



European Training Foundation

COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2020 UPDATE: LEBANON



A BRIEF SUMMARY OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN VET AND SKILLS AND EU AND DONOR COOPERATION DURING 2018–19

The National Strategic Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was a major achievement towards developing the whole sector. It provides an overall guide for how the different actors should work to develop the TVET sector further. The strategy was launched in 2018 with the joint efforts of, among others, the International Labour Organization, UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the national employment office and the European Training Foundation (ETF) in close cooperation with the European Union (EU) institutions. The process for implementing the TVET action plan is currently ongoing.

As highlighted in the third conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region that took place in March 2019, a total of EUR 1.7 billion in EU assistance has been provided to Lebanon since 2011 with nearly 125 000 Lebanese and Syrian children gaining access to education. The EU creates long-term opportunities in Lebanon for both Syrians and Lebanese by:

- promoting growth, job creation and social cohesion
- supporting Lebanon in delivering access to improved education, health and water services
- addressing the needs of refugees and Lebanese through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis.

Moreover, the EU is fully committed to assisting the economic and social development of Lebanon as a long-term strategic partner in the region. A package of up to EUR 150 million to support the revitalisation of the Lebanese economy, which could generate up to EUR 1.5 billion in loans for Lebanon by 2020, was already announced at the CEDRE (*Conférence économique pour le développement, par les réformes et avec les entreprises*) Conference held in Paris in April 2018.

In Lebanon the key donor remains the EU, yet due to the Syrian conflict, other donors (e.g. the United States Agency for International Development, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Agence Française de Développement) are active in the country in the field of education to support refugees and vulnerable local communities and enhance employability overall.

Mobility Partnership negotiations with the EU have halted, but should restart with the new government.



AN ASSESSMENT OF MID-TERM PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ETF'S 2020 OBJECTIVES

Specific objective 1: Support the EU Delegation in the EU external assistance project cycle for VET and employment

In 2019, the EU Delegation requested ETF input on VET and employment initiatives and projects.

Specifically, the ETF advised on the Technical Assistance project for more practice-oriented vocational and technical education in Lebanon. It provided input on project outcomes and finalised testing of the viability of establishing a sector skills council for the construction and infrastructure sector. It facilitated dialogue among international organisations involved in the preparation of the TVET action plan for the National Strategic Framework 2018–22 as well as provided thematic input in the drafting process. It contributed to the education and training programme for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, implemented by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Specific objective 2: Support the Lebanese Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Office in developing capacity to facilitate the school-to-work transition

On the request of the Ministry of Labour, the ETF has assisted the newly established Task Force (composed of government and industry representatives) in creating the basis for a national employers' survey, with the objective of identifying and analysing the training needs of the companies. The first pilot of the employers' survey was conducted in autumn 2018 in cooperation with the Task Force. The objective of the pilot exercise was twofold: 1) to test the feasibility of the methodology and make adjustments to the survey method if required; and 2) develop an initial understanding of workforce demand by identifying and analysing companies' vacancies and skills needs to adjust the training offer accordingly. Public and private stakeholders have been fully engaged in the survey, which has also enabled the ETF to expand its network in Lebanon.

Following the finalisation of the evaluation report from the pilot exercise, continued support has been provided for the follow-up of the pilot. Different modalities of support were agreed with national authorities, including the delivery of a focus group discussion with employers to complement the outcome of the first pilot exercise. Furthermore, adjustments of the methodology, conducting a second pilot exercise and supporting with national expertise to collaborate with the Task Force in building up recommendations for decision-makers are due to be completed by the end of 2019.



ACTIONS PLANNED FOR 2020

Specific objective 1: Support the EU Delegation in the EU external assistance project cycle for VET and employment

In 2020, the ETF will support the EU Delegation through: i) the Technical Assistance project for more practice-oriented VET in Lebanon; ii) finalisation of the National Strategic Framework 2018–22 TVET action plan by providing technical input; and iii) reengineering of the UNRWA's TVET system in Lebanon by providing expertise input to the reports/proposals produced in the framework of the study to provide options and a plan for TVET services for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

On request from the European Commission or the EU Delegation, the ETF will support EU–Lebanon bilateral policy dialogue. It will provide inputs to bilateral subcommittee meetings and European Neighbourhood Policy action plan monitoring and deliver annual country fiches to the Director-General for Employment.

Specific objective 2: Help the Lebanese Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Office develop capacity to support the school-to-work transition

The results and analysis of the two pilot surveys will be shared and discussed with stakeholders and policy makers with the aim of designing a regular employers' survey in Lebanon. In this delicate phase where the country will move from the pilot phase to possible national implementation, advice to the Task Force will be provided to ensure structured coordination among institutions, especially between the public and private sector.

ETF intervention is highly appreciated by the Ministry of Labour, which is not supported by many other donors, as the international community's target for employment interventions are mainly Syrian refugees. ETF actions should foster additional support for Lebanese authorities and the private sector from EU or other donors.

The establishment of a public and private stakeholders' Task Force to implement the employers' survey is a unique example of good practice in a country where coordination remains a challenge. The ETF aims to take advantage of this opportunity to constitute a collaborative governance model for other activities. Key to the sustainability of the ETF intervention is confirmation that the government is committed to using the recommendations from the two pilot exercises to shape national skills and employment policies.

Specific objective 3: Consolidate and expand Guidance Employment Offices by wrapping them into a legal framework that would allow the offices to conduct regular training in career guidance including the use of



job placement tools and techniques in market research and local needs analysis

Building on the pilot project implemented in Lebanon within the framework of the GEMM (Growth, Equal opportunities, Migration and Markets) project, Guidance Employment Offices (GEO) were established mainly to identify training and job opportunities in local enterprises and to plan development of the curricula, with the identification of equipment and materials needed to carry on preliminary practical activities to develop the basic competences required before starting work-based training in local businesses. These GEOs are still operational and new ones have been established within the Technical Assistance project for a more practice-oriented VET in Lebanon, funded by the EU and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ, a German development agency). This successful experience, initiated by the ETF in 2014, has also been proved to be a sustainable initiative over the years.

Based on this, the ETF will work with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, directors of schools and relevant international organisations to raise awareness among other VET schools in Lebanon (both public and private). A process of providing policy advice to relevant national authorities will also be put in place to ensure that the existing legal framework for GEOs is fully applied to scale up this experience at the national level.

In 2020, the ETF will conclude the ETF assessment on human capital development in Lebanon, based on the Torino Process national report, expected to be finalised in early 2020. The results of the Torino Process assessment will be presented at an event planned to take place in Lebanon in the first half of 2020.

Other activities

Lebanon is an active member of the ETF Forum for Quality Assurance, and activities will continue in 2020.

Lebanon will be involved as a member of the Communities of Practice, as a follow-up of the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration signed after the Ministerial Conference on Skills and Labour, held in Cascais, in April 2019.

In 2020, the ETF will finalise the fifth edition of the Torino Process. Synergy between the Torino Process and assessment of ongoing strategic reforms, especially the National Strategic Framework for TVET 2018–22, are in place thanks to ETF involvement with national authorities and the international community in the TVET action plan drafting process. The Torino Process report and the ETF assessment of human capital development issues will help identify priorities for the next EU and other donor programmes. It could also serve as the basis for discussions on enhanced donor cooperation in VET.

Finally, a collection of statistical data and information on VET, skills and employment/labour market policies will be carried out in Lebanon by a national expert.

