational restructuring to redistribute line management responsibilities, streamline structures around core services and value delivery to key beneficiaries and stakeholders, expand project management capabilities, and pursue efficiency gains. A three-layer management structure was replaced by everyone one step away approach with Directorate and units. A separate unit was established to focus on people and institutional development.

The Project & Partners Unit revised and improved workflows and procedures for project management, communication and mobilisation activities, including changes to the operational use of contracted services. The ETF introduced an online project management tool and automated certain processes to facilitate project implementation.

Efficiency gains have already been achieved in the financial circuits by combining the roles of financial and operational initiating agents, therefore reducing the number of actors involved in certain workflows. The same applies with the development of polyvalent functions able to deliver broader support services in the ETF purchase-to-pay cycle. On the operational side of financial management, a full review of the financial circuits has been done in the context of the restructuring and follow up of business processes is further enhanced within the Project & Partners Unit, which is a service centre supporting the different operational projects.

In terms of procurement, a plan was published in the ETF website in line with the regulatory requirements. Overall, seventeen procurement procedures were launched in 2024, including the in-country support service contracts to be used for future similar contracts. Also, six digital related contracts were launched, while eighteen contracts were concluded. Ultimately, more than 71 tenders were received and evaluated in 2024. To further expand efficiencies, a thorough review of all specifications was made, which will also ensure all aspects related to contract management are respected.

In the financial and procurement area, the ETF 2024 recalibration process brought in more financial actors which have been trained and supported in performing their duties. The Finproc Hub was launched bringing together actors within the organisation having a role in financial and procurement transactions. It is aimed as a forum for sharing knowledge, experience and practices across the organisation, and touching upon issues related to financial flows, procurement modalities, roles, regulation and IT systems.

This is already helping the harmonisation and dissemination of best practices throughout ETF, which leads to further gains in efficiency. Furthermore, the ETF recalibration prompted the revision of financial workflows, thus streamlining financial processes while aligning them to the revised business strategic goals.

Further efficiency gains were attained due to ETF's digital maturity and full deployment of corporate monitoring systems. PPMT was regularly used to launch procedures, full phasing out of TED2 and all functionalities operational for agencies in December. Preparations for the rollout of MIPS as the EC mission tool, were completed in 2024 for full deployment in 2025. This will bring efficiency gains in externalisation of mission claims process. Cooperation with Agencies (see below) is an additional support to efficiency gains.

Likewise, ETF's sustainability maturity also contributed to efficiency gains, including in terms of energy efficiency due to building management measures, which enabled the ETF to decrease energy consumption by 6.5% and gas consumption by 2% compared to 2023. The implemented sustainable commuting plan enabled an increase of 10% in use of carpooling system and of alternative modes of transport such as bicycle.

The above is linked to the continued compromise to maintain and improve greening standards, as per EMAS registration and ISO 14001 certification.

Cooperation with other EU agencies

The ETF continued to strengthen its collaboration with EU agencies in 2024 around issues of common concern and with clear added value. A highlight was the cooperation with ENISA on a cybersecurity risk assessment that is preparing ETF to comply with regulation requirements. ETF cooperated with ELA in the development of AI solutions, notably the ETF Chatty and ELA GPT. With EFSA the ETF cooperated on AI in procurement as part of the EUAN NAPO working group.

In terms of shared services, in 2024 the ETF continued sharing accounting services with EU-OSHA through a Service Level Agreement. This has led to significant efficiency gains. In addition, the two agencies are cooperating on the onboarding and preparatory measures for SUMMA, both in terms of planning and training preparation.

In 2024, ETF also continued to be very active within the EU agencies' network and is fully committed to the goal of administrative excellence as outlined in the Strategy of the EU Agencies' Network. The ETF continued cooperation with other agencies on initiatives including participation in the AI procurement working group and participation to contract management seminars organised by FRONTEX. In addition, ETF trained EU-OSHA on framework contracts in the field of HCD and had other regular exchanges on best practices.

In addition, ETF led two inter-institutional working groups on sustainability, notably one on sustainable procurement under the Network of Procurement Officers and another on sustainable meetings and events under the Greening network. ETF organised two successful sharing events on "Making business with the EU" and on sustainability, as part of the EUAN diversity and inclusion cooperation plan.

Also, a seminar on procurement was organised in 2024 involving 13 EU agencies and the local authority, as well as more than 100 economic operators from the local market and the University of Torino. The seminar provided valuable insights on procurement needs and received positive feedback from participants. It enabled mutual learning and expanded cooperation between involved EU agencies. It shall be repeated in 2025 at request from Latvian authorities in Riga.

There was excellent cooperation between the ETF and agencies in the EMPL cluster throughout 2024, for example with fruitful exchanges in relation to the external evaluation commissioned by DG EMPL, for a coordinated initiative and approach on data architecture, and in view of the 2024 risk peer review exercise. Additionally, there were regular bilateral exchanges between the ETF and CEDEFOP in areas such as HR, and ETF also continued to participate as an observer in the Governing Board of ELA.

Overall, networking, mutual learning and sharing practices and tools with other agencies appear key for learning and for efficiency gains. In this context, the integration with ARES is in progress and will continue in Q1 2025, and networking with other agencies on common solutions are further improving efficiencies.

2.7 Assessment of audit results during the reporting year

This section sets out the observations, opinions and conclusions reported by auditors, including the limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control. The management measures taken in response to the audit recommendations are also included, together with an assessment of the material impact of the findings on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on management's assurance.

The information provided below confirms the **trend of positive audit results** and is a strong indicator of ETF performance to support the management assurance on the achievement of internal control objectives.

2.7.1 Internal Audit Service (IAS)

The Internal Audit Service of the European Commission is the ETF's Internal Auditor. In this capacity, in 2024, IAS auditors carried out a full-scale risk assessment, which resulted in the IAS Strategic Internal Audit Plan for the period 2025-2027. This multi-annual audit plan contains two audit topics: project management, and analysis and monitoring service as inputs to policy advice – the Torino Process, with a reserve topic of cybersecurity.

In June 2024, the IAS concluded an audit on digitalisation and a review of internal processes. The audit opinion is positive. Notwithstanding the positive report, it contains one recommendation ranked as very important by IAS on digitalisation implementation. The ETF is currently implementing actions to address this issue, which is expected to be fully implemented by Q2-2025.

In December 2024 the IAS formally closed three out of four recommendations from the 2022 audit on collaboration and cooperation mechanisms between the ETF and EC services.

To date, the ETF has not received any critical level audit findings.

2.7.2 Audit of ETF provisional and final accounts

The audit for 2024 is ongoing and is expected to be concluded by June 2025.

2.7.3 European Court of Auditors (ECA)

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) is the external auditor of the ETF.

In October 2024, ECA published the annual audit report for EU agencies for the financial year 2023⁸. This contains a clean unqualified audit opinion for the ETF, whereby ECA concluded that: *“in our opinion, the payments underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 are legal and regular in all material respects”*.

2.8 Sustainability including greening and EMAS

The ETF approach to a more sustainable way of working has an impact on programming, planning and implementation of the ETF work programme. In 2024, the ETF moved one step further in its sustainability efforts in a systemic manner by giving equal attention to its three pillars: environmental, social and economic.

The ETF is fully committed to reducing its carbon footprint and devising new sustainable solutions in line with the EC ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, as outlined in the European Green Deal. In addition, the ETF strives for a working environment where talent is nurtured and work-life balance a reality, placing attention on inclusion and diversity, as well as on gender and geographical aspects, thus fostering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights. These are also important considerations in all procurement processes performed by the ETF, which consider the lifetime of products or services being purchased.

Environmental pillar

The ETF implements its environmental policy to achieve its strategic environmental goals (Annex 7). In this context, a new environmental policy was approved by ETF in 2024 with a more ambitious objective to expand its sustainability approach with clear targets towards carbon neutrality in 2050. The ETF obtained EMAS registration and ISO certification in 2021, which have been continually renewed.

In 2024, ETF continued to lead the EUAN working group on greener meetings and events, including the development and presentation of new guidelines. Likewise, ETF continued to

⁸ ECA audit report for EU agencies for the financial year 2023.

lead the EUAN working group on sustainable procurement under the NAPO, which will continue operating in 2025. Nine EU agencies participated actively in close cooperation with both the Greening Network and the EUAN working group on sustainability reporting.

Furthermore, the ETF sustainable commuting plan was implemented in 2024, with the agency now acquiring a new certification as a friendly cycling employer. Also, the new GHG protocol will be piloted in 2025 as a more performing monitoring system, based on preparatory work in 2024. Additionally, the new ETF GEMS group was fully operational in 2024 paving the way for the new generation of connectors. It delivered on communication actions and prepared a draft of a smarter travelling proposal to be presented to the management team in 2025.

Social pillar

The ETF strongly believes in fostering and valuing a diverse and inclusive workplace. To this end, it has in place the “Diversity & Inclusion Charter” and the “Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit for Managers”. These enable ETF to implement an annual diversity and inclusion action plan. The ETF also continues to be an active member of the EU agencies network on diversity and inclusion and the women support network.

The ETF developed a dedicated intranet page and continues to raise awareness internally on learning opportunities for staff on promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace. This includes issues such as promoting training on unconscious bias and developing indicators to carefully monitor the gender and geographical balance of staff.

The ETF has also been actively involved in developing strategies to attracting talent from a wider community and promoting job opportunities to reach a wider and diverse audience, while remaining an equal opportunities employer. With a merit-based approach to recruitment, in the case of equal merit of two candidates, the ETF would then favour the under-represented nationality or gender.

In 2024, a workshop was organised on the ‘sustainability journey in EU agencies’. It aimed to offer insights on how to embed sustainability aspects in the EU agencies ‘diversity & inclusion’ action plans. Also, on ways in which agencies can make public procurement more sustainable and socially responsible. The workshop was successful with more than 150 participants online, triggering further networking with the University of Turin and the GGP helpdesk staff.

In addition, a handbook on socially responsible procurement was published in 2024, the very first NAPO publication and a reference document for EU agencies. In terms of staff wellbeing, the ETF cares for its staff with numerous social support measures in place and a zero tolerance for harassment in the workplace.

Economic pillar

Concerning the economic aspect of sustainability, ETF’s attention remains on the deployment of life-cycle cost (LCC) analysis to assess any purchase of products and furniture with attention to their whole lifecycle.

This has important repercussions in terms of achieving circular procurement while reducing the environmental impact of procured products and services. In addition, the Green Public Procurement (GPP) Policy at ETF, approved in 2020, entails the systematic use of GPP practices in ETF public procurements. It established the need to embed consideration of the

impacts of products throughout their lifecycle. Procedures are since then awarded based on considerations that go beyond the lowest price at purchase, thus including consideration of all the costs that will be incurred during the lifetime of the product, work or service.

Best practices in GPP were introduced in several procedures in 2024. A specific section in the 'orientation form' on expected level of greenness and a flag on GPP in the annual procurement plan, as well as general and specific green criteria were introduced in tenders for sustainable office furniture, printers and utilities.

In this context, the new Managed Print Services contract will see a reduction of 40% of ETF printers and will ensure a greener approach thanks to the Blue Angel certification, thus warranting efficiency gains and materialising how green procurement can be applied in practice.

2.9 Digital transformation and information management

In 2024, the IAS Audit on digitalisation was completed and the implementation of recommendations initiated. As a result, a revised governance framework and project management model was developed in 2024 and approved early in January 2025 for implementation. In addition, a revised draft digital strategy was discussed in house, presented to the digital steering group, and is ready for management approval in the first quarter of 2025.

A revised planning process was put in action with bilateral in-depth consultations on business needs, a comprehensive inventory of tools and digital projects across the organisation, and the identification of key actors. New planning guidelines were also approved early in January 2025 which will lead to a strategy and an associated roadmap as well as a learning and communication plan to be delivered late in 2025.

In 2024 the digitalisation portfolio of ETF progressed at a high pace and with significant team engagement. The onboarding of two contractors, Unipartner and Seidor, provided a notable boost in delivery capacity. Several tailored tools were developed or fully deployed. The ETF planning and corporate reporting tool, Carmen, is now consolidated. The ETF GPT or Chatty emerged in alignment with Copilot and other AI tools such as ETF Literature Review Pilot.

Furthermore, ETF's data strategy matured and has been divided in two streams: policy and technical. From the technical standpoint, architectural decisions have proven to be solid and future-proof as evidenced with KIESE and the Union for the Mediterranean monitoring work. The strategic stream is being shaped and should be completed in 2025.

Additionally, in 2024 the ETF made substantial progress in enhancing its cybersecurity infrastructure. Key actions included reinforced monitoring through CERT-EU, the introduction of a cloud-native security information and event management (Microsoft sentinel), continuous improvements of onsite monitoring software like Splunk, and conducting vulnerability assessments on the two main ETF websites, including phishing attack simulations.

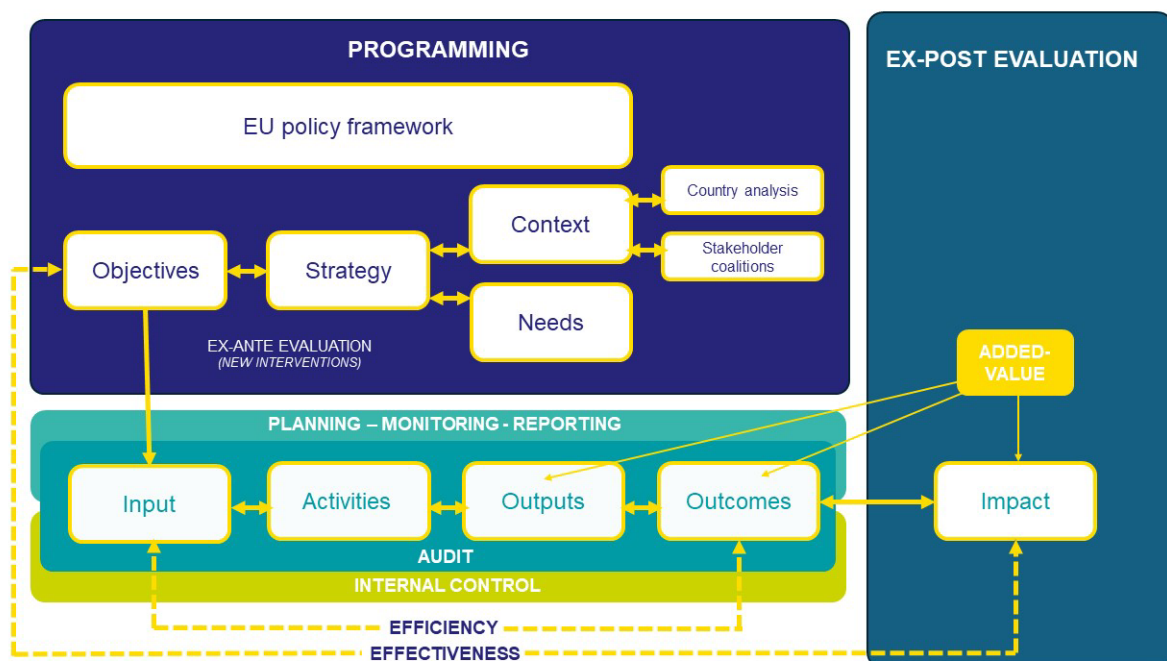
Preparations started with external support for the implementation of the requirements in the EU Regulation as per defined deadlines and technical guidelines provided by CERT-EU. Cooperation with ENISA on the risk assessment is proving of high added value.

EVALUATION (Part II B)

Evaluations in the ETF are integrated into the overall performance management system of the agency and are commissioned either by the ETF or by the European Commission. ETF evaluation practices are based on the principles of the European Commission's 'Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolkit' to:

- Capture the results of ETF interventions and evidence of impact and added value.
- Improve the ETF's long-term capacity to achieve results and impact by identifying and disseminating the lessons learned from experience.
- Identify opportunities to adapt ETF interventions according to achieved impact and country development stage (e.g. scale up ETF work and/or put in place an exit strategy).

ETF logic model



As an EU agency, the ETF is subject to a regular (4 year) evaluation by the Commission in consultation with the Governing Board of the implementation of the ETF Regulation. The Commission presents the results of the evaluation to the European Parliament, Council and European Economic and Social Committee, following which the ETF formulates an action plan to remedy any problems or implement any recommendations. Progress against the action plan is reported to the Commission and Governing Board.

The last EC evaluation was closed in 2024. Together with its sister agencies, the ETF actively participated in this exercise by sharing and feedback to the EC as well as surveys with over 2000 stakeholders and various interactions with the evaluators. The results were published late in 2024. The ETF should submit an action plan outlining how it will cater for recommendations in Q1 2025.

In addition, the ETF commissions evaluations mainly focussing on assessing the extent to which its activities have achieved planned results, their added value and impact. According to

the ETF Financial Regulation⁹, retrospective evaluations should be undertaken periodically and in sufficient time for the findings to be considered in ex-ante evaluations or impact assessments that support the preparation of related programme activities.

The ETF develops a multiannual rolling plan for potential evaluations. These are then considered together with inputs from previous evaluations and audits, as well as from partner countries and the EC, in the planning discussions and decision-making process annually.

Evaluations 2024

In 2024, the external evaluation commissioned by DG EMPL to all agencies under its remit was closed. These include ETF, EU-OSHA, Cedefop and Eurofound. A separate evaluation was commissioned for ELA which is still ongoing. In addition, the ETF closed one ongoing external evaluation on its operational work and another one related to its strategy 2027 mid-term review. To sum up, these were:

1. Evaluation of EU Agencies: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA [EC SWD 27/09/24]

In line with the Commission's 'better regulation' guidelines, this evaluation aimed to analyse the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of each Agency, assessing to what extent they have fulfilled their mandates, specific objectives and activities. It included individual and cross-cutting assessments, with an emphasis on synergies, cooperation and how the Agencies complement one another. It covered the period 2017-2022 and included the entire remit of the Agencies.

The results point to several impactful activities and outputs. These include: high satisfaction from PCs on the Torino process and modernisation of qualification systems; ability to adapt quickly to the Covid-19 pandemic and steep collaboration on skills, youth and career guidance; been praised by responsiveness and tailored support (greater than any other agency) to Ukraine; high appreciation from PCs on skills demand anticipation, RED, innovative teaching and learning, vocational excellence, enterprise skills development, green skills; capacity to innovate and co-create valuable outputs via networks (i.e. ENE, SkillsLab, New Learning); been commended by ability to support EU external policy and align to EC priorities; and by sharing accounting services with EU-OSHA.

Three major areas of impact in line with ETF's intervention logic include the ability to adapt VET governance to changing skills demands, to enhance labour market policies and practices, and to contribute to EU external relations policy through advice. Highlights outlined by the EC include: "all data produced by the ETF on country intelligence are not available anywhere else"; "expertise in EU and PC policies does not exist at such scale at EU or PC level"; and "ranked highest in terms of representing the Commission's external dimension in PCs".

2. Proposal for impact-oriented outcome indicators [final report on 06/09/2024]

The aim was to bring together the findings from mid-term review of ETF's strategy 2027, by translating their recommendations into actions for change. In addition, recommendations are in line with the recent recalibration undergone by the ETF based on the 2027 strategy mid-term review and inputs from a staff survey.

⁹ Financial Regulation of the European Training Foundation, Turin, 15 June 2019 (GB-19-DEC-008).

The goal was to conceptualise and formulate a set of impact-oriented indicators for the revised strategic goals and related outcomes, as well as to review the existing ETF indicators (monitoring matrix) for coherence and alignment to the new strategy impact-oriented intervention logic, with special consideration of the description and measurement of the KPI(s).

The results fed into the ETF Single Programming Document (SPD) 2025-27 and Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2025. Overall, the assignment and its results entailed a critical reflection on the defined strategic outcomes and finding indicators (and targets) to measure progress on the delivery of those outcomes. These will help the ETF to monitor progress towards delivery of its strategy 2027, in line with its roadmap 2027.

3. Evaluation of the ETF network of excellence (ENE) [final report on 23/10/2024]

The aim was to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the ETF network of excellence (ENE). The evaluation covered the activities carried out in the context of ENE from 2018 to mid-2023. The ultimate objective of the evaluation was to pinpoint what ETF can do better in the future, based on lessons learned. The methodological approach included both summative and formative aspects.

Results point to key success factors of ENE, which include: peer learning relevant to members' needs and supporting the internationalisation of ENE; internal and external alignment, collaboration and coherence with EU priorities and multiple international organisations and platforms on vocational excellence; and ENESAT considered extremely useful to identify and prioritise areas for improvements, to present clear strategic plans to policymakers, and to foster policy dialogue.

Looking forward, ENE is in the right direction and key areas to prioritise are those in line with the new EC priorities, including to: foster further collaboration, partnerships and multi-level engagement; maintain and increase alignment and support to EU priorities; stay abreast of latest developments for flexibility and adaptability to rapid change, in particular of labour markets; further encourage dialogue between CoVEs and diverse actors and across governance levels; and strengthen skills ecosystem between CoVEs and local, national and regional actors and decision makers.

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS (PART III)

The ETF uses the organisational structure and the internal control systems suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives in accordance with associated principles and has due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

4.1 Effectiveness of internal control systems

The assessment of the effectiveness of internal controls supports the ETF by ensuring compliance, enabling the ETF to report on its effectiveness and by obtaining reasonable assurance that ETF control systems in place function as intended. Any potential weaknesses are addressed in the form of actions for improvement and priority areas for the year ahead.

In 2024 the results are very positive and show that controls in the ETF are effective and functioning as intended, and that the ETF is mitigating its risks.

In line with the approach of the EC, the ETF carried out a thorough cascading assessment, whereby the overall assessment is based on an assessment at the level of the components of internal control, and this in turn is based on an assessment at the level of the 17 principles. All principles were assessed as effective (with two principles requiring some improvements) and the ETF has developed an action plan to capture actions aimed at continuous improvement.

The above is also sustained by a low number of deviations, for a total value of € 118,680.50, representing 0.42% of the ETF budget and voluntary contribution funds in 2024.

Economy of controls

The ETF has designed its controls to be effective, efficient, and proportional to the risks involved. Consideration has been made to the legality and regularity of underlying transactions and the effectiveness and efficiency of controls, taking into consideration the estimated costs and level of risk involved.

The ETF methodology used to calculate the cost of controls (Table 14) considers how the ETF implements its budget in terms of payments.

Table 14: Cost of controls 2024

Control System	Internal Cost Cost of Staff Time		External Costs		Total	Ratio (cost compared to annual subsidy)
	Time of ETF Staff	Total Cost of Staff Time (EUR)	Cost (EUR)	Type of External Cost	Internal + External Costs	Annual Subsidy € 23,807,037
Financial management	4.7 FTE TOTAL	563,060	12,800	Ex post controls on financial transactions	575,860	2.4%
Budget and accounting	0.9 FTE TOTAL	107,820			107,820	0.5%
External audit	0.25 FTE TOTAL	29,950	27,443	audit of ETF accounts 2024	57,393	0.2%
Coordination (strategic planning & programming, internal control)	0.65 FTE TOTAL	77,870			77,870	0.3%

Anti-fraud	0.05 FTE TOTAL	5,990			5,990	0.0%
Programme management	0.2 FTE TOTAL	23,960	125,185	2024 evaluations	111,225	0.5%
IT	0.6 FTE TOTAL	71,880	51,164	CERT-EU 2024, cybersecurity review	123,044	0.5%
Grand Total	7.35 FTE Total	880,530	880,530		1,073,162	4.5 %

4.2 Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems

The 2024 assessment of the effectiveness of internal controls support the Director's declaration of assurance and provides reasonable assurance that the ETF internal controls are functioning.

4.3 Statement of Internal Control Coordinator

I declare that in accordance with the Commission's communication on the internal control framework, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in the European Training Foundation in 2024 to the ETF Director. I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Consolidated Annual Activity Report and in its annexes is to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable, and complete¹⁰.

¹⁰ Annex 13.

MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE (PART IV)

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management that support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives. The ETF's assurance building and materiality criteria are described in Section 4 (PART III) outlining the internal control principles and indicators used to measure the performance of the control systems.

5.1 Review of the elements supporting assurance

Assurance provides an assessment of the effectiveness of risk management and controls. The ICC undertakes this assessment and reports to the Director. The reports produced, which result from a systematic analysis of the available evidence are:

- Quarterly Management Reports.
- Annual Progress and Performance Report.
- Annual assessment and review of internal controls.
- Evaluation reports.

Based on an assessment of the most relevant key indicators and control results, the ETF has positively assessed the cost effectiveness and efficiency of controls related to financial, budget and procurement management.

Legality and regularity of the transactions

The ETF has set up internal control processes to ensure the adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

As in previous years, the ETF did not receive any critical recommendations from audits or control bodies.

Exceptions and non-compliance events

The register of exceptions and non-compliance events is an integral part of the ETF internal control system, governed by internal control principle 12. As such, the ETF has developed a robust policy and procedure on handling deviations, and 2024 marked the second full year of implementing the policy. An internal analysis concluded that in 2024 the deviations were correctly registered in line with the policy, and that no significant weaknesses were identified in terms of existing controls linked to the management and reporting of exceptions and non-compliance events.

10 deviations (exceptions and non-compliance events) were registered centrally in 2024 (4 ex-ante exceptions and 6 ex-post non-conformities). The total value of deviations registered in 2024 was € 118,680.50. This represents 0.42% of the ETF revenue and voluntary contribution funds in 2024.

Prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities

The ETF has an anti-fraud strategy in place for the period 2020-2027 and has developed a strong internal anti-fraud culture, underpinned by a robust ethics framework, annual action plans and targeted awareness raising initiatives.

In 2024 the ETF assessed the risk of fraud within its annual corporate risk assessment. Mitigating controls were assessed as functioning, proportional and relevant.

In 2024, all ETF managers and governing board members signed their annual declaration of absence of conflict of interest and declarations were published on the ETF website in line with the established procedure.

For transparency, a list of meetings with the ETF Director and externals was regularly updated and published on the ETF website throughout 2024. The ETF has an appointed OLAF correspondent in place as well as an ethics correspondent and deputy.

Results of internal transactional ex-post controls

The ETF implemented ex-post controls on financial transactions with a risk-based sampling of payments covering the years 2023 and 2024. The 2023 exercise was carried out by internal financial verifying agent while the 2024 exercise was carried out by externalising the technical checks. Both exercises were based on the same externally reviewed methodology aiming at providing reasonable assurance on the legality and regularity of 2023 and 2024 financial transactions not subject to ex-ante verification. The outcome of the 2023-2024 ex-post controls confirms that:

1. The expenses included in the payment sample, reflecting expenditure processed through the light workflow for low-risk transactions, were properly documented and duly authorised.
2. The control system set up surrounding the light payment workflow is well designed and operating effectively in all material respects.
3. The funds were used for their intended purpose and disbursed in accordance with the ETF regulatory framework and the principles of sound financial management.

As the past years of ex post verification have shown high levels of compliance, the ETF will consider the increase of threshold for low-risk transactions below which verification will be carried out only ex post. Also, the ETF will consider in the methodology the inclusion of contracts considered low risk from financial management point of view for which verification could be done ex post (e.g. travel agency, temporary workers, telecommunications, utilities, etc.).

The review of the overall methodology will consider the evolution of audit practices and include in the ex-post verification diversified sample criteria, such as considering specific procurements as riskier than others and sampling based on change of roles in financial circuits. Based on the successful exercise of externalisation of the ex post technical checks, this practice will be considered as relevant for the future.

Timely performance

Thanks to the redesign of the payment process implemented in previous years with a light payment circuit involving two actors for low-risk payments, as well as with a stricter monitoring of end date of activities with reports automatically produced for the financial circuit's actors, the rate of late payments remained within target and the time to pay below 20 days (16.4 days in 2024 vs. 20 days a few years ago). Within the late payments (5.4% in 2024), none of them implied the payment of late interest in 2024. In a nutshell:

1. The average time-to-award is around four months for open tenders and less than one month for low and middle value negotiated procedures, thus demonstrating efficient organisation of the work involved.
2. Considering the benefits of the control strategy, namely low risk of fraud, favourable audit opinions, low reputational damage, and low number of errors, the budget related control strategy is considered effective. In 2024, developments in financial and procurement management were guided by the overall objective of increased efficiency, digitalisation of processes and assessment of risks inherent to procedures, financial transactions and systems.
3. The payment process and the centralisation of the management of finance and procurement processes proved its worth in the performance of the financial and procurement management processes.
4. The ETF implemented integrated European Commission solutions for Digital signature (ARES and EU-Sign), as well as for staff time management (SYSPER).

Results of risk management process

The ETF carried out its annual corporate risk assessment in September 2024, which resulted in the updated ETF risk register for 2025. The well-established process ensures that the ETF has controls in place to mitigate the risks which may affect the achievement of the ETF's objectives at strategic, organisational and operational levels, and that controls are comprehensive and proportional to the level of risk involved.

The results confirm the **ETF risk profile is low / medium**. The ETF's main risk areas for are confirmed such as external risks linked to the instability of the external environment, which is of key importance considering ETF is the only Agency working solely outside the EU, and includes mission security linked to the overall instability, cybersecurity and resources (fixed establishment plan and budget).

In 2024 the ETF actively participated in the risk management peer review exercise within the employment cluster of agencies. The cluster identified two common risks of cybersecurity and resources, which reflect the ETF's key risks as indicated above. The peer review was also an opportunity to confirm that the ETF approach to risk management is effective and in line with the approach of other agencies within the cluster, and with the European Commission.

5.2 Reservations

A key building block of assurance is the ETF system of cascading declarations of assurance of (Sub) Delegated Authorising Officers and the ICC declaration to support the ETF Director's declaration of assurance. In 2024, the ETF Director has a sound basis to support her reasonable assurance that the internal control system is in place and working as intended. Risks are monitored and mitigated as appropriate, and necessary improvements and reinforcement measures are being implemented. Hence, there are no reservations for 2024.

Declaration of assurance in cascade by (sub) delegated authorising officers

In 2024, budgetary implementation powers were delegated by the Authorising Officer through a Director's Decision¹¹ which allocated the different budgetary areas, including specific budget

¹¹ Delegation of the authorising officer for budget implementation (ETF/23/DEC/014 (01/01/2024 to 30/06/2024, ETF/24/DEC/011 (from 01.07.2024 to 15.07.2024) and ETF/24/DEC/014 (as of 16.07.2024).

lines, to the delegated and Sub Delegated Authorising Officers. In line with ETF rules and procedures on the deputising mechanism and the presence of managers on the ETF premises¹², the ETF introduces a second level of back-ups for delegated authorising officers, to reduce the number of transactions to be approved by the Director and ensure transactions are dealt with by the most informed authorising officer available.

The decision is accompanied by individual delegations, signed by the Director, and the authorising officer by delegation and his/her back-up. In addition, they are also signed to confirm acceptance of the charter of the authorising officer by delegation. The cascading declaration of assurance is strengthened by an annex containing for each (S)DAO: i) budget execution rates, ii) exceptions and non-compliance events registered centrally, iii) negotiated procedures without prior notice, and iv) space for any potential issues/potential problems that may lead to a reservation in the annual activity report.

¹² Rules and procedures on the deputising mechanism and presence of managers.

DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

I, the undersigned, **Pilvi Torsti**, Director of the European Training Foundation, in my capacity as Authorising Officer, declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view¹³.

I also state that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the lessons learnt from the work of the Internal Audit Service and reports of the European Court of Auditors.

I confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the institution.

[signed and dated]

Pilvi Torsti

ETF Director

¹³ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the institution.

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List of Acronyms

ABAC	Activity-based accounting system
ABB	Activity-based budgeting
ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AD	Action Document
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
AU	African Union
BC	British Council
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
B2B	Business to business
ENABEL	Belgian Development Agency
CA	Central Asia
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CNL	Creative New Learning
CORLEAP	Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership
CoVEs	Centres of Vocational Excellence
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CVT/CVET	Continuing vocational training/ Continuous vocational education and training
DARYA	Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DG	Directorate General
DG EAC	Directorate General Education and Culture
DG EMPL	Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DG GROW	Directorate General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG HOME	Directorate General Home Affairs
DG INTPA	Directorate General International Partnerships
DG JRC	Directorate General Joint Research Centre
DG NEAR	Directorate General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG REGIO	Directorate General Regional and urban Policy
DG SG	Directorate General Secretariat-General
DG TRADE	Directorate General Trade
DigComp	European Digital Competence Framework
DOL	Distance and open learning
DSC	Digital Skills and Competences
DVV	Institute for International Cooperation of German Adult Education Association
EafA	European Alliance for Apprenticeships
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Court of Auditors
EEAS	European External Action Service
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee

EFSD+	European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus
EIP	Economic Investment Plan
ELA	European Labour Authority
ENE	ETF Network for Excellence
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EntreComp	Entrepreneurship Competence Framework
EP	European Parliament
EPSO	European Personnel Selection Office
EPSR	European Pillar of Social Rights
EQARF	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ERI SEE	Education Reform Initiative of South East Europe
ERPs	Economic Reform Programmes
ESAP	Employment and Social Affairs Platform
ET 2020	Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUDs	European Union Delegations
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
Euromed	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EVTA	The European Vocational Training Association
FTE	Full-time equivalent
FoW	Future of Work
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GB	Governing Board
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIM	GIM (Grow with Internal Move)
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
GLAD	Governance Learning Action and Dialogue
HCD	Human capital development
IAS	Internal Audit Service
ICT	Information and communications technology
IFI	International Finance Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
KH	Knowledge hub
KIESE	Key Performance Indicators on Education, Skills and Employment
KPI	Key performance indicators
LMI(S)	Labour Market Information (System)
LLL	Lifelong learning
MEPs	Members of the European Parliament
MISMES	Migrant Support Measures from an Employment and Skills Perspective
MTD	Medium-term deliverables
M&A	Monitoring and assessment

NAPO	Inter-agency Network of Procurement Officers
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NEET	Not in education, employment, or training
NMF	New monitoring framework
NQF	National qualifications framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIB	Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels
PA	Policy advice
PES	Public Employment Services
PMO	Paymaster Office
PPP	Public-private partnerships
PSD	Private Sector Development
QA	Quality assurance
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
RCI	Regional Competitive Initiative
RED	Rapid Education Diagnosis
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SBA	Small Business Act for Europe
SD	Structured Dialogue
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SEET	South Eastern Europe and Türkiye
SEE2020	South East Europe 2020 Strategy
SEECCL	South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning
SEMED	Southern and Eastern Mediterranean
SG	Secretariat General
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SPD	Single Programming Document
SRC	Sector Reform Contract
THAMM	Towards a Holistic Approach to Migration
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
URC	Ukraine Recovery Conference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET/TVET	(Technical and) vocational education and training
VNFIL	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
WB	Western Balkans
WBL	Work-based learning
WBPET	Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training
WBT	Western Balkans and Türkiye
WB6	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia
WP	Work Programme
YAP	Youth Action Plan
YEM	Youth Employment in the Mediterranean
YG	Youth Guarantee

Annex 1 – Core business statistics

KPIs for ETF overall performance

Administration

KPI	Description	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	Frequency
Activities completion rate ^{3*}	Rate (%) of completion of the activities of the ETF Work Programme Target >90%	95.69%	97.69%	93%	95.58%	86.84%	91%	91%	Quarterly
Timely achievement of activities of WP*	Rate (%) of activities of the ETF Work Program timely achieved in year: Target 80%	85.87%	83.93%	89%	91.15%	75.94%	85%	94%	Quarterly
Timely submission of WP/SPD to EC*	The Annual WP/SPD timely submitted to the EC. Target 100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Annually

Human resources

KPI	Description	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	Frequency
Administrative support, / operational staff ratio*	(Administrative support and coordination job type category)/(Operational job type category / Neutral job type category) Target <30%	14.77%	14.92%	17.06%	15.80%	16.59%	17.19%	19%	Annually
Average vacancy rate*	% of authorised posts of the annual establishment plan which are vacant at the end of the year, including job offers sent before 31 December. Target <5%	3%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	Annually
Staff engagement*	Rate (%) of staff engagement from satisfaction survey within the agency. (every two years) Target >2% increase	In 2025	51%	NA (Q1 2023)	-	56%	-	54%	2-3 years

Finance

KPI	Description	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	Frequency
Commitment appropriation implementation*	Rate (%) of implementation of Commitment Appropriations. Target >98%	99.77%	99.85%	99.98%	99.91%	99.88%	99.96%	99.99%	Quarterly
Payment appropriations cancellation rate*	Rate (%) of cancellation of Payment Appropriations. Target <2%	3.11%	0.35%	0.29%	0.44%	1.46%	1.21%	0.11%	Annually
Timely payments*	Rate (%) of payments executed within the legal/contractual deadlines. Target >90%	94.1%	95%	96.4%	97.6%	94.3%	94%	93%	Quarterly
Rate of outturn*	Total payments in year N and carry-forwards to Year N+1, as a % of the total EU funding received in Year Target >96%	97.24%	99.87%	99.98%	99.91%	98.79%	98.88%	99.94%	Annually
Audit recommendation implementation*	Rate (%) of external and accepted internal audit recommendations implemented within agreed deadlines. Target >90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Quarterly

Operational*

KPI	Description	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	Frequency
Knowledge uptake	Uptake of the developed ETF knowledge products (target 75%)	Mid-March 2025	NA (biannual)	84%**	85%	NA	NA	NA	Bi-annually
Programme design	Geographic and thematic coverage of EU Requests for support to projects and programmes design (target >75%)	82%	80%	78%	79%	NA	NA	NA	Q2 and Q4
Network level of participation	Engagement rate of active members in ETF networks (target 75%)	92%	72.8%	73%	61%	NA	NA	NA	Q2 and Q4
Stakeholder engagement	Number and typology of stakeholders engaged in ETF activities (target >7,000/80% primary)	7,814 stakeholders engaged, 89% of primary stakeholders	8,078 stakeholders engaged, 86% primary stakeholders	10,237 stakeholders engaged, 84% of primary stakeholders	7,635 stakeholders engaged, 75% primary stakeholders	NA	NA	NA	Annually

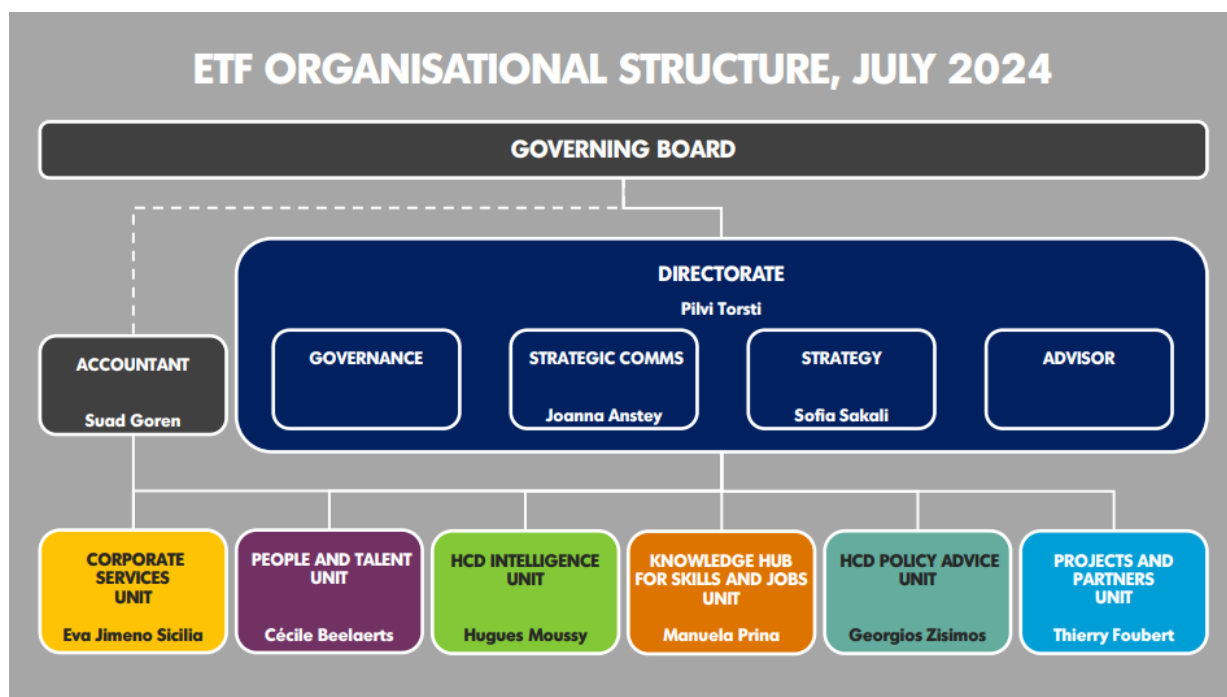
* Operational KPIs defined in 2021 and targets set in 2023 after two years of analysis. ETF continues to systematise its monitoring system and indicators in line with SMART/RACER principles. A methodology for knowledge uptake was successfully piloted.

** Pilot survey implemented in Q1/2023.

Annex 2 – Statistics on financial management

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Overall Budget ETF (EU Contribution)	23,807,037	22,627,956	21,726,208	21,300,000 CA 21,000,000 PA	20,957,000 CA 20,400,000 PA
Committed (C1)	23,752,836	22,594,617	21,722,517	21,281,233	20,930,853
Rate (%) of implementation of Commitment Appropriations	99.77%	99.85%	99.98%	99.91%	99.88%
Rate (%) of cancellation of Payment Appropriations	3.10%	0.36%	0.29%	0.44%	1.70%
Rate of payments executed within the legal/Contractual deadline	94.1%	95.0%	96.4%	97.6%	94.3%
Rate (%) of outturn (Total payments in year N and carry-forwards to Year N+1, as a % of the total EU funding and fee income, where applicable, received in Year N).	97.24%	99.87%	99.98%	99.91%	98.55%
Payments Executed out of year's budget (PAY C1+ PAY C8T3) / Budget	93.45%	95.85%	97.70%	95.74%	95.65%
Overall CF+RAL into N+1	14.51%	12.61%	11.08%	13.71%	12.32%
Amount CF+RAL into N+1	3,453,468	2,854,251	2,407,361	2,920,538	2,581,707
CF in N+1 – T1	1.75%	1.80%	0%	1%	1%
CF in N+1 – T2	26.15%	26.22%	21%	33%	19%
Total CF (T1&T2)	5.27%	5.00%	2.9%	5.2%	3.6%
RAL in N+1 – T3	54.52%	42.62%	44%	49%	42%
Number of Transfers	8	6	9	7	8
Transferred budget	8.1%	3.0%	4.7%	7.1%	6.4%
Lines with more than 3 transfers	8	7	8	11	10
Number of transfers in the last 2 months	4	3	3	3	3
Cost of GB meetings (2 or 3* per year)	€96,200	€97,105.38	116,751.00	81,030.00	12,960.00
Payments made within deadline	94.6%	95.00%	96.40%	97.62%	94.26%
Total to be reimbursed to EC:	82,275.36	82,275.36	62,209.00	93,863.79	347,202.46

Annex 3 – ETF organisational structure as of 1 July 2024¹⁴



¹⁴ The current organisational structure of the ETF came into force in July 2024 following approval of the ETF GB (GB/24/DEC/006).

Annex 4 – Establishment plan and additional information on human resources

A. Statutory staff and SNE

Table 1 – Staff population and its evolution; Overview of all categories of staff

Human Resources	2024		
	Authorised Budget	Actually filled as of 31/12/2024	Occupancy Rate%
Administrators (AD)	63	62	98%
Assistants (AST)	23	21	91%
Assistants/Secretaries (AST/SC)	0	0	
ESTABLISHMENT PLAN POSTS*	86	83	97%
Contract Agents (CA)**	42	39	93%
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	0	0	
Local Agents	1	0	0%
TOTAL STAFF	129	122	94.6%

*As of 2018, on the basis of article 38.2 of the ETF Financial Regulation, the ETF has been using the opportunity to “offset the effects of part-time work” by 2 additional appointments (function group AD). 1 additional TA AD corresponds to the offset of part time work in 2024. Should all posts be filled in, the total number of TA employed would therefore be 86 +1.

** In 2021, DG HR recommended to offset long-term absences and part-time of CA with short term contracts of CA. The ETF used this option in 2023, and 1 additional short-term contract agent FG II was in service in 2024 and is not included in this table. One contract agent is foreseen to be recruited already in 2025 or early 2026 to compensate for the retirement of the local agent which took place in January 2024.

B. Other Staff

Structural service providers

	Actual filled as of 31/12/2024
Security	1
IT	2
Receptionist	1
Facilities support	1

Interim workers

	Actual filled as of 31/12/2024
Number	6

Table 2 – Establishment plan

Function group and grade	2024			
	Authorised Budget		Actually filled as of 31/12 *	
	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AD 16				
AD 15				
AD 14		1		1
AD 13		3		1
AD 12		9		6
AD 11		10		11
AD 10		10		8
AD 9		12		11
AD 8		7		5
AD 7		7		13
AD 6				
AD 5		4		6
AD TOTAL	0	63	0	62
AST 11				
AST 10		2		1
AST 9		9		8
AST 8		6		1
AST 7		4		4
AST 6		2		4
AST 5				3
AST 4				
AST 3				
AST 2				
AST 1				
AST TOTAL	0	23	0	21
AST/SC 6				
AST/SC 5				
AST/SC 4				
AST/SC 3				
AST/SC 2				
AST/SC 1				
AST/SC TOTAL	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	86	0	83
GRAND TOTAL		86		83

*As of 2018, on the basis of article 38.2 of the ETF Financial Regulation, the ETF has been using the opportunity to “offset the effects of part-time work” by 2 additional appointments (function group AD). 1 additional TA AD corresponds to the offset of part time work in 2024. Should all posts be filled in, the total number of TA employed would therefore be 86 + 1.

** We envisage to continue using the opportunity provided by art. 38.2 of the Financial Regulation in the coming years and adjust it in accordance with the evolution of part-time requests.

External personnel

Contract Agents

Contract agents**	Authorised 2024	Recruited as of 31/12/2024*
Function Group IV	14	12
Function Group III	24	22
Function Group II	4	5
Function Group I	0	0
TOTAL	42	39

** One contract agent is foreseen to be recruited already in 2025 or early 2026 to compensate for the retirement of the local agent which took place in January 2024

Local Agents

Local agents	Authorised 2024	Recruited as of 31/12/2024*
Function Group AL/N2	1	0

* Early 2024, the local agent has retired and will be replaced by a contract agent FG II already in 2025 or early 2026.

Seconded National Experts

Seconded National Experts	Authorised 2024	Recruited as of 31/12/2024
TOTAL	0	0

Human Resources Qualitative

Appraisal and reclassification/promotions

Table 1 – Reclassification of temporary agents/promotion of officials

Average seniority in the grade among reclassified staff							
Grades	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Actual average over 5 years	Average over 5 years (annex I B SR)
AD05	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	2.8
AD06	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0		3.0	2.8
AD07	2.2	2.0	2.8	0.0	3.8	2.87	2.8
AD08	2.8	3.0	4.0	0.0	3.9	3.33	3
AD09	3.2	9.7	4.0	4.0	4.1	5.33	4
AD10	2.0	4.5	4.9	4.5	4.3	4.3	4
AD11	16.2	7.5	10.5	4.5		8.5	4

AD12	0.0	0.0	7.5	0.0		7.5	6.7
AD13	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	6.7
AST1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	3
AST2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	3
AST3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	3
AST4	3.5	4.3	6.5	0.0		4.6	3
AST5	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.5	4.0	4.25	4
AST6	3.5	0.0	4.5	4.0		4.0	4
AST7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	4.00	4
AST8	4.8	3.7	0.0	4.5		4.3	4
AST9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A
AST10 (Senior assistant)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	5
AST/SC1							4
AST/SC2							5
AST/SC3							5.9
AST/SC4							6.7
AST/SC5							8.3

Table 2 – Reclassification of contract staff

Function Group	Grade	Staff in activity at 01/01/2023 and eligible for reclassification	How many staff members were reclassified in 2024	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members according to decision C(2015)9561
CA IV	17	1			Between 6 and 10 years
	16	7			Between 5 and 7 years
	15	2			Between 4 and 6 years
	14				Between 3 and 5 years
	13				Between 3 and 5 years
CA III	11	5	1	6	Between 6 and 10 years
	10	7	2	6.3	Between 5 and 7 years
	9	4			Between 4 and 6 years
	8				Between 3 and 5 years
CA II	6				Between 6 and 10 years
	5				Between 5 and 7 years
	4				Between 3 and 5 years
CA I	2				Between 6 and 10 years
	1				Between 3 and 5 years

Tables 1 and 2 above show that the ETF is fully in line with the legal requirements on reclassification.

Gender representation

		Official		Temporary		Contract and Local Agents		Grand Total	
		Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%
Female	Administrator			35	42%	11	28%	46	38%
	Assistant (AST & AST/SC)			15	18%	22	56%	37	30%
	TOTAL			50	60%	33	85%	83	68%
Male	Administrator			27	33%	1	3%	28	23%
	Assistant (AST & AST/SC)			6	7%	5	13%	11	9%
	TOTAL			33	40%	6	15%	39	32%
GRAND TOTAL				83	100%	39	100%	122	100%

Table 2 – Data regarding gender evolution over 5 years of the Middle and Senior management

	2020		2024	
	Number	%	Number	%
Female Managers	6	60%	4	57%
Male Managers	4	40%	3	43%

Job screening exercise

Job Type (sub)category	2018 (%)	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)
Administrative support and Coordination	19.06	17.06	14.92	14.77
Administrative support	13.3	13.18	12.59	13.76
Coordination	5.76	3.88	2.33	1.01
Operational	70.47	74.41	77.52	75.74
Top Level Operational Coordination	2.17	2.32	3.10	2.33
Programme Management & Implementation	56.28	61.24	64.34	64.50
Evaluation & Impact Assessment	3.88	2.32	2.33	1.55
General Operational	8.14	8.53	7.75	7.36
Neutral	10.47	8.53	7.56	8.72
Finance/Control	9.69	8.53	7.56	8.72
Linguistics	0.78	0.00	0.00	0

Geographical Balance

Explanatory figures to highlight nationalities of staff (split per Administrator/CA FG IV and Assistant /CA FG I, II, III)

Nationality	AD+FGIV		AST+FGII+FGIII+LA		Grand Total	
	Number	% of Total staff in AD + FGIV	Number	% of Total staff in AST+FGII+III+ LA	Number	% of total staff
AL	2	2.7%		0.0%	2	1.6%
AM	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
AT	3	4.1%		0.0%	3	2.5%
BE	5	6.8%	2	4.2%	7	5.7%
CY	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
CZ	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
DE	4	5.4%	2	4.2%	6	4.9%
DK	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
EE	0	0.0%	2	4.2%	2	1.6%
ES	4	5.4%	1	2.1%	5	4.1%
FI	3	4.1%	1	2.1%	4	3.3%
FR	4	5.4%	1	2.1%	5	4.1%
GR	2	2.7%		0.0%	2	1.6%
IE	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
IT	20	27.0%	29	60.4%	49	40.2%
LU	0	0.0%	1	2.1%	1	0.8%
LV	0	0.0%	1	2.1%	1	0.8%
MA	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
MK	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
NL	3	4.1%		0.0%	3	2.5%
PL	3	4.1%	1	2.1%	4	3.3%
PT	2	2.7%		0.0%	2	1.6%
RO	3	4.1%	3	6.3%	6	4.9%
SI	0	0.0%	1	2.1%	1	0.8%
SK	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
TN	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
TR	1	1.4%		0.0%	1	0.8%
UA	4	5.4%		0.0%	4	3.3%
UK	2	2.7%	3	6.3%	5	4.1%
Grand Total	74	100%	48	100%	122	100%

Table 2 – Evolution over 5 years of the most represented nationality in the Agency

Most represented nationality	2020		2024	
	Number	%	Number	%
IT	52	41%	49	40%

* The ETF receives constantly a higher proportion of applications from its host country despite the wide publication of its vacancy notices, in particular for administrative and support positions (AST/FGII-FGIII). Thanks to the efforts put on attractiveness, the proportion of Italian nationals recruited has improved from 43% in 2023 to 40% in 2024. ETF selection procedures are merit-based but where there are equal merits, the ETF would favour the under-represented nationalities.

Annex 5 – Human and financial resources by activity

by Strategic Objective	Staff planned	Budget planned (m€)	%	Staff actual	Budget actual (m€)	%
Strategic Objective 1	56.4	10.9	47%	53.2	11.0	46.1%
Strategic Objective 2	45.1	7.2	31%	42.2	6.9	29.0%
Strategic Objective 3	27.5	5.1	22%	33.7	5.9	24.9%
TOTAL	129.0	23.2	100.0%	129.0	23.8	100.0%

by Activity area	Staff planned	Budget planned (m€)	%	Staff actual	Budget actual (m€)	%
Skills demand	22.4	3.8	16.7%	18.7	3.4	14.2%
Active labour market measures	20.7	3.9	17.0%	19.2	5.0	21.1%
Qualifications	13.4	2.9	12.6%	15.2	2.6	10.8%
Vocational Excellence	13.9	2.0	8.9%	14.6	1.8	7.6%
Innovative teaching and learning	15.8	2.9	12.4%	14.9	2.9	12.3%
Engaging enterprises in skills development	15.4	2.4	10.2%	12.7	2.2	9.1%
Lifelong learning policies and system change	21.1	3.4	14.8%	20.9	3.6	15.2%
Quality assurance and governance mechanisms	6.4	1.7	7.5%	12.8	2.3	9.6%
TOTAL	129.0	23.2	100.0%	129.0	23.8	100.0%

by Service	Staff planned	Budget planned (m€)	%	Staff actual	Budget actual (m€)	%
Knowledge hub	24.9	8.9	38.4%	66.2	11.4	48.1%
Monitoring and assessment	34.1	4.7	20.4%	26.1	6.7	28.2%
Policy advice	70.0	9.5	41.2%	36.7	5.6	23.7%
TOTAL	129.0	23.2	100.0%	129	23.8	100.0%

By Region/Country	Staff planned	Budget planned (m€)	%	Staff actual	Budget actual (m€)	%
South-East Europe and Türkiye	42.1	8.8	38.6%	45.3	9.8	41.3%
Albania	6.4	1.4	6.0%	8.2	1.9	7.9%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5.9	1.2	5.3%	6.5	1.3	5.5%
Kosovo	5.8	1.2	5.2%	6.0	1.3	5.3%
Montenegro	5.5	1.2	5.3%	6.2	1.4	5.8%
North Macedonia	6.8	1.4	6.1%	6.4	1.6	6.5%
Serbia	6.5	1.4	5.9%	7.0	1.6	6.6%
Türkiye	5.2	1.0	4.8%	5.0	0.8	3.5%
Southern and Eastern Mediterranean	34.9	5.6	24.2%	40.9	6.4	26.8%
Algeria	3.7	0.6	2.4%	5.5	0.9	3.7%
Egypt	5.4	1.1	3.9%	5.4	0.9	3.8%
Israel	2.8	0.3	2.0%	3.9	0.5	1.9%
Jordan	3.5	0.5	2.3%	4.5	0.7	2.9%
Lebanon	4.9	0.7	3.1%	5.2	0.8	3.4%
Libya	0.6	0.1	0.3%	0.3	0.1	0.3%
Morocco	5.3	0.8	3.8%	6.1	1.0	4.2%
Palestine	3.8	0.6	2.7%	4.8	0.8	3.2%
Tunisia	5.0	0.9	3.7%	5.2	0.8	3.4%
Eastern partnership	42.9	6.9	30.2%	31.3	5.5	22.9%
Armenia	7.9	1.3	5.3%	5.7	0.9	3.9%
Azerbaijan	7.8	1.2	5.3%	5.4	0.9	3.8%
Belarus	0.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0.0	0%
Georgia	7.0	1.2	5.0%	6.4	1.0	4.4%
Moldova	8.2	1.3	5.3%	5.5	1.0	4.2%
Ukraine	11.9	1.9	9.3%	8.4	1.6	6.7%
Central Asia	8.3	1.3	5.5%	10.5	1.5	6.4%
Kazakhstan	2.8	0.5	2.0%	3.5	0.6	2.4%
Kyrgyzstan	2.7	0.4	1.8%	3.5	0.6	2.4%
Tajikistan	1.6	0.2	0.9%	2.1	0.2	0.9%
Turkmenistan	0.6	0.1	0.4%	0.8	0.2	0.8%
Uzbekistan	0.6	0.1	0.4%	0.6	0.0	0%
Cooperation in other areas	0.9	0.5	1.5%	1.0	0.6	2.0%
TOTAL	129.0	23.2	100.0%	129.0	23.8	100.0%

Annex 6 – Contribution, grant and service level agreements. Financial framework partnership agreements

	2024
Additional EU funding stemming from grant agreements (FFR Art.7)	-
none	-
Additional EU funding stemming from contribution agreements (FFR Art.7)	4,965,935
Darya - Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia -contribution agreement with DG INTPA for €10m across 5 years (2022-2027)	2,000,000
ACQF II - Second phase of the project on African Continental Qualification Framework – contribution agreement with DGINTPA for €5m across 4 years (2023-2026)	1,305,935
EaP SER – Contribution Agreement with DG NEAR for NDICI/2023/450-824, first instalment (€2.5m for 3 years, started in 2024)	1,210,000
Egypt TVET (TA4TE) - EU Technical Assistant to the Ministry of Education and Technical Education TE 2.0 strategy (TA4TE) – contribution agreement with DG NEAR for €0.5m in 2024 across 12 months (2024-2025)	450,000
Rwanda TVET- Support to the preparation of an action in the TVET sector in Rwanda – contribution agreement with DG INTPA for €0.18m for 12 months (2023-2024)	-
COVES SLA 2 - International Dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence: Implementing international cooperation – Service level agreement with DG EMPL for €1.5m across 2 years (2023-2024)	-
Additional EU funding stemming from service level agreements (FFR Art. 43.2)	13,665
Provision of accounting services to EU-OSHA	13,665
Total	4,979,600

Annex 7 – Sustainability

The ETF, as an EU agency, is committed to contribute to the EU sustainable development goals through a medium-term sustainability plan that acts on three pillars:

- Protection of diversity and inclusion.
- Application of Green Public Procurement (GPP) and Socially Responsible public procurement (SRPP).
- Promotion of environmental protection through its environmental management system.

The environmental sustainability policy and related actions contribute to the commitment of the EC to be carbon neutral by 2050. With the aim of pushing the drivers of environmental sustainability, the ETF has established in 2021 and chooses to maintain an Environmental Management System which complies with the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and ISO 14001 standard. Within the overall regulatory framework, the ETF is committed to:

- Protecting the environment and minimise pollution through a sustainable use of resources.
- Complying with the relevant environmental legislation, regulations and other compliance obligations.
- Creating, maintaining and continuously improving the Environmental Management System and its environmental performance.
- Ensuring awareness of environmental issues and the active participation of all staff, with a view to reduce the ETF environmental impact.
- Encouraging suppliers and external stakeholders to abide by the environmental protection principles established by the ETF.

With the help of its Environmental Management System, the ETF pursues the following strategic environmental goal:

- To reach climate neutrality in its operations by 2030, by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 60% compared to 2005 (corresponding to approximately 38% compared to 2019) and compensate for remaining emissions through carbon removals.

This goal is pursued through plans and actions inspired by this policy which act on:

- Rational use of energy and material resources.
- Improvement and optimisation of business trips and events.
- Increase in Green Public Procurement (GPP).
- Increase in environmental awareness of ETF stakeholders.

In addition, the ETF strives for a working environment where talent is nurtured and work-life balance a reality, placing attention on inclusion and diversity, as well as on gender and geographical aspects, thus fostering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights. The principles that guide the social pillar of sustainability at the ETF are:

- Attracting and deploying
- Managing and retaining
- Growing and development

- Caring and valuing

In addition, the ETF is committed to foster good practices on sustainability by embedding environmental and social aspects in public procurement procedures performed by ETF. Regarding the economic pillar of sustainability, the ETF considers the lifetime of products or services being purchased, thus putting in practice the ETF Green Public Procurement Policy approved in 2020. Finally, the ETF continues to lead the Network of Agencies Procurement Officers (NAPO) working group on Sustainable Procurement. As a tangible result, in 2024 the publication on [Socialing Public Procurement](#) was published.

Annex 8 – Draft annual accounts and financial reports

Balance sheet

	EUR	
	2024	2023
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Intangible assets	849,316	675,965
Property, Plant and Equipment	478,326	573,820
Land and buildings	118,129	138,383
Plant and equipment	76,316	105,133
Computer hardware	88,275	89,859
Furniture and vehicles	78,005	125,765
Other fixtures and fittings	117,601	114,680
Tangible assets under construction		
Financial assets	-	-
Long-term receivables and recoverables	-	-
Long-term receivables and recoverables	-	-
Long-term receivables from consolidated EC entities	-	-
Pre-financing	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS		
Inventories	-	-
Financial assets		
Pre-financing	47,165	190,283
Receivables and recoverables	379,895	196,175
Current receivables from non-exchange transactions	-	-
Current receivables from exchange transactions	379,895	196,175
Cash and cash equivalents	6,757,065	6,595,800
TOTAL ASSETS	8,511,767	8,232,043
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	-	-
Pension and other employee benefits	-	-
Provisions for risks and liabilities	-	-
Financial liabilities	-	-
Long-term liabilities to consolidated entities	-	-
Other liabilities	-	-
CURRENT LIABILITIES	5,203,713	7,662,881
Provisions for risks and liabilities	-	-
Financial liabilities	-	-
Payables		
Current payables	514,086	412,640
Accounts payable to consolidated EU entities	3,265,765	4,898,625
Accrued charges and deferred income	1,423,861	2,351,616
TOTAL LIABILITIES	5,203,713	7,662,881
NET ASSETS	3,308,054	569,161
Accumulated surplus/deficit	569,161	857,849
Economic result of the year	2,738,893 -	288,687

Statement of Financial performance

EUR

	2024	2023
OPERATING REVENUE	30,176,550	25,990,334
Non-exchange revenue		
European Union Contribution	22,707,120	22,545,681
Other non-exchange revenue	7,469,429	3,444,654
Exchange revenue		
OPERATING EXPENSES	- 27,663,790 -	26,491,120
Operational expenses	- 9,196,523 -	8,234,675
Administrative expenses	- 2,287,002 -	2,340,017
Staff expenses	- 15,623,250 -	15,378,019
Fixed assets expenses	- 557,014 -	537,271
Other expenses	- -	1,100
Financial expenses - interest late payment	- -	38
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2,512,760 -	500,786
Financial revenue	226,404	213,446
Financial expenses	- 271 -	1,348
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	2,738,893 -	288,687
Extraordinary gains	-	-
Extraordinary losses/gains - exchange rates	-	-
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FROM EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS	-	-
ECONOMIC RESULT OF THE YEAR	2,738,893 -	288,687

Statement of changes in net assets

	Accumulated Surplus/Deficit	Economic result of the year	Net Assets (Total)
Balance as at 31 December 2023	857,849 -	288,687	569,161
Changes in accounting policies	-	-	-
Balance as at 1 January 2024	857,849 -	288,687	569,161
Allocation of the economic result of previous year	- 288,687	288,687	-
Economic result of the year	-	2,738,893	2,738,893
Balance as at 31 December 2024	569,161	2,738,893	3,308,054

Cash Flow statement

EUR

	2024	2023
Economic result of the year	2,738,893 -	288,687
Operating activities		
Amortisation/Depreciation	557,014	537,271
(Increase)/Decrease in receivables and recoverables	- 183,720	64,572
(Increase)/Decrease in pre-financing	143,118	25,719
Increase/(Decrease) in payables	- 1,531,414	2,575,990
Increase/(Decrease) in accrued charges	- 927,755	813,205
Net cash flow from operating activities	796,137	3,728,069
Investing activities		
(Increase)/Decrease in intangible assets and property, plant and equipment	- 634,869 -	209,562
Other...	-	-
Net cash flow from investing activities	- 634,869 -	209,562
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	161,267	3,518,507
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	6,595,800	3,081,776
Cash and cash equivalents at year-end	6,757,065	6,595,800

Budget Result

EUR

	2024	2023
Revenue (a)	29,105,801.14	28,680,710.77
EC subsidy	23,807,037	22,627,956
Other subsidies	4,987,132	5,805,000
Miscellaneous revenue	311,632	247,755
Expenditure (b)	- 33,488,926 -	31,224,812
<i>Staff - Title I of the budget</i>		
Payments	- 15,419,006 -	15,551,861
Appropriations carried forward	- 319,566 -	285,094
<i>Administration - Title II of the budget</i>		
Payments	- 1,844,029 -	1,737,142
Appropriations carried forward	- 797,393 -	625,934
<i>Operating activities - Title III of the budget</i>		
Payments	- 5,084,338 -	4,722,041
Appropriations carried forward	- -	2,307
<i>Operating activities - Title IV of the budget</i>		
Payments	- 4,852,781 -	2,812,971
Appropriations carried forward	- 5,171,812 -	5,487,462
Outturn for the financial year (a + b)	- 4,383,125 -	2,544,101
Appropriations carried over and cancelled	80,796	49,785
Adjustment for carry over from the previous year of appropriations available on 31 December arising from assigned revenue	5,040,526	2,576,819
Exchange rate differences	- 209 -	227
Balance of the outturn account for the financial year	737,988	82,275
Balance carried over from the previous financial year	82,275	62,209
Reimbursements to EC	- 82,275 -	62,209
Amount related to the financial year to be reimbursed to EC	737,988	82,275

Annex 9 – Delivery in partnership and cooperation with HCD actors

The ETF's cooperation with international and bilateral organisations and other actors active in HCD contributes to the fulfilment of the ETF functions as outlined in its mandate¹⁵, more specifically:

- To achieve maximum effectiveness in improving human capital development in partner countries.
- To facilitate the exchange of information and experience among actors engaged in HCD reform in partner countries.
- To disseminate information, encourage networking and exchange of experience and good practice between the EU and partner countries and among partner countries on HCD issues.

In 2024, the ETF counted 22 formal partnerships in force¹⁶, including:

- EU Agencies: Cedefop, Eurofound, OSHA
- MS bilateral: ENABEL (plus a growing number of joint action plans with MS without formal agreement)
- International: ICT-ILO, IoM, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNDP, SKILLMAN
- Regional: ARLEM, CORLEAP, ERISSE, UfM, UNIMED¹⁷, WB6CIF
- Thematic: ICDE, DVVI, IVETA, IIAS/EGPA
- IFIs: EBRD, ADB
- 2 formal network memberships: Learn4dev network and UNESCO TT network with regional and international organisation (IAG task force)

Three new formal partnerships were established in the year:

- European Labour Authority (ELA)
- World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES)
- International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG)
- Negotiations ongoing with EUI (European University Institute) and EIB (European Investment Bank)

All formal partnerships have been active during the year and have contributed to ETF operations. More in general, cooperation has grown beyond formal partnerships alone and there is an increased engagement of the ETF with actors active in human capital development (HCD). Continuing the trend of the last 5 years, partnerships in 2024 became increasingly perceived as both operational and political tools to deliver contextualised solutions, to increase ETF's impact in partner countries, to augment efficiency in terms of resources, as well as to expand the ETF's perception as a global reference for HCD. In 2024 the added value of partnerships and cooperation triggered wider influence and access to capacities and resources beyond ETF's current means.

¹⁵ Art.2 (paragraph c, d and f) of the ETF Regulation No 1339/2008.

¹⁶ Partnership with ERISSE, IIAS/EGPA and with WB6CIF expired in November/December 2024.

¹⁷ Partnership agreement with UNIMED renewed in December 2024 for three years.

In addition to the formal partnership, in 2024, cooperation and exchanges happened with many other partners in the HCD ecosystem, including bilateral development partners from the Member States, actors in the HCD networks, civil society and social partners.

Highlights of partnerships in 2024 across ETF's activity areas:

Overall highlights for 2024 include:

- Cooperation with the MS scaled up as part of a Team Europe approach and entered new modality with direct bilateral work programmes, including continual cooperation with ENABEL and GIZ.
- Cooperation with IFIs including with EBRD, ADB and EIB. New opportunities opened thanks to missions, meetings and a high-level joint workshop with DG NEAR organised gathering IFIs in Brussels, and in the next couple of years this opening may result to more incoming voluntary contribution projects.
- Strong partnership work with EUDs to provide technical assistance and support for education system monitoring and assessment activities, and with Partner Countries on tools and methodologies for M&A of LLL systems.
- Strong partnership with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission on digital education (SELFIE for teachers in Western Balkans), skills demand analysis, key competences (SCAFFOLD/EU Academy), skills and migration, smart specialisation.
- ETF role recognised in the collaboration with DGs in the Youth Guarantee; green skills including at COP29 and in cooperation with UNICEF; contribution to the EU Year of Skills, with youth globally, and in Ukraine's Skills Alliance.
- Active participation in several subnetworks of EUAN. HR collaboration with Cedefop, and on AI with EFSA and with ELA. ETF in the lead of greening network group, of the sustainable procurement working group as part of NAPO and on connecting foresight with evaluation in the PDN sub-group on evaluation.
- Continued liaison with EU agencies and actors in anticipation of cyber & information security framework, including with ENISA. Exchange visits with CEDEFOP.

Highlights per activity area are:

1. Skills demand analysis

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- The Network of Experts is the greatest example of collaboration and partnership.
 - Collaboration with Cedefop for the implementation of ESJS.
 - ETF nominated chair of IAG on skills mismatch for the period 2024-2025 in collaboration with ILO, UNESCO, Cedefop, DG EMPL and OECD.
 - Joint publications with UNICEF on youth perceptions on climate actions.
 - Collaboration with DG EMPL for the organization of several events at COP29 in Azerbaijan.
 - Collaboration with research entities for the online peer learnings, including AE4RIA, OSKA, Skilllab, Public Policy Research Centre.
 - Collaboration with ITC-ILO and other international organisations for the foresight live event on different colours of the economy.
 - ETF's strategic partnership with UfM continued in 2024 with joint organisation of 2 workshops.
-

2. Active Labour Market Policies

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- Implementation of the e-survey on working and learning in the EU neighbouring countries with Eurofound.
 - With UNICEF ECARO two joint studies were developed covering youth perception regarding quality and relevance of career guidance which was used for YG preparation.
 - With the European Commission, ILO, UNICEF and main PCs stakeholders, ETF pushed forward policies to support young people not in employment, education or training.
 - The ETF actively engaged with the other members of the Inter-Agency working groups on Work Based Learning and Career Guidance and Counselling, leading to a series of joint publications and events.
 - Coherent and comprehensive policy advice to Western Balkans in context of Youth Guarantee implementation plans.
-

3. Modernisation of qualifications and establishment of qualification systems

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- With the European Commission for the launch of the new version of ESCO.
 - Support to the EQF Advisory Group steered by DG EMPL, actively participating in several technical groups such as Europass, Certificate Supplement, Comparison of third countries NQFs with EQF group.
 - Collaboration with Cedefop on monitoring NQF developments in the enlargement countries.
 - Support to EQF comparison exercises with Capo Verde NQF and South African Development Community QF.
 - Contribution to three webinars organised by DG GROW as a follow-up to the recommendation on recognition.
 - Contribution to several meetings organised on Talent Partnership by DG HOME and the international organisations involved in the initiative.
 - VNFIL annual peer learning event organised in collaboration with French Afpa.
 - Several external inputs to the trainings organised by ITC-ILO on the role of qualification systems, qualifications frameworks and RPL in skills development policies.
 - Contribution to the training organised by UIL and Shanghai Open University.
 - Contribution to the Solifem project implemented by ILO event focusing on how to strengthen the position of workers in the informal economy by recognising their skills.
-

4. Vocational excellence provision models

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- Close partnership with EfVET, EVBB and EVTA.
 - Collaboration with steering group including DG EMPL, CEDEFOP EACEA, EfVET, EVBB, EVTA, Community of Practice of CoVEs and EURASHE.
-

5. Innovative teaching and learning processes and practices

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- Collaboration with EU Steering Group (EAC and JRC) and with national institutions on Selfie for teachers.
 - Two joint activities with three major EU VET provider associations EVBB, EVTA, EfVET on competence-based assessment and adult learning.
 - Scaffold dissemination activities were delivered jointly with ALLDigital, EU Academy (for the production of the course), Youth@Work.
 - CNL network Clubs with European SchoolNET and Scientix, Digital Education Hub of the EC, Lifelong Learning Platform, ICDE, UNESCO-UNEVOC, Stem women Congress, and ITC-ILO.
 - PLA visits in collaboration with Forem in Belgium.
-

6. Engaging enterprises in skills development

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- Peer learning among WB6 stakeholders, including SMEs, business intermediary organisations, VET and HE institutions, policy makers and their EU peers.
 - Peer exchanges with partners from Austria, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal – as well as EU institutions such as EIT Food, COSME and Enterprise Europe Network, and WB6 centre of excellence, the BioSense institute.
 - Foresight reflexion and policy dialogue and exchange of good practice among policy makers as well public-private dialogue on how to solve coordination failures in terms of upskilling and reskilling.
 - Engagement of 6 EU peer learning partners were identified and took part in the WB6 agri-food project from 2023: the University of Applied Sciences from Krems, Austria; the Provincial Technical Institute (PTI) from
-

Kortrijk, Belgium; University of Technology from Lappeenranta, Finland, ACE AgriTech Centre of Excellence from Kerry, Ireland; Wageningen University from the Netherlands, InovCluster from Castelo Branco, Portugal.

- Overall, 9 partnerships have been initiated 6 of which have reached a maturity to implement concrete follow-up activities and/or submit their project proposal to EU finding instruments.
-

7. Lifelong learning policies and system change

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- Partnerships with several international organisations, in particular OECD, UNESCO UIL, and CEDEFOP.
 - Engagement with a multitude of national level organisations in the partner countries participating in the Torino Process: line ministries, quality assurance agencies, testing centres, providers, research entities, and in some cases NGOs.
-

8. Quality assurance and governance mechanisms

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- In particular with the EC and international partners including DVV international, UNDP, Unicef, DVV international, as well as regional and local authorities in Albania, Ukraine, Armenia, Serbia, and Tunisia.
-

9. Darya

Delivering in partnership in 2024

- In all 5 countries cooperation between all key stakeholders, including MoE, MoL as well as key organisations under their responsibility, sectoral associations.
 - Cross-institutional/ministerial involvement throughout.
 - Cooperation with the High-Level Group of Vice Ministers of Employment and Education.
 - Employer participation is also present all qualifications related work.
 - Involvement of EU MS in face to face and on-line learning, including Latvia and France, as well as Ireland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Poland, Portugal, Belgium and Italy.
 - Cooperation with UNICEF on the youth consultation 2024 on green competences, involving young people from all five CA countries.
 - With EBRD and ADB there are regular exchanges as there are with key donor organisations in the five CA countries.
-

Annex 10 – Collaboration with Cedefop 2024

Thematic Areas	Actions	Progress
Qualifications development	<p>Shared products (publications): co-design, development and production, (also with UNESCO) of the fifth edition of the Global NQF Inventory.</p> <p>Joint advice to Commission: in the EQF, exchange of data and intelligence on qualifications systems and frameworks in the Advisory Group's sub-group on EQF to NQF comparison for third countries.</p> <p>Information-sharing, expertise exchange, peer learning: in particular contribute to skills Agenda implementation in micro-credentials, individual learning accounts, interoperable databases of qualifications, common European VET profiles, upskilling pathways and international qualifications, use of ESCO and Europass in third countries.</p>	<p>The ETF has continued the cooperation with Cedefop (and UNESCO) for the elaboration of the fifth edition of the Global NQF Inventory, through design of information collection and NQF systems' updates, coverage of countries as per geographical mandate of the two agencies, exploration of joint avenues for publication and dissemination of findings, including preparation of the joint publication Global NQF Inventory in 2025.</p> <p>The ETF, together with Cedefop, participated and contributed to the advisory group on EQF and supported the preparation of NQF comparison processes for selected Partner Countries.</p> <p>Exchanges between the two agencies continued for the follow up and potential transferability of EU policy priorities on micro-credentials, flexible learning pathways, including upskilling initiative, ESCO and interoperable databases of qualifications to the EU neighbouring countries.</p>
Skills matching and anticipation/identification	<p>Concrete thematic cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Platform economy/platform work: Based on the past year's exchanges with Cedefop on the new forms of employment and platform work, the knowledge sharing will continue in 2024, including participation in events, exchanges through peer learning events and technical meetings. - European Skills and Jobs survey (ESJS): ETF and Cedefop will exchange information and findings, will have regular interaction. <p>Network building and knowledge sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invitation of Cedefop's experts in the ETF's Network of Experts on new skills needs and skills anticipation. - Exchange and knowledge sharing on calls for innovative proposals from the research community, with possible cooperation on the annual event. <p>Regular communication and exchange of ETF's recent initiatives with Cedefop, in particular regarding the skills for green transition, use of Big Data in LMI, future of skills needs in selected economic sectors, and future skills needs in craftsmanship.</p>	<p>The ETF has constantly shared information and updates regarding its skills needs and skills anticipation work including specific lines of research and dissemination of results and findings, including the work with the SkillsLab Network and the annual network's event organised in autumn 2024.</p> <p>Methodological exchanges and exploration of opportunities to develop joint products also took place in the framework of the Interagency Working Group on Skills Mismatches.</p> <p>The ETF continued the consolidation of its online job vacancy platform and country coverage, an initiative built on Cedefop's methodological lessons regarding similar initiative.</p> <p>Both agencies had regular exchanges to provide input during the management and analysis phase of data from the second European Skills and Jobs Survey (ESJS) implemented in ETF PCs. Additionally, ETF participated in the Cedefop's conference on ESJS in December 2024. The concept for joint publication has been developed, with its analysis scheduled for implementation in 2025.</p>

<p>Effective/Innovative teaching and learning</p>	<p>Network-building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cedefop membership of ETF's expert group to steer its Creating New Learning's project (CNL) (including an informal consultative group between the ETF and the Cedefop to support the ETF's UA Re-Emerge(ncy) activity regarding the micro credentials for VET e-learning and adults' re-skilling and upskilling in Ukraine); - Joint activities engaging support from the ETF's Community of Innovative Educators (under CNL). <p>Co-development of common tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing research tools and experiences in their use, and pooling of data, in respective projects in curricula innovation (notably Key Competences), VET teachers and trainers' professional development; teaching, learning and assessment methods; - Dissemination and enrichment of Cedefop and ETF's practical tools for policy makers and VET practitioners. From ETF's side: READY, Scaffold, Teacher Booster; - Collaboration of ETF/CNL and Cedefop experts on ReferNet work in green skills and digital education for teachers (reference to READY and SELFIE Tools); - Possible partnership and interest of ETF's joining the Cedefop's Pan-European survey of VET teachers and trainers with regard of ETF's PCs (in the initial phase, at least in one ETF partner country). A particular interest from ETF - evidence on digital education. Cedefop has consulted ETF at an earlier stage of their development of a survey. - Overall benefit for the ETF PCs coming from this cooperation and exchange with Cedefop. <p>Key competence in VET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint engagement in key competence discussions with partners (JRC, others). 	<p>ETF continued exchanging and joining forces in supporting Ukraine in the area of innovative teaching and learning.</p> <p>Taking the opportunity of the knowledge sharing event in June 2024, the two agencies shared tools and materials in curriculum development. READY, Scaffold, Teacher Booster were among the tools discussed.</p> <p>As a solid outcome of these cooperation was the launch of the cooperation in the area of citizenship as a key competence.</p>
<p>Vocational Excellence</p>	<p>Exchange of knowledge and expertise. Participation of ETF to the advisory group of Cedefop study on 'European VET for the 21st century: the balancing of excellence and inclusion'</p>	<p>Cooperation strengthened with continuous sharing of knowledge. Cedefop participated regularly in the steering group led by ETF under the Internationalising Vocational excellence project. Cedefop regularly shared knowledge on the progress of their study on Inclusion and Excellence.</p>

System change and lifelong learning -	<p>Copenhagen/Osnabruck process follow up – Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation in the development and implementation of the joint monitoring framework for the policy objectives and reform priorities under the Osnabruck Declaration and the VET Recommendation - Joint participation and presentation of findings in the ACVT/DGVT meetings - Preparatory work for the 2025 joint final report and event 	<p>This is the area where the two agencies have a long tradition of cooperation. Both ACVT and DGVT platforms are used for this cooperation beyond the ad-hoc cooperation of the relevant teams. Both agencies reported and analysed jointly the findings of the Osnabruck/Vet Recommendation cycles and assisted the drafting of the new Herning Declaration coming up in 2025. The two agencies agreed in joint presentations in different occasions.</p>
Cooperating through the GLAD network	<p>Regular exchange of input based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening partnerships to foster LLL - Governance and governing bodies - Collaborative governance and financing - Civil society organisations' relevant role in LLL 	<p>The GLAD network and its new format have been presented and discussed with Cedefop in December 2024 during the 2nd knowledge sharing event.</p>
Knowledge sharing seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Torino, June 2024 - Thessaloniki, December 2024 	<p>Both events executed as designed. Citizenship, creating new learning and GLAD were among the topics discussed.</p>
WBL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration to prepare the new leaflet for the Inter Agency Working Group on WBL - Dialogue on possible joint analysis on new LFS HATWORK variable (this could for example be used in the new IAWG leaflet – see first point) - Discuss how to join forces for the purpose of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships - Explore the idea to invite some ETF Partner Countries to Cedefop 2024 Policy Learning forum on apprenticeships 	<p>This is an area where exchanges have happened regularly. The platforms of ACVT and DGVT were used to facilitate these exchanges. The Inter agency group working group has been a very useful setup to further these exchanges.</p>
Central Administration Issues	<p>Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two knowledge sharing sessions per year, if possible with same calendar as those of core business, to take stock of the cooperation <p>Human resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot staff exchanges using hybrid working modalities on, e.g. development of IT tools (oleeo, carmen) - Recruitment: Sharing of reserve lists; Joint recruitments; participation in selection boards - Share practices on e.g. SNE rules, unconscious bias, well-being and diversity and inclusion; job architecture and career development tools - Joint training sessions on unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion, motivational drivers etc. 	<p>Exchanges between the two agencies continued throughout 2024. The format and timing of the exchanges was adapted to make the best of other actions organised within the EUAN so as to avoid duplication.</p> <p>In 2024 most of the exchanges took place online.</p> <p>Both agencies greatly benefited from mutual exchange of practices and experiences in HR, particularly through initiatives developed by each, such as career management framework, recruitment tool, participation in learning activities, and involvement in selection boards. The joint ETF/Cedefop projects on Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors, as well as on shared services for staff selection, were successfully realised within the EUAN.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint development/exchange of IT tools for recruitment purposes, including proctored tests <p>Procurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint procurements <p>Digital transformation and cybersecurity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital transformation strategies - Exchange on IT Service Management (flowforma, Ares, MS power automate, vs Service now) - Data strategy & architecture - Teams Policy & DMS guidelines (consideration of migration to ARES) - Cyber security approaches, impact of new regulation & technical implementation - Possibility of sharing services/SLA on cybersecurity <p>Other areas for exchanges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal communication tools (intranet, workplace, ETF times) - EMAS certification: ETF experience - Joint follow up on EMPL agencies external evaluation. 	<p>Both agencies exchanged information on their respective procurement plans. A joint procurement on evaluation was concluded.</p> <p>Furthermore, Cedefop was an active contributor to the session organised by the EUAN and led by ETF with the diversity and inclusion WG on sustainable procurement.</p> <p>Regarding digital and cybersecurity, both agencies have been very active on exchanges, especially in the areas of data and cybersecurity.</p> <p>In the area of data, exchanges have been enlarged to the EMPL cluster agencies around the data lakehouse idea that will be further shaped in 2025. ETF has actively shared the data architecture and visualisation plans.</p> <p>Regarding cybersecurity, exchanges have focused on preparations for the implementation of the new Regulation, notably regarding the risk assessment. This has been greatly facilitated by ENISA.</p> <p>Regarding shared services, all EMPL agencies gathered to present a joint proposal for shared services to the EC. The proposal asked for additional posts that were not granted. Agencies have continued to exchange on preparations. The exchange will continue in 2025.</p>
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Annex 11 – Collaboration with Eurofound 2024

Actions	Activities	Status
Knowledge coordination/exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation in the area of social dialogue in IPA countries – contribution of the ETF to Tripartite Exchange Seminars under Eurofound lead - Skills Lab Network of Experts: continuation of active participation of Eurofound in the events of the Network, including dissemination of research results and other relevant information through regular newsletter of the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Agencies were involved in Tripartite Exchange Seminars as multi-Agency (EF, ETF, Cedefop, EEA) joint project with online and residential modules focusing on social dialogue and the green just transition. This is a unique and genuinely co-managed project with a dedicated project team and resources, pulling resources together for making a difference in the field (all participants were practitioners-employers' organisations, trade unions and governments). The residential module was hosted by the EESC in Brussels. Remaining activities (Practice Groups, last online seminar and assessment) were concluded by the end of 2024. Each Agency contributed with knowledge and expertise stemming from their own mandate to provide a unique learning experience to the participants. - Skills Lab Network of Experts: Eurofound was invited to the network's annual meeting to participate as speaker and regular updates of the Skills Lab Network newsletter.
Implementation of surveys, exchange on data collection and joint analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E-survey on living and working conditions. This involves the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring cooperation pathways for the implementation of the third wave of the e-survey in the neighbouring countries. - ETF to facilitate access to research networks in the relevant IPA countries for the secondary analysis of the survey data and for dissemination activities. - European Working Conditions (telephone) Survey (EWCTS): ETF to facilitate access to research networks in the IPA countries for the secondary analysis of the survey data and for dissemination activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurofound consulted and informed ETF on the e-survey process and elements of the questionnaire relevant to training. ETF provided advice to Eurofound for coverage of Western Balkans countries (e.g. sharing lessons from implementation in 2022 and 2023 e-survey waves). - IPA survey and youth report: ETF provided expert advice to Eurofound on the topics of training and traineeships and peer reviewed the draft report on youth in Western Balkans. ETF also attended the expert seminar organised by Eurofound in May 2024, Brussels to discuss the key findings with national researchers. - European Working Conditions (telephone) Survey (EWCTS): ETF provided contact details of relevant researchers in the targeted countries for research purposes and the expert meeting. - Initial technical consultation in view of joint data lakehouse project between EMPL, Eurofound and sister agencies.
Administration, shared services, internal control and risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing exchange of info the Agencies' performance indicator methodologies - Exchange and building on good practices in internal control and risk management (including peer review) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurofound presented its review of the corporate key performance indicators in Q4 - Exploration of sharing services for accounting function took place - Joint follow up on EMPL agencies external evaluation.
Development of Programming Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In consideration of the different mandates of the Agencies the joint action plan for the next year will be prepared following the exchange of draft work programmes before their approval by the respective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Eurofound PD 2025 and 2026 were shared with ETF; while ETF shared as well its SPD 2025-27 with Eurofound. - Joint action plan published as annex in the ETF SPD.

	Administrative Boards. Both agencies will refer to each other's work and cooperation where appropriate.as well as in relevant strategic discussion	
Organisation of the annual consultation	- Organisation of annual meetings (possibly teleconference) to discuss and assess progresses on the above and other relevant issues.	- The annual meeting took place in October 2024 with the participation of both Directors, other managerial and expert staff.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To contribute, in the context of the EU external relations policies, to improving human capital development by supporting countries to create inclusive and innovative lifelong learning systems

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING

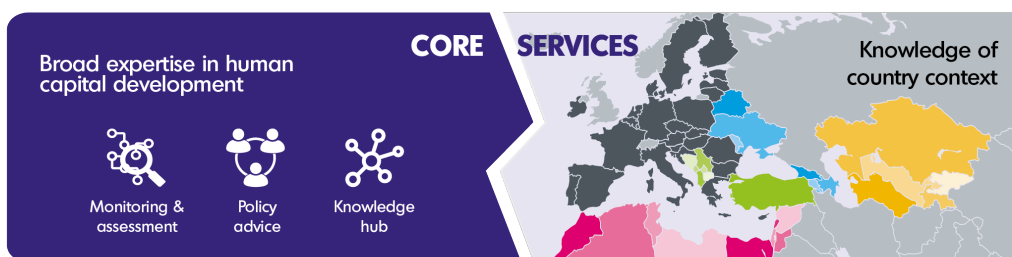
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Skills relevance and anticipation**

To identify changing skills demands and ensure relevance
- Skills development and validation**

To innovate skills development models and processes
- Performance and quality of education and training policies**

To increase the quality and performance of lifelong learning systems



ACTIVITY AREAS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills demand analysis Active labour market policies Qualifications modernisation Vocational excellence Innovative teaching & learning Engaging enterprises in skills development Lifelong learning policies Quality assurance mechanisms Governance mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country & multi-country assessments Thematic studies & analyses EU intervention design, monitoring & evaluation Methodological models, tools & guides Thematic & geographic networks Tailored policy advice Innovative practices & approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generating knowledge based on co-creation Developing & disseminating new concepts, tools & approaches Mobilising & connecting stakeholders & experts in networks Designing projects & programmes to support EU Member State development policies Facilitating policy dialogue Monitoring & assessing the performance of systems

IMPACT

<p>EU Global Strategy</p> <p>Build state and societal resilience through regional differentiation</p> <p>Enlargement policy</p> <p>Neighbourhood policy</p> <p>Development policy</p>	<p>EU Consensus on development (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership)</p> <p>Support inclusive lifelong learning and equitable quality education</p> <p>Meet the specific needs of young people, particularly young women and girls, by increasing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities</p>
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2030 Agenda for sustainable development

Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Annex 13 – Statements of the Internal Control Coordinator

Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control for the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024

I declare that in accordance with the Commission’s communication on the internal control framework, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in the European Training Foundation for the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 to the ETF Director, for the period in which I was Internal Control Coordinator in 2024.

[signed and dated]

Eva Jimeno Sicilia

ETF Internal Control Coordinator 01/01/2024 to 30/06/2024

Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024

I declare that in accordance with the Commission’s communication on the internal control framework, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in the European Training Foundation for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024 to the ETF Director, for the period in which I was Internal Control Coordinator in 2024.

[signed and dated]

Tiziana Ciccicone

ETF Internal Control Coordinator ad interim 01/07/2024 to 31/12/2024

Annex 14 – Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned, **PILVI TORSTI**, Director of the European Training Foundation in my capacity as Authorising Officer,

- Declare that the information contained in the annual progress and performance report 2024 gives a true and fair view.
- State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as:

- The end of year declarations of assurance issued by (Sub) Delegated Authorising Officers based on the knowledge gained from daily operation and management supervision activities;
- The results of the annual review and management self-assessment of the internal control system and organisational performance;
- The results of the internal transactional ex-post exercise;
- The progress and follow-up of risk management activities;
- The results and follow up of ex-post audits and controls;
- The results of ex-post evaluations and the monitoring of ETF activities;
- The recommendations of the Internal Audit Service, the accompanying action plans and their follow-up; and
- The lessons learned from the reports of the Court of Auditors for the years prior to the year of this declaration.

I confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interest of the European Training Foundation

[Signed and dated]

Dr. Pilvi Torsti

Annex 15 – Main Achievements of ETF’s Activity Areas in 2024

Skills demand analysis

The Skills Lab Network grew in membership, moving from 317 researchers at the end of 2023 to 433 in 2024. The Network has matured as an agile, dynamic and multi-disciplinary platform where skills experts from ETF partner countries, EU member states, third countries and other international organisations regularly meet to co-create knowledge and increase awareness and capacity on changing skills needs building on each other’s experience.

The highlights for Skills Lab in 2024 include the live foresight event organised in partnership with ITC-ILO in which different colours of the economy were used as a lens to systemically explore future developments in key economic sectors and at their intersection. Also, the participation of network members in the Regional Reshaping Work Conference, organised in cooperation with CENTAR, a public policy research centre from Serbia: the event investigated the transformative shifts in platform work and impacts on workers, businesses and societies in Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

In addition, the ETF has been appointed as chair of the AIG InterAgency Working Group on Skills Mismatches, covering aspects of skills anticipation and matching. ETF also continued its strategic partnership with UfM organising two workshops on platform work in SEMED and on the future of work (FoW).

In 2024 the ETF has further increased its global recognition as a reference on green skills and skills for the green transition in the EU neighbourhood by leveraging two topical products for dissemination at COP29 and to conclude the EU Year of Skills. The joint publication with UNICEF on youth perceptions on climate actions was well received at COP29 where the ETF actively participated in five panels. The Green Skills Red Alert was widely disseminated in the conclusion of the EU Year of Skills.

ETF’s recognition on green skills deployment in low- and mid-income settings generated further requests from partner countries, donors and EC services, with the highlight being the peer learning initiative for the EU Education Area working group on green VET.

In addition, its capacity to anticipate and use skills anticipation and matching methodologies to explore which skills are needed today to meet the needs of tomorrow and graduate employment pathways, as well as to explore diverse scenarios of the evolving global economy, led to requests for replicating ETF’s approaches in partner countries. Skills anticipation findings were used as input for a debate with ETF stakeholders including GB members, partner countries, youth representatives, researchers and experts at the occasion of its 30th anniversary to shape ETF’s vision 2040.

This activity area contributes to [European Skills Agenda](#) Action 2 of strengthening skills intelligence as a means to achieve higher attention to and investment in skills for citizens across economic sectors and a better alignment of skills policies to demands. It also contributes to European Skills Agenda Action 6 of identifying skills that support the green and digital transitions, in line with the [European Green Deal](#) and its accompanying [Just Transition Mechanism](#), as well as [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#) and the associated [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-27](#).

The contribution of this activity area extends to the [European Dialogue on Skills and Migration](#), the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) and to the [Global Approach to Migration and Mobility](#), by covering the skills dimension of migration (labour mobility) through its support to improved skills matching, inclusion, and social fairness in line with the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), the [Porto Declaration](#) and the [European Consensus on Development](#). In the youth dimension, ETF's contributions also reach out to the [Youth Action Plan \(YAP\) in EU external action 2022 – 2027](#), the [Reinforced Youth Guarantee](#) and the [Youth Employment Support: a Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation](#).

In addition, this activity area promotes the [Council recommendation on vocational education and training \(VET\) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#) and the [Marrakech Ministerial Declaration](#), as well as the [Bridge to Jobs](#). Regionally, it fosters the [Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 – Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all](#), the [Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans](#), the [Joint Communication on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood](#), the [new Agenda for the Mediterranean](#) and the [Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa](#).

Finally, this activity area contributes to [Sustainable Development \(SDG\) Goal 4](#) on quality education, [SDG 5](#) on gender equality, and to [SGD 8](#) on decent work and economic growth.

Active labour market policies and transition measures

In 2024 the ETF facilitated piloting youth guarantee approaches in the EU neighbourhood and used its experience to further support developments in the Western Balkans, in Eastern Partnership countries, particularly in Ukraine, in SEMED and in Central Asia. The motto 'from Kyiv to Bangkok' reflects ETF's work on Youth Guarantee in 2024. It shed light on skills and employability challenges young people face in the EU neighbouring countries and beyond. Together with the EC, all Western Balkan policy makers and stakeholders benefited from ETF facilitated policy exchange with EU MS on career guidance, work-based learning and other skills development aspects of Youth Guarantee.

In response to Ukraine's governmental commitments to pursue reforms on youth transition to employment, the ETF launched in 2024 a specific initiative to support Ukrainian stakeholders to prepare for the future design and deployment of a Youth Guarantee approach adapted to (post)war conditions and in preparation for EU accession. This experience further prepared the ETF to contextualise its approach to other neighbouring regions.

Cooperation with Eurofound on the implementation of the e-survey on working and learning in the EU neighbourhood continued in 2024. This revealed aspects of participation in employment and learning as well as social challenges. With UNICEF ICARO two studies were developed, one on youth perception on quality and relevance of career guidance that was used for policy discussions in the context of Youth Guarantee, and another on youth for climate actions that fed into COP29 sessions organised in Azerbaijan.

With the EC, ILO, UNICEF and key partner country stakeholders the ETF pushed forward policies to support young people not in employment education or training, which led to policy advice across ETF's geographical remit and to Thailand.

ETF's work on active labour market policies (ALMP) were consolidated in 2024, including its work with public employment services, social partners, youth organisations and other actors in support to implementing ALMP in line with the EU Pillar of Social Rights. Studies on gender, people with disabilities, and ALPM in fragile contexts, have all been used to shape support and deliver assistance to partner countries' reforms, as well as to provide input to EU services and EUDs. Also, ETF's initiative to review policy priorities and measures to support labour market (re)integration of persons with disabilities led to a joint peer learning event co-organised with EC TAIEX.

The ETF generated new intelligence on ALMP in fragile and (post)conflict contexts clarified what works in difficult socio-economic contexts and for vulnerable groups. In turn, this enabled ETF to inform partner countries on modalities to devise more effective employment and skills development programmes. Moreover, a joint peer learning event was organised with ENABEL with the participation of DG EMPL, the Ukrainian State Employment Service and other Public Employment Services from partner countries.

On work-based learning (WBL) the ETF launched a series of country mappings of policies and programmes as well as their harmonisation with the EU quality frameworks applicable to apprenticeships and traineeships. Collaboration with other international and EU partners within the InterAgency Group resulted in a joint publication defining key concepts and contribution to both the International Skills Fair on Quality Apprenticeships and the training on financing WBL organised in Turin by ITC-ILO. The ETF and the EC also continued their partnership in organising the EafA seminar for partner countries in 2024.

The ETF continued its comprehensive reviews of career guidance and counselling systems in several SEMED countries. These aimed at informing reforms and cross-country exchanges, including the newly launched EU Y-NEET regional programme. Work with Euroguidance and other international and EU stakeholders allowed for enhanced transfer of know-how to partner countries. The ETF also developed a how-to guide in setting up and providing career guidance services in vocational education and training schools, and in the framework of IAG CGC contributed to the operationalisation of its global knowledge hub.

Transition to work and Active Labour Market Policies are among the priorities of the ETF work, as are WBL, career guidance and adult learning in line with the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (EPSR) and the [European Skills Agenda](#), including in terms of flexible learning pathways, quality of employment and access to career guidance and learning in highly flexible and transitional labour markets, quality and expansion of WBL opportunities for young and adults in the face of significant demand and technological changes.

The ETF also focuses on WBL reforms, including quality apprenticeships and traineeships, and career guidance as per the [Osnabrück Declaration](#) and [VET Recommendation](#). It analyses the role of ALMPs in promoting upskilling and reskilling contributing to the [Upskilling Pathways - New opportunities for adults](#), the [European Agenda for Adult learning](#) and the [European Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies](#).

In promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, this activity area contributes to the [EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 \(GAP III\)](#). This activity area contributes to the twin transition supporting the [European](#)

[Green Deal](#) and its accompanying [Just Transition Mechanism](#), as well as [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#) and the associated [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-27](#).

This activity supports the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the Western Balkans and its promotion in other partner countries in line with the [Recommendations for the Youth Guarantee update](#), the [Youth Employment support](#), the [Reinforced Youth Guarantee](#) and the [Bridge to Jobs](#). Finally, this activity area also contributes to [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 5](#) on gender equality, [SDG 8](#) on decent work and economic growth, and [SDG 10](#) on reduced inequalities, in addition to [SDG 4](#) on quality education.

Modernisation of qualifications and establishment of qualification systems

In 2024, the ETF worked with the European Commission to launch the new version of ESCO, including at international level. Also, the ETF coached partner countries and supported both talent partnership and EU candidate countries in the adoption and development of digital systems to facilitate the comparison and recognition of skills and qualifications. As a result, Moldova has now a state-of-the-art qualifications database compatible with the European Learning Model and linking qualifications to ESCO occupations. Moreover, Tunisia agreed to develop a qualifications database with the support of the EU PASE project, as well as that its national classification system for occupations and skills will be linked to ESCO. Also, Morocco is planning to classify occupations and skills after a study visit to Italy and the ETF.

Following on the deliverables to the EU Year of Skills and the Skills and Talent Mobility Package, and in line with the EC recommendation of 15/11/2023, ETF's work on recognition of qualifications of third country nationals in 2024 strengthened the global availability of information on qualification systems. The same is true in relation to digitalisation of qualifications databases, and development of methodological tools supporting comparison of qualifications and linking data on qualifications based on EU tools, such as the European Learning Model (ELM), Europass and ESCO.

In addition, in 2024 the ETF further supported the work of the EQF Advisory Group steered by DG EMPL and continued collaborating with Cedefop on monitoring NQF developments in the enlargement countries. This enabled the ETF to expand collaboration with the EC, the EU Council and Cedefop to develop know-how for the four countries in the EQF Advisory Group that did not reference their frameworks yet to the EQF: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. As a result, Ukraine and Georgia submitted their readiness to start the EQF referencing process.

Furthermore, the ETF supported EQF comparison exercises with Capo Verde NQF and South African Development Community QF. Together with the EC the ETF organised in Turin a peer learning activity on the take aways from the EQF comparison pilots. Also, a report on qualification systems and VNFIL was drafted by the ETF to improve the international transparency of Algerian VET qualifications. In addition, ETF's country intelligence via NQF country fiches will further contribute to the Global Inventory of NQFs, which is a flagship publication of ETF, Cedefop, UNESCO and UIL on developments around qualifications frameworks globally.

In the area of validation of non-formal learning, ETF concluded a round of the inventory of VNFIL in 16 partner countries, thus creating a solid evidence base for the analysis of progress

in adoption of lifelong learning principles in the EU neighbouring countries. Also, to support the advancement of VNFIL, the ETF delivered an annual peer learning event in collaboration with French Afpa in Lyon.

On capacity building, in 2024 the ETF provided several inputs to trainings by ITC-ILO on the roles of qualification systems, qualifications frameworks and RPL in skills' development policies, as well as to the training organised by UIL and Shanghai Open University. ETF also contributed to the Solifem project implemented by ILO focusing on how to strengthen the position of workers in the informal economy by recognising their skills.

North Macedonia's training of validation practitioners by ETF facilitated launching a pilot scheme for validation of non-formal and informal learning by the Macedonian Regional VET Centres. Targeted policy advice was also delivered to Bosnia and Herzegovina for the development of a QF national document, for Türkiye for the formulation of TAIEX event, and for Egypt to support its ESCO mapping. A highlight of 2024 was the incorporation of ETF policy advice in the Palestinian NQF White Paper.

The ETF's global standing in recognition of skills and qualifications was reinforced in 2024 via the ongoing survey on qualification data needs, as well as via networking and contributions to DG HOME, DG GROW, RCC and EU countries Erasmus+ projects. Also, key ETF presentations at the Talent Partnership round tables in Morocco and Egypt underlines the recognition of qualification and skills as a centre piece of European migration policies.

In this context, it is important to highlight that this activity area builds on the [European Skills Agenda](#), the [VET Recommendation](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#) in close cooperation with the EQF advisory group and the European Commission, and thus in line with the [EQF Recommendation](#) and the [Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning](#). It also benefits from a longstanding partnership and joint work with Cedefop and the international community, in particular UNESCO, UIL and OECD. Moreover, the ETF increasingly supports the African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF) as part of the EU partnership with the African Union (see ACQF II).

Ultimately, the ETF supports the development of flexible qualifications systems and upskilling pathways, including through increased focus on micro-credentials, recognition, validation and flexibilisation, as well as the digital and international dimensions of qualifications, in line with the [Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#), the EC priority [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#), the [Porto Declaration](#) and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), as well as inspired by the [Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025](#), the [Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-30\)](#), the [Joint Employment Report](#), the [Council Resolution on a new European Agenda for Adult Learning 2021-30](#), and [ALMA](#).

This activity area is also instrumental in the context of improving legal pathways of migration and the recognition of third-country nationals' competences on the EU labour market, in line with the EU new initiative on [Talent Partnerships](#) under the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). This includes ETF work on Ukraine in line with the [Recommendation on recognition of Professional Qualifications](#) and the [recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's](#)

[invasion of Ukraine](#). Finally, this activity area also contributes to the [Sustainable Development Goal 4](#) on quality education.

African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF II)

In 2024, a highlight has been the achievement of a longstanding aspiration turned into reality, which has been the development of national policies and guidelines supporting the establishment of comprehensive National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (CATS), and innovative initiatives such as the integration of micro-credentials in NQFs in multiple ACQF countries. In addition, peer learning and training programmes enabled increased knowledge and enhanced capacity of NQF teams and authorities.

As a result, there has been increased self-confidence and ownership by the NQF working groups and NQF commissions steering the development of the NQF-RPL-CATS policies. Also, there has been higher recognition and visibility for the involved national qualifications authorities and agencies, both at national level and internationally. This is coupled with mutual trust and better understanding of qualifications and NQFs of other ACQF II countries that lead to gains in recognition of qualifications and facilitates fair mobility of learners and workers.

NQF instruments such as dedicated websites and the qualifications and credentials platform (QCP) further stimulate implementation and visibility of NQFs-RPL-CATS and enable information sharing between countries and regions (Africa and globally). Furthermore, the initiative of the ACQF network supporting sustainability of ACQF and fostering knowledge creation is promising and has gained momentum for all involved countries and the African Union, thus contributing to the 'Africa We Want' and CESA.

In terms of numbers, for capacity development, peer learning and networking, in 2024 there were four continental forums, one regional conference and twelve country capacity development workshops and online training programmes on monitoring and evaluation, QCP and qualifications and credentials databases, learning outcomes and RPL.

In relation to direct support, eleven countries have been supported in developing an implementing their NQFs, RPL and CATS. A new ACQF handbook with an accompanying technical note was also launched. And a new pilot project – Green ACQF – has been launched and is being implemented with the All Africa Students Union (AASU). A green dashboard and analysis of market demand for green skills has also been launched in 2024.

Under referencing to ACQF, the pilot phase involved eight countries and a streamlined methodology was agreed with all countries for ease application. The results of the referencing were presented by involved countries at three ACQF forums, and peer validation presentations were discussed at the ACQF 2024 webinar in December 2024. The current overview on referencing to ACQF shows that seven countries meet the requirements of the four fundamental referencing criteria.

Finally, a handbook for RPL practitioners was launched in three languages and the continental survey had responses from 28 countries with an analytical report available and disseminated via the ACQF website. Policy documents have already been developed with three countries. In addition, a new platform in the ACQF website has been launched – the skills data focus –

which hosts dashboards and data visualisation tools on common skills profiles of occupations, an online job adds analysis, and the green skills dashboard already mentioned. It is important to highlight that this activity area contributes to the same EU policies and SDGs as its twin activity area ‘modernisation of qualifications and establishment of qualification systems’.

Vocational excellence provision models

ENE brings together hundreds of organisations and CoVEs globally, including from the EU neighbourhood, Central Asia, Africa, and the EU. In 2024, the ENE network reached 333 members (from 291 in 2023) with over one third being actively engaged in webinars, the peer learning events, and thematic initiatives organised during the year.

In this context, coaching on the use of ecosystem engagement tool ENTRE COVEs has been completed in 2024 allowing network members to better understand CoVEs strengths and weaknesses as well as contextualised needs and solutions. Both an individual report for each CoVE on recommendations for improvements and a comprehensive report with lessons learned were produced by ETF.

A highlight was ETF’s participation at the vocational excellence forum in Lyon in September 2024 in which it also organised a side event and a hackathon to boost economies and societies via ENE entrepreneurial centres of vocational excellence. A report with key findings and recommendations was widely distributed to network members and beyond.

The ENE green initiative or GRETA engaged over 450 participants via a social dialogue as a driver of green transitions together with the GLAD network (1.5) and the webinar ‘Building Green – Together!’. The latter discussed the roles of CoVEs in the green just transition, which was held alongside COP29 with contributions from EEA, UNESCO-UNIVOC and the UN Environment Programme Copenhagen Climate Centre.

Opportunities for ENE members to further develop expertise in the area of digital teaching and learning through peer learning, and to share expertise on the digital realm with the broader ENE network were provided via three webinars and a face-to-face peer learning organised by DIGI ENE. Beyond knowledge sharing and transfer, these initiatives also aimed to provide ENE members with opportunities for collaboration and transnational partnerships.

A highlight in 2024 was the presentational event ‘Adult learning in VET: the role of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)’ co-organised with ETF activity area 1.5 Innovative Teaching and Learning in November. It enabled around forty participants to discuss key challenges facing VET schools in adult learning provision, to share good practices and innovative approaches among practitioners, to strengthen the role and capacity of CoVEs in reskilling and upskilling of adults, and to share insights on tools and approaches for adult learning, such a micro-credentials, flexible learning offers, in-company training, among others.

It is also important to bring to the fore that in Moldova CoVEs are having a crucial role in the governance of VET education in line with adopted legislation (order of the Ministry of Education 1158/2015). Since 2022 ENE has been supporting CoVEs in cooperation with Austria’s Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD) to develop required functions in Moldova. In addition, North Macedonia initiated VET reforms with the establishment of

Regional VET Centres (RVETC) foreseen in its Education Strategy 2018-2025, and ENE is actively supporting this process from 2024.

ENE has also been actively engaged and providing high-level advice at international level in cooperation with the EC, EU VET providers associations, E+ community of practices CoP CoVEs, EACEA – Erasmus+, among others. An internal evaluation of ENE in 2024 highlighted that its greatest success factors include:

- Peer learning relevant to members' needs and supporting the internationalisation of ENE.
- Internal and external alignment, collaboration and coherence with EU priorities and multiple international organisations and platforms on vocational excellence.
- ENESAT considered extremely useful to identify and prioritise areas for improvements, to present clear strategic plans to policymakers, and to foster policy dialogue.

Moving forward in line with the new Commission priorities ENE will further strengthen a few actions as outlined in the table below.

ENE PRIORITIES	NEW EC PRIORITIES
Further collaboration and partnerships	Foster partnerships and multi-level engagement
Maintain and increase alignment and support to EU priorities	Align with EU priorities
Stay abreast of latest developments for flexibility and adaptability to rapid change	Adaptability to labour market changes
Encourage dialogue between CoVEs and diverse actors and governance levels	Facilitate dialogue across governance levels
Strengthen skills ecosystem between CoVEs and local/national/regional actors and decision makers	Develop a skills ecosystem

This activity area contributes to the [EU Treaty Article 166](#), the geopolitical dimension of the [European Education Area](#) by making education part of a stronger Europe in the world, building on the [VET Recommendation](#) and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (EPSR) and its principles. Thus, it is possible to pinpoint that this activity area contributes to the [Erasmus+ programme](#) and its [Key Action 2](#), in particular in the field of [Centres of Vocational Excellence](#).

Also, that the ENE approach fits within the [European Skills Agenda](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#). The dimensions of excellence supports EU priorities such as the [European Green Deal](#) and [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#) in line with the [Digital Competence Framework for Citizens](#), the [European Sustainability Competence Framework](#) and the [Entrepreneurship Competence Framework](#). In addition, in cooperation with [EU Danube strategy](#) Priority Area 9, ENE is advancing its engagement with centres of vocational excellence at regional level in the dimensions of green skills and social inclusion.

Finally, this activity area also contributes to the [Sustainable Development \(SDG\) Goal 4](#) on quality education, [SDG 5](#) on gender equality, [SDG 8](#) on decent work and economic growth, [SDG 9](#) on industry, innovation and infrastructure, [SDG 10](#) on reduced inequalities, [SDG 12](#) on responsible consumption and production, [SDG 13](#) on climate action, and [SDG 17](#) on partnerships for the goals.

International dimension of centres of vocational excellence: building a strong international cooperation dimension on vocational excellence

Key in 2024 was to involve CoVEs in the implementation of the international self-assessment tool for CoVEs (ISATCOVE), a detailed assessment framework on vocational excellence, as well as to create resources to support the further development of vocational excellence. Thus, 79 centres participated in the first and second wave of ISATCOVE implementation, beyond the original plan of engaging 50 centres by the end of 2024. In addition, 200 participants registered for the webinars showing a growing interest in the resources developed. A highlight in 2024 were the partnerships and collaboration with the consultative panel consisting of beneficiaries and with the steering group members including DG EMPL, Cedefop, EACEA, EfVET, EVBB, EVTA, the community of practice of CoVEs and EURASHE.

The e-library with resources on vocational excellence was launched in December 2024. The website is the entry point to the support services developed, with regular visitors across the year but with peaks around events in which the website is promoted. In addition, work to support ETF country intelligence has started in 2024 with the development of a methodology that enables analysis of ISATCOVE data, and which will be piloted in Q1 2025.

A policy note was also produced in 2024 on the importance of the work on vocational excellence, including a proposal for next steps. The aim is to follow up this by including a policy dimension in SLA 3 currently under negotiation with DG EMPL. It is important to highlight that this activity area contributes to the same EU policies and SDGs as its twin activity area 'vocational excellence provision models'.

Innovative teaching and learning

In 2024, country intelligence was further strengthened via the use of tools such as SELFIE and SELFIE for teachers, DERF, and case studies of CNL research on innovation in teaching and learning. These, together with the 2024 experience gained with SCAFFOLD and READY, enabled the delivery of policy advice, including on digital inclusion. The uptake of ETF knowledge and advice delivered led to SCAFFOLD been translated into 13 languages and printed in 3 EU countries, 6 partner countries, and globally, including in China. A highlight has been the employment of SCAFFOLD in Central Asia (see Darya).

Several partnerships were key in 2024, including with the EU steering group (EAC and JRC) and national institutions on SELFIE for teachers. Two joint activities were undertaken with three important EU VET provider associations – EVBB, EVTA and EfVET – on competence-based assessment and adult learning. Furthermore, SCAFFOLD dissemination activities were jointly delivered with ALLDigital, the EU Academy and Youth@Work. In addition, the CNL network clubs were delivered with European SchoolNET and Scientix, Digital Education Hub of the EC, Lifelong Learning Platform, IDCE, UNESCO-UNEVOC, Stem Woman Congress, and ITC-ILO. Finally, PLA visits were done in collaboration with Foren in Belgium.

In this context, this activity area is aligned with the [European Skills Agenda](#) and its associated instruments, notably the [VET Recommendation](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#). Activities in the partner countries are also aligned with the first priority of the [Digital Education Action Plan](#) of developing a high-performing digital education ecosystem, in particular those referring to online/distance learning, SELFIE for teachers, the European Digital Competence Framework

and improving digital skills provision. Finally, this activity area also contributes to the Commission priority [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#), the further development of the [European Education Area to support future-oriented education and training systems](#), the Council conclusions on [European teachers and trainers for the future](#), and to the [Sustainable Development Goal 4](#) on quality education.

Engaging enterprises in skills development

In 2024, the project 'Skilling up the Western Balkans agri-food sector: digitalising and greening' was officially agreed to be handed over to BioSense, a research centre based in Serbia. The full handover is expected to be completed by the end of 2025. This transition marked the beginning of a collaborative effort between the ETF and BioSense, which will catalyse the engagement of a network comprising of a core group of about 125 members with a wider outreach to nearly 9800 companies, education and training providers, public authorities and EU institutions.

During the year multiple events took place both online and in-person, including a foresight event that identified the need to develop the project into a regional network with national hubs. The flagship annual networking event co-organised with the BioSense institute in Novi Sad, Serbia, and with support from DG NEAR, enabled the regional network to expand by including participants from six EaP countries who have since initiated cooperation with stakeholders from the six Western Balkan countries (WB6).

As specialisation and mutual interests drive cooperation, the project sought to engage peer-learning partnerships in a new way to achieve greater impact. Through its lifespan it engaged eight EU Member States in the WB6 agri-food project: Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland; BioSense institute, Serbia; Wageningen University, Netherlands; Provincial Technical Institute of West Flanders, Belgium; Agriculture College Krems, Austria; Innovation Hub Portugal; and AgriTech Cluster, Ireland. This resulted in an enriched foresight process where peer learning partners engaged with WB6 companies in a vision building exercise for skills, which provided the basis for identifying skill needs and determining priority peer-learning measures. In addition, the peer learning exchanges led to several cross-border joint initiatives where EU institutions and stakeholders from the WB6 worked together towards funding opportunities under Erasmus+, Horizon, and EIT Food. Several project findings have already been submitted for funding, including:

- Establishment of an educational centre for livestock farming in a partnership between Greenagro, a North Macedonian SME specialised in biochemicals, and Lappeenranta University of Technology in Finland.
- Development of a B2B digital platform, AgriHub regional platform, to boost the growth of agri-business in a partnership between Biotech agriculture from Kosovo and both the AgriTech Cluster and the ACE AgriTech Centre of Excellence in Ireland.
- Formation of a sustainable network of digital academies across the Western Balkans, the skills enhancement and education for digital agriculture, in partnership with Lappeenranta University of Technology in Finland.
- Bilateral partnership on applied research between Biofor, a Serbian AgriTech company, and the Wine School Krems in Austria.

- Creation of a network that brings together VET schools and teachers to support curricula update and as a platform to exchange learning materials, the WB6 teacher network, in partnership with the Technical Institute of West Flanders, Belgium, and the Agriculture College Krems in Austria.

Furthermore, an analysis on skills for smart specialisation in Albania was completed as part of the Growth Plan and the National Smart Specialisation Strategy. The analysis focused on three priority domains: renewable energy and natural resources, a healthy and sustainable food chain, and sustainable and diversified tourism. Stakeholder consultations were conducted, and final dissemination event was held. As a result of the policy advice provided, three additional requests were received for 2025 to support the peer learning and updating of curricula using the project findings. Finally, the SME Index for Eastern Partnership was completed and published on the OECD website in 2024.

The activity area was designed to directly contribute to policies that guide the EU towards higher levels of competitiveness, from Cohesion policy focused on research and innovation to the New European Innovation Agenda and productivity, all in the broader context of the Single market as a driver of European competitiveness and the twin transition. Moreover, the project informs the use of IPA and, more specifically, IPARD funds. Also, the activity area concretely cooperates on common objectives with EU policy instruments such as EIT Food, COSME, and Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

In this context, this activity area is in line with the [Competitiveness Compass](#), the [European Skills Agenda](#) on the need to acquire new skills, and the [European Charter for Small Enterprises](#), which calls upon taking action to support and encourage small enterprises. Furthermore, the work linking VET and SMEs for innovation, productivity-enhancing skills and quality of work supports the Western Balkan economies in ensuring that their industrial ambitions consider the new circumstances following the Covid-19 crisis and in line with the [‘Small Business Act’ for Europe](#). By fostering networking within the Western Balkans, this activity area also supports the implementation of [‘A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans’](#), which identifies lack of job creation and a low level of innovation as key challenges.

It also supports regional industry to lead the way in transitioning to a green, digital and resilient economy, in line with the [updated European industrial strategy](#). The focus on the twin digital and green transitions supports the new [SME Strategy](#) for a sustainable and digital Europe and the [Green Action Plan \(GAP\) for SMEs](#), which aims at helping SMEs take advantage of the opportunities offered by the transition to a green economy in line with the Commission priority [European Green Deal](#). Furthermore, it also contributes to the DG RTD policy on research, science and innovation, which aims to help create growth and jobs. Finally, this activity area also contributes to [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 4](#) on quality education, [SDG 8](#) on decent work and economic growth, [SDG 9](#) on industry, innovation and infrastructure, and [SDG 12](#) on responsible consumption and production.

Lifelong learning policies and system change

Key highlights in 2024 were the release of the annual cross-country monitoring report and the completion of the 2023/2024 biennium of the Torino Process monitoring, with lessons learned in terms of scope and process of monitoring, as well as engagement of partner countries and

deliverables produced as a result. Based on this, a new web-based gateway to all Torino Process deliverables was launched.

Primary stakeholders' engagement in 2024 increased to 92%. Deliverables related to the Osnabrück initiative, the migration thematic area and release of country fiches occurred according to plan in 2024. In addition, several policy reviews were completed, including for Georgia, or newly initiated, such as for Egypt and Palestine. Partnerships to be highlighted in 2024 include the OECD, UNESCO UIL and Cedefop, beyond a multitude of national level organisations in partner countries participating in the Torino Process, including line ministers, quality assurance agencies, testing centres, providers, research entities and NGOs.

The Torino Process provides the basis for bilateral and regional policy advice for lifelong learning system change, as well as regional policy reviews and the monitoring of the [Osnabrück Declaration](#) and [VET Recommendation](#). In-depth analyses enable the ETF to deliver evidence-based policy advice, based on information about country experiences, contexts and implementation scenarios, which feed back into the work of monitoring and support the co-creation of knowledge, thus enabling partner countries to create effective and inclusive opportunities for lifelong learning through system change in line with the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

Policy advice and its associated implementation support is done on this basis and in line with EU guidance and best practices, which embed the principles of EU policies such as the [European Skills Agenda](#). The Torino Process also adds value by including dimensions linked to skills for green transition, technological transformation including digitalisation, and recovery in alignment with EU skills agenda and VET recommendations. In doing so, it contributes to the [European Green Deal](#) and its accompanying [Just Transition Mechanism](#) as well as with [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#).

Moreover, attention is paid to gender aspects, particularly the monitoring of women in education, training and labour markets through their participation, for instance, in STEM or entrepreneurship. Hence, its work is inspired and contributes to the [European Consensus on Development](#) and the [EU Gender Action Plan III](#). For EC services and partner countries alike, this activity area also provides reliable and relevant country data and key performance indicators on Education, Skills and Employment (KIESE) monitoring system for policy review and analysis, as well as for monitoring system performance informed by the [Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#). In addition, it enables partner countries to advance national implementation plans, monitoring frameworks and reporting, and the co-creation of country briefings.

The ETF also contributes to the [European Dialogue on Skills and Migration](#), the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) and the [Global Approach to Migration and Mobility](#) by focusing on the role of skills in tackling the root causes of migration as well as on the need for the EU to attract new talents while ensuring win-win solutions with the countries of origin and the migrants themselves.

Finally, this activity area also contributes to the [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 4](#) on quality education, to [SDG 8](#) on decent work and economic growth and to [SDG 10](#) on reduced inequalities.

Quality assurance and governance mechanisms

In 2024, the ETF advocated for adult learning as an essential component of lifelong learning, in alliance with nine Ukrainian cities that joined the UNESCO global network of learning cities. This was key to advance and accelerate local authorities and citizens engagement in the implementation of local-level responses to adult learning urgent demands, and to reach out to national policy makers in charge of approving a new law on adult education. The advocacy campaign for adult education as a tool for professional retraining and social re-integration in Ukraine impacted on priorities identified in light of post-war recovery and EU integration.

The advocacy campaign in the Western Balkan region focussed on updating legislation and governance structures on adult learning as relevant steps towards the EU accession, as evidenced by the European Commission, Committee of the Regions and Economic and Social Committee at the international conference in Brussels. In addition, the ETF collected and shared evidence about the effective benefits of actor cooperation on youth policy implementation, and with that it operationalised participatory governance in context of the Youth Guarantee. This had led Albania to build in its Youth Guarantee governance participatory mechanisms that had not been planned in the initial design. Hence, engagement of social partners and civil society became a reality.

Furthermore, the ETF facilitated the engagement and mobilisation of social partner representatives and, in doing so, mainstreamed the green just transition on the social dialogue agenda. Key highlights include the publication *Role of CSOs in HCD and lifelong learning*, and the quality assurance of formative assessment and on diagnostic tools to assess quality assurance across VET systems.

Also, the ETF intensified partnerships and cooperation with internal and external partners on Youth Guarantee, adult learning, resilience, civil society organisations (CSOs) and tripartite exchanges. These are further detailed below:

- Tripartite exchange seminar with Eurofound, Cedefop and EESC.
- Youth Guarantee implementation in Albania with EUD, UNDP, UNICEF, Estonia and Slovenia.
- On adult education and learning with EARALL, EAEA, LLP, DVV international and UNESCO UIL.
- With regional and local authorities in Ukraine on adult learning boosting economic recovery.
- With Armenian stakeholders on quality assurance of formative assessment and self-assessment of quality assurance in VET via piloting a diagnostic tool.
- With Serbian stakeholders on quality assurance of career guidance and councillors' accreditation, and piloting of the quality assurance diagnostic tool.
- With national and international experts, academics, EU and partner country authorities, OECD, RAN-Helvetas, on GLAD knowledge and practice sharing webinars.

The approach employed draws from the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), the [European Skills Agenda](#), the [VET Recommendation](#), the [European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-30\)](#), the [European Quality](#)

[Assurance Reference Framework for VET](#), the [Sectoral Blueprint for Cooperation on Skills](#), the [European Alliance for Apprenticeships](#), the [Youth Guarantee](#), the [UNESCO Marrakech Framework for Action](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#).

It aligns with the [European Green Deal](#) and its accompanying [Just Transition Mechanism](#) and [Fit for 55': delivering the EU's 2030 Climate Target on the way to climate neutrality](#), as well as [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#) and related EU recommendations on skills development. It does so by encouraging cross-fertilisation between lifelong VET and both the greening and digitalisation of the economy, and with industrial strategies that pursue sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

Finally, it contributes to the [SDG 4](#) on quality education, to [SDG 8](#) on decent work and economic growth, to [SDG 10](#) on reduced inequalities, to [SDG 16](#) on peace, justice and strong institutions, and to [SDG 17](#) on partnerships for the goals.

DARYA – Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia

In 2024, the ETF further facilitated regional cooperation on skills and qualifications in Central Asia by using and adapting ETF, EC and other relevant tools and methods to address skills development needs in the region. A regional study on new forms of work was developed using ETF methodology and covering Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Policy recommendations on how best to support platform workers was widely disseminated. In addition, establishment and employer surveys were piloted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while tracer studies were piloted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

A multilingual glossary of national qualifications systems and a mapping of national qualifications were also developed in the region in 2024. These were complemented with a feasibility study on regional cooperation in the sphere of qualifications by exploring various scenarios for collaboration in the region.

A highlight in 2024 was the introduction of the SCAFFOLD card deck tool for educator in the five national languages and Russian in all five Central Asian countries. In all five countries teams of trainers were trained, and support was provided for the introduction of the tool in general education, VET and adult education and learning (the latter for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). In addition, all countries nominated trainers from their main CPD providers to be able to introduce SCAFFOLD as part of CPD provision as of 2025.

In cooperation with Ministries of Education in the five countries, DARYA provided support to highly visible national one-day training events for educators in all five countries. These reached about 750 educators, while training sessions led by national trainers with the support of national or sub-national education authorities reached several thousand further educators.

DARYA also supported the piloting of SCAFFOLD in a team-based approach in a small number of general education and VET providers in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This team-based piloting will continue until June 2025 and will, among other things, result in the development of practical recommendations that can be used by providers who wish to use the approach in the future.

The use of SCAFFOLD in the region involves nearly all key education authorities (Ministries of Education, national CPD providers for general education and VET, Methodological Centres or

Education Academies) in the five countries. These are playing a pro-active role so that within less than a year information on the tool has spread throughout the education system, while several national partners have initiated their own developments (such as development of a SCAFFOLD module for VET related CPD in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, development of methodological guidance in Turkmenistan).

Furthermore, in several countries, DARYA was pro-actively approached by pedagogical colleges and universities or Ministries of Education with the proposal to work on SCAFFOLD in the sphere of pre-service training of educators (work to start in 2025).

It is also important to highlight the participatory nature of the project that in 2024 engaged cross-institutional and ministerial stakeholders, including via the yearly High-Level Group of Vice Ministers of Employment and Education (organised in Tashkent in December 2024), as well as employers in the region and EU Member States.

Cooperation with UNICEF continued in 2024, with a youth consultation on green competences, which was accessible to youth from all five countries. Over 40,000 young people from the region took part in the short survey, including several VET students. Regular exchanges with EBRD and ADB, as important development partners in the region also continued.

In this context, DARYA contributes to the [European Skills Agenda](#) Actions 2 and 6, in line with the [European Green Deal](#) and its accompanying [Just Transition Mechanism](#), as well as [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#) and the associated [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-27](#). The focus on skills needs and matching, inclusion and social fairness are in line with the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and the [European Consensus on Development](#).

The youth dimension is in line with the [Youth Action Plan \(YAP\) in EU external action 2022 – 2027](#), the [Reinforced Youth Guarantee](#) and the [Youth Employment Support: a Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation](#). In relation to qualifications, DARYA builds on the [VET Recommendation](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#) in close cooperation with the EQF advisory group and the European Commission, and thus in line with the [EQF Recommendation](#) and the [Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning](#).

Regarding flexible qualifications systems and upskilling pathways, beyond the policies above mentioned, DARYA is also in line with the [Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#), the [Porto Declaration](#), the [Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025](#), the [Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-30\)](#), the [Joint Employment Report](#), the [Council Resolution on a new European Agenda for Adult Learning 2021-30](#), and [ALMA](#).

Moreover, DARYA promotes the [Council recommendation on vocational education and training \(VET\) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#) and the [Marrakech Ministerial Declaration](#). It also promotes the further development of the [European education Area to support future-oriented education and training systems](#), and the Council conclusions on [European teachers and trainers for the future](#). Regionally, it fosters the [new EU Strategy for Central Asia](#) and the [EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership](#).

Finally, Darya also contributes to [Sustainable Development \(SDG\) Goal 4](#) on quality education, [SDG 5](#) on gender equality, and to [SGD 8](#) on decent work and economic growth.

Responding to the new EU policy and geographical priorities

In 2024 the ETF has been actively engaged in supporting TVET reform in Egypt, working alongside key development partners such as the EU Delegation (EUD), GIZ, EBRD, AFD and (throughout also including) USAID to ensure that expertise is shared effectively across partners. Through policy dialogue, technical support, and coordination efforts, ETF has contributed expertise and insights to ongoing initiatives aimed at improving vocational education and skills development in Egypt.

In this context, the ETF has contributed to key TVET and labour market reforms in Egypt. By providing technical support, policy advice, and facilitating dialogue, ETF has helped strengthen initiatives that aim to enhance education quality, improve labour market structures, and foster private sector engagement. These efforts continue to support Egypt's broader education and employment strategies, ensuring that skills development aligns with the country's economic and social needs.

As part of its collaboration with the EUD in Egypt, ETF has played a role in coordinating multilateral dialogue for the EU4YES initiative, ensuring alignment with actions led by development agencies of Germany GIZ (TCTI II) and Italy AICS (I). These initiatives collectively contribute to the broader TVET reform efforts led by the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE). ETF has provided intelligence and expertise on vocational education systems, which supported the formulation of the €45 million contribution agreement for the initiative. ETF is now involved in content monitoring of the program to ensure its alignment with reform objectives.

Within the framework of EU4YES, ETF has helped to prepare engagement of technical assistance that will support ETQAAN (Egypt's TVET quality assurance body) and NAQAAE (the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education). These institutions play a key role in implementing the TVET 2.0 reforms. By strengthening quality assurance mechanisms and enhancing qualifications transparency, this work contributes to greater labour mobility and supports the development of a Lifelong Learning (LLL) system in Egypt.

ETF has also contributed to efforts to modernize Egypt's job classification system by working with the Ministry of Labour (MOL). Through advisory support and workshops, ETF has enabled technical assistance to assist MOL in developing a Vocational Training Strategy and reforming the Egyptian Job Classification System, taking inspiration from the European ESCO model. While still in progress, this work is expected to enhance transparency in job classifications, improving alignment between skills supply and labour market demands.

ETF is also supporting the establishment of a Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Renewable Energy, as part of a capacity-building initiative. SSCs play an important role in formalizing private sector involvement in skills development. Through this initiative, representatives from the renewable energy industry, training providers, and policymakers are engaging in discussions on workforce needs and skills development, helping to better align training programs with industry requirements.

In Rwanda, in 2024 the ETF completed the analysis of skills supply and demand in the agricultural sector. This was contextualised in line with Rwanda's vision 2050, which envisages an economic and social transformation of society through the guidance of the state and private sector-led growth. In addition, it took into consideration the drivers of change of Rwanda's agricultural sector, as well as human capital development, demographic and socioeconomic trends and developments.

Results point to a shrinking primary agricultural sector despite continuing dominance of agriculture in employment, coupled with self-selected exit from agriculture by more educated people. This calls for a mix of at least three policy areas: labour market policies, sector economic policies, and education and training policies. In parallel, the ETF worked closely with the Government of Rwanda to lay the foundations for the development of TVET Centres of Excellence.

The ETF also supported the Government of Rwanda in two additional areas: (i) organising a Labour Market Assessment Training for the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) as a direct follow-up to the above-mentioned agricultural sector analysis; and (ii) developing a concept for TVET Centres of Excellence, which included different areas or dimensions for vocational excellence, such as teaching and learning, applied research and innovation, production units, and assessment of learners, including associated quality standards and performance indicators.

In this context, the TVET Centres in Rwanda will focus on strengthening existing education and training programmes and on integrating new education and training programmes into the districts' development plans. They will serve as role models for the rest of the Technical Secondary Schools (TSSs) in the district. The construction of several new TVET Centres of Excellence and the expansion of the capacity of another 20 to 25 centres are also expected to contribute to the ambitious target of 60% TVET students in secondary education (Rwanda Vision 2050). Ultimately, their aim is to provide high-quality TVET skills and to contribute to regional development planning and growth.

In relation to the EU programme 'Supporting Education Reforms and Skills (SER) in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region', in 2024 there were advancements in terms of diagnostic assessments by applying the Rapid Education Diagnosis (RED) methodology, capacity development activities, and peer learning and training. These achievements took place mostly in Moldova and Armenia, while Georgia's assessment was put on hold due to political reasons. The assessments involved data collection and analysis, and extensive stakeholder consultations, and the results have been well-received and have generated significant interest in the engaged countries.

In addition, peer learning events were organised to facilitate exchange among countries on topics such as the use of evidence in education policy planning and design, teacher preparation, remuneration, and career development. A successful flagship event took place in Finland and Estonia in September, where all EaP countries participated. However, the programme also faced challenges in engaging, for example, Azerbaijan due to political issues and Ukraine due to the ongoing war.

Adjustments were made on Ukraine to focus programme activities on areas highlighted in Ukraine's EU membership application:

- Modernisation of the vocational education legislation: this involved providing feedback on the draft law in 2024 and to organise in 2025 webinars to discuss specific aspects of the law with Ukrainian education authorities and MPs together with experts from EU Member States' education ministries.
- Education statistics: the project started supporting Ukraine in reviewing plans to improve data collection and sharing in education aligned with EU and international standards in 2024 and will help design a mid-term education statistics development strategy in 2025.
- Optimisation of school networks: this topic has been prioritised by all countries in 2024 and will bring them together to a peer learning workshop in Latvia and Estonia in May 2025 with a view discussing further analysis and study on optimisation of school networks to be launched in Ukraine.

The project has also made progress in identifying capacity development activities, particularly in Armenia and Moldova, based on the outcomes of diagnostic assessments. Furthermore, Armenia requested support to carry out a functional review of the education management system to optimise the use of capacities and capabilities of institutions involved in implementing and advancing education reforms.

Finally, in 2024 the project has engaged with key stakeholders, including ministers and deputy ministers, in detailed discussions on the outcomes of the assessments and the formulation of action-oriented recommendations. As such, the project aims to continue capacity development activities, possibly expand analytical work also to other EaP countries, with discussions on lessons learned and possible avenues for a Phase II funding by the European Commission.

In this context, the ETF has been encouraged by the Commission to use its flexibility to respond to new EU priorities including, but not limited to, those related to the [European Skills Agenda](#), the [European Green Deal](#), the [Youth Guarantee](#), the [Digital Education Action Plan](#) and [A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#), the [Erasmus+ programme](#), the [European Dialogue on Skills and Migration](#), the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), the [Global Approach to Migration and Mobility](#), the [Comprehensive Strategy for Africa](#), the [Africa-EU partnership](#), the new [Africa Communication](#), the [Communication on the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#), and the [African Continental Qualifications Framework](#).

In particular, the trainings contribute to DG INTPA's priority to use 10% of development budget eye marked for education of skills development for decent jobs. Overall, the activity area can potentially contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals, including [SDG 4](#) on quality education, to [SDG 5](#) on gender equality, to [SDG 8](#) on decent work and economic growth, to [SDG 9](#) on industry, innovation and infrastructure, to [SDG 10](#) on reduced inequalities, to [SDG 12](#) on responsible consumption and production, to [SDG 16](#) on peace, justice and strong institutions, and to [SDG 17](#) on partnerships for the goals.