

COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2019 UPDATE

PALESTINE¹

¹ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the Member States on this issue.

1. A brief summary of key developments in VET and skills and EU and donor cooperation during 2017–18

The National Policy Agenda (2017-2022) recognises the importance of education to economic growth and sustainable development and identifies quality education for all as a priority.

The 2010 National Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy includes an action plan covering legislation, financing, labour market relevance, qualification frameworks, teacher training and quality assurance. Strategy and reform implementation is slow because of TVET system fragmentation and the socio-economic context. The situation is made more challenging by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) budget cuts announced in 2018, which may affect the VET sector for Palestinian refugees.

TVET implementation and governance has developed since 2017. A work-based learning strategy was approved and the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel) introduced 83 work-based learning initiatives in the West Bank and Gaza.

A cabinet decision to unify the TVET sector was rejected. However, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and the Ministry of Labour are cooperating to increase efficiency. The 11th grade curriculum was adapted to a competence-based approach and new assessment methods are under discussion. Teachers are being retrained and efforts made to modernise vocational schools' equipment. The MoEHE increased VET attractiveness, resulting in higher enrolment in 2018.

The Higher Council of TVET has been reactivated and is supported by the Executive Council. In 2017, the Higher Council approved a Development Centre to ensure progress in VET strategy implementation. The Development Centre, with two staff members supported by a GIZ representative, is drafting the VET law and revising the 2010 VET Strategy. It will undertake TVET monitoring and evaluation in the future, but lacks resources to lead the Torino Process 2019. When the new VET law is adopted in late 2019 or early 2020, the Development Centre will be recognised as an official national body.

Palestine is largely dependent on donor support. The European Commission contributes most external assistance, mainly through the European Neighbourhood Instrument. GIZ, Enabel and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation are active in TVET and employment. The ETF will enlarge its network in the international donor community.

2. An assessment of mid-term progress towards the ETF's 2020 objectives

Specific objective 1: support establishment of TVET monitoring and evaluation to map the system's efficiency and effectiveness in addressing labour market needs

Work progressed slowly towards 2020 objectives and planned activities were revised in 2017. Delays were caused by stakeholder instability, uncertainty about the Development Centre's role, financial and human resources and insufficient leadership in the monitoring and evaluation technical working group. In the future, the Development Centre will monitor and evaluate the TVET sector.

In 2017, a national monitoring and evaluation framework and indicators were developed and validated. MoEHE and Ministry of Labour evaluation processes were revised and TVET student data were disaggregated by qualification. In 2018, the MoEHE reviewed its data collection system to identify new indicators for the monitoring and evaluation framework.

The ETF has halted work on a governance model for monitoring and evaluation until the Development Centre is operational. It organised capacity building workshops in 2017–18.

In 2018, six indicators from the new monitoring and evaluation framework were tested by the TVET League. A joint monitoring and evaluation publication will focus on tracing studies; an important tool to measure VET effectiveness. The 2018 tracer study report by the ETF, GIZ and Enabel will help Palestine and the donor community find a common approach to tracer studies in the future.

The EU project Support to TVET Development (EUR 8 million), designed with ETF cooperation and implemented by GIZ, will end in October 2019. No separate TVET programme is planned. TVET support is embedded within results-oriented frameworks for education and the labour market. The results-oriented framework for private sector development addresses start-up training.

3. Actions planned for 2019

Specific objective 1: support establishment of TVET monitoring and evaluation to map the system's efficiency and effectiveness in addressing labour market needs

In the 2019 Torino Process, the ETF will scale-up to national level the evaluation tested by the TVET League in 2018. Quantitative data collection will be based on the new national monitoring and evaluation framework and commonly agreed indicators. The Torino Process will help stakeholders assess and improve their monitoring and evaluation systems.

Since the VET system is fragmented and a national governance model for monitoring and evaluation is lacking, stakeholders will collect and compile information for the national overview. In the future, the Development Centre will monitor and evaluate the VET sector and centralise data collection.

Specific objective 2: support EU external assistance and the bilateral policy dialogue

The ETF will seek opportunities to design new projects in the area of VET and skills development, with the EU Delegation and Member States involved in the result-oriented frameworks. Upon request of the EU Delegation, the ETF can support with the preparation for a possible Twinning project. It will comment on the UNRWA schools feasibility study, if necessary. Upon request of the European Commission or the EU Delegation, the ETF will support EU-Palestine bilateral policy dialogue with input for European Neighbourhood Policy action plan monitoring and bilateral subcommittee meetings and delivery of annual country fiches to DG Employment.

The ETF has two additional objectives for 2020:

Specific objective 3: support the MoEHE and the Development Centre to create a more inclusive VET system

The latest Monitoring and Evaluation Report on education strategy revealed that no students with disabilities were enrolled in 11th grade vocational education, despite the target of 5% by 2019. The ETF will help the Development Centre explore measures to increase TVET system inclusiveness.

The ETF could help the Development Centre and other relevant stakeholders apply for EU technical assistance and information exchange (TAIEX) funding for workshops or a study visit. The Development Centre should write the first draft of the needs identification and get approval from the Higher Council in order to go ahead.

Specific objective 4: enlarge the ETF network in Palestine to share information and identify areas of future cooperation

As the ETF is a centre of expertise rather than a donor, it must cooperate with all education and training stakeholders, share information and identify where to add value. The ETF will continue to enlarge its network.