“EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION, A EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY”

FINAL REPORT

8 FEBRUARY 2012

By

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Contractor:
Public Policy and Management Institute
Gedimino avenue 50, LT-01110 Vilnius, Lithuania
Tel. +370 5 262 0338
Fax. +370 5 262 5410
http://www.vpvi.lt
Director Haroldas Brožaitis

The evaluation team:
Dr. Dion Curry, Public Policy and Management Institute
Rimantas Dumčius, Public Policy and Management Institute (Project Director)
Petri Uusikylä, Ramboll Management Consulting Finland

Other contributors to evaluation data collection and analysis:
Eugenija Golubova, Public Policy and Management Institute
Violeta Podagelytė, Public Policy and Management Institute

Contributors to partner country case studies and analysis:
Maia Chankseliani, Alexi Gugushvili, Jove Jankulovski, Mimoza Anastoska-Jankulovska and Zhanna Mukhamedyarova.

Acknowledgements:
The team responsible for this report would like to thank all the interviewees, experts and the officials in the European Commission, European Parliament, European External Action Service, European Training Foundation, Partner Country organisations and stakeholders who contributed their time, expertise and assistance to us during the research and writing of this report.

This evaluation report has been produced by the Public Policy and Management Institute based on the service contract No. EAC-2011-0140 awarded to PPMI by the Directorate General for Education and Culture of European Commission on 30th of March, 2011.

Contents

Contents 2
List of boxes, figures, graphs and tables 5
Abbreviations 7
Executive summary..8
Introduction...15
1. The ETF: 2006-2010 15
2. Methodology 17
2.1. The logic of ETF Intervention 17
2.2. Sources of data and research tools 18
2.2.1. Surveys and statistical analysis 19
2.2.2. Interviews 21
2.2.3. Network analysis 21
2.2.4. Case studies 21
2.2.5. Analysis of monitoring and other secondary data 22
2.2.6. Cost effectiveness analysis 22
2.2.7. Validity of the methodology...22
3. Evaluation findings 25
3.1. Relevance..25
3.1.1. Relevance to beneficiary needs 26
3.1.2. Responsiveness to beneficiary needs 32
3.1.3. Conclusions regarding relevance.................................36
3.2. Coherence 38
3.2.1. Internal coherence 39
3.2.2. Coherence with EU policies and strategic objectives 41
3.2.3. Coherence with actions of other international stakeholders 45
3.2.4. Coherence at the partner country level.......................46
3.2.5. Conclusions regarding coherence...............................47
3.3. Effectiveness..48
3.3.1. General ETF performance 49

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

3.3.2. Provision and dissemination of information, analyses and policy advice 51

3.3.3. Capacity building 55

3.3.4. Networking and knowledge transfer 58

3.3.5. Conclusions regarding effectiveness 63

3.4. Impact and added value 64

3.4.1. Measureable impacts for beneficiaries 65

3.4.2. Added value of ETF activities...................................67

3.4.3. Centrality of ETF in human capital development in Partner Countries and the EU 68

3.4.4. Conclusions regarding impact and added value 71

3.5. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness 73

3.5.1. Cost-effectiveness of ETF actions.............................73

3.5.2. Efficiency implications of ETF organisational, budgetary, management, monitoring and evaluation structures and processes 80

3.5.3. Conclusions regarding efficiency and cost-effectiveness 82

3.6. Conclusions and recommendations 83

Annex 1 – Survey questionnaires..87

Annex 2 – List of interviewees and contacts 109

Annex 3 – Case studies 112

Annex 4 – Terms of reference 113

Annex 5 – Glossary of selected terms 124

Annex 6 – Dissemination of evaluation findings 125

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

List of boxes, figures, graphs and tables

Boxes

Box 1: Summary of case study findings on the adherence to the needs 27
Box 2: Summary of case study findings on the responsiveness to beneficiaries 30
Box 3: Summary of case study findings on the coherence of ETF actions 45
Box 4: Summary of case study findings on the dissemination of information 52
Box 5: Summary of case study findings on the capacity building 56
Box 6: Summary of case study findings on the networking and knowledge transfer 59

Figures

Figure 1: Summary intervention logic of ETF 16
Figure 2: ETF Average Performance Achievement Rate, 2006-2010 77

Graphs:

Graph 1: The level of needs expressed in Partner Countries 24
Graph 2: Thematic areas of clearly expressed needs in Partner Countries 25
Graph 3: Evaluation of ETF's adherence to country's/region's needs 26
Graph 4: Type of assistance of clearly-expressed needs in Partner Countries 28
Graph 5: Evaluation of ETF's activities in showing flexibility and responsiveness in working with organisations in Partner Countries 31
Graph 6: Evaluation of ETF's awareness of beneficiary organisation's activities 31
Graph 7: Evaluation of ETF's performance in seeking feedback in Partner Countries 32
Graph 8: The ways in which ETF activities fit with other EU activities 43
Graph 9: The ways in which ETF's activities fit with other non-EU activities 44
Graph 10: Evaluation of ETF's performance in providing information, policy analyses and advice to partner countries 50
Graph 11: Evaluation of ETF's performance in disseminating information on important issues in partner countries 50
Graph 12: Evaluation of ETF's performance in providing trustworthy and reliable information for partner countries 53
Graph 13: Evaluation of ETF's performance in supporting the delivery of EU assistance in partner countries 54
Graph 14: Evaluation of ETF's performance in building capacity of relevant stakeholders to improve governance in partner countries 55
Graph 15: Evaluation of ETF's performance in providing support in setting targets and objectives in partner countries 57
Graph 16: The frequency with which organisations of the respondents participate in activities organized by ETF 58
Graph 17: The evaluation of sufficiency of communication with ETF 60

Graph 18: Evaluation of ETF's performance in introducing partner country organisations to new projects or initiatives outside their country 61
Graph 19: Evaluation of ETF's performance in facilitating the exchange of information and experience among donors 62
Graph 20: Evaluation of ETF's performance in aiding in implementation of new policy approaches in partner countries 65
Graph 21: Evaluation of ETF's performance in having concrete influence over the introduction of new objectives, priorities, strategy and policies in PCs 66
Graph 22: Evaluation of ETF's performance in helping to improve policy co-ordination processes among stakeholders and across levels of government 70

<u>**Tables:**</u>

Table 1: Summary of survey samples, numbers of respondents and response rates 19
Table 2: The overall population and the respondents of the survey by type of actor and by region 19
Table 3: Validity of the methodology 22
Table 4: ETF strategic objectives during the period 2006 – 2010 38
Table 5: Summary of main EU policy documents providing framework for ETF actions 40
Table 6: Achievement of ETF outputs by function in 2008 – 2010 75
Table 7: Comparison of ETF budget lines 2009-2011 79
Table 8: Dissemination of the results 126

Abbreviations

APA – Average Performance Achievement Rate

B&H– Bosnia and Herzegovina

CEA– Cost-effectiveness analysis

CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

DCI – Development Co-operation Instrument

EC – European Commission

EEAS – European External Action Service

EFSA – European Food Safety Authority HCD – Human Capital Development

ENPI - European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument

EQARF - European Quality Assurance Reference Framework

ETF – European Training Foundation

EU – European Union

FYR of Macedonia – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

GB–Governing board

HCD – Human Capital Development

IPA – Instrument for Pre-accession assistance

NQF – National Qualifications Framework

OPT – Occupied Palestinian Territory

SPSS– Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

VET – Vocational Education and Training

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Executive summary

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is a decentralised EU agency that aims 'to help transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU's external relations policy'.[1] The ETF has undergone major change in recent years, with significant structural reform internally and a reformulation of its mandate in 2008 to take a broader perspective on human capital development and lifelong learning. The ETF operates in 29 partner countries in three broad regions - Western Balkans and Turkey; Southern and Eastern Mediterranean; and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Activities are structured around a series of thematic projects that take place at the national, regional or interregional level, and are aimed at providing services to the partner countries, European Commission and External Action Service, and to a lesser extent, other beneficiaries.

The ETF has four main functions, namely:

- Supporting the Commission's sector programming and project cycle;
- Supporting partner countries with capacity building activities;
- Providing evidence-based policy analysis and supporting partner countries in developing their own national capacities;
- Facilitating the exchange of information and experience as well as networking.

This evaluation addresses the activities of the ETF and focuses on its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact and added value as an organisation, as well as the cost effectiveness of its operation. The evaluation used multiple sources of data and triangulated all findings. The main sources of data were:

1. Surveys – Large-scale surveys were conducted of both beneficiary groups (partner countries and EC/EEAS) and a self-assessment of ETF staff was also undertaken. Response rates were adequate to undertake statistical analyses of results and these findings were compared to other data sources.
2. Network analysis – stakeholders were asked to identify the key organisations they worked with in addressing HCD policy. These results were analysed using social network analysis to determine how central the ETF was to the policy process and whether they were able to create networks of stakeholders and introduce new actors to the process. These results helped to triangulate findings about the ETF's impact and added value in strengthening human capital development.
3. Case studies from four countries – Kazakhstan, FYR of Macedonia, Georgia and Tunisia – were chosen for in-depth analyses of how the ETF worked in different regions. Specific ETF interventions were examined in each case, and ETF action was analysed over the 5-year period under question.

---

[1] http://etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Who_we_are.

4. Documentary analysis – all ETF reports and relevant EU policy documents were analysed and country data was compiled to produce a clear picture of how the ETF operated in partner countries.
5. Interviews – the evaluation team interviewed representatives of all main groups of stakeholders involved with ETF actions at partner country and EU levels. This mainly involved interviews with the ETF, Commission, EEAS staff, and partner country stakeholders.

The evaluation identified several key issues:

1. *Organisational, thematic and procedural changes* - The ETF underwent significant change during the last five years. Since the 2008 recast of the ETF mandate, there has been significant organisational and operational reform. Key among these changes is the introduction of the Torino process, whereby the ETF aims to more accurately and easily identify, enumerate and address HCD issues in partner countries and develop their capacities for evidence-based policy making. While only one year's reports were available for this evaluation, Torino process outcomes were viewed favourably at the ETF level and produced a considerable amount of data and literature on partner country situations and policies. Internal organisational reform within the ETF took place to improve cost effectiveness of the organisation and to better address the multiple thematic areas covered by the ETF. Many of these changes took place very recently and as such are difficult to evaluate, but initial evidence is positive in suggesting that these reforms are addressing factors that require attention.

2. *Relevance*: The work of the ETF was seen to be highly relevant and responsive to beneficiaries, and struck a good balance between flexibility and strategic planning. Thematically, the ETF operated in areas relevant to beneficiaries. The area of strongest focus was still VET policy, but increasingly other areas such as entrepreneurship and labour markets were becoming relevant, which reflects the ETF's widening mandate. This broader focus also increased the expectations of beneficiaries regarding what the ETF could do. Process-wise, the types of ETF intervention were relevant to stakeholders, although different groups favoured different types of interventions. Capacity building and dissemination of information were most relevant at the partner country level, while the EC/EEAS found the provision of policy advice to be the most relevant ETF activity. This indicates that the ETF should tailor their procedural approach as much as possible to match the needs of different stakeholder groups.

3. *Coherence* - ETF actions were coherent internally, at the EU level and with partner country policies. At the EU level, the widened ETF mandate helped to keep ETF objectives in line with broad EU objectives in education, labour and HCD policy. While ETF objectives did not necessarily have to cohere with partner country

policies, in general ETF actions were adaptable to specific partner country needs. Internally, ETF strategic and operational objectives were coherent. However, there was no clear hierarchy in these objectives, and a clear strategy for moving from broad overarching objectives to more specific objectives (and actions to achieve these objectives) was not explicitly drawn in work programmes or country plans.

4. *Provision and Dissemination of Information, analyses and policy advice* – The ETF was very effective in providing information and advice to stakeholders. Beneficiaries saw the ETF as operating effectively, with the EC/EEAS particularly focused on the provision of policy advice by the ETF, and partner countries focused on the ETF as a source of knowledge and expertise. At the partner country level, not all stakeholders were fully aware of the extent of ETF knowledge and expertise, and as such did not utilise it to its full extent. Recent approaches by the ETF – including social networking and online methods, as well as development of thematic knowledge networks – have signalled a more proactive approach to disseminating information, which should help to raise awareness among stakeholders about the nature and extent of ETF actions.

5. *Capacity Building* - The ETF was effective in providing the knowledge and expertise necessary to lead to further development of partner country policy capacity, and this function was valued and relevant to beneficiaries. ETF actions tended to support this area of intervention, but it was not always clear to beneficiaries (particularly in partner countries) how ETF actions could contribute to capacity building at the national level. This connection should develop more fully over time. The ETF had the greatest influence in providing the necessary knowledge and expertise to lead to capacity development over a longer period of time – in essence, acting as a catalyst for developing partner country change and development. This fully fits with its mandate, but makes it more difficult for beneficiaries to separate out ETF effects from those of other interventions. This is not a problem in ETF approach, but indicates that the ETF should more clearly communicate with stakeholders regarding its objectives in capacity building, and set timelines for achieving these objectives.

6. *Networking and Knowledge Transfer* – This was the ETF's strongest area of influence and all stakeholders benefitted from this and saw that the ETF was a crucial actor in connecting stakeholders to the HCD process. Regional networks were seen as particularly useful and appreciated by partner countries. However, this was also an area where it was felt that the ETF could develop further activities. Other international stakeholders did not target activities at the regional level, and partner countries saw great value in regional programmes that allowed for the sharing of relevant good practice and collaboration and knowledge-sharing on HCD activities that often (to a certain extent) cut across national borders. The ETF was a central actor in the field of HCD and successfully created networking opportunities for the stakeholders with

whom they were in regular contact. These network connections acted both to better connect stakeholders already involved in the process and to introduce and involve new stakeholders in the HCD policy process. At the current time, this networking effect has not had a significant impact on improving coordination between stakeholders. However, similar to other areas, the networks created by the ETF should help to act as a catalyst in developing this coordination over a longer period of time.

While knowledge transfer is harder to measure, there was a high degree of stakeholder satisfaction with ETF work in the area, and most stakeholders consulted ETF agents or information regularly. Case studies and surveys showed that beneficiaries appreciated opportunities created by the ETF to share good practice nationally, regionally and with the EU and EU Member States. As with networking, the transfer of knowledge regionally was seen as useful and a unique ETF activity, and one that should receive more ETF attention. Given the non-binding nature of ETF work, this finding is very positive, as it shows the ETF to occupy an influential position in HCD work and highlights the importance of developing long-term contacts and relationships in the field. Case studies and surveys both showed that the ETF was more likely to have an impact when they had a long-term relationship with a country. This is not an easily measurable aspect of ETF work, but should be strongly promoted, as network analysis and case studies show. The work of the ETF is necessarily ongoing and iterative, and this evaluation has shown that longer term interventions produce a greater impact and added value.

7. *Impact and Added Value* – Longer-term impacts of ETF actions are hard to discern as clear causality cannot be established, given the ETF's mandate of non-binding interventions as a centre of expertise. Still, the ETF was shown to add significant value in the field of HCD at EU and partner country levels, and contribute strongly to development of policy in the area. The types of interventions that added the most value over the longer term were in the areas of capacity building and provision of information and knowledge. The ETF was central to the HCD policy process as a whole and added value by strengthening ties between stakeholders in the area. The main finding in the area of impact and added value is the crucial importance of long-term involvement of the ETF in partner countries in order to have an impact. Lengthy involvement with partner countries improves communication between the ETF and stakeholders, deepens knowledge and information transfer and allows for iterative development of specific policies over time. Therefore, it is vital that ETF interventions in partner countries (and with relevant EEAS/EC personnel) are ongoing and continuous in order to achieve impacts and add value.

8. *Cost Effectiveness* – The ETF significantly overhauled its internal structure, and this greatly improved efficiency within the organisation. Budgets did not change significantly in the evaluation period, but the ETF was more cost effective in utilising

these resources. Still, resource constraints somewhat hampered the ETF's ability to act. In terms of monitoring and evaluation, indicators focused strongly on process and immediate outputs, but did not measure outcomes of these outputs, or specific ways in which operational objectives and indicators were linked to broader strategic objectives. Partly, this is due to the nature of ETF work and the need for flexibility in approach, but more work can be done to measure the importance and effects of immediate outputs.

Several main conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from this evaluation:

	Conclusions	Recommendations
Relevance	• ETF actions were found to be relevant both thematically and procedurally to beneficiary needs, and the ETF was and flexible in addressing these needs. • Relevance of ETF actions was not consistent for all stakeholders, however. While the ETF worked mainly at the strategic level, a minority of stakeholders identified operational objectives as key to relevant action. • Regionally, the ETF was required to operate in a variety of situations, ranging from relatively well-developed HCD policies to situations in which HCD was a new concept. • In addition, different groups of stakeholders favoured different ETF interventions, and often perceived ETF actions differently. • Given the ETF mandate, the organisation must balance strategic objectives with a flexible approach to beneficiary requests. As a whole, the ETF strikes a good balance between flexibility and strategic planning.	• The ETF should be more proactive in clarifying its role to stakeholders with whom they work, and the ways in which the ETF can provide support. In addition, the ETF should actively promote their work and share examples of success with EC/EEAS and partner country stakeholders. This evaluation shows that the ETF has performed very well in developing HCD policy at all levels, but beneficiaries are not always aware of this impact. While much of this information is shared passively (via website), the ETF can take a more proactive stance in making EU- and partner country-level stakeholders aware of their success and impact in several ways: - A clear description of possible ETF actions, including clarification of their strategic (rather than operational) role in partner countries and the EU; - The goals of the ETF at EU and partner country levels, and how ETF actions can contribute to improving partner country HCD policy; - A description of areas in which the ETF can provide support, and the form this support can take; - Explanation of how areas of ETF action are chosen and prioritised; - Examples of effective and successful ETF actions. Much of this information can be adapted from existing data and sources. However, this evaluation shows that beneficiaries do not always seek this information out, so the ETF should be proactive in illustrating their effect and impact. • While the ETF role is clearly defined at the policy level (where it primarily operates) and with state-level actors (with whom they have long-standing contact), the ETF role vis-a-vis social partners and NGOs is less clear. The ETF should clarify its objectives for including different groups of stakeholders, and how it intends to engage these groups. This will aid the ETF in engaging with these groups, and help to manage expectations of stakeholders regarding ETF actions.

	Conclusions	Recommendations
Coherence	• ETF actions were internally coherent, as well as being coherent with broader EU objectives and most partner country objectives. • A clear hierarchy between strategic and operational ETF objectives was not clearly developed in mid-term perspectives and annual work plans. Specific ways of translating strategic objectives into action were not clearly stated in planning documents.	• Annual work programmes and country plans should identify specific areas of action – both thematically and procedurally – and clearly state how these actions contribute to wider strategic objectives of the ETF. This would help to more clearly identify ETF progress and clarify how ETF processes contribute to operational change, while still allowing for flexibility in approach.
Effectiveness	• The ETF was highly effective in its main roles of: - Provision and dissemination of information, analyses and policy advice; - Capacity building; - Networking and knowledge transfer. • Information dissemination has evolved over the evaluation period, and is now making greater use of social media and online opportunities to share information. While significant amounts of information are shared, not all stakeholder groups are clear on the nature or extent of ETF information and action. • Capacity building was a central objective of the ETF, and it was effective in helping to develop knowledge and expertise that could lead to greater partner country capacity in HCD. Still, it was difficult to distinguish how effective the ETF was in building capacity, as a picture of how ETF actions should contribute to capacity development – and a clear definition of capacity building – were not established. • The ETF performed most strongly in networking and knowledge transfer, and these activities were highly valued by beneficiaries. Regional networks were especially valued, and an approach where the ETF added significant value and was particularly distinctive from other international actors in the area. The creation of separate thematic and geographic departments offers potential to strengthen further regional initiatives in terms of networking and policy learning between stakeholders.	• Particularly with stakeholder groups more recently engaged by the ETF (ie. social partners and NGOs), a more proactive approach to information dissemination should be undertaken in order to inform these groups about the nature and extent of ETF action. Care must be taken to properly target and refine this information in a way that avoids information overload for stakeholders. Social networking platforms and/or methods of sharing information should be further examined as a potential way to develop closer connections not only between the ETF and beneficiaries, but also between beneficiaries themselves. • The ETF should continue to work closely and continuously with partner country stakeholders to develop a strategy for how ETF actions and knowledge development can be utilised to improve capacity and increase partner country ownership over the policy process. • The ETF has performed strongly in developing networks of stakeholders. New approaches recently developed by the ETF – such as thematic networks – should be expanded to other areas as resources permit. This will help to grow networks and, in time, increase the function of these networks to help coordinate networks and improve communication between stakeholders. In addition, these networks should include short-term feedback mechanisms to improve day-to-day contact between the ETF and partner country stakeholders. • Regional programmes and initiatives should continue to be developed to the greatest extent possible, to support networking and policy learning between stakeholders.

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

	Conclusions	Recommendations
Impact and Added Value	• Overall, the ETF performs very well, given its wide mandate and limited resources. There has been significant effort in the organisation over the last five years to improve operations, and this is already becoming evident in its actions and results. While measureable and quantifiable results are difficult to ascertain given the ETF's mandate as a centre of expertise, strong and varied qualitative evidence clearly shows the significant value of ETF work at EU and partner country levels.	• Long-term engagement by the ETF at the partner country level is absolutely essential in ensuring impact and added value for ETF actions. Broadly, this means that the ETF should maintain presence in all partner countries – and be given adequate resources to do so – even if immediate results are not evident. Internally, the ETF should, to as great an extent as possible, maintain consistency at the partner country level by matching staff skills with particular thematic and geographic areas. Country managers should be rotated infrequently in order to allow them to build up sufficient knowledge and connections at the partner country level, and non-political stakeholders should be engaged to help to mitigate disruptions created by political change.
Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness	• ETF has a system of useful performance indicators, which should be kept stable to enable measuring the progress of the organisation over the years. However, the existing indicators focus solely on immediate outputs. Therefore, the progress of ETF as an organisation towards its broader objectives is not being monitored in a systematic way. • Not only is the ETF adding good value, but it is also cost-effective in doing so. Given its vast thematic mandate, large geographical area and relatively modest budget (only a small fraction of overall EU HCD financial assistance to the region), the ETF has proven to be flexible in the past in deploying its support where EU institutions and Governing Board deemed it was most necessary. As shown in other sections, this flexibility is a positive aspect of the ETF approach, as it allows it to be responsive, relevant and effective to beneficiary needs. However, there is a certain trade-off between this flexibility and maintaining strategic clarity, networks, support and a constant presence in all partner countries. In particular, over the last year ETF resources were strained when it tried to respond to demand for more intensive and focused support in some partner countries in the South and East Mediterranean that are undergoing political transition.	• ETF performance indicators should be carefully extended to incorporate results level indicators, e.g. partner country beneficiary satisfaction with services provided by ETF, the actual use of ETF expertise by the beneficiaries in their work, etc. Collection of performance monitoring information should be extended accordingly. • The EU should take advantage of any opening windows of opportunity presented in partner countries or regions and make full use of the ETF and its stakeholder network to deliver policy support and institutional capacity building in areas particularly open to support and reform. The EU should consider increasing ETF budget allocation to support EU priority partner countries when specific opportunities for increased impact are presented. Countries where these windows of opportunity are opened through transition or policy reform can make use of temporary increases in ETF support, perhaps through the deployment of additional staff and resources in order to take advantage of these openings for significant and faster ETF (and EU) impact.

Introduction

This final evaluation report covers the activities and governance of the European Training Foundation (ETF) from 2006-2010. It sets out the background and methodology of the evaluation and provides an in-depth analysis of ETF actions, looking both broadly at its overall objectives and priorities and more narrowly and in-depth at its actions in specific partner countries. The analysis directly addresses questions of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, added value and efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the ETF. The evaluation as a whole aims to:

1. Provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the extent to which the commitments made by the Foundation in its Work Programmes (2006-2010) have been achieved;
2. Provide an assessment of the extent to which the Foundation has evolved under its new mandate;
3. Provide useful lessons and recommendations for the challenges facing the Foundation in the forthcoming programming period 2014-17.

The report first provides a brief overview of the ETF and the main changes that have occurred since 2006, when the last evaluation occurred. The subsequent chapter of the report summarise the methodology of the assignment, including the key sources of evidence that are used. The report then looks at results and how the ETF has evolved in five areas: relevance; coherence; effectiveness; impact and added value; and efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The report ends with conclusions and recommendations about future ETF work and action. Technical details of the evaluation are provided in the annexes.

1. The ETF: 2006-2010

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is a decentralised EU agency based in Torino, Italy. Its mission is 'to help transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU's external relations policy'.[2] In 2008, the ETF's mandate was reformulated in a holistic manner to encompass a broader perspective of human capital development and lifelong learning. This recast of the mandate will be explored in greater detail below.

The European Training Foundation is governed by a Board comprising one representative from each EU Member State, three representatives of the Commission as well as three non-

[2] http://etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Who_we_are.

voting experts appointed by the European Parliament. In addition, three representatives of the partner countries may attend meetings of the Governing Board as observers. The Board is chaired by one of the representatives of the Commission, the Director General of DG EAC. The agency is managed by the Director, who has a five-year mandate and who reports to the Governing Board.

The ETF is structured into departments and units, and in 2011 underwent significant structural reform. Now, the geographic operations department is subdivided into units that represent three different geographic areas: Western Balkans and Turkey; Southern and Eastern Mediterranean; and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The evidence-based policy making and thematic departments provide expertise for the operations in the partner countries and the other three departments (administration; planning, monitoring and evaluation; communication) support them.

ETF activities are described and expanded in greater detail through annual work programmes and in mid-term perspectives. At the partner country level, country plans elaborate what actions the ETF will undertake. Activities are structured around a series of thematic projects that take place at the national, regional or inter-regional level. ETF activities are aimed at providing services to the partner countries, European Commission and, to a lesser extent, the EU Member States.

The ETF has four main functions, namely:

- Supporting the Commission's sector programming and project cycle;
- Supporting partner countries with capacity building activities;
- Providing evidence-based policy analysis and supporting partner countries in developing their own national capacities;
- Facilitating the exchange of information and experience as well as networking.

Since the previous external evaluation in 2006, significant changes have been undertaken in the ETF. In 2008, the EU regulation governing the ETF was recast,[3] creating a new mandate for the ETF to address human capital development issues, which widened its formal scope beyond vocational education and training to include issues such as labour market needs and enterprise development. In addition, the new mandate allowed for the geographic scope of the ETF to be expanded if necessary. The new regulation did not include any programme management functions for the ETF, consolidating its role as a centre of policy expertise in human capital development for EU external policies. As a result, the ETF undertook significant reform of its internal structures starting in 2008. Most recently, the Operations Department was split into three separate departments – the Thematic Expertise Development Department, the Geographical Operations Department and the Evidence-based Policy Making

[3] REGULATION (EC) No 1339/2008 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 December 2008 establishing a European Training Foundation (recast).

Department. While this restructuring is not addressed comprehensively in this report, the conclusions and recommendations presented herein are mindful of these recent developments.

In general, changes to the ETF over the past five years have been noticed by its beneficiaries in the partner countries,[4] and these changes have been seen as favourable.[5] In addition, this has led to greater involvement of its beneficiaries in the European Commission and External Action Service with the ETF.[6] In all sections, brief introductory paragraphs highlight where the ETF's performance as evaluated in 2006 to provide some context, highlighting areas of particular importance to the current evaluation. In addition to broader analyses, these sections then determine whether progress has been made in addressing the issues raised by earlier evaluations.

2. Methodology

2.1. The logic of ETF Intervention

The intervention logic refers to the operations of the ETF in delivering its key services to external actors and excludes the elaborate internal management and support activities. Two main lines of ETF interventions can be distinguished. The first line is to support partner countries in improving their human capital development policies, which includes:

- Analysis of needs and constraints of partner countries;
- Development of partner country capacity to analyse, design, implement and review human capital development policies;
- Facilitation of exchange of experience between the EU and the partner countries and among the partner countries themselves;
- Dissemination of findings and good practices to partner countries and other actors helping them.

The second line of intervention is to support EU institutions and actors (most importantly the European Commission and External Action Service) in deploying external policy instruments in the field of human capital development in partner countries, which includes:

- Support and guidance to the EU external policy instrument programming cycle;

[4] 67% (112 of 168) partner country respondents felt that the ETF had changed. Methodology of the surveys and their main findings are presented in subsequent chapters.

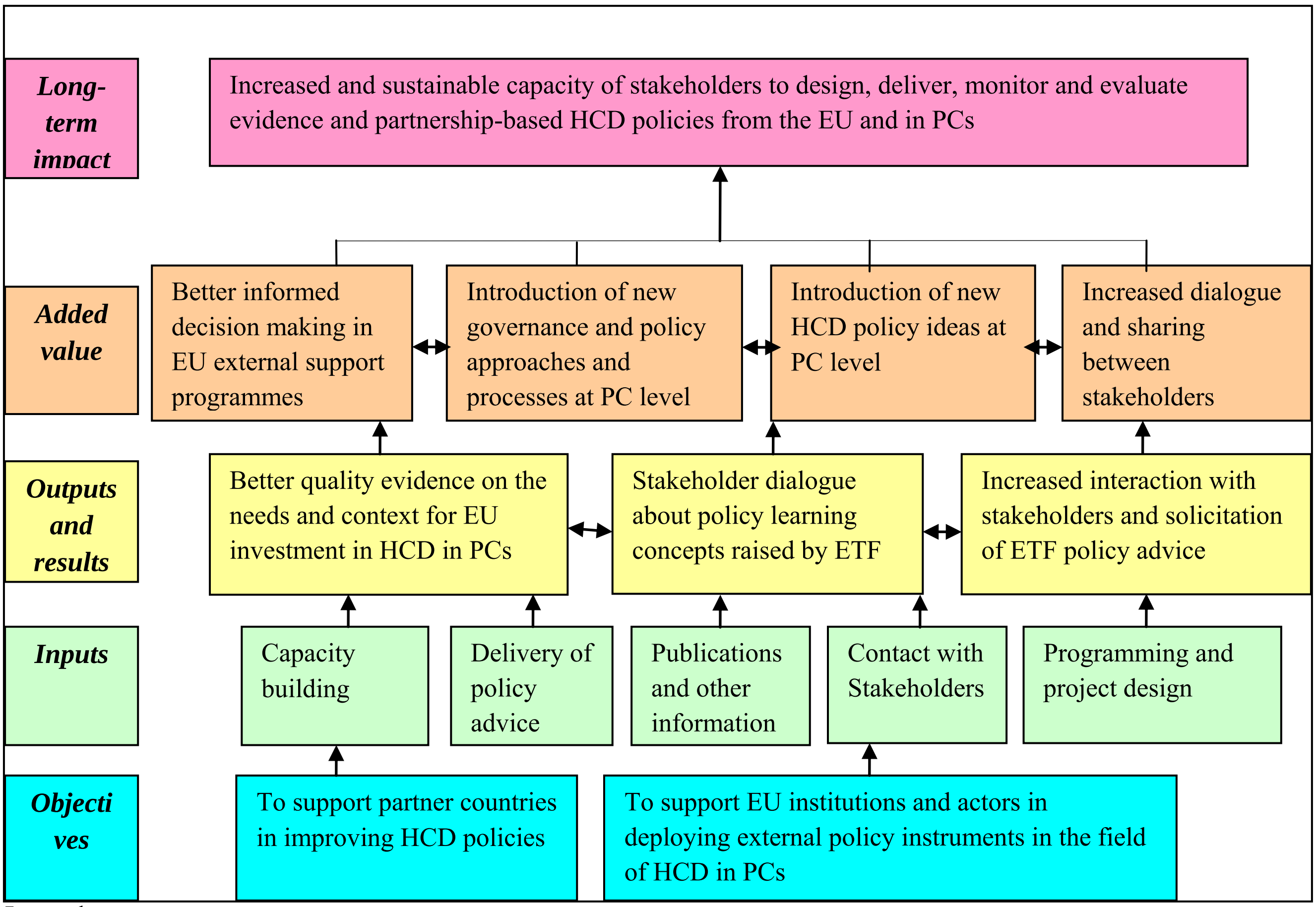
[5] 18 out of 19 respondents to the EC/EEAS survey deemed that their activity with the ETF has increased over the past five years and that this change was positive.

[6] 26 of 29 EC/EEAS respondents felt their involvement with the ETF had increased or been maintained.

- Analysis of the overall effectiveness of EU external technical assistance to the partner countries in the field of human capital development.

Both interventions are very closely interconnected. Knowledge, skills and competences generated through interaction with partner countries and involvement of other actors sharing their policy expertise (such as EU Member States and international organisations including UNESCO, ILO, OECD and others) are utilised in supporting EU institutions and actors, while the demand for ETF support from the EU institutions and actors helps to guide the activities of the ETF in partner countries and its interaction with other actors. The summary intervention logic of the ETF is provided in the figure below. Evaluation questions and detailed evaluation judgement criteria are elaborated in the subsequent chapter.

Figure 1: Summary intervention logic of ETF



Legend: HCD – Human capital development; PC – Partner country.

Source: developed by the authors

2.2. Sources of data and research tools

The report draws on several sources. A large-scale survey was undertaken of partner countries, European Commission and European External Action Service personnel who work with the ETF, as well as ETF operations staff. Among other questions, the respondents were asked to name their top contacts in their job, and results were used to conduct social network analysis on connections between stakeholders. In addition desk research was carried out to corroborate findings at all stages of the evaluation and interviews were conducted with ETF managerial staff, selected partner countries and EC/EEAS staff. Finally, four specific ETF projects in four partner countries were analysed in depth. Results were triangulated in all cases, supported by at least two sources of evidence and more when possible.

2.2.1. Surveys and statistical analysis

Three separate but complementary surveys were carried out, focusing on two groups of beneficiaries (partner countries and the European External Action Service/European Commission) and a survey of ETF operations expert personnel that provide services to beneficiaries (support staff excluded). The general population of the ETF beneficiaries was drawn from the ETF database of working contacts and all 100% were included into survey samples. Surveys were 24 – 29 questions long (not including sub-questions), and asked for respondents' views on a variety of topics related to ETF performance, the ways in which they engage with and use ETF resources and how the ETF fits into their broader view of human capital development. In addition, respondents were asked a number of questions identifying their role(s) in the process, in order to better gauge exactly where and how the ETF has an impact.[7] The questionnaires for partner country beneficiaries were provided in English, French and Russian. Surveys were conducted online, but questionnaires were also sent to some respondents via e-mail when requested. Survey responses were anonymised and all three surveys were piloted with small samples of each target group and amended based on any comments received before they were sent to the full populations.

The summary of survey samples, numbers of respondents and response rates are provided in the table below. The response rate of ETF operations personnel survey was exceptionally high, exceeding 70%.[8] The surveys of ETF beneficiaries were less successful in terms of response rates, but still the rates are considered to be good – both well above 20%. Even though the response rate of partner country beneficiaries was the lowest,[9] the overall response rate was sufficiently high (26.5%). In addition to response rate, the validity of the results of online surveys ultimately relies on the representativeness of the respondents in relation to the overall population. The table below illustrates that the respondents to the surveys were representative of the population in terms of both regions and types of actors. Only in the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood regions was the response rate slightly lower than representative. Most likely this difference is related to issues of political stability in the area.

[7] The full texts of all the questionnaires are provided in the annex.

[8] 30% is usually considered an adequate response rate for online surveys.

[9] In some countries, only one or two responses were received. In addition, the events of the Arab Spring likely had a negative impact on response rates in the affected countries.

Table 1: Summary of survey samples, numbers of respondents and response rates

<table>
<tr><th>Organisations and respondents surveyed</th><th>Sample / Population</th><th colspan="2">No. of respondents</th><th>Response rate</th></tr>
<tr><td>ETF operations (expert) personnel</td><td>40</td><td colspan="2">29</td><td>72.5%</td></tr>
<tr><td>ETF beneficiaries from EEAS incl. EU delegations</td><td rowspan="2">113</td><td rowspan="2">32</td><td>26</td><td rowspan="2">28.32%</td></tr>
<tr><td>ETF beneficiaries from EC</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>ETF beneficiaries from PCs</td><td>787</td><td colspan="2">209</td><td>26.5%</td></tr>
</table>

Table 2: The overall population and the respondents of the survey by type of actor and by region

Region/Type of actor	Overall population of the survey		Respondents of the survey	
	Size of population	% of the total population	No. of respondents	% of the total respondents
EU candidate countries	96	12.2%	31	14.8%
Western Balkans	169	21.5%	49	24%
Eastern Europe & Russia	137	17.4%	55	27%
Central Asia	72	9.2%	15	7.4%
Southern Mediterranean	313	39.7%	54	26.5%
Missing			5	2.4
Total	*787*	*100*	*209*	*100*
State/public administration	424	53.9%	115	55%
Social partners	106	13.5%	33	15.8%
Independent researchers/NGOs	221	28%	53	25.4%
Unknown	36	4.6%	8	3.8%
Total	*787*	*100*	*209*	*100*

Statistical analysis of partner country survey data was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and aimed to uncover any linkages between the variables measured in the surveys. The analysis was based on the assumption that independent variables include a set of basic characteristics of the respondents: country and region where the respondent works, type of actor he/she represents, work experience with the ETF, work experience within their organisation, role of his/her organisation in human resource development and the position of the respondent within the organisation. However, in some cases where other possible linkages were explored, attempts were made to verify the plausibility of the assumption of these linkages through cross-tabulation.

2.2.2. Interviews

In order to add depth to information collected through surveys and case studies, interviews were carried out in partner countries, the ETF, the European Commission and External Action Service. Interviews were semi-structured, and whenever possible conducted face to face. Interviews were also completed for specific partner country case studies, which addressed ETF actions in that country as well as looking at a broader view of ETF actions overall. The list of interviewees is provided in the Annexes.

2.2.3. Network analysis

Included in the surveys was a question asking respondents to identify their most important contacts in the field of human capital development. Using this data, social network analysis was used to construct a network of actors involved in the field of human capital development at the European and partner country level. Relational ties between all actors were used to determine the centrality of stakeholders to the HCD process, and the placement of the ETF in this network was quantified. Measurements ascertained how tightly bound the network was (density of connections), how influential actors were to the process (centrality of actors) and other measurements. Network analysis was used to both strengthen and validate other findings in the evaluation and to provide insight into the nature of relations between the ETF and its beneficiaries.

2.2.4. Case studies

In-depth case studies were undertaken in four countries representing the four regions targeted by different EU external policy instruments and ETF actions: IPA, ENPI Eastern neighbourhood, ENPI Southern neighbourhood, and DCI. These countries were chosen to be representative of the region in terms of socio-economic context and level of democratisation.[10] The four countries chosen were:

- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR of Macedonia) (IPA);
- Georgia (Eastern ENPI);
- Tunisia (Southern ENPI);
- Kazakhstan (DCI).

In each country case, one relevant thematic area targeted by one or more projects within the ETF's broader work was chosen and examined in detail. Using contribution analysis, work in these specific HCD issues in each country was analysed to determine how much and in what ways ETF actions contributed to further development of national policy in the area. This helps to determine the relevance, effectiveness and added value of the ETF in benefiting

[10] Please note: the study was undertaken while the Arab Spring was underway. While this affected data collection in Tunisia, expert opinion felt that it would not have a significant effect on the results of this case study, which were undertaken mainly at the bureaucratic level.

partner country stakeholders. These results were compared to survey results and network data to triangulate evaluation findings.

2.2.5. Analysis of monitoring and other secondary data

Desk research formed a core component of background research for this analysis and was also used at later stages in the analysis as a source of data, context and evidence of ETF activities. The sources included EU policy documents, ETF corporate performance data, reports and other relevant documents and literature in the field. This data was used to support findings developed from other sources.

2.2.6. Cost effectiveness analysis

Cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) derives a ratio of cost per unit of observed outcome as a summary measure. In this evaluation, a modified CEA framework was used because the causal chain between ETF inputs and activities (cost side) and macro changes in partner countries (ultimate expected outcome) is too long to be examined in CEA. Instead the analysis focused on the immediate ETF outputs (or outcomes whenever available) and their cost obtained from corporate performance data. The analysis examined whether the ETF was able to maximise its outputs and/or minimise their cost. The analysis was limited due to constant changes in the ETF planning and reporting system during the evaluated period, which prevented comparison of ETF unit costs from year to year. In addition, the nature of ETF interventions required a more qualitative approach to understanding cost-effectiveness.

2.2.7. Validity of the methodology

The methodological design of this evaluation is both internally and externally valid. Internally, the evaluation was tailored to the specificities of the ETF and designed to incorporate data from a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative sources in order to provide sufficient breadth and depth to the evaluation, as well as to triangulate all findings. Surveys, network analysis and case studies provide a strong methodological underpinning to understand how ETF actions were relevant, coherent, effective and added value to partner countries and at the EU level. These three main methods were further augmented by interviews at all levels, as well as extensive desk research. Contribution analysis (mostly used in case studies, but also shaping survey questionnaires) provided an analytical framework to understand how the ETF added to HCD policy and provided a way to overcome issues of establishing causation by instead examining net benefits of ETF actions as compared to no action.

The individual methods used are also valid to varying degrees. The survey was sent to the entire population in question, which eliminated any chance of sampling error. Case studies covered all geographic areas targeted by the ETF, and were carefully selected to take into account political, economic and social factors that may have an effect on ETF work. Network analysis mapped the connections between nearly 500 actors, providing an extensive and detailed view of interactions between stakeholders. Cost effectiveness analysis could not be carried out in a traditional manner, as unit costs cannot be directly linked to outcomes. Therefore, a more global approach to cost effectiveness was used, which took into account more qualitative measures, as well as all output indicators. Organisational and procedural changes over the past five years were taken into account as well, in order to provide a relative picture of ETF performance now as compared to earlier periods.

Identifying stakeholders in HCD proved to be the biggest impediment to developing a comprehensively valid methodology. Therefore, this evaluation focused on the ETF's work only in regard to stakeholders with whom it is regularly in contact. Because of the extensiveness of ETF work (29 partner countries, working at national and EU levels), a comprehensive analysis of ETF's work in the area of HCD as a whole, or how it would compare to alternative models of delivery, was impossible. Instead, this evaluation focused on how well the ETF performed only in interacting with its regular contacts. The results of this study cannot, however, be extended to understanding how the ETF operates with all HCD stakeholders and policies, as the conditions of those stakeholders not directly involved with the ETF were not considered.

While the nature of the ETF's work precludes true external validity (as direct causation cannot be established), steps were taken to ensure that effects of ETF actions could not be attributable to other factors. The use of contribution analysis in this evaluation enabled the evaluators to more accurately separate out how – and how much – the ETF contributed to specific outcomes at partner country levels. This method was utilised mostly in case studies, but also informed the other research methods used. Triangulation of findings helped to ensure that ETF effects were evident from numerous angles and likely attributable to ETF actions. Whenever possible, specific examples of concrete ETF impact (mostly found in case studies) were provided as examples to support the triangulated findings.

Table 3: Validity of the methodology

Evaluation Area	Assessment of Evidence Used	Explanation
Relevance (needs and responsiveness)	**STRONG** 1. Survey results; 2. Case studies; 3. Documentary analysis; 4. Interviews.	Findings were supported by numerous sources in all cases. Extensive survey questions targeted different ideas of relevance (thematic and procedural) and responsiveness. Case studies, interviews and documentary analysis provided depth and triangulation for relevance at both EC/EEAS and partner country levels.
Coherence (internal, EU-level, effect of mandate)	**MEDIUM** 1. Documentary analysis; 2. Survey results.	Analysis of ETF and EU strategic documents formed the basis for evaluation of relevance, with objectives compared within the ETF and with EU-level objectives. These findings were supported with qualitative ETF/beneficiary assessments of the complementarity of ETF

Evaluation Area	Assessment of Evidence Used	Explanation
		actions with other EU- and non-EU activities.
Effectiveness (objectives and change in mandate)	**STRONG** 1. Survey results; 2. Documentary analysis 3. Case studies; 4. Interviews.	Extensive survey questions evaluated ETF effectiveness in numerous areas and from different angles. Results were compared across beneficiary groups and ETF self-assessment. Documentary analysis of ETF actions and outputs supported survey results, and findings were compared to previous evaluations in order to determine ETF progress. Case studies and interviews provided more support to further deepen and explain findings.
Impact and added value (measureable impact and uniqueness of ETF contributions)	**MEDIUM/STRONG** 1. Case studies; 2. Survey results; 3. Network analysis; 4. Documentary analysis.	In-depth case studies in four countries provided detailed analyses of specific ETF interventions over a five-year period. Survey questions supported this by establishing qualitative assessment of the nature, extent and quality of ETF change in the preceding five-year period. Finally, network analysis established the centrality of ETF to the HCD process and the added value of ETF actions in improving stakeholder coordination and interaction. Comparison to previous evaluations helped to establish ETF impact in the past five years. The most significant impediment was the difficulty in establishing causation; the evaluation addressed this by focusing on ETF *contribution* to concrete change, which acknowledged other causal factors while still identifying specific ETF impact and added value.
Efficiency and cost-effectiveness	**MEDIUM/WEAK** 1. ETF corporate indicators, strategic and operational documents; 2. ETF outputs and budget; 3. Interviews.	The nature of ETF's work makes costs per unit difficult to establish. Changes in corporate indicators over the evaluation period made comparison between years difficult. The evaluation overcame these shortcomings by blending traditional cost-effectiveness measures (where available) with qualitative assessment of the efficiency of ETF operations given relative size of budget. In contrast to analysis of cost-effectiveness for which the evidence was scarce, the analysis of ETF internal governance reforms and efficiency gains was well supported by ETF performance data and interviews.

3. Evaluation findings

3.1. Relevance

- ETF relevance and responsiveness were both rated very highly by both partner countries and EC/EEAS beneficiaries, thematically and in terms of approach.
- Different stakeholders valued different interventions – capacity building and information dissemination were most appreciated in partner countries, while the EC/EEAS policy advice and formulation were most relevant.
- Beneficiaries were not always clear on what level ETF operates, with partner countries more likely to find operational objectives more relevant than policy-level advice. The ETF should make it clear to beneficiaries what they can and cannot do.
- The ETF was seen to be highly flexible and responsive to needs. This is a positive finding, although care should be taken to balance this with clear priorities on issues and objectives.
- The ETF's response to feedback was also positive in the long-term, but there were few short-term mechanisms in place for the ETF to receive feedback.

Relevance of ETF actions relates specifically to answering several evaluation questions:

1. To what extent are the activities of the ETF in line with the needs of beneficiaries (both partner countries and EC/EEAS) in regard to vocational education and training system development, labour market needs and employability and education and business partnerships?
2. Is the mixture of ETF activities appropriate and responsive to the relative needs of its main beneficiaries?

There are two aspects related to relevance: the ETF must be both relevant to beneficiary needs (of both partner countries and European Union institutions and actors), as well as be relevant in how those needs are addressed. In addressing needs in a relevant way, the ETF must also be responsive to changing needs of beneficiaries. Related to this, the ETF should be clear on what needs they can and will address, thus clarifying *how* they can be relevant to the needs of beneficiaries.

This involves knowledge of the thematic needs of beneficiaries, as well as potential ETF actions to address these needs. Several factors need to be in place to do so. First, the ETF must be able to identify the needs of its beneficiaries and must have developed a clear framework for deciding to respond (or not) to these requirements. As part of this, the scope of

ETF activities (within its mandate) should be wide enough to accommodate different needs. Second, solicitation of ETF knowledge on HCD issues shows that beneficiaries see the ETF to be a useful and relevant source. This, in turn, should be met by responsiveness of the ETF to these requests, in a way that is able to prioritise the most urgent and/or appropriate places for ETF action. If these factors are in place and beneficiaries feel that ETF actions are relevant, we would expect that there would be a low demand for change to ETF's approach to identification of needs and responsiveness to these needs. This section looks at relevance both at partner country and EU levels and draws mainly on surveys, case studies and desk research of country reports and ETF documents.

Previous evaluations of the ETF highlighted some factors regarding the relevance of ETF's work, although were produced too early to take into account the significant change in mandate in 2008. In 2006, there was some concern that the EC's focus on accession countries hampered ETF work in the development region. In certain cases, national ownership of VET activities was seen to be weak, and this represented another factor (external to ETF's work) that restricted the relevance of ETF actions. The fit between ETF thematic remit and national priorities was noted as a relevant issue where a broader mandate would prove useful in allowing the ETF to better meet partner country needs. Finally, the importance of flexibility and regional expertise in improving relevance and responsiveness was also noted. More broadly, evaluations noted that relevance was generally strong in decentralised agencies, although in those covering a broad remit – such as the ETF - responsiveness and prioritisation could be hampered by their need to address a wide range of issues.

3.1.1. Relevance to beneficiary needs

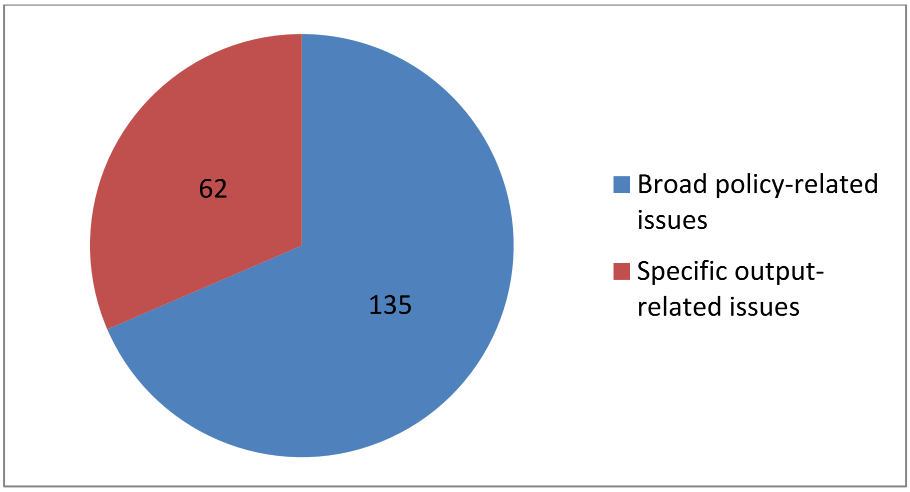
Beneficiaries responded very positively in all measures of relevance, to varying degrees. The introduction of the new mandate has broadened the scope of thematic issues covered by the ETF and this is reflected in a wider range of activities undertaken in partner countries. Positively, this has allowed the ETF to work more freely in areas of interest to beneficiaries, although this broadening of need has also broadened the demands placed on the ETF.

Recent areas of action by the ETF include education, business and the labour market (Albania, Armenia, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Georgia, Israel, Kosovo, Montenegro, OPT, Serbia, Turkey), inclusive education (Albania, B&H, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia), human capital development and employability (Mediterranean), qualifications and quality assurance (Mediterranean), the role of social partners in the policy process (Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey), women and work (Egypt, FYR of Macedonia, Jordan), and human resources development and migration (Albania, Egypt, Moldova, Tunisia, Ukraine), among others. Many of these address issues relating to the expanded new mandate (such as labour market issues), but some of the new thematic areas introduced in the 2008 recast of the mandate were already receiving some attention from the ETF prior to the change. This broader scope also has an effect on the evaluation of needs, both at the ETF level and with beneficiaries, as a larger range of activities leads to increased expectations, which can have an effect on how well these needs are perceived to have been met. With no increase in overall ETF funding to implement an extended mandate, the ETF faced a challenge to manage increased expectations that inevitably had to be prioritised and any additional needs could only be met as a result of efficiency gains analysed in chapter 3.5.2 of this report.

In ETF country reports, partner countries identified a wide variety of needs related to HCD. While most partner countries were able to identify clear and specific needs, many others only identified broad areas that required intervention. In regard to specific issues identified by countries, this often varied depending on the region in question. Social inclusion was a key issue addressed by the ETF and was also prioritised by partner countries, mostly in the IPA region, as it is a clear part of accession requirements.

However, it should be noted that the needs of different stakeholder groups are not homogeneous, and this becomes increasingly important as the ETF starts to target groups beyond state officials and the Commission. For example, the most important needs expressed by the EC/EEAS dealt with broad policy issues and/or the need for institutional adaptation.[11] ETF staff also, for the most part, saw the most significant needs as being broad policy-related issues. Partner country stakeholders, though, showed a much stronger focus on very specific output-related issues than the ETF or EC/EEAS (see Graph below).

Graph 1: The level of needs expressed in Partner Countries

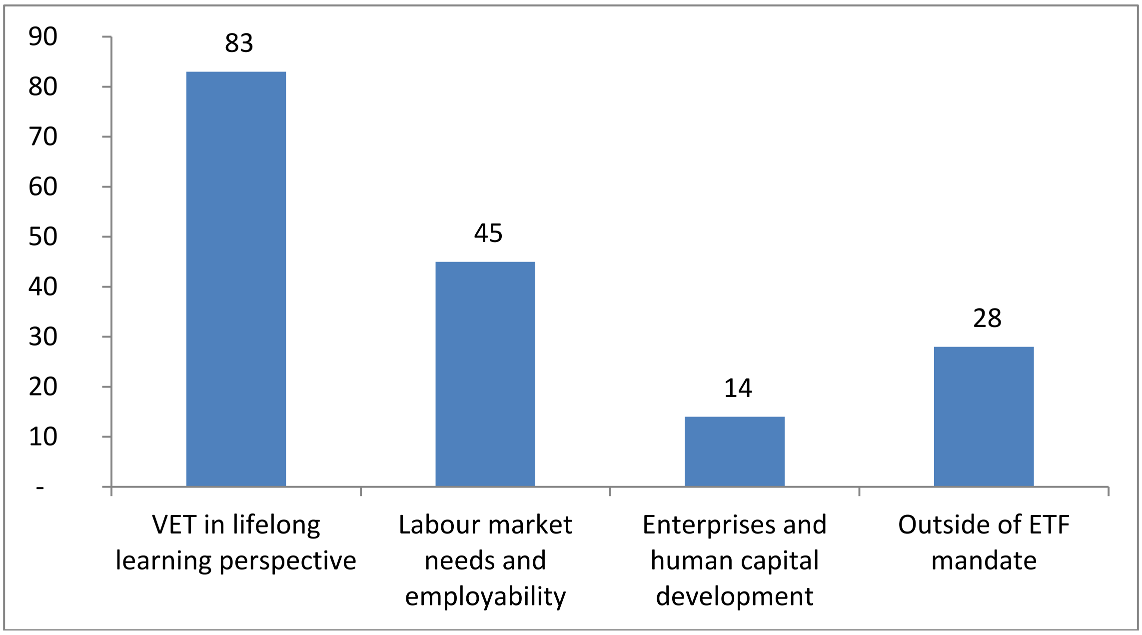


The widening of the ETF mandate was recognised by the ETF and beneficiaries alike as also widening the scope of potential ETF actions. In partner countries, while VET issues were still the most central need identified by stakeholders, labour market issues and enterprise role in human capital development issues also accounted for nearly 42% of the needs identified that

[11] Note, needs were only quantified for partner country responses, as ETF and EC/EEAS surveys were too small to develop any reliable descriptive statistics.

fell within the ETF mandate. However, 16.5% of respondents identified needs that fell outside of the ETF mandate, indicating some mismatch between partner country expectations and ETF areas of activity.

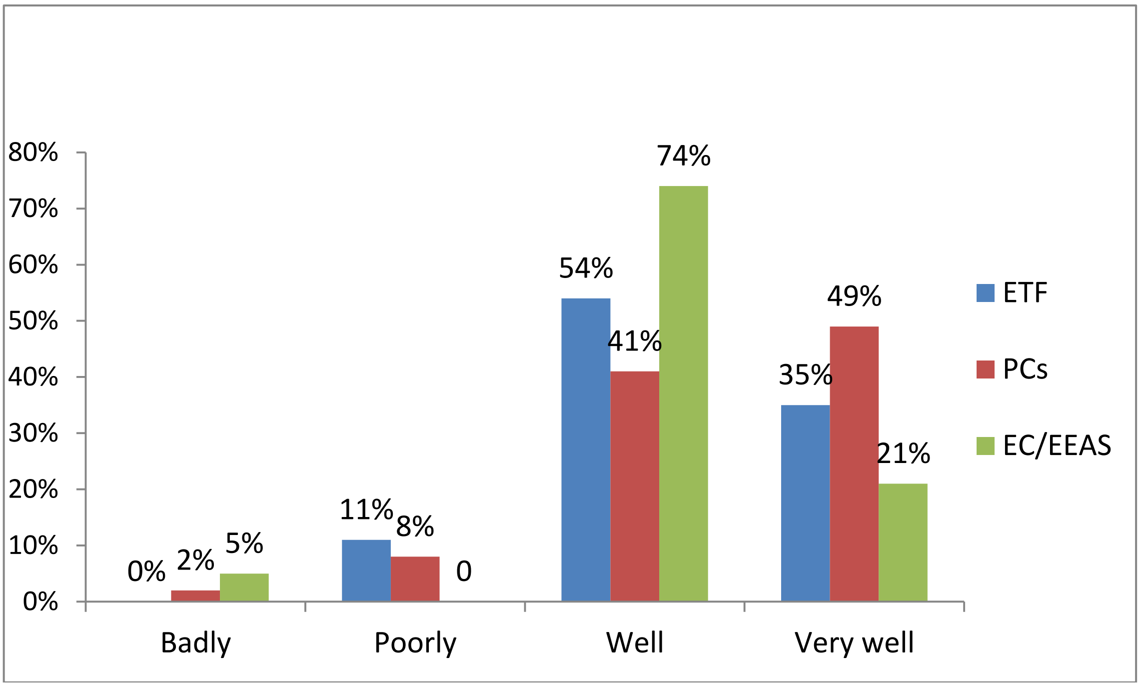
Graph 2: Thematic areas of clearly expressed needs in Partner Countries[12]



A large majority of partner country stakeholders (71.6%) felt that the ETF performed well or very well in adhering to their thematic needs, and these strong results were reflected by EC/EEAS staff as well. In addition, this roughly reflected the ETF staff's self-assessment of their ability to meet country's needs (25/30). Case studies generally supported this view. Thematic issues addressed by the ETF were seen to be important, although all needs expressed by partner country stakeholders were not necessarily addressed. However, those issues addressed by the ETF were seen to be relevant.

[12] Thematic areas that fell outside the ETF mandate included issues such as health care reform, combating organised crime, and environmental protection.

Graph 3: Evaluation of ETF's adherence to country's/region's needs



However, some beneficiaries were unclear on the extent to which the ETF was and should be responsive to their needs. 20.7% of partner country respondents did not know how well the ETF met their needs or felt that the ETF did not take action to address their needs. This indicates a need for the ETF to more clearly outline to beneficiaries what they can and cannot do, and how these needs can be assessed at an ETF level.

Box 1: Summary of case study findings on the ETF's adherence to the countries' needs

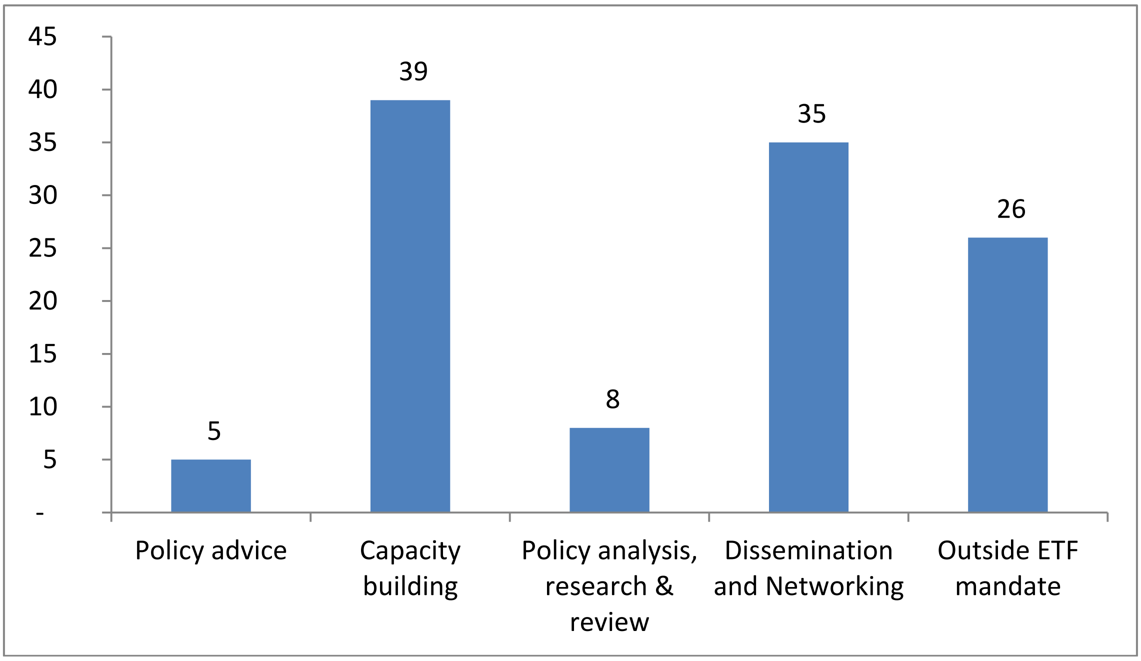
In Tunisia, the ETF was sensitive and adaptive to the broad as well as to the specific needs of the country. ETF action was judged to be pertinent, aware of and sensitive to the national context. This applied in a range of areas of ETF action, including women and work, the Torino process, implications of migration for VET development, support to EC services and entrepreneurial learning. The development of NQF was a high-level priority in Tunisia. In 2005 in Tunisia there was already awareness about the necessity to undertake a comprehensive reform process and the ETF responded to this need with adequate, sequenced, well-targeted and combined activities which led to the official adoption of the NQF. This mainly came from the ETF's role in raising awareness and providing general support, which covered Tunisian areas of need such as matching supply and demand of skills on the labour market and managing migratory flows.

In the Georgian case, the ETF was seen to be sensitive and adaptive to the specific needs of the country. However, some areas of quality assurance were not perceived to receive adequate attention, such as financing and equality between VET centres. ETF's activities in Kazakhstan fit well within the general objectives of the reform process but were not considered to be very relevant to the country. Introduction of a new concept of lifelong learning in the context of low institutional absorption capacity explains this. In FYR of Macedonia, the actors involved in ETF activities were not always aware of the nature and extent of ETF actions or how they fit into the broader HCD picture in the country. The ETF was mainly engaged at the state level, and with state-level needs, in this case.

The relevance of ETF activities can also be assessed according to the form they take. The ETF mainly delivered expertise in HCD through governance and capacity building, and promotion of cooperation and experience exchange at the national and regional levels. More specific end results of ETF activities (beyond immediate outputs) were not clearly identified in ETF documents, and as such the relevance of the form of their actions was not readily apparent. In addition, external factors can limit the relevance ETF actions in certain forms. Constraints such as corruption, faults of the legal system and funding are outside of the ETF's control and can affect the form and relevance of ETF actions. While these factors cannot be readily addressed by ETF, care needs to be taken to correctly choose and target not only the themes, but also the forms, that ETF activities take, in a way that recognises cultural and political factors. Case study evidence indicates that the ETF is considerate of these factors when acting in partner countries. While this evaluation did not significantly analyse the effects of external factors on ETF actions, the Tunisian case did indicate that the ETF responded to recent changes in a sensitive manner. However, in certain cases, such as in FYR of Macedonia, stakeholders were not always aware of what form ETF action could take, and thus were unable to fully assess its appropriateness.

Surveys provide a deeper indication of what types of intervention are seen as most relevant in partner countries.

Graph 4: Type of assistance of clearly-expressed needs in Partner Countries[13]



[13] Types of assistance that fell outside of the ETF mandate included issues such as training in foreign languages and other transferrable skills, improving material and technical resources in the educational sphere.

The most important areas of action identified as relevant to partner country needs were capacity building (45% of needs within ETF mandate) and dissemination and networking (40% of needs within ETF mandate), both key ETF objectives. ETF performance in these areas will be examined in more depth in the effectiveness section. 23% of respondents identified actions that fall outside the mandate of the ETF, again indicating that stakeholders are not always clear on what the ETF can and cannot do.

At the EC/EEAS level, most needs expressed by stakeholders related more to the (policy) form necessary in the broad HCD thematic area, rather than specifying particular themes. Given the nature of the ETF's work with various DGs as well as the EEAS, thematic needs are more DG-specific, while common ground can be found in how officials feel these needs should be addressed. Commission requests for ETF services can provide a proxy for understanding whether the ETF is relevant to their work, with more (or rising) Commission requests indicating a high level of ETF relevance. Commission requests for ETF services have remained relatively constant over the evaluated period, ranging from 97 to 115 requests per year. However, the nature of these requests has changed. There has been a significant drop in requests for ETF help in policy programming,[14] but this was met with a large increase in the requests for help in policy formulation.[15] There was also a significant increase in requests for policy advice, which now make up the bulk of Commission requests addressed by the ETF. Regionally, there was also a large increase in the demand for ETF aid in the IPA region,[16] while requests fell in both ENPI and DCI areas. Survey data supports the relevance of ETF actions to Commission activities and also supports the increasing relevance of the ETF's role in delivering policy advice. Most respondents identified advisory issues as a key need and consulted ETF information and resources regularly.[17] An even higher number are regularly in contact with ETF officials.[18]

Overall, these results show that the ETF is performing well in meeting the needs of beneficiaries, but there is some minor mismatch between the level on which ETF responds and the needs as perceived by partner countries. While partner countries are more likely to identify end needs in human capital development, ETF targets the process that may (or may not) address these needs, a view shared by EC/EEAS. This does not mean that ETF actions are irrelevant in partner countries and the ETF is still rated very positively in providing relevant support. However, it is indicative that the expectations of all partner country stakeholders targeted by the ETF are not always in line with what the ETF can provide (or how it provides it).

---

[14] In 2006, there were 40 requests in this area. In 2010, this had dropped to 13.

[15] In 2006, only four requests came in this area. This reached a high of 23 in 2008. In 2010, 13 requests were made in this area.

[16] From 24 in 2006 to 66 in 2010.

[17] 21of 31 responses consult ETF work often or very often.

[18] 25 of 30 responses.

3.1.2. Responsiveness to beneficiary needs

Another aspect of relevance is ETF responsiveness to changes in circumstances and beneficiary needs. Numbers of requests for assistance from the ETF by partner countries were not available in annual activity reports. The surveys reveal some correlations between different facets of ETF responsiveness. Overall, 84% of partner country beneficiaries who expressed an opinion felt that the ETF was flexible and responsive to their needs, although 22% of overall responses were unaware of ETF activity in responding to their needs, or did not know how well they responded. A high number of EC/EEAS respondents (23/28) also felt the ETF did well or very well at responding to their needs, and this corresponded to the ETF's self assessment. While only a small minority responded negatively, it should be noted that the ETF's flexibility and responsiveness also received a negative rating from 16% of partner country respondents. This likely indicates that the ETF is responsive to different types of stakeholders to a different degree. Network analysis and case studies indicate that in general the group who feels the ETF is less flexible and responsive is made up mainly of NGOs, a group only recently targeted by the ETF.

Box 2: Summary of case study findings on the ETF's responsiveness to beneficiaries

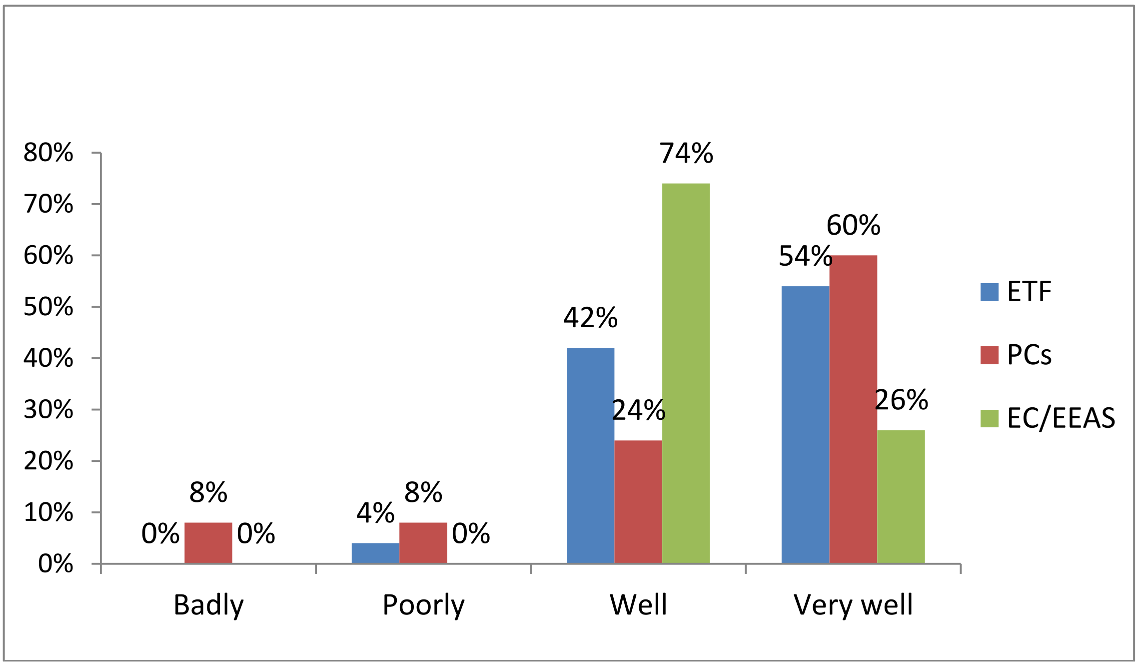
In Tunisia, the officials from the Ministry felt that the ETF successfully and promptly responded to the demands and requests of stakeholders and met their expectations. Moreover, the ETF was judged to be very flexible and open to negotiations as regards the form and terms of the support provided. ETF help that was seen to be particularly valuable was the provision of long-lasting external expertise.

In Kazakhstan, the ETF was generally considered to be responsive to national demands and successful in meeting most of the needs expressed by different stakeholders. However, representatives of business and NGOs felt that they were not fully consulted during the process of VET programme preparation. This could be explained by the fact that these groups of stakeholders do not have a long experience of working with the ETF and were not aware of the ETF's processes and methods.

In FYR of Macedonia, stakeholders generally felt that the ETF was willing to respond to any needs that arose, but this was sometimes limited by certain factors. Political instability affected the ETF's ability to fully engage with decision-makers and maintain the contact necessary to respond to all changes, and the lack of permanent ETF presence in the country hampered the ability of the organisation to respond quickly to all needs.

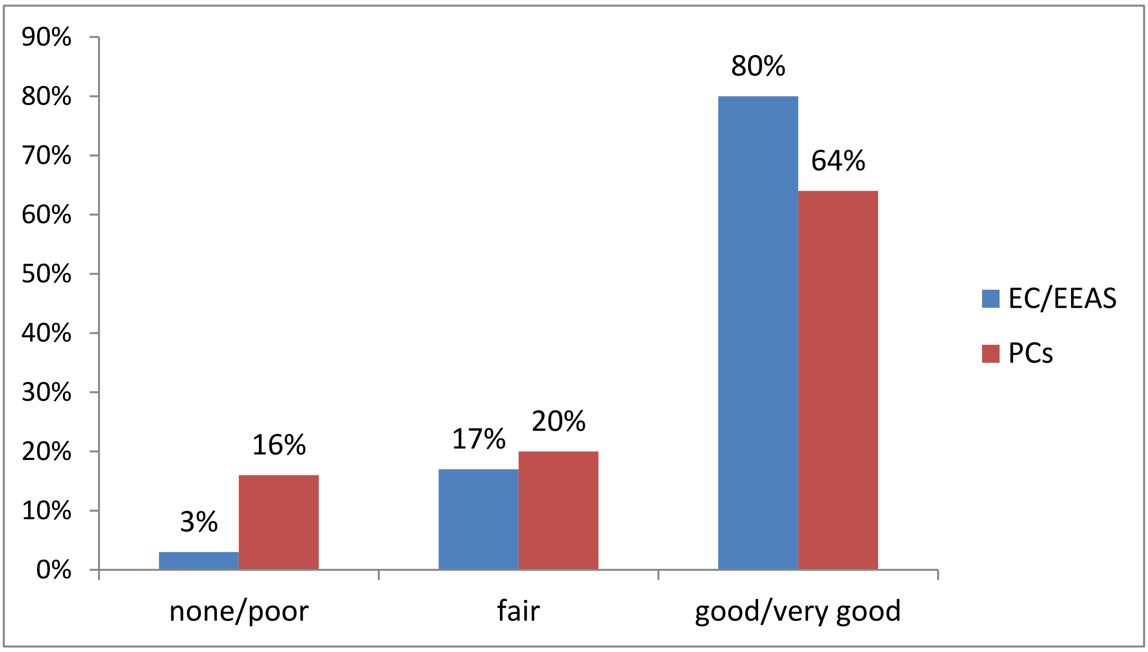
In Georgia, the ETF was seen to be flexible and responsive to needs, even though some stakeholders felt that this responsiveness was not always managed in a timely fashion. The activities undertaken by the ETF that were initially relevant were not always able or willing to adapt to changing political priorities. For example, in the area of quality assurance, national policy change outpaced ETF activities in the area, which somewhat hampered ETF relevance. ETF responsiveness was primarily in developing and undertaking ETF actions, but was not felt to extend to ETF responsiveness to feedback it received in suggestions for further action and support.

Graph 5: Evaluation of ETF's activities in showing flexibility and responsiveness in working with organisations in Partner Countries



Beneficiaries also positively assessed the ETF's awareness of a country's situation and positively evaluated performance in seeking feedback in partner countries.

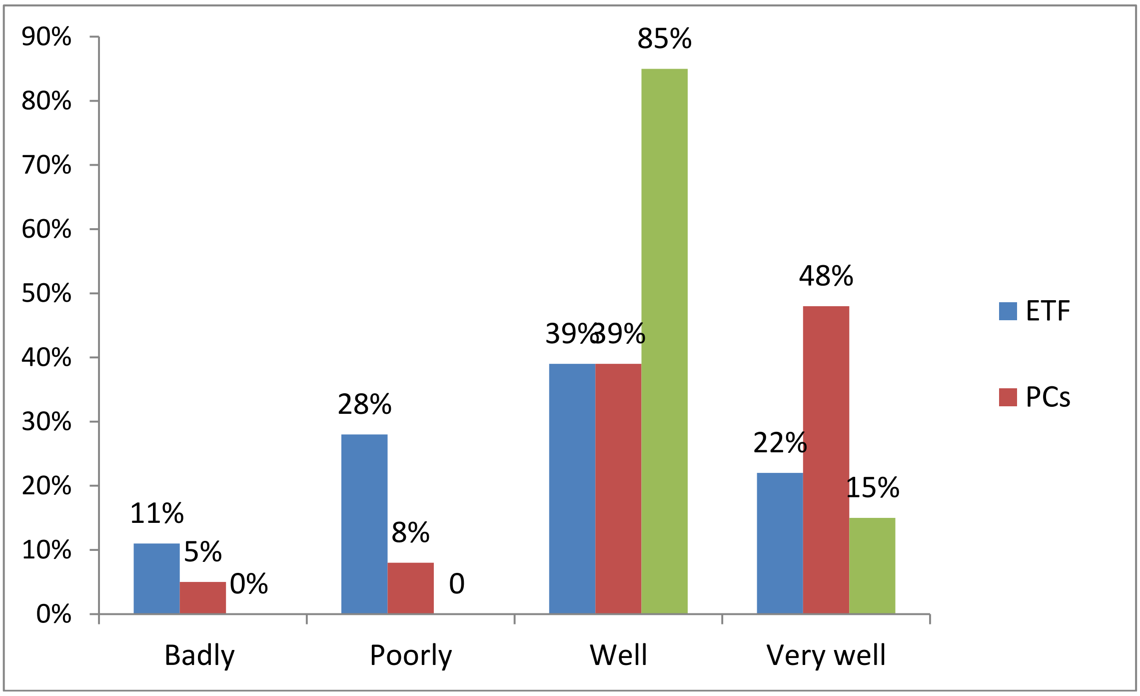
Graph 6: Evaluation of ETF's awareness of beneficiary organisation's activities



Interestingly, the ETF itself was most critical of its ability to seek feedback. EC/EEAS respondents felt the ETF performed this function extremely well with no negative responses.

A large majority of partner country respondents also felt the ETF sought feedback well or very well, but 13% of respondents did not feel the ETF performed this function satisfactorily.

Graph 7: Evaluation of ETF's performance in seeking feedback in Partner Countries



In cases where feedback was seen to be taken into account, this was viewed as a significant strength. For example, in the Tunisian case study, the ETF's response to issues raised by stakeholders about assistance provided was judged highly positively and contributed significantly to ETF results in that country. In other case studies, any feedback sought by the ETF was viewed positively, but it was not always clear to stakeholder groups how – or whether – their feedback was taken into account. In the other direction, the Torino Process, introduced in 2010, is seen as a process by which feedback can be shared between partner countries and the ETF on HCD activities. ETF site visits and programme reviews help to contribute to this feedback loop and generally the ETF exhibits a strong medium- to long-term approach to seeking feedback from stakeholders. This feedback seemed to be limited to ex post situations and case studies showed this feedback loop to rarely be iterative. The new qualifications platform, which provides an online forum for policy makers and practitioners to discuss issues around professional qualifications, is a positive step in providing ongoing connections with stakeholder groups in that area. This should be extended to other areas in order to provide increased opportunities for stakeholders to engage in ongoing dialogue and interaction with the ETF regarding HCD issues.

While all measures of relevance and responsiveness were highly positive, a few areas showed a few more dissenting opinions in how well the ETF was able to react. For instance, 23% of partner country respondents who stated a positive or negative opinion felt that the ETF did not maintain close enough contact with their organisation, but the EC/EEAS respondents felt the ETF did this well and the ETF's self assessment was high. Certain stakeholder groups – such as social partners and NGOs – did not view ETF contact and support to be as continuous and sufficient as other stakeholder groups, which might be due to the relatively recent targeting of these groups (specifically NGOs). In all case studies, consistent contact was seen to be a hugely positive approach that supported long-term effects in the country.

3.1.3. Conclusions regarding relevance

The relevance and responsiveness of ETF actions is very strong. ETF actions targeted important thematic areas and did so in ways that addressed the procedural needs of beneficiaries. There was no significant difference in regional views and any negative response was very low. The widening mandate has allowed for the ETF to take relevant action in a wider variety of areas, although this has also increased expectations of stakeholders. The ETF was seen to show a high level of flexibility, especially at the EC/EEAS level, which is seen to be a great strength by ETF beneficiaries specifically and in decentralised agencies generally. Overall, ETF relevance is excellent.

The ETF was relevant both in themes and approaches. Thematically, while VET remained the most relevant need to most partner countries, labour market and entrepreneurship issues were becoming increasing relevant, which indicates that the recast of the ETF mandate was an important move in increasing ETF relevance. Given that the new mandate that widened the ETF scope to formally include these elements has only been in place since 2008, these other areas will likely rise more in prominence over time. However, the widened mandate has not been met with an increase in ETF resources. So far, the ETF has performed well in meeting these broader needs, but without an increase in resources, may have difficulty responding effectively to all thematic areas.

In terms of approach to dealing with these issues, capacity building and dissemination of information and networking were the most relevant of the ETF's activities to partner countries. At the EC/EEAS level, policy advice was seen to be the ETF's most relevant role, followed by policy formulation, while there was a drop in Commission-level requests for ETF support in policy programming. This reflects favourably on the ETF, as they receive more requests for help in substantive policy issues. These findings indicate general support for a wide range of ETF interventions, and one that is dependent on the type of stakeholder. As with thematic concerns, this could lead to situations where the ETF is spread too thinly, if activities are not properly targeted and sufficient resources are not devoted to these interventions.

These issues also raise an important point about the level at which the ETF operates. Partner countries were much more likely to identify specific output-related needs in specific policy areas, whereas Commission/EEAS and the ETF were more likely to identify needs primarily as process-based approaches to addressing issues. In addition, some partner country stakeholders did not identify needs within the remit of the ETF. This indicates that some national stakeholders that the ETF works directly with, such as NGOs, may not be fully aware of the scope or nature of ETF actions in the area. This in turn could hamper national ownership over these processes, which has been found to be an issue in previous evaluations. The ETF must continue to make strong efforts to raise the awareness of national stakeholders about their mandate, the work they can and cannot do in partner countries and how they can add to the general HCD process.

The ETF was also seen to be highly responsive to the needs of all beneficiaries, especially the EC/EEAS, and well aware of beneficiaries' needs. Flexibility in responding to beneficiaries was seen to be a positive factor in decentralised agencies, and this trait was also viewed favourably in this evaluation. However, flexibility and responsiveness become more difficult to maintain in decentralised agencies that cover a broad range of issues, such as the ETF. In these cases, this flexibility should also be backed by clear prioritisation and assessment of issues, approaches and beneficiaries. This would improve not only the ETF's ability to address such a wide range of issues, but also help to clarify to beneficiaries what can be expected from the ETF.

Both partner countries and the EC/EEAS were overwhelming positive about the ETF's performance in seeking feedback on its work. The Torino Process, introduced in 2010, will likely serve to further improve this feedback loop. Interestingly, the ETF itself was quite self-critical of its performance in this area, which indicates the ETF feels it can do more in the area. All feedback sought by the ETF was appreciated in partner countries, but this evaluation noted a lack of short-term information sharing or feedback mechanisms that can be used *during* ETF activities or processes. The new qualifications platform is a positive step in addressing this, allowing members a chance for dialogue on an ongoing basis. This should be extended to other areas, and clear linkages to ETF actions could be further developed with these platforms. Stakeholders would benefit from some semi-formalised mechanism by which they could provide feedback on ETF activities in between larger-scale ex post evaluations, site visits, the Torino Process and other less frequently deployed feedback mechanisms.

3.2. Coherence

- Given the trade-offs – seen in most decentralised agencies – between developing a clear framework and maintaining positive flexibility for the organisation, the ETF has struck a good balance in developing a coherent but flexible work plan.
- ETF actions match operational and strategic objectives of the ETF, although clear connections between short-term and long-term objectives are not always drawn.
- ETF actions are coherent internally with other EU policies, and complement the work of other related EU and non-EU agencies working in human capital development, although it was not always clear at the partner country level how ETF actions fit into the broader HCD field as compared to other stakeholders.

ETF actions should be both internally coherent with the ETF's own objectives and coherent with other EU-level actions in the area of human capital development. This evaluation answers several questions in this regard:

1. Are the ETF's strategic objectives consistent and clearly linked with its operational objectives in work programmes and country plans?
2. Do the ETF's strategic objectives fit with objectives adopted in related EU-level strategy documents?
3. Was the ETF prompt, flexible and successful in adapting its operational objectives to the new mandate?

This can be determined by looking at ETF strategic and operational objectives, and especially examining the coherence of ETF actions with the changes in its mandate brought about by the recast regulation. Externally there should be a match between ETF objectives and the objectives specified in the policy documents of European Commission, other European Union institutions and other international institutions working in the area. Coherence requires that two conditions are met. First, strategic and operational objectives should be in line both within the ETF framework, as well as with wider EU objectives regarding human capital development. Secondly, these objectives must be presented in a way that also allows for them to be used to create actions that are coherent with these objectives. If there is a clear link between strategic and operational objectives, and if there is a match between ETF objectives and wider EU objectives, then there should also be a clear complementarity between any ETF actions taken in the field and other EU actions. This section draws mainly on documentary analysis of relevant ETF and EU-level documents, and supports this with survey data and interviews regarding the coherence of ETF policies internally and externally.

In 2006, the ETF evaluation noted that there were few opportunities for the ETF to complement (or overlap with) the work of other donors, as they worked in a limited field. Linkages between ETF actions and broader EU actions were seen to be complementary but not always clear. Coherence issues with other international stakeholders were also identified as a potential area of difficulty in decentralised agencies as a whole.

3.2.1. Internal coherence

Internal coherence can be ascertained by looking at the logical connection between strategic and operational objectives. The evaluation period of 2006 – 2010 consists of three mid-term periods, and accordingly – three sets of strategic objectives.

Table 4: ETF strategic objectives during the period 2006 – 2010

ETF strategic objectives
Mid-term perspective 2004 – 2006 • consolidate the capacity of operational departments to support Community priorities in line with EC requests per region; • develop ETF added value and expertise; • improve communication and transparency with external stakeholders, and in particular with EU institutions; • improve internal efficiency and management of ETF statutory bodies; • maintain high level of technical assistance to Tempus Programme
Mid-term perspective 2007 – 2010 To ensure that • information, analyses, and policy advice on human resource development have been provided by the ETF to the partner countries; • partner country stakeholder capacities have been strengthened and result in more relevant education and training sectors; • the ETF has facilitated the exchange of information and experience among donors engaged in human resources development reform in partner countries; • the ETF's policy advice and programming analysis have improved the effectiveness and relevance of Community assistance programmes to partner countries in the field of HRD; and • the ETF's dissemination and networking activities transfer relevant policy lessons between EU Member States and partner countries and between partner countries, and provide opportunities for engagement with the EU's policies and programmes.
Mid-term perspective 2010 – 2013 • to contribute to the interplay between EU internal policies and the implementation of its external human capital development through VET reform; • to contribute to the development of PC intelligence and capacities in planning, designing, implementing, evaluating and reviewing evidence based policies in VET reform

The nature of ETF mid-term objectives changed throughout these documents, evolving from rather inward-looking objectives in 2004 - 2006 to detailed objectives focused on the main functions of ETF in 2007 – 2010, to general and strategic objectives in the 2010-2013 mid-term perspective reflecting two main lines of ETF intervention. Given the evaluation period, this report focuses mainly on the 2007-2010 mid-term perspective, while also looking back to the 2004-2006 perspective and forward to the 2010-2013 one.

Coherence among objectives

Coherence among organisational objectives at different levels is important because it provides a clear and consistent framework of operation. The following section aims to evaluate consistency and coherence among the ETF strategic and operational objectives in every year in the evaluation period. This is done at three levels – mid-term perspectives, work programmes and country plans. As the plans become more specific, objectives should also more explicitly and clearly state concrete actions that the ETF should take. Reasonably, coherence requires not only require that the strategic objectives are consistent, but also that they are clear in stating how these strategic objectives can be translated into actions in order to avoid incoherence at the operational level.

While objectives of annual ETF work programmes generally cohered with the broader objectives of the mid-term perspectives, they often did not outline these objectives more specifically than the mid-term perspective, thus making it unclear how these broad strategies would be translated into action. ETF individual country plans more specifically outlined actions in partner countries, and while these were for the most part coherent with the work programmes and the mid-term perspective, the linkage between country objectives and higher level ETF objectives was not explicitly made.

General coherence between objectives at these three levels does not necessarily ensure coherence in application. As overarching objectives are often not more narrowly or explicitly stated in work programmes, it is difficult to determine the level of coherence of ETF actions between operational and strategic objectives. Stronger efforts are being made to develop yearly objectives that more clearly elaborate on mid-term objectives, with mid-term objectives outlining the broad area of work (e.g. human capital development) and yearly objectives outlining the approach to addressing these issues (e.g. building capacity in partner countries). While this is a positive development, care must still be taken to link these objectives and define them in a way that supports clear interventions and lines of action. For example, in the 2010 work programme the objectives were the same as those stated in the mid-term perspective and did not further develop them in a more explicit way. While that is technically coherent, it provides no indication of how these objectives should be translated into actions.

Change in the mandate

The ETF mandate was expanded geographically and thematically in the year 2008. This change should also be reflected in ETF strategic and operational objectives so that the new mandate can be properly implemented. In the recast regulation the ETF's field of activity was expanded from vocational education and training to a much broader idea of human capital development, which includes the development of individuals' skills in a lifelong learning perspective and links it clearly with labour market issues and the employability of individuals. Geographically, the ETF mandate was widened to include any country "that is covered by the Community instrument or international agreement that includes an element of human capital development".[19] This opened the door for the ETF, at the invitation of the governing board, to cover a larger geographic area. Up to this point, however, the partner countries have remained largely the same, apart from some new ETF activity in Iceland.

These changes were not always clearly incorporated into the objectives at all levels, although this was reflective of an already (informally) widening ETF scope, rather than any incoherence. The wider scope, including lifelong learning and labour market issues, was actually incorporated into the mid-term perspective one year *before* the change in mandate, covering the 2007-2010 period. The 2006 evaluation noted the necessity of a broader scope in ETF action,[20] and even before the official recast, the ETF was broadening its scope and addressing more issues that fell outside the traditional bounds of VET. In many ways, the change in mandate was more a formalisation of activities that were already undertaken by the ETF, rather than a significant change in ETF approach. This is reflected in the work programmes, and supported by interviews with all ETF managers.

While the widening of scope of ETF action was recognised in the mid-term perspective, work programme objectives did not as clearly reflect this increase in scope by including any specific provisions for new areas covered under the recast mandate. The wider understanding of VET issues was better reflected in country plans, where employment and labour market-related issues and entrepreneurial learning and lifelong learning were often noted and provisions were made for their inclusion within the scope of ETF activities.

3.2.2. Coherence with EU policies and strategic objectives

ETF is a decentralised EU agency, and therefore ETF strategic objectives should also cohere with the objectives of relevant EU policies. EU policy objectives tend to be broader and longer-term than the ETF's mid-term perspective of 3 years, with ETF actions contributing only certain elements to implementation of broader EU goals. The table below presents the EU-level documents used to analyse coherence.

Table 5: Summary of main EU policy documents providing framework for ETF actions

Year	EU policy document
EU broad strategic documents	
2010 – 2020	Europe 2020
2000 – 2010	Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs
2010 – 2020	European cooperation in education and training 2020
2001 – 2010	Education and Training 2010

[19] Regulation (EC) 1339/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of December 16 2008 establishing a European Training Foundation (recast)
[20] Interim evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF), EAC/06/05, Final report, 25 May 2006, p. 3.

Year	EU policy document
2003 – 2020	European Employment Strategy
Since 2000	European Charter for Small Enterprises
Copenhagen process documents	
2011 – 2020	Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training
2008 – 2010	Bordeaux communiqué
2006 – 2008	Helsinki communiqué
2004 – 2006	Maastricht communiqué
Partner country-related strategies	
Since 2006	Instrument of pre-accession assistance
Since 2004	European neighbourhood policy (strategy papers)
Since 2006	Development cooperation instrument
Candidacy years	Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Priorities
Candidacy years	Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion
Since 2004	Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise
Since 2009	Eastern Partnership
Since 2008	Black Sea Synergy
Since 2007	Central Asia strategy
Since 2007	European Education Initiative for Central Asia
Since 1995	Euro-Mediterranean partnership
Since 1994	Strategic partnership with Russia
Since 1999	Northern dimension (with Russia)
Since 2006	Enlargement strategy

Coherence with all three types of EU policy documents is necessary because they set EU policies in HCD-related fields that guide ETF actions in the partner countries. In addition, ETF objectives now explicitly state that the agency should contribute to the interplay between EU internal policies and external HCD as an objective (and this was implicit before).

ETF's activities in 2006-2010 clearly reflected EU priorities and fitted coherently within the framework of the EU's internal strategies and external relations. ETF activities were aimed at aiding EU assistance to partner countries and supporting them in the reform and modernisation process of education and training, labour market systems and other human resources development issues. The ETF has operated at different levels (national, regional and interregional) and engaged itself in capacity building, policy analysis, sharing and disseminating good practices between the EU and partner countries and among the partner countries themselves. In its activities, the ETF thus followed the main goals of EU international cooperation in education and training, which include:

- Supporting partner countries outside the EU in their modernisation efforts;
- Promoting common values and closer understanding between different peoples and cultures;
- Advancing the EU as a centre of excellence in education and training;
- Improving the quality of services and human resources in the EU through mutual learning, comparison and exchange of good practice.

EU education and training policies have gained strength since the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000 and the recast ETF regulation follows the pattern of EU developments and formulates their mandate in a holistic approach to human capital development and lifelong learning.

The ETF was also coherence with EU regional frameworks to promote human capital development. In the framework of EU pre-accession assistance, the IPA strategy enumerates areas of assistance that include investments in human resource development, removal of obstacles to social inclusion, support for inclusive labour markets and adaptation, reform or, where appropriate, establishment of educational systems and professional training systems. ETF activities in this region covered these areas of assistance with particular emphasis on social inclusion and inclusive labour markets, as well as reform processes.

The European Neighbourhood Strategy (ENP) aims to deepen EU relations with its Southern and Eastern neighbours through political dialogue, deeper economic integration, social development policy, increased mobility, people-to-people contacts and other strategic areas of cooperation. The ENP strategy paper emphasises the need for dialogue on employment and social policy with a view to develop an analysis and assessment of the situation, identify key challenges and promote policy responses. It also states that the "ENP will promote cultural, educational and more general societal links between the Union and its neighbourhood" and that "the reform and modernisation of learning systems is a sine qua non condition for the economic competitiveness and the social and political stability of partner countries". The ENP is further enriched with regional and multilateral co-operation initiatives, namely the Eastern Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea Synergy.

In the 2006-2010 period, the ETF has undertaken substantial activities in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and tried to assist these countries at the national level as well as engage them in regional activities. The objectives of reforming and modernising learning systems and connecting them better to labour markets were central in ETF activities. The Torino process was also coherent with the goal of assessing the HCD situation in partner countries and identifying key challenges in order to better assist partner countries in the formulation of adequate policy responses.

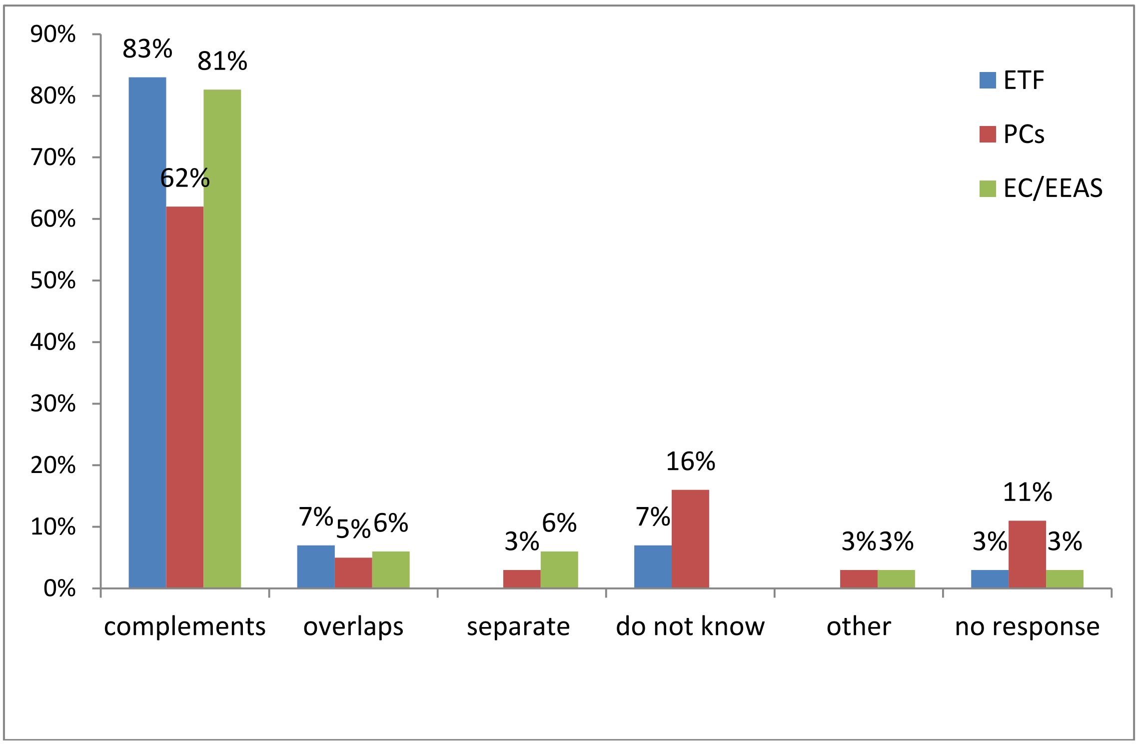
ETF activities in Central Asia follow the priorities of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The Regulation establishes a financing instrument for development cooperation and states that one of the areas of cooperation is human capital development. It also specifies that in the field of education, social cohesion and employment, priority should be given to primary education followed by vocational training and the reduction of inequalities in terms of access to education, fighting against poverty, inequality, unemployment and exclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups. Thematic programmes should focus on education in the context of promoting donor harmonisation. The ETF was coherent with these goals and focused on poverty reduction, social exclusion and modernisation of vocational and training systems. Much work still needs to be done in supporting the donor coordination activities of the EU delegations and the Commission, which is a particularly salient issue in Central Asia.

Internally, EU education and training policies have gained strength since the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, which recognised that knowledge and innovation are among the EU's most valuable assets, and pushed for these areas to be strengthened in order for the EU to become a more competitive and knowledge-based economy. The education and training work programme launched in 2001 and the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (‘ET 2020’) further recognise that high-quality education and training at all levels is fundamental to Europe's success. These documents also emphasise that in a rapidly changing world, lifelong learning needs to be a priority since this approach is central to employment and economic success as well as to individual and societal well-being.

The Europe 2020 strategy talks about smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. When referring to smart growth, the strategy encourages EU Member States “to ensure efficient investment in education and training systems at all levels (pre-school to tertiary); to improve educational outcomes, addressing each segment (pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary) within an integrated approach; to enhance the openness and relevance of education systems by building national qualification frameworks and better gearing learning outcomes towards labour market needs; to improve young people's entry into the labour market through integrated action covering guidance, counselling and apprenticeships”. The concept of inclusive growth refers to “empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection systems”. The ETF concentrates on these cross-cutting themes that aim to contribute to the overall reform of the education system and strengthen relations with the EU in areas such as qualification frameworks, financing, decentralisation, migration and skills recognition, the contribution of skills development to poverty reduction, gender participation and the continuing capacity development of stakeholders.

The coherence of ETF objectives with EU objectives has improved through the period of evaluation. The mid-term perspective 2004 – 2006 objectives stressed the improvement of ETF administrative functions, but from 2007 on, ETF objectives were more clearly attributable to relevant EU policies. Mostly, ETF objectives addressed only a small part of wider EU objectives, which is reasonable considering the focus of the ETF. This is especially the case in EU-level work that addresses labour market needs and entrepreneurship, where ETF actions cover only a small portion of issues addressed in such EU documents. In general, ETF objectives in specific partner countries were coherent with wider EU activities in these regions, and this has been aided by the explicit linkage of EU internal and external policies in ETF objectives. As part of this, ETF actions are closely linked to the work of the EEAS, which viewed ETF actions as coherent with their own. This generally positive picture of coherence at the EU level was supported by survey data, where a strong majority of all stakeholders felt that ETF actions complement other EU actions in the area.

Graph 8: The ways in which ETF activities fit with other EU activities

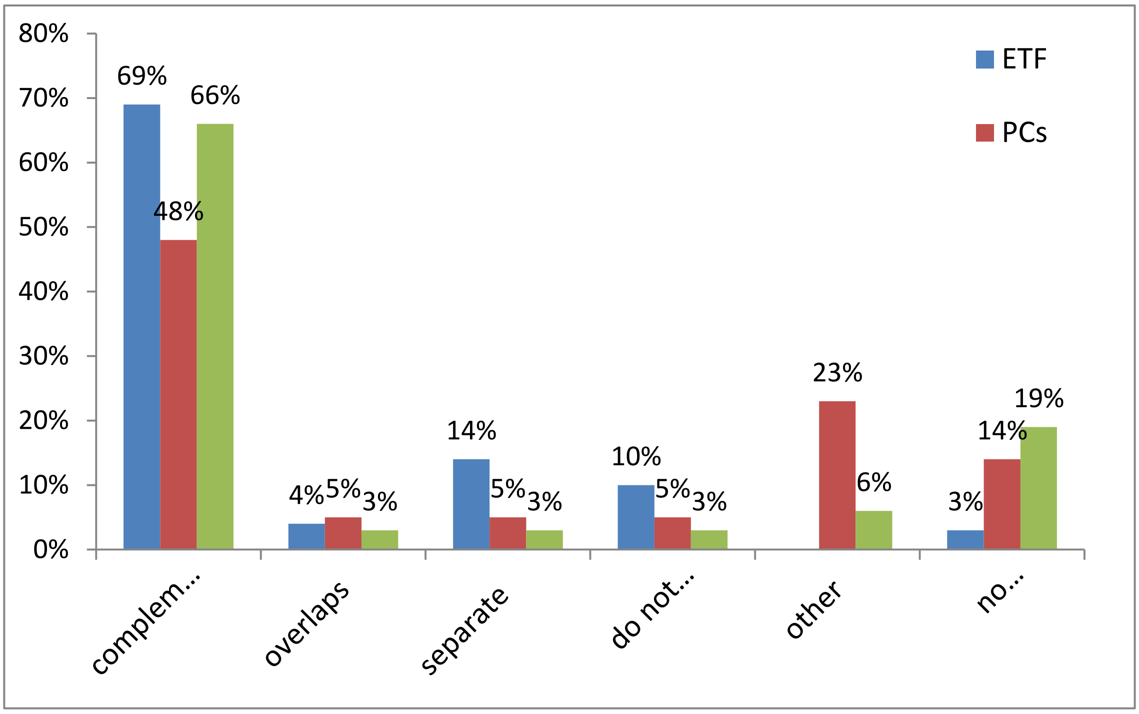


Apart from the Commission and the EEAS, another key EU-level organisation with which the ETF works is Cedefop. Cedefop performs in a similar thematic area to the ETF, but for EU Member States rather than partner countries. As their work is closely related, the ETF has a Memorandum of Understanding with Cedefop, and one of the main objectives of Cedefop is to involve candidate countries by closely working with the ETF. The study on decentralised agencies specifically noted the success the two organisations had in working together to help new EU countries in 2004 and 2007 transition from working with the ETF (external) to working with Cedefop.

3.2.3. Coherence with actions of other international stakeholders

The ETF occupies a unique place in the field of HCD, as it is a source of knowledge and expertise, rather than a donor. While stakeholders did not always recognise this distinction, it allows the ETF to complement rather than overlap with the work done by other international organisations, as well as provide a service that these stakeholders do not provide.

Graph 9: The ways in which ETF's activities fit with other non-EU activities



The ETF works closely with other key organisations in the HCD field. For instance, when UNESCO was developing a Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy in 2008, the ETF (as well as other stakeholders) was consulted about this strategy to ensure that the work of these two organisations was complementary.[21] In general, the ETF and other international organisations coordinate activities to avoid overlap, and regularly take part in conferences and events organised by each other. The ETF offers positions on work done by these international organisations,[22] and will work together with other organisations to produce research and knowledge.[23]

3.2.4. Coherence at the partner country level

Survey respondents generally felt that ETF activities fit well with other state-level and international-level activities in the area. Still, there was some ambiguity about how ETF activities fit into wider international development in human capital development. This was especially evident in countries where the ETF had a less established position and where other international stakeholders were well established. For example, in FYR of Macedonia, the ETF approach was appreciated, but stakeholders were unclear about how ETF actions extended beyond the work undertaken by other international stakeholders. This was also

---

[21] King, Kenneth. (2009). A Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy for UNESCO. A Background Paper

[22] For example, see a recent (2011) ETF position on ILO national qualification frameworks study.

[23] See, for example, the co-funded ETF/World Bank report: Alquézar Sabadie, Jesús, et al. Migration and Skills: The Experience of Migrant Workers from Albania, Egypt, Moldova, and Tunisia.

evident to a greater degree in Kazakhstan, where ETF activities in developing a national qualifications framework were not clearly differentiated from work done by other organisations. However, this difficulty in coordination was noted as a problem in decentralised agencies as a whole, and in the ETF it did not appear to be a problem of *overlap* as much as a problem of *differentiation* of their actions from other stakeholders.

Box 3: Summary of case study findings on the coherence of ETF actions

In Georgia, prior to ETF involvement in quality assurance, many organisations and initiatives were already doing work in the area. The ETF's work in the field was seen to complement and develop on these existing initiatives and the introduction of quality mechanisms was seen to add value to the existing approach. In Tunisia, ETF activities also tended to be complementary to the objectives of national actions. The ETF managed to help structure national activities and support them during the whole reform process. The ETF, in comparison to other international actors, was more successful in the provision of coherent, continuous, specific and well-informed assistance and thus it gained the central position in the reform process. The ETF also provided a platform for regional networks and this represented a unique opportunity for four South Mediterranean countries (Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt) to interact and exchange examples of good practice during the development of respective NQFs. This type of support is not provided by any other international actors or donors and complemented the activities undertaken within the national framework.

In other cases, ETF coherence was more problematic in relation to the activities undertaken by other international actors. In FYR of Macedonia, it was not always easy to differentiate or separate ETF activity from the work done by other international stakeholders in social inclusion, also confused by other ETF activities in the area related to pre-accession requirements. This was not a problem of coherence so much as it was a problem of differentiating ETF activities from those of other stakeholders, including the wider EU.

In Kazakhstan this problem was even more evident since the ETF operates in an environment with a high density of international actors and donors. The implementation of the project on school development for lifelong learning was based on the dissemination at the national and regional levels of tools and knowledge generated by NQF projects. The development of this NQF project, initially supported by the ETF, was further assisted by other international actors and donors and thus the shift of ETF focus towards the broader dissemination of results was positive, since it avoided overlapping with the activities of other donors.

3.2.5. Conclusions regarding coherence

The timeline of this evaluation and changes in the ETF shows that the new mandate more closely reflects ETF work, and therefore the change in mandate has improved the coherence of ETF operational objectives with broader strategic and EU-level objectives. However, objectives at all levels remain relatively broad, thus making it difficult to link coherence of strategic objectives with operational actions undertaken by the ETF.

Generally, ETF objectives are coherent, internally and with other EU-level documents, bodies and actions. However, a clear hierarchy of internal objectives was lacking during the evaluated period. Each strategic ETF objective was not broken down into several operational objectives, while operational objectives were not clearly broken down into specific tasks. However, ETF actions themselves were coherent internally and with a broader EU mandate, and new objectives set in the next mid-term perspective already help to address this problem and provide a good basis for a clearer hierarchy of ETF objectives.

The line between the process of these actions and the ultimate outcomes they aimed to achieve was not always clear, leaving some ambiguity in how partner country needs were translated into ETF actions, how these actions contributed to achieving partner country objectives and how these objectives fit into a broader ETF mandate. This slight mismatch could be explained by ETF restrictions on budget and mandate, in that the ETF can only operate in certain areas. In addition, the need for the ETF to be responsive and flexible to a wide range of stakeholder needs reflects this trade-off in ambiguity, as noted in the operation of other decentralised agencies. In general, any ambiguity in developing a clear framework of objectives is positively offset by the flexibility of the organisation in responding to beneficiaries, as outlined in the relevance section.

3.3. Effectiveness

- The ETF was seen to be effective in all of its main roles, and performed especially well in information sharing and networking.
- Information sharing and dissemination were positively viewed, with the ETF acting as both a conduit through which knowledge could be shared and as a provider of knowledge itself. The ETF should continue to work to raise awareness among beneficiaries of the information and services they can provide.
- The ETF’s contribution to capacity building was positively judged by stakeholders, but stakeholders were not always clear on how ETF actions contributed to building capacity. This is not a problem with ETF services, but the ETF should actively promote its positive effects in order to make it clear to beneficiaries what and how they contribute.
- The ETF performed most strongly in developing networks between stakeholders and promoting the exchange of knowledge both between partner countries and between partner countries and the EU/Member States. Regional initiatives were particularly appreciated and should be developed to a full extent.

The evaluation answers several key questions regarding the effectiveness of ETF actions:

1. To what extent have the immediate objectives set out in the work programmes for years 2006 to 2010 been accomplished? Are there explanations for any deviations in accomplishing these objectives?
2. Have there been any changes due to the redefinition of the ETF mandate? In what ways has the new mandate influenced the operations of the ETF?
3. Is ETF knowledge and expertise valued and extensively used by its beneficiaries?

The main objectives of the ETF in terms of effectiveness, as stated in the mid-term perspectives, can be grouped into three broad categories. This fits with ETF objectives, as well as objectives broadly identified in earlier evaluations as relevant to the ETF.

1. Provision and dissemination of information, analyses and policy advice – this operates both at the partner country level and also includes the provision of advice and programming analysis to improve the effectiveness and relevance of EU external assistance programmes;
2. Capacity building – in order to improve stakeholder efficiency and improve relevance of the education and training sectors;
3. Networking and knowledge transfer – this includes improving and facilitating the exchange of information and experience between donors and the exchange of policy lessons between EU Member States and partner countries.

This chapter examines whether the ETF achieved its expected outputs, and if these outputs then led to the expected results. This section draws on survey data, case studies, ETF reports and interviews to evaluate performance. ETF actions – namely events, publications and other direct ETF interventions – were examined both qualitatively (through stakeholder opinions, interviews and case studies) and quantitatively (through the number of outputs produced). This provided a clear picture of the overall effectiveness of ETF actions in each of the three categories. Achievement of ETF corporate indicators and outputs is mainly discussed in the evaluation of efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

The 2006 ETF evaluation saw ETF planning as a well-established part of programming, although structured planning at a country level was in earlier stages (country plans were introduced in 2005). In addition, the report highlighted that coordination between work programmes and annual activity reports was not always clear. ETF objectives have clearly and purposefully moved from programme management to provision of information and analysis, which was noted in the 2008 decentralised agency evaluation.

3.3.1. General ETF performance

In general, ETF performance was viewed favourably by both beneficiary groups, and also accurately self-assessed by ETF staff. This indicates not only that the ETF is performing its functions in an effective manner, but also that it is aware of its strengths and how they can be utilised. All three groups viewed ETF actions as particularly strong in the areas of providing trustworthy and reliable information and promoting exchange of experience and good practice between partner countries and the EU. Comparatively, beneficiaries viewed ETF actions somewhat more positively than the ETF self-assessment in providing examples of good practice, promoting involvement of all stakeholders and providing support in setting policy targets and objectives in the country. Meanwhile, the ETF assessed its actions in the areas of providing information, policy analyses and advice somewhat more favourably than beneficiaries, as well as promoting good practice within regions and maintaining contact with stakeholders. However, as responses were all positive, these issues are only notable in relative terms.

There were no overly weak areas of ETF intervention, although all groups felt the ETF was less successful in enhancing the accountability of policies and providing support for improving the monitoring and evaluation process. The performance of the ETF was viewed favourably by partner country stakeholders in all measures of effectiveness, with a majority of respondents who expressed an opinion rating ETF performance as good or very good in all categories. Comparatively, the ETF was strongest in certain key areas:[24]

1. Introducing good practice examples;
2. Promoting the involvement of all key stakeholders;
3. Promoting exchange of experience and good practice between the country and the EU;
4. Introducing new concepts or ideas in looking at issues;
5. Disseminating information on important issues.

They were also seen to perform strongly in adhering to the needs of a country, providing support in setting targets and objectives in a country and providing trustworthy and reliable information.

The ETF was seen as marginally weaker in a few areas as well, although overall response was still highly positive:

1. Helping in improvement of policy co-ordination processes among stakeholders and across levels of government;
2. Maintaining contact with partner country organisations and providing timely advice and support;
3. Building capacity of relevant stakeholders to improve governance.

The ETF was also seen to perform somewhat more weakly in introducing partner countries to new projects and initiatives outside the country and providing support for monitoring and

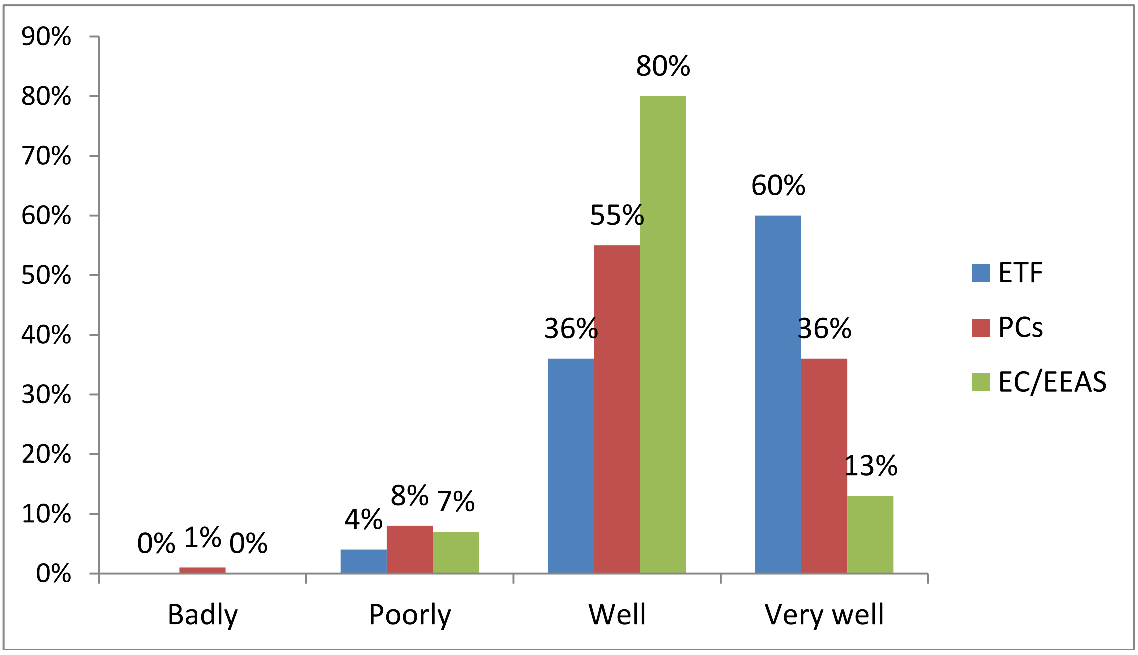
[24] Given differences in response rates and schemes and a high number of non-respondents, this data, while having a strong statistical base, is presented in a more qualitative manner in order to take into account other factors such as strength of response and relativity compared to other activities and responses. In addition, these were supported and triangulated by other sources, such as case studies and network analysis.

evaluation. The following sections examine ETF performance in relation to its main areas of activity.

3.3.2. Provision and dissemination of information, analyses and policy advice

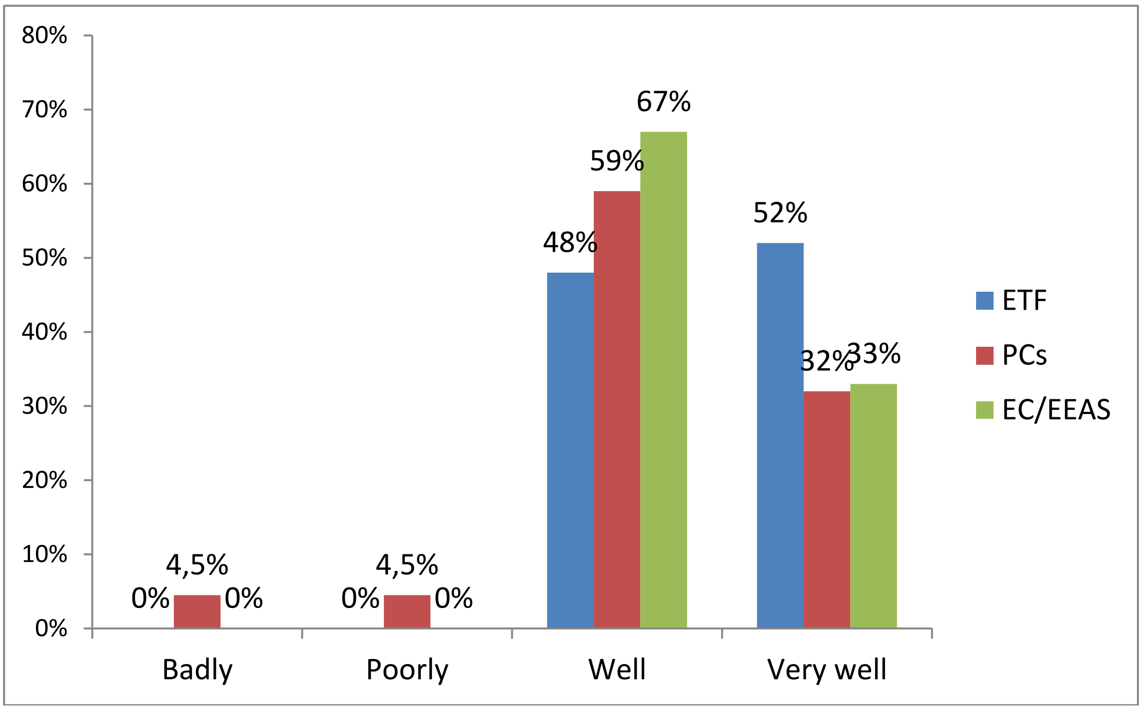
One of the objectives of the mid-term perspective 2007-2010 was to provide 'information, analyses, and policy advice on human resource development' to beneficiaries, as well as to provide advice and programming analysis to the Commission on improving assistance programmes. This was evaluated strongly in this report, supporting positive findings of previous studies (2008 decentralised agencies).

Graph 10: Evaluation of ETF's performance in providing information, policy analyses and advice to partner countries



The ETF performed exceptionally well in providing information, policy analyses and advice to partner countries, with over 90% of all stakeholders feeling they performed this task well or very well. This was supported by case studies, where ETF advice was seen as useful and an important contribution to the policy debate in countries such as FYR of Macedonia. This information was also seen to be effectively disseminated, with no stakeholders feeling this was not done satisfactorily.

Graph 11: Evaluation of ETF's performance in disseminating information on important issues in partner countries



In other partner country case studies, the effectiveness of the ETF in disseminating information was somewhat more qualified. ETF dissemination of information was seen as mostly ad hoc, and few proactive attempts by the ETF to share information were noted. While all stakeholders felt the ETF was able and willing to supply necessary information, stakeholders were not always made aware of all the information the ETF had to offer. Fora created by the ETF were seen as a positive way to disseminate information (such as the Georgian Stakeholder Forum, and FYR of Macedonian fora for exchange of information).

Box 4: Summary of case study findings on the ETF's dissemination of information

In the Georgian case, the government attempted to mirror good practices from the EU, namely the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) and the ETF actively assisted Georgian actors in this. The ETF generally performed well, and stakeholders felt that the ETF was available to provide information and advice. However, this support tends to be ad hoc (at the request of state actors), and thus no clear mechanisms were easily identified by stakeholders for how the ETF is able to disseminate information when needed. In the other direction, the ETF provided the Georgian government with opportunities to share good practices with other countries, such as during a Polish conference where the Georgian government presented its experiences in developing a national qualifications framework.

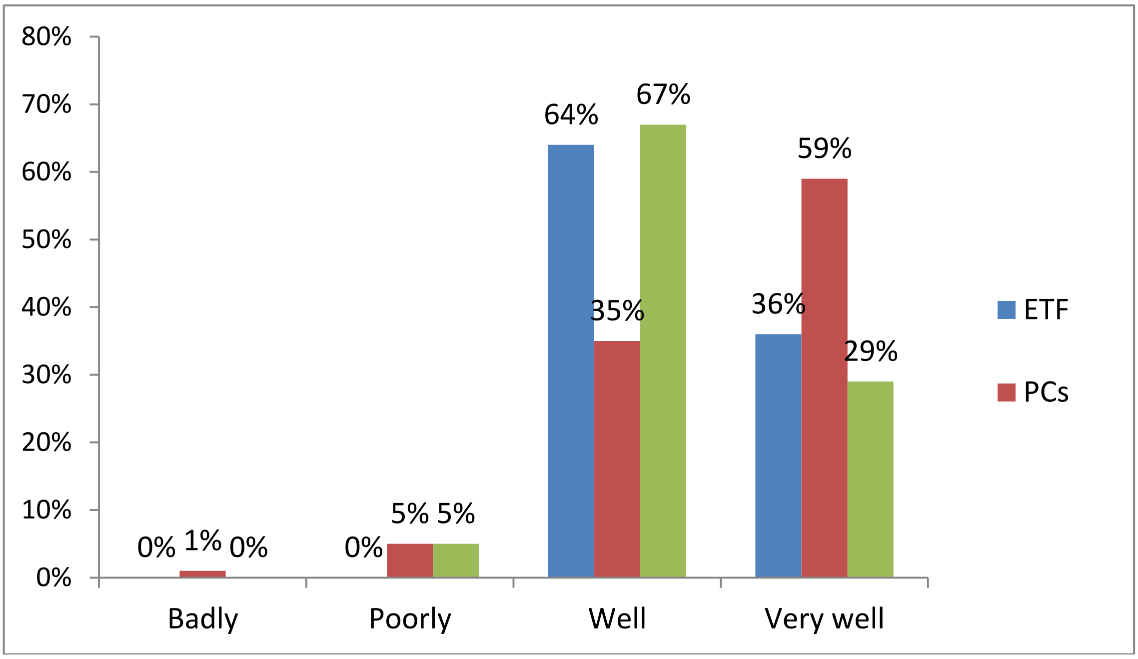
In FYR of Macedonia, the ETF was instrumental in introducing, developing and facilitating the acceptance of the concept of social inclusion in HCD, and thus was able to contribute both in shaping ideas of social inclusion and placing these ideas on the policy agenda. This was particularly evident at the policy development stage, where the concept of social inclusion was widened from a narrow vision to include aspects of employment and training. ETF was seen as the most important actor and perhaps the only one operating at the regional level. It helped to introduce comparative good practices and facilitated the exchange of experiences, which enabled knowledge transfer beyond the state level. Nevertheless, ETF information rarely permeated beyond the core group of stakeholders involved in the issue. While stakeholders felt information was available if they requested it, the ETF was not seen to take a proactive approach to supplying information to stakeholders unless it was requested.

In Kazakhstan, dissemination of information was aimed to raise awareness about the need to involve businesses in VET and lifelong learning discussions. The ETF was generally seen as successful in engaging all relevant actors in the field and contributing to raising awareness and discussions about the need to strengthen the legislative framework and undertake reform in lifelong learning. It also promoted a more inclusive approach, since it included actors that usually are not well informed and consulted. The ETF also provided a platform for regional communication and discussions and organised study visits with EU Member States (Estonia and Netherlands).

In the Tunisian case, the mix between regional and national approaches, as well as the mix of activities (hiring international experts, study visits, workshops, etc.), was highly valued. Tunisian officials admitted that there was a lack of awareness and knowledge about international approaches prior to 2006, and this gap is now filled. Undoubtedly, ETF has largely contributed to this development through a number of concrete activities and initiatives aimed at experience and knowledge sharing as well as at the introduction of new approaches. The introduction of the competence-based approach in Tunisia, which represented a paradigmatic shift in approach, was the result of these efforts.

Perception of political neutrality and reliability of information can be seen as a cornerstone of effective ETF policy, as partner countries are more likely to make use of knowledge and support if they view it as trustworthy, and long-term engagement is more likely. In this regard, a large majority of beneficiaries felt that ETF information was trustworthy and reliable. Only a very small minority (5% in partner countries and EEAS/EC) felt negatively about ETF information, and, in partner countries, case studies indicated this might be simply due to political considerations, with ETF actions linked to wider EU actions. Given the importance of establishing long-term and trusting relations with partner countries (examined in more detail below), the overwhelmingly positive response regarding ETF neutrality is an important finding in showing that the organisation is seen as a reliable source of knowledge and expertise.

Graph 12: Evaluation of ETF's performance in providing trustworthy and reliable information for partner countries

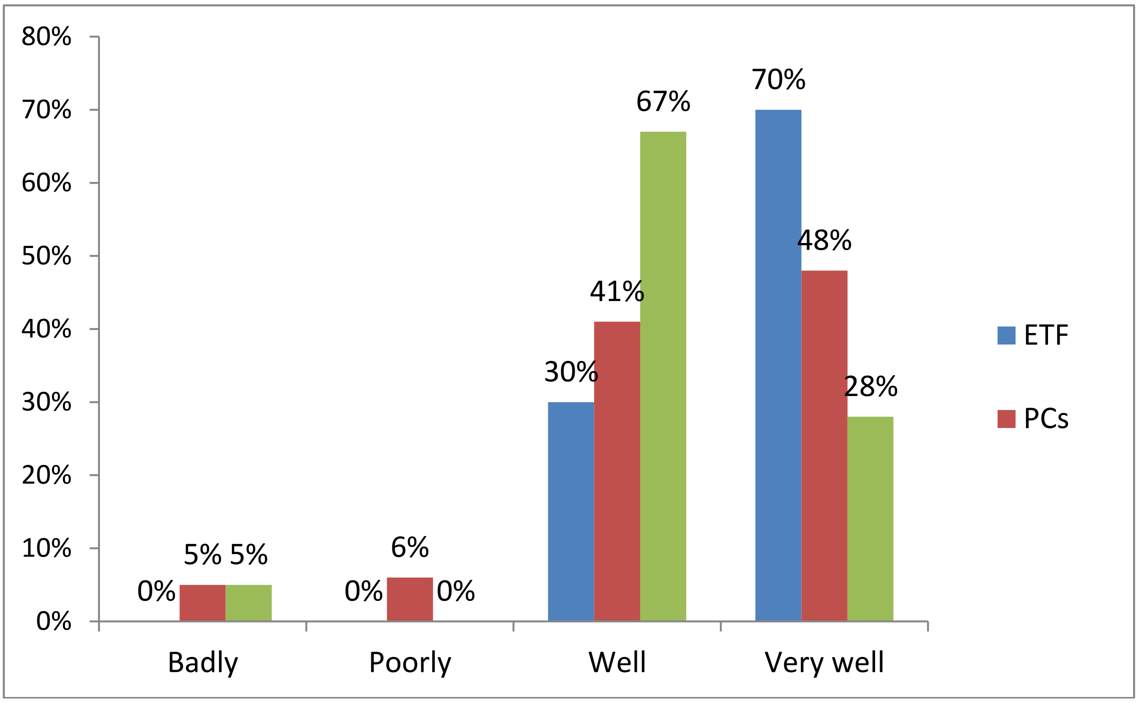


The ETF's general communications policy was judged positively and recent efforts have been taken to further improve it. Since 2008, there has been increased effort to improve the awareness of the ETF in the European Parliament and the European Union institutions in general. Two corporate conferences[25] are held by the ETF per year, and one is held in Brussels for the convenience of its EU stakeholders and in order to engage stakeholders at the Brussels level, including the European Parliament. In connection with the Torino Process, Torinet has been created, which creates a network of experts in the area of HCD and fosters an evidence-based approach to work in the area, and a new qualifications platform aims to provide an ETF-led medium for communication and knowledge-sharing between stakeholders. In addition, new methods of communication are being developed involving social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, which were used, for example, to prepare and follow up its December 2010 conference in Brussels on promoting social inclusion. The ETF website was significantly redesigned recently to aid in clearly and precisely present ETF information.

[25] In addition to greater number of regional and partner country conferences.

This information on partner country situations and policies accumulated by the ETF was seen to translate into competent support for the delivery of EU assistance. Partner countries mostly recognised the role played by the ETF in supporting EU assistance, and at the EU level, this support was recognised as a positive contribution of the ETF by most EEAS/EC respondents.

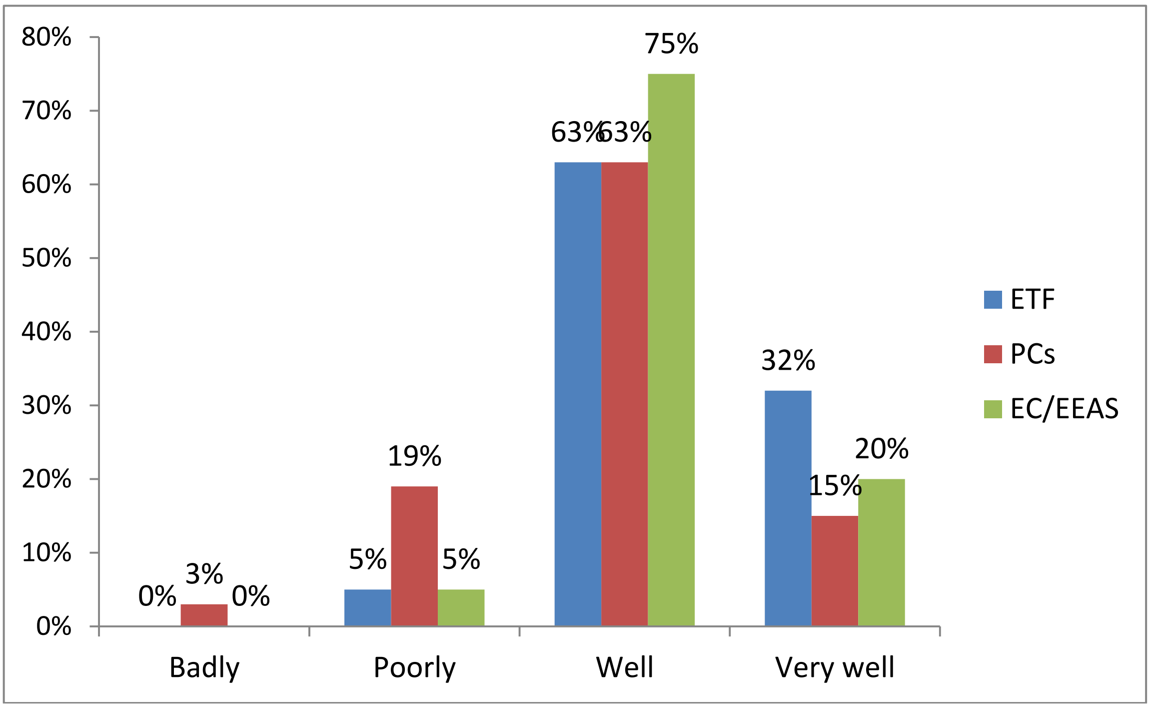
Graph 13: Evaluation of ETF's performance in supporting the delivery of EU assistance in partner countries



3.3.3. Capacity building

A second objective of the mid-term perspective was to ensure 'partner country stakeholder capacities have been strengthened and result in more relevant education and training sectors'. Again, beneficiary satisfaction was high in judging the ability of the ETF to build capacity, although compared to other measures, a relatively high percentage (22%) of partner country respondents did not feel the ETF addressed this issue adequately.

Graph 14: Evaluation of ETF's performance in building capacity of relevant stakeholders to improve governance in partner countries



Case studies reflected this mostly positive view but also noted the limitations of ETF actions in building capacity. While ETF actions were appreciated, stakeholders were generally unclear on how these actions translated into an increase in capacity for policy development at the governmental level. The ETF fared better in earlier stages in the policy process, where they were seen as more effective in facilitating initial steps towards strengthening capacity, acting as a sort of catalyst for further action.

Box 5: Summary of case study findings on the ETF's capacity building activities

In FYR of Macedonia, even though the ETF was seen to improve stakeholders' ability to engage with social inclusion and broader HCD issues, this was not easily translated into increased capacity in developing and implementing policies. At the state level, ETF activities contributed to the debate on social inclusion, the labour market and other HCD issues, but concrete examples of how this developed the capacity of state actors to address this issue were not evident.

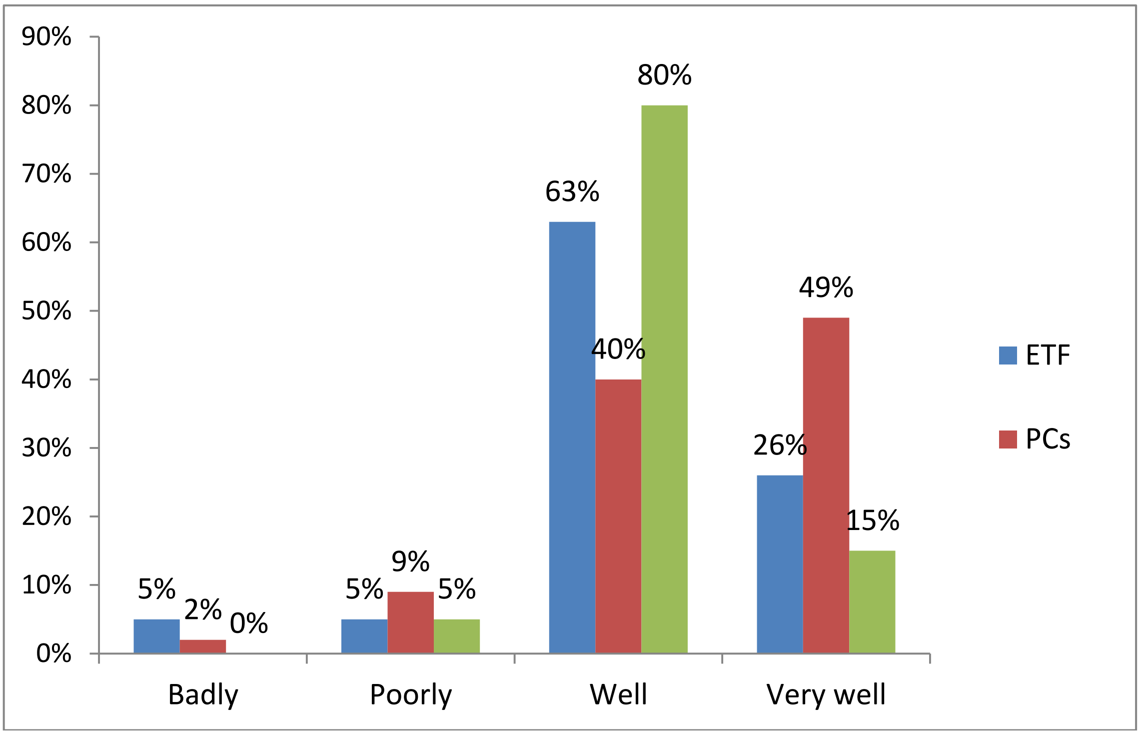
In Kazakhstan, interviewees felt that the ETF provided the participants of their activities with new and useful tools in dealing with TVET-related issues in their daily work. However, these new approaches are rarely being implemented systematically because the outcomes of ETF projects are not always absorbed at the institutional level. Capacity building was aimed at three groups of stakeholders: VET schools, social partners and national policy-makers. However, the low institutional absorption capacity at the central level and the marginal position of local and social actors in terms of resources and influence on the policy-making process made capacity building activities a long-term process. Again, this highlights the importance of long-term engagement of the ETF in partner countries.

In the Georgian case, different stakeholders benefited from ETF actions in terms of capacity building. For instance, the Employers' Association, one of the strongest players in Georgian HCD issues, significantly benefited from ETF activities in capacity building by participating in various training activities and seminars related to quality assurance. This illustrates the importance of the ETF in building capacity of non-state actors in engaging in wider policy debates.

In Tunisia, the ETF helped to develop and organise NQF by levels and descriptors, taking into account international experience while also accommodating specific national circumstances. Study visits, hiring of European experts and the inclusion of individual EU Member States (namely France, Spain and Italy) in the project contributed to capacity building for stakeholders about European developments in the field.

In terms of activities that can lead to increased capacity, a high percentage (89%) of partner country stakeholders felt that the ETF performed well or very well in providing support for setting policy targets and objectives.

Graph 15: Evaluation of ETF's performance in providing support in setting targets and objectives in partner countries



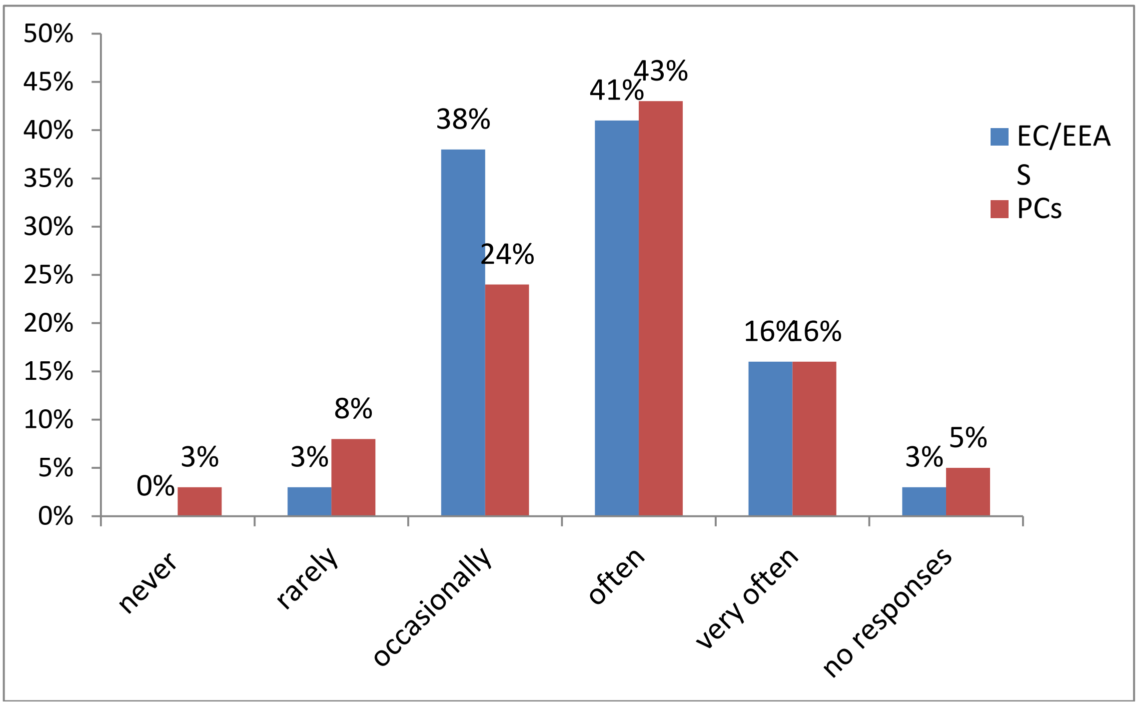
Case studies reflected these views and highlighted the need for the ETF to introduce concepts and ideas before any capacity can be developed nationally. This shows that the ETF is most effective in laying the groundwork and developing activities that in the future may help partner countries to further build on their capacity in HCD policy, and highlights the long-term nature of the capacity building function of the ETF.

3.3.4. Networking and knowledge transfer

Another objective of the mid-term perspective was to ensure that the ETF's 'networking activities transfer relevant policy lessons between EU Member States and partner countries and between partner countries, and provide opportunities for engagement with the EU's policies and programmes'. Through surveys, case studies and network analysis, this was seen to be the strongest area in which the ETF had an effect. This took several forms, notably the exchange of good practice examples (regionally and with EU Member States), the promotion of the inclusion of all stakeholders in policy dialogue and the increase of policy coordination between stakeholders.

Networking was seen by ETF staff to be an important function of the ETF and this was reflected in stakeholder views of the ETF in this area, where ETF performance was rated highly in all aspects and most respondents participated in ETF activities often or very often.

Graph 16: The frequency with which organisations of the respondents participate in activities organized by ETF



Connected to participation in ETF events, partner countries felt this involvement helped to increase awareness and dialogue around HCD issues. In Tunisia, there was a perceived lack of awareness regarding these issues prior to increased ETF involvement. While other international organisations also contributed to the development of this dialogue, the ETF was seen to be an integral part of this discussion.

Box 6: Summary of case study findings on the ETF's networking and knowledge transfer activities

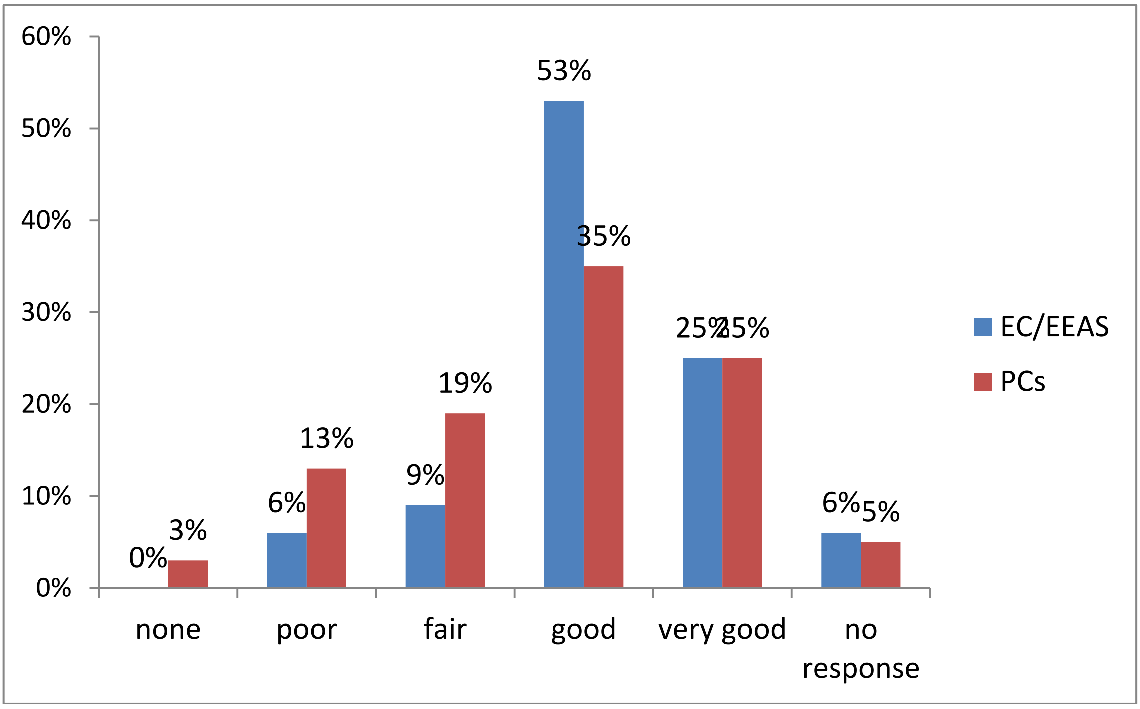
In the Kazakhstan case, the involvement of businesses in VET discussions increased at a national level. At the regional level, a platform for communication was created but this has not yet created strong network ties between stakeholders in VET. At the national level, the case study provided no evidence of ETF success in knowledge transfer and showed that the focus was placed on capacity building activities rather than on networking. However, the fact that there was no pre-existing network in place and the ETF had to gather the stakeholders (who were in many cases marginal to the process) could explain this gap. In the context of low institutional and societal capacity to absorb ETF resources, the emphasis was put on awareness raising and building on minimal capacities in VET.

In FYR of Macedonia, the ETF was able to provide a forum to share experiences and knowledge in social inclusion at national, regional and international levels. ETF involvement was seen as particularly crucial and effective in developing networks between stakeholders, facilitating the exchange of good practice within the region and providing information and expertise.

In the Tunisian case, the ETF provided a platform for peer reviews and exchange of experience between the four Southern Mediterranean countries. This was complementary to the respective national reform processes and was aimed at developing NQFs with a regional dimension in the Southern Mediterranean. Participants of these activities felt that the ETF was crucial in initiating these activities, which resulted in the creation of a new regional network. Knowledge transfer occurred not only at the regional level. Tunisia also benefitted from sharing good practice examples and developments in other EU Member States. Spain, France and Italy all contributed to knowledge transfer and exchange of ideas in Tunisia.

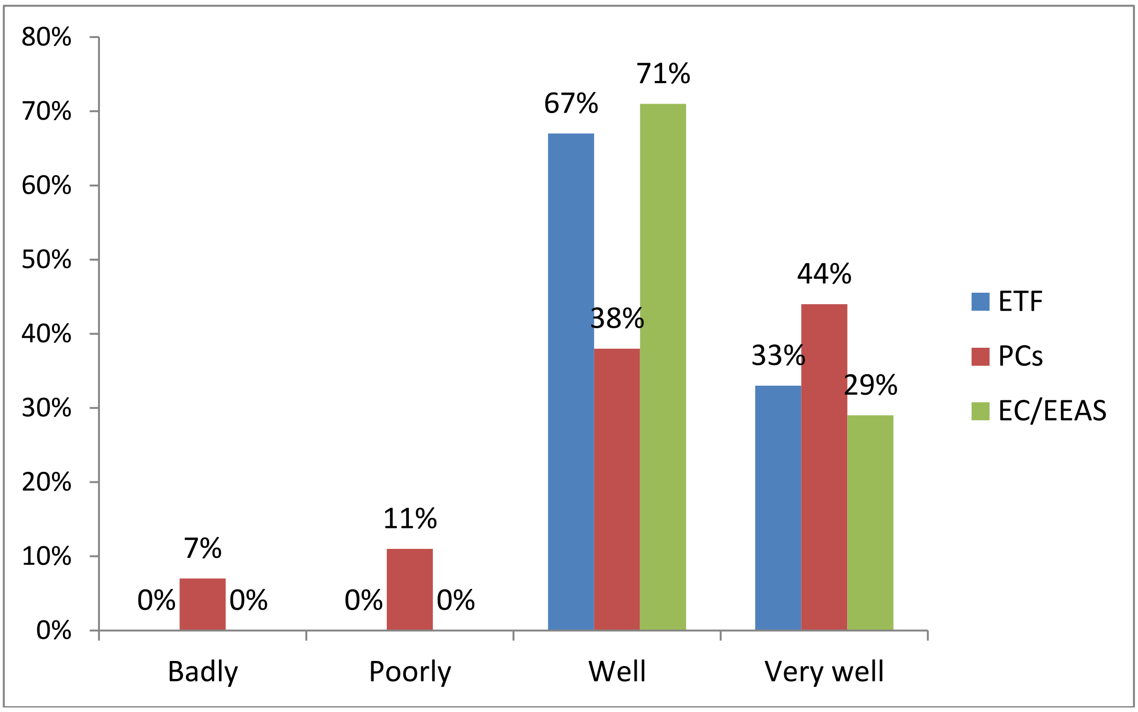
Network analysis shows that the ETF helps to integrate new stakeholders in the process, as they act as a central actor in involving stakeholders who would otherwise not be involved in the policy process. Case studies support this finding. In Georgia, for example, the Employers' Association benefitted from ETF action and took a central role in developing qualifications in the area, and in Tunisia, trade unions, traditionally a marginalised participant, took a more central role in HCD policy. Other groups of stakeholders were less central to ETF activities, with NGOs and academic institutes remaining peripheral to the policy process. The main role of the ETF was to provide a forum for these stakeholders to meet and discuss issues and evidence supporting this role was also strongly in surveys and case studies. In general, stakeholders in the ETF network felt that the ETF performed well in communicating with them.

Graph 17: Evaluation of sufficiency of communication with ETF



In looking at specific areas of networking and information dissemination, partner country stakeholders felt that the function performed best by the ETF was the introduction of examples of good practice, with a significant majority of beneficiary stakeholders feeling that the ETF performed this function well or very well. Stakeholders felt that this good practice was promoted effectively between partner countries and the EU, but a slightly smaller number saw this exchange as adequately promoted among the neighbouring partner countries in their regions, although they regarded this regional networking as important. Case studies also noted the importance of regional knowledge sharing. ETF performance in promoting the involvement of all relevant stakeholders was rated favourably, where 124 partner country respondents felt ETF performed well or very well. Most stakeholders also felt that this networking led to their involvement in other national and regional projects in which they otherwise would not be involved.

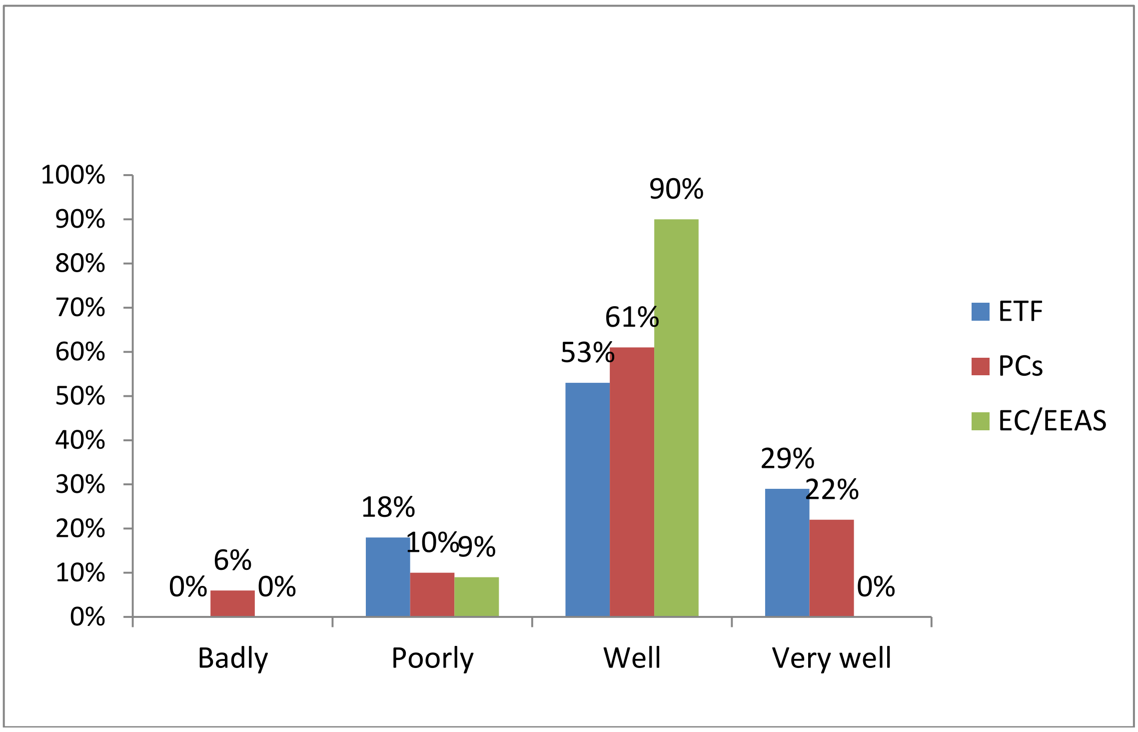
Graph 18: Evaluation of ETF's performance in introducing partner country organisations to new projects or initiatives outside their country



Regional activities were especially well received by partner countries, but also an area where it was felt the ETF could further develop, especially since other international actors were not investing in regional networking. For example, in all case studies, regional initiatives were viewed favourably as an opportunity for knowledge sharing and relevant comparisons of good practices. This was seen concretely through opportunities such as conferences, peer reviews and other less direct methods of sharing. The ETF also provided examples from Member States and EU approaches, including use of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework in Georgia and the transfer of good practice from Member States (such as Slovenia, Italy, France and Spain) to partner countries (including FYR of Macedonia and Tunisia).

The ETF also aimed to facilitate the exchange of information between donors, supporting previous positive findings in other evaluations (2008 decentralised agencies). Beneficiaries recognised the interplay between ETF actions and that of other international stakeholders, and felt the ETF performed strongly in supporting donor response. This was confirmed by case studies and network analysis, which highlighted the centrality of the ETF in addressing HCD needs. However, partner country respondents were not always clear in differentiating ETF actions from those of other donors. This indicates that there is still room for the ETF to grow and differentiate itself as a 'centre of expertise', adding value above that of donors.

Graph 19: Evaluation of ETF's performance in facilitating the exchange of information and experience among donors



3.3.5. Conclusions regarding effectiveness

Overall, ETF actions have had a positive effect on beneficiary actions in the field of human capital development in all operational objectives established by the organisation. The ETF is seen as most effective in providing information to beneficiaries, enabling networking and knowledge transfer and generally promoting the exchange of information between both beneficiaries and donors. The ETF also performed well in facilitating knowledge transfer at all levels, namely within partner countries, within regions and between partner countries and EU Member States. The contribution of ETF regional activities to sharing of good practices and experience was highlighted as a particularly positive effect and one that can continue to be developed.

Dissemination of information was positively viewed, but stakeholders were not always aware of all sources of ETF information or how to get it. Stakeholder responses indicate that the ETF can be more proactive in sharing its information and this sharing will enable a stronger connection between the ETF and all stakeholders. National, regional and thematic fora have been effective in operating as an information sharing tool, and can be further developed in other cases at the ETF level. In terms of capacity building, the ETF was judged positively, but some stakeholders (roughly 1/5) did not see the ETF as effective in this regard. Stakeholders were not always able to see how ETF actions were translated into increased capacity nationally. This was a problem in decentralised agencies with a wide scope as a whole, and still, the ETF was seen to provide sufficient support in building capacity and helping partner countries to set targets and objectives. That being said, the ETF should work hard to highlight and promote the benefits of their work in partner countries, thus making it clearer to beneficiaries how the ETF contributes.

3.4. Impact and added value

- Long-term effects of ETF actions are difficult to discern, given its non-binding approach to addressing HCD policy issues. Most beneficiaries felt that the ETF had a positive influence in helping to bring about concrete change and had the potential to add the most value in building capacity and improving information dissemination and networking.
- The ETF has a considerable impact on developing networks between stakeholders and acted as a central stakeholder in working with existing stakeholders and involving new stakeholders in the process. Regional networks are seen as a significant added value of the ETF and one that is not easily provided by other stakeholders.
- The ETF's ability to have an impact and add value in developing concrete change in capacity and networking (as well as other areas) is highly contingent on its ability to engage in partner countries long term.

The ETF operates as a non-binding instrument in addressing human capital development in partner countries. Given its status as a centre of expertise aimed at providing knowledge and expertise to lead to further change, measurable impact and added value are not always easy to ascertain and often take considerable time to become evident, as has been noted in previous evaluations. Still, the ETF has been shown to have an impact and added value in certain specific areas. This evaluation examines ETF added value through several questions:

1. Did the ETF have any measurable impact in social or economic affairs in the partner countries at the institutional or procedural level (on human capital development policies or on governance processes)?
2. Is the ETF perceived by EU and partner country stakeholders as a centre of expertise and one of the most important and reliable channels of information and resources in regard to education and training, labour market and entrepreneurship programmes?
3. Is the expertise and analysis provided by the ETF perceived as exclusive and not easily substitutable by the beneficiaries?

Previous evaluations noted the difficulty in evaluating the impact of ETF work, as the ETF tends to play the role of 'catalyst' in earlier stages of reform, which makes causal linkages difficult to draw. Given that, the 2006 evaluation focused on country cases, and found that concrete political or institutional reform was difficult to identify but qualitative impacts could be noted in most country cases. However, many of the ETF areas they were assessing for impact – such as the Tempus Programme and the National Observatory function – no longer fall within the ETF mandate. The 2008 and 2009 meta-studies on decentralised agencies did not explicitly address issues of impact in these bodies.

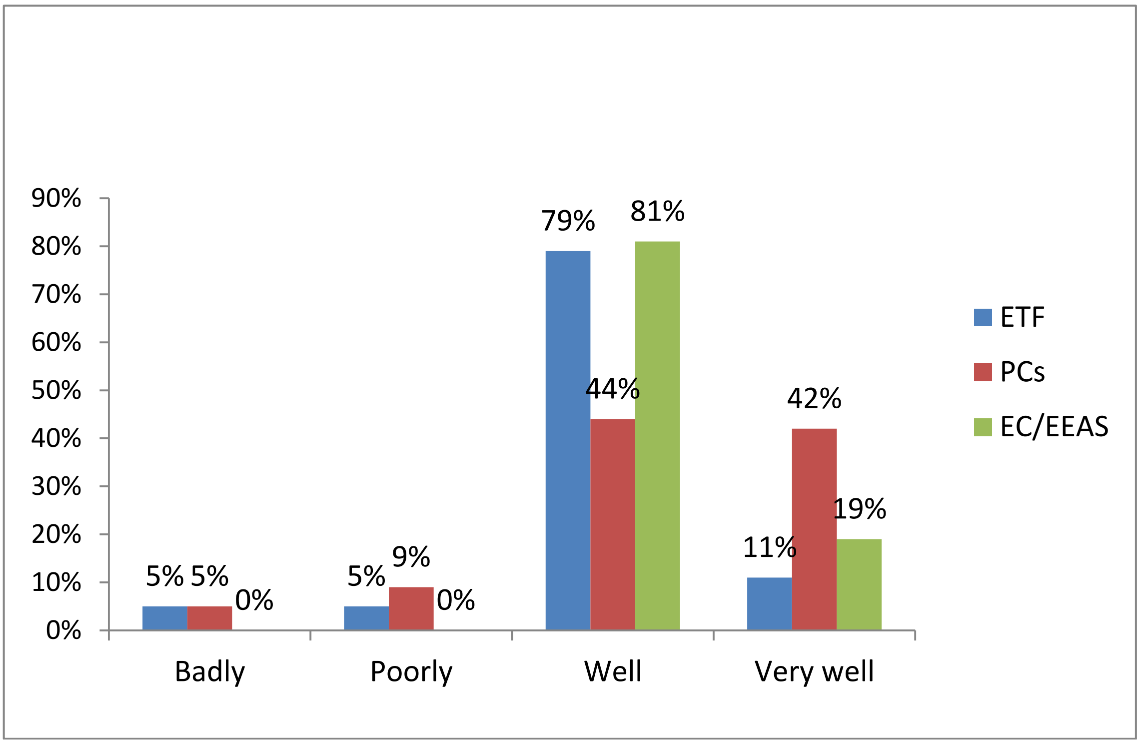
As a centre of knowledge and expertise, the impacts of the ETF are difficult to measure quantifiably. Still, certain impacts can be identified in partner countries and at the EU level, indicating the added value of ETF actions. While effectiveness measures the immediate results of ETF activities, this section will look at longer-term impacts and the ETF's position in the HCD network for providing unique and distinctive data and support not provided by other stakeholders. Impact requires that ETF actions lead to a measureable change – development of sustainable policy expertise and/or improved governance processes at the beneficiary level – that shows that the ETF has influenced the HCD process in either partner countries or the EU. Given the long-term knowledge provision role of the ETF, any changes brought about by ETF action can be hard to attribute to any one action or actor. Therefore, this evaluation focuses mostly on the added value of the ETF, using contribution analysis to look at what ways beneficiaries rely on the ETF, how the ETF improves the feeling of ownership over HCD processes among beneficiaries and how ETF expertise is used in a way that develops sustainable expertise and improves governance processes. These factors should in turn lead to the ETF playing a central role in human capital development at EU and partner country levels, both in terms of engaging with many stakeholders and in terms of introducing new stakeholders to the process, which illustrates that the ETF is performing a service that is not easily replaceable.

Evaluation of impact and added value draws on numerous sources. Case studies, surveys and network analysis were used to ascertain how the ETF has helped in selected partner countries over a longer period, augmented by interviews at the EU and partner country levels. In terms of added value, social network analysis was used to analyse the large-scale network of stakeholders involved in HCD over all 29 partner countries and beneficiaries of ETF in the EU institutions and actors. This helps to determine ETF centrality in HCD in its work with all stakeholders, as well as its ability to connect new stakeholders to the process. This is supported by selected survey data and interviews. The report will first look at measureable impacts before turning to the assessment of added value of ETF activities and the centrality of the ETF to the HCD process.

3.4.1. Measureable impacts for beneficiaries

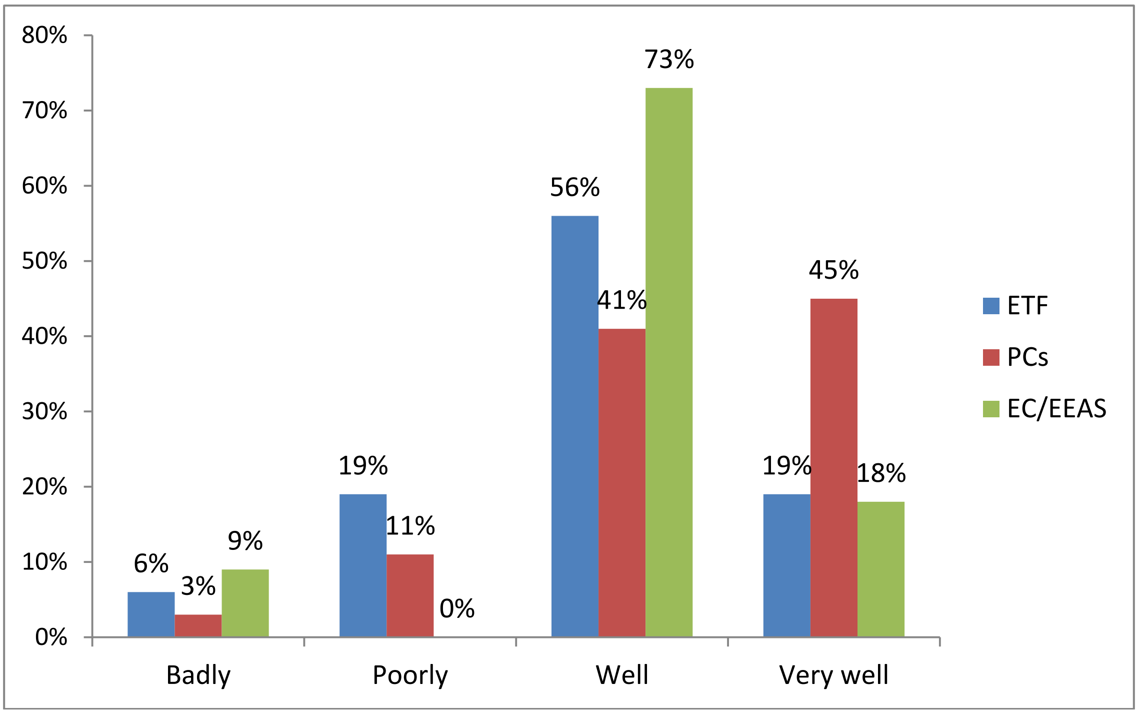
Measureable impacts at the institutional or policy level were difficult to observe in partner countries, as the ETF generally provides low intensity support over long periods, thus making causality harder to ascertain. Still, there were some signs of ETF impacts in certain areas. While the ETF was seen to add more value in immediate effects (see analysis above), beneficiaries still viewed ETF actions as positive in the longer term in areas such as aiding the implementation of new policies in partner countries. While the ETF itself does not implement policies, it can provide support, knowledge and expertise in helping partner countries to implement policies.

Graph 20: Evaluation of ETF's performance in aiding in implementation of new policy approaches in partner countries



Case studies supported this assertion, with some reservations. Namely, time issues were a concern, and policies developed with help from the ETF had not yet been fully implemented in cases such as Georgia and Tunisia. Long-term involvement of the ETF was seen to be a definite asset, with ETF added value increasing when the ETF had developed a permanent connection with state stakeholders. ETF support was stronger in developing policies when they had long-term national experience in the area, but stakeholders felt that there was less evidence of ETF contribution on the ground level in terms of helping to implement policy. Given the general mandate of the ETF, it is reasonable to expect a drop in ETF influence as policies become more entrenched in partner countries, and there was still a positive response to how well the ETF aided in implementation of policies. The reliance on ETF in earlier stages and diminishment of ETF influence as partner countries take ownership of policies was mostly evident through case studies, where ETF involvement could be tracked over time. These cases showed that the ETF was instrumental in introducing concepts and developing the agenda and debate on HCD issues, but was less instrumental in aiding the implementation of these policies. As such, beneficiaries, especially partner countries (where 25% of survey respondents viewed ETF concrete influence negatively), were less able to identify concrete influence of the ETF over HCD policy, but still generally viewed the ETF contributions as positive.

Graph 21: Evaluation of ETF's performance in having concrete influence over the introduction of new objectives, priorities, strategy and policies in PCs



The ETF itself was self-aware about the level of impact they could have in bringing about concrete changes in partner countries, and beneficiaries also recognised the ETF's somewhat more limited impact in bringing about long-term change. EEAS/EC respondents responded comparatively favourably regarding the ETF's concrete influence on introducing new objectives, priorities, strategy and policies, and partner countries also valued highly the ETF's impact in this area, although 25% felt that the ETF could improve in this regard. In general, these statistics shows that even though longer-term impacts of ETF actions are harder to determine, many beneficiaries recognise these impacts.

3.4.2. Added value of ETF activities

ETF actions can potentially add value at any stage of the policy process, from identification and introduction of issues onto the policy agenda to evaluation of specific interventions. It is reasonable to assume that as one moves further in the policy cycle, the actual influence of external stakeholders such as the ETF will diminish, and this evaluation found that to be the case, based on the evidence of surveys of beneficiaries and case studies. The ETF was judged most favourably in introducing new concepts on the policy agenda and improving dialogue on these issues, and there was somewhat less influence in creating and implementing new policies. Case studies showed that stakeholders recognised the clear influence of the ETF in introducing new policy concepts (such as social inclusion in labour issues in FYR of Macedonia, or the development of VET quality assurance in Georgia), but did not see the

ETF as having the same level of impact in ensuring that these policies had strong support at the implementation stage.

As discussed in the relevance section, the ETF operates at the policy level and stakeholders recognised broad, policy-related issues as the area where the ETF can and does add most value. As was highlighted in the relevance section however, a significant number of partner country stakeholders (31% of valid responses) see the ETF's role in terms of specific outputs, which is not the focus of the ETF mandate. Again, this points to some uncertainty amongst partner country stakeholders about how the ETF can add value.

The widening of the ETF mandate in 2008 was reflected in the nature of the needs of partner countries. Many respondents still recognised the central role of the ETF in its long-standing area of VET, but a widening number of respondents also identified new policy areas – namely labour market needs and entrepreneurship – as issues where the ETF can add value. A minority of partner country respondents drawn from the database of ETF working contacts in partner countries identified needs that thematically fell outside of ETF mandate, such as health and environmental issues. As with relevance, this points to some mismatch between what the ETF can provide and where some beneficiaries feel the ETF can add value thematically.

The ETF is, to a large extent, a process-driven organisation, and these processes are also where the ETF is seen to add the greatest value. As discussed above, the ETF adds significant value in networking, involving numerous stakeholders in the HCD process and providing knowledge and expertise. In these regards, the ETF is seen as important and unique in the support that it offers. A strong majority of partner country respondents felt that it would be difficult to address one or more aspects of HCD without the aid of the ETF, and this was supported by the EC/EEAS survey and case studies. This indicates that even if the ETF is unable to exercise concrete influence over policy processes in beneficiaries, their activities are important and not easily replaced by the activities of other stakeholders.

The types of assistance where the ETF was most valuable were diverse and covered a wide spectrum of activities, not all of which fell within the ETF mandate. Capacity building and networking were major types of assistance where partner countries felt ETF actions could be most useful. These fully align with the ETF's own priorities, indicating a strong awareness and fit between ETF objectives and actions and the interventions deemed to be most helpful by partner country beneficiaries.

3.4.3. Centrality of ETF in human capital development in Partner Countries and the EU

Previous studies[26] identified a main reason for the establishment of the ETF was to address a "lack of communication and co-operation between the stakeholders throughout Europe". In this regard, the ETF could be seen to have made significant progress, as it was identified as a key ETF role that was appreciated by stakeholders and seen as effectively undertaken, both in improving communication between central stakeholders and in involving new stakeholders.

Network analysis, based on responses by beneficiaries about the stakeholders whom they work with most regularly, helps to more clearly define the ETF's role and centrality in human capital development and provide insight into whether it adds value above that provided by other stakeholders in the field. Analysis was undertaken on the overall beneficiary network, as well as examining it along regional lines and types of stakeholders (NGOs, social partners, state actors and international actors). The network was developed based on contacts identified by the ETF as stakeholders with whom they work closely, and therefore it is expected that the ETF should show up as central to the process.[27] Analysis of the ETF network helps to reveal how the ETF operates compared to other international stakeholders central to the process, as well as how the ETF acts to link up state-level stakeholders and improve connections at all levels. This in turn indicates how – and with whom – the ETF adds value in creating opportunities for improving contact between stakeholders. Analysis of the networks is supported and deepened with data from surveys and case studies.

Overall, the network of connections between stakeholders is sparse, given its spread over 29 countries with a wide variety of international and national connections. The network becomes better connected when taking into account only international stakeholders that cut across countries. The ETF was the most central international actor connecting HCD stakeholders in partner countries, and in all sub-networks within partner countries. This emphasises the added value of the ETF in engaging partner country stakeholders in the HCD process. In the EEAS/EC stakeholder network, the ETF was not the most central stakeholder, with both the ILO and World Bank viewed as somewhat more central to the process. However, it should be noted that overall, EC/EEAS responses were less likely to favour one stakeholder over another, and respondents tended to work with a wide range of actors. The ETF was viewed more centrally in all partner countries, with the IPA region rating the ETF as the most central to the process. The ETF was the least central in the Central Asia region, where GIZ[28] was viewed as equally central to the process. Looking at particular groups of stakeholders, the

---

[26] 2003 and 2006 Meta Studies on Decentralised Agencies.

[27] Given the extent of ETF activities – 29 countries and a variety of thematic areas – full HCD networks could not be developed within the research framework. Therefore, this network analysis should be seen as indicative of how well the ETF engages those it works closely with, but does not take into account HCD stakeholders that *are not* targeted by the ETF.

[28] German external aid agency.

ETF was relatively more effective in connecting state actors, and least effective in connecting NGOs to the HCD policy process.

These findings provide more nuance to the role the ETF plays in connecting stakeholders. While the ETF works mainly at the strategic policy level, its actions at this level (as illustrated by EU-level connections) operate within a denser network with more central actors. Still, ETF actions complement rather than duplicate work done by these other central international stakeholders. However, the ETF adds most value at the partner country level, where it is the most central actor in the HCD process for those actors with whom they engage. Given their strengths at the partner country level and their relative centrality with the EC/EEAS, the ETF is in a position to operate as an effective bridge between the two levels. While other international stakeholders also fill this role, such as the ILO, World Bank and GIZ, the ETF is uniquely placed as a centre of expertise (rather than a donor) to facilitate connections between these levels on an informational, rather than financial, basis.

The ETF network shows that among EU stakeholders the ETF works most closely with EU delegations and are less closely connected to EC Directorates General. This reflects the dominant partner country focus in the daily operations of the ETF, which is also necessary to deliver quality support to the EC. In partner countries, the ETF is a significant influence in helping to connect HCD actors. Without ETF influence, the density of the network dropped significantly, indicating a strong role for the ETF in improving connections between stakeholders and a significant ETF impact on the cohesion of stakeholders in the HCD network.[29] More significantly, ETF involvement was shown to greatly reduce the distance between stakeholders. In other words, the ETF facilitated easier communication between stakeholders, where peripheral stakeholders would not have to talk to as many intermediaries in order to have their opinions heard by more central actors.

The ETF also proved effective at connecting stakeholders who would otherwise not be strongly connected to the HCD process. This roughly followed other measures of centrality, with the ETF being less likely to connect peripheral actors only in the EEAS/EC network. Regionally, the ETF was strongest at connecting peripheral stakeholders in the IPA region and very weak in connecting new actors in Central Asia, which might be explained by the vertical nature of governance and low independence of non-governmental actors in many countries in the region. The ETF also helped to develop networks at a regional level, connecting stakeholders between partner countries within specific regions. As discussed above, this role in developing regional networks was also highlighted in case studies as a significant area where the ETF can add value.

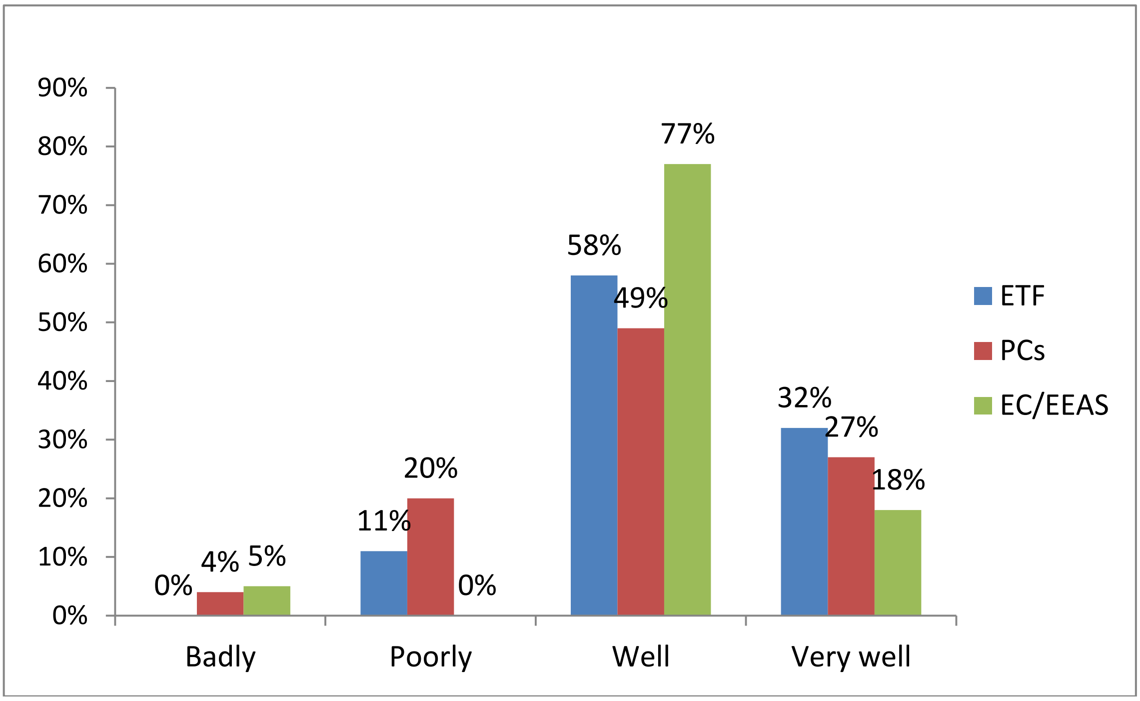
In the different categories of stakeholders, the ETF was strongest in connecting state actors, and weakest in connecting NGOs and social partners. Out of all respondents, 39 of them

[29] However, it should be noted that the removal of GIZ, ILO and the World Bank had a similar effect.

would not be strongly connected to the international network of HCD stakeholders without ETF intervention. In addition, 33 organisations were only connected to the process through the ETF, mostly concentrated in the Southern Mediterranean and Central Asia, which somewhat conflicts with the low centrality of the ETF in Central Asia. Given the political contexts in these areas, this indicates that the ETF adds significant value in broadening stakeholder involvement in countries with limited international involvement. In countries with more international contact, the ETF still plays an important role as an informational conduit, but does not necessarily bring new actors into the process. Both roles are important and add considerable value, but there is some noticeable regional discrepancy in how the ETF operates within the stakeholder network. The ETF's role in bringing new actors into the process is also supported by the experiences of interviewees.

This networking process should in turn result in improved coordination processes among stakeholders. A significant majority of beneficiaries – particularly in the EEAS/EC, felt that the ETF greatly facilitated coordination between stakeholders and governmental levels.

Graph 22: Evaluation of ETF's performance in helping to improve policy co-ordination processes among stakeholders and across levels of government



Partner country respondents also generally felt that the ETF aided coordination between stakeholders, although a relatively high percentage (24%) felt that ETF action in networking did not result in improved coordination between stakeholders. As networking and coordination are long-term and ongoing processes, this may simply indicate that the ETF needs more time to have an impact in some networks. Still, the ETF should ensure that there is a clear linkage between the process of developing networks and longer-term goals of improving coordination between stakeholders.

3.4.4. Conclusions regarding impact and added value

Impacts of ETF actions are hard to measure and causality is difficult to ascertain, but there are indications that the ETF has some impact on the policy process. Measurable impacts are evident in some partner countries, and contribution analysis in case studies shows that the ETF helps to shape policy in partner countries. This is supported by survey data, where respondents identified positive impacts of the ETF in bringing about concrete policy change or development. Processes through which the ETF could add the most value were in the areas of capacity building and dissemination of information and networking. The ETF was particularly successful in improving networking between stakeholders. While ETF actions in building capacity were also judged positively (as seen in the effectiveness section), a moderately higher proportion of partner country respondents (22%) felt that the ETF could improve in this area. Still, ETF actions in helping to build capacity were appreciated and generally judged favourably.

Measurable impact occurred mostly in earlier stages of the policy process and in introducing new concepts onto the policy agenda, while ETF impacts were less evident in implementing policy change. However, survey results and case studies also indicated that stronger ETF influence in earlier stages of policy development led to more impact in later policy stages. The ETF acted as a catalyst for bringing about further policy change, and as the organisation occupies an important place in shaping the agenda and debate around HCD issues, long-term engagement with partner countries is vital to ETF success.

The ETF has considerable impact in creating and developing a network of relevant stakeholders. Network analysis revealed that the ETF was central in connecting all stakeholders, and also helped to involve unconnected stakeholders into the process. Supported by case studies, the regional importance of the ETF is highlighted, with the ETF well-placed to play a significant role in connecting stakeholders across country lines and allow for information exchange between partner countries. The ETF is the international stakeholder most involved at the regional level, and while stakeholders greatly appreciated this regional approach, it can continue to be developed. This networking process linked up to an improvement of coordination between stakeholders in the HCD policy process. This coordination necessarily takes place over the long-term and the full impact of the ETF has not yet been fully realised in this coordinating function. This again highlights the importance of long-term engagement at the partner country level in order for the ETF to have an impact and add value.

3.5. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness

- Administrative reforms together with decentralised financial management systems and procedures have made the ETF organization leaner and more efficient.
- The introduction of a new monitoring and evaluation framework within the ETF (supported by the Dashboard) together with corporate-level performance indicators and activity-based budgeting has made the operations of the ETF more transparent and thus strengthened accountability measures.
- However, performance indicators need further development in terms of making them more valid (measures like downloads do not necessarily measure the use of ETF products) and reliable (same indicators every year together with evidence-based target levels).
- Overall performance of the ETF improved between 2006-2010 in achieving corporate performance targets and implementing the budget.
- Reporting covers all relevant areas. In the future, effort should be made to improve focus (less and only relevant information) and make reports easier to read (less abbreviations and function/title codes).
- In general the competence of the staff is very high (still plenty of variations at the individual level) due to successful recruitment and training. A future challenge is to gain a better understanding of the broadened scope of VET-related policies.

3.5.1. Cost-effectiveness of ETF actions

Cost-effectiveness analysis solves a problem of optimisation of resources that is usually presented in the following two forms:

- Given a fixed budget and alternative projects, the agency aims to maximise the outcomes achievable, measured in terms of effectiveness;
- Given a fixed level of effectiveness that has to be achieved, the agency aims to minimise the cost.[30]

Analysis of cost-effectiveness relies, to a great extent, on both clear costs and clear results in order to establish unit costs. However, the actions of the ETF are not easily or directly translated into measurable results and impacts (and even more immediate results) are often deferred over a long period of time. In addition, ETF indicators focus on process and

[30] European Commission DG Regional Policy (2008): Guide to Cost Benefit Analysis of Investment projects. Structural Funds, Cohesion Fund and Instrument for Pre-Accession.

immediate outputs, rather than outcomes and results.[31] This means that the traditional approach to matching outcomes and effectiveness to costs and budget is impossible. Instead, this report evaluates corporate performance based on internal ETF measures and data, and also provides a more holistic, qualitative assessment of the cost-effectiveness of ETF actions based on perceived effectiveness, impact and added value over the five year period as compared to changes in budget and costs.

The 2006 evaluation did not go into significant depth on the cost-effectiveness of the ETF, and this lack of information is common to other decentralised agencies. More generally, satisfaction and internal efficiency of decentralised bodies is seen as relatively favourable, but productivity is often not clearly (or even qualitatively) measured due to lack of data. Many of the issues the ETF has to address – including staffing issues, approach to management and budgeting, measurement of results and impacts and flexibility versus accountability were issues that were relatively common to decentralised bodies. Firmer analyses of cost-effectiveness such as unit-cost ratios were not common among decentralised bodies. The analysis of decentralised agencies shows that ETF performs activity-based management and quality management, but only partially performs results-based management. The share of ETF administrative staff was 35% in 2006, and 38% in 2007, which was seen to be a medium percentage. By 2010, this had dropped significantly to 26%.

The evaluation of cost-effectiveness relies on the availability of monitoring data on the achievement of quantified objectives over time and costs incurred in the process. However, following the recommendations of the previous external evaluation, significant changes in planning and reporting on ETF performance were undertaken with modifications introduced in 2007, 2008 and 2010. Continuous changes in the ETF monitoring system throughout the evaluation period meant that the evaluation team was unable to access comparable quantitative information covering the entire period or establish clear trends in the cost-effectiveness of its actions. This chapter starts with a review of how the ETF set and achieved its targets over time and ends with a discussion of costs based on 2010 data, when the latest planning and reporting system was introduced.

Early measurements of ETF performance

In 2006, according to the annual activity report, the ETF fully achieved 27 out of 44 expected results (61%), and 70 out of 100 indicators. EC actions and resource constraints were the reasons given for most of the non-achievement, but reasons were not always provided. Accordingly, 17 expected results and 27 indicators were carried over to the next year to be achieved. However, the Annual activity report 2007 does not account for the achievement of

[31] This can be partially explained by the nature of ETF work, although the organisation should also work to develop more outcome and results-based indicators. Significant work has been undertaken to develop indicators in recent years, and the ETF is working to create this more outcome-based approach.

these results and indicators, thus it is unclear how many of them were achieved. This lack of follow-through was noted in other decentralised agencies, as well.

In 2007, the ETF used a different system of results monitoring from 2006, with the annual activity report 2007 providing "main project results achieved in 2007". It is not known whether such measurement is exhaustive in investigating the achievement of expected results, and results are not clearly linked to indicators. In the majority of cases it is impossible to distinguish whether the expected result was achieved or not, since the necessary information for such assessment is not provided. Overall there is no evaluation on the achievement of the expected results as was done in 2006: only 2 out of 53 expected results were explicitly evaluated as reached.

For 2008, the annual activity report was not based on either expected results or indicators, but on the work carried out according to activity areas defined in the work programme. Such objectives rightfully outline the area of activity. However, they do not present any measurable expected result that should be achieved.

Since 2008, the annual activity reports also started presenting quantitative information on achieved outputs that correspond to the new functions after the recast regulation. There were targets set for how many outputs should be delivered. However, one major drawback of this measurement system was that outputs were not clearly measured against the achievement of objectives. Therefore, even if a quantitative target for outputs was met, it was not known how well the ETF performed in reaching its objectives in a certain country or whole region.

Corporate indicators

With the recast regulation in 2008, the ETF began to measure outputs in four areas: policy review and analysis, capacity building, support to programming cycle and dissemination and networking. Additionally, outputs for innovation and learning projects were also measured (in 2010 they were incorporated into functions), while 2008 also measured effectiveness analysis outputs. Table 7 below presents only the outputs delivered under the EC subvention funding so as to have a clearer picture on the targets achieved. It is evident that the ETF met its overall target in 2008 and 2009 but fell a bit short of it in 2010. Moreover, it has been consistently under-achieving its targets in the capacity building function.

In 2010, the ETF planning and reporting system was changed again. Before this, the planned number of outputs established by the EC in the Financial Perspective for the ETF was included in its Work Programmes automatically. Since 2010, the plan is updated annually according to changes in EU and partner country priorities and only then specified in the Work Programmes. In 2008 and 2009 the planned number of ETF outputs was still taken from the Financial Perspective without modification. This could affect the variation between targeted and achieved outputs in the table below.

Table 7: Achievement of ETF outputs by function in 2008 – 2010

ETF functions		Outputs 2008	Outputs 2009	Outputs 2010
Input to Commission sector programming and project cycle	Target	18	25	31
	Achieved	36	29	30
Support to partner country capacity building	Target	70	91	73
	Achieved	67	68	67
Policy review and analysis	Target	8	10	26
	Achieved	55	23	28
Dissemination and networking	Target	15	20	29
	Achieved	10	23	30
Innovation and learning projects	Target	7	9	
	Achieved	14	13	
Effectiveness analysis	Target	2		
	Achieved	9		
Total	Target	120	155	159
	Achieved	191	156	155

Legend: Green – achievement or overachievement; Red – underachievement.
Source: Created by the authors using data from the ETF annual activity reports 2008 – 2010.

Furthermore, in the course of Work Programme implementation the ETF had to manage its output plans when unforeseen priority requests came from its beneficiaries or when the ETF budget allocation was reduced due to overall budget cuts in the EU. For example, in 2010 the EC informed the ETF that it was not in a position to make available the full amount of the subsidy foreseen in the agency's budget. The ETF was therefore required to adapt its budget to accommodate a reduction of €628,000 in available commitment appropriations. The ETF addressed this shortfall by prioritising activities planned for the rest of the year. As a result, the difference between the total number of outputs planned and achieved (159 to 155) is approximately 3% of the planned outputs for the year. This correlates with the difference between the ETF budget on which the original output target was estimated and the final budget received in 2010: 96.78% of that initially approved.

A significant overachievement of outputs in 2008 is also explained by the fact that the EC requested more but smaller outputs in the policy analysis section, which was also true of the programming cycle. In 2009 underperformance in the capacity building area was linked to the global financial crisis, which resulted in a change in operational priorities. The underperformance in 2010 was mostly attributed to cancelled activities (mainly in the capacity building area) and non-requested activities, as well as postponement of some activities to 2011. When broken down by region, there does not seem to be a general pattern that might explain achievement/non-achievement of outputs; in 2009 fewer outputs than planned were delivered in the ENPI region, while in 2010 targets failed to be met under all functions in the DCI region.

Certain conclusions can be drawn from the corporate indicators. Most importantly, with the exception of the performance measurement system in 2006, there is no explicit linking of results and outputs delivered to the fulfilment of ETF objectives. Thus it is unclear how the results of ETF activities actually contributed to the achievement of operational and strategic objectives. These indicators are process- rather than results-oriented, which makes linkages between results and objectives difficult to ascertain.

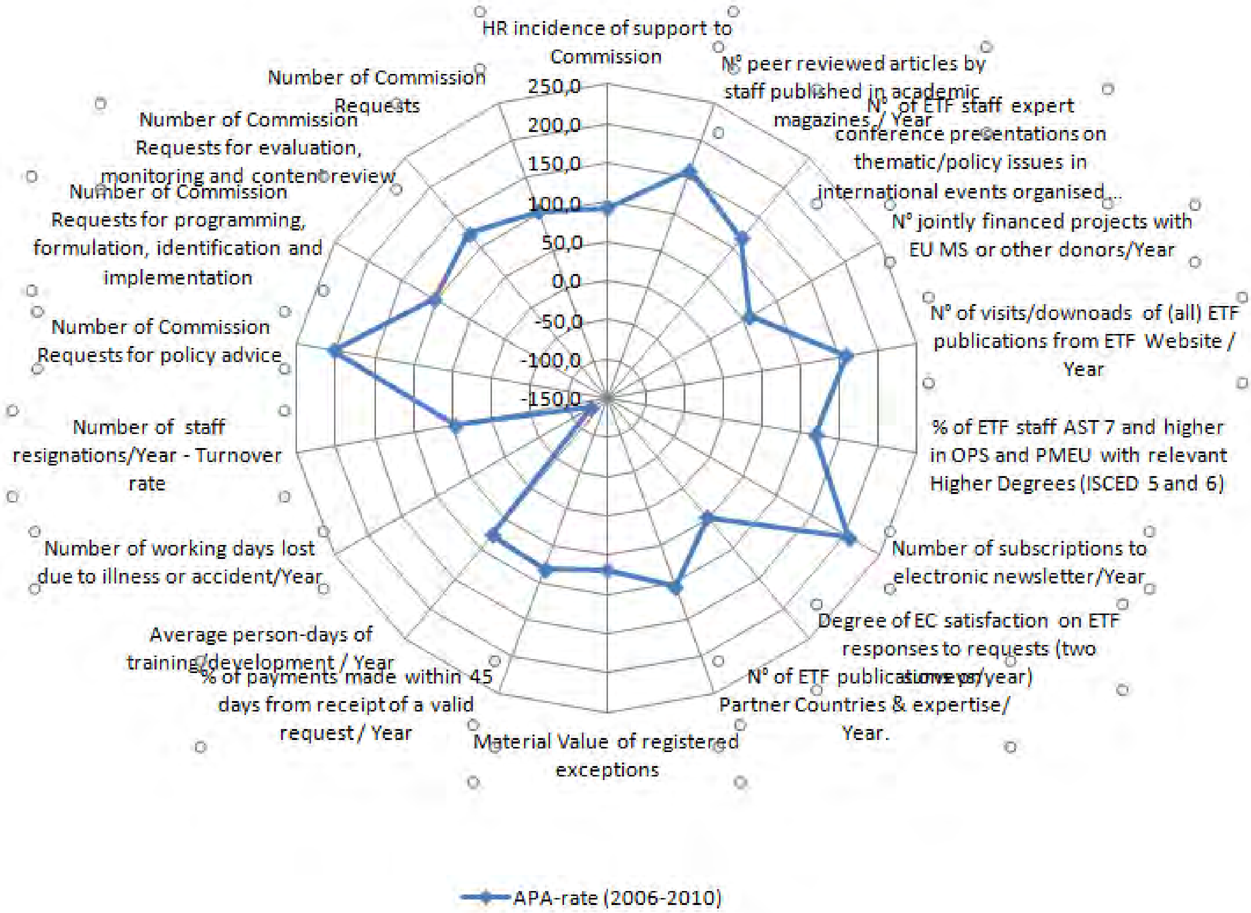
Other corporate indicators

Besides the aforementioned indicators, there are other ETF corporate indicators that are relevant to this analysis. These indicators do not measure the actual outputs of the ETF's activities, but they can give valuable insight into the performance of the ETF. For instance, the number of ETF publications and peer-reviewed articles reflects the ETF's level of expertise and promotion of its recognition outside the immediate ETF environment. Other indicators were discussed in more detail in the effectiveness section.

What has to be noted about the corporate indicators is the planning of their targets. With the exception of the indicator on jointly financed projects, all other targets are set according to the achievement of the previous year. While it is difficult to find a middle ground between what the organisation should maximally achieve and its actual capabilities, target setting should involve a level of reasonably ambitious planning. Otherwise performance will be relative depending on the results of the previous years, which defeats the purpose of strategic planning in the first place. Achievement on corporate performance indicators is illustrated in the Average Performance Achievement Rate (APA) from 2006-2010.[32] Results of this analysis are presented in Figure 2.

[32] APA-rate is an average percentage of achievements of each financial year. However, those indicators with missing data from several years were dropped out. Also Indicator No 5. Number of downloads of ETF publications was dropped because of the low degree of reliability and high level of volatility of the indicator.

Figure 2: ETF Average Performance Achievement Rate, 2006-2010



This figure clearly shows that the ETF has exceeded target levels, especially in responding to Commission requests, getting subscriptions to its electronic newsletter, publishing peer reviewed articles (although this objective is given less attention in the new strategy) and giving presentations at international conferences. The lowest achievement rates can be found in the areas of expected staff turnover rate (mostly due to age structure and transfers of functions), degree of EC satisfaction with ETF responses to requests, average person-days of training and percentage of payments made within 45 days of receipt of a valid request/year.

In all, the volatility of the yearly performance rates is rather high and therefore these results should be treated as indicative findings. However, the validity and reliability of certain indicators (such as number of downloads) can be questioned, although subsequent work has been done to address some of these issues. Also, the rationale behind the target setting of certain indicators seems a bit unclear. For example, the number of Commission requests is beyond the ETF's control and during later years seems to match 100% with the targets.

In examining the budget, several findings can be noted.

Table 8: Comparison of ETF budget lines 2009-2011

Budget lines		Year, share of the total (in %)			
		2009	2010	2011	Average 2009-2011
Operations		52.26	53.56	59.02	54.95
of which:	*Enlargement*	18.12	15.76	17.80	17.23
	Neighbourhood	19.41	17.51	20.58	19.17
	Development and Co-operation	4.78	7.03	5.86	5.89
	Innovation and learning	9.95	13.26	14.13	12.45
Corporate communication		13.74	9.77	11.38	11.63
Management, governance and resources		33.97	36.70	30.21	33.63
of which:	*Administrative*	24.69	24.39	19.19	22.76

When the budget is broken down by operations, one can see that two major budget lines are operations and management, which together account for more than 80% of overall spending. Under the operations category, Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions cover the biggest share of the total budget. It should also be noted that administrative costs have decreased radically at the end of the period. This is a clear indication of the positive impacts of administrative reforms and increased efficiency caused by it. Also, communication costs have decreased and are likely to shrink further due to more active use of internet and social media.

The ETF has applied activity based budgeting[33] in full-scale since 2009. This allows for a more accurate calculation of unit costs and thus makes the implementation of operations more transparent in financial terms. In 2010, of the €18.832 million available as commitment appropriations in the 2010 subvention, the ETF achieved a commitment rate of 99.9% (compared to 99.8% in 2009 and 98.5% in 2008) and paid 87.1% of the amount committed (compared to 82% in 2009 and 84% in 2008). Including the payments on operational commitments carried forward from the previous year, of the €19.298 million available payment appropriations in 2010, the ETF achieved a payment execution rate of 96.5% (compared to approx. 90% in 2009 and 2008). The ETF has more than halved the number of budgetary transfers to 15 in 2010, compared to 33 in 2009, and carried forward only 12.8% of the 2010 amount committed (compared to 17% in 2009, 15% in 2008).

Based on the ETF annual activity report for 2010, capacity building activities in partner countries cover almost half of all ETF allocations. Also unit costs (budget allocations by outputs) are at the highest level, especially in IPA activities (almost 227.000 euros). The second largest allocation is given to policy review and analysis in partner countries (22% of the total allocations and average unit cost of 138.000 euros) with the highest costs in DCI and

[33] Activity based budgeting (ABB) is the method used by the European Commission for the organisation of budget appropriations and resources by purpose. It allows people to see what policies are pursued, and within them, what activities make up the policies, how much money is spent on each of them, and how many people work on them. EC: Financial Planning and Programming Glossary. http://ec.europa.eu/budget/other_main/glossary_en.htm

ENPI South regions (around 226.000 and 209.000 respectively). Delivery of the support to EC in programming of the EU assistance to partner countries covers 16% of total 2010 budget, with the average output cost of 104.000 euros. Facilitation of dissemination and networking takes approximately 15% of the budget with the lowest average costs per output, but these are rather high in DCI and ENPI South (around 263.000 and 203.000 euros), while at the same time extremely low in IPA (around 46.000 euros).

The significant variation in the average cost of outputs in the same function area across the partner country regions is understandable due to the fact that the levels of resources needed to produce different outputs in the same function might differ dramatically (e.g. provide a policy brief on a narrow subject or deliver a broad comparative study based on new data collection across partner countries). However, small and large assignments at the regional level in performing similar functions should tend to even out. Therefore the five-fold difference between the highest and the lowest average output cost in dissemination and networking function between regions seems hard to justify.

The highest average output cost by region in 2010 was in the DCI region, closely followed by the ENPI South. IPA region significantly fell below average (reaching only 74% of DCI average) and ENPI East outputs were the cheapest (62% of DCI average). Thus the average cost of outputs did not correlate well with the overall funding priorities of ETF, where ENPI South and IPA regions were top priority while DCI and ENPI East were lower priority. Based on this, there might be room for a more ambitious planning of outputs and lowering of the average cost per output in DCI and ENPI South, with outputs in dissemination and networking function in these regions needing particularly close attention.

3.5.2. Efficiency implications of ETF organisational, budgetary, management, monitoring and evaluation structures and processes

Between 2006 – 2010, the ETF went through several managerial reforms. Most of them were introduced in the ETF Work Programme 2010 and implemented in 2011 and thus are beyond the timeframe of this evaluation. Still, the major reforms will be briefly listed and discussed, along with their potential impact on addressing development needs expressed during the years 2006-2010.

In 2010 the ETF carried out functional analyses of its administration and operational activities. In the resulting action plans, the ETF has implemented and will implement in the course of 2011 and 2012 a series of measures aimed at rationalising and improving the efficiency of its activities. These include the reorganisation of the administration to reduce the department from 4 units to 3 and from 40 staff at the end 2009 to 28 staff in 2011,[34]

[34] Including the staff reduction caused by the transfer of TEMPUS from the ETF to European Commission.

enabling a transfer of resources from central administrative functions to corporate-level and operational activities.

For the period of analysis, the ETF management was composed of the following members of the management team: the Director and the Heads of four Departments (Operations Department; Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Department; Communication Department; Administration Department). In 2011, the operations department was split into three separate departments: the geographic operations department, the thematic expertise development department and the evidence-based policy making department. While it is too early (and outside of the purview of this evaluation) to judge the effectiveness of this split, initial staff opinions of the reorganisation are positive, as the operations department was very large and the changes are seen as a useful way of more clearly and efficiently developing and implementing ETF projects along prescribed lines. However, some questions were raised about whether the split might hinder the development of projects that cut across the departments.

The ETF is governed by a Board comprising one representative for each of the EU Member States, members from the European Commission and the European Parliament and three independent experts, as well as observers from the Candidate Countries. The Governing Board is responsible for adopting the draft annual work programme of the ETF and its budget, subject to the approval of the European Parliament in the context of the overall European Union budget. The ETF Governing Board (GB) is very much engaged in what the ETF is doing. There have been several attempts to make the governing board more active, including regular meetings and increased involvement in drafting the work programme.

Efforts have been made to improve ETF management as well. The Performance-based Management Framework has been developed by revising the policies on planning, monitoring and evaluation and risk management and corporate performance indicators. In addition, a Dashboard has been developed as a data integrator to support and collate all information about ETF projects. According to planning documents, the ETF has chosen to operate competence-based management of its human resources, designed to support its continuing development as a centre of expertise. In this framework, human resources management will bring a significant contribution to the achievement of the work programmes' objectives.

Staff figures show that approximately 60% of the expert staff works in the areas of capacity building and policy analysis. Dissemination and networking cover 18% and input to Commission sector programming account for 21%. Competencies of the staff are a major issue with respect to the new mandate. Labour market and other new areas set in the new regulation were where the ETF had to recruit and develop its current staff, and this is shift is progressing well.

There has also been a move to a risk-based simplification of financial and procurement processes, with the reduction of central ex-ante verification on low-risk transactions. Combined with the decentralisation of financial and procurement transactions processing, this is expected to significantly reduce the overall administrative burden as well as eliminate bottlenecks and reduce transaction processing times. A corporate process development team has been created with the aim of driving efficiency improvements within the organisation. From 2012, a corporate efficiency policy and strategy will be developed, with objectives and indicators for meeting medium-term efficiency improvement targets. Finally, ETF quality management policy and processes, project management and administrative support will be reviewed in upcoming years.

According to the ETF (see Annual Report of 2010), these developments together covered changes in the organisational structure, resource management, internal processes and systems, procedures and workflows. In particular, the functional analysis of administration, the institutional and functional analysis of operations and the move towards an effective performance management system should be highlighted. As these changes are so recent, it is difficult to measure their effectiveness (and makes the measurement of past cost effectiveness less relevant), but the ETF has worked significantly to improve the cost-effectiveness of its operations.

3.5.3. Conclusions regarding efficiency and cost-effectiveness

Overall, ETF efficiency and cost-effectiveness has improved significantly over the period of the evaluation. The ETF was very effective in deploying its resources effectively. However, the largest constraint to further ETF growth – identified through interviews and supported by case study examples of limited ETF support – was a lack of resources to further build on developing ETF success in partner countries. Tunisia presents a positive example where the ETF was able to focus resources and support in a way that built on pre-existing ETF action and the changing political and policy climate in order to add significant value to HCD policy in the country. However, at the current time and given resource limitations, any additional support provided by the ETF subtracts from work done in other areas. This can limit the opportunities for the ETF to build on past successes and exploit windows of opportunity for increased action.

Unit costs remain difficult to ascertain given the nature of the work undertaken by the ETF, although recent efforts have been made, through activity-based budgeting, to more accurately calculate per unit costs on regional and thematic bases. Qualitative data from surveys and interviews supports the assertion that the ETF performs its functions in a cost-effective manner and maximises its outputs given its limited resources and capacity. Significant discrepancies in unit costs exist between regions. While this is generally understandable given different circumstances and approaches utilised by the ETF in different regions, care should be taken in areas with much higher per unit costs – particularly the DCI and ENPI

South in dissemination and networking function – to ensure that ETF resources are efficiently deployed to achieve desired outputs and results.

3.6. Conclusions and recommendations

Significant changes have occurred in the ETF since 2006, and these are reflected in actions undertaken during this evaluation period. These changes are reflected in the findings of this evaluation, where ETF relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact and added value, and cost effectiveness have been further developed since the last evaluation in 2006. Conclusions and recommendations draw from surveys, case studies, and network analysis. In all areas, ETF performance was very strong and no significant changes are recommended. These conclusions and recommendations should be seen as ways to further improve ETF work, rather than indicative of any significant problems with the work of the ETF.

Since the 2008 recast of the ETF mandate, there has been significant organisational and operational reform. Key among these changes is the introduction of the Torino process, whereby the ETF aims to more accurately and easily identify, enumerate and address HCD issues in partner countries and develop their capacities for evidence-based policy making. While only one year's reports were available for this evaluation, Torino process outcomes were viewed favourably in the ETF as well as among stakeholders and produced a considerable amount of data and literature on partner country situation and policies. Internal organisational reform within ETF took place to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness of the organisation and to better address the multiple thematic areas covered by the ETF. Many of these changes took place very recently, and as such are difficult to evaluate, but initial evidence is very positive in suggesting that these reforms have addressed issues that required attention.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Conclusions</th><th>Recommendations</th></tr>
<tr><td>Relevance</td><td>

ETF actions were found to be relevant both thematically and procedurally to beneficiary needs, and the ETF was and flexible in addressing these needs.
Relevance of ETF actions was not consistent for all stakeholders, however. While the ETF worked mainly at the strategic level, a minority of stakeholders identified operational objectives as key to relevant action.
Regionally, the ETF was required to operate in a variety of situations, ranging from relatively well-developed HCD policies to situations in which HCD was a new concept.
In addition, different groups of stakeholders favoured different ETF interventions, and often perceived ETF actions differently.
Given the ETF mandate, the organisation must balance strategic objectives with a flexible approach to beneficiary requests. As a whole, the ETF strikes a good balance between flexibility and strategic planning.

</td><td>

The ETF should be more proactive in clarifying its role to stakeholders with whom they work, and the ways in which the ETF can provide support. In addition, the ETF should actively promote their work and share examples of success with EC/EEAS and partner country stakeholders. This evaluation shows that the ETF has performed very well in developing HCD policy at all levels, but beneficiaries are not always aware of this impact. While much of this information is shared passively (via website), the ETF can take a more proactive stance in making EU- and partner country-level stakeholders aware of their success and impact in several ways:

- A clear description of possible ETF actions, including clarification of their strategic (rather than operational) role in partner countries and the EU;

- The goals of the ETF at EU and partner country levels, and how ETF actions can contribute to improving partner country HCD policy;

- A description of areas in which the ETF can provide support, and the form this support can take;

- Explanation of how areas of ETF action are chosen and prioritised;

- Examples of effective and successful ETF actions.

Much of this information can be adapted from existing data and sources. However, this evaluation shows that beneficiaries do not always seek this information out, so the ETF should be proactive in illustrating their effect and impact.
While the ETF role is clearly defined at the policy level (where it primarily operates) and with state-level actors (with whom they have long-standing contact), the ETF role vis-a-vis social partners and NGOs is less clear. The ETF should clarify its objectives for including different groups of stakeholders, and how it intends to engage these groups. This will aid the ETF in engaging with these groups, and help to manage expectations of stakeholders regarding ETF actions.

</td></tr>
</table>

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

	Conclusions	Recommendations
Coherence	• ETF actions were internally coherent, as well as being coherent with broader EU objectives and most partner country objectives. • A clear hierarchy between strategic and operational ETF objectives was not clearly developed in mid-term perspectives and annual work plans. Specific ways of translating strategic objectives into action were not clearly stated in planning documents.	• Annual work programmes and country plans should identify specific areas of action – both thematically and procedurally – and clearly state how these actions contribute to wider strategic objectives of the ETF. This would help to more clearly identify ETF progress and clarify how ETF processes contribute to operational change, while still allowing for flexibility in approach.
Effectiveness	• The ETF was highly effective in its main roles of: - Provision and dissemination of information, analyses and policy advice; - Capacity building; - Networking and knowledge transfer. • Information dissemination has evolved over the evaluation period, and is now making greater use of social media and online opportunities to share information. While significant amounts of information are shared, not all stakeholder groups are clear on the nature or extent of ETF information and action. • Capacity building was a central objective of the ETF, and it was effective in helping to develop knowledge and expertise that could lead to greater partner country capacity in HCD. Still, it was difficult to distinguish how effective the ETF was in building capacity, as a picture of how ETF actions should contribute to capacity development – and a clear definition of capacity building – were not established. • The ETF performed most strongly in networking and knowledge transfer, and these activities were highly valued by beneficiaries. Regional networks were especially valued, and an approach where the ETF added significant value and was particularly distinctive from other international actors in the area. The creation of separate thematic and geographic departments offers potential to strengthen further regional initiatives in terms of networking and policy learning between stakeholders.	• Particularly with stakeholder groups more recently engaged by the ETF (ie. social partners and NGOs), a more proactive approach to information dissemination should be undertaken in order to inform these groups about the nature and extent of ETF action. Care must be taken to properly target and refine this information in a way that avoids information overload for stakeholders. Social networking platforms and/or methods of sharing information should be further examined as a potential way to develop closer connections not only between the ETF and beneficiaries, but also between beneficiaries themselves. • The ETF should continue to work closely and continuously with partner country stakeholders to develop a strategy for how ETF actions and knowledge development can be utilised to improve capacity and increase partner country ownership over the policy process. • The ETF has performed strongly in developing networks of stakeholders. New approaches recently developed by the ETF – such as thematic networks – should be expanded to other areas as resources permit. This will help to grow networks and, in time, increase the function of these networks to help coordinate networks and improve communication between stakeholders. In addition, these networks should include short-term feedback mechanisms to improve day-to-day contact between the ETF and partner country stakeholders. • Regional programmes and initiatives should continue to be developed to the greatest extent possible, to support networking and policy learning between stakeholders.

	Conclusions	Recommendations
Impact and Added Value	• Overall, the ETF performs very well, given its wide mandate and limited resources. There has been significant effort in the organisation over the last five years to improve operations, and this is already becoming evident in its actions and results. While measureable and quantifiable results are difficult to ascertain given the ETF's mandate as a centre of expertise, strong and varied qualitative evidence clearly shows the significant value of ETF work at EU and partner country levels.	• Long-term engagement by the ETF at the partner country level is absolutely essential in ensuring impact and added value for ETF actions. Broadly, this means that the ETF should maintain presence in all partner countries – and be given adequate resources to do so – even if immediate results are not evident. Internally, the ETF should, to as great an extent as possible, maintain consistency at the partner country level by matching staff skills with particular thematic and geographic areas. Country managers should be rotated infrequently in order to allow them to build up sufficient knowledge and connections at the partner country level, and non-political stakeholders should be engaged to help to mitigate disruptions created by political change.
Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness	• ETF has a system of useful performance indicators, which should be kept stable to enable measuring the progress of the organisation over the years. However, the existing indicators focus solely on immediate outputs. Therefore, the progress of ETF as an organisation towards its broader objectives is not being monitored in a systematic way. • Not only is the ETF adding good value, but it is also cost-effective in doing so. Given its vast thematic mandate, large geographical area and relatively modest budget (only a small fraction of overall EU HCD financial assistance to the region), the ETF has proven to be flexible in the past in deploying its support where EU institutions and Governing Board deemed it was most necessary. As shown in other sections, this flexibility is a positive aspect of the ETF approach, as it allows it to be responsive, relevant and effective to beneficiary needs. However, there is a certain trade-off between this flexibility and maintaining strategic clarity, networks, support and a constant presence in all partner countries. In particular, over the last year ETF resources were strained when it tried to respond to demand for more intensive and focused support in some partner countries in the South and East Mediterranean that are undergoing political transition.	• ETF performance indicators should be carefully extended to incorporate results level indicators, e.g. partner country beneficiary satisfaction with services provided by ETF, the actual use of ETF expertise by the beneficiaries in their work, etc. Collection of performance monitoring information should be extended accordingly. • The EU should take advantage of any opening windows of opportunity presented in partner countries or regions and make full use of the ETF and its stakeholder network to deliver policy support and institutional capacity building in areas particularly open to support and reform. The EU should consider increasing ETF budget allocation to support EU priority partner countries when specific opportunities for increased impact are presented. Countries where these windows of opportunity are opened through transition or policy reform can make use of temporary increases in ETF support, perhaps through the deployment of additional staff and resources in order to take advantage of these openings for significant and faster ETF (and EU) impact.

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Annex 1 – Survey questionnaires

1. Questionnaire for beneficiaries of ETF in Partner Countries

Dear respondent,

Thank you for taking part in this survey on human capital development. This specifically includes:

- Vocational education and training system development and provision in a lifelong learning perspective;
- Labour market needs and employability;
- Enterprises and human capital development: Education and Business partnerships.

This survey has been commissioned by the Directorate General of Education and Culture of the European Commission and aims to examine human capital development context in the EU partner countries and to provide an insight into which EU-supported activities are working well and which have to be improved.

This is an independent evaluation and your responses are completely confidential. Only the evaluators will see individual responses and only generalised data will be presented in our report. The survey provides an opportunity for you to speak freely about your work in human capital development, and honest and detailed responses are greatly appreciated, especially in open-ended questions.

If you would prefer to receive a paper copy of the survey, or if you have any questions regarding it, please do not hesitate to contact Dion Curry at Dion.Curry@vpvi.lt or at +370 5 249 6829.

1. **Apart from financial resources, what are the most significant needs of your country in human capital development?**

2. **In your opinion, who are your organisation's most important institutional partners in the area of human capital development?**

   Please provide the names of **up to** 10 national and/or international organisations **and** specify units where possible: e.g. specific ministries of partner countries, departments of international bodies, NGOs, service providers, etc.

Institutional partner	Unit

Institutional partner	Unit

3. To what stage(s) of your work does the European Training Foundation (further - ETF) contribute?

Please tick all that apply.

Identifying the problems that need to be addressed	☐
Developing strategies	☐
Developing specific action plans	☐
Implementing action plans	☐
Evaluating and monitoring action plans	☐
Other (please specify)	☐

Please provide an example of how the ETF contributes to your organisation in the area(s) you ticked.

4. How often:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often
Does your organisation participate in the activities organised by the ETF?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does your organisation consult ETF information, resources or services?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is your organisation in contact with the ETF officials?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. How would you evaluate:

	None	**Weak**	**Moderate**	**Considerable**	**Strong**
The sufficiency of communication between your organisation and the ETF?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your organisation's awareness of the ETF's activities that relate to your work?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ETF's awareness of your organisation's activities in human capital development?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How would you evaluate the performance of the ETF in the area of human capital development in your country in:

	Don't know	**No ETF action**	**Badly**	**Poorly**	**Fairly**	**Well**	**Very well**
1. Providing information, policy analyses and advice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Promoting the involvement of all key stakeholders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Helping in improvement of policy co-ordination processes among stakeholders and across levels of government	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Facilitating the exchange of information and experience among donors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Introducing new concepts or ideas in looking at issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Introducing new approaches and methods to governance and policy design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Building capacity of relevant stakeholders to improve governance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Introducing good-practice examples	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Enhancing accountability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Disseminating information on important issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Promoting exchange of experience and good practice between your country and the EU	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Promoting exchange of experience and good practice with other countries in the region	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Maintaining contact with your organisation, providing timely advice and support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Aiding in implementation of new policy approaches in your country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Providing support to improve monitoring and evaluation process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Remaining politically neutral and respecting the policy priorities and approaches of your state	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Showing flexibility and responsiveness in working with your organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Adhering to the needs of the region	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Providing support in setting targets and objectives in your country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Seeking feedback regarding the ETF's work in your country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Providing trustworthy and reliable information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Introducing your organisation to new projects or initiatives outside your country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Supporting the delivery of EU assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Concrete influence over the introduction of new objectives, priorities, strategy and policies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
!25. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5.1. **Out of these above-mentioned activities, would any of them be difficult to fulfil well without the help of the ETF?**

If yes, please specify numbers of **up to** 3 activities where ETF provides the highest value added.

5.2. **Have the ETF activities significantly changed in any of these above-mentioned areas over the past 5 years?**

If yes, please specify numbers of activities and **specify how they changed** (e.g. decreased/increased in quality, new activities were started etc.).

6. **Which ETF activity, in comparison to other ETF activities, has had the best result in your country?**

Please provide an example of such activity and specify what made this activity successful.

7. **Which ETF activity, in comparison to other ETF activities, has been the least successful in your country?**

Please provide an example of such activity and specify what made this activity unsuccessful.

8. **In areas where you feel the ETF's work with your organisation should be improved, how can this be done?**

Please describe in your own words for each area you wish to discuss.

9. **As a result of ETF activities, was concrete action taken in any of the following areas in human capital development?**

Please tick all that apply. Refer to the region you specified.

New discussions/debates were carried on among key institutional actors	☐
Introduction of new concepts in national policy documents	☐
Proposal of new priorities and objectives in the national agenda	☐
Implementation of new policy at the national level	☐

Please specify what was exactly done in the area(s) you ticked.

10. **According to you, have the ETF's activities resulted in any unintended results and impacts (beneficial or harmful) in your country?**

If yes, please specify these results and whether they are beneficial or harmful.

11. **How does the work of the ETF fit with other EU activities in the area of human capital development in your country?**

Please tick only one answer.

The work of the ETF complements other EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF overlaps with other EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF is completely separate from other EU activities	☐
!Other (please specify)	☐
I do not know of other EU activities in human capital development	☐

12. **How does the work of the ETF fit with other non-EU activities in the area of human capital development in your country?**

    Please tick only one answer.

The work of the ETF complements other non-EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF overlaps with other non-EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF is completely separate from other non-EU activities	☐
Other (please specify)	☐
I do not know of other non-EU activities in human capital development	☐

13. **How important is each type of information for the work of your organisation in the area of human capital development?**

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extensively
EU policy documents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from the ETF	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from the EU Member States	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from other countries in your region	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from other intergovernmental organisations (e.g. Council of Europe, United Nations, IMF, World Bank)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from social partners (e.g. trade unions, employer organisations)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from international non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from national non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from your country's governmental institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research information (e.g. universities, research institutions)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from education and training institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. **Are there any specific ETF sources of information that are particularly useful to your work?**

    If yes, please specify the source of information (e.g. written documents, ETF facilitated activities, consultations with ETF officials, others) for each of the beneficiaries.

15. **How has the ETF helped your organisation to communicate with:**

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extensively	Not applicable

EU actors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
International (non-EU) actors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Regional actors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
National actors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15.1. **Does the ETF work on any human capital development related activities that the above-mentioned actors do not work on or work significantly less?**

If yes, please specify these activities (activity).

16. **According to you, what factors facilitate the work of the ETF with your organisation?**

Please name **up to** 4 factors.

17. **According to you, what factors complicate the work of the ETF with your organisation?**

Please name **up to** 4 factors.

18. **Over the past 5 years, has your organisation become:**

Please tick only one answer.

More involved with the ETF	☐
Less involved with the ETF	☐
Maintained the same level of involvement with the ETF	☐

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

2. Questionnaire for ETF operations core personnel

Dear respondent,

Thank you for taking part in this survey on the role and performance of the European Training Foundation. This survey is a part of an independent external evaluation commissioned by the European Commission that aims to examine and to evaluate the ETF's activities in the period 2006-2010. The evaluation will also provide suggestions and recommendations regarding the activities of the Foundation in the post-2010 period.

Your responses are completely confidential and anonymous since only generalised data will be presented in our report. The survey provides an opportunity for you to express freely your opinions on the different aspects of Foundation's activities. Honest and detailed responses, especially to open-ended questions, are therefore greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please do not hesitate to contact Dion Curry at Dion.Curry@vpvi.lt or at +370 5 249 6829.

1. **Please indicate your major area of expertise within the ETF:**

   Please tick only one answer.

Country management	☐
VET systems and policies	☐
Quality and Qualifications Systems	☐
Labour Market and Employability	☐
Entrepreneurship and enterprise skills	☐
VET and Social Partnership	☐
VET and social inclusion	☐
VET and gender	☐
Governance and lifelong learning	☐
Administration	☐
Monitoring and Evaluation	☐
Planning	☐
Other (please specify)	☐

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

2. **How often do you personally work with the following beneficiaries of the ETF activities?**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often
Partner countries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EU Commission	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EEAS and/or EU delegations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. **Over the last 5 years, which region did you work with the most within the ETF?**

   Please tick only one answer.

EU candidate countries	☐
Western Balkans	☐
Eastern Europe and Russia	☐
Middle Asia	☐
Southern Mediterranean	☐

4. **Does the ETF performance vary within this region in countries you have been working with over the last 5 years?**

   Please tick only one answer.

Yes, ETF performance significantly varies depending on the country	☐
There are some differences in ETF performance depending on the country	☐
No, ETF performance is mostly the same within the region	☐
I have been working with just 1 country in this region	☐

For the following questions regarding the ETF's work in this region, please generalise as much as possible at the regional level (if you worked with more than 1 country)

5. **According to you, what are the most significant needs (apart from financial resources) of this region in human capital development?**
6. **In your opinion, who are the ETF's most important institutional partners in the area of human capital development?**

   Please provide the names of **up to** 10 national and/or international organisations **and** specify units where possible: e.g. specific ministries of partner countries, departments of international bodies, NGOs, service providers, etc.

Institutional partner	Unit

Institutional partner	Unit

7. Referring to the region you have specified, how would you evaluate:

	None	Weak	Moderate	Considerable	Strong
ETF's awareness of the region's activities in human capital development?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Region's awareness of the ETF's activities that relate to its work?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coherence between ETF's activities in the region and its activities in the EU?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. How would you evaluate the performance of the ETF in the area of human capital development in its work with:

A) the region you have specified in:						
	No ETF action	**Badly**	**Poorly**	**Fairly**	**Well**	**Very well**
1. Providing information, policy analyses and advice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Promoting the involvement of all key stakeholders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Helping in improvement of policy co-ordination processes among stakeholders and across levels of government	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Facilitating the exchange of information and experience among donors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Introducing new concepts or ideas in looking at issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Introducing new approaches and methods to governance and policy design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Building capacity of relevant stakeholders to improve governance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Introducing good-practice examples	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Enhancing accountability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Disseminating information on important issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Promoting exchange of experience and good practice between the region and the EU	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Promoting exchange of experience and good practice within the region	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Maintaining contact, providing timely advice and support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Aiding in implementation of new policy approaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Providing support to improve monitoring and evaluation process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Remaining politically neutral and respecting the policy priorities and approaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Showing flexibility and responsiveness in one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Adhering to the needs of the region	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Providing support in setting targets and objectives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Seeking feedback regarding one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Providing trustworthy and reliable information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Introducing countries in the region to new projects or initiatives outside their own countries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Supporting the delivery of EU assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Concrete influence over the introduction of new objectives, priorities, strategy and policies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
!25. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B) the EU Commission in:						
	No ETF action	**Badly**	**Poorly**	**Fairly**	**Well**	**Very well**
1. Providing information, policy analyses and advice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Disseminating information on important issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Maintaining contact, providing timely advice and support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Aiding in implementation of new policy approaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Providing support to improve monitoring and evaluation process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Showing flexibility and responsiveness in one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Supporting the EU external policy instrument cycle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Contributing to analysis of the effectiveness of EU external assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Seeking feedback regarding one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Providing trustworthy and reliable information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Providing useful recommendations on external support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C) EEAS and/or EU delegations in:						
	No ETF action	**Badly**	**Poorly**	**Fairly**	**Well**	**Very well**
1. Providing information, policy analyses and advice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Disseminating information on important issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Maintaining contact, providing timely advice and support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Aiding in implementation of new policy approaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Providing support to improve monitoring and evaluation process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Showing flexibility and responsiveness in one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Supporting the EU external policy instrument cycle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Contributing to analysis of the effectiveness of EU external assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Seeking feedback regarding one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Providing trustworthy and reliable information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8.1. **Have the ETF activities significantly changed in any of these above-mentioned areas over the past 5 years?**

If yes, please indicate the numbers of activities and **specify how they changed** (e.g. decreased/ increased in quality, new activities were started etc.)

9. **Which ETF activities, in comparison to other ETF activities, have had the best result with various ETF beneficiaries?**

Please provide an example of such activity for each of the beneficiaries below and specify what made these activities successful.

Region you specified

EU Commission

EEAS and/or EU delegations

10. **Which ETF activities, in comparison to other ETF activities, have been the least successful with various ETF beneficiaries?**

Please provide an example of such activity for each of the beneficiaries below and specify what made these activities unsuccessful.

Region you specified

EU Commission

EEAS and/or EU delegations

11. In areas where you feel the ETF's work should be improved, how can this be done?

Please describe in your own words for each area and beneficiary you wish to discuss.

Region you specified

EU Commission

EEAS and/or EU delegations

12. As a result of ETF activities, was concrete action taken in any of the following areas in human capital development?

Please tick all that apply. Refer to the region you specified.

New discussions/debates were carried on among key institutional actors	☐
Introduction of new concepts in national policy documents	☐
Proposal of new priorities and objectives in the national agenda	☐
Implementation of new policy at the national level	☐

Please specify what was exactly done in the area(s) you ticked.

13. How does the work of the ETF fit with other EU activities in the area of human capital development?

Please tick only one answer.

The work of the ETF complements other EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF overlaps with other EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF is completely separate from other EU activities	☐
!Other (please specify)	☐
I do not know of other EU activities in human capital development	☐

14. How does the work of the ETF fit with other non-EU activities in the area of human capital development?

Please tick only one answer.

The work of the ETF complements other non-EU activities	☐

The work of the ETF overlaps with other non-EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF is completely separate from other non-EU activities	☐
!Other (please specify)	☐
I do not know of other non-EU activities in human capital development	☐

15. To what extent does the ETF help national stakeholders of the region you specified to communicate with:

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extensively	Not applicable
EU actors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
International (non-EU) actors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Regional actors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
National actors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
!Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. How would you rate the sufficiency of communication between:

	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
The ETF and the region you specified	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The ETF and the EU institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. What kind of feedback do you receive on the ETF's activities from:

	None	Mostly negative	More negative than positive	Equally negative and positive	More positive than negative	Mostly positive
Partner countries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EU Commission	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EEAS and/or EU delegations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. For what activities would you say the ETF receives the most positive feedback?

Please specify the activities (if there is feedback).

19. For what activities would you say the ETF receives the most negative feedback?

Please specify the activities (if there is feedback).

20. Are there any specific ETF sources of information that you see as particularly important for the ETF beneficiaries?

If yes, please specify the source of information (e.g. written documents, ETF facilitated activities, consultations with ETF officials, others) for each of the beneficiaries.

Partner countries	
EU Commission	
EEAS and/or EU delegations	

21. Over the past five years, have national stakeholders in the region you specified become:

Please tick only one answer.

More involved with the ETF	☐
Less involved with the ETF	☐
Maintained the same level of involvement with the ETF	☐

22. According to you, what factors facilitate the work of the ETF with its beneficiaries?

Please name **up to** 4 factors.

23. According to you, what factors complicate the work of the ETF with its beneficiaries?

Please name **up to** 4 factors.

24. According to you, have the ETF's activities resulted in any unintended results and impacts (beneficial or harmful)?

If yes, please specify these results (and whether they are beneficial or harmful) for all the beneficiaries.

Region you specified

EU Commission

EEAS and/or EU delegations

25. According to you, has the ETF adapted itself, its way of operating and its activities to the changes introduced by the new mandate?

Please comment on your answer.

Yes	☐
Partly	☐
No	☐

26. According to you, what could be further done in order to improve the way in which the ETF provides services for EU institutions and bodies?
27. According to you, what could be further done in order to improve the way in which the ETF operates in the region you specified?
28. Speaking generally, what would you say has been the most significant change over the last 5 years in how the ETF operates?
29. Do you consider this change positive or negative?

Please specify your answer.

Positive	☐
Negative	☐
Other (please, specify)	☐

PPMI
PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

3. Questionnaire for beneficiaries of ETF in the European Commission and the European External Action Service

Dear respondent,

Thank you for taking part in this survey on the role and performance of the European Training Foundation (ETF) in human capital development. This specifically includes:

- Vocational education and training system development and provision in a lifelong learning perspective;
- Labour market needs and employability;
- Enterprises and human capital development: Education and Business partnerships.

This survey is part of an independent external evaluation commissioned by the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission that aims to examine and to evaluate the ETF activities in the period 2006 - 2010. The evaluation will also provide suggestions and recommendations regarding the activities of the Foundation in the post-2010 period.

Your responses are completely confidential and anonymous since only generalised data will be presented in our report. Your opinion is of great value in providing insight into which areas of the ETF activities could be further improved and how this could be achieved. Honest and detailed responses are therefore greatly appreciated, especially in open-ended questions.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please do not hesitate to contact Dion Curry at dion.curry@vpvi.lt or at +370 5 249 7538.

1. **What organisation do you represent?**

European Commission	☐
European External Action Service **excluding** the EU delegations	☐
EU delegations	☐

2. **How long have you been working in your organisation in the area of human capital development?**

Less than 2 years	☐
2 to 5 years	☐
More than 5 years	☐

3. **How long have you been working with the European Training Foundation (further: ETF) and its programmes?**

Less than 2 years	☐
2 to 5 years	☐
More than 5 years	☐

4. Over the last 5 years, which region (if any) did you work with the most outside the EU?

Please tick only one answer.

EU candidate countries	☐
Western Balkans	☐
Eastern Europe and Russia	☐
Middle Asia	☐
Southern Mediterranean	☐
No particular geographic region	☐

For the questions regarding the ETF's work in this region, please generalise as much as possible at the level. (if you worked with a specific region)

5. **According to you, what are the most significant needs (apart from financial resources) of your organisation in human capital development?**
6. **In your opinion, who are your organisation's most important institutional partners in the area of human capital development?**

Please provide the names of **up to** 10 national and/or international organisations **and** specify units where possible: e.g. specific ministries of partner countries, departments of international bodies, NGOs, service providers, etc.

Institutional partner	Unit

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

How often:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very often
Does your organisation participate in the activities organised by the ETF?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does your organisation consult ETF information, resources or services?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is your organisation in contact with the ETF officials?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. **How would you evaluate:**

	None	**Weak**	**Moderate**	**Considerable**	**Strong**
The sufficiency of communication between your organisation and the ETF?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your organisation's awareness of the ETF's activities that relate to your work?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ETF's awareness of your organisation's activities in human capital development?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. **How would you evaluate the performance of the ETF in the area of human capital development in its work with:**

A) your organisation in:							
	Don't know	**No ETF action**	**Badly**	**Poorly**	**Fairly**	**Well**	**Very well**
1. Providing information, policy analyses and advice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Disseminating information on important issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Maintaining contact, providing timely advice and support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Aiding in implementation of new policy approaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Providing support to improve monitoring and evaluation process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Showing flexibility and responsiveness in one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Supporting the EU external policy instrument cycle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Contributing to analysis of the effectiveness of EU external assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Seeking feedback regarding one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Providing trustworthy and reliable information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Providing useful recommendations on external support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
!12. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B) the region you specified in: (please skip if you did not work with any regions)							

	Don't know	No ETF action	Badly	Poorly	Fairly	Well	Very well
1. Providing information, policy analyses and advice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Promoting the involvement of all key stakeholders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Helping in improvement of policy co-ordination processes among stakeholders and across levels of government	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Facilitating the exchange of information and experience among donors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Introducing new concepts or ideas in looking at issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Introducing new approaches and methods to governance and policy design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Building capacity of relevant stakeholders to improve governance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Introducing good-practice examples	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Enhancing accountability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Disseminating information on important issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Promoting exchange of experience and good practice between the region and the EU	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Promoting exchange of experience and good practice within the region	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Maintaining contact, providing timely advice and support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Aiding in implementation of new policy approaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Providing support to improve monitoring and evaluation process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Remaining politically neutral and respecting the policy priorities and approaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Showing flexibility and responsiveness in one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Adhering to the needs of the region	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Providing support in setting targets and objectives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Seeking feedback regarding one's work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Providing trustworthy and reliable information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Introducing countries in the region to new projects or initiatives outside their own countries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Supporting the delivery of EU assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. Concrete influence over the introduction of new objectives, priorities, strategy and policies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
!25. Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8.1. **Out of these above-mentioned activities, would any of them be difficult to fulfil well without the help of the ETF?**

If yes, please specify numbers of **up to** 3 activities where ETF provides the highest value added.

8.2. **Have the ETF activities significantly changed in any of these above-mentioned areas over the past 5 years?**

If yes, please specify numbers of activities and **specify how they changed** (e.g. decreased/increased in quality, new activities were started etc.).

9. **As a result of ETF activities, was concrete action taken in any of the following areas in human capital development?**

Please refer to the region you have specified. Tick all that apply.
(please skip if you did not work with any regions)

New discussions/debates were carried on among key institutional actors	☐
Introduction of new concepts in national policy documents	☐
Proposal of new priorities and objectives in the national agenda	☐
Implementation of new policy at the national level	☐

Please specify what was exactly done in the area(s) you ticked.

10. **According to you, have the ETF's activities resulted in any unintended results and impacts (beneficial or harmful)?**

If yes, please specify these results and whether they are beneficial or harmful.

11. **Which ETF activity, in comparison to other ETF activities, has had the best result in your experience?**

Please provide an example of such activity and specify what made this activity successful.

12. **Which ETF activity, in comparison to other ETF activities, has been the least successful in your experience?**

Please provide an example of such activity and specify what made this activity unsuccessful.

13. **In areas where you feel the ETF's work with your organisation should be improved, how can this be done?**

Please describe in your own words for each area you wish to discuss.

14. How does the work of the ETF fit with other EU activities in the area of human capital development?

Please tick only one answer.

The work of the ETF complements other EU activities	☐

The work of the ETF overlaps with other EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF is completely separate from other EU activities	☐
!Other (please specify)	☐
I do not know of other EU activities in human capital development	☐

15. How does the work of the ETF fit with other non-EU activities in the area of human capital development?

Please tick only one answer.

The work of the ETF complements other non-EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF overlaps with other non-EU activities	☐
The work of the ETF is completely separate from other non-EU activities	☐
!Other (please specify)	☐
I do not know of other non-EU activities in human capital development	☐

16. How important is each type of information for the work of your organisation in the area of human capital development?

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extensively
EU policy documents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from the ETF	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from the EU Member States	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from the EU partner countries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from other intergovernmental organisations (e.g. Council of Europe, United Nations, IMF, World Bank)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from social partners (e.g. trade unions, employer organisations)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information from international non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research information (e.g. universities, research institutions)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. **Are there any specific ETF sources of information that are particularly useful to your work?**

If yes, please specify the source of information (e.g. written documents, ETF facilitated activities, consultations with ETF officials, others).

18. **According to you, what factors facilitate the work of the ETF with your organisation?**

    Please name **up to** 4 factors.

19. **According to you, what factors complicate the work of the ETF with your organisation?**

    Please name **up to** 4 factors.

20. **Over the past 5 years, has your organisation become:**

    Please tick only one answer.

More involved with the ETF	☐
Less involved with the ETF	☐
Maintained the same level of involvement with the ETF	☐

21. **Over the past 5 years, has your organisation become involved in any new ETF initiatives or activities?**

    If yes, please specify these activities.
22. **Speaking generally, what would you say has been the most significant change over the last 5 years in how the ETF operates?**
23. **Do you consider this change positive or negative?**

    Please specify your answer.

Positive	☐
Negative	☐
Other (please, specify)	☐

Annex 2 – List of interviewees and contacts

Interviews with ETF management and staff

Interviewee	Department/Unit	Rank
Cecile Beelaerts	Administration / Financial, Contract and Procurement Support	Head of Unit
Alessandro Brolpito	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Operations Performance Management Officer
Eduarda Castel Branco	Geographical Operations	Country manager for Georgia
Mircea Copot	Administration / Financial, Contract and Procurement Support	Budget Officer
Xavier Matheu de Cortada	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Department Director
Ulrike Damyanovic	Geographical Operations	Head of Unit Western Balkans and Turkey
Marie Dorleans	Geographical Operations	Country manager for Tunisia
Muriel Dunbar		Former Director of ETF (2004-2009)
Henrik Faudel	Geographical Operations	Department Director
Anastasia Fetsi	Thematic Expertise	Department Director
Peter Greenwood	Evidence-Based Policy Making	Department Director
Lida Kita	Geographical Operations	HCD Specialist
Alistair Macphail	Administration	Department Director
Dagmar Ouzoun	Geographical Operations	Country manager for Kazakhstan
Sofia Sakali	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
Madlen Serban		Director of ETF
Eva Jimeno Sicilia	Geographical Operations	Head of Unit Southern and Eastern Mediterranean
Bent Sorensen	Communications	Department Director
Arjen Vos	Geographical Operations	Head of Unit Eastern Europe

Interviewee	Department/Unit	Rank
		and Central Asia

Interviews with ETF stakeholders or beneficiaries in partner countries

Country	Name of interviewee	Institution/agency/position
Georgia	Ana Mchedlishvili	Chief Specialist from The Department of General and Vocational Education Development, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
	Ani Kitiashvili	Key expert in ETF project
	David Kereselidze	Deputy Director of the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement
	Giorgi Makharadze	the Director of VET Centre (Professional college)
	Mikheil Kordzaia	Deputy Head of the Employers' Association of Georgia
	Shorena Japaridze	Independent expert, formerly (2004-2007) an official at the MoES
	Thea Gulua	Executive Director of Georgian Adult Education Association.
Former Yugoslav Republic of FYR of Macedonia	Aferdita Haxhijaha Imeri	Expert at NGO Deside
	Lidija Mihajlovska	Principal of municipal Secondary Technical School "Nace Bugjoni", Kumanovo
	Maja Gerovska	Associated professor in the Institute of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Philosophy, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University
	Nada Stojmenova	Adviser for Secondary Education, Reforms and International Cooperation
	Natasa Angelovska Gelevska	University St. Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of pedagogy
	Susanna Kirandzhiska	Program manager, Step by Step, Soros
Kazakhstan	Baimenov Alikhan Mukhamedievich	Chairman of Public Service Agency
	Boribekov Kadyrbek Kazybaevich	Head of VET department in Ministry of Education &Science,
	Kadyrov Nadzhat	Executive Director of

Country	Name of interviewee	Institution/agency/position
	Khudzhatovich	Association of Employers
	Paltasheva Munavara Tursunovna	Executive Director of Forum of Entrepreneurs
	Rupatova Aigul Kyzyrona	Deputy Chairman of National Economic Chamber Union "Atameken"
	Semchenko Alexander Alexandrovich	Deputy Director of National Institute for Teacher Training
	Thomas Lux	Team leader of project implemented by GIZ/GOPA
Tunisia	Mohamed Charfeddine	Director General, Ministry of Professional Education and Employment (MFPE)
	Monia Mghirbi	Director General, Ministry of Professional Education and Employment (MFPE)

Interviews with ETF stakeholders or beneficiaries in the EU institutions or actors

Name of interviewee	Institution/agency
Miriam Brewka	EEAS
Jose Manuel Lopez de la Mano	EAC Unit R2
Isabelle Mazingant	EAC Unit A3
Stamatis Paleocrassas	ETF Governing Board
Elena Pascual Ximenez	EAC Unit A3
Nafi Saracini	EU Delegation in Former Yugoslav Republic of FYR of Macedonia
Aigul Zharylgassova	EU Delegation in Kazakhstan
Bo Caperman	DG ELARG
Frederique Richener	DG EMPL

Annex 3 – Case studies

(Provided in separate files)

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Annex 4 – Terms of reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Tender no. EAC/

External evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF), a European Union Agency

Contracting Authority: European Commission

Contents

1. CONTEXT 2
1.1 Background 2
1.2 Objectives of the agency 2
1.3 Description of the activities of the agency 3
1.4 Interim evaluation and monitoring provisions 4
2. TASK SPECIFICATION FOR THE ASSIGNMENT 4
2.1 Overall objectives 4
2.2 Specific objectives 4
2.3 Results to be achieved by the contractor 5
2.4 Evaluation questions 5
2.5 Other tasks under the assignment 6
3. REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES 6
3.1 General reporting requirements 6
3.2 Inception report 6
3.3 Interim report 6
3.4 Draft final report 6
3.5 Final report 7
4. ORGANISATION, TIMETABLE AND BUDGET 7
4.1 Organisation 7
4.2 Meetings 7
4.3 Timetable 7
4.4 Budget 8
5. REFERENCES 8
5.1. Basic documents 8
5.2 Documents and information to be provided after contract signature (not exhaustive) 8
6. REQUIREMENTS 8
6.1 Methodology 8
6.2 Resources 8

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Background

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is a European Union Agency established under Council Regulation 1360/90 of 7 May 1990. The last amendment of the founding regulation, Regulation (EC) 1339/2008, stipulates in its article 24, that the Commission shall conduct an evaluation of the implementation of this Regulation, the results obtained by the Foundation and its working methods in light of the objectives, mandate and functions defined by the Regulation. This evaluation shall be carried out every four years by external experts. The Commission shall present the results of the evaluation to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic & Social Committee.

The last external evaluation of ETF was presented in 2006 covering the period 2002 – 2005.

The present evaluation should cover a transitional period for the agency: 2006 to 2008 prior to the adoption of the recast Regulation 1339/2008 and 2009 to 2010, the first two years of application of Regulation 1339/2008.

1.2 Objectives of the agency

The ETF[35] is located in Torino, Italy, and has around 130 staff and 19 million euro annual budget. The overall objective of the Foundation is to help transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU's external relations. Their activities focus on three core themes:

- Vocational education and training system development and provision in a lifelong learning perspective
- Labour market needs and employability
- Enterprises and human capital development: education and business partnerships

The geographical remit of the ETF is the following:

- European Neighbourhood: countries involved in the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI)[36]
- Enlargement process: countries involved in the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)[37]
- A number of countries from Central Asia[38]

Beneficiary countries are known as "partner countries".

---

35 ETF website: http://www.etf.eu.int/

36 Council Regulation 1638/2006 covering: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Russian Federation, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, occupied Palestinian territory

37 Council Regulation 1085/2006 covering: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and UNSCR 1244, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey

38 Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan

From 1995 to 2000, the main activity of the Foundation was to provide management, technical support and monitoring of activities under the EU's PHARE and TACIS programmes. It also provided the technical assistance for the TEMPUS programme (Phases II and III). In 2000, following the revision of the Community's external relations architecture, it was decided that the ETF should develop as a centre of expertise supporting Community external policies rather than (save for TEMPUS) providing programme management services.

The management of TEMPUS was assigned to the executive agency for education (EACEA) in 2008.

A new regulation for ETF (1339/2008) was adopted in December 2008 with the view to allow the ETF to perform its activities within the framework of the new generation of EU cooperation instruments for external relations (ENPI, IPA, DCI) and to develop its full potential as a centre of expertise.

1.3 Description of the activities of the agency

The Foundation provides services to seven Directorates-General (DGs) of the European Commission: Education & Culture (the ETF's supervisory DG), External Relations, EuropeAid, Enlargement, Enterprise, Employment & Social Affairs and Home Affairs. It contributes to the programming cycle of ENPI, IPA and DCI external cooperation instruments by:

- Providing information, policy analyses and advice on human capital development issues in the partner countries
- Promoting knowledge and analysis of skills needs in national and local labour markets
- Supporting relevant stakeholders in partner countries in building capacity in human capital development
- Facilitating the exchange of information and experience among donors engaged in human capital development reform in partner countries
- Supporting the delivery of Union assistance to partner countries in the field of human capital development
- Disseminating information and encouraging networking and the exchange of experience and good practice between the EU and partner countries and amongst partner countries in human capital development issues
- Contributing, at the Commission's request, to the analysis of overall effectiveness of training assistance to the partner countries

The ETF works in a multidimensional planning context, combining country and regional projects with its core themes and the political priorities of the dialogue between the EU and its partner countries.

Typical outputs of the activities of the ETF are:

- Country policy reviews and country needs analysis in the field of human capital development
- Capacity building

- Comparative analyses
- Specialised publications
- Events organization to facilitate dissemination of information and peer-learning: workshops; expert meetings;symposia;capacity building events and international conferences
- Policy briefs for Commission and partner countries

1.4 Interim evaluation and monitoring provisions

A Communication of 1997[39] reported on the findings of a first external evaluation. In the interim, two other external evaluations have been carried out in 2002[40] and in 2006.[41]

The European Commission has also commissioned global evaluation reports that involved all Union agencies.[42]

It is important to take these evaluations into account in order to benefit from conclusions that are still valid but at the same time avoiding unnecessary overlapping and repetition of recommendations made by previous reports.

2. TASK SPECIFICATION FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

2.1 Overall objectives

The overall objectives to which this contract will contribute are as follows:

- an assessment of the extent to which the commitments made by the Foundation in its 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 Work Programmes have been achieved;
- an assessment of the extent to which the recommendations made by the last external evaluation have been put into practice;
- an assessment of the extent to which the Foundation has evolved under its new mandate;
- the provision of useful lessons and recommendations for the challenges facing the Foundation for the forthcoming programming period 2014-17.

2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objective of this contract is to procure an external, independent interim evaluation of the activities, outputs and impact of the Foundation between 2006 and the start

[39] COM(1997) 379, 18.7.1997

[40] *External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation*, ITAD, November 2002: http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/index_en.htm#ETFinterim1

[41] External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation, ITAD, May 2006: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/index_en.htm#ETFinterim3

[42] Metastudy on decentralised agencies: cross-cutting analysis of evaluation findings, Eurèval, September 2008 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/evaluation/docs/study_decentralised_agencies_en.pdf Evaluation of the EU decentralised agencies in 2009, Rambøll Management-Eurèval-Matrix, December 2009 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/evaluation/docs/decentralised_agencies_2009_part4_en.pdf

of the evaluation contract, focussing on the preparation for and implementation of the new mandate of the agency as defined by Regulation (EC) 1339/2008. Issues that are no longer relevant for the new mandate such as the management of the Tempus programme are excluded from the scope of the evaluation.

2.3 Results to be achieved by the contractor

The results to be achieved by the contractor are as follows:

- an interim evaluation according to the provisions of sections 2.4 and 3 below;
- recommendations regarding the activities of the Foundation in the post-2010 period;
- recommendations regarding the implementation of Regulation 1339/2008

2.4 Evaluation questions

The Contractor must provide answers to the evaluation questions listed below. They will be called upon to use their knowledge and experience to interpret and break down these questions and, where appropriate, propose others to the Commission with the aim of improving the focus of this interim evaluation. The Contractor should note that the questions proposed below do not necessarily cover the entire substance and material of the area concerned. In fact, they deal with issues the Commission is particularly interested in and which the contractor should therefore address in addition to any other issues which the evaluator may see as requiring attention.

When establishing their body of evidence, the Contractor will build on the results of previous evaluations, to the extent they are still relevant:

- They will take into account the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the 2008 Meta-study and the 2009 Evaluation on decentralised agencies that are relevant to the ETF; will assess the extent to which they are still valid and relevant and will elaborate conclusions and make recommendations accordingly.

- The Contractor will also take into account the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the 2006 interim evaluation. To what extent are they still valid? To what extent has the ETF been successful in implementing the recommendations? Have there been any difficulties? Has the new Regulation made some of the recommendations obsolete?

Relevance, Added Value and Coherence:

1. To what extent are the objectives of the Foundation in line with the needs of the stakeholders of its activities and the socio-economic problems it is meant to address?

2. To what extent does outsourcing to the Foundation provide added value compared to possible alternative options?

3. To what extent do the ETF's objectives and activities after the adoption of regulation 1339/2008 complement those of other public and private actors, relevant services of the Commission, other EU institutions, Member States, and any other national, international or private organisations or bodies active in the field of Human Capital development in partner countries of the EU?

4. To what extent is the ETF's current mix of activities the most appropriate for achieving its objectives? What new kinds of activities could usefully be undertaken in the framework of regulation 1339/2008 in the years following this evaluation?

5. To what extent are the resources that the ETF makes available fully exploited by its stakeholders?

Effectiveness:

6. To what extent have the objectives set out in the work programmes for years 2006 to 2010 been accomplished? Have there been any difficulties in the implementation of the work programmes? Which ones, and how can these be overcome? Are there any additional outputs/outcomes that were not foreseen initially in the work programme?

7. How successful is the Foundation in reaching the expected results, in light of the objectives, mandate and functions defined in its new Regulation?

8. To what extent has the ETF actually developed itself as a centre of expertise since the adoption of regulation 1339/2008?

9. To what extent does the Foundation contribute to the EU education and training and other political and strategic priorities (e.g., Pre-Accession Strategy in the Western Balkans and Turkey , ENP, Strategic Partnership with Russia, EU Central Asia Strategy, Education and Training 2020, Europe 2020)?

Efficiency / Cost-effectiveness:

10. Is the size of budget and human resources appropriate and proportional to what the Foundation is expected to achieve? Is it sufficient for reaching a critical mass of impacts? Could the same results have been achieved with fewer resources? How can cost-effectiveness be improved?

11. Compare the work programmes before and after the adoption of regulation 1339/2008: to what extent has the ETF been successful in adapting its activities to the new regulation?

12. Do the ETF's organisational and budgetary structure and governance regime contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations? Have there been any modifications since the adoption of Regulation 1339/2008?

13. To what extent do ETF's management systems and processes, including monitoring, contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations?

2.5 Other tasks under the assignment

The Contractor should:

- Provide a one-page statement about the validity of the evaluation results, i.e. to what extent it has been possible to provide reliable statements on all essential aspects of the Union interventions examined. Issues to be referred to may include scoping of the evaluation exercise, availability of data, unexpected problems encountered in the evaluation process, proportionality between budget and objectives of the assignment, etc.
- Make a proposal for the dissemination of the evaluation results, on the basis of the draft Dissemination Plan annexed to these Terms of Reference

3. REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES

3.1 General reporting requirements

Each report (except the final version of the Final Report) should have an **introductory page** providing an overview and orientation of the report. It should describe which parts of the document, on the one hand, have been carried over from previous reports or been recycled from other documents, and on the other hand, which parts represent progress of the evaluation work with reference to the work plan.

All reports must be drafted in English and submitted according to the timetable below to the responsible body. Electronic files must be provided in Microsoft ® Word for Windows format.

Additionally, besides Word, the Final Report must be delivered in Adobe ® Acrobat pdf format and in 5 hard copies.

The Commission will comment on all reports within a maximum of 30 calendar days. In the absence of observations from the Commission within the deadline, the report will be considered as being approved.

Within a maximum of 14 calendar days of receiving the Commission's observations, the Contractor will submit the report in definitive form, taking full account of these observations, either by following them precisely or by explaining clearly why they could not be followed. Should the Commission still not consider the report acceptable, the Contractor will be invited to amend the report insofar as such amendments do not interfere with the independence of the evaluator in respect of their findings, conclusions or recommendations.

3.2 Inception Report

The report should describe how the methodology proposed by the Contractor is going to be implemented in detail, after e.g. having further examined the sources of secondary and primary data that will be used for the evaluation. It should include the Contractor's understanding of the intervention logic, as well as the quantitative and qualitative indicators that they will use in addressing each of the evaluation questions. A detailed work plan including the allocation of experts per task per number of working-days should also be provided.

It shall not exceed **15** pages, annexes excluded.

3.3 Interim Report

The report is to be produced after the desk and field research has been completed, and should, to the extent possible, include some preliminary conclusions. The report must as a minimum provide:

- An overview of the status of the evaluation project;
- A description of problems encountered and solutions found;
- A summary of initial findings and results of the data gathering;
- An assessment of the data, whether it meets expectations and will provide a sound basis for responding to the evaluation questions;
- A conclusion whether any changes are required to the work plan, or any other solutions should be sought in order to ensure that the required results of the evaluation are achieved. If any such issues are to be identified, they must be discussed in the meeting with the Steering Group dedicated to this report;
- A proposal for the final structure of the Final Report, as well as a structure of the Executive Summary.

It shall not exceed **30** pages, annexes excluded.

3.4 Draft Final Report

This document should deliver the results of all tasks covered by these Terms of Reference, and must be clear enough for any potential reader to understand.

The structure of the report should follow a broad classification into three parts:

- **Executive summary:** It sets out, in no more than **10** pages, a summary of the evaluation's main conclusions, the main evidence supporting them and the recommendations arising from them.
- **Main report:** The main report must be limited to **60** pages and present, in full, the results of the analyses, conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation. It must also contain a description of the subject evaluated, the context of the evaluation, and the methodology used (including an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses).
- **Annexes:** These must collate the technical details of the evaluation, and must include the Terms of Reference, questionnaire templates, interview guides, any additional tables or graphics, and references and sources.

3.5 Final Report

The Final Report follows the same format as the draft Final Report. Furthermore, it should include a ½ **page summary statement** on the main evaluation conclusions and recommendations. The Executive Summary should be translated into French and German by a professional translation agency, once it has been approved by the Steering Group.

The document must take into account the feedback from the Steering Group on the draft Final Report, insofar as these do not interfere with the autonomy of the Contractor in respect of the conclusions they have reached and the recommendations made.

The contracting authority will publish the Final Report, the Executive Summary and the annexes on the World-Wide Web.

4. ORGANISATION, TIMETABLE AND BUDGET

4.1 Organisation

The contract will be managed by Unit A.3 of the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

A Steering Group will be involved in the management of the evaluation. The responsibilities of the Steering Group will include:

- providing the external evaluator with access to information;

- supporting and monitoring the work of the external evaluator;

- assessing the quality of the reports submitted by the external evaluator, while ensuring that the Contractor's independence is not compromised;

4.2 Meetings

It is expected that the contractor participate in four meetings in Brussels with the evaluation Steering Group. For these meetings, **minutes should be drafted by the contractor**, to be agreed among the participants and approved and signed by the chair person, who will be appointed from Unit EAC/R2.

4.3 Timetable

The indicative starting date is **20 December 2010**. The contract will start after both parties have signed it. The period of execution of the contract is **9 months**.

The following outline work plan and indicative timetable are envisaged:

Deadline (from starting date)	**Task**
Kick-off meeting *Beginning January 2011*	First meeting of contractor with steering group to clarify the work to be done and allow contractor to better prepare the inception report

Inception Report Beginning February 2011	Contractor prepares inception report and presents to Steering Group in Brussels
Interim Report Beginning May 2011	Desk and field research completed. Contractor presents interim report to Steering Group in Brussels.
Draft Final Report End June 2011	Contractor presents a draft final report, including an executive summary, to Steering Group in Brussels
Final Report End July 2011	Taking account of the Commission's comments contractor sends final report and summary to Steering Group in Brussels

4.4 Budget

The maximum budget for the evaluation of the action, covering all the results to be achieved by the Contractor as listed in sections 2 and 3 above, is **EUR 120.000**.

5. REFERENCES

5.1. Basic documents

ETF website: http://www.etf.eu.int/

Founding regulation as last amended: Regulation (EC) 1339/2008

Last external evaluations of the ETF:
External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation, ITAD, November 2002:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/index_en.htm#ETFinterim1
External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation, ITAD, May 2006:

Last external evaluation of EU decentralised agencies
Evaluation of the EU decentralised agencies in 2009, Rambøll Management-Eureval-Matrix, December 2009
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/evaluation/docs/decentralised_agencies_2009_part4_en.pdf

Annual activity reports, work programmes and multiannual work programmes from the ETF can be found at:
http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Work_programme_EN?OpenDocument

5.2 Documents and information to be provided after contract signature (not exhaustive)

List of contact points for the different stakeholders of the ETF

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Methodology

The contractor will have a free choice as to the methods used to gather and analyse information and for making the assessment, but must take account of the following:

– The evaluation must be based on recognised evaluation techniques.

– The choice and a detailed description of the methodology must form part of the offer submitted. There should be a clear link between the evaluation questions addressed and the corresponding methodology proposed. The evaluation questions can be further elaborated, e.g. by providing operational sub-questions under each question.

– Considerable emphasis should be placed on the analysis phase of the evaluation. In addressing the evaluation questions, quantitative indicators should be sought and used as far as possible. The contractor must support findings and recommendations by explaining the degree to which these are based on opinion, analysis and objectively verifiable evidence. Where opinion is the main source, the degree of consensus and the steps taken to test the opinion should be given.

– It is not expected that all individual projects financed by the programme be assessed, but the sample of projects examined should be drawn up in a manner suitable for each evaluation question addressed and should be such as to enable the evaluators to draw general conclusions on the actions.

6.2 Resources

The Contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting resources, as well as junior experts, must be available to enable senior experts to concentrate on their core evaluation tasks.

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Annex 5 – Glossary of selected terms

Added value – the effect of a certain intervention that potentially adds value to the existing situation. Added value can spill over into any stage of the policy process, from identification and introduction of issues onto the policy agenda to evaluation of specific interventions.

Capacity building – activities aimed at developing or increasing awareness, knowledge, skills, and other capabilities of an organization or individuals.

Coherence – the degree to which activities are consistent with broader strategies, objectives and activities to which these activities refer.

Contribution analysis - analysis that is used in complex contexts where the intervention under investigation could be just one of the numerous possible causes of the observed change. This analysis aims to demonstrate whether or not the evaluated intervention is one of the causes of observed change, and what specifically that intervention contributed to change.

Corporate performance - the results of activities of an organisation or agency over a given period of time.

Cost-effectiveness - the relationship between outputs and results on one hand, and inputs on the other hand. Analysis of cost-effectiveness involves assessing how well the inputs were transformed into outputs and whether the unit costs of outputs were reasonable.

Effectiveness - the extent to which expected results are achieved.

Evidence-based policy – a policy-making approach that relies on and seeks the best available evidence in order to make policy decisions.

Impact – longer term results of interventions.

Intervention logic – systematic and reasoned description of casual links between objectives, activities, effects, immediate and end outcomes of a certain agency, policy or institution.

Monitoring and evaluation - the regular observation and recording of activities taking place in a project or programme and their subsequent evaluation.

Network analysis – a research tool that identifies and analyses existing ties between organizations and/or individuals and their strength and nature.

Policy cycle - different phases of the policy-making process. The policy cycle ideally involves the following phases: definition of the problem, agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Relevance - the extent to which the objectives of a certain intervention are considered important and desirable by the beneficiary/recipient of these activities.

Triangulation – employment of different data sources and methods in the research process. This method helps to reduce the subjectivity of the data and is aimed at ensuring the better validity of results.

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Annex 6 – Dissemination of evaluation findings

The evaluators recommend that the results of this evaluation be disseminated in several different ways to a variety of stakeholders. At the EU level, the results should, at a minimum, be sent to all relevant Commission and Parliament officials, as well as relevant EEAS representatives for partner countries. The ETF Governing Board provides a strong conduit for dissemination, and Board members should be encouraged to share the results widely. The ETF itself has a large database of contacts within all relevant DGs, and copies of the report should be sent to all ETF contacts at the European level, as well as relevant international stakeholders. In terms of partner countries, it is recommended that some time be devoted to discussion of the evaluation at the next general conference held by the ETF. This study found that partner country stakeholders were not always aware of the value of ETF work, and the ETF should be assertive in pointing out its successes and accomplishments at both partner country and EU levels. In addition to this proactive dissemination, the report should be made available on the ETF website, along with other online sources.

Table 8: Dissemination of the results

Document/ Contents	Target group	Dissemination channel	Language/ Translations
Final report / executive summary	The European Parliament, relevant European Commission DGs, EEAS, other relevant EU institutions	According to procedure, e-mail, through ETF Governing Board	EN, FR, DE
Final report / executive summary	Partner country stakeholders	E-mail, mail, website, ETF database, through EEAS/ETF country managers	EN, FR, DE
PowerPoint Presentation of results	ETF beneficiaries	ETF general conference 2011	EN, FR, RU, AR
Final report / executive summary	Relevant international organisations (e.g. the World Bank, ILO, GIZ, UNESCO, etc.)	E-mail	EN, FR, DE
Press release – Final report	Public	Press release, website	EN
Final report / executive summary	General dissemination	Website	EN, FR, DE