

ETF FORUM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING - PEER VISIT TO MONTENEGRO

BUDVA, MONTENEGRO, MAY 30-31, 2022



Quality Assurance Forum

SUMMARY

The meeting of the ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ETF QA Forum) in Budva, Montenegro, May 30 – 31, 2022 focussed on quality assurance measure related to the external evaluation of VET schools.

The ETF QA Forum, established in 2017, is a multi-national collaborative scientific network of national-level institutions with a VET quality assurance mandate in ETF partner countries in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, the South-Eastern Europe regions and Turkey and the Eastern partnership. ETF Forum members collaborate to improve quality assurance in VET by pooling knowledge and know-how, monitoring, and reporting on national developments in quality assurance, engaging in joint projects, including Peer Visits, and developing and disseminating good examples of policy and practice.

The peer visit was organised as a hybrid event. The face-to-face meeting in Budva was preceded by an online meeting held on May 19th. The meeting was hosted by the Centre for vocational education and training and the Bureau of educational services of Montenegro.

The ETF Forum's Peer Visit methodology includes peer assessment of, and feedback on, the effectiveness of quality assurance related to a selected VET policy area. The meeting in Montenegro included the participation of twenty representatives of the main national level stakeholders' institutions.

The Montenegrin host institutions' objectives were to receive feedback on the strengths and shortcomings of the quality assurance measure related to the external evaluation of VET schools, on the implementation plans of the newly designed methodology and the

visibility of the EQAVET quality indicators within this methodology.

In the evaluation session, all NCPs have expressed strong positive impressions and firm willingness to continue the application of peer visit methodology for peer exchange. NCPs participants suggested some improvements of the peer visit process, included: longer duration to allow for a better understanding of the system, a preliminary preparatory meeting with visiting peers and the hosting NCP to make sure that there are no unclarities, bringing the perspective of the end users of the quality assurance measures that are being assessed, organisation of an online meeting to discuss the follow-up phase the host country.

The host institutions were reassured that they were 'on the right track'. Peer feedback concluded that the Montenegrin approach to the external evaluation of schools had great strengths, including: the existence of a legal basis, the complementarity between internal and external evaluation, the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, the use of EQAVET indicators, the clear description of the phases of the external evaluation process and the publication of the evaluation report.

Ideas for reflection/improvement included considerations related to a more consistent training of evaluators, a reconsideration of the administrative burden on reporting, a diversification of pools of experts by including for instance a representative of the labour market in the expert panels, the development of a Code of Ethics of the supervisor acting in the capacity of an external evaluator, a more comprehensive and consistent appeals procedure, strengthening the outcome based evaluation approach, a clear separation of evaluation and developmental activities, and digitalisation of QA process.



INTRODUCTION

This report provides both an overview of the 3-day event and the preparations that ensured its success. ETF Forum members actively engaged in preparatory activities in the 2-month period leading up to the event. The event itself was an intensive learning opportunity for all. This report simply provides a ‘taste’ of the experience. The report follows three phases of the four-phases approach of the ETF Forum’s Peer Visit methodology: Preparation, Implementation, Reflection and Feedback; the fourth phase ‘Follow up on the Feedback’ will be the subject of a subsequent report.



BACKGROUND

A Peer Visit is a form of external feedback from visiting peers that aims to support the host country in its quality assurance development efforts. Peer Visits serve as catalysts for:

- National-level self-assessment of quality assurance in VET approaches and measures.
- Engagement of national stakeholders in an international review of VET quality assurance measures.
- Receiving of external, critical but supportive observation and feedback on quality assurance measures.
- Gathering evidence for the effective reform of VET quality assurance.

The ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in VET’s Peer Visit Guidance and Training Manual - Working Paper was developed by ARQA-VET (Österreichische Referenzstelle für Qualität in der Berufsbildung) in collaboration with the ETF quality assurance team. The Manual provides guidance and a training concept for the implementation of Peer Visits as well as a ‘toolbox’ of instruments.



The ETF Forum member institution for Montenegro, the Centre for vocational education and training represented by the National Contact Person Vladislav Koprivica, Head of Quality Assurance department at the Centre for Vocational Education and Training

and his alternate Ivan Marković Senior Advisor for Quality Assurance in VET at the Centre planned and hosted the Peer Visit, in co-operation with the Bureau for educational services and the Ministry of Education.



Photo: Vladislav Koprivica, Center for Vocational Education and Training Montenegro; National contact person for Montenegro in ETF QA Forum

THE PEER VISIT – PHASE ONE, PREPARATION

The preparation of the peer visit started in January 2020 with a view to organise it in March of the same year. However, due to the COVID pandemic, it has been cancelled and planned for 2022. Vladislav Koprivica and Ivan Marković followed the Peer Visit guidance.

Firstly, they identified the policy area as the external evaluation of schools.

Policy area at the centre of the peer visit: external evaluation of VET schools
<p>Background: The education system of Montenegro consists of pre-school, primary, general secondary, vocational secondary, upper secondary and higher education. Adult education is part of the education system and is implemented at all levels of education. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports is in charge of the overall education policy. Two bodies support the ministry of education: The VET Centre oversees the development, advisory support and research in VET of youth and adults and the Bureau for Educational Services which is the leading institution for monitoring, improvement, and evaluation of educational reform processes in general pre-university education. Among other responsibilities, it participates in development, monitoring and evaluation of new curricula; organizes training for teachers, monitors and assesses school practice. Another body plays an important role in the education system. It is the Examinations Centre which carries out the external assessment of knowledge, skills and competences upon completion of certain levels of education. 47 public secondary schools and 3 resource centres offer vocational education and training.</p>
<p>Context for the Peer Visit: quality assurance and improvement process are one of the objectives of the Montenegro education system reform. The General Law on Education Development and</p>



improvement of QA in VET refer to the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework and aims at introducing EQAVET indicators in the national QA system. Schools apply quality assurance measures through external and internal evaluation process. Assessment of quality in education is defined across 3 categories (operational context for schools, processes, achieved outcomes) and 5 quality areas (teaching & learning; institution management; institutional ethos; student achievements; support to students). Recently, the VET centre and the Bureau for Educational Services adopted a joint methodology for external evaluation. The external evaluation which takes place at least once in 4 years is conducted by a joint team of evaluators leading to a single evaluation instead of 2 and allowed to avoid areas of evaluation and indicators.

As a result of the evaluation, a report is drafted with contains a set of recommendations translated into a 4-year quality improvement plan.

Rationale for the Peer Visit: to receive feedback from the ETF Quality Assurance Forum members on the methodology for external evaluation of VET schools.

The expected outcomes of the peer visit are the following: 1) peers' feedback on the strengths and shortcomings of the quality assurance measures presented during the peer visit; 2) mutual learning on quality assurance measures related to the methodology for external evaluation of VET schools and discuss the advantages/disadvantages of different measures; 3) promotion of ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in VET in Montenegro and involvement of national stakeholders in international debate on QA.

A second step in the preparation of the peer visit consist for the host institution to prepare an information note for the visiting peers on the policy area, giving the reasons for its selection as the focus of the peer visit.

Following that, the host institution prepares a detailed National Context Report, in accordance with the Manual guidance, and provided relevant reference materials.

Structure of a Peer Visit National Context Report	
Section A	General information on VET and quality assurance in the host Forum member country.
Section B	Focus of the Peer Visit.
Section C	Self-assessment of selected quality assurance measure(s), including a SWOT analysis and a stakeholder analysis for each quality assurance measure selected.
Section D	Special assessment questions for peers according to the quality assurance measure.
Section E	First ideas/considerations for improvement after the Peer Visit (Follow-up).
Section F	Annexes (references, relevant documents).

Finally, the host prepares the agenda.

Visiting peers

Peers from Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey have taken part in the peer visit.

The main preparatory task for the visiting peers was to read the National Context Report, seek clarifications and further information, and consider the special assessment questions presented by the host institution for review and feedback.



QA measure
<p>Assessment question n°1: Design</p> <p>a. Please give feedback on the strengths and shortcomings of the quality assurance measure related to the external evaluation, with a specific focus here on three issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - its complementarity and consistency with the internal evaluation, - the extent to which this new methodology builds on lessons learnt from the previous one. - the engagement of stakeholders in particular staff of schools and teachers. <p>b. Please provide related examples of practice from the peer group.</p>
<p>Assessment question n°2: plans for the implementation and evaluation phases</p> <p>a. Please give feedback on the strengths and shortcomings of the quality assurance measures related to the plans for the implementation and evaluation phases of the external evaluation of schools; please include focus on performance indicators.</p> <p>b. Please provide related examples of practice from the peer group.</p>
<p>Assessment question n°3: use of EQAVET indicators</p> <p>Are EQAVET quality indicators visible in QA Methodology implemented in Montenegro? Are all EQAVET indicators properly applied within the Methodology?</p>

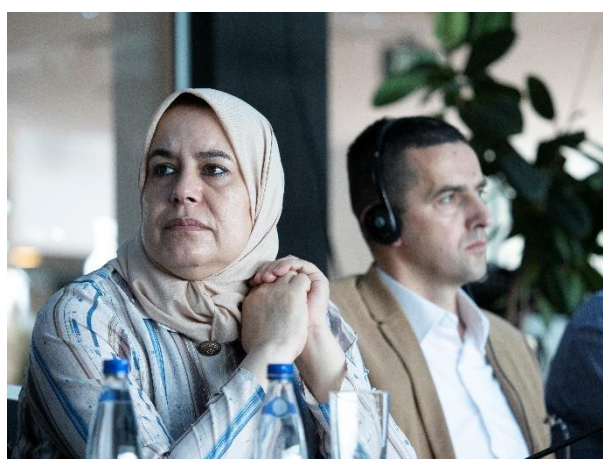


Photo: Tatijana Glisic Milutinović, Qualifications Agency of Republic of Serbia, National contact person for Serbia in ETF QA Forum, Rkia El Mahmoudi, VET department, Ministry of economic inclusion, SMEs, employment and competences of Morocco, National contact person for Morocco in ETF QA Forum

Additionally, visiting peers conducted research on the state of play of the external evaluation of schools in their own countries and prepared short notes. The notes addressed the following questions: are VET schools subject to external evaluation? which institution(s) oversee external evaluation? Does it complement an internal evaluation? What are the challenges facing the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers?

Peers from Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Morocco and Serbia have provided their self-assessment.



The notes prepared by the peers were transmitted to the host country that selected 2 of them to get much more in-depth information.

Synthesis of visiting peers' notes on quality assurance measures in their countries

The external evaluation of vocational training institutions has specific characteristics in each of the 11 visiting peer countries. The heterogeneity derives from the national approach to external and internal quality assurance, legal status of vocational training providers and also from belonging to public or private sphere. Some of their features are summarised below.

Are VET schools subject to external evaluation?

In most of the countries, the VET schools must comply with the requirements of external evaluation. In Israel, there is no external evaluation on schools - schools are assessed based on pedagogical evaluation of students by the teachers. In some countries it is stated by the law on education, while in others it developed on a pilot basis as a result of international project (in case of Albania) . The legal basis covers standards, criteria and accreditation procedures of VET providers. In all the 8 countries vocational training providers need to apply self-assessment as an internal quality assurance measure and/or to get access to accreditation as education supplier.

Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?

Across the visiting countries, the Ministry of Education has the main role to play in setting the rules for external evaluation. In most of the countries, either the Ministry itself/ its competent Departments (Morocco) or a specialised agency under the Ministry bears responsibility for the implementation of quality assurance measures (National Qualifications Agency in Kosovo, National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in Georgia, National Agency for VET and Qualifications and Ministry of Finance and Economy in Albania, National centre for professional education quality assurance of Armenia, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research of Moldova, Institute for the Evaluation of the Quality of Education and Upbringing of Serbia) with engagement of independent certified TVET QA or sector experts or even by professional associations. Finally, the timeframe and funding of external evaluation depends highly on the country context.

Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation?

As reported by the countries, external evaluation is based on internal self-assessment – usually done on a yearly basis through submission of a self-assessment report by the VET provider. Normally, VET providers prepare their annual development plans, building on the findings of self-assessment reports. It is interesting to note how in some countries, the internal self-evaluation is actually done in the context of 360-degree evaluation including school professional bodies, parents' councils, student parliament, students, teachers, educators, pedagogical associates, secretary, director and governing body of the VET provider. To prepare the self-evaluation report, the self-evaluation team collects, analyses, and processes the pedagogical documentation, databases on education and conducts research, results of monitoring school classes.

Challenges in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers

Across the countries, the existing system and practice of external evaluation faces a variety of challenges. Some peers report the necessity to keep on building the culture of quality and quality improvement in VET providers – one of the main objectives of self- and external evaluations. In this regard, there is a need for a systematic support to schools to carry out internal and external evaluation, or even to consider introduction of a 360-degree self-assessment, to support schools' analytical capacity, as well as to implement post-evaluation improvement actions. Some countries report weak system of feedback and post-accreditation monitoring. As reported by peers, in some countries, schools are still in the process towards larger autonomy. Other peers report the need to support the capacity of accreditation and evaluation actors. They also aim to have more private sector involvement in internal and external quality assurance. The process of self-assessment is considered hindered by difficulty to collect reliable data as data sources may vary.



Volatile legal framework or missing regulation on VET providers evaluation do not help to align the school internal evaluation with the external assessment. Among the reported challenges is also the absence of a uniform national evaluation system making it possible to have the aggregates of indicators at local, regional and national level. Concerning the accreditation process, there are still few applicants in some countries as schools' staff and students seem to be less interested in going through the quality assurance process. And peer review experts are missing too. To mitigate this, teachers could be trained to become evaluators as suggested by few peers. As a next step, to stay in pace with the digital progress, a standardised online system for self-assessment by schools and accreditation procedure by entitled actors would facilitate the alignment to this specific quality assurance measure. Finally, peers propose to have a national platform for discussion on quality assurance and reinforce evidence-based decision making.

THE PEER VISIT – PHASE TWO, IMPLEMENTATION

The Peer Visit commenced with an online session dedicated to a presentation of the ETF peer visit methodology and approach, a presentation of the VET system in Montenegro, the QA system, and the QA measure subject of the peer visit.

Introduction into the context

Vocational Education and Training system in Montenegro

Mounir Baati, senior human capital development expert and coordinator of the ETF QA Forum reminded the participants that a peer visit is a form of external feedback provided by visiting peers that aims to support the host country in its quality assurance development efforts. In contrast to study visits, peer visits put a strong emphasis on the provision of professional feedback given by a group of peers within a structured procedure. The intention is that the outcomes of peer feedback and peer counselling are helpful for the host forum member institution and can potentially inform plans for the improvement of the selected quality assurance measure.

Marko Vukašinović Head of Directorate for EU Funds at the Ministry of Education provided an overview of the general and vocational education system in Montenegro. The main priorities of the system lie on strengthening the over quality of VET by further developing WBL in all its forms, enhancing the flexibility of the qualifications system, bringing VET provision closer to the labour market and digitalizing it. Involving partners in the governance of VET and better matching skills and qualifications with the needs remain the main challenges of the system.



Photo: Ivana Vučinić, Centre for Vocational Education and Training of Montenegro
Marko Vukašinović, Ministry of Education of Montenegro



Ivana Vučinić, Senior Adviser for International Cooperation in the Centre for Vocational Education and Training of Montenegro presented the activities and the roles of the centre which is the host institution of the peer visit. The centre has a developmental, advisory, research and expert role in charge of ensuring the quality of vocational and adult education in Montenegro. Amongst others, the center monitors, analyses the development of the VET system, assesses the quality of implementation of training programmes, develops occupational, qualification and assessment standards and curricula. It oversees professional development of teachers and principals of schools.

Introduction into the context

Quality assurance in Vocational education and training in Montenegro

Vladislav Koprivica, Head of Department for Quality Assurance, Centre for Vocational Education and Training of Montenegro and National Contact Person for Montenegro in the ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in VET presented the Quality assurance system in Montenegro with a focus on external evaluation of schools.

Quality assurance and improvement in VET is a legal obligation of institutions and schools and it is, among others, exercised via the processes of external and internal evaluation. Assessment of quality of education activity is carried out for the following key areas (quality areas):

1. **TEACHING AND LEARNING:** planning and preparation of classes and other forms of educational work, teaching, student activity, learning, assessment, monitoring, reporting.
2. **INSTITUTION MANAGEMENT:** planning and implementation, quality assurance.
3. **ETHOS OF THE INSTITUTION:** working conditions, sense of belonging to the institution and the environment, equality, partnership.
4. **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS:** learning success (at the level of department, grade, institution), quality of knowledge, student achievement in qualifying and entrance exams and competitions, student motivation.
5. **SUPPORT TO STUDENTS:** quality of care for students, learning support, social and personal development, professional orientation.

Internal evaluation is conducted on regular basis, a report is produced every second year. To carry out the evaluation, a school must set up a team composed of the school management, representatives from the professional departments, and a selected number of teachers to plan and coordinate the process and draft the evaluation report. The report is submitted to the VET Centre and the Bureau for Educational Services, and it is recommended to be uploaded on the website of the school.

Evaluation is the basis for developing a school improvement plan.

While only 50 % VET schools used to carry out an internal evaluation in the past using the Manual for VET schools' development, more than 90% are doing it today thanks to several counselling sessions organised by the VET Centre.

External evaluation of VET providers is mandatory and carried out at least once in four years. The VET Centre appoints a team of evaluators composed of advisors from QA Department of VET Centre and Bureau for Educational Services and external associates who are professionals in respective occupational fields. The team carries out the external evaluation and drafts a follow-up evaluation report accompanied with recommendations. The report serves as a basis for the VET school to develop a four-year quality improvement plan.

Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, Education Inspectorate, Bureau for Educational Services, VET Centre, companies, parents, students are involved in the external evaluation process.



Students and parents as end-users participate through different forms (conversations, surveys, etc). The companies in which practical training is implemented are visited by external evaluators during the process.



Photo: Biljana Joksimović, Director of the Bureau for Educational Services of Montenegro, Duško Rajković, Director of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training of Montenegro

The evaluation reports are addressed to the Educational Inspectorate. In accordance with the new joint methodology, the VET Centre and the Bureau appoint one evaluation team and prepare joint report to be published and made easily accessible. The report is structured around the following sections:

- description and data on the institution.
- abstract and brief analysis of the previous findings on the quality and plan for the quality improvement.
- area of quality – quality indicators – evaluation, rationale, and recommendations.
- quality of implementation of curricula.
- summary report: areas and indicators of quality of teaching and overall assessment of the quality of school.
- legal remedy.

The report has to be produced within 5 working days from the completion of the visit to the institution and submitted to the school and the Ministry of Education within 15 working days from the day of the completion of the visit. The report is published on the website of the VET Centre.

Focus of the peer visit – Methodology for external evaluation of vocational education and training providers

Following this presentation of the external evaluation system of VET schools, Ivan Marković, Senior QA specialist at the VET Centre and the Alternate national contact person in the ETF QA Forum, presented the desired outcomes of the peer visit.

Ivan Marković invited the peers to provide feedback on the strengths and shortcomings of the quality assurance measure related to the external evaluation with a focus on its complementarity and consistency with the internal evaluation, the extent to which the new methodology builds on lessons learnt from the previous one, the engagement of stakeholders in particular staff of schools and teachers in its design, and the integration on EQAVET indicators.



Ivan shared a nationally prepared SWOT analyses of the external evaluation system.

Weaknesses (internal)	Strengths (internal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low number of employees within Quality Assurance Department • Insufficient number of trained evaluators for VET curricula • Less visibility of the specificities and indicators characteristic for VET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term experience of the VET Centre in the area of quality assurance and improvement in VET • Evaluation process already exists and is carried out according to the defined Methodology and the existing Rulebook • Good knowledge of the manner of work of all VET primarily due to small number of VET schools in education system • Selection of evaluators and creation of evaluation team for identifying quality of VET schools • Evaluation is a process defined by law • Compatibility with internal evaluation • School is able to develop AP based on external evaluation report obtained
Threats (external)	Opportunities (external)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manner of organization and implementation of external evaluation processes according to joint methodology may be a challenge for all participants at the beginning • A large number of different VET curricula • Diversity of profiles of teachers of vocational-theoretical subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of engaging external human capacities from schools during evaluation process • Application of joint quality assurance methodology will improve the process of external evaluation in schools • Alignment of standards and indicators of the joint methodology • The introduction of joint methodology will be significant release of burden for schools in their work process • Existence of the procedures for the preparation and implementation of evaluation in schools and creation of reports • Improvement of self-evaluation processes

Table: SWOT analysis of the Methodology for External Evaluation in Montenegro with Focus on VET Schools

Zooming in - methodology for external evaluation of vocational education and training providers in Montenegro - visit by peers

The onsite visit was organised on 30-31 May in Budva. In the opening of the visit, the participants were addressed by Miomir Vojinović, Minister of Education of Montenegro, Duško Rajković, Director of Centre for Vocational Education of Montenegro, Biljana Joksimović, Director of the Bureau for Educational Services of Montenegro and Xavier Matheu de Cortada, ETF Director ad interim.





Photo: Miomir Vojinović, Minister of Education of Montenegro
Duško Rajković, Director of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training of Montenegro

Following this opening session, 2 panels discussion were organised. The first one facilitated by Mounir Baati gathered a group of schools' principals. The panellists were:

- Mr. Miomir Đurišić, Director of the Tourism and Hospitality VET School "Sergije Stanić" Podgorica;
- Ms. Sonja Kekovic Dabetic, Director of the Mechanical Engineering VET School "Ivan Uskoković" Podgorica ;
- Ms. Dijana Vujacic, Director of the Economics VET School "Mirko Vešović" Podgorica (JU Srednja ekonomska škola "Mirko Vešović")



Photo: Miomir Đurišić, Tourism and Hospitality VET School "Sergije Stanić" Podgorica,
Sonja Kekovic Dabetic, Mechanical Engineering VET School "Ivan Uskoković" Podgorica,
Dijana Vujacic, Economics VET School "Mirko Vešović" Podgorica

The second panel discussion was facilitated by Nadezda Solodjankina, human capital development expert gathered a group of external evaluators. The panellists were:

- Mr. Milija Nenezić, external associate – evaluator, Economics and Hospitality VET School Nikšić
- Mr. Brano Knezevic, external associate – evaluator, VET School Bar,
- Mr. Bojan Kraljević, external associate – evaluator, Medical VET School Podgorica,





Photo: Milija Nenezić, Economics and Hospitality VET School Nikšić,
Brano Knezevic, VET School Bar,
Bojan Kraljević, Medical VET School Podgorica
Nadezda Solodjankina, ETF

The peers got clarifications on the following issues:

Evaluators: how are they prepared to become evaluators, are they certified, how are they appointed, is their work regulated, were they involved in the design of the new methodology, are they involved in the follow up phase, how are they coordinated, what data do they have access to, is there a code of conduct/ethics?

Evaluation process: what tools are being used to evaluate schools, how consistency is being ensured across schools and across evaluators, are there sufficient time to carry out the evaluation and produce the report, how do the evaluators come to an agreement about the evaluation, is there an appealing process, are all fields easily assessable (some seem to be quite subjective, i.e., "Directors provide enjoyable learning environment"), how practical work in companies is being evaluated, how does the external evaluation complement the self-assessment?

Evaluation report: do schools have enough autonomy and capacity to implement recommendations from the external evaluation, what are the components and the structure of the evaluation report?

Evaluation methodology: is there feedback from schools on the external evaluation process, how the overall quality of the new methodology of external evaluation is going to be monitored, how do the bureau of educational services and the VET centre cooperate or coordinate in carrying out evaluation?



THE PEER VISIT – PHASE THREE, FEEDBACK

Reflection and preparing the Joint Peer Feedback

Peers were grouped into 2 subgroups to prepare their feedback. The peers identified strengths and areas for improvement in a balanced way and based on facts and evidence and discussed how best to give reflective, constructive and motivating feedback to the host institution.



Photo, right: Kakhber Eradze, National Center for Quality Enhancement of Georgia; National contact person for Georgia in ETF QA Forum

Following the peer visit methodology, peers' feedback discussions and final feedback delivery focused on 2 issues:

- Strengths of the QA measure
- Shortcomings and ideas for improvement of the QA measure

Key points from peers' feedback were the following.

Strengths of Montenegrin QA measures related to external evaluation of VET providers:

- The existence of external evaluation system with legal basis, designed in complementarity with self-evaluation and a well described methodology.
- Engagement of wide range of stakeholders.
- Public access to external evaluation reports.
- Visibility of EQAVET indicators in the external evaluation methodology.
- Availability of external evaluation team for support to VET school in the post-evaluation follow-up phase.





Photo, from left to right: Fayçal Ben Brahim, Ministry of Vocational Training & Employment of Tunisia, National contact person for Tunisia in ETF QA Forum, Kadir Eren Gülsoy, Ministry of National Education of Turkey, National contact person for Turkey in ETF QA Forum, Teuta Braço, National Agency for VET and Qualifications of Albania, National contact person for Albania in ETF QA Forum, Stela Guvir, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research of Moldova, National contact person for Moldova in ETF QA Forum

Ideas for improvement related to external evaluation of VET providers:

- Diversification of pool of experts involved in external evaluation, to include professionals covering wider variety of fields.
- More consistent training and certification of evaluators.
- Strengthening outcome-based evaluation approach, so to cover not only input indicators.
- Separation of processes related to external evaluation and improvement/development plans to increase ownership of VET institutions.
- Digitalisation of QA processes.
- Support and guidance to VET providers on indicators used in the external evaluation.
- Revision of terminology used as regards the definition of the external evaluation process – “control” versus “support to improvement”.



Photos from left to right: Kaltrina Mulliqi, National Qualification Authority of Kosovo, Alternate National contact person for Kosovo in ETF QA Forum, Shireen H.I. Abu Ajeen, Ministry of Education of Palestine, National contact person for Palestine in ETF QA Forum, Avni Gashi, Kosovo Accreditation Agency, National contact person for Kosovo in ETF QA Forum



THE ETF FORUM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

At the request of the host country 2 case studies on external evaluation were presented. They were from Moldova and Serbia.



Photos from left to right: Shireen H.I. Abu Ajeen, Ministry of Education of Palestine, National contact person for Palestine in ETF QA Forum,
Teuta Braço, National Agency for VET and Qualifications of Albania, National contact person for Albania in ETF QA Forum,
Stela Guvir, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research of Moldova, National contact person for Moldova in ETF QA Forum,
Ruben Topchyan, National center for professional (vocational and higher) education quality assurance of Armenia, National contact person for Armenia in ETF QA Forum,
Anahit Terteryan, National center for professional (vocational and higher) education quality assurance of Armenia, Alternate National contact person for Armenia in ETF QA Forum



Photos, from left to right: Yaron Doppelt, Ministry of Education of Israel, National contact person for Israel in ETF QA Forum,
Mounir Baati, ETF



THE ETF FORUM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

THE PEER VISIT – PHASE FOUR, FOLLOW-UP

In the last phase of the Peer Visit procedure, the focus is on the usage of peer feedback as a source for improvements in the host country. The host institution is advised to analyse and reflect on the peer feedback and disseminate it, as appropriate, to relevant stakeholders. As an important additional learning outcome, peer visitors are also encouraged to think about if and how they might adapt/ transfer good practice observed during the Peer Visit in their own countries.

The forum members will meet (online) again in September-October 2022 to review what improvements the host country intends to do with the feedback of the peers.

In this respect, the ETF methodology for peer recommends a series of guidelines on this follow up phase, such as discussing the feedback with a circle of relevant stakeholders, decision on the utilisation of the feedback, setting up of an action plan and devising responsibilities for implementation.

The peer visit concluded with a feedback and reflection session between the Forum members' representatives. Generally, all have expressed strong positive impressions and firm willingness to continue the application of peer visit methodology for peer exchange. They particularly noted that the peer visit approach allows to pursue active learning and in-depth analysis of the quality assurance measure. A series of improvements/proposals were suggested for the future peer visits, both related to the process and actors involved:

- Format of the peer visit to avoid online sessions (prefer onsite), foresee longer duration and more field visits to allow more time to get to know the system and stakeholders and more in-depth peer reflection.
- Preliminary preparatory meeting with visiting peers and hosting country QA Forum member, to support better preparation
- Peer visit to provide space for the perspective of the end users of the assessed quality assurance measure (for example, staff of VET schools, students)
- 4th phase of the peer visit – follow up by the host peers on the feedback provided by visiting peers – to be made an essential part of the peer visit agenda, through the organisation of a follow up meeting with peers.
- Open and constructive discussions are supported by involving peers and practitioners operating at same or similar technical levels
- Peer visits related documentation to be enriched with documents going beyond intended implementation (such as methodologies and manuals), but demonstrating the real practice.



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ETF FORUM MEMBERS

ALBANIA	MS TEUTA BRAÇO, National Agency for VET and Qualifications
ARMENIA	MR RUBEN TOPCHYAN, Director of the National center for professional (vocational and higher) education quality assurance MS ANAHIT TERTERYAN, Specialist at Institutional and Programme Accreditation Division, ANQA
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THE ETF FORUM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ANNEX – Self-assessments of peers

Self-assessment: Albania

Please, briefly respond to the below questions:

1. Are VET schools in your country subject to external evaluation?

- Yes.

2. Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?

- National Agency for VET and Qualifications (NAVETQ) an Ministry of Finance and Economy

3. Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation? – Yes.

- NAVETQ, in cooperation with UNDP, the program "Development of Employment Skills") has developed for the first time with an international expertise, a complete model of the Accreditation process, for VET providers.
- VET providers who intend to apply for accreditation must implement the self-assessment process in advance, which is an important part of the accreditation documentation package.
- In support of the accreditation process, important activities and documents have been developed related to the legal basis (standards, criteria and accreditation procedures of VET providers), drafting of procedures, documents and standardized accreditation forms, recruitment, selection and training of external evaluators and their certification.
- The accreditation process is in pilot. (5 VET providers are included.)
- Non-public VET providers, who intend to submit the application for accreditation, must implement the self-assessment process in advance, according to the special instruction of the minister responsible for VET.
- Public VET providers implement every year (regularly) the self-assessment process, according to the provisions of the special instruction of the minister responsible for VET.
- Self-assessment is part of the necessary documentation for the accreditation of VET providers.

4. Please, reflect on and describe the challenges that you see in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers in your country.

- Creating a quality culture in VET providers.
- Capacity building of accreditation process actors.



Self-assessment: Armenia

Please, briefly respond to the below questions:

1. Are VET schools in your country subject to external evaluation?

All VET institutions are subject to external evaluation in Armenia. According to Law of the Republic of Armenia on primary vocational (handicraft) and secondary vocational education Institutional accreditation is mandatory for all VET institutions and Programme accreditation is on a voluntary basis besides medical VET institutions.

The process of accreditation of VET institutions in Armenia started in 2019. Government finances every year accreditation of 5 VET institutions and intended next year increase number to 15 institutions per year to finalise the cycle in 5 years.

2. Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?

National centre for professional education QA, ANQA

3. Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation?

External evaluation based on Self-Evaluation Report of institution based on state approved standards. The expert panel conduct desk-review by examining the self-Evaluation report and the appendices.

External evaluation is based on peer review principal.

4. Please, reflect on and describe the challenges that you see in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers in your country.

- Expert pool just established and are in development phase.
- Institutions SER still are descriptive and fact based. There is a lack of analysis.
- As to spread the culture of quality, it is necessary to involve more teachers and administrators in the quality assurance processes.
- Institutions have not practice of yearly evaluation of the progress developments in VET institutions
- PDCA cycle still not completed for all processes, different processes are on different stages of development of PDCA cycle.
- Institutions started development of autonomy and took responsibility for their programs vs approach in country when programs exemplary development was done by responsible external body.
- Institution promoted to develop systematic approach in institution based on outcome and regular evaluation of strategic decision supported by data.
- Promote to develop joint Strategic Plan with Employers.
- Promote to increase autonomy in VET and reduce state dependence.



Self-assessment: Georgia

Please, briefly respond to the below questions:

1. Are VET schools in your country subject to external evaluation?

Vet schools (referred as VET colleges) in **Georgia** can be public (22 colleges) and private (58 colleges). In order to provide wide geographical access to TVET, it can be provided by General Education institutions (high schools, EQF level 3-4 programmes) and Higher education institutions (universities, EQF level 3-5 programmes), if they comply with national standards for TVET authorization.

Authorization is the mandatory procedure to gain the status of educational institution. There are different standards for early childhood and preschool institutions, schools, VET colleges and Universities. Only authorized institution can have access to budget financing and issue certificate/diploma within formal education, that is recognized by the state. Issuing formal qualification document without authorization causes the criminal penalty. Authorization is awarded for 6 years period and after this period, institutions have to be re-authorized.

At the same time Authorization is the external quality assurance mechanism.

2. Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?

Legal Entity of Public Law, National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) is responsible for administering Authorization and external quality assurance evaluation of all educational institutions in Georgia. Decision about authorisation by reviewing the report about compliance of the institution with national standards is made by the National TVET authorization council, consisting of 13 people (representing private sector, NGO-s and ministries and government institutions) and appointed by the prime minister of Georgia for 2 years period.

3. Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation?

External evaluation takes place at the primary authorization (establishment of the institution), re-authorization (every 6 years) and monitoring missions (at least once in 3 years). Monitoring can take place in different forms and is scheduled or non-scheduled (based on different data analysis or complaints). Authorization (re-authorization) procedure is based on institutions self-assessment report, which is the main tool of internal evaluation. According to the latest changes into the law on Education Quality Enhancement, TVET institutions are obliged to develop their annual development plans based on self-assessment, which means, should be done at least annually. External evaluation which is done by the independent certifies TVET QA experts and sector experts, uses the latest internal evaluation results (self-assessment report) as one of the main data sources for reference.

4. Please, reflect on and describe the challenges that you see in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers in your country.

Despite of significant progress achieved since 2020, when new system of QA, including new national standards was introduced in Georgian VET system, there are several challenges to be addressed, such as:

- Digitalization of the internal and external QA, including evaluation;
- Reliability of data collection system, tools and data sources;
- Increase of QA culture at the institution level;
- Participation of college community in self-assessment (360° self-assessment approach to be introduced, with participation of college administration, students, teachers and private sector);
- Increasing the level of participation of private sector representatives in TVET QA, both internal and external.
- Introduction of ECAVET indicators for system level VET Quality measurement and introduction of effective national level platform for discussion and evidence-based decision making for VET quality improvement.



Self-assessment: Israel

Please, briefly respond to the below questions:

- Are VET schools in your country subject to external evaluation?
- Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?
- Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation?

In Israel there are no separate schools for VET. All pupils learn in a comprehensive high school between 35 hour per week – regular level to 45 hour per week – high level. Every pupil is required to take external matriculation examinations on minimum 50% of the school subject – regular level, up to 85% of school subjects – high level. During high school pupils choose selective major subjects, upon the required equal curriculum of all schools. For each school subject there is a National Superintendent who is supervising teaching, learning and evaluation in his/her domain.

VET education is part of the comprehensive high school system supervised by the Ministry of Education – **M.O.E.**. For example, I, Dr. Yaron Doppelt, am the National Superintendent of Mechanical Engineering & Robotics Education. I supervise the teaching, learning, and evaluation of 10,000 pupils (16-18 years old, grades 10-12) and 2000, students (18-20 years old, grades 13-14). Mechanical engineering, like all other technology education subject is being taught in two main subjects, each 560 hours per 3 years of high school. This technology curriculum, of 1100 hours for three years is a third of the comprehensive curriculum in all high schools.

Assessment in the Israeli educational system is divided to two sections: Teacher evaluation and External assessment.

1. **The teacher evaluation (50%)** is divided also to: Formative evaluation (not written tests or examinations), written tests or examinations (three time per year) and projects. Final school score is calculated by the teacher for each year, all these scores, calculated at the end of the 11th grade or 12th grade are recalculated to a school score which is 50% of the final matriculation score.
2. **External Assessment (50%)** is done on each of the two main subjects (as mentioned earlier):
 - a. A summative assessment of a written examination, 3 hours
 - b. A summative assessment in which senior teachers/teacher leaders whom the Superintendent approve are sent to preform a final oral examination on a final graduation project.

There is no external evaluation of industry or academy on schools.

The industry and academy are partners in shaping the curriculum and participate in the internal evaluation process the Ministry of Education is leading and applies in the field.

Please, reflect on and describe the challenges that you see in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers in your country.

As I mention in the previous section the “provider” of VET education is the Ministry of Education (M.O.E.). Teachers teach all school subject according to national curricula. The M.O.E. is also in charge of all evaluation and assessment processes. Schools are required to perform formative evaluation and summative assessments each year.

Challenges:

1. How to align school internal evaluation process with M.O.E.’s external summative assessment.
2. How to train teachers to be better evaluators.
3. How to align national curriculum with school application of the curriculum and with external examinations.

Solutions:

The main solution is teacher professional development and especially – teachers in-service training. I see, as part of my role, to perform the following challenging tasks:

1. Take active part in developing learning materials
2. Take active part in preparing learning instruction for teachers



3. To be involved in every in-service teacher training, workshops, conferences I design or my teachers (400 teachers across the country)
4. Making evidence-based research on how teachers in-service training impact both teacher practice in their actual classroom and impact student learning.
5. How to educate teacher leaders that will assist me to integrate and apply theses complicated solutions
6. In our technology education we are trying also to evaluate levels of achievements of mastering competencies (skills). This is much complicated then to assess learning achievements on school subjects.



Self-assessment: Kosovo

Please, briefly respond to the below questions:

1. Are VET schools in your country subject to external evaluation?

According to the legislation in force, all VET Institutions in Kosovo must be subject to external evaluation. According to the Law on VET 04/L-138, the Inspectorate of Education (MEST), State Matura (MEST) and the National Qualifications Authority have the right to be evaluated for VET.

Currently in Kosovo are accredited by AKM 79 VET providers, of which we have providers that provide formal education in private institutions (5 providers) and public (3 Competence Centers with a total of 9 qualifications). We also have public vocational training centers (7 vocational training centers from the Employment Agency and the Academy for Public Safety from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Center for University Studies of the Kosovo Security Force from the Ministry of Defence) and other private providers (62 providers). Also, 4 Institutions are accredited for the implementation of Recognition of prior learning.

2. Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?

The institution which has the responsibility for the supervision of accredited bidders is the NQA, where through the monitoring component it supervises the bidders after the accreditation given by the NQA.

3. Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation?

This component is achieved through the National Framework for Quality Assurance (NFQA), where each VET Institution is obliged to make a self-assessment report (SAR) once a year according to the NFQA. Also, the external evaluation by NQA is done through the SAR, as well as specific accreditation and validation forms for each qualification.

4. Please, reflect on and describe the challenges that you see in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers in your country.

One of the main features for public IVET in Kosovo is the small number of applicants for the accreditation process, which due to this is the use of old core curricula not in accordance with occupational standards in some institutions, lack of necessary space and relevant workshops, as well as financial costs. Also, there is a lack of development of some occupational standards for some qualifications which are still offered in some VET schools.

Regarding the providers accredited by the NQA, one of the biggest challenges remains the component of post-accreditation monitoring, capacity building in the NQA, etc.



Self-assessment: Moldova

Please, briefly respond to the below questions:

1. Are VET schools in your country subject to external evaluation?

Both VET institutions (state or private) and their study programs are subject to the external evaluation of quality.

External evaluation is done for the purpose of *authorization for provisional operation* or *accreditation* of the study program or of the VET institution and therefore it can result in one of the following decisions:

- authorization of provisional operation;
- non-authorization of provisional operation;
- accreditation;
- non-accreditation.

The external evaluation is carried out by a panel of experts (external of ANACEC) and the final decisions mentioned above are made based on their recommendations by the Governing Board of ANACEC and then by the Ministry of Education and Research.

2. Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?

The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) is the recognized body in the Republic of Moldova responsible for the external evaluation of quality in education, together with the Ministry of Education and Research as national regulatory body.

3. Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation?

Yes, it does.

The whole external evaluation process consists of several steps:

- Drafting the self-evaluation report (by the VET institution based on the external evaluation guidelines of ANACEC);
- Application by the VET institution or at the request of the Ministry of Education and Research and initiation of the process (by ANACEC Governing Board decision);
- Setting up the expert panel by ANACEC (and its training or briefing);
- Analysis of the self-evaluation report (by the experts);
- Site visit (on site, online or hybrid);
- Drafting the external evaluation report (by the members of the expert panel, including strong and weak aspects, recommendations, mandatory areas of improvement, recommendation for the final decision);
- Approval and validation of the external evaluation report by the Profile Committee in VET;
- Making the decision (by the Governing Board);
- Final decision made by the Ministry of Education and Research;
- Follow-up.

4. Please, reflect on and describe the challenges that you see in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers in your country.

The external and internal evaluation of quality is still a first-time exercise for the VET providers in the country. Therefore, a lot of training and information seminars are needed.

There is not enough staff in the VET department of ANACEC to carry out the external evaluation process. Hence the high workload and work under pressure for them.

Difficulties in identifying experts for the expert panels coming from VET. Almost non-existent applications from representatives of the VT sector to become peer-review experts.

Very changeable legal framework (here we refer to the Methodology for external evaluation). This sometimes disrupts the proper activity of the agency.



Self-assessment: Morocco

Please, briefly respond to the below questions:

- Are VET schools in your country subject to external evaluation?
- Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?
- Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation?

Vocational training establishments in Morocco fall into two main categories:

- o Private establishments
- o Public establishments

- **For private vocational training establishments**, they are managed by their own law, Law 13.00, which requires the government authority responsible for vocational training, in this case the vocational training department, to submit them to:

1. **Control** to verify on-site compliance with the requirements of premises, equipment, etc.
2. **Qualification** of courses: aims to ensure the compliance of training courses with the standards and conditions laid down in the specifications for the purposes of and to prepare the conditions for accreditation of private vocational training establishments, instituted by Law No. 13.00.
3. **Accreditation of establishments**

These are 3 audits/assessments carried out by independent firms. Only accredited private vocational training establishments can issue diplomas recognized by the State; the others training certificates

- **For public vocational training establishments**, they are managed by the vocational training office or by ministerial departments, each training operator has its own practices in terms of establishment evaluations;
- **The institutes with delegated management IGD** are a new generation of training establishments (built and equipped by the state which delegates their management to professional federations with the aim of improving the adequacy training/employment), the IGD adopt a quality approach who opt for ISO certification.
- In 2019, the vocational training department is working on the standardization of evaluation practices for training establishments by:
 - The gradual implementation of a national self-assessment system for training establishments unified to all public and private training operators is based on a national self-assessment reference system, an E@REF computer application), the system will be adopted in 500 establishments in September 2022;
 - The design of a national external evaluation system for training establishments based on a national external evaluation reference system, an auditor grid and a computer application, the system and the tools have been tested in 27 training establishments
 - The development of a guide to the interpretation and implementation of the ISO21001 standard for establishments applying for ISO certification.

Please, reflect on and describe the challenges that you see in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers in your country.

1. The vocational training system has several training operators who manage their own training establishments. the Department of Vocational Training has no direct authority over training establishments except for IGDs and private training schools, hence the difficulty of having a uniform evaluation system making it possible to have the aggregates of indicators at local, regional and national level;
2. Although the framework law 51.17 relating to the education and training system has insisted on the need to submit training establishments to internal evaluations and external evaluations, no implementing text of this law which clearly defines these evaluations has not yet been adopted as of today's date. Thus, the evaluation of training establishments is not yet regulated.



Self-assessment: Serbia

Please, briefly respond to the below questions:

- Are VET schools in your country subject to external evaluation?
- Which institution(s) oversee external evaluation?
- Does external evaluation of providers complement/relate to an internal evaluation?

Law on foundation of Education foreseen that every institution (school, including VET) takes care of providing and improving conditions for the development of education, providing and improving the quality of education programs, all forms of educational work and conditions, independently and in cooperation with the social partners and local government.

Quality assurance of institution is realized as self-evaluation and external evaluation. This complementary processes are based on Quality standards and indicators that are defined on the national level – Overall Quality Framework, consisting of area: 1. Programming, planning and reporting, 2. Teaching and learning, 3. Student achievements (of learning outcomes), 4. Support for students, 5. Ethos, 6. School work organization, management of human and material resources

The Rulebook on methodology of evaluation regulates: the bodies of the institution, procedures for monitoring the implementation of educational programs, other forms of educational work, bases and criteria for self-evaluation and external evaluation, content and manner of reporting and publishing the results of self-evaluation and external evaluation of the quality of schools.

Self-evaluation is performed every year in individual areas of evaluation, and every fourth or fifth year - as a whole. School professional bodies, parents' council, student parliament, students, teachers, educators, pedagogical associates (pedagogue, psychologist, etc) secretary, director and governing body of the institution participate in self-evaluation. The self-evaluation team collects, analyzes and processes data related to subject of self-evaluation (pedagogical documentation of the institution, databases within the Unified information system of education and from conducted researches, results of monitoring school classes and other activities, etc), and accordingly prepare self-evaluation report.

External evaluation of the work of the institution is conducted by the professional and pedagogical supervision (external evaluators) of the Ministry and by the Institute for the Evaluation of the Quality of Education and Upbringing at least once in six years. External evaluators are authorized persons who have mastered the training program for external evaluation. The Ministry, at the level of the school administration, shall, by 31 August at the latest, draw up an external evaluation plan for the following school year. External evaluation of the school is based on: analysis of school records and pedagogical documentation, school self-evaluation report, school program, annual work plan, school development plan and report of the educational advisor; direct monitoring of teaching and other forms of education (monitoring the performance of classes by at least 40% of teachers); conversations with the principal, professional associates, teachers, educators, students, parents, or other legal representatives and other persons of importance; etc. The external evaluation process at the school lasts at least two working days. After the external evaluation, the external evaluation team, on the spot, orally informs the director of the institution about the preliminary findings on the quality of the institution and prepare report latest within sixty days. Based on the report on self and external evaluation, the institution prepares the development plan for a period of three to five years. In the process of evaluating the quality of the work of the institution, the fulfilment of the development plan of the institution is also evaluated.

Also, The Institute for the Evaluation of the Quality of Education and Upbringing participates in the external evaluation of the quality of the work of the institution by evaluating the educational achievements of students in final and matura exams or when needed on the request of the Ministry.

Please, reflect on and describe the challenges that you see in the existing system and practice of external evaluation of VET providers in your country.

- Lack of constant and systematic support to school related to quality
- Lack of interest among school staff and students for quality improvement
- Not efficient feedback system and mechanisms for assuring long-term effects on quality of learning and teaching processes



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