



European Training Foundation

COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2020 UPDATE: UKRAINE



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

The Law on Education, approved in September 2017, introduced the New Ukrainian School reform to shift the focus of education from knowledge acquisition and accumulation to skills and competences. In early 2018, a working group was created to draft a vocational education law to be completed and approved by the end of the year.

In 2019, the implementation of the New Ukrainian School reform, in line with the new Law on Education, was ongoing. The strategic document for the new education standard package in Ukraine is entitled *Competence Potential (Foundations of the State Standard)*. It is a competence-based framework for the final, compulsory learning outcomes for the end of cycle by each subject area. The framework will guide the developers of the state standard for each cycle of education beyond primary school (basic secondary, upper secondary education and VET – International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2 and 3). Different guidelines are currently being developed, including guidelines for educators, on the key competence approach in the “New Ukrainian School”.

The Law on Education assigned an important role to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), lifelong learning and competence-based education. The law distinguishes between educational qualifications (delivered through formal education) and professional qualifications (focused on relevance in the labour market). It introduces sector qualifications frameworks and partial qualifications. The law has a chapter on the qualification system and describes the tasks to be performed by the National Agency for Qualifications (NAK).

NAK is a collegial body supported by the government and the social partners. It coordinates the development of occupational standards and qualifications, manages the register of qualification standards, supports a broadening of the scope of the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) and accredits qualification centres. The NAK has a number of tasks to perform. These will include coordinating and informing stakeholders; supporting legislative developments; developing and maintaining the registry of qualifications; coordinating the development of occupational standards; supporting the development of educational standards; accrediting qualification centres; overseeing the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning; and establishing the criteria for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

The Medium-Term Government Priority Action Plan 2020 focuses on human capital development. It includes as priorities a framework to ensure stakeholder participation in VET system reform and a VET strategy and action plan based on VET Vision 2018.

The Single Support Framework for EU support to Ukraine 2018–20 identifies VET as a cooperation priority, while the European Commission programme U-LEAD (2016–20; EUR 100 million) includes VET decentralisation aspects and pilot VET activities in Rivne and Lviv.

The EU4Skills: Better Skills for Better Jobs in Modern Ukraine 2018–20 project, with a budget of approx. EUR 58 million, is implemented by GIZ and KfW (a German state-owned development bank). It became operational in July 2019.

In late 2017, GIZ launched the Vocational Integration of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine project (2017–21; EUR 4 million), which offered short training courses and/or internships to increase employability. In the agriculture sector, GIZ is helping to develop food processing training programmes and teacher training with instructors from German companies. Polish Aid runs VET and education

projects (2012–19; EUR 2.2 million) focused on young people, entrepreneurship, education reform and business incubators. The Estonian Development Cooperation assists vocational colleges in Volyn Oblast and the Ministry of Education and Science as part of the Ukrainian Education Strategy, which will run until 2021. Finland's support (worth EUR 10 million) for the "New Ukrainian School" became fully operational in 2019; Finland is expected to provide further support for education and human capital development.

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

VET Vision 2018, compiled by the Ministry of Education and Science, was approved by the Council of Ministers in June 2019. The concept lays the ground for VET reform and upcoming EU and other donor support, and is a key policy objective in the form of a VET modernisation document: Modern Vocational Education 2027.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Science, the fifth round of the Torino Process was implemented in Ukraine in 2019. All regions participated. The Torino Process working group was formally established by a ministerial decree and involves relevant key institutions. Under the leadership of the newly established Directorate-General of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Torino Process 2019–20 cycle has been implemented at two levels: national and regional.

Specific objective 1: Support the EU external assistance intervention for VET in 2018–20

The ETF cooperated with the EU Delegation and the European Commission on a feasibility study and formulation of the EU intervention. The result is EU4Skills: Better Skills for Better Jobs in Modern Ukraine 2018–20. The objectives of the action are to contribute to the modernisation of VET and to ensure that the skills provided are more demand-driven and responsive to a new competitive economy. The expected results are: (i) a clear, decentralised VET policy; (ii) enhanced quality in VET provision; (iii) a modernised VET infrastructure. In 2019, the ETF supported decentralisation and the NQF in preparation for the project. The ETF advised on EU project operationalisation at meetings of the implementing agencies.

Specific objective 2: Support VET decentralisation

ETF strategic project governance increased stakeholders' capacity and participation in VET policymaking and created better reform conditions. An ETF conference on VET decentralisation was held in April 2017 for policymakers. Policy dialogue continued on VET decentralisation, building an efficient system and VET network optimisation. Policy advice was given on regional bodies' roles in VET. In 2019, the ETF developed the centres of excellence concept for EU intervention. In 2019, the concept was in the process of being signed by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Specific objective 3: Support the action plan for NQF implementation

On request, the ETF evaluated competence-based vocational qualifications and worked on occupational standard and VET educational and assessment standard guidelines linked to the decentralisation of VET curriculum development. This was part of a three-year cycle to resolve NQF methodological issues in advance of future EU projects.

In 2018, the ETF helped to develop the concept and statutes for NAK, which was scheduled to be established by the end of September 2018. The ETF also supported the creation of a national qualifications website with an NQF register. In 2019, the ETF supported further development of the NQF and operationalisation of NAK.

Specific objective 4: Support entrepreneurial learning

The ETF focused on promoting competence-based education and integrating entrepreneurship into curricula, in line with the objectives of the New Ukrainian School and the Law on Education. It helped Ukrainian experts to develop the *Competence Potential* document in accordance with the Law on Education, EU and Council of Europe frameworks.

ACTIONS PLANNED FOR 2020

With the new EU intervention, the ETF will focus on supporting the EU Delegation and monitoring human capital development.

In line with Chapter 5.7 of the EU4Skills: Better Skills for Better Jobs contractual agreement, the ETF will ensure content monitoring¹ and participation in steering committee meetings of the EU4Skills project. The objective is for ETF input to be used in the VET and skills policy process in Ukraine, and as such it will provide helpful support and advice to the country's policymakers, European Commission services, various donors active in the country and implementing agencies. The content monitoring exercise will be undertaken in collaboration with the EU Delegation in Kyiv and the Support Group for Ukraine (SGUA), which was established by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

In 2020, the ETF will explore in greater detail the policy approach to labour market and skills issues taken by the new government of Ukraine. In recent years, there has been a lack of policy progress in this very area. To capitalise further on cooperation initiated with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2019, the ETF will further explore this opportunity in relation to the skills matching agenda in the country and within the framework of inclusive labour markets for job creation in Ukraine.

Specific objective 1: Support the EU external assistance intervention for VET in 2018–20

The ETF will work with the EU Delegation in Kyiv and the Support Group for Ukraine on EU4Skills. Initially, it will review relevant documents, advise the EU Delegation in detail to the project. Subsequently, it will review reports, inform the EU Delegation on progress, and support VET and skills policy dialogue. The ETF will participate in discussions with EU Member States and GIZ, Estonian Cooperation, Polish Aid and Finnish cooperation. It will support EU-Ukraine policy dialogue, prepare annual Country Fiches for the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and provide advice for current and future European Commission interventions.

¹ It should not be misleading that the ETF will undertake Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM).

Specific objective 2: Support VET decentralisation

The objective of Component 1 of the EU4Skills project is to introduce a sector strategy, a coordination framework and improved governance within the context of decentralised VET. This Specific objective 2 of the ETF country programme will therefore be integrated into Specific objective 1.

Specific objective 3: Support the action plan for NQF implementation

The objective of Component 2 of the EU4Skills project is to continue to integrate the NQF into the system and to continue with the establishment and operationalisation of NAK. This Specific objective 3 of the ETF country programme will therefore be integrated into Specific objective 1.

Specific objective 4: Support entrepreneurial learning

The ETF will further integrate the *Competence Potential* document into the VET policy debate. It will support this dialogue through cooperation with different implementing agencies, including dissemination of the findings of SBA Human Capital Dimensions, focused on entrepreneurial learning. This Specific objective 4 of the ETF country programme will therefore be integrated into Specific objective 1.