

Evidence in action: ETF Monitoring Forum 2025

Milan, Italy

28 – 29 October 2025

Agenda and session notes

INTRODUCTION

Every year, in collaboration with its partner countries, the European Training Foundation (ETF) collects key indicators needed to monitor trends and developments in education, skills, and employment. These efforts, known as the KIESE Initiative, culminate annually in country-specific progress reports (country fiches) and a cross-country report, which provides insights into national, regional, and international developments based on the collected data.

In addition, the ETF implements the Torino Process. Since 2023, the monitoring strand of the Torino Process selects a subset of KIESE indicators, aggregates them into “system performance indices,” and combines them with qualitative evidence to track how well vocational education and training (VET) systems in partner countries deliver on key commitments to learners, such as access, quality, relevance, and system efficiency. The annual results of KIESE and Torino Process monitoring are summarised in various reports, including the cross-country monitoring report.

In preparation for the 2026 round of monitoring and evidence collection, the ETF is inviting members of the KIESE data network and national coordinators for the Torino Process to an in-person meeting. The meeting will present the findings from the 2025 monitoring round, gather feedback, provide updates on new developments, and offer an opportunity for joint planning for 2026.

The meeting will take place on 29 October 2025 in Milan and will focus on three major topics:

1. Presentation and discussion of the 2025 monitoring findings ahead of their official release.
2. Presentation and discussion of priorities and plans for the 2026 editions of KIESE and the Torino Process.
3. Updates on new and forthcoming developments in data and monitoring in education, skills, and employment.

The working language of the meeting is English, with simultaneous interpretation provided in Russian and Arabic.

Venue: Hotel TRIBE Milano Malpensa, Via Gabriele d'Annunzio 8, 21010 Vizzola Ticino.

AGENDA

DAY 1, 28 OCTOBER 2025

20.00 – 22.00	Networking dinner at <i>Hotel TRIBE Milano Malpensa</i>
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DAY 2, 29 OCTOBER 2025

08.30 – 09:00	Registration of participants
09.00 – 09.30	Welcome and introduction to the day <i>Filippo Del Ninno</i> , Team Leader Data Collection (ETF) <i>Mihaylo Milovanovitch</i> , Team Leader Monitoring and Assessment (ETF)
09.30 – 11.00	Session 1: Key developments in education, skills, and employment: ETF partner countries <i>This session will present and discuss the 2025 monitoring findings ahead of their official release and provide an opportunity to exchange on priorities and plans for the 2026 editions of KIESE and the Torino Process.</i> • Presentation and discussion of monitoring results 2025 • Monitoring outlook 2026 • Open discussion <i>Stefano Lasagni</i> , Data Analyst (ETF); <i>Marco Barreca</i> , Data Analyst (ETF); <i>Mihaylo Milovanovitch</i> (ETF) Moderator: Simona Rinaldi , Senior Human Capital Development Expert (ETF)
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 – 12.30	Session 2: Novelties and updates <i>This session will present and then discuss updates from ETF and partner countries on new initiatives in monitoring education, skills, and employment, with a focus on the ETF Skills Gap Index and recent national developments.</i> • Tracking complex developments through index-based monitoring: ETF Skills Gap Index <i>Elma Aga</i>, Human Capital Development Expert (ETF) <i>Oliver Toskovic</i>, Statistics Expert • Partner country updates • Open discussion Moderator: Mihaylo Milovanovitch (ETF)
12.30 – 13.45	Lunch break

13.45 – 15.30	Coffee station available throughout the afternoon Session 3: Knowledge exchange Working Group A: Using AI for policy and system monitoring <i>This parallel session will explore the ways in which artificial intelligence is becoming part of everyday policy and system monitoring in ETF partner countries and beyond. By looking at broad use cases such as data harvesting, analysis, and reporting, and at the many grassroots uses, improvised practices, and emerging protocols through which ETF and partner countries are already making AI work for them, it will help participants frame the possibilities of AI in their own work. The session will also present selected international experiences and new insights and approaches.</i> Facilitators: Jan Peter Ganter De Otero, Human Capital Development Expert (ETF); Elma Aga (ETF) Working Group B: Data misinterpretation – a problem or a tool? <i>This parallel session will explore the role of data interpretation in shaping public understanding and policy decisions in education, skills and employment. Drawing on approaches such as strategic framing, data storytelling, and asset-based narratives, it will examine when ‘misinterpretation’ becomes a legitimate tool for reframing evidence to support constructive policy outcomes rather than a problem of distortion.</i> Facilitators: Mihaylo Milovanovitch (ETF); Stefano Lasagni (ETF); Marco Barreca (ETF)
15.30 – 16.30	Session 4: Reporting back <i>This final session will bring participants back together to share the main take-aways from the parallel discussions and consider their relevance for future monitoring practice. The session will conclude with a plenary exchange and closing remarks.</i> - Debrief from parallel sessions - Plenary discussion - Closing remarks Filippo Del Ninno, Team Leader Data Collection (ETF) Mihaylo Milovanovitch, Team Leader Monitoring and Assessment (ETF) Moderator: Simona Rinaldi (ETF)
16:45 – 18:00	Transfer from hotel to Milan city centre
18:00 – 20.30	Cultural visit & Cocktail dinner at Triennale Milano
20.30 – 21.00	Transfer from Milan city centre to hotel

SESSION NOTES

Session 1:

Key developments in education, skills, and employment

Every year, in collaboration with its partner countries, the ETF gathers and analyses key evidence on education, skills, and employment. This work takes place through two flagship initiatives: KIESE and the Torino Process.

KIESE, which stands for Key Indicators on Education, Skills, and Employment, compiles quantitative data from international and national repositories and provides a comprehensive foundation for analysing country developments.

The Torino Process, a long-standing and regular policy monitoring activity of the ETF dating back to 2010, uses KIESE data together with supplementary qualitative evidence to assess how national education and training systems perform in delivering access, quality, and effective management in support of lifelong learning.

The ETF draws on evidence from KIESE and the Torino Process to prepare annual reports on progress and developments in education, skills, and employment across its partner countries.

This session will present and discuss the monitoring findings for 2025 ahead of their official release in the third edition of the annual ETF cross-country monitoring report, Education, Skills, and Employment – Trends and Developments 2025, which will be published in November.

As in previous years, the findings consolidate evidence from KIESE and the Torino Process to provide a comparative overview of developments and emerging patterns that characterise the state of lifelong learning in the ETF partner countries.

The session will give participants an opportunity to discuss and comment on the 2025 findings and reflect on their implications for education, employment, and future priorities in support of VET.

The discussion will also look ahead to the next monitoring cycle, identifying priorities and practical steps for the 2026 round of evidence collection and reporting in the context of KIESE and the Torino Process.

Session 2:

Novelties and updates

Skills Gap Index

During this part of Session 2, the ETF will present its latest initiative in monitoring education, skills, and employment systems: the Skills Gap Index (SGI). The index is designed to provide a concise and comparable overview of how far countries are from meeting the skills needed to support social and economic development.

The creation of the SGI responds to the need for a more integrated view of how education, training, and employment systems work together. While many international indicators describe individual aspects of these systems, they often fail to capture how effectively they function as a whole.

The SGI addresses this gap by measuring, in a comparable and transparent way, how well skills are generated, mobilised, and matched to labour-market needs. It is a composite measure that tracks the distance between the skills available in a country and those required across three dimensions of the skills ecosystem: (i) inputs – the capacity to develop skills, (ii) outputs – the extent of skills development and attainment, and (iii) mobilisation – the use and matching of skills in the economy. A separate Enablers/Readiness module captures the institutional linkages that connect education, training, and employment systems.

Participants will be introduced to the main ideas behind the index and to the planned next steps in its development. The session will provide an opportunity for countries to discuss the proposed approach, share views on its relevance for their own contexts, and in this way contribute to shaping the future work on the index.

Partner country updates

This segment of Session 2 will give participating countries an opportunity to briefly share new developments and experiences related to education, skills, and employment, and/or the monitoring of policies and systems in these domains. Each participant who volunteers to provide an update will have a few minutes to present their updates in plenary, without the use of slides, focusing on key actions, results, or ongoing initiatives that may be of interest to peers.

The purpose is to enable a quick and informal exchange across countries, highlight recent progress, and identify emerging priorities or areas where further cooperation could be useful.

Session 3:

Knowledge exchange

Working Group A: Using AI for policy and system monitoring

This parallel session will explore how artificial intelligence is becoming part of everyday policy and system monitoring in ETF partner countries and beyond. The discussion will look at practical, real-world experiences of using AI tools and approaches in monitoring workflows, from data collection and analysis to reporting and dissemination, and will invite participants to share how they already make AI work for them in their own contexts.

Rather than focusing only on latest technological breakthroughs or high-end applications, the session will concentrate on grounded, peer-to-peer exchange. Participants will be encouraged to present examples, tips, and challenges from their daily work and to reflect on how these experiences can inform the use of AI for evidence generation and monitoring in diverse institutional settings.

The discussion will be organised around four stages that are common to most monitoring processes: data collection, data analysis, reporting, and dissemination. These stages will serve as a shared reference point for collecting insights, mapping current practices, and identifying opportunities and gaps.

By the end of the session, participants will have a clearer understanding of how AI can complement human expertise across these stages, what remains uniquely human in these workflows, and how the use of AI in support of monitoring can be efficient across contexts with different levels of digital maturity, while remaining transparent and responsible.

Working Group B: Data misinterpretation – a problem or a tool?

This working session explores the idea that data interpretation is never entirely neutral. The same evidence can lead to very different conclusions depending on how it is framed, explained, and communicated. The session will show how deliberate interpretation can serve as a legitimate analytical and communication tool by drawing on approaches such as strategic framing, data storytelling, and asset-based narratives. It will also invite reflection on when such interpretation ceases to be a legitimate approach and becomes malpractice.

The discussion will begin by framing the theme and illustrating, through simple examples such as the “glass half full or half empty,” how meaning emerges from the way data are interpreted. It will then demonstrate that data itself does not speak but requires interpretation, and that this step inevitably involves choice and judgement.

Participants will be invited to reflect on their own experiences of using interpretation as a tool and to discuss where, in their view, the boundaries of legitimacy lie. The session will include practical exercises based on case studies and group work to help participants explore how framing alters understanding and to consider the possibility of defining simple criteria that distinguish legitimate interpretation from malpractice.

The session will close with a collective reflection on the insights gained and a short summary of key take-aways. Participants are expected to leave with a sharper awareness of the interpretive nature of data work, a shared vocabulary for discussing and using legitimate “misinterpretation”, and a better sense of the boundaries that safeguard credibility and integrity in evidence-based monitoring and reporting.

The discussion may also serve as the basis for a jointly authored article or short paper capturing the perspectives and insights emerging from the session, should participants in the working group so agree.

Session 4:

Reporting back

This final session will bring participants together to share the main messages from the working groups and discussions. Each group will briefly report on its conclusions, pointing out common findings, differences in perspective, and practical ideas for the next year and beyond.

The session will then open for a short plenary exchange on how these insights relate to evidence collection and reporting under KIESE and the Torino Process. It will close with final remarks and an outline of the next milestones in ETF monitoring, including preparations for the 2026 round.