



European Training Foundation

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT 2023 - 25

WORK PROGRAMME 2023



CONTENTS

PREFACE	4
LIST OF ACRONYMS	6
ETF MISSION, VISION AND VALUES	10
SECTION I – GENERAL CONTEXT	11
SECTION II – MULTI-ANNUAL PROGRAMMING 2023-25	22
1. Multi-annual work programme	22
1.1 The ETF's response to Covid-19 and definition of the next normal	23
1.2 The ETF's approach to human capital development and lifelong learning	24
1.3 Delivering in partnership	26
1.4 A differentiated approach	27
1.5 ETF Networks	28
1.6 Advising EU institutions	29
1.7 ETF core services	30
1.8 Strategic objectives	31
1.9 Geographic area of operation	35
1.10 ETF intervention logic	36
2. Human and financial resource outlook for 2023-25	37
2.1 Overview of the past and current situation	39
2.2 Resource programming for 2023-25	40
2.3 Strategy for achieving efficiency gains	43
SECTION III – ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2023	45
1. Executive summary	45
2. Activity Areas	48
2.1 Skills demand analysis	48
2.2 Active labour market policies and transition measures	50
2.3 Modernisation of qualifications and establishment of qualification systems	52
2.4 a. Vocational excellence provision models	53
2.4 b. Service level agreement – 'The international Dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence: Building a strong international cooperation dimension on Vocational Excellence'	55
2.5 Innovative teaching and learning	55

2.6 Engaging enterprises in skills development	57
2.7 Lifelong learning policies and system change	58
2.8 Quality assurance and governance mechanisms	61
2.9 DARYA – Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia	63
2.10 Responding to new EU policy and geographical priorities	64
Horizontal activity areas	65
2.11 Communication and stakeholder engagement	65
2.12 Digitalisation and greening of the ETF	66
2.13 Institutional development	67
ANNEXES	69
Annex I - ETF organisation chart (31/12/2021)	70
Annex II - Resource allocation per activity 2023-25	72
Annex III - Financial resources 2023-25	74
Annex IV - Human resources (quantitative)	80
Annex V - Human resources (qualitative)	83
Annex VI - Environment management	87
Annex VII - Buildings	88
Annex VIII - Privileges and immunities	89
Annex IX - Evaluations	90
Annex X - Organisational management and internal control systems strategy	92
Annex XI - Plan for grant, contribution and service-level agreements	94
Annex XII - Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations	95
Annex XIII - Collaboration with other EU Agencies	97
Annex XIV - Planned requests from EU services 2023	101
Annex XV - Cross-checking conditions for ETF operation in countries and regions	107

PREFACE

The European Training Foundation's (ETF) 2027 vision is to become a reference for human capital development (HCD), providing policy advice, supporting sustainable reforms of education and training systems in a lifelong learning perspective, and promoting skills for the future. The ETF cooperates at country and regional level with the countries of the EU neighbourhood and enlargement regions and in Central Asia, as well as contributing to the EU external policies and African continental programmes. As an agency of the EU, the ETF's action supports the external action of the Union by contributing to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and to the achievement of European Commission (EC) priorities through four transversal dimensions – greening, digitalisation, gender and migration – across its operations.

In 2023-25, the ETF is working towards becoming a global asset for the EU, a resource that can be mobilised to support EU investment in human capital, policy dialogue, financial programmes and promote knowledge sharing. The ETF's analytical work feeds into stakeholder policy dialogue and steers the development of evidence-based strategies. Hence, the ETF will work further with the European Commission and the EU Delegations to enhance the strategic impact of EU funds for the benefit of partner countries with a focus on the sustainability of reforms, promotion of green economies and digital transformation.

Building upon its regular exchanges with various thematic and geographic EC services, the ETF will continue working towards the common EU objectives of Global Europe and the international dimension of the new EU Skills Agenda. In doing so it seeks added value and synergies with various EU programmes, and pursues opportunities to work beyond its current partner countries or to engage in new priority thematic areas in order to respond to relevant EU requests. Next to the regular actions in the workplan funded through its subsidy, the ETF is also implementing additional extra-subsidy actions upon the specific request of EC services.

Whilst the ETF's geographic scope will continue to focus on the EU neighbourhood and Central Asia, its priorities will adapt to changes in the world. The ETF will increase the impact of its actions and the reach of its expertise in partnership with EC services, other EU agencies, international organisations and development agencies to address challenges and opportunities for human capital development in other parts of the world, including Africa. In the framework of the newly adopted EC instruments and in the spirit of the Team Europe approach, the ETF is reinforcing its collaboration with EU Member States supporting human capital development (HCD) in partner countries and engaging with international financial institutions (IFIs) on 'policy first' investment in HCD.

As a resilient organisation, the ETF is building flexibility into its workplan to absorb further shocks such as the Russian aggression towards Ukraine and to ensure its relevance in responding to supporting HCD systems during or after conflict. Furthermore, it supports the long-term recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and accompanies partner countries in their process towards 'candidate' EU member status. As such, regardless of the challenging context, the ETF sets out to influence labour markets and the workplace, and boosts new skills sets so that everyone can make the best use of opportunities while mitigating emerging risks. It also supports countries to further reform their education, training and labour market systems to be responsive to geopolitical and socio-economic needs, be more resilient to shocks and to move towards comprehensive, open and flexible lifelong learning systems.

Keeping a level of agility to respond to these changing needs, the ETF's 2023 workplan foresees support to countries to build back better and increase their resilience by embracing these changes through medium to long term policy reforms. It does so by integrating other transitions such as

technological change, the greening of economies, demographic factors and migration. The ETF is ready to deepen its contribution and support to EC services to realise the proposal made by President von der Leyen in her State of the Union Address of September 2022 to make 2023 the European Year of Skills¹.

During the third year of implementation of its multi-annual workplan, the ETF will continue to focus on delivering its core services as a knowledge hub, monitoring and assessing HCD systems and the progress of reforms, and providing meaningful policy advice. It will do so under nine thematic focus areas and through an innovative internal structure, and with a wide range of external partners. Last but not least, as an organisation, the ETF will also continue to develop itself, ensuring the well-being of its staff, working towards digital maturity and becoming greener.

Xavier Matheu de Cortada, ETF Director ad interim

¹ [State of the Union \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e3001c0d-323d-4b31-8e11-3d908f81d264/p1020123_en.pdf).

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABAC	Activity-based accounting system
ABB	Activity-based budgeting
ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
AU	African Union
BC	British Council
ENABEL	Belgian Development Agency
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CMI	Center for Mediterranean Integration
CORLEAP	Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CVT/CVET	Continuing vocational training/ Continuous vocational education and training
DARYA	Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DG	Directorate General
DG EAC	Directorate General Education and Culture
DG EMPL	Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DG GROW	Directorate General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG HOME	Directorate General Home Affairs
DG INTPA	Directorate General International Partnerships
DG NEAR	Directorate General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG REGIO	Directorate General Regional and urban Policy
DG SG	Directorate General Secretariat-General
DG TRADE	Directorate General Trade
DigComp	European Digital Competence Framework
DOL	Distance and open learning
DVV	Institute for International Cooperation of German Adult Education Association
EaFA	European Alliance for Apprenticeships
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
Eehub	Entrepreneurship Education Hub
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Executive Agency
EFSD+	European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus
EIP	Economic Investment Plan
ELA	European Labour Authority
ENABEL	Belgian Development Agency
ENE	ETF Network for Excellence

ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EntreComp	Entrepreneurship Competence Framework
EPSO	European Personnel Selection Office
EQARF	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ERI SEE	Education Reform Initiative of South East Europe
ERPs	Economic Reform Programmes
ESAP	Employment and Social Affairs Platform
ET 2020	Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUDs	European Union Delegations
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
Euromed	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EVTA	European Vocational Training Association
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
HCD	Human capital development
ICT	Information and communications technology
IFI	International Finance Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
LuxDev	Luxembourg Development Cooperation
MISMES	Migrant Support Measures from an Employment and Skills Perspective
MTD	Medium-term deliverables
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NEET	Not in education, employment, or training
NQF	National qualifications framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIB	Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels
PES	Public Employment Services
PMO	Paymaster Office
PSD	Private Sector Development
QA	Quality assurance
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
RCI	Regional Competitive Initiative
SBA	Small Business Act for Europe
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SEE2020	South East Europe 2020 Strategy
SEECCEL	South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise

SPD	Single Programming Document
SRC	Sector Reform Contract
THAMM	Towards a Holistic Approach to Migration
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET/TVET	(Technical and) vocational education and training
VNFIL	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
WBL	Work-based learning
WBPET	Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training
YEM	Youth Employment in the Mediterranean

ETF partner regions and country acronyms²

South Eastern Europe and Türkiye	SEET
Albania	AL
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BA
Kosovo ³	XK ⁴
North Macedonia	MK
Montenegro	ME
Serbia	RS
Türkiye	TR

Southern and Eastern Mediterranean	SEMED
Algeria	DZ
Egypt	EG
Israel ⁵	IL
Jordan	JO
Lebanon	LB
Libya ⁶	LY
Morocco	MA
Palestine ⁷	PS
Syria ⁸	SY
Tunisia	TN

Eastern Partnership	EaP
Armenia	AM
Azerbaijan	AZ
Belarus ⁹	BY
Georgia	GE
Moldova	MD

Ukraine	UA
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Central Asia	CA
Kazakhstan	KZ
Kyrgyzstan	KG
Tajikistan	TJ
Turkmenistan	TM
Uzbekistan	UZ

Cooperation in other areas	
African Union	AU

² These acronyms come from the [EU's interinstitutional style guide](#).

³ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁴ 'XK' is a code used for practical reasons and is not an official ISO country code.

⁵ ETF support to Israel takes place in the context of EU-Israel cooperation and related guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards.

⁶ ETF resumed cooperation with Libya in 2018. If conditions allow, the ETF will continue to support the EUD in 2023-25.

⁷ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

⁸ No activities are currently envisioned in Syria.

⁹ ETF support to Belarus takes place in the context of SG note of 01/03/2022, Ares (2022)1502984. Also, in the context of the SG note aforementioned and the EU Council Decision 2022/428 amending regulation 833/2014, and subsequent acts, the ETF has ceased to support Russia, which until further notice is no longer a partner country.

ETF MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Mandate

The ETF's mandate is to contribute, in the context of EU external relations policies, to improving human capital development in partner countries by delivering high quality and timely support to the EU's external policies and actions, providing relevant policy advice and targeted direct technical support to partner countries to facilitate their development towards the adoption and implementation of policies supporting the improvement of education and training systems and lifelong learning.

Mission

The ETF's mission is to be a global catalyst for change and innovation in lifelong learning systems.

Vision

The ETF's vision is to achieve stability and prosperity in our partner countries through sustainable and adaptable lifelong learning systems.

Values

The ETF's core values define what the organisation does and how it works. They guide everything from interaction inside the organisation to interaction with external partners.

Acting with integrity and respect: the ETF leads by example by keeping its word and commitments in its daily work, speaking up for what is right and acting accordingly.

Striving for innovation and fostering creativity: the ETF nurtures creativity to drive innovation and explore opportunities for continuous improvement, to foster knowledge co-creation and sharing both internally and externally to become a catalyst for innovation, and to encourage staff to challenge the status quo by being curious, open and receptive to what is happening in its environment.

Committed to excellence and service orientation: the ETF puts its expertise at the service of its internal and external partners, always striving for excellence and quality. It fosters an analytical and evidence-based approach to meet internal and external customers' needs and foresee future trends. The ETF keeps itself at the leading edge of its fields of expertise, through continuous learning and training. The ETF acts and responds to change with agility and it interacts with its partners efficiently and consistently.

Being accountable: the ETF is accountable for everything it does and with all its internal and external partners. The organisation explains its decisions and stands behind them, taking responsibility for all decisions and actions. The ETF takes ownership and is proud of its work.

Working together: the ETF works together with its partners towards shared goals and objectives. It co-creates for and with its partners. The ETF acts honestly and transparently both inside and outside the organisation. It embraces differences and the diversity of perspectives and gives constructive feedback.

Section I – GENERAL CONTEXT

Policy context

As the only EU agency working solely in the context of EU external action, and in line with the [European Commission's priorities for 2019-24](#), the ETF contributes to building a stronger Europe and to achieving social fairness and prosperity in the EU neighbouring (enlargement countries, Neighbourhood East and South) and other partner countries. It responds to the EU's political commitment to support human capital development (HCD) as a key priority in its external assistance to third countries and to the neighbourhood.

The basis for EU external action is the [EU Global Strategy](#), which prioritises strengthening the resilience of states and societies, in particular in the EU's surrounding regions to the east and the south. The ETF supports the '[Geopolitical Commission](#)', notably at the crossroads of the ambition for a stronger EU in the world (Western Balkans' European Perspective, Eastern and Southern Partnership, and the [Comprehensive Strategy for Africa](#)). It does so by empowering people with education and skills (through the skills and human capital dimensions of the [EU Green Deal](#), [Migration & Asylum Pact](#), [Investment & Jobs](#), [Gender Action Plan \(GAP\) III](#) and [Europe Fit for the Digital Age](#)).

The ETF increases the performance and quality of education and training systems in line with the [VET Recommendation](#), the [Osnabrück Declaration](#), the [European Skills Agenda](#), the [Bridge to Jobs](#) and the [Recommendations for Youth Guarantee update](#). It also identifies changing skills demands in the EU neighbourhood, working closely with EU Delegations, international donors, and other EU bodies to improve the effectiveness of assistance and development projects. Its work contributes directly to economic growth and social cohesion, fostering resilience and tackling the root causes of migration.

The ETF's operations in developing countries are further guided by the [European Consensus on Development](#), which aligns the Union's development policy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through the consensus, the EU and its Member States commit to supporting inclusive lifelong learning and equitable quality education in developing countries, including promoting education at secondary and tertiary level, technical and vocational training, and work-based and adult learning. Special attention is paid to education and training opportunities for girls and women. Digital literacy and skills are an important tool to empower people, especially women and people in vulnerable and marginalised situations, to promote social inclusion and to facilitate their participation in democratic governance and the digital economy.

In the **regions** where it works, the ETF contributes to the EU regional policies. In the Western Balkans and Türkiye, it operates under the EU Enlargement Policy and in particular, the [Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance](#). The EU recently adopted the [Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans](#) which includes human capital development and the youth guarantee. The ETF will be fundamental in the implementation of this in the Western Balkans. The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is a solid basis for the engagement of the ETF based on an agreed action plan.

In the EU Neighbourhood region, the ETF operates within the framework of the [European Neighbourhood Policy](#), which aims to build more effective partnerships between the EU and its neighbours towards a more stable EU neighbourhood, in political, socio-economic and security terms. It also builds on the Joint Communication on a renewed partnership with the [Southern Neighbourhood](#) which puts emphasis on human development, digital and green transitions, as well as its [economic](#)

[and investment plan](#). As regards the EU's Eastern neighbourhood, the ETF contributes to the [Eastern Partnership \(EaP\)](#) policy initiative¹⁰ under which the EU, its Member States and the six partner countries have committed to developing a stronger economy, stronger governance, stronger connectivity and a stronger society, including increased possibilities for mobility. The ETF also takes into account the [Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 – Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership for resilient economies, resilient digital transformation and for more inclusive societies](#), as well as the [new Deal for Youth](#).

The [new EU Strategy for Central Asia](#) is the basis for the ETF's operations in that region, including a commitment to provide substantial support to vocational education and training. The ETF is streamlining operations to maintain a minimum regional approach while addressing where possible bilateral requests for actions. In this regard, the ETF focuses its intervention on actions through the Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia (DARYA).

The [Africa-EU partnership](#) and the new [Africa Communication](#), as well as the [Communication on the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#), are reference points for the ETF's work with the African Union. They stress the importance of technical and vocational education and training and skills development both through Pan-African and national initiatives to support growth and job creation in strategic development areas. Encouraged by the Commission opinion, the ETF plans to continue to engage with Africa and the African Union in 2023. As such, the delivery of training seminars for EU Delegations, a regional study on centres of excellence to support DG INTPA, as well as the support to the [African Continental Qualifications Framework](#) (ACQF) project as part of the multi-annual programme "AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability" are significant developments for ETF engagement in Africa.

The ETF also contributes to the [European Dialogue on Skills and Migration](#), the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), and to the [Global Approach to Migration and Mobility](#).

Facing the challenge of operating in (post)-conflict countries and fragile environments, the ETF takes into account the [Communication on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises](#) and the [Council conclusions on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crisis](#).

Thematically, ETF operations are inspired by the overall importance of human capital development in policies applying to EU Member States, such as the [European Skills Agenda](#), which is based on five building blocks calling for collective action to mobilise stakeholders and investment for lifelong skills development that lead to jobs and the [Youth Employment support](#) specifically targeting young people as part of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the EU proposal for individual learning accounts and micro-credentials to enable access to quality-assured learning and training opportunities.

In addition, the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) sets out 20 key principles and rights (among which is the right to education and the Youth Guarantee) to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems in the EU as an element of social cohesion policy. In June 2021 the European Council welcomed the EU headline targets on jobs, skills and poverty reduction set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, in line with the [Porto Declaration](#), including the EU-level target of at least 60 % of adults participating in learning every year by 2030. This also includes the EU

¹⁰ 4.1.4 "Investing in People" of 18 March 2020 Joint Communication on the future of the Eastern Partnership.

proposal for individual learning accounts and micro-credentials to enable access to quality-assured learning and training opportunities.

ETF work is also inspired by the [Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025](#), and the [Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021-2030\)](#), as well as recent political developments such as the [Joint Employment Report](#), the [Council Resolution on a new European Agenda for Adult Learning 2021-2030](#), and [ALMA](#) in line with [the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Reinforced Youth Guarantee](#).

The [European Green Deal](#), and its accompanying [Just Transition Mechanism](#), foresees proactive reskilling and upskilling for the workforce to adapt to new processes in the green economy. It also covers an update of the European Skills Agenda and the Youth Guarantee, as well as the establishment of a Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. An environment, energy and climate partnership with the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Neighbourhood is also envisaged.

Furthermore, the EU priorities on greening and digitalisation ([A Europe fit for the Digital Age](#)) are already shaping skills demand in the EU Neighbourhood. This is particularly the case in the countries with close export ties to the EU market. The foreseeable impact is that learning and activation programmes, as well as career orientation, should encompass such demand and context changes. This should also apply to preparing graduates and workers for career changes, and to orient providers to offer labour-market demanded programmes and qualifications. In this context, the [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#) drives innovation in teaching and learning to respond to the evolving needs of education and training systems in the EU neighbouring countries.

ETF work on linking VET and SMEs for innovation, productivity-enhancing skills and quality of work supports the Western Balkan economies in ensuring that their industrial ambitions consider the new circumstances following the COVID-19 crisis. It also supports regional industry to lead the way in transitioning to a green, digital and resilient economy, in line with the [updated European industrial strategy](#) and the [New European Innovation Agenda](#). The focus on the digital and green transition supports the [new SME Strategy](#) for a sustainable and digital Europe, and the [Green Action Plan \(GAP\) for SMEs](#), which aims at helping SMEs to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the transition to a green economy.

Drawing from the EU gender equality strategy 2020-25, the ETF takes into account the [EU Gender Action Plan III](#) – an ambitious agenda for gender equality and women’s empowerment in EU external action, with a commitment that 85% of all new external action spending has gender equality and women’s empowerment as a principal or significant objective.

Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-27

The multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-27 foresees stronger coordination between external and internal policies to ensure a more coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the EU Global Strategy, the European Consensus on Development, the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as the external dimension of migration, including the Partnership Framework with third countries on migration. According to the adopted MFF¹¹, the annual allocations to the ‘Neighbourhood and the World’ has increased to a total amount of €98.4 billion (in

¹¹ [“Council Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027”.](#)

2018 prices). Most existing financial instruments are being merged into a [Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument \(NDICI\) – ‘Global Europe’](#) with a total financial envelope of €79.5 billion (in 2021 prices), of which €60.4 billion are planned for geographic programmes, including €19.3 billion for the Neighbourhood maintaining an adequate geographical balance, €29.2 billion for Sub-Saharan Africa, €6.4 billion for thematic programming and €3.2 billion for rapid response mechanisms. A cushion of €9.5 billion is foreseen for new needs or emerging challenges and priorities to address unforeseen circumstances, such as crisis and post-crisis situations or migratory pressure, or to promote new Union-led or international initiatives or priorities.

The allocation for the [Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance \(IPA\) III](#), that supports beneficiaries on their path to fulfilling the accession criteria, is €14.1 billion (in 2021 prices). It supports Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye. Furthermore, strategic investment in connectivity of infrastructure, SMEs, energy efficiency, innovation, digital and green economy are included via the External Action Guarantee under the NDICI – Global Europe, which also covers IPA beneficiaries. It has the capacity to guarantee investments of up to €53.4 billion worldwide (under the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+)) by leveraging private capital to complement direct external cooperation grants.

The [Erasmus+](#) programme supporting education, training, youth and sport has an estimated budget of €26.2 billion, almost double that of its predecessor programme (2014-2020). It places a strong focus on social inclusion and the green and digital transition, offering mobility and cooperation opportunities in VET, school and adult education, and youth, among others. Mobility of learners will be privileged in the Western Balkans under VET capacity building, whereas in the coming years the Western Balkans should become fully associated to the programme.

More recently, the [Global Gateway](#) draws on the new financial tools in the EU MFF 2021-27, in particular the NDICI-Global Europe, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) III, the digital and international aspects of the [Connecting Europe Facility](#), but also Interreg, InvestEU and Horizon Europe, the EU research and innovation programme. In particular, the European Fund for Sustainable Development+ (EFSD+), the financial arm of NDICI-Global Europe will make available up to €135 billion for guaranteed investments for infrastructure projects between 2021 and 2027. Up to €18 billion will be made available in grant funding from the EU budget. European financial and development finance institutions have up to €145 billion in planned investment volumes. The Global Gateway is key to the ETF’s work with its focus on education and research, building connectivity in the neighbourhood and delivering through Team Europe.

The new architecture for the EU’s external action instruments reflects the need to focus on strategic priorities both geographically – the Western Balkans, the European Neighbourhood and Africa and thematically – access and quality at all levels of the education systems in partner countries, youth employability, lifelong learning, inclusion of women and decent work for all, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. This puts new demands on the ETF in terms of its support to EU actions in the pre-accession and neighbourhood regions as well as the rest of the world, to support the external dimension of EU policies. As set out in the Commission opinions of July 2021 and July 2022, the ETF is to use its agility in programming *“to respond to the new European Commission priorities and to pursue opportunities to work beyond current partner countries or to engage in new priority thematic areas”*.

Regional context

The ETF's geographical scope covers the neighbouring countries of the EU, including South Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Türkiye (SEET), Eastern Partnership (EaP), Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) and Central Asia. Beyond these regions, the ETF is also active in other areas such as Africa and Asia¹² through its partnerships and networks as well as extra-subsidy projects supporting EC services. With the African Union, the ETF is engaged in a project as part of the "AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability" programme. As a knowledge actor, the ETF is working in the global arena on HCD, with its products, methodologies and services such as training courses used by partner international organisations and the EUDs in Latin America beyond Africa and Asia.

Western Balkans and Türkiye

At the Brdo pri Kranju EU-Western Balkans summit hosted by the Slovenian presidency in 2021, the EU leaders adopted a declaration that Western Balkans leaders also aligned themselves to. It reaffirms the EU's unequivocal support for the European perspective of the region and sets out initiatives to support connectivity and the green and digital transition in the region. It also outlines commitments in the area of political and security cooperation, with concrete deliverables benefiting the Western Balkans including those related to the Economic and Investment Plan, the Innovation Agenda, COVID-19 vaccination, roaming costs, as well as Green Lanes and Transport Community Action Plans.

The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is an important policy vehicle for the region. The objectives, priorities and the tentative roadmap of key actions of this agenda are important for the region especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking into account the effect of the pandemic, fostering the stability, prosperity and the European perspective of the region remains a key priority for the EU. The pandemic has hit the societies and economies of the region hard. The EU acted very quickly to support its Western Balkan partners from the start of the crisis, mobilising a very substantial package to help address the immediate health crisis and mitigate the socio-economic crisis.

In line with European Commission priorities, the green transition, digital transformation and an economy that works for people, are crucial for relaunching and modernising the economies of the Western Balkans, helping to create jobs and growth, addressing the long-standing challenges faced by young people in the region such as limited job prospects and inequality. Education, culture, youth and sport, together with research and innovation, are recognised as essential drivers to boost the region's economic development, its competitiveness and social cohesion.

According to PISA¹³, the region is struggling to attain the same level of development as many of its neighbours, with per capita gross domestic product lower and youth unemployment rates higher than most countries in Central and Eastern Europe, despite significant improvements in recent years. PISA 2018 results show that learning outcomes in the region are highly inequitable. Boys perform worse than girls at rates exceeding international averages. In systems with linguistic minorities, learning gaps between different student groups can be greater than 70 points in reading. Compared to students

¹² DG EAC is the main EU representative for ASEM and education, and it is increasingly involving ETF in discussions on lifelong learning and TVET.

¹³ [OECD \(2020\). Education in the Western Balkans: Findings from PISA. PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris.](#)

enrolled in general upper-secondary programmes, students enrolled in vocational programmes underperform to larger degrees than OECD averages.

Culture and inter-cultural dialogue processes also have a role in creating an enabling environment for strengthening and reconciling communities. The Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport outlines a comprehensive, long-term strategy for cooperation in these fields. It will contribute to economic development and regional cooperation by building on overall EU support for a rapid restart of the region's economy and the on-going accession process.

The Economic and Investment Plan for the region to support the green and digital transition proposes to mobilise up to €9 billion of IPA III funding for the period 2021-27 as well as €20 billion in loans, leveraged by the new Western Balkans Guarantee facility, with the ambition to raise additional investments of up to €20 billion. Its flagship on the Youth Guarantee will support youth activation and employability in the region. This is complemented by the Council's recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, as well as the European Skills Agenda and the European Pillar of Social Rights. Last but not least, Erasmus+ has the objective of supporting the Western Balkans to achieve programme country status.

Within the Western Balkans Agenda for Innovation, Research, Education and Culture, the ETF is committed to supporting the implementation of relevant actions through its work programme, i.e., monitoring and reporting under the Osnabrück Declaration, Digital Learning or Centres of Excellence.

The ETF will continue to cooperate with regional bodies like RCC, ERI SEE and Western Balkans Six Chamber Investment Forum in line with existing agreements and be actively involved in the Berlin Process.

EU Neighbourhood South

Protracted conflicts in the region impact heavily on populations that suffer from forced displacement and from hosting communities leading to significant socio-economic troubles and instability. Based on this, at the end of 2020, the European Council called for a renewed and strengthened partnership with the Southern Mediterranean neighbours, as a strategic imperative for the EU, to provide a common response, join forces for economic recovery (including in the aftermath of COVID-19), and improve quality of life.

The new agenda comprising a [new joint communication on the southern partnership](#) and an [Economic Investment Plan](#) (EIP) were officially adopted in February 2021.

Climate change, the digital and green transition, as well as the post COVID-19 recovery represent opportunities to commit to a common people-centred agenda. The policy areas included in the new partnership are the following:

- **Human development, good governance and the rule of law:** Renew the shared commitment to democracy, the rule of law, human rights and accountable governance;
- **Resilience, prosperity and digital transition:** Support resilient, inclusive, sustainable and connected economies that create opportunities for all, especially women and youth;
- **Peace and security:** Provide support to countries to address security challenges and find solutions to ongoing conflicts;

- **Migration and mobility:** Jointly address the challenges of forced displacement and irregular migration and facilitate safe and legal pathways for migration and mobility;
- **Green transition: climate resilience, energy, and environment:** Take advantage of the potential of a low-carbon future, protect the region's natural resources and generate green growth.

Regional dialogue is complemented by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation which brings together the countries of the European Union and the countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. The ETF cooperates closely with the UfM Secretariat and is part of the task force guiding the monitoring process of the fourth Ministerial Declaration priorities on Employment and Labour.

In the area of skills development and employability, a number of regional programmes covering HCD are EU funded. Some explicitly cover skills development or address entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial learning to foster employability. Others target social partners to strengthen their involvement in skills development and policy making. The ETF follows the regional programmes closely and interacts with them, where and when relevant. This is the case for [Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration](#) (THAMM), a regional project in the field of mobility and migration, funded under the EU emergency fund for Africa covering Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The SOLIFEM and SOLID II projects got underway in the last quarter of 2021. As such, the ETF is also involved in the preparations for the regional Team Europe Initiative on jobs through trade and investment and inclusive entrepreneurship.

Eastern Partnership

For the countries bordering the EU to the east is the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative, which is a joint policy initiative that started in 2009, aiming to deepen and strengthen relations between the EU, its Member States and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus¹⁴, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The EU's Global Strategy and the revised European Neighbourhood Policy guide the EU's relations with its neighbours and call on the need to focus on increasing the stabilisation and resilience of the EU's Eastern neighbours.

Within this framework, there is a joint commitment to deliver tangible results for citizens across the region. In support of a more results-oriented approach towards the Eastern Partnership, 20 key deliverables for 2020 have been identified with clear milestones. In March 2020, the [Joint Communication on Eastern Partnership Policy beyond 2020](#) was approved to set out the broad framework based on the following priority areas: Economy (which includes also Education, Youth, HCD, LLL); Governance; Environment and Green Deal; Digital Transformation; and Inclusive Societies.

In this context, since 2009, the ETF has been involved and engaged in regional policy dialogue, bringing the skills development dimension through close and efficient cooperation with DG NEAR and related DGs in thematic clusters and pillars such as employment, digital, entrepreneurship, etc. In particular since 2018, the ETF has supported the EaP monitoring of the 20 deliverables; the policy

¹⁴ ETF support to Belarus takes place in the context of SG note of 01/03/2022, Ares (2022)1502984. Furthermore, also in the context of the aforementioned note and EU Council Decision 2022/428 amending regulation 833/2014, and subsequent acts, the ETF has ceased to support Russia, which, until further notice, is no longer considered a partner country.

dialogue within Platform 4 (mobility and people-to-people); and expertise in the framework of the EU4Youth and EU4Digital initiatives.

Central Asia

The five Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – have undertaken a profound structural transformation process moving from centrally planned to market economies. The countries vary considerably in terms of population, size, economic development and openness to the outside world, yet they also share a number of common features.

Already prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, young people in Central Asia, especially young women, faced multiple challenges to access quality skills development opportunities and subsequently to enter the labour market. As a result, many young people could at best access informal, precarious employment opportunities or had to resort to self-employment so that many had only limited prospects. Many young women have been relegated to employment in low wage sectors or inactivity, while for many young men, migration represented the only opportunity to find employment. These challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis and young people are among those most affected by the pandemic, both as participants in education and training provision but also as labour migrants. New labour market entrants or newcomers in national or regional labour markets affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have also been affected.

The policy agenda between the EU and Central Asian countries is mainly defined on a bilateral basis. In May 2019 a joint Communication was adopted on [The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership](#) aiming to forge a stronger, modern and non-exclusive partnership with the countries of Central Asia so that the region develops as a sustainable, more resilient, prosperous, and closely interconnected economic and political space.

A five-year action 'DARYA – Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia' (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) – financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument of the European Union has been signed in the form of a contribution agreement with the EU Delegation in Kazakhstan for an overall amount of €10,000,000 from June 2022 to June 2027.

The DARYA action targets VET and skills development, focusing on measures that support inclusive and labour market relevant skills development opportunities for young people in Central Asia. In line with the opportunity to “build back better”, DARYA will have a system approach that considers immediate as well as medium-term development requirements that will support better (more labour market relevant, more inclusive, more varied opportunities, enhanced employability) skills provision for young people. In view of the importance of economic integration and connectivity for the recovery and future development of the region, and considering the importance of migration, DARYA covers activities at national and regional or multi-country level.

African Union

The EU's relationship with Africa is a key priority for the Commission. The new post-pandemic reality and the growing urgency of the climate crisis make this relationship all the more important. The EU vision of the future Africa-EU partnership is outlined in the 2020 Joint Communication [“Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa”](#). It proposes working together on five key global trends:

- A partnership for the green transition and energy access.

- A partnership for digital transformation.
- A partnership for sustainable growth and jobs.
- A partnership for peace, security and governance.
- A partnership on migration and mobility.

Long-term strategic priorities discussed at the EU-AU Summit in February 2022 remain at the forefront of the partnership with Africa. These include innovative financing solutions for the EU-AU partnership, economic recovery, as well as the green and digital transition, all of which are even more important and urgent in the post COVID-19 world. By 2027, under the new EU financing instrument NDICI – Global Europe, €29 billion is foreseen for Sub-Saharan Africa and €12.5 billion is set aside for the Southern Neighbourhood, of which a significant part will go to North Africa.

In this framework, over the past years, ETF support has increasingly been requested and it has been active in sharing knowledge and expertise where relevant. As such, the ETF supported the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) project, which is part of the multi-annual programme “AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability”, aiming at improving the occupational prospects of young Africans through the provision of innovative market-oriented skills development and supporting measures to facilitate the recognition of qualifications between African countries. This initiative is also part of the renewed commitments under the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs and one of the milestone deliverables of the commitments made at the fifth AU-EU Summit in Abidjan in 2017. A proposed new phase of ACQF is under discussion with a broad plan of ten outputs (2022–25) and potentially a robust contribution to the Europe-Africa strategy, through a focus on mobility (the essence of qualifications frameworks) in view of a wider learning and skills ecosystem. This new phase is expected to be implemented by the ETF and will be contracted in the form of a contribution agreement in the first quarter of 2023.

EU Candidate Countries

In view of the recent Council decision to grant the status of candidate countries to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia (as per certain conditions), the ETF will upgrade its engagement with these countries in a differentiated approach, to support them in the process of accession. In this regard, the ETF's experience with candidate countries in the Western Balkans and Türkiye will be used.

Institutional context

In line with its 2027 strategy, the ETF prepares its annual work programme on the basis of priorities gathered during the Structured Dialogue and bilateral meetings with EC services, the EEAS and EU Delegations (EUDs). As per common practice, the ETF has a flexible approach in place to absorb unforeseen requests (to the extent possible) by a continuous reprioritisation of its annual work programme during implementation.

The ETF operates within the EU Institutional framework. The mid-term financial outlook for the agency is stable in real terms¹⁵, representing a 2% increase in nominal terms to match expected inflation. The ambitions of the ETF Strategy 2027 are constrained by the budget available since the subsidy is fixed under the MFF for the 2021-27 period.

In view of supporting wider EU investment, enlarging the impact of its work, building synergies within the EC family and widening its operational resources, the ETF has identified the option, in a few and

¹⁵ [SEC\(2021\)-250](#) – June 2021 - Statement of estimates of the European Commission 2022.

well-defined number of cases, of implementing extra-budgetary projects. These are closely related to the mandate and expertise of the ETF and cannot be met with the limited support under the subsidy. Moreover, they respond to policy priorities for EC services including DGs INTPA, NEAR, EMPL and EAC, among others. The ETF has a positive track record of undertaking such activities.

To ensure that its mandate is fully respected, the ETF has investigated various contractual modalities at the disposal of the EU to engage the agencies in such additional tasks. The main challenge is to ensure that additional funds can be used to mobilise the resources needed to reach its objectives, including expertise and administrative support, adding and complementing the resources support through the subsidy. As part of these efforts and to enable an easier decision-making process, the ETF has applied and obtained exemption from pillar-assessment (December 2021)¹⁶.

In this regard, the ETF has signed a Service Level Agreement with DG Employment to support the international dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence. In cooperation with DG INTPA and the EU Delegation to the Africa Union (AU), the ETF is expected to support the implementation of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF II) to contribute to the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa 2021-27 under Priority Area 1 or Human Development – Education. Also, a contribution agreement with DG INTPA on Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia (DARYA) has been signed to cover the period 2022-27.

In the future, another option for the ETF to expand the impact of its work and to increase the use of its expertise and in view of widening its operational resources, would be to provide remunerated services for other international actors or to move towards results-based financing with IFIs.

The ETF operates with the EU family, liaising both with thematic DGs with a mandate in HCD and external relations DGs, all of which are involved in its strategic development. For instance, core geographical DGs include DG NEAR and DG INTPA, whereas thematic DGs close to ETF core business include DG EMPL, DG EAC, DG HOME and DG JRC. At partner country level, EU Delegations (EUDs) are key actors for the ETF and the entry point for engagement, which has been constantly high over the years.

ETF support often includes inputs to policy dialogue, programming, coordination and the different stages of the project cycle, which stem from its analytical work. A valuable source of data is represented by the official statistics collected by Eurostat, especially for Western Balkans and Türkiye and the Neighbourhood countries.

With regard to other EU agencies, the ETF is an active member of the EU Agencies Network. Cooperation agreements are in place with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). These agreements foresee early consultation on work programme development and yearly action plans that set out further forms of exchange and, where appropriate, joint activities. In particular, regarding the cooperation between the ETF and Cedefop, the two agencies cooperate in a number of thematic areas and share knowledge through regular meetings. To ensure synergies, the ETF Director has a seat on the Management Board of Cedefop, Eurofound and European Labour Authority (ELA) as an observer.

¹⁶ Exemption decision ARES(2021)7461073 dated 03/12/2021 and valid until 31/12/2023.

Beyond Team Europe, cooperation with third countries and international organisations is mandated in the [ETF Recast Regulation](#) to facilitate the exchange of information and experience among international actors engaged in human capital development reform in partner countries and between the EU and partner countries and among partner countries. The agency will seek opportunities to cooperate with entities that can advance the HCD agenda in countries for increased impact and added value.

With its 2027 strategy, the ETF is further strengthening its delivery through partnerships, and it is an active member of the Inter-Agency Group led by UNESCO where key global players in the area of human capital development, skills and VET share information and cooperate actively. Methodologies and tools are developed in a range of key policy areas such as: the future of work, including digital skills; matching and anticipation of skills needs and shortages; qualifications and qualifications systems; the contribution of skills recognition for migration management; work-based learning and apprenticeship; teacher and teacher training; education information systems/key performance indicators; and entrepreneurship.

It is against this background that the ETF fulfils its mandate to contribute, in the context of EU external relations policies and in support of the Team Europe approach, to improving human capital development by supporting countries to create inclusive and innovative lifelong learning systems. It is also against this background and its vision to become a global reference for human capital development, that the ETF has initiated the preparation of its 2027 strategy mid-term review together with a long-term reflection vision post-27.

Section II – MULTI-ANNUAL PROGRAMMING 2023-25

1. Multi-annual work programme

The ETF Governing Board adopted the ETF Strategy 2027 in June 2019¹⁷, paving the way for the ETF to put in place a package of services that better address the pressing needs that countries face to make skills provision more responsive to the changing demands of industry and the challenges of new technologies, environmental change, migration and changing skills needs.

In preparation for the development of the strategy, a thorough review of ETF past work was conducted taking in the results from evaluations alongside an intensive consultation process using a Policy Delphi methodology with key ETF stakeholders. The evaluation findings and feedback from stakeholders confirmed the added value of the ETF to:

- bring together a unique mix of expertise, innovation, in-depth analysis and policy dialogue capacity in the field of human capital development with a deep-rooted understanding of country context and,
- through its expertise development, prepare thematic and system-level analysis and studies, and ensure the continuous quality of its services.

Based on these findings, the strategy sets out the changes required of the ETF to broaden its area of expertise in response to the shifting trends away from formal schooling towards wider learning pathways, and from isolated solutions towards comprehensive and integrated ones across education and training systems.

The aim for the ETF for the period 2021-27 is to consolidate delivery of its services as:

- A global asset **for the EU** providing expertise on human capital development through a **diverse provision of clearly agreed services**.
- A reference **for partner countries for sector analysis, policy advice and to develop capacities**.
- A **global knowledge hub** in the field of human capital development in transition and developing countries.
- An **important resource for programming** and preparing and monitoring EU investment in human capital development.
- A **partner to the EU to enhance the strategic impact of EU funds**.

The ETF's interventions reflect the priorities of the EU with reference to the human capital development (HCD) sector. Priorities for the operational direction of the ETF are agreed with the ETF Governing Board and the EU services cooperating with the ETF.

¹⁷ [ETF Strategy 2027](#)

1.1 The ETF's response to COVID-19 and definition of the next normal

The outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent impact on socio-economic demands and challenges of EU partner countries, as well as education and training disruptions, have confirmed the role of skills in determining the capacity of individuals, communities and countries to adopt resilient responses to the crisis, put in place inclusive policies and actions, and engage in a fast-moving post-emergency phase. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's announcement of making 2023 the European Year of Skills substantiates this.

The ETF has monitored the evolution of the impact of COVID-19 in the partner countries as regards both education and training as well as socio-economic issues. Based on current demands and future perspectives, investment in skills at all stages of the life of individuals are key to confronting immediate demands as well as accompanying transformation processes towards greening, digitalisation and inclusiveness.

From the onset of the pandemic, the ETF has adapted its work programme to address immediate demands and offer flexible and customised support to its stakeholders. Building further on lessons learned, the ETF continues to support partners in medium and longer-term transformation processes, such as translating their experiences of digital and online learning in response to the pandemic into blended learning strategies, support to active labour market policies in particular targeting youth and women, and skilling, upskilling and reskilling in the context of enterprises. This is reflected in the activities and further expansion of networks where the ETF seeks to position the skills agenda as a key component of economic and social development processes.

Against this background, the ETF continues its internal reflection its future and the next normal. Departing from the development of alternative scenarios and the discussion of their implications, the institution will co-create the future of its working environment, including the use of its physical space and digital opportunities, as well as hybrid modes of working and managing staff. This will enable the ETF to increase its resilience, efficiency and agility, as well as to continue building the staff skills required to position itself as an innovative and pioneering organisation in relation to new ways of working post COVID-19.

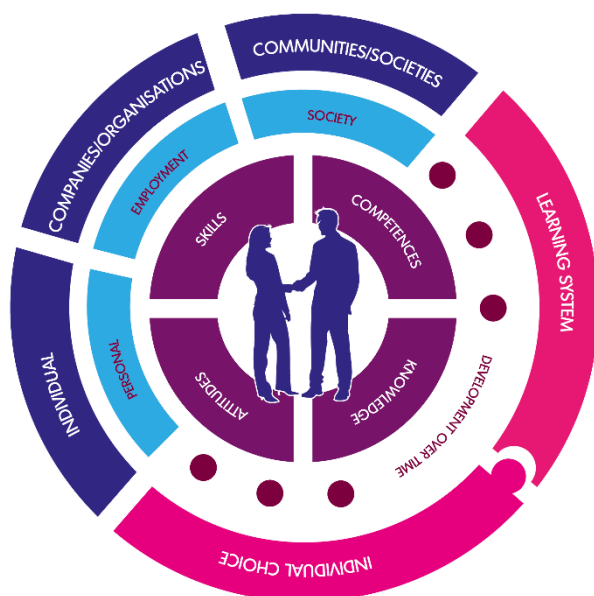
Communication in this context is key to delivering the ETF's mandate and helping to define the next normal. By tailoring messages to different stakeholder audiences and multiplying their reach, the ETF can increase its capacity to influence and engage the key actors in the policy cycle at national, EU and international levels, and to drive the change process. In an increasingly competitive environment, the ETF needs to position itself effectively, highlighting its unique position in the policy process through coherent and consistent messaging on its objectives, action and impact. Communication plays a critical role in this and in ensuring outreach to key stakeholders.

1.2 The ETF's approach to human capital development and lifelong learning

Human capital development

Human capital development (HCD) is the cornerstone of the ETF's work as stated in its mandate: 'to contribute, in the context of EU external relations policies, to improving human capital development'¹⁸. For the ETF, the understanding of human capital development is guided by five key principles:

1. Human capital development stands not only for skills and competences, but also for the knowledge and attitudes of people. Human capital is something that belongs to the people, to each of us individually. This means that the ETF's support to the development of human capital is meant to benefit learners first and foremost.
2. Developing the skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes of a person is not only an aim in itself, but it also realises the potential of individuals as members of society.



3. Developing the skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes also benefit companies, organisations, communities and society overall. Human capital is a key factor in the promotion of prosperous, innovative and inclusive societies.
4. HCD is a dynamic notion, which means that it has to be developed over time to ensure that people can adapt and respond to rapidly changing environments.
5. Participation in HCD should always be a matter of individual choice. However, it is the responsibility of each country to create learning systems that provide opportunities and incentives for everyone to develop themselves at any point in their lives, should they wish to.

Human capital development is the provision of support to countries for the creation of lifelong learning systems that provide opportunities and incentives for people to develop their skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes throughout their lives to realise their potential, for employment purposes, and as a contribution to prosperous, innovative and inclusive societies.

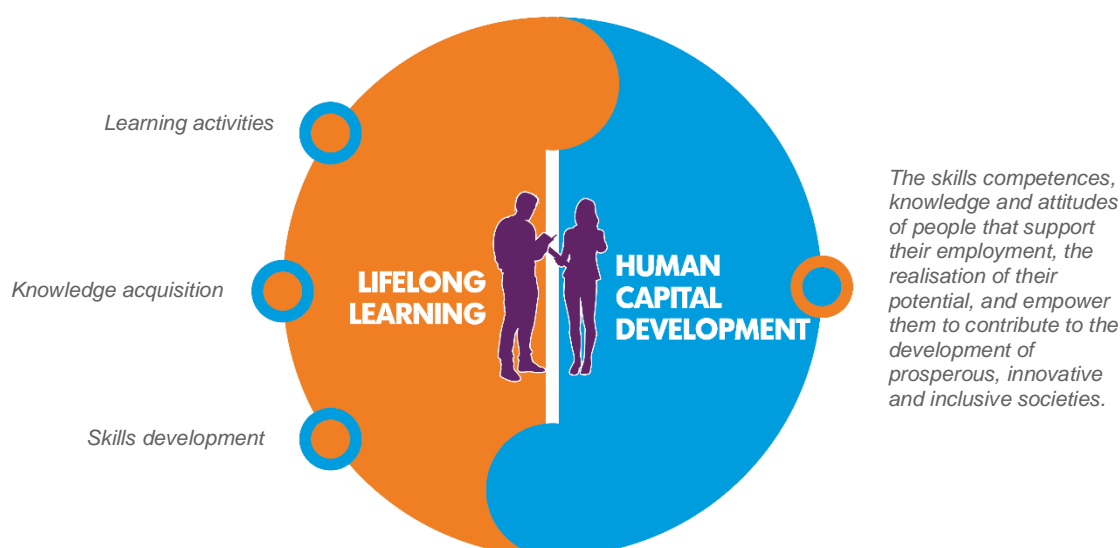
¹⁸ Art.1.2 REG (EC) NO 1339/2008: human capital development shall be defined as work which contributes to the lifelong development of individuals' skills and competences through the improvement of vocational and education training systems.

Human capital development through lifelong learning

For the ETF, human capital development places the learner at the centre, signalling a shift towards learning opportunities that accommodate the needs of autonomous and independent individuals who may not be bound to a single provider, fixed educational path or to a predefined learning age. Placing the learner at the centre signals a shift towards the creation of sustainable and adaptable lifelong learning systems.

The ETF approach to **lifelong learning** is to focus on all learning that contributes to developing skills that promote the professional fulfilment of people, including their long and short-term employability, their capacity to innovate, and to actively participate in society. The key principles are:

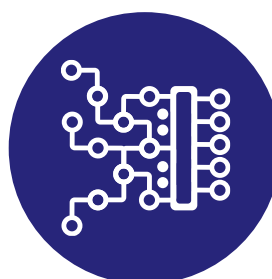
- Learner at the centre;
- Shift of focus away from only (formal) education and training systems towards flexible and individualised learning processes, learning opportunities and learning pathways;
- Diversity of learning environments and purposes.



Learner-centred approach



Diversity of learning environments and purposes



Flexible learning pathways



Multiple providers and education paths

Lifelong learning refers to all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills/competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.

1.3 Delivering in partnership

The ETF enters into partnerships and strategic alliances to increase the impact of its work and ensure a higher level of coordination and coherence of EU and international investment among the most relevant actors in the field of human capital development. The aim is to:

- Support greater impact of interventions;
- Enhance efficiency gains and economies of scale;
- Increase the visibility of the EU and the ETF in influencing policy in human capital development and lifelong learning.

This will be done first and foremost through the consolidation of cooperation with EU services and, by targeting ETF knowledge and products more accurately in order to align them with new EU priorities. This is key to maximising the uptake of its expertise, sharing good practice and supporting the EU external actions under the EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood policies, the Geopolitical Commission and the global agenda for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, the Global Gateway is crucial to the ETF's work with a focus on education and research, building connectivity in the neighbourhood and delivering through Team Europe. In this regard, the ETF is eager to provide expertise input and policy advice in the preparation of Team European Initiatives where relevant.

In addition, targeted strategic alliances and partnerships will be identified that will provide the best value to implement the ETF Strategy 2027:

- **EU agencies:** joint work with other EU agencies, including Cedefop, EIGE, EISMEA, ELA and Eurofound, will continue in areas of shared interest to ensure mutual benefit and exchange of experience between the EU and partner countries. In particular, in the framework of cooperation with Cedefop and Eurofound.
- **EU Member States and bilateral organisations:** Cooperation with EU Members States through a Team Europe approach, its agencies (AfD, Enabel, GIZ, DVV, etc.) and other actors (VET toolbox) driving thematic development and implementation in countries will be essential to delivering the ETF's objectives. As such, the ETF will pay particular attention to further enhancing relevance and seeking synergies, and to pursuing opportunities to work beyond current partner countries or to engaging in new priority thematic areas.
- **International organisations and donors active** in the area of human capital development globally (such as OECD, UNDP, UNEVOC/UNESCO/UIIL, UNICEF, UNIDO, ILO/ITC/IO, IOM). The ETF will continue its cooperation, expertise contribution and knowledge exchange globally, in regional settings (such as UfM, CMI and the African Union), and at partner country level, within dedicated platforms and networks and with other international players active in the field of international skills investments and knowledge creation.
- **International financial institutions** investing increasingly in the area of human capital development (e.g. the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Asian Development Bank, World Bank and European Development Finance Institutions).

The ETF will continue its cooperative approach with development and investment banks and seek the most impactful engagement towards policy and impact investment in HCD. This will be done through new instruments for policy-first investment and Team Europe in consultation with EC services, and via a differentiated approach towards the IFIs.

- **Platforms and networks** to contribute to a global HCD agenda and to enable building on and benefiting from already existing partnerships, research and knowledge bases at regional and/or cross-country level with ERI SEE, EVTA, RCC, Skillman, the ASEM Education platform and WB6 CIF and UNIMED.
- **Non-state actors** such as private companies and foundations, non-governmental organisations and civil society actors active in the field of human capital development, including social partners.

More details on the involvement of partners are included in the activity area summaries and in Annexes XII and XIII.

1.4 A differentiated approach

Differentiation means clearly identifying the added value of the ETF's actions bearing in mind the specific country context and the EU priorities as a basis for defining different packages of deliverables for different partner countries using a set of defined principles and criteria. Where needed, partner countries are clustered. ETF activities are planned, following EU external action policies and taking into account the level of EU and other donor investment as well as country ownership and commitment towards improving policies and performance in targeted areas. In the wake of this differentiation approach, the ETF will also further refine the consultation and engagement of partner countries in the planning and delivery of actions. Setting-up an advisory platform with partner countries for more systematic exchange at policy level is among the ideas to be explored.

Lastly, facing an increasing level of fragility in its partner countries, the ETF is also adjusting its operations to the context of (post)-conflict countries and protracted crises to ensure the relevance of its interventions and supporting the resilience of lifelong learning systems. In doing so, the ETF will continue to strengthen partnerships for a rapid, efficient, effective and innovative response, thus co-creating solutions with partners, and leveraging the EU's role in political dialogue and bilateral support by following a needs-based prioritisation.

Principles

- Transparency using global and ETF benchmarks and indicators for decision-making processes on country actions;
- Effectiveness through actions for higher impact, to support EU policies and country priorities;
- Complementarity with EU and EU Member State goals and existing interventions;
- Alignment with partner country development strategies and policies.

Requirements

- Maintaining the logic of partnership between the ETF and the countries and regions where it operates; and
- Maximising ETF resources and expertise, tailoring and better targeting direct country support actions.

1.5 ETF Networks

The ETF's mandate tasks it with facilitating the exchange of information and experience amongst international actors involved in human capital development reforms in partner countries and disseminating information and encouraging networking between the EU and partner countries and between countries¹⁹. Networks are a key tool for stakeholder engagement, expertise development and expertise sharing. As such, the ETF has set up a number of networks as part of the ETF's function as a knowledge hub. These ETF branded networks also allow for strategic orientation, foresight and positioning of ETF products and services to ensure their added value. They also cater for a bottom-up approach in maintaining hands-on cooperation with relevant stakeholders in partner countries. Following the experience of the pandemic, the ETF continues to invest in online engagement with all stakeholders to foster knowledge co-creation and innovation, peer learning and international cooperation.

More specifically, ETF networks enable:

- initiating dialogue and facilitating exchanges of policies, practice and experience;
- identifying opportunities for joint methodological development and actions;
- sharing information and expertise;
- reaching out to stakeholder groups internationally and fostering international cooperation in areas covered under the ETF's strategy.

ETF networks target stakeholders at international, regional and country level, including but not limited to:

- Networks of individual practitioners and experts including researchers collaborating to co-create and generate new knowledge, develop methodologies and disseminate results. The ETF's current active networks are the SkillsLab focusing on skills anticipation and matching, the Community of Innovative Educators focusing on innovation in teaching and learning practices, and the Governance Learning Action Dialogue (GLAD) network focusing on governance arrangements for supporting lifelong learning.
- Networks of organisations, in particular centres of vocational excellence, civil society organisations and enterprises that invest and participate in skills development actions. The ETF's current active networks are the ETF Network of Excellence (ENE) targeting Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), the Skills4Enterprise Network targeting intermediary bodies as well as private sector and social partners organisations, and the Network of Qualifications and Recognition Authorities/Centres that will become active in 2023.
- Networks of institutions and policy shapers that participate in ETF operational actions and engage in peer learning and exchanges. The ETF's current active network is the Quality Assurance Forum, which brings together quality assurance authorities across partner countries.

A description of the active networks is provided as part of section III of the SPD.

¹⁹ [Art.2 d\) & f\) Regulation \(EC\) No 1339/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 establishing a European Training Foundation \(recast\).](#)

1.6 Advising EU institutions

The ETF provides policy advice and expertise to the EU institutions, namely the EC services, EEAS and EU Delegations based on continuous interaction and consultation, as well as upon request²⁰. In this context, the ETF's main focus is to support the different phases of the EU programming cycle in partner countries. The ETF's analytical work, which builds upon its body of evidence and anticipation is key to this. It enables the ETF to further develop synergies and complementarities with EC services to ensure the success of reforms, thus creating new opportunities to underpin the stability and prosperity of the Enlargement and European Neighbourhood regions.

The ETF is equally ready to be involved in regional policy development on HCD and in the early stages of programming. To do so, it has a pro-active and supportive approach to EU programming in all regions, sharing its thematic and geographic expertise. Beyond policy advice, the ETF remains available for implementing EU programmes in case its specific thematic HCD expertise and/or country knowledge is deemed to add value over other outsourcing options. Examples of policy advice and expertise provided include but are not limited to:

1. the different phases of the EU bilateral and regional external assistance project cycle (identification, formulation, operationalisation and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, both for project and budget support modalities);
2. contributing to programming (including joint programming in a Team Europe approach) and planning;
3. contributing to/facilitating external assistance related to EU bilateral and regional policy dialogue processes;
4. reporting on the achievement of EU-led monitoring and assessment processes on education and training reforms, such as the Copenhagen Process deliverables or the ERP;
5. developing methodological tools and guides to support EU external assistance (such as the analysis of indicators for budget support, the diagnostic assessments, etc.);
6. delivering training sessions to address the specific contexts of partner countries and needs of the EU, especially the EU Delegations.

Following the enhanced cooperation of the ETF with various EU services both in terms of thematic priorities and geographic focus it can be expected that the demand for policy advice, expertise and monitoring from the ETF will increase further. The provision of these services has to be directed in a way that helps to improve synergies and complementarities with the EU and strengthen common efforts to ensure the success of reforms.

More recently, the international dimension of Erasmus+ has grown in importance. Hence, the ETF is working closely with EACEA offering policy advice for further dissemination of the calls (mainly the CoVEs and Capacity Building in VET) and their more impactful use in policy dialogue. The ETF will increase its cooperation with the Erasmus+ offices.

While the Commission will continue to streamline the types and the timing of the requests for ETF support, as per common practice, the ETF will continue to balance its resources with a flexible approach to absorb unforeseen requests (as far as possible) by a continuous reprioritisation during implementation. Addressing these ad-hoc requests whenever possible is an indication of the flexibility

²⁰ See Annex XIV for planned requests 2023.




of the ETF in the implementation of its annual work programme and the priority given to the requests directly coming from the EU services, even when not initially planned.

1.7 ETF core services

The ETF Strategy 2027 outlines the following pillars that are at the core of its operational modalities.

- **Knowledge hub.** The breadth and the quality of the ETF's expertise as a global reference for education and training. The ETF accompanies countries in the transformation of their education and training systems. The ETF will make greater use of digital and online tools to engage with stakeholders, ensure wider access and distribution of knowledge, good practice and learning materials. It will continue to engage with international donors and stakeholders for knowledge exchange, expertise development and increased impact.
- **Monitoring and assessment.** The ETF has developed a series of diagnostic and assessment methodologies that cover education systems as a whole as well as specific policy and governance domains. The ETF will continue its work on policy learning and innovation, including developing and piloting methodologies and producing knowledge products. These methodologies/tools will be applied/scaled up on request to support EU and third country decision making.
- **Policy advice and input to EU external action priorities in the area of education and training.** As a result of the increased investment in the HCD sector from the EU and other international actors, the ETF plays a role in the programming of EU assistance, and in the provision of policy advice to EU and partner country stakeholders. Together with actions in countries, the ETF will further increase its involvement at international (regional and multi-country) level. The ETF will also be an important actor in the delivery of EU external action priorities for regional and multi-country policy dialogue. In this direction, the ETF will explore further the participation of partner countries in Erasmus+ to support policy dialogue and advice, and through the analysis of the findings and experience from the participation of partner countries in Erasmus+ it will put forward specific interventions.

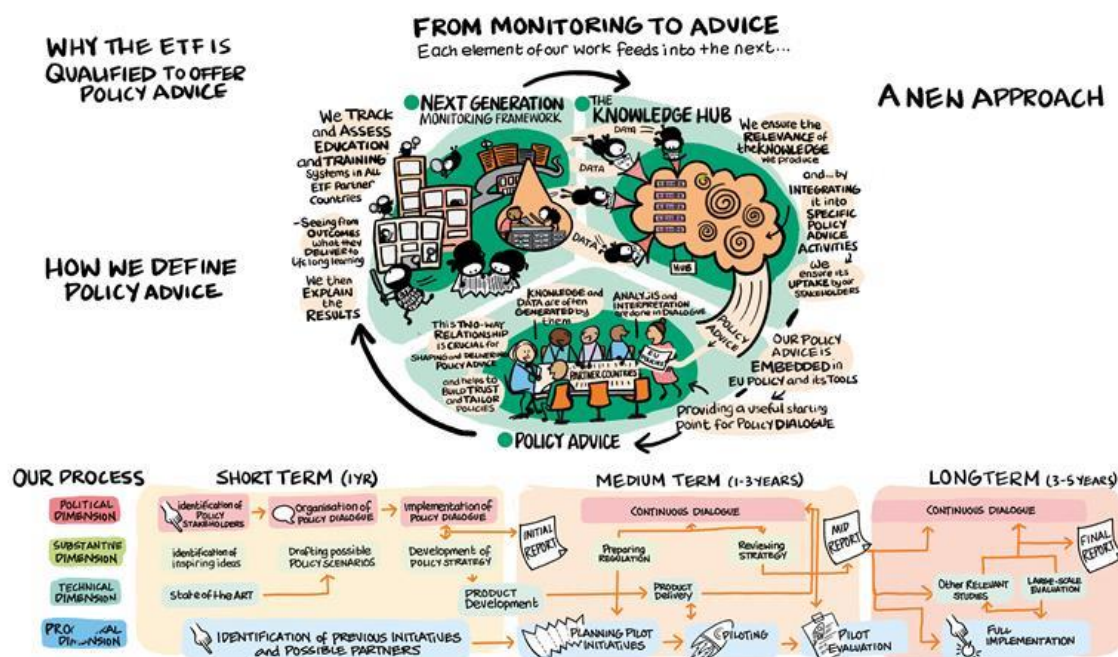
Key outputs of ETF services

 Knowledge hub	 Monitoring & assessment	 Policy advice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Thematic networks ■ Multi-country analysis ■ Co-created models, methodological tools and guides for skills identification and development ■ Thematic studies and analyses ■ Innovative practices and approaches on education and training in a lifelong learning perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Intelligence management systems ■ Datasets and statistical publications ■ HCD country and regional assessments ■ Country intelligence (snapshots, fiches, progress reports) ■ Thematic intelligence (inventories, fiches) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tailored policy advice and guidance for EU programmes, including content monitoring of EU programmes (bilateral and regional) ■ Tailored policy advice and guidance for country reform processes, including through EU and other partners' interventions

Synergies between ETF services

The integration of the ETF's three core services aims to increase the impact of ETF's work and generate value for stakeholders. The knowledge developed through the knowledge hub and the monitoring and assessment services shapes ETF's diagnostic and anticipation capabilities, thus building its ability for in-depth context understanding and to drive innovation. In turn, these serve as sound basis for providing policy advice to both partner countries (i.e. reform of education and training systems as well as participatory/inclusive governance systems) and the EC programming and interventions in the wider Team Europe. Finally, the feedback received from partner countries and EC services through the ETF's policy advice service, either in the form of demands or requests, is used as input for further knowledge development and monitoring, thus closing the cycle of ETF service integration.

Therefore, the ETF's support and contribution to EC services and partner countries stem from its analytical work based on the synergies of its core services. Knowledge creation, skills anticipation, country intelligence and monitoring progress of HCD reforms in partner countries increasingly feeds into stakeholder policy dialogue and the development of evidence-based policy advice to the EC and partner countries alike. In particular, the ETF's monitoring and assessment provide country intelligence and evidence in terms of system functioning and performance, which are key to identifying priorities for investments and advice for direction and transformation. This is key to strengthen common EU efforts to ensure the success of reforms of education and training systems. The ETF is continually seeking to build synergies and complementarities with EC services and EUDs.



1.8 Strategic objectives

The ETF intervention logic for the period 2023-25 is based on three strategic objectives with a focus on skills and education and training system development in a lifelong learning perspective. They aim at:

- **Skills relevance and anticipation** – to identify changing skills demands and ensure skills relevance

There are profound changes in societies and economies that influence labour markets and the workplace and require new skills sets for individuals to make the best use of opportunities while mitigating emerging risks. The impact of technology on jobs and training, the greening of economies, new demands emerging in the markets, and the effect of the prolonged crisis generated by the impact of COVID-19 are only some of the significant factors impacting on the lives and jobs of everyone everywhere. These changes and demands are the drivers that the ETF aims to address through its activities under this objective.

The ETF will support partner countries to anticipate and monitor changing skills demands (also including skills gaps and skills mismatch) at national, sectoral and territorial level through the generation of new evidence. It includes methodological support and policy advice for the development of modern labour market information systems as well as inclusive and effective active labour market policies. The ETF will also provide policy advice for the modernisation of qualifications systems and the development of qualifications relevant to new labour market and workplace realities with particular attention to the comparison of national and regional qualification frameworks to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and improved focus on validation, micro-credentials and the modularisation of curricula. The ETF will continue to support EU labour mobility and migration policies with a specific focus on the role of skills in tackling the root causes of migration on the one side, and in supporting talent partnerships and labour mobility on the other. These will also be key elements of the European Year of Skills 2023.

In terms of contributing to EC objectives, the ETF will support the definition and implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans in the Western Balkans. The ETF contributes to the EU Skills Agenda²¹ as it fosters innovations, such as individual learning accounts and micro-credentials, and ensures that existing skills intelligence is strengthened and new evidence on skills demand and matching explored, including through a skills anticipation toolkit and a methodological handbook on big data for labour market intelligence. In addition, it contributes to strengthening a culture of evidence-based policy making and to the New Pact on Asylum and Migration by covering the skills dimension of migration. Moreover, it supports a systematic assessment of how partner countries use their education and training systems to power their green and digital transition in line with the EU Green Deal and Digital Agenda, thus enabling these to guide necessary reforms and corresponding aid. Work-Based Learning (WBL) reforms and career guidance are fostered in line with the Osnabruck Declaration and VET Recommendation. Support to the African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF) is ensured as part of the EU partnership with the African Union. Finally, through evolving interoperable databases and evidence, the ETF is increasingly enabling partner and third countries to compare, search and analyse their qualification systems, as well as to develop their own digital qualifications databases, all of which will revolutionise recognition processes and validation systems. Ultimately, these actions lead to policy advice in terms of how best to develop and adapt gender friendly employment policies as well as labour market tools and instruments for a more resilient workforce, including their activation through youth, upskilling and reskilling.

²¹ The link to EU policies can be found in Section I under 'Policy Context'. The aim of this Section is not to be exhaustive in outlining all policies that inspire the ETF's work (these can be found in Sections I and III of this document), but rather to highlight key impacts or contributions to EU policy implementation.

- **Skills development and validation** – to innovate skills development models and processes

The way skills are acquired is becoming continuously more diversified. Skills development takes place across people's lifetimes. It takes place in different learning environments (schools, training centres, workplaces, online etc.), applying different teaching and learning methods and requiring different, flexible and individualised learning pathways. The combination of key competences and technical skills is becoming ever more important for people's adaptability to new workplaces and professional development. Validating the skills and competences that people acquire in different ways is a must for access to employment and further learning, as is career guidance as a prerequisite for helping people to navigate in changing labour markets and in a world of diversified training provision.

Under this objective, the ETF will support partner countries to promote innovation in the teaching and learning of both young and adult learners in formal, informal and non-formal learning environments and tap into innovation already taking place to tackle these issues. The ETF will promote excellence in VET across partner countries and foster networking opportunities for centres of excellence between partner countries and the EU in line with the new EU Skills Agenda and the Osnabruck Declaration. In doing so, ETF's support contributes to the international dimension of VET within the Erasmus+ programme, in international partnerships and within the priorities set for different regions. Furthermore, by fostering the development of digital skills, online and distance learning, and the use of SELFIE for teachers, the ETF contributes to the Digital Education Action Plan.

Finally, the ETF will continue to provide support to enhance work-based learning and career guidance, as well as strengthen its actions in supporting skills for smart specialisation, re-skilling and up-skilling strategies by cooperating more closely with private sector representatives and companies in partner countries. These are in line with the new European Skills Agenda, the European Charter for Small Enterprises and the New European Innovation Agenda. In this way, this objective contributes to sketching out possible future development pathways for education and training to connect to and to drive innovation, growth and competitiveness, thus enabling partner countries to transition to green, digital and resilient economies, in line with the updated European Industrial Strategy.

- **Performance and quality of education and training policies**

In line with the VET Recommendation, the European Education Area and the European Skills Agenda, effective public policies imply good governance, including: (i) coordinated and concerted action of actors at different levels that link education and training systems to economic and social developments; (ii) financing mechanisms that work in favour of policy objectives and ensuring adequate funds for policy implementation, efficiency and equity; (iii) quality assurance mechanisms; and (iv) regular monitoring and assessment of the performance of the education and training system taking into account countries' human capital development challenges.

The ETF supports countries to monitor and permanently improve the performance of their education and training systems and lifelong learning policies. It does so by using monitoring and assessment findings to provide tailored policy advice to EU interventions and to systemic reforms in the partner countries to increase quality performance, thus contributing to EC programming on education and the European Skills agenda.

In addition, the ETF contributes to the generation of evidence, insights and policy dialogue on promoting equal opportunities and access to education, training and lifelong learning, in line with the EU Pillar of Social Rights. The ETF also provides active support to employment in the form of guidance to training and retraining opportunities, including for migrants. This includes the need for the

EU to attract new talents, while ensuring win-win solutions with the countries of origin and the migrants themselves, in line with the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Finally, the ETF uses the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning to guide its support to partner countries as well as the identification of policy solutions and good practices which help them to promote, implement and monitor policies supporting the development of key competences from an early age throughout life, as well as their assessment and validation.

1.9 Geographic area of operation

Western Balkans and Türkiye

Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Kosovo²²
North Macedonia
Montenegro
Serbia
Türkiye

Eastern Partnership

Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus²³
Georgia
Moldova
Ukraine

Southern and Eastern Mediterranean

Algeria
Egypt
Israel²⁴
Jordan
Lebanon
Libya²⁵
Morocco
Palestine²⁶
Syria²⁷
Tunisia

Central Asia

Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Tajikistan
Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan

Cooperation elsewhere

African Union



²² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

²³ ETF support to Belarus takes place in the context of SG note of 01/03/2022, Ares (2022)1502984. Also, in the context of the aforementioned SG note and the EU Council Decision 2022/428 amending regulation 833/2014, and subsequent acts, the ETF has ceased to support Russia, which until further notice is no longer a partner country.

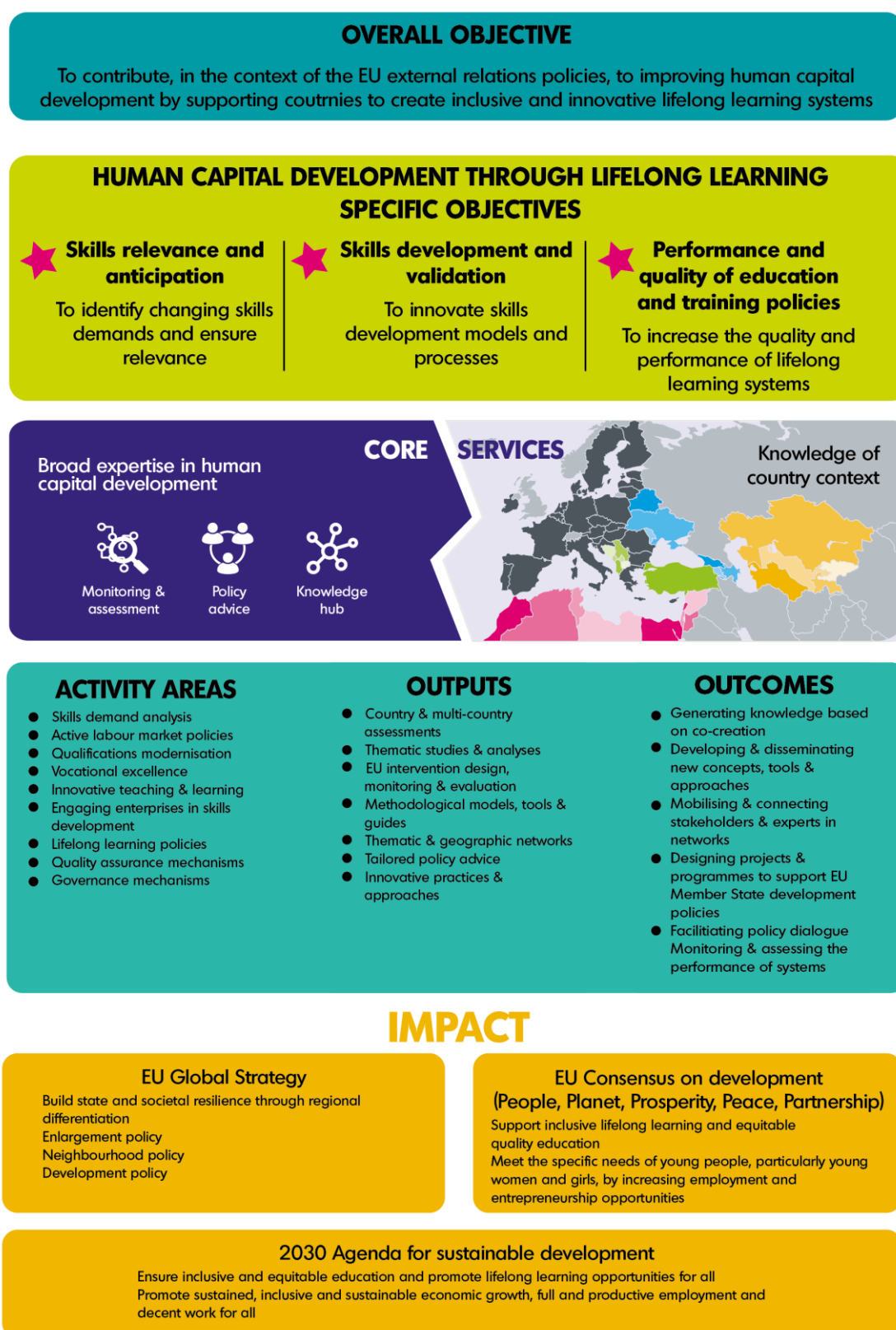
²⁴ ETF support to Israel takes place in the context of EU-Israel cooperation and related Guidelines on eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards.

²⁵ The ETF resumed cooperation with Libya in 2018. If conditions allow, this cooperation will continue in 2023.

²⁶ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

²⁷ The ETF aligns with the position adopted by the EU for EU-Syria bilateral relations [Syria | European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations \(europa.eu\)](#); no activities are currently envisaged for Syria.

1.10 ETF Intervention Logic



2. Human and financial resource outlook for 2023-25

During the period 2023-25, the human and financial resource outlook for the period are:

Human resources

As a centre of expertise, the ETF relies fully on its staff to fulfil its core mission. Human resource management and development is therefore key to ensuring a supporting environment to enable the successful implementation of the objectives of the ETF work programme as well as ensuring full compliance with the regulatory framework (i.e. Staff Regulations and their implementing rules). In line with the ETF Human Resources Strategy 2021-27 adopted in 2020, the priority areas gravitate around:

- Attracting and deploying, which refers to the strategic importance of recruitment and integration;
- Managing and retaining, which focuses on clarity of performance objectives, managing by results and providing career opportunities for staff to continuously make use of their competences, skills and capabilities;
- Growing and developing, which embraces the modalities of learning and thus developing;
- Caring for people and valuing diversity, which fosters inclusion, respect for diversity and the importance of staff well-being so they can perform at their best.

Building on the design and kick-off of the implementation phases of the new HR strategy that took place throughout 2021, the focus from 2023 will be on reviewing key people management processes, including reclassification, as well as modernising recruitment and using it to ensure staff diversity. This also includes enhancing internal communication and consolidating the new career framework and people development. The 'next normal' context of reviewing working modalities following the COVID-19 pandemic will further accelerate the implementation of these change processes. The ETF will review the provisions regarding working time and hybrid work, taking as reference the new EC Decision and the ongoing debate with agencies. In addition, as a transversal objective to increase efficiency, the ETF will continue the digitalisation of HR processes, making best use of the Commission's and other relevant software, such as the deployment of EC HR management systems (SYSPER modules when progressively made available and MIPs).

Finance and procurement

The challenge of optimising the trade-off between resources and performance will continue. The ETF will therefore continue to focus on budget performance and discipline whilst ensuring a robust, compliant and effective financial and procurement management cycle. The ETF will:

- enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of budget implementation using information and communication technology, completing the digitalisation of internal/external processes and deploying the new procurement and financial management systems as they are made available for use by EC services (SUMMA, e-prior suite);
- optimise the use of procurement instruments by sharing them with EC services and other agencies for standard procurement needs;
- optimise and facilitate the integration of sustainable responsible purchasing;

- mobilise additional revenue as allowed by the reformed financial regulation and in addition to the EU contribution;
- implement efficient quality assurance measures within the ETF internal control and risk management frameworks;
- implement measures deriving from the reform of the Financial Regulation.

Facilities and security

The ETF ensures that all aspects of the building, people and information are managed in a secure, effective and efficient manner. This is key to providing the agency, its staff and visitors with an optimal, safe and cost-effective working environment, while respecting corporate and regulatory compliance. Taking into account environmental considerations, changing health situations and (cyber) security concerns, the ETF will:

- continue to implement an Environmental Management System aligned with EMAS standards and implement improvement actions deriving from the objectives defined in the ETF environmental policy as well as sharing its experience with other EU Agencies;
- improve the maintenance and management of the building and technological systems, including upgrades to adapt to 'next normal' working modalities;
- develop the necessary feasibility studies to support the decision making for the future ETF premises post 2027;
- provide healthy, safe and secure on-site working conditions based on risk assessments and applicable regulations for an implementation of the 'next normal', including the dynamic management of the evolution of the pandemic, in line with EU-OSHA analysis and indications;
- review the approach to security in a comprehensive manner by aligning with EU and international standards and new EU regulations, with particular attention to IT and cybersecurity as well as information security;
- improve safety and security on missions by fostering cooperation with EEAS and other agencies via the implementation of the new interinstitutional framework agreement and integrating the assessment for the increased health risks caused by the pandemic.

Accounting

The ETF will continue to ensure high quality annual financial statements with the aim of receiving a positive audit opinion from the European Court of Auditors (ECA). The ETF will achieve this by maintaining and further enhancing its in-house accounting capacity with a focus on maintaining robust, compliant and auditable accounts and related documentation. To increase cost-efficiency, the ETF will continue to implement the agreement signed with EU-OSHA in 2022 for the provision of accounting services.

2.1 Overview of the past and current situation

Staff population overview for 2021

Over the last few years, the ETF has gradually managed to increase the number of staff allocated to its core operational activities from around 69% in 2016 to 75% in 2021, as highlighted in the job screening exercise (see table below). This happened whilst reducing administrative support, coordination and neutral functions. The increase in the operational category is noteworthy given that natural departures, used to implement staff cuts, took place almost exclusively amongst HCD specialists. In addition, the ETF took advantage of article 38.2 of the Financial Regulation and started to offset 'the effects of part-time work authorised by other appointments'. In this context, one additional HCD Expert and one Digital Architect (temporary agents AD 7) were recruited in 2021.

Job Type (sub)category	2016 (%)	2020 (%)	2021 (%)
Administrative support and Coordination	18.56	16.59	16.60
Administrative support	14.55	13.26	13.30
Coordination	4.02	3.33	3.30
Operational	69.47	72.71	74.85
Top Level Operational Coordination	2.27	2.95	2.17
Programme Management & Implementation	55.08	57.36	60.74
Evaluation & Impact Assessment	4.55	3.49	2.87
General Operational	7.58	8.91	9.07
Neutral	11.97	10.7	9.73
Finance/Control	11.59	9.54	9.34
Linguistics	0.38	1.16	0.39

In 2021 staffing remained stable with 86 Temporary Agents, 42 Contract Agents, and 1 Local Agent. At the end of 2021 the full establishment plan for Temporary Agents was occupied (0% vacancy rate) in addition to all authorised Contract Agents.

Expenditure for 2021

The ETF optimised its use of the budget contribution by achieving a commitment rate of 99.91% in 2021. Savings under Title 1 staff costs were carefully allocated to priority investments to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 (online working facilities, health and safety, equipment), while the operational budget has been implemented through an adapted set of measures (missions and face-to-face meetings and events reduced almost completely, compensated by increased on-line meetings, seminars, workshops and publications).

2.2 Resource programming for 2023-25

The resource programming for the new period has been updated and is in line with the forecast for the ETF contained in the adopted MFF for 2021-27 indicating that the mid-term financial outlook for the agency is stable in real terms²⁸, representing a 2% increase in nominal terms matching expected inflation, increased for 2023 by an additional 2% following note Ares(2022)3431906 of 04/05/2022 on salary adjustments. The budget of the ETF is under Heading 2 of the general EC budget acknowledging that, whilst the activities of the ETF are carried out in the neighbourhood countries, ETF activities are part of the external projection of EU vocational education and training policies.

In the current context, should inflation be higher than 4% or the weighting factor for Italy increase, the operational budget of ETF would decrease and consequently put a strain on the ETF's capacity to deliver on its mandate and fulfil the ambitions of the ETF Strategy 2027.

As already mentioned, there are two main options possible to increase the use of the ETF's expertise and the ETF's revenue. The first, already in motion, is that the Commission and/or Member States provide contributions to the ETF to implement the actions as part of their cooperation with third countries. A second option would be for the ETF to provide remunerated services or to move towards results-based financing with IFIs.

2.2.2 Financial resources

Justification

A) Revenue

The 2023 budget is based on the EU contribution of €22,627,956 in both commitment and payment appropriations, composed of a contribution of €22,534,092 from the EU budget and €93,864 from the recovery of surplus related to the 2021 budget execution.

The revenue for 2023-25 is expected to increase in nominal terms by 2% each year, according to the updated MFF 2021-2027, thus ensuring stability in real terms. As part of the future programming phase, the ETF is in discussion with EC services to assess whether additional EU requests for actions might require appropriate dedicated funds and additional budget resources options.

B) Expenditure

The forecast for expenditure on Title 1 – staff expenditure, is based on the following assumptions: a cumulative salary adaptation in line with the Commission's assumptions²⁹ (+4% in 2023 and 2% in subsequent years) and a small decrease in the weighting factor. The extended traineeship programme and the additional medical advisor initiated in 2021 are expected to continue in 2023 and beyond. In addition, an upward impact on salary costs due to the automatic increase in step and the annual reclassification exercise on the one hand, and savings deriving from staff turnover and the retirement of senior staff replaced by more junior staff on the other hand, both affect the Title 1 forecast. An increase of 2% is foreseen for the subsequent period 2024-25. Should the financial allocation prove insufficient, the ETF will attempt mitigating measures within the foreseen staffing measures and/or

²⁸ SEC(2020)-250 – June 2020 - Statement of estimates of the European Commission.

²⁹ Budget Circular for 2023 – Agency Instructions (15 Dec 2021).

eventually transfers from the other budgetary titles based on negative priorities or postponement of actions.

The forecast for expenditure on Title 2 – infrastructure, is estimated at €2.3 million, an increase of 14% compared to 2022. This mainly covers expenditure on facilities and IT. While the sizeable improvements made to the premises in recent years, also driven by EMAS requirements, helped contain maintenance costs beyond 2022, the increase in the cost of utilities (especially gas and electricity) observed in 2022 have required an adjustment in the budget. Hence, estimates are based on 2022. However, the high volatility and unknown evolution in 2023 and beyond remain a considerable risk factor. An additional expected increase in the cost of premises is linked to the consultancy work required for the in-depth assessment of opportunities and options at the end of the ETF's rental contract post-2027, as well as the expected mandatory electrical works performed by the 'Regione Piemonte' (owner of the building), part of which will have to be borne by the ETF.

As mentioned, IT expenditure is expected to increase mainly due to the compulsory implementation of a new cybersecurity framework agreed at the level of all the EU institutions and bodies, and the planned rollout of digital improvements. Regular IT expenses are expected to remain at similar levels to those in 2022, though efficiency gains are expected to kick in during the year with the closure of legacy systems. The ETF environmental certification (EMAS) project has seen significant investment in previous years, including renovations for a healthier and more environmentally friendly building and facilities. Investments for 2023 and beyond are expected to focus on staff mobility (commuting and missions). As the new normality takes shape in terms of working modalities, some additional work could be expected in 2023.

As staff and infrastructure costs are expected to increase, this will lead to a revision of the budget forecast for Title 3 – operational activities, including finding ways to increase efficiency in the delivery of activities, also based on lessons learned from COVID-19 in 2020, 2021 and 2022. In the coming years there is a possibility for a different breakdown between the different actions, such as missions/services. While absorbing a reduction in 2023 (-10%), the resources available for Title 3 are expected to recover by 2025, assuming that Italy's coefficient stays stable in spite of inflationary pressures in the country. Another assumption is that other Title 1 related costs do not increase above current inflation forecasts (e.g. social costs, medical support, trainees, etc.). However, it is important to highlight that recovery is fragile, inflation is a risk and, in general, this would mean that the annual subsidy increase would be mostly absorbed by Title 1. Currently this reduction is compensated by the additional EU funding, which guarantees an overall increase in the operational funds corresponding to €1 million in 2022 and €2 million in 2023, thus allowing the ETF to better fulfil its mandate. As per consolidated practice, savings in Title 1 will be assigned to operational activities and, if necessary, to infrastructure improvements.

Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations (detailed data in table 3 Annex III)

The 2021 budget outturn is €93,864 taking into account the reduced subvention request by €300,000. The main reasons for the outturn are appropriations committed and carried forward from 2020, and not paid in Titles 1 and 2 (€72,935). This is mainly linked to the conservative estimate of the cost of utilities.

2.2.2 Human resources

Staff population evolution (detailed data in table 2 Annex IV)

During the period 2023-25, the ETF's total staff population will remain stable. Considering the evolution of the Italian legislation and its related restrictions for the use of interim workers, offsetting of the unplanned staff shortages is becoming very difficult. A possible solution, recommended by DG HR, is to offer short-term employment contracts to contract agents and the ETF may resort to this in the future.

The ETF's HCD experts are a scarce and valued resource on which the agency relies for its added value. All efforts will therefore continue to ensure that the proportion of staff allocated to operational activities is above 70%. With this in mind, between 2023 and 2025 a number of Temporary Agents will retire, and some of those holding an AST contract may be replaced with AD grades.

Regarding external personnel, the total number remains stable in 2023 at 43, including one Local Agent and additional potential short-term Contract Agents, as mentioned above. No Seconded National Expert is envisaged during the period 2023-25. Finally, to deliver on additional services or new tasks, additional external staff may be financed from negotiated contributions or service-level agreements.

Resource outlook over the years 2023-25

A. New tasks

The ETF has agreements in place with both DG EMPL and DG INTPA to provide support in the implementation of specific projects. With DG EMPL, the ETF works to strengthen the international dimension of the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) with an initial agreement covering targeted activities. Negotiations are ongoing to further expand the project beyond its end date in May 2023.

With DG INTPA, through the EU Delegation in Kazakhstan, the ETF is supporting the implementation of the regional project on DARYA for the next five years until June 2027. It contributes to post COVID-19 recovery with a focus on inclusive and labour-market oriented VET and skills development. Under DARYA, synergies may be explored with Erasmus+ "Capacity Building in Higher Education" projects with Central Asia, as many of these have a strong emphasis on skills development, and therefore a strong link to VET.

In parallel, the ETF implements specific target actions as part of the EC cooperation with third countries. The ETF supports DG INTPA in the delivery of VET training courses, seminars and studies for EU Delegation staff.

With DG NEAR discussions are ongoing on the outcome of diagnostics of education and training systems applied in Kosovo. With DG INTPA discussions around ACQF2 with the African Union are on track. The estimated starting date is February 2023.

B. Growth of existing tasks

There are many areas of potential growth that could be developed with the EU Services, Member States and international actors active in the field of human capital development. As such, the ETF's strategic focus on delivering in partnership is key to finding synergies. The new NDICI and IPA III instruments and

the Team Europe approach create promising opportunities both at partner country level and in terms of knowledge creation. The ETF will remain open to identifying opportunities that provide added value to the EU priorities and the implementation of the new financing instruments. Further encouraged by the Commission opinion³⁰, the ETF will continue to pursue opportunities to work beyond current partner countries or to engage in new priority thematic areas in order to respond to relevant requests.

2.3 Strategy for achieving efficiency gains

The ETF continuously strives to improve its functioning through an integrated approach to monitoring performance. On an annual basis improvement actions are identified through the assessment of internal controls, annual performance assessment, risks assessment, audits and evaluations, and an action plan is prepared.

A review of the resource allocation is done annually during the planning process. For human resources the aim is to increase the numbers and level of staff allocated to operational activities through reallocation of duties, staff mobility and training. The ETF fares well in the benchmarking exercise which demonstrates that efficiency in the use of staff has already been achieved. At the end of 2021, the ETF had 75% of its statutory staff allocated to the core operational activities (from 69% in 2016).

Financial resource allocations and circuits are reviewed annually and areas for streamlining processes are identified. As mentioned above, any savings in Title 1 are mostly allocated to operational core business activities. Close monitoring of resource consumption during the year with analyses of costs allocated to missions and (online) events also allow for improved efficiency gains during implementation, as was the case over the past three years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the context of the new 2027 strategy, the ETF also implemented an organisational restructuring, with the aim of rebalancing line management, rationalising its structure to deliver core services, further improving project management with the creation of a Project Management & Tools Unit and seeking efficiency gains. The unit has developed new workflows and processes in all areas of project management, including a revision of the operational use of the services procured. Project implementation has been improved through the development of an online project management tool and using automated processes for routine transactions. In 2023 progress tracking of financial indicators show a reduced level of numbers of transactions with a larger volume of resources utilised and more completed in a more timely fashion.

The creation of the Resources Unit merging the human resources, financial and procurement functions created opportunities for synergies in various shared areas of the resource management sphere. This includes business process management, internal and external client management, legal framework and compliance issues. The merge also enables efficiency gains in the financial circuits by combining the roles of financial and operational initiating agents, therefore reducing the number of actors involved in certain workflows. The same applies with the development of polyvalent functions within the Resources Unit able to deliver broader support services in the ETF Purchase to Pay cycle.

On the operational side of financial management, a full review of the financial circuits has been done in the context of the restructuring and follow up of business processes is further enhanced within the

³⁰ Commission opinion of 18.07.2022 on the draft Programming Document (2023-2025) of the European Training Foundation (ETF) C(2022) Ref. 2022-37.

newly set-up Project Management Unit that is working as a service centre supporting the different operational projects.

In terms of operational activities in partner countries, the new ETF strategy 2027 uses a differentiated approach to maximise impact and use of resources. In practice this means a more streamlined and targeted approach to each country taking into account the level of investment of the EU and other international actors as well as country ownership and commitment in the areas targeted. The strategy foresees a decrease in smaller, pilot actions and a discontinuation of tasks that are resource intensive, towards actions with a higher added value and impact. The ETF also aims to seek partnerships and strategic alliances with other international actors active in human capital development in partner countries to maximise synergies, identify joint actions and share resources in the spirit of the Team Europe approach.

Through the network of EU Agencies, the ETF will continue to explore areas for cost savings through shared services, joint procurement and cooperation on sustainability purchasing, as well as using Commission IT systems where shared infrastructure is more cost effective. Mutual learning will also continue, especially in areas related to evaluation, risks and internal controls, as well as digitalisation and strategy development with emphasis on processes, tools and methods for performance improvement and accountability. In the area of services, as mentioned earlier, the ETF is sharing accounting services with EU-OSHA. Discussion is ongoing among agencies for shared services in the context of the enhanced measures to be implemented on cybersecurity outlined in the upcoming new EU cybersecurity regulation. Synergies and efficiency gains will also be sought in terms of procurement by strategizing internal procurement needs and by continuing to participate in inter-institutional tenders, as well as by opening ETF contracts to other agencies where possible. Additionally, one member of the ETF management team is member of the agencies group of investigators for administrative inquiries.

A digital transformation strategy was initiated in 2020 to review the internal IT infrastructure for a more integrated approach to increase the use of digital and online tools for delivering ETF services and engaging stakeholders as well as for internal efficiency gains. In a first phase, the ETF reviewed its digital architecture, defined key principles and identified levers for change towards becoming a (more) digitally mature agency. Capitalising further on the pandemic experience of shifting 100% to an online working environment, the transformation intends to seek further efficiency gains through the use of digital tools. Interoperability with EC services is also one of the key drivers through the integration of EC systems such as SYSPER, ARES and PPMT for staff, document and procurement processes as well as SUMMA at a later stage for financial management processes.

COVID-19 accelerated the digitalisation of internal processes (HR, financial workflows and electronic signature, procurement management) and external interaction (use of online digital tools for exchanges, meetings, among others). The new normality consolidates paperless practices with further automation in administrative processes. The ETF is also taking advantage of this momentum to continue pursuing its environmental agenda and develop knowledge and experience in environmental management, to improve its environmental performance. This has already led to efficiencies and savings such as on energy, building maintenance, materials consumption and travelling, and is expected to continue.

Finally, efficiency gains will also be sought within the context of audits and evaluations. In particular, the IAS Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2021-23 indicates prospective audit topics on complementarity and cooperation mechanisms between the ETF and the EC services; and the digitalisation and review of internal processes.

Section III – ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2023

1. Executive summary

The annual work programme 2023 is the third year of implementation of the ETF Strategy 2027. The strategy presupposes a holistic approach to human capital development and lifelong learning and is underpinned by the principles of partnership and differentiation. Three strategic objectives are set in a coherent intervention logic for the period 2021-27.

Through the different work programmes in the period covered by the ETF Strategy 2027, the ETF will contribute to the ambitions of the European Commission, notably under the fifth priority (a stronger Europe in the world). In doing so, the ETF will support its partner countries to adopt lifelong learning policies to develop their human capital and, where relevant from a skills perspective, to support the transition towards greener economies and societies, to advance digital transformation in education and training, to focus on gender and equality, and to ensure a specific focus on the role of skills in tackling the root causes of migration. Skills relevance and anticipation activities aim at identifying the skills demand from economies and societies to inform the supply side on how to equip individuals with the skills needed for the transition to green and digital economies. Better knowledge about human capital development will inspire policies linked to labour mobility and migration to prevent brain drain and find win-win-win solutions for sending and receiving countries as well as individuals. Contributions to reskilling and upskilling the labour force will support investment and jobs.

Across all its activity areas, the ETF will pay particular attention to the following dimensions:

- **Skills dimension of the green transition:** by ensuring attention to the impact of greening on employment, skills demands, qualifications and skills development, and embedding the ‘green’ factor across its operations to support the transition towards greener economies and societies in full alignment with the external dimension of the European Green Deal and the EU Global Agenda. Under this dimension, the support to the skills and employment dimensions of the Just Transition Mechanism is also a priority in the ETF partner countries addressing challenges brought by the green transition. In 2023, the ETF will consolidate the findings of policy reviews across partner countries and provide guidance for the skills dimension of the green transition in partner countries. Through its regular corporate communication campaigns, the ETF will ensure targeted dissemination, engagement with stakeholders and the wider public, as well as visibility across the partner countries and beyond.
- **Skills dimension of the digital transition:** by focusing on the impact of digitalisation on jobs, skills demands and development, as well as societal and economic dynamics, the ETF will reinforce its support to countries across its activity areas by fostering attention on digital skills. It will also encourage the use of digital and technological developments to strengthen lifelong learning systems. In partnership with international actors, in 2023 the ETF will ensure, through its corporate campaigns as well as outreach actions, a specific attention to digital inclusion and the impact of the digital transition on jobs and employment patterns in partner countries.
- **Gender and inclusion:** by ensuring an increased and constant attention to gender and equality across its work in line with the European Consensus on Development and GAP III, and with specific attention to addressing structural inequalities in HCD, including those emerged in the

aftermath of the pandemic. Across its operations ETF will reinforce in 2023 the policy analysis and the awareness raising of gender specific dimensions across its practice areas, including by working closely with other international actors and the EC with specific publications and outreach activities.

- **Migration:** by focusing on the role of skills in tackling the root causes of migration and in supporting talent partnerships and labour mobility through increased focus on recognition and validation within EU labour mobility and migration policies. In 2023 the ETF will continue its support to talent partnerships and talent pool initiative at the request of the EC and will continue analysing, across practice areas, the role, potential and dynamics of mobility in connection to labour market trends.

The three strategic objectives and associated activity areas for 2023 are listed below. The delivery mechanism and associated outputs of each will be linked to the overarching core services of the Knowledge Hub, Monitoring and Assessment and Policy Advice as foreseen in the 2027 Strategy and outlined in more detail in section 1.7. Their synergies are expected to mutually reinforce quality.

Skills relevance and anticipation ³¹	Skills development and validation	Performance and quality of education and training policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Skills demand analysis ■ Active labour market policies & transition methods ■ Modernisation of qualifications and establishment of qualification systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vocational excellence provision models ■ Innovative teaching and learning ■ Engaging enterprises in skills development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lifelong learning policies and system change ■ Quality assurance and governance mechanisms

ETF actions are planned in all countries where it operates in line with EU positioning³². A consultation process is in place to discuss the relevance of actions directly with partner countries based on a differentiated approach. In 2023, the ETF will streamline its approach to working in fragile contexts of (post)-conflict and protracted crises. In particular, the ETF is currently monitoring the Ukraine crisis and is responding where possible and relevant³³, in close contact with different EC services, tapping

³¹ Following the rationale of the multiannual intervention logic, the Validation of Skills is part of the second objective, while for operational reasons some related activities (namely VNFIL) are in project 2.3, together with the overall project on Qualifications.

³² The ETF activities are in line with the EU positioning in the countries where it operates, which include: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion of the Kosovo declaration of independence), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine (this designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the EU Member States on this issue), Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. As such, it resumed cooperation with Libya in 2018 (in support to the EU Delegation) and there are no activities currently envisioned in Syria in line with the EU-Syria bilateral relations: [Syria | European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations \(europa.eu\)](#). Likewise, ETF support to Belarus takes place in the context of SG note of 01/03/2022, Ares (2022)1502984. Also, in the context of the aforementioned SG note and the EU Council Decision 2022/428 amending regulation 833/2014, and subsequent acts, the ETF has ceased to support Russia, which until further notice is no longer a partner country.

³³ Beyond the [emergency support programme for Ukraine under the framework of the ETF Creating New learning Initiative](#) (see Activity Area 2.5), the ETF has developed an [online resource hub](#) for the recognition of qualifications, skills and study periods of

into its thematic expertise and knowledge of education and training systems of the country, while strengthening partnerships with local stakeholders and beyond. As such, activities in the annual work programme may be adapted to incorporate new needs.

Likewise, the ETF will continue to engage in new priority thematic areas and provide thematic expertise to support emerging EU priorities in work with the African Union and in other geographic regions or countries at the request of the European Commission. To maximise the delivery of its operational activities and its resources for impact, complementarity and outreach, the ETF has three horizontal activity areas: communication and stakeholder engagement; greening and digitalisation; and institutional development. Finally, the current 2027 strategy mid-term review together with a fully-fledged foresight process for reflecting on the ETF post-2027 will start in 2023.

Assumptions

The proposed work programme for 2023 has been planned considering the macro level risks involved and is based on the assumptions that:

- the external environment in most of the partner countries remains relatively socially and politically stable;
- institutional and political priorities in individual partner countries remain committed to and engaged in HCD and socio-economic policy reform processes;
- the network of key partner country stakeholders remains relatively stable;
- the ETF adapts its mode of programme delivery in the context of fragile, (post)-conflict and protracted crises (where and when relevant);
- the ETF has agile planning in place to respond in a timely and flexible way, and at a high level of quality and relevance to EC and EU Delegation requests³⁴;
- the ETF adapts its mode of working and programme delivery through digital and other means in response to next normal and to increase resilience to future shocks;
- the ETF easily adapts its organisational set up to alternative forms of financing or to absorb extra-subsidy projects in line to increased demand for ETF services and changes in nature and type of requests.

Ukrainian refugees. The ETF has also developed a proposal, in alignment with local actors and the Ukrainian government, for the recovery and reconstruction (post-conflict) of Ukraine, which aims at building back a stronger, more resilient and fit-for-purpose VET network capable of driving local innovation and competitiveness for sustained growth and recovery. Furthermore, the ETF is exchanging information with other EU agencies and EC services on the collective scientific efforts and data collection in response to the war in Ukraine, including: [Information for people fleeing Ukraine; ETF - Big Data LMI - Ukraine; and ETF's weekly analysis of the invasion of Ukraine: the impact on human capital and education](#). Finally, the ETF will potentially provide input to the assessment of education part of the Recovery Plan.

³⁴ Although the ETF has an agile planning approach in place, flexibility will depend on multiple factors including timeliness of requests, the relevance of the request to the ETF's knowledge base, availability of thematic expertise, etc.

2. Activity Areas

2.1 Skills demand analysis

The skills demand area of work contributes to the EU policy objective of the green and digital transition and to assist national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It does so by strengthening skills intelligence, anticipation and matching methods in the partner countries. In particular, it contributes to the Skills Agenda³⁵ Action 2 of strengthening skills intelligence as a means to achieve more attention and investment in skills for citizens across economic sectors and a better alignment of skills policies to demands. It also contributes to the New Pact on Asylum and Migration, by covering the skills dimension of migration through its support to improved skills matching, inclusion, and fairness.

The activity area unfolds around a solid package of data collection allowing for the ETF to act as an observatory as regards skills demands in EU partner countries. This comprises online job vacancy analytics, sector studies and labour market information analysis, including new forms of work and mobility patterns, which is used as a basis for dialogue and policy advice to partner countries and input to EU investment and cooperation in the field. Increased attention will be put on greening of economies and inclusion patterns in the labour market. Growing interest on skills anticipation and foresight will be supported on a demand and prioritisation basis linked to priority sectors outlined in the skills agenda and external action priorities.

This activity area steers the SkillsLab network which brings together experts in skills anticipation and matching from the EU and partner countries, as well as practitioners from relevant ministries, public sector agencies, think tanks and universities active in the domain of skills demand analysis. The network supports close cooperation between the EU and partner countries in this field, allows for innovation and piloting of new methods of work, peer learning and exchange. The ETF works in close cooperation with Cedefop, Eurofound, Eurostat, EU bodies and social partners, including the private sector, as well as international actors, in particular the interagency group, ILO, OECD, UNIDO, UNDP, UfM and IFIs interested in skills demands analysis and foresight.

In 2023, this activity area will continue with the implementation of the skills and jobs survey with Cedefop in selected partner countries. Specific studies and foresight will target the energy and crafts sectors in particular. The project will continue the online job vacancy analysis with the objective of covering the priority countries of the EU neighbourhood by 2025. Customised support will be provided on demand for the development of anticipation and matching systems as well as in priority sectors defined under the EU external action agenda.

Objective

Support the systematic generation and use of information on changing skills demand for the benefit of individuals, companies and economies in transition and developing countries.

³⁵ Full overview including links to EU policies can be found in Section I.

Outcomes

- Analyses of skills (skills needs, skills gaps, skills mismatch) for PC and EU services on the basis of the methodologies developed through the project inform national, EU bilateral and regional policy dialogue.
 - Experience, knowledge and good practice on skills identification mechanisms and tools systematically gathered and shared among a network of experts to foster a culture of skills anticipation in PCs.
-

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intelligence and evidence on changing skills demand is available, known by target stakeholder groups and easy to access Methodological instruments for skills needs' analysis made available to partner countries, widely known and easy to access Network of experts 'SkillsLab' is active and organises regular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of methodological instruments mainstreamed in countries with findings used for policy advice Uptake (in the form of advice/EU programming/donors adoption) of findings recommendations emerged from studies Membership and engagement of the skills LAB Network
Resources ³⁶ - €1 274 800	

2.2 Active labour market policies and transition measures

Within this activity area, the ETF seeks to consolidate support to partner country policy makers and stakeholders, as well as EU services, for target policies and measures that support the transition from school to work and from unemployment to employment. The focus is on enabling active labour market policies in partner countries with particular attention to youth and fragile groups. In terms of transition measures, priority is given to work-based learning and career guidance and counselling as ways of supporting fairness, inclusion and activation. Hence, this activity area is instrumental in mitigating risks of social exclusion and achieving a fair, inclusive society.

The ETF bases its interventions on the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and its principles, in particular equal access to education and training, as well as relevance of skills development and access to employment, including proper social protection and support for activation during unemployment. The three targets set for 2030 by the EPSR action plan are relevant for the partner countries, although the most challenging is increasing the participation of adults in training to 60% by 2030.

Under the umbrella of the European Skills Agenda, the focus will be on making access and participation in training more flexible and securing individual access and innovative financing modalities, such as individual learning accounts (e.g. use of Active Labour Market Policies or ALMPs for policy innovations). It will also consolidate work-based learning (WBL) reforms, including quality apprenticeships and traineeships, and career guidance as set out in the Osnabruck Declaration and VET Recommendation. Finally, it will analyse the role of ALMPs in promoting upskilling and reskilling (i.e. participation of unemployed and low skilled adults in training).

In 2023, the ETF will prioritise the follow up of EU youth policies through knowledge development and hands-on support and advice to partner countries in the context of 2020 Recommendation of the Council of the European Union concerning the Reinforced Youth Guarantee (YG). The ETF, jointly with the EC and ILO, will help the Western Balkans to implement the adopted YG plans. The ETF will liaise with EC services to support the preparation of new YG plans, potentially in the neighbourhood South and the neighbourhood East. The ETF will also support the EC services in raising awareness about and consolidating the capacities of Eastern Partnership countries to build Youth Employment

³⁶ Extra-budgetary funding is not included in this resource calculation - this is labelled as 'extra subsidy resources'. Updated figures will be tabled at the Structured Dialogue.

Partnerships. In SEMED and Central Asia, it will start preparations in view of future possible commitments to develop YG inspired schemes or similar approaches.

The ETF will focus on shortcomings exacerbated by the crisis, while dedicating a longer-term perspective to structural reforms, system change and resilience linked to opportunities brought by the global trends of digitalisation, greening, migration and others. This might include, depending on country requests and EC priorities, actions addressing support to reinforcing Public Employment Services (PES), strengthening capacities for the implementation of ALMPs, with a particular focus on youth, women and fragile adults, career guidance and counselling as cornerstones for well-informed career transitions, and work-based learning opportunities for pupils, students and the workforce.

Working closely with stakeholders in partner countries, particularly public sector bodies leading on ALMPs, WBL and Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC), but also with the private sector to understand their needs for reskilling and upskilling, the ETF will steer knowledge sharing and peer learning, as well as provide advice in the design, implementation and monitoring of ALMPs and transition measures.

Objective

Support countries to improve Active Labour Market Policies and employment services, as well as career guidance and counselling and work-based learning to increase skills relevance, and labour market inclusion of young and adults.

Outcomes

- Policy buy-in on the role and effectiveness of ALMPs and PESs in supporting adaptation to socio-economic changes, labour market inclusion of young and adults and social fairness.
- Increased collaboration and policy exchanges (peer learning) on the role of ALMPs and skills dimension in view of changing labour markets, twin transitions, and inclusiveness as well as flexibilisation of skills development approaches and matching policies and services.
- Enhanced career development support systems and services as central building blocks of lifelong learning systems.
- Strengthened work-based learning systems through peer learning networks, policy advice, policy analysis, capacity building and international cooperation.
- Consolidated approaches to youth employability and adult learning in partner country policies aimed at supporting transition to work.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Intelligence on active labour market policy developments, WBL and CGC including challenges and measures to support inclusive and fair societies, including youth transition to work ■ Policy and practice exchange among partner countries, the EU and international actors to enhance the innovation potential of employment services and activation programme delivery ■ Policy analysis and advice for consolidation and reforms as regards ALMPs, WBL and CGC ■ Evidence-based technical inputs to the design of bilateral and regional EU interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of countries advised and feedback received to adapt their ALMPs and/or employment strategies, WBL, CGC policies as well as (re)design of youth employability programmes ■ Number of partner countries advised for gender responsive ALMPs, employment policies, WBL, CG and other relevant gender related transition issues ■ Number of EU requests using evidence/findings from ALMPs, WBL and CGC knowledge and policy advice ■ Policy dialogue inputs delivered to EU institutions
Resources – €943 000	

2.3 Modernisation of qualifications and establishment of qualification systems

The overall long-term objective of this activity area is to help maximise the currency of qualifications, so that individuals can get better access to labour markets and lifelong learning and fulfil their potential. In the post COVID-19 world, qualification systems will be increasingly connected and support solid lifelong learning systems where recognition, validation and flexible learning pathways are operational. This includes addressing the challenges posed by the twin digital and green transitions, as well as building bridges between higher education and VET to ensure the relevance of the skills acquired and continued pathways in a lifelong perspective, which are key for successful VET³⁷. Therefore, the aim is to support that middle- and low-income countries are fully part of this development in a growing international and digital dimension of qualifications and qualification systems.

The activity area builds on The European Skills agenda cooperating closely with the EQF advisory group and the European Commission, and benefitting from a longstanding partnership and joint work with Cedefop and the international community, in particular UNESCO, UNESCO-UIL, ASEM and OECD. It supports the development of flexible qualifications systems and upskilling pathways, through increased focus on micro-credentials, recognition and validation, as well as the digital and international dimensions of qualifications amongst other areas. This activity area is instrumental in the context of improving legal pathways for migration and the recognition of the competences of third-country nationals on the EU labour market. In this context, the ETF will continue its work at international level as part of the World Reference Group. This includes providing analytical input to the Global NQF inventory and taking part in international level expertise networks.

The ETF will continue its support to the African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF) as part of the EU partnership with the African Union. A proposed new phase of ACQF is under discussion with a broad plan of ten outputs (2022–25) covering the critical aspects and components of the ACQF (from governance to technical foundations, capacity development and cooperation and partnerships with other frameworks at global level), will kick off in 2023. The ETF's support in this area could turn into an extra-subsidy or term agreement within EU external action (with DG INTPA).

In 2023, the ETF will also seek to consolidate its networks of qualifications and recognition agencies, as well as the secretariats of RQFs around the globe. This includes promoting an international and digital approach to qualifications, thus enabling stronger international dialogue. In doing so, the ETF will support the recognition, validation and flexibilisation of qualification systems, as well as contribute to partner countries in reaching a fair and equal access to lifelong learning opportunities. Also, building on the strong analytical results of 2021-22, the ETF will deploy new advisory services and recommendations to the benefit of partner countries, in particular focusing on micro-credential, validation and digitalisation of qualification systems. These recommendations will feed, on demand, larger projects and initiatives funded by the EU³⁸ and steered by partner countries.

³⁷ This is being discussed within EAfA 2022.

³⁸ The ETF develops country fiches in its partner countries and its products on qualifications are part of the ACQF, while more studies and reports will become available under ACQF II. The ETF is ready to explore the potential to go beyond partner countries subject to the availability of extra-subsidy resources.

Objective

Support countries to modernise qualifications / qualification systems for lifelong learning, employability and competitiveness.

Outcomes

- Qualification systems facilitate the validation and recognition of lifelong learning and support mobility.
- Access to qualifications is improved through linked and interoperable databases³⁹, including micro credentials; stackable qualifications become available to support lifelong learning.
- Partner countries develop stronger links with the EQF. Groups of countries compare their systems to the EQF and make use of/adapt EU instruments for own development.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Progress in the establishment of modern qualifications systems is monitored with reinforced focus on flexibilisation, recognition and validation.■ Advice on the external dimension of the EQF through comparison with third country qualification frameworks provided on demand in the context of internationalisation of qualification systems■ Knowledge and examples of good practice are made available and easy to access supporting policy learning and development internationally■ Tailored policy advice to establish qualification systems in partner countries linked to the three priorities (international cooperation, digitalisation, validation & recognition)■ Inputs to EU programming and EU interventions (project design, formulation) and to bilateral and regional policy dialogue using new tools and instruments of qualification systems for lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ NQF and VNFIL inventories record progress in countries on NQF stages of development, and record trends■ EQF AG supports further comparison, European Commission requests ETF support for EQF external dimension■ Number of tools/practices made available and used in the context of policy exchange/programme design■ Number of instruments/tools promoted (i.e. qualification databases, micro-credentials and validation and recognition tools) are integrated in qualification systems in countries■ Qualification systems development via EU external assistance in partner countries
Resources – €1 332 600	

2.4 a. Vocational excellence provision models

Vocational excellence brings to the forefront new elements of consideration when discussing skills provision models. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these excellence considerations will need to be reflected in a more systematic and systemic manner at policy making level. Centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs), committed to vocational excellence, are very good cases for expanding new innovative methods and ideas in skills provision. As such, their objective is to identify good practice at ground level in schools, training centres and school to business partnerships, in order to disseminate these through clusters across the national system. Furthermore, and as per their nature, CoVEs are genuine examples of partnerships at a global level.

³⁹ This includes the coordination efforts around such interoperable databases, whereas the implementation of a network of national databases goes beyond the scope of ETF's Annual Work Programme and can only be executed if additional resources (i.e. extra-subsidy) become available.

This activity area builds its actions and intervention around the ETF Network for Excellence (ENE) which currently has more than 255 members from more than 40 countries (partner countries, EU, African Union member states and ASEM countries). Its aim is to feed excellence and innovation as drivers for vocational skills for employment and education systems from a lifelong learning perspective. Also, to address the quality, innovation and relevance of skills through re-thinking institutional network set-ups and transitions needed by the labour market. ENE is the bonding platform for partnerships and peer learning activities among its members. It is expected to grow over time into a rich policy-oriented source of information and knowledge. Emphasis will be put on the use of the knowledge developed to help CoVEs improve further while supporting VET systems to progress through policy advice.

ENE is inspired by a Commission-led initiative in EU countries, which establishes CoVE partnerships. This approach fits within the new EU Skills Agenda as well as the Osnabruck Declaration (2020). ENE also contributes to the Erasmus+ programme in the field of VET excellence. The dimensions of excellence will continue supporting EU priorities such as the green and digital transition.

In 2023, the work in this activity area will contribute further to the EU approach on internationalisation of VET. Within the external policy domain, it will be able to provide contextualised advice for policy makers and shapers applicable in the area of skills provision for countries beyond the EU. Finally, the ENE initiative will continue to increase its outreach to partner countries and investigate new areas of work for peer learning and knowledge sharing, as per the EU priorities.

Objective

Enhance skills provision and inspire innovation through centres of vocational excellence acting as hubs, beacons or models for systemic change.

Outcomes

- Improved policy buy-in on how centres of excellence develop in different contexts and how centres of vocational excellence contribute at system level.
- Fostering collaboration around the identified excellence dimensions as part of the ETF Network for Excellence.
- Contribution⁴⁰ to the international dimension of VET within the Erasmus+ programme, international partnerships and priorities set for different regions.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Digital registry of Centres of Vocational Excellence created and functioning ■ Operational network with members in ENE in different partner countries ■ Peer learning activities ■ Knowledge products and tools available and easy to access for network members and stakeholders ■ Partnerships among ENE members in different dimensions of excellence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of Centres of Vocational Excellence mapped in the Digital Registry ■ Number of COVEs which implemented self-assessment ■ Number of members in the ETF Network for Excellence by type of thematic dimension ■ Involvement of ENE members in the reform of the VET system in their respective countries ■ Number by type of peer learning activities ■ Number of initiatives, projects (etc.) in which ETF PCs are participating as ENE members
Resources – €1 146 500	

⁴⁰ Upon request of the Commission.

2.4b. Service level agreement – ‘The international Dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence: Building a strong international cooperation dimension on Vocational Excellence’

The ETF has concluded a service level agreement with DG EMPL to implement activities linked to the internationalisation of CoVEs: “The international Dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence: Building a strong international cooperation dimension on Vocational Excellence” for an amount of €1,000,000 from November 2021 to November 2023. This intervention builds on the knowledge and experience of the ETF in this thematic area, reinforces synergies and generates a multiplier effect.

In line with EU external action priorities, it is expected that in autumn 2022, a new service level agreement will be signed with DG EMPL (second phase) to roll out and implement the deliverables under the first service level agreement. This second phase or new service level agreement is expected to end in 2025.

Objective

To support and strengthen the international dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence.

Specific Objectives

1. To support the continuous and inclusive improvement of vocational education and training systems.
2. To use the ETF Network for Excellence (ENE) as a channel for expanding the international dimension of CoVES and for those joining the network to actively seek cooperation and dialogue with CoVEs in partner countries, and beyond.

Outcomes

- An international vocational excellence quality and development tool is created to deliver a self-assessment instrument that will help map the progress to vocational excellence, based on a maturity model that includes the 25 characteristics/activities of the CoVEs initiative build on the experience with the already existing ETF self-assessment tool, as well as those developed by UNESCO-UNEVOC.
- The feasibility of developing a quality label for vocational excellence is explored to provide visibility and recognition of concrete achievements and a commitment to pursue vocational excellence in its various dimensions.
- Evidence to support vocational excellence for the digital and green transition is developed through international studies that analyse the complex nature of CoVEs in different contexts and their contribution to the digital and green transition.
- Policy support activities and capacity building are fostered to support policy making in different contexts, as well as capacity building for the effective implementation of the CoVEs initiative as an instrument for change in co-creating skills ecosystems that foster innovation, smart specialisation and territorial development strategies, as well as social inclusion.

Extra subsidy resources – €1 million for 24 months from November 2021 – November 2023

2.5 Innovative teaching and learning

The aim is to create and expand a knowledge hub in the field of HCD in transition and developing countries with the ETF as a central node and a reference for partner countries for sector analysis, policy advice and development of capacities, as well as a resource for EU programming and monitoring. This is key because the ways in which people learn is changing. How systems respond to new learning is also changing. Education and training systems in all countries had to adapt rapidly to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to a huge expansion of new models of digital and online learning.

Beside the quality of education, which remains a prerequisite in terms of curricula content and competencies, development of innovation in teaching and learning, support to the transition to lifelong learning and the promotion of issues such as a lifelong learning culture; personalised learning and flexible, individualised pathways; new roles of teachers, teacher development and support to innovative teaching practices in VET and adult learning; among others, are all areas in demand across all ETF partner regions.

In response, the ETF examines new learning practices, how learning is delivered and in which environments, including the workplace, in various non-formal or informal settings, or in traditional, formal schooling. Under this activity area, the ETF implements the Creating New Learning project (CNL). The project seeks to address the deficit in countries to develop and use tools to create new learning opportunities⁴¹. The project is a rich repository of good practice worldwide. It develops new tools, guides and methodologies that can be of use for practitioners, policy makers and social partners, including the private sector, in different contexts. These tools are co-created and shared within the 'Innovative educators community', which has more than 1000 members from partner countries and beyond. The community is instrumental in collecting good practice, analysing it and supporting further innovation in teaching and learning practices through peer exchange.

This activity area is aligned with the new EU Skills Agenda and its associated instruments. Notably, it is consistent with the VET recommendation in identifying and facilitating individualised learning pathways, modularised and digitalised qualifications, and new learning environments, tools and pedagogies. Activities in the partner countries are also aligned with the first priority of the Digital Education Action Plan, "Developing a high-performing digital education ecosystem" in particular those referring to online/distance learning, SELFIE for teachers, the European Digital Competence Framework and improving digital skills provision⁴².

In 2023, the ETF will develop its products to better support policy makers and shapers in different contexts, as well as contribute to the creation of innovation in teaching and learning. Higher priority will be assigned to activities related to the use of digital technologies for more relevant and engaging learning at distance and in face-to-face educational contexts, formal and non-formal, improving accessibility, equity and the well-being of learners in their individual lifelong learning journeys.

Objective

Encourage the development, implementation and dissemination of innovative teaching and learning practices for more effective and inclusive education and training systems in a lifelong learning perspective.

Outcomes

- Buy-in for policy reforms in partner countries on the role of innovation in teaching and learning in contributing to equity and quality of education and training.
 - Improved capacity of countries to co-create new teaching and learning approaches by fostering collaboration through community of practitioners.
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⁴¹ In the framework of the Creating New learning Initiative the ETF has launched an emergency support programme for Ukraine in response to the Russian military aggression. The purpose of the programme, called UA Re-Emerge(ncy): e-learning and skills development to rebuild Ukraine, is to collect and adapt professional short modules and other e-learning resources from the EU and EU neighbouring countries, which will give Ukrainian learners the opportunity to enrol in high quality vocational e-learning, reskilling and upskilling courses. Participation in this programme will ensure that Ukrainian learners will acquire the skills and knowledge required by their local labour markets and gain micro-credentials recognised by employers. In order to align the training offer with the demand of employers, the ETF supports dialogue between sectoral experts, training providers and employers.

⁴² "Digital Education Action Plan" (https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en).

- Innovative teaching and learning practices, piloting of EU tools for digital educators serve as inspiration for policy dialogue and policy advice at local, regional, national and EU levels.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evidence based on applied research (publications) and system-wide pilots ■ Community of practitioners from partner countries ■ Tools and instruments for innovative teaching and learning approaches ■ Collection/identification of examples of innovative teaching and learning tools and practices and shared with relevant stakeholders to support peer learning and know-how exchange between practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of practitioners engaged in the CNL network, by country, and type of interaction (exchange on findings; adoption of new processes/models) ■ Use by partner country actors of publications and other tools produced by CNL
Resources – €1 139 500	

2.6 Engaging enterprises in skills development

Delivering on lifelong learning requires a strong engagement from the world of work towards continuous skills development, upskilling and reskilling of workers, as well as in linking up to the wider skills ecosystem at local, regional, national and international levels. Hence, it looks beyond VET and includes other forms and levels of education in a lifelong learning perspective, as is the case across all ETF operations. In this context, this activity area targets the engagement of enterprises in skills development in ETF partner countries. It does so by promoting, in partnership with international and national stakeholders, good practice at the level of enterprises. It focuses, in particular, on skills for resilience, innovation and competitiveness in an inclusive and fair perspective.

The activity area works through the increased outreach of the SkillsforEnterprise development network, building on the 2022 pilot year. The network will support partnerships with international and regional actors including EBRD, OECD, UNIDO, SMEunited and BusinessMED.

This activity area is in line with the new European Skills Agenda on the need to acquire new skills and the European Charter for Small Enterprises, which calls upon taking action to support and encourage small enterprises. Furthermore, the activity area supports priorities outlined in EU external actions programmes, especially those in which the focus on upskilling, reskilling and the transition to greener and digital economies requires a strong attention to small businesses in partner countries. The project works in synergy with several EU bodies and projects including JRC, EISMEA, and Sectoral Associations and Chambers of Commerce.

In 2023, the ETF will continue to work in the Western Balkans in the context of its Innovation Agenda. It will prioritise the agribusiness sector in line with the smart specialisation strategies approach and the regional agenda. Therefore, it will strengthen the attention on the skills dimension of smart specialisation strategies and to technology transfer in partnership with the JRC, Commission services and the international donors active in this field. The activity area will further expand its geographical coverage on a demand basis and in line with EU external actions programmes.

Knowledge development, in particular those looking at good practices and sharing of experience gained by EU regions in the context of targeted initiatives under the umbrella of Smart Specialisation Strategies, will continue in 2023. These will target, in particular, the skills dimension of regional and

sector level partnerships, including public and private actors, as well as education providers across levels of qualifications. This will, in turn, promote a partnership approach at local, regional and international levels fostering innovation, competitiveness and inclusion through skills.

Objective

Provide high quality support in linking skills development actors and SMEs for innovation, productivity-enhancing skills and quality of work.

Outcomes

- Engagement of business intermediaries and trade unions in PCs to support skills development of SMEs in the context of the twin digital and green transitions.
- Enhanced capacity of business intermediary bodies and trade unions to support implementation, scaling, and quality of skills development in enterprises.
- Strengthened links between skills development actors, including VET, higher VET, CVT and innovation actors and systems.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partnerships and peer learning within the Skills4Enterprise network ■ Peer learning partnerships and activities with EU and partner countries on skilling, upskilling, reskilling and career development support in SMEs ■ Collaborative partnerships to enable technology transfer and applied research between education and training providers, innovation actors, and SMEs or their representatives ■ Sharing of good practice and peer learning on skills development within enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of business intermediaries and trade unions engaged in the network ■ Use of good practice for policy advice and dialogue ■ Number of cross-border peer learning partnerships with EU and partner countries ■ Number of vocational schools skills development actors engaged in innovation processes in the context of collaborative partnerships with SMEs

Resources – €1 136 000

2.7 Lifelong learning policies and system change

The aim is to support partner countries in the design and implementation of policies which support the change of education and training systems into inclusive, open and flexible lifelong learning systems, which are focused on learners irrespective of their age, gender or socio-economic background. Policies promoting this priority are key to empowering people to develop the skills, competences and knowledge necessary to find employment, realise their potential, and contribute to the societies they live in, while staying resilient in times of technological, socio-economic and demographic transformation.

In this activity area, the ETF will work on embedding the EU values and good practice concerning lifelong learning in its partner countries. This work will go hand in hand with reinforcing VET as a central element in the lifelong learning continuum, with strong links to all other segments and sectors pertaining to the education and training sector, both public and private. The project will do so by co-creating knowledge on system change for lifelong learning based on policy dialogue with partner countries. Based on their experiences, the monitoring of system change towards lifelong learning is undertaken with the help of a new generation of monitoring tools embedded within the Torino Process brand and activity.

The provision of timely, high quality and evidence-based lifelong learning policy advice and its associated implementation support is done in line with EU guidance and best practice. These embed the principles of EU policies such as the EU Skills Agenda, the EU Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabruck Declaration, but also global commitments as reflected in the UNESCO Marrakech Framework for Action and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The ETF aims to support the process of change of education and training systems towards lifelong learning systems through direct policy advice to partner countries and advice to the EU assistance and cooperation modalities. Specifically, the ETF will base its policy advice on several key actions. First, through the continuous **monitoring** of trends, developments and system performance regarding human capital development and lifelong learning. Second, by **reviewing/assessing** policies which influence that performance and developments in a lifelong learning perspective. A set of relevant indicators will be collected, analysed and published to enable both quantitative and qualitative monitoring and assessment of the performance of VET systems in partner countries as per the EU recommendations related to VET system development. In this regard, the ETF relies on the EU acquis on statistics and will work closely with Eurostat on indicators for the Western Balkans.

Therefore, the **monitoring** of development trends will continue through the collection of quantitative and qualitative information on a regular basis. The scope of the main source of monitoring information collection, the Torino Process Analytical Framework Level 1, will be expanded to cover a more specific and strategic range of aspects related to lifelong learning and the contribution of IVET and CVET to the establishment and maintenance of lifelong learning systems as per the ETF 2027 Strategy.

The **assessment/review** of policies (Torino Process Level 2) as well as the rapid education diagnostic (RED) will be made by using the differentiation principle, which means they will be implemented wherever it fits a need to support policy advice either for national or EU policy purposes. These processes should build on a country's national guidance and procedures, according to ownership and alignment principles. In general, the ETF has planned to integrate its different assessment methodologies into a package of approaches and methods to better analyse lifelong learning systems, based on quantitative and qualitative evidence. This includes aligning all tools in a coherent framework and exploring synergies with external tools and initiatives.

In this context, this activity area will contribute to several EU policies and priorities. The first is the European Skills Agenda. Specifically, the ETF's work in this area will inform national efforts for upskilling actions and will promote the often-difficult transition from strategic plans for lifelong learning to their implementation. It will also support the modernisation of the partner countries' vision for VET, as well as the development of tools and solutions which incentivise and empower people to become learners throughout their lives. Here, the ETF will continue devoting particular attention to the integrated monitoring process of the implementation of the Osnabruck Declaration and EU Council Recommendation on VET in the EU candidate countries of the SEET region, based on the National Implementation Plans submitted by the EU and non-EU countries in May 2022.

In relation to the European Pillar of Social Rights, the ETF's work will help generate evidence, insights and policy dialogue on promoting equal opportunities and access to education, training and lifelong learning. It will inform requirements for providing active support to employment in the form of training and retraining opportunities, also for migrants. The third policy priority is the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, which will inform the monitoring of system performance, thematic knowledge development efforts, and the necessary policy review activities.

The ETF will also contribute to the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. It will specifically focus on Pillar 4 of the Pact, on Skills and Talent, and the need for the EU to attract new talent while ensuring win-win solutions with the countries of origin and the migrants themselves. In particular, the monitoring activities and the development of new thematic knowledge under this activity area will be informed by the need to build up Talent Partnerships with partner countries, to develop a Talent Pool in the EU, and to reinforce legal pathways of labour migration.

Furthermore, in 2023, the activity area will pursue the implementation of the new Torino Process framework in all partner countries which participate in its sixth round of the monitoring process (now called “*Torino Process: Towards Lifelong Learning*”). This sixth round has a specific focus on lifelong learning and in this context, it will also include dimensions linked to skills for the green transition, innovation and excellence, among others. It will also encompass technological transformations, including digitalisation, as well as lessons learned from COVID-19 and its recovery, in alignment with the EU skills agenda and VET recommendations. Attention will be paid to gender aspects, particularly the monitoring of women in education, training and labour markets through their participation in STEM and entrepreneurship, among others, as well as to adult education.

Likewise, reviewing policies underpinning the functioning and performance of systems will be strengthened through several key actions. First, through the systematic and country-driven implementation of the Torino Process methodology as an ETF branded tool for monitoring system performance and reviewing policies for lifelong learning, based on a participatory approach. Second, through the application of the RED methodology in one country and on-demand depending on external funding, following the lessons learned from its application on the field⁴³. Third, through the ongoing support and facilitation of participation of the five EU candidate countries from SEET in the monitoring of the Osnabruck Declaration and the EU Council Recommendation on VET. Fourth, through the collection and dissemination of country intelligence through products such as the country fiches and others based on KIESE data. This also includes the preparation of an updated migration fiche for Ukraine. Sixth, through the continuation of the thematic and analytical work on migration. Finally, through the development of new and forward looking thematic areas pertaining to system change and lifelong learning.

Objective

Provision of policy support to partner countries through monitoring, policy reviews and diagnostics, as well as thematic innovation, for the creation of effective and inclusive opportunities for lifelong learning through system change.

Outcomes

- Reliable and relevant system monitoring data, collected and analysed and disseminated.
- Hands-on policy review insights and recommendations which can guide improvement and policy implementation in the domain of lifelong learning.
- Knowledge on system change developed for policy dialogue/advice in line with lifelong learning approach.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implementation of the annual Torino Process monitoring of system performance for lifelong learning and release of monitoring reports for all participating countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Policy uptake of ETF reviews and demand for follow-up in the form of requests for thematic follow-up report and targeted support to selected partner

⁴³ Examples of previous application on the field include Lebanon and Kosovo. In 2023, the ETF foresees the application of the RED methodology in one country (eventually two depending on availability of resources), while its further application would require external funding.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Four Torino Process country reviews of policies for lifelong learning in four partner countries ■ Four country discussion/dissemination events of the reviews findings ■ A regional Torino Process policy dialogue event for the SEMED region ■ Five country monitoring deliverables in the framework of support for SEET as annual products of the EU candidate countries in the region participating in the monitoring following their commitments to the integrated monitoring framework of the Osnabruck Declaration and EU Council Recommendation on VET ■ Bilateral and regional policy advice and inputs, in particular Lebanon as a follow up to the EDA (Education Diagnostic Assessment) project ■ Publication and dissemination of the RED Kosovo report ■ Country fiches, KIESE, as well as migration fiche for Ukraine 	<p>countries in the regions covered by the LLL policy review activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Timely availability of evidence gathered with the help of solutions within the new Torino Process monitoring framework (Level 1) ■ Publication and dissemination of thematic knowledge studies, and of the RED methodology, i.e., number of dissemination occasions and degree of stakeholder participation ■ Publication and dissemination of country fiches, KIESE and of the migration fiche for Ukraine ■ Production of five country monitoring publications for the integrated monitoring process of Osnabruck Declaration and EU Council Recommendation on VET
Resources – €894 900	

2.8 Quality assurance and governance mechanisms

The ETF promotes system governance and partnerships between governmental actors, social partners and civil society actors in order to support conditions at system level that enable the transition from education and training to performant and modern lifelong learning-oriented HCD in partner countries. This is important because policies are more effective when they are prepared and implemented in an inclusive way. The ETF provides support in the framework of existing government institutions and inter-ministerial structures, while it also sustains the move to more participatory governance modalities based on triple-helix partnerships and stronger coordination mechanisms. In formulating expert advice, the ETF sees the areas of governance, quality assurance and financing as closely interrelated.

In view of more participatory governance modalities, the ETF identifies the relevant actors that play a role in each country's lifelong learning system, and it reviews the horizontal and vertical mechanisms they have in place to cooperate⁴⁴. As such, under this activity area, the ETF tracks the level of cooperation among these actors in the lifelong learning system, and it advises on better interactions, partnership mechanisms and processes to foster cooperation. The ETF also encourages transnational collaboration between partner countries. Finally, it also provides support in using EU policies and processes, expertise, instruments and resources to strengthen VET quality assurance (QA) and its governance and financing. This is done, for instance, by supporting partner countries in the systematic monitoring of QA improvements to allow them to progress in planning and/or in implementing policies

⁴⁴ The ETF will work to better support inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination mechanisms in partner countries, in the framework of existing structures. To this end, it will provide advice notably with a focus on: i) creating a shared vision and understanding on expected policy outcomes across the ministries and agencies involved, ii) suitable attribution of roles and responsibilities depending on each country's institutional settings, and iii) identification of areas for improvement in the current flow of information sharing and in the initiating actor's role, which may impede the smooth implementation of the agreed policy e.g. advice to the Youth Guarantee inter-ministerial task forces in context of the Economic Reform Programmes.

and practices. Tools used include the ETF Transnational Forum for peer exchange and collaboration on QA issues in VET.

This approach essentially draws from the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Skills Agenda, the VET Recommendation, European cooperation towards a European Education Area and beyond, the Sectoral Blueprint for Cooperation on Skills, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, the Youth Guarantee and the Osnabruck Declaration. The project aligns with the overarching EU Green Deal and Digital Agenda priorities and related EU recommendations on skills development. It does so by encouraging cross-fertilisation between lifelong VET and both the greening and digitalisation of the economy, as well as with industrial strategies that pursue sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

In 2023, the work will evolve in two main directions. First, through policy advice, knowledge sharing and peer learning, the ETF will further increase partner country awareness and commitment to develop a systemic approach to co-creating the conditions for multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance ecosystems. Second, the ETF will continue to develop knowledge on three areas that are highly strategic for partner countries, namely: (i) resilience of VET systems and how these can prepare to face major and rapid changes in contexts of crises and fragility; (ii) civil society organisation (CSO) participation in governance processes and associated modalities, to enhance their integration into policy dialogue and policy decision-making and value their role as service providers in HCD; and (iii) financing of VET systems in a lifelong learning perspective.

Objective

Support conditions at system level that enable the transition from education and training to performant lifelong learning.

Outcomes

- Partner countries are familiar with and apply mechanisms for participatory governance (including quality assurance and financing mechanisms) in order to move to lifelong learning systems.
- EU programmes in partner countries are informed by multi-level and multi-actor governance, quality assurance and ETF knowledge on financing.
- QA Forum members advise their respective country on quality assurance mechanisms, and selected countries implemented them.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Governance Learning Network (GLN) facilitates implementation of participatory governance, Government and social partner co-design and co-implementation in selected countries, on e.g. WBL, skills and qualifications, Youth Guarantee ■ Publication on civil society organisations (CSOs)' role in LLL, and enhanced reflection on CSO's participation ■ Selected countries and the EU are advised on participatory governance, including QA mechanisms. Reflection and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The participants in the GNL, social partnership and CSOs related actions, and QA Forum represent the diversity of lifelong learning actors ■ At least 20% of those taking part in the mutual exchange and/or policy advice actions report about implementing participatory governance mechanisms ■ Country and regional platforms – e.g. the EafA, ECOSOC Platform, Youth Guarantee bodies, UfM, etc.- informed by ETF expert input on social partnership and PPPs ■ EU assistance and policy dialogue embed participatory and partnership-based mechanisms of governance, quality assurance, financing

knowledge creation on resilience and financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU assistance support building capacities to effectively implement participatory and partnership-based governance
Resources – €809 000	

2.9 DARYA – Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia

Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe), the proposed action DARYA (Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia) focuses on measures that support inclusive and labour market relevant skills development opportunities for young women and men in Central Asia. In line with the opportunity to “build back better” the action takes a system approach that considers immediate as well as medium-term (within the next five years) development requirements that will support better (more labour market relevant, more inclusive, more varied opportunities, enhanced employability) skills provision for young people.

The action is articulated around three thematic areas that are required to sustain robust, yet adaptable skills development systems that supports youth employability. In view of the importance of regional economic integration and connectivity for the recovery and future development of the region and considering the importance of migration, the action covers activities at national and regional or multi-country level. The action will be implemented in Central Asia in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan (should the situation allow).

The action commenced in July 2022 with a six month inception phase during which a mapping exercise has been carried out at national level in each of the five Central Asian countries currently being analysed (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). The aim is to review the current state of play of developments and provide a description and analysis of recent and planned policy developments, as well as identification of relevant activities of international donors, private actors or civil society organisations in the five countries. The mapping exercise will inform the intervention with a detailed implementation plan and indicators to measure progress in the next phase.

Objective

To contribute to post-Covid recovery in Central Asia by fostering improved employability of young people in Central Asia through inclusive and labour-market oriented skills development.

Specific Objectives

3. To foster the quality and inclusiveness of education, training and employment systems in Central Asia.
4. To foster participatory and inclusive dialogue and cooperation mechanisms at national and regional level.

Outcomes

- Forward-looking and gender sensitive skills development and employment services enhanced through better evidence and analysis of education and training outcomes and skills needs.
- Stakeholder-driven flexible and permeable approaches to qualifications are adopted at national and regional level in order to allow equal opportunities to all.
- Increased use of flexible and inclusive teaching and learning approaches, based on learning outcomes and relevant to the labour market.
- Wider skills development for the employment stakeholder community is actively involved through jointly designed and agreed governance mechanisms, learning programmes, sharing tools and piloting of new tools.

- Increased country-led regional cooperation and peer exchange on skills development for the employment sector among Central Asian countries, EU Member States and the international development community.

Extra subsidy resources – €10 million for 60 months from July 2022 – July 2027

2.10 Responding to new EU policy and geographical priorities

With the recently adopted NDICI 'Global Europe' and IPA III instruments, as well as with the changes in the geopolitical landscape, the ETF has retained a certain amount of flexibility to react to information needs and policy advice that could not be foreseen at the time of the finalisation of the work programme. Also, to respond to ad hoc requests from EU services and other important stakeholders.

Encouraged by the Commission opinions of July 2021 and July 2022, the ETF will use this flexibility to respond to the new European Commission priorities (new Skills Agenda, Green Deal, Youth Guarantee, Erasmus+, Africa, migration, digitalisation) and continue to pursue opportunities to work beyond current partner countries or to engage in new priority thematic areas. This is key to respond to relevant requests supported by the Commission and the Member States, paying particular attention to the Team Europe approach.

The ETF will also streamline its approach to working in the fragile context of (post)-conflict countries and protracted crises. In this context, the ETF is monitoring the Ukraine crisis while responding where possible and relevant in liaison with EC services and tapping into its thematic expertise and knowledge of education and training systems of the country, while strengthening partnerships with local stakeholders and beyond. Therefore, the ETF remains available to support various EC services in addressing challenges in fragile and conflict areas in support to increased resilience, recovery and renewal through education, training and HCD anticipation. As such, activities in the annual work programme may be adapted to incorporate new needs.

Objective

To respond to the evolving global and EU priorities in order to advance the EU agenda on skills and human capital development.

Outcomes

- EU agenda on skills and human capital development is further promoted.
- ETF responds to the needs of the European Commission and addresses EU priorities at both thematic and geographical levels.
- Partnerships are established with strategic partners and TEI is taken into account.

Key deliverables

- Collaboration with new third countries and EU Delegations
- Partnership agreements and actions delivered with other global international organisations for addressing EU policy priorities
- Inputs to EU programming beyond neighbourhood countries

Indicators

- Number of EU requests outside of the geographical coverage of ETF partner countries accepted and delivered
- Number of partners involved for organising global actions and debates

Resources – €505 000

Extra-subsidy under negotiation

- Implementation of the second phase of the project on African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF2) through a contribution agreement with DG INTPA and the African Union to be formalised in 2023.
- Contribution agreement with DG INTPA for opportunity-driven VET seminars for an overall amount of €100,000 being formalised (September 2022 to October 2023).
- Implementation of the second phase of the project on the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVES2) through a service level agreement with DG EMPL being formalised.

Horizontal activity areas

The horizontal activity areas are related to how the ETF delivers its operational activity areas (2.1 to 2.10), thus maximising its resources for impact, complementarity and outreach.

2.11 Communication and stakeholder engagement

The ETF's work is about supporting system change in its partner countries. This involves working closely with the partner countries to influence people's mind-sets, attitudes, assumptions and ultimately behaviour, besides producing and disseminating tools for change (information, analysis, advice, models, frameworks, methodologies, examples of good practice, among others). To improve this cooperation, the ETF is systematising its consultation with partner countries and stakeholders to respond in a timely and effective way to their needs. This is expected to improve further once the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic have been lifted.

Communication is core to delivering the ETF's mandate. By tailoring messages to different stakeholder audiences and multiplying their reach, the ETF can increase its capacity to influence the key actors in the policy cycle at national, EU and international levels, and to drive the change process. In an increasingly competitive environment, the ETF needs to position itself effectively through coherent and consistent messaging on its objectives, action and impact. Communication plays a critical role in this and in ensuring outreach to key stakeholders.

2023 has been declared the European Year of Skills and this will give the ETF additional opportunities to extend its communication reach and work in partnership with the EC services and other relevant EU agencies and international organisations to convey its key messages on the importance of skills and human capital development.

In line with the ETF Communication Strategy 2021-27, the ETF will focus on delivering a series of thematic communication campaigns across the year, taking the European Year of Skills as an underlying theme. The campaigns will feed topics of international interest and target key stakeholder groups, mobilising the full range of communication channels (digital, social media, audiovisual, publications, press and media relations, the web site and the OpenSpace knowledge sharing community) and link the ETF's various activities, as well as highlight their relevance to the challenges facing education and training in our partner countries. The switch to digital has accelerated during the pandemic and has vastly expanded the volume and range of online and social media communication, and innovations such as the ETF podcast series, regular live broadcasts, as well as the ETF's online newsletter, support this trend.

Stakeholders are one of the ETF's key assets. The ETF has a long-standing tradition of investing in building relationships and sustained engagement with a wide range of HCD stakeholders in its partner countries. In addition, it works in cooperation with relevant international and regional stakeholders active in the field of human capital development, including international and regional donors, and research and civil society organisations as well as private sector actors and social partners.

Objective

To support and engage our stakeholders and position the ETF as a trusted partner by making our expertise and knowledge in the area of human capital development readily available.

Outcomes

The ETF's expertise and knowledge is packaged in the form of accessible and meaningful communication products targeted towards our stakeholders.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Innovative impactful and engaging communication campaigns delivered across the year ▪ Engagement in activities linked to the European Year of Skills 2023 ▪ Digital communication platforms are further developed to support ETF activities ▪ Press relations and social media actions reach wider, relevant audiences ▪ The ETF's online knowledge sharing community (Open Space) grows in reach and relevance ▪ Stakeholder information (SRM system) is updated and used effectively to support communication and stakeholder engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No of stakeholders directly engaged in ETF activities through online media, meetings, workshops, missions ▪ Level of engagement through Open Space and social media ▪ Reach of ETF communication and knowledge products including through multipliers
Resources – €1 305 000	

2.12 Digitalisation and greening of the ETF

Since 2020, the ETF has embarked on a digital transformation process with the goal of enhancing its digital maturity in line with the ETF Strategy 2027. This resulted in a Digital Transformation Strategy (2021) and a roadmap for its implementation. A set of key pillars have been identified as drivers for the transformation process, namely: IT as a digital partner, data centric projects, investment in cloud-based solutions for software and hardware and European Commission integrations.

After an initial onboarding process and initial pilots, the first transformations went live in 2022. Digital maturity should also contribute to improved efficiency of ETF functions and underlying processes through the application of digital solutions and upskilling staff with digital skills. The progressive implementation of cloud infrastructure supported by a mature digital strategy enables a data-centric organisation and maximises the value of information produced. In this regard, COVID-19 has taken online engagement with partner countries and other stakeholders to unprecedented levels. In parallel to the digital transformation, the ETF will also invest in higher levels of IT and cybersecurity. In 2023, the ETF will digitalise its knowledge products as well as improve the ways it collaborates with different communities in its partner countries. Moreover, moving towards cloud applications opens up the possibility to reduce the ETF's carbon footprint and purchase more climate-sensitive hardware.

In this context, the ETF advances its journey to greening. Building on the environmental management system set in 2020-21, as well as the ISO and EMAS certification obtained in 2021, in 2023 the ETF

will focus on further implementing sustainable and green procurement, as well as actions to refine its data collection and decrease its CO2 emissions. Actions will focus on sustainable and reduced travelling and commuting, materials consumption, and in understanding the impact of hybrid work on sustainability. Cooperation with and via the EU Agencies network will be intensified thanks to the implementation of interinstitutional contracts, additional joint procurement, exchanges of good practice and sharing of ETF experience with agencies embarking on the process of EMAS certification. The ETF will also continue to explore options for its premises post-2027, including sustainable environmental impact as one of the key criteria to be considered.

Objective

To ensure a more integrated approach to digital transformation and greening of ETF.

Outcomes

- Increased sustainability and efficiency gains in processes supporting operational activities, as well as in administrative workload through green and cloud-based digital solutions and system upgrades.
- Improved digital maturity and upgraded ICT tools for project planning, implementation and reporting processes, data input, knowledge management and stakeholder engagement.
- Internal control and performance reporting is streamlined and reflects the requirements of the EC Information and cyber security protocols, and associated performance indicators and evaluation results.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implemented organisational digital culture change process ■ Information security management system in place ■ Integrated planning and monitoring digital tools ■ Simplified cloud-based ICT platform ■ Enhanced digital maturity of staff members ■ ISO 14001 and EMAS certification renewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % of implementation of the digitalisation roadmap ■ % of legacy systems decommissioned ■ The new corporate resource management system is in place and used by all departments ■ % of environmental certificates renewed

Resources – €1 185 000

2.13 Institutional development

In the area of institutional development, the ETF identifies projects and actions that enable the organisation to improve performance and efficiency ensuring compliance with EC regulatory requirements. Both internal control monitoring and external evaluations are guiding tools in this endeavour. As a result of the ETF 2027 strategy and the rollout of the new organisational structure (operational since January 2021), development actions were identified and put in place under the 'One ETF' change process. This included actions such as revisiting the ETF's core values, enhancing internal communication, revamping knowledge management, supporting a cooperative culture adapted to the new structure to ensure that the ETF delivers as one and is fully equipped for the challenges ahead, as well as support to the new management team. In this context, 2023 should be a year of consolidation of the abovementioned changes driven by the actions implemented in 2021-2022.

In 2023, the ETF will also consolidate the actions initiated from 2021 on the next normal and new ways of working impacting on the ETF building, as well as its culture, communication and

management, and attractiveness for staff. Further growth and development opportunities will be sought with the set-up of cooperation mechanisms with other organisations, universities and research centres.

Furthermore, the ETF will put in motion a foresight process to build a vision for post-2027 following a mid-term review of its 2027 strategy. The process includes, amongst others, a reflection with an high-level advisory group. Its aim is to help the ETF to look beyond its current multi-annual programming cycle in a systemic way to ensure it remains fit for the future. This process should also revisit the ETF's seat agreement. Most importantly, it should equip the ETF to embed an anticipatory culture in its strategic development and to continue building its staff's futures literacy. It should also support the identification of skills required to position the ETF as an innovative and pioneering organisation, as well as relevant technological developments, such as AI, big data and blockchain. Ultimately, this process should enable the ETF to deepen existing institutional arrangements to liaise with Commission Services, international organisations and partner countries, building on the results of the 2022 IAS audit on ETF coordination and cooperation with EC services.

An important building block for the implementation of the ETF 2027 strategy is the support to the mobilisation of revenue in addition to the EC contribution, as well as to the negotiation, conclusion and management of the underlying legal instruments, which will remain a priority area. This should take place in parallel to ensuring that the newly extra-subsidy projects have adequate human, financial and procurement resources. Finally, developing a robust information and document management process to support well-informed decision making and knowledge sharing are important prerequisites in this direction.

Objective

To identify and put in place improvement projects and actions that will increase institutional performance.

Outcomes

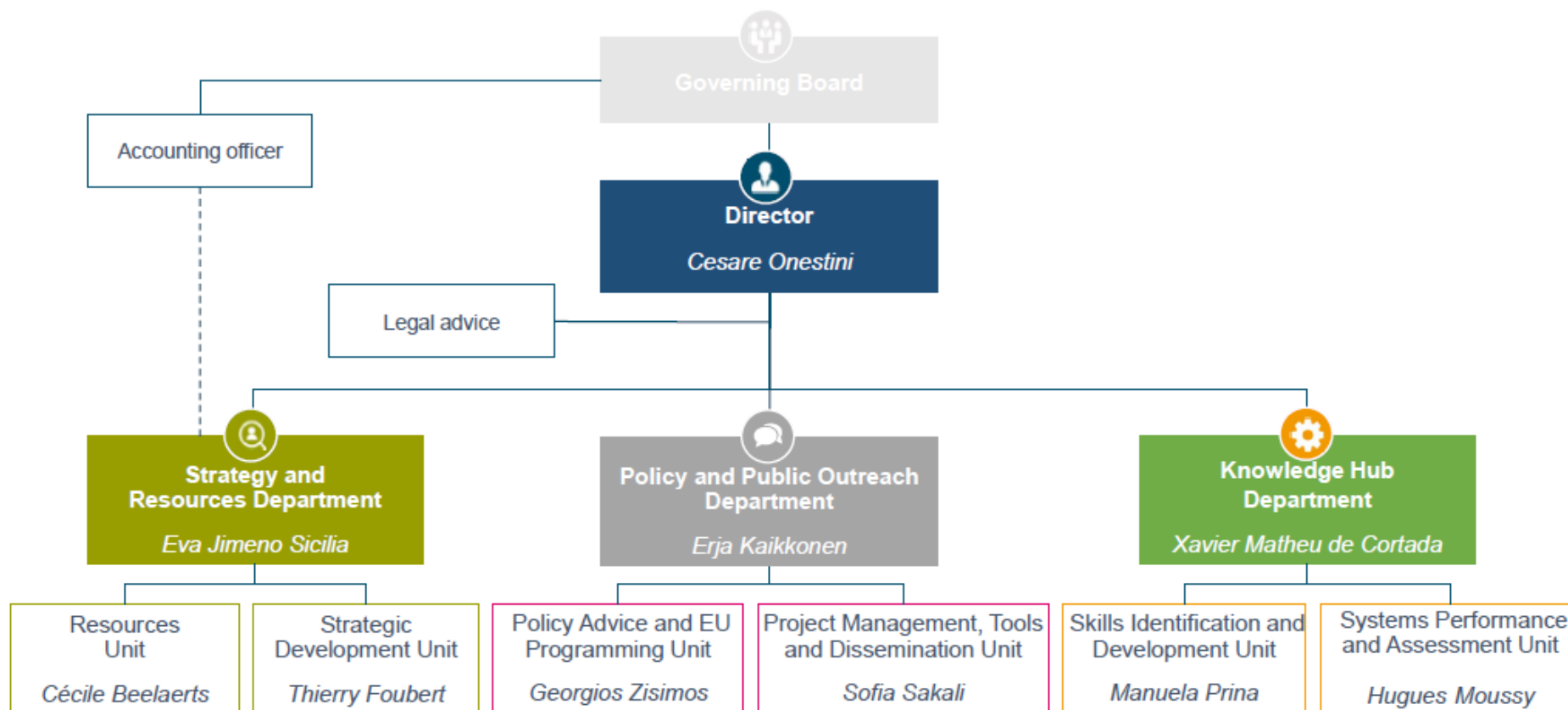
- Internal control and performance reporting is streamlined and reflects the requirements of the 2018 ICF, the 2019 Financial Regulation, and performance indicators and evaluation results.
- Increased team and institutional performance, following staff take up of ETF core values and enhanced capacity to adapt to change.
- Improvement needs in organisational performance are identified through performance data, audit and evaluation findings and recommendations.
- Processes are developed, updated, and/or simplified to adapt to changes, such as digitalisation and new organisational structure.
- Review of corporate information management.

Key deliverables	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Internal control assessment included in consolidated annual activity report (CAAR) ■ Development activities and institutional projects in line with ETF 2027 strategy ■ Audit and evaluation reports and action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of improvement actions and their implementation rate (%) ■ Number of staff development actions and their implementation rate (%)
Resources – €1 118 000	

ANNEXES

Number	Title
Annex I	Organisation chart – 31 December 2021
Annex II	Resource allocation per activity 2023-25
Annex III	Financial resources 2023-25 Table 1 – Revenue Table 2 – Expenditure Table 3 – Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations Table 4 – Global budgetary envelope for procurement
Annex IV	Human resources (quantitative) Table 1 – Staff population and its evolution; Overview of all categories of staff A. Statutory staff and SNE B. Additional external staff expected to be financed from grant, contribution or service-level agreements C. Other staff Table 2 – Multi -annual staff policy plan 2023-25 Table 3 – Recruitment forecasts 2023
Annex V	Human resources (qualitative) A. Recruitment policy B. Appraisal of performance and reclassification/promotions Table 1 – Reclassification of temporary staff/promotion of officials Table 2 – Reclassification of contract staff C. Implementing rules foreseen for adoption 2023 D. Gender balance Table 1 – Data on 31/12/2021 statutory staff (only officials, AT and AC) Table 2 – Data regarding gender evolution over 5 years of the Middle and Senior management E. Geographical balance Table 1 – Data on 31/12/2021 Table 2 – Evolution over 5 years of the most represented nationality in the Agency F. Schooling
Annex VI	Environment management
Annex VII	Buildings
Annex VIII	Privileges and immunities
Annex IX	Evaluations
Annex X	Strategy for organisational management and internal control systems
Annex XI	Plan for grant, contribution or service-level agreements
Annex XII	Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations
Annex XIII	Collaboration with other EU Agencies
Annex XIV	Planned requests from EU services 2023
Annex XV	Cross-checking conditions for ETF operation in countries and regions

Annex I – ETF Organisation chart (31 December 2021)



Organisational structure – 31.12.2021	CA	SNE	LA	TA*	Total	Vacant posit.	TOTAL
Policy and Public Outreach Department (PUB)							
PUB core (Manager, StratComm and sup. staff)	5			4	9		9
Policy Advice and EU Programming Unit	1			20	21		21
Project Management, Tools and Dissemination Unit	12		1	5	18		18
Sub-Total PUB	18	0	1	29	48	0	48
Knowledge Hub Department (KHD)							
KHD core (Manager and sup. Staff)	1			1	2		2
Skills Identification and Development Unit	4			17	21		21
Systems Performance and Assessment Unit	5			14	19		19
Sub-Total KHD	10	0	0	32	42	0	42
Strategy and Resources Department (SRD)							
SRD Core (Manager, Facilities and sup. Staff)	1			2	3		3
Accounting	1			1	2		2
Strategic Development Unit	3			11	14		14
Resources Unit	8			10	18		18
Sub-Total SRD	13	0	0	24	37	0	37
Director's office (DIR)							
DIR Core (Director, sup. Staff)	1			2	3		3
Legal Advice				1	1		1
Sub-Total DIR	1	0	0	3	4	0	4
Total	42	0	1	88	131	0	131
Vacant positions*	0			0	0		
Total including vacant positions	42	0	1	88*	131	0	131

*As of 2018, on the basis of article 38.2 of the ETF Financial Regulation, the ETF uses the opportunity to “offset the effects of part-time work”. At the end of 2021, all posts have been filled in reaching 86 + 2 TA (corresponding to 2 FTE of part time work).

Annex II – Resource allocation per activity 2023

by Strategic Objective	Staff	Budget (m€)	%
Strategic Objective 1 Skills relevance and anticipation	48.9	9.1	40%
Strategic Objective 2 Skills development and validation	44.3	7.5	33%
Strategic Objective 3 Performance and quality of Education and Training policies	35.8	6.0	27%
TOTAL	129	€22.6m	100.0%

by Activity area	Staff	Budget (m€)	%
Skills demand	18.9	3.5	16%
Active labour market measures	16.0	2.9	13%
Qualifications	14.0	2.7	12%
Vocational Excellence	11.3	1.7	8%
Innovative teaching and learning	16.2	3.2	14%
Engaging enterprises in skills development	16.8	2.6	11%
Lifelong learning policies and system change	20.1	3.7	17%
Quality assurance and governance mechanisms	15.7	2.2	10%
TOTAL	129	€22.6m	100.0%

by Service	Staff	Budget (m€)	%
Knowledge hub	61.0	10.7	47%
Monitoring and assessment	16.9	3.0	13%
Policy advice	51.1	8.9	40%
TOTAL	129	€22.6m	100.0%

External projects	ETF Contribution	External assigned revenue	Notes
DARYA	450,000	2,000,000	10m€ for 5 years
COVES	179,930	1,000,000	additional 1.5m€ under negotiation
INTPA	26,000	55,000	one training

By Region/Country	Staff	Budget (m€)	%
South-East Europe and Türkiye	44.3	7.7	34.0%
Albania	6.4	1.1	5.0%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6.2	1.1	5.0%
Kosovo	8.4	1.3	5.9%
Montenegro	6.4	1.1	5.0%
North Macedonia	6.4	1.1	5.0%
Serbia	7.0	1.2	5.2%
Türkiye	3.7	0.7	3.1%
Southern and Eastern Mediterranean	24.3	5.5	24.4%
Algeria	1.5	0.4	2.0%
Egypt	3.3	0.6	2.8%
Israel	3.4	1.0	4.6%
Jordan	3.9	0.7	3.3%
Lebanon	3.6	0.7	3.0%
Libya	0.0	0.0	0.0%
Morocco	2.9	0.6	2.8%
Palestine	2.6	0.6	2.5%
Tunisia	3.1	0.8	3.5%
Eastern partnership	30.4	5.6	24.6%
Armenia	4.5	0.9	4.0%
Azerbaijan	4.4	0.7	3.1%
Belarus	0.0	0.0	0.0%
Georgia	4.9	0.9	4.0%
Moldova	6.0	1.2	5.1%
Ukraine	10.7	1.9	8.4%
Central Asia	26.3	3.5	15.5%
Kazakhstan	5.2	0.7	3.1%
Kyrgyzstan	5.2	0.7	3.0%
Tajikistan	5.3	0.7	3.1%
Turkmenistan	5.2	0.7	3.1%
Uzbekistan	5.5	0.7	3.2%
Cooperation in other areas	3.8	0.3	1.5%
TOTAL	129	€22.6m	100.0%

Annex III - Financial resources 2023-25⁴⁵

Table 1 – Revenue⁴⁶

General revenues

REVENUES	2022	2023
	Revenues estimated by the agency	Budget Forecast
EU contribution	21 726 000	22 627 956
Other Revenue	1 308 476	2 060 000
TOTAL REVENUES	23 034 476	24 687 956

REVENUES	General revenues						
	Executed 2021	Estimated by the agency 2022	2023		VAR 2023/2022 (%)	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
1 REVENUE FROM FEES AND CHARGES							
2 EU CONTRIBUTION	21 000 000	21 726 000	22 627 956	22 627 956	+4.2%	22 685 000	23 139 000
- Of which assigned revenues deriving from previous years' surpluses	246 713	347 203	93 864	93 864	-73.0%		
3 THIRD COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTION (incl. EEA/EFTA and candidate countries)							
- Of which EEA/EFTA (excl. Switzerland)							
- Of which candidate countries							
4 OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS							
5 ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS							
- Of which interest generated by funds paid by the Commission by way of the EU contribution (FFR Art. 58)							
6 REVENUES FROM SERVICES RENDERED AGAINST PAYMENT							
7 CORRECTION OF BUDGETARY IMBALANCES							
TOTAL	21 000 000	21 726 000	22 627 956	22 627 956	+4.2%	22 685 000	23 139 000

⁴⁵ Updated figures will be tabled in the Structured Dialogue.

⁴⁶ All forecasts related to the EU budget contribution in 2023, 2024 and 2025 are indicative and based on the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, updated by the note Ares(2022)3431906 of 04/05/2022.

Additional EU funding: grant, contribution and service-level agreements

REVENUES	2022	2023
	Revenues estimated by the agency	Budget Forecast
TOTAL REVENUES	1 308 476	2 060 000

REVENUES	Additional EU funding: grant, contribution and service-level agreements						
	Executed 2021	Estimated by the agency 2022	2023		VAR 2023/2022 (%)	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM GRANTS (FFR Art.7)							
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS (FFR Art.7)	102 739	278 476	2 000 000			2 000 000	2 000 000
ADDITIONAL EU FUNDING STEMMING FROM SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (FFR Art. 43.2)		1 030 000	60 000			60 000	60 000
TOTAL	102 739	1 308 476	2 060 000	-	57%	2 060 000	2 060 000

Table 2 – Expenditure

Expenditure	2022		2023	
	Commitment	Payment	Commitment	Payment
Title 1 - Staff expenditure	14 871 200	14 871 200	15 949 350	15 949 350
Title 2 - Infrastructure and operating expenditure	2 048 300	2 048 300	2 345 175	2 345 175
Title 3 - Operational	4 806 500	4 806 500	4 333 431	4 333 431
TOTAL SUBVENTION	21 726 000	21 726 000	22 627 956	22 627 956
Extra subsidy	1 308 476	1 308 476	2 060 000	2 060 000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	23 034 476	23 034 476	24 687 956	24 687 956

EXPENDITURE	Commitment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2021	Budget 2022	Draft Budget 2023		VAR 2023/2022 (%)	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 - Staff expenditure	14 788 256	14 871 200	15 949 350		+7.2%	16 133 200	16 379 900
Salaries & allowances	14 072 974	14 302 700	15 226 000		+6.5%	15 467 400	15 713 800
- Of which establishment plan posts	11 414 605	11 660 500	12 298 000		+5.5%	12 484 000	12 674 000
- Of which external personnel	2 658 369	2 642 200	2 928 000		+10.8%	2 983 400	3 039 800
Staff recruitment	29 630	9 000	25 000		+177.8%	9 000	9 000
Mission expenses	4 495	65 000	50 000		-23.1%	40 000	40 000
Socio-medical infrastructure	40 818	33 500	45 000		+34.3%	45 000	45 000
Training	141 739	115 000	200 000		+73.9%	200 000	200 000
External Services	383 017	280 000	309 850		+10.7%	282 300	282 600
Receptions, events and representation	39	4 000	4 000		0.0%	4 000	4 000
Social welfare	115 545	62 000	89 500		+44.4%	85 500	85 500
Other Staff related expenditure							
Title 2 - Infrastructure and operating expenditure	2 025 126	2 048 300	2 345 175		+14.5%	2 243 775	2 194 000
Rental of buildings and associated costs	685 368	729 100	875 075		+19.7%	829 075	845 300
Information, communication technology and data processing	1 212 136	1 143 000	1 307 000		+14.3%	1 254 000	1 188 000
Movable property and associated costs	9 861	-	10 000			5 000	5 000
Current administrative expenditure	36 122	38 000	48 100		+32.9%	50 500	50 500
Postage / Telecommunications	610	8 200	5 000		-39.0%	5 200	5 200
Meeting expenses	81 030	130 000	100 000		-23.1%	100 000	100 000
Running costs in connection with operational activities	-	-	-			-	-
Information and publishing	-	-	-			-	-
Studies	-	-	-			-	-
Other infrastructure and operating expenditure	-	-	-			-	-
Title 3 - Operational expenditure	4 466 850	4 806 500	4 333 431		-9.8%	4 785 025	5 051 100
Communication	378 951	375 000	375 000		0.0%	375 000	375 000
Corporate Performance and Stakeholders	142 000	214 500	248 000		+15.6%	288 000	240 000
Operational projects	3 931 899	3 817 000	3 310 431		-13.3%	3 722 025	4 036 100
Operational missions	14 000	400 000	400 000		0.0%	400 000	400 000
Total Subvention	21 280 232	21 726 000	22 627 956			23 162 000	23 625 000
Title 1 – additional (SLA EU-OSHA)		30 000	60 000			60 000	60 000
Title 4 – Extra subsidy	102 739	1 278 476	2 000 000		+56.4%	2 000 000	2 000 000
Delivery of Training for EU Delegation Staff (INTPA)	102 739	100 000	-			-	-
Internationalisation of CoVeS (EMPL)	-	1 000 000	-			-	-
Support to ACQF (GIZ)	-	178 476	-			-	-
Implementation of ACQF 2 (INTPA)							
DARYA (INTPA)	-	-	2 000 000			2 000 000	2 000 000
TOTAL	21 382 971	23 034 476	24 687 956		+7.2%	25 222 000	25 685 000

EXPENDITURE	Payment appropriations						
	Executed Budget 2021	Budget 2022	Draft Budget 2023		VAR 2023/2022 (%)	Envisaged 2024*	Envisaged 2025*
			Agency request	Budget forecast			
Title 1 - Staff expenditure	14 788 256	14 871 200	15 949 350		+7.2%	16 133 200	16 379 900
Salaries & allowances	14 072 974	14 302 700	15 226 000		+6.5%	15 467 400	15 713 800
- Of which establishment plan posts	11 414 605	11 660 500	12 298 000		+5.5%	12 484 000	12 674 000
- Of which external personnel	2 658 369	2 642 200	2 928 000		+10.8%	2 983 400	3 039 800
Staff recruitment	29 630	9 000	25 000		+177.8%	9 000	9 000
Mission expenses	4 495	65 000	50 000		-23.1%	40 000	40 000
Socio-medical infrastructure	40 818	33 500	45 000		+34.3%	45 000	45 000
Training	141 739	115 000	200 000		+73.9%	200 000	200 000
External Services	383 017	280 000	309 850		+10.7%	282 300	282 600
Receptions, events and representation	39	4 000	4 000		0.0%	4 000	4 000
Social welfare	115 545	62 000	89 500		+44.4%	85 500	85 500
Other Staff related expenditure							
Title 2 - Infrastructure and operating expenditure	2 025 126	2 048 300	2 345 175		+14.5%	2 243 775	2 194 000
Rental of buildings and associated costs	685 368	729 100	875 075		+19.7%	829 075	845 300
Information, communication technology and data processing	1 212 136	1 143 000	1 307 000		+14.3%	1 254 000	1 188 000
Movable property and associated costs	9 861	-	10 000		#DIV/0!	5 000	5 000
Current administrative expenditure	36 122	38 000	48 100		+32.9%	50 500	50 500
Postage / Telecommunications	610	8 200	5 000		-39.0%	5 200	5 200
Meeting expenses	81 030	130 000	100 000		-23.1%	100 000	100 000
Running costs in connection with operational activities	-	-	-			-	-
Information and publishing	-	-	-			-	-
Studies	-	-	-			-	-
Other infrastructure and operating expenditure	-	-	-			-	-
Title 3 - Operational expenditure	4 166 619	4 806 500	4 333 431		-9.8%	4 785 025	5 051 100
Communication	443 654	375 000	375 000		0.0%	375 000	375 000
Corporate Performance and Stakeholders	183 425	214 500	248 000		+15.6%	288 000	240 000
Operational projects	3 536 171	3 817 000	3 310 431		-13.3%	3 722 025	4 036 100
Operational missions	3 370	400 000	400 000		0.0%	400 000	400 000
Total Subvention	20 980 002	21 726 000	22 627 956			23 162 000	23 625 000
Title 1 – additional (SLA EU-OSHA)		30 000	60 000			60 000	60 000
Title 4 – Extra subsidy		1 278 476	2 000 000		+56.4%	2 000 000	2 000 000
Delivery of Training for EU Delegation Staff (INTPA)		100 000	-			-	-
Internationalisation of CoVeS (EMPL)		1 000 000	-			-	-
Support to ACQF (GIZ)		178 476	-			-	-
Implementation of ACQF 2 (INTPA)							
DARYA (INTPA)		-	2 000 000			2 000 000	2 000 000
TOTAL	21 082 741	23 034 476	24 687 956		+7.2%	25 222 000	25 685 000

* Figures for 2024 and 2025 are indicative and based on the 2021-2027 MFF

Table 3 - Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations

Budget outturn	2019	2020	2021
Revenue actually received (+)	20 561 154.13	20 424 932	22 108 581
Payments made (-)	-19 740 813.61	-19 514 245	-20 229 869
Carry-over of appropriations (-)	- 590 354.04	-615 738	-1 884 246
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	18 732.64	51 565	72 935
Adjustment for carry-over of assigned revenue appropriations from previous year (+)		1 150	24 932
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	- 2 005.95	-462	1 530
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year (-)			
TOTAL	246 713.17	347 202	93 864

Budget outturn

The 2021 budget outturn is EUR 93,864. Having already reduced the request of subvention by EUR 300,000, the main reason behind the outturn is cancellation of appropriations carried forward from 2020 for Titles 1 and 2 (EUR 72,935).

Cancellation of commitment appropriations

The ETF has only cancelled EUR 18,616.49 commitment appropriations which were not used in Titles 1 and 2.

Cancellation of payment appropriations for the year and payment appropriations carried over

The ETF has only cancelled EUR 476.69 payment appropriations for the year which were not used in Title 3 and has cancelled EUR 72,935 payment appropriations carried forward from 2020.

For appropriations carried forward the main reason for cancellation of appropriations is linked to the conservative estimates made at the end of 2019 about the actual cost of the utilities. For payment appropriations for the year the main reason is the small delay observed in starting and implementing the operational activities.

Procurement

The global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts for operational activities in 2023 in support of ETF's strategic objectives is 6,043,431 Euros.

Table 4 Global budgetary envelope for procurement

Year	Planned	Total
2023	Procurement contracts for operational activities	6,043,431Euros

Within this global budgetary envelope, the ETF purchases its goods and services via procurement procedures as appropriate, mostly through framework contracts (new procedures and contracts in force). As an indication, contracts for the operational activities cover studies and assessments, consultancy and research services, supply of databases and platforms, surveys, various services for project implementation, communication services, translation services, conference organiser services and organisation of virtual meetings, logistical support to projects, travel services, evaluation services.

Extra budgetary projects include outsourcing of activities to be defined for each project.

The list of operational activities to be outsourced through new procurement procedures will be defined in the procurement plan and published on the ETF website for application by potential tenderers at the beginning of 2023.

Annex IV – Human Resources (quantitative)

Table 1 – Staff population and its evolution; Overview of all categories of staff

- Statutory staff and SNE

Human Resources	2021			2022	2023	2024	2025
	Authorised Budget	Actually filled as of 31/12/2021	Occupancy Rate %	Authorised staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff
Administrators (AD)	57	59	103.5%	58	59	59	59
Assistants (AST)	29	29	100%	28	27	27	27
Assistants/Secretaries (AST/SC)	0	0		0	0	0	0
ESTABLISHMENT PLAN POSTS*	86	88	102.3%	86	86	86	86
Contract Agents (CA)**	42	42	100.0%	42	42	42	42
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	0	0		0	0	0	0
Local Agents	1	1	100%	1	1	1	1
TOTAL STAFF	129	131	101.6%	129	129	129	129

*As of 2018, on the basis of article 38.2 of the ETF Financial Regulation, the ETF uses the opportunity to “offset the effects of part-time work”. At the end of 2021, all posts have been filled in reaching 86 + 2 TA (corresponding to 2 FTE of part time work).

** In 2021, DG HR recommended to offset long-term absences and part-time of CA with short term contracts of CA. The ETF may use this option in the future

- Additional external staff expected to be financed from grant, contribution or service-level agreements

Human Resources	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff	Envisaged staff
Contract Agents (CA)	0	0 ⁴⁷	3	3
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	3	3

- Other Staff

Structural service providers

	Actual filled as of 31/12/2021
Security	1
IT	1
Receptionist	1
Facilities support	1

Interim workers

	Actual filled as of 31/12/2021
Number	2

Table 2 – Multi -annual staff policy plan 2022-25

Function group and grade	2021				2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Authorised Budget		Actually filled as of 31/12 *		Authorised budget		Envisaged **		Envisaged **		Envisaged **	
	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts	Perm. posts	Temp. posts
AD 16												
AD 15												
AD 14		1		1		1		1		1		1
AD 13		5		2		5		5		5		5
AD 12		10		7		11		11		11		11
AD 11		10		8		10		10		10		10
AD 10		9		14		10		10		10		10
AD 9		13		12		12		12		12		12
AD 8		6		6		5		5		5		5
AD 7		3		8		4		4		4		4
AD 6				1								
AD 5								1		2		2
AD TOTAL	0	57	0	59	0	58	0	59	0	60	0	60
AST 11		1		1								
AST 10		3		1		3		2		2		2
AST 9		13		13		13		13		12		12
AST 8		6		2		6		6		6		6
AST 7		4		2		4		4		5		5
AST 6		1		5		2		2		1		1
AST 5		1		4								
AST 4				1								
AST 3												
AST 2												
AST 1												
AST TOTAL	0	29	0	29	0	28	0	27	0	26	0	26
AST/SC 6												
AST/SC 5												
AST/SC 4												
AST/SC 3												
AST/SC 2												
AST/SC 1												
AST/SC TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	86	0	88	0	86	0	86	0	86	0	86
GRAND TOTAL	86		88		86		86		86		86	

*As of 2018, on the basis of article 38.2 of the ETF Financial Regulation, the ETF uses the opportunity to “offset the effects of part-time work”. At the end of 2021, all posts have been filled in reaching 86 + 2 TA (corresponding to 2 FTE of part time work).

** Considering that the trend in part-time requests at ETF is above 2 FTE, we envisage to continue using the opportunity provided by art. 38.2 of the Financial Regulation.

External personnel

Contract Agents

Contract agents**	Authorised 2021	Recruited as of 31/12/2021	Envisaged 2022**	Envisaged 2023**	Envisaged 2024**	Envisaged 2025**
Function Group IV	14	15	14	14	14	14
Function Group III	23	21	23	24	24	24
Function Group II	5	6	5	4	4	4
Function Group I	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	42	42	42	42	42	42

** In 2021, DG HR recommended to offset long-term absences and part-time of CA with short term contracts of CA. The ETF may use this option in the future.

Local Agents

Local agents	Authorised 2021	Recruited as of 31/12/2021	Authorised 2022	Envisaged 2023	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
Function Group AL/N2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Seconded National Experts

Seconded National Experts	Authorised 2021	Recruited as of 31/12/2021	Authorised 2022	Envisaged 2023	Envisaged 2024	Envisaged 2025
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3 – Recruitment forecasts 2023 following retirement/Mobility or new requested posts (Information on the entry level for each type of posts: Indicative table)

Job title in the Agency	Type of contract		TA/Official	CA
	(Official, TA or CA)		Function group/grade of recruitment Internal (Brackets) and external (single grade) foreseen for publication*	Recruitment Function Group (I, II, III or IV)
	Due to foreseen retirement/mobility	New post requested due to additional tasks		
HCD Expert(s)	TA		TA AD6 AD8 internal TA AD7 external	
Junior HCD Expert(s)	TA		TA AD5 external	
Organisational Development/ Communication Officer	TA		TA	
Project management		CA	CA FG III/IV	

*indication of both is required

In addition, a number of TA are reaching or will be soon reaching their pensionable age. Nevertheless, they could decide to carry on working until the maximum pensionable age of 65 years. In any case, we estimate that the ETF will have around 10 TA retiring in the next 3 years. This may result in replacing some AST positions with AD ones (at AD 5/6 or AD 7/8 entry level).

Inter-agency mobility

Number of inter-agency mobility 2021 from and to the Agency:	0
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Annex V – Human resources (qualitative)

A. Recruitment policy

Implementing rules in place

		Yes	No	If no, which other IR are in place
Engagement of CA	Model Decision C(2019)3016	X		
Engagement of TA	Model Decision C(2015)1509	X		
Middle management	Model decision C(2018)2542	X		
Type of posts	Model Decision C(2018)8800	X		

B. Appraisal and reclassification/promotions

Implementing rules in place

		Yes	No	If no, which other IR s are in place
Reclassification of TA	Model Decision C(2015)9563	X		
Reclassification of CA	Model Decision C(2015)9561	X		

Table 1 - Reclassification of temporary agents/promotion of officials

Average seniority in the grade among reclassified staff							
Grades	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Actual average over 5 years	Average over 5 years (annex IB SR)
AD05	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	3.8	2.8
AD06	2.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7*	2.8
AD07	3.2	6.0	2.5	2.2	2.0	3.2	2.8
AD08	3.6	4.3	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.2	3
AD09	0.0	5.4	5.9	3.2	6.0	5.9	4
AD10	0.0	4.5	5.0	2.0	2.5	4.2	4
AD11	22.7	0.0	0.0	16.2	6.0	13.5⁴⁸	4
AD12	3.5	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.1*	6.7
AD13	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7
AST1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3
AST2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3
AST3	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5*	3
AST4	3.5	2.0	0.0	3.5	4.3	3.5	3
AST5	2.0	0.0	5.5	0.0	4.3	4.3	4
AST6	0.0	0.0	4.5	3.5	3.5	4.0	4
AST7	2.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	4
AST8	2.5	0.0	0.0	4.8	3.7	4.0	4
AST9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
AST10 (Senior assistant)	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	5

⁴⁸ The ETF has always cautiously assessed the reclassification of AD 11 to AD 12 and has high expectations on the level of performance and responsibilities for that grade (considering AD 12 is the highest and last grade to which AD non managers staff members (non-managers) can aspire to. Those reclassified over the last 5 years from AD 11 to AD 12, were recruited before the reform of the Staff Regulation in 2004. Their recruitment grade was already very high. Therefore, the career perspective is shorter, which implies that a reclassification requires more time.

AST/SC1							4
AST/SC2							5
AST/SC3							5.9
AST/SC4							6.7
AST/SC5							8.3

* to be noted: if the number of reclassifications at that grade during the reference period is 3 or less, the average can be below the minimum set in annex IB of the SR

Table 2 - Reclassification of contract staff

Function Group	Grade	Staff in activity at 01/01/2021 and eligible for reclassification	How many staff members were reclassified in 2021	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members	Average number of years in grade of reclassified staff members according to decision C(2015)9561
CA IV	17	1			Between 6 and 10 years
	16	3	3	3.8	Between 5 and 7 years
	15	3	1	2.3	Between 4 and 6 years
	14	2			Between 3 and 5 years
	13				Between 3 and 5 years
CA III	11	4			Between 6 and 10 years
	10	5			Between 5 and 7 years
	9	3			Between 4 and 6 years
	8				Between 3 and 5 years
CA II	6	3			Between 6 and 10 years
	5	1			Between 5 and 7 years
	4				Between 3 and 5 years
CA I	2				Between 6 and 10 years
	1				Between 3 and 5 years

C. HR implementing rules foreseen for adoption in 2023

The upcoming HR implementing rules foreseen for adoption in 2023 are not yet known.

D. Gender representation

Table 1 - Data on 31/12/2021 statutory staff (only officials, TA,CA and LA)

		Official		Temporary		Contract and Local Agents		Grand Total	
		Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%
Female	Administrator			30	34%	12	28%	42	32%
	Assistant (AST & AST/SC)			23	26%	22	51%	45	34%
	TOTAL			53	60%	34	79%	87	66%
Male	Administrator			29	33%	3	7%	32	25%
	Assistant (AST & AST/SC)			6	7%	6	14%	12	9%

	TOTAL			35	40%	9	21%	44	34%
	GRAND TOTAL			88	100%	43	100%	131	100%

Table 2 - Data regarding gender evolution over 5 years of the Middle and Senior management⁴⁹

	2017		2021	
	Number	%	Number	%
Female Managers	4	50%	5	50%
Male Managers	4	50%	5	50%

E. Geographical Balance

Table 1 - Table on 31/12/2021 - statutory staff only (officials, TA,CA and LA)

Nationality	AD+FGIV		AST+FGII+FGIII+LA		Grand Total	
	Number	% of Total staff in AD + FGIV	Number	% of Total staff in AST+FGII+III+LA	Number	% of total staff
AT	3	4%		0%	3	2%
BE	4	5%	3	5%	7	5%
CY	1	1%		0%	1	1%
CZ	1	1%		0%	1	1%
DE	5	7%	2	4%	7	5%
DK	1	1%		0%	1	1%
EE		0%	2	4%	2	1%
ES	5	7%		0%	5	4%
FI	3	4%	1	2%	4	3%
FR	4	5%	2	4%	6	5%
GR	3	4%		0%	3	2%
IE	3	4%		0%	3	2%
IT	21	28%	35	61%	56	43%
LU		0%	1	2%	1	1%
LV		0%	1	2%	1	1%
MA	1	1%		0%	1	1%
MK	1	1%		0%	1	1%
NL	3	4%	1	2%	4	3%
PL	2	3%	2	4%	4	3%
PT	2	3%		0%	2	1%
RO	2	3%	3	5%	5	4%
SI		0%	1	2%	1	1%
TN	1	1%		0%	1	1%
TR	1	1%		0%	1	1%

⁴⁹ From Head of Unit only.

UA	3	4%		0%	3	2%
UK	4	5%	3	5%	7	5%
Grand Total	74	100%	57	100%	131	100%

Table 2 - Evolution over 5 years of the most represented nationality in the Agency

Most represented nationality	2017		2021	
	Number	%	Number	%
IT	53	42%	56	43%

The ETF receives constantly a higher proportion of applications from its host country despite the wide publication of its vacancy notices, in particular for administrative and support positions (AST/FGII-FGIII), which explains the constant higher number of Italian nationals recruited. The ETF selection procedures are merit-based but where there are equal merits, the ETF would favour the under-represented nationalities.

F. Schooling

Agreement in place with the European School(s) of				
Contribution agreements signed with the EC on type I European schools	Yes		No	X
Contribution agreements signed with the EC on type II European schools	Yes		No	X
Number of service contracts in place with international schools:				

Description of any other solutions or actions in place:

Due to the absence of a European School in Turin and the fact that there are several international schools which are extremely expensive, the ETF covers up to 50% of the cost of fees above the ceiling foreseen in the Staff Regulations. This is done with the scope to support the ETF's capacity to attract and retain staff as a social support measure. The ETF has applied a similar principle for pre-school and kindergarten from school year 2021/22.

Annex VI - Environment management

The ETF vision is to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals following the EU approach⁵⁰. Hence, to promote environmental protection and sustainable development to optimize the use of resources by both reducing their use as much as possible and using renewable resources.

To contribute to environmental protection and to implement the above-mentioned vision, the ETF has established an Environmental Management System, which complies with the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)⁵¹. Within the overall regulatory framework, the ETF is committed to:

1. Protecting the environment and minimizing pollution through the sustainable use of resources;
2. Complying with the relevant environmental legislation, regulations and other compliance obligations;
3. Creating, maintaining and continuously improving the Environmental Management System and its environmental performance;
4. Ensuring awareness of environmental issues and the active participation of all staff, with a view to reducing the ETF environmental impact;
5. Encouraging suppliers and external stakeholders to abide by the environmental protection principles established by the ETF.

With the help of its Environmental Management System, the ETF pursues the following strategic environmental goals:

- Shifting towards the use of renewable energy sources and reducing overall energy consumption;
- Reducing the general use of resources and materials (incl. paper, plastics, gadgets, office equipment and furniture, stationery and other supplies);
- Reducing greenhouse/polluting gas and particulate matter emissions resulting from ETF-related travels (incl. commuting by staff, staff missions, travels of event participants and contractors);
- Reducing water consumption;
- Reducing and effectively managing waste;
- Shifting towards more sustainable events;
- Raising awareness among staff on environmental issues.

The ETF makes available the resources necessary to implement its Environmental Policy and to achieve its strategic environmental goals. The ETF has obtained EMAS and ISO certification in 2021. Following EMAS certification, the ETF indicators and targets will be used to monitor the implementation of the action plan and report annually in the ETF's Annual Activity Report. The ETF approach to a more environmentally responsible way of working will have an impact on programming, planning, and implementation of the ETF work programme, particularly in relation to missions and events, whether physical or online.

⁵⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/international-strategies/sustainable-development-goals/eu-approach-sustainable-development-0_en.

⁵¹ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm.

Annex VII - Buildings

#	Building Name and type	Location	SURFACE AREA(in m²)			RENTAL CONTRACT					Host country (grant or support)	Building present value (€)
			Office space	non-office	Total	RENT (€/year)	Duration of the contract	Type	Breakout clause Y/N	Conditions attached to the breakout clause (if applicable)		
1	Villa Gualino	Turin, Italy	2,175 m²	3,825 m²	6,000 m²	1	30 years until 2027	Rent is covered by a Convention complemented by detailed service contracts			NO	N/A

The ETF does not have any building projects in the planning phase, nor any building projects submitted to the European Parliament and the Council

Annex VIII - Privileges and immunities

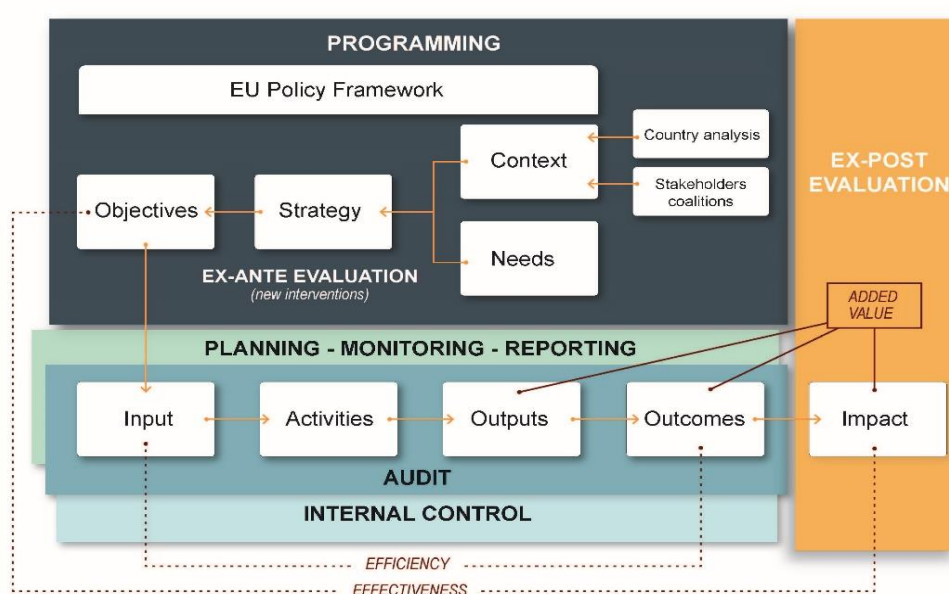
Agency privileges	Privileges granted to staff	
	Protocol of privileges and immunities / diplomatic status	Education / day care
<p>* Local premises have been provided by local authorities on the basis of a convention that provides for the following main essential points: ETF to participate in the costs of refurbishing the premises to be used, ETF to pay a symbolic rent, ETF to participate in the costs of maintenance of the building</p> <p>* General support is provided by Italy against unauthorised access or other forms of disturbances to the premises.</p> <p>*ETF is authorised to install and operate communications systems.</p> <p>* ETF official communication is not subject to any restrictions or to confidentiality breaches.</p> <p>*The Protocol of privileges and immunities is applicable to ETF.</p> <p>* ETF, its assets and funds may not be subject to administrative or legal measures of constraints.</p> <p>*Premises (including temporary premises) and buildings are inviolable, except in case of emergencies/ fire.</p> <p>* ETF, its assets and funds are exempt from taxes or direct duties, except for taxes on public services.</p> <p>* ETF is exempt from the payment of VAT for purchases of goods or service. The value of the exemption is established in the law applicable to international organisations in Italy.</p> <p>* ETF imports and exports are exempted from customs duties, taxes, prohibitions or restrictions.</p> <p>* Goods transported as hand baggage are treated as diplomatic luggage.</p> <p>* ETF vehicles are exempted from any taxes, duties or fees or from any import prohibitions/ restrictions.</p> <p>* ETF exempted from payment social security and health insurance contributions on salaries paid to staff, except for local agents.</p>	<p>*Staff immune from legal proceedings for acts performed in the exercise of their official duties.</p> <p>* Staff exempted from taxes on salaries and emoluments paid by ETF.</p> <p>* Staff, spouses and dependent members of family not subject to immigration restrictions or registration formalities for foreigners.</p> <p>* For currency exchange staff has the same privileges as officials of equal rank in the diplomatic missions.</p> <p>* Staff, spouses and dependent members of family receive assistance for repatriation in the event of international crises.</p> <p>* Staff who is neither permanently resident in Italy at the time of their appointment, nor Italian, may, duty-free and without prohibitions and restrictions, import from the country of their last residence or the country of which they are nationals, when they first take up their post, for a period of one year from their appointment for a maximum of two shipments, their own furniture and personal effects, including a vehicle bought at the conditions of that country, which will be registered in special series.</p> <p>* Staff may export, in the year following the date of cessation of their duties, without prohibitions and restrictions, their own furniture and personal effects, including vehicles.</p> <p>* The ETF Director, spouse and dependent members of family, is granted privileges and immunities, facilities and concessions granted by the Italy to members of equivalent rank in the diplomatic corps in Italy.</p> <p>* Staff, who is neither permanently resident in Italy at the time of their appointment nor Italian, may, when they first take up their post, for a period of one year from their appointment purchase a motor vehicle free from taxes and charges.</p> <p>* Italy issues a special identity card to staff, spouses and dependent members of family to prove that the holder is ETF staff and enjoys privileges and immunities.</p>	None

Annex IX – Evaluations

Evaluations in the ETF are integrated into the overall performance management system of the Agency and are commissioned either by the ETF or by the European Commission. ETFs evaluation practices are based on the principles of the European Commission, 'Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolkit':

- Capture the results of ETF's interventions and evidence of impact and added value;
- Improve the ETF's long-term capacity to achieve results and impact by identifying and disseminating the lessons learned from experience;
- Identify opportunities to adapt ETF's interventions according to achieved impact and country development stage (for example to scale up ETF work and/or put in place an exit strategy).

ETF LOGIC MODEL



As an Agency of the European Commission, the ETF is subject to regular (4 year) evaluation by the Commission in consultation with the Governing Board of the implementation of the ETF Regulation. The Commission presents the results of the evaluation to the European Parliament, Council and European Economic and Social Committee following which the ETF formulates an action plan to remedy any problems or implement any recommendations. The action plan is entered into the ETF Improvement Plan with regular report to the Commission and Governing Board.

ETF commissioned evaluations mainly focus on assessing the extent to which the ETF's activities funded by the EU Contribution have achieved planned results, their added value and impact. According to the ETF Financial Regulation⁵², retrospective evaluations shall be undertaken periodically and in sufficient time for the findings to be taken into account in ex-ante evaluations or impact assessments that support the preparation of related programme activities.

The ETF develops a multiannual rolling plan for potential evaluations. These are then considered together with inputs from previous evaluations and audits, as well as from partner countries and the

⁵² Financial Regulation of the European Training Foundation, Turin, 15 June 2019 (GB-19-DEC-008).

EC, in the planning discussions and decision-making process annually. For the period 2023-2025, the rolling plan includes three types of possible evaluations for consideration.

Individual Activity Areas

The rolling plan outlines potential priorities to be considered, such as ENE in 2023, based either on their maturity or previous evaluations already undertaken for each activity area.

Issues transversal to two or more Activity Areas

These include issues that ETF contributes to across activity areas, such as governance and system change, or functions used in more than one activity area, such as anticipation, policy advice or monitoring and assessment.

Specific operational topics

Topics can be selected for evaluation either individually or through complementarities.

Annex X - Organisational management and internal control systems strategy

Organisational performance and development actions are identified through regular monitoring of a framework of indicators based on a core of 15 key performance indicators and the Internal Control principles to ensure efficient and effective organisational performance and proactive organisational change (see Annex VIII). This, together with a continued monitoring and evaluation of its operational delivery, performance and added value, provides the necessary evidence to ensure the quality of the work of the agency and a culture of quality enhancement and improvement.

KPIS FOR ETF OVERALL PERFORMANCE 2023 - 2025

Administration

Activities completion rate ^{53*}	Rate (%) of completion of the activities of the ETF Work Programme Target >90%
Timely achievement of activities of WP*	Rate (%) of activities of the ETF Work Program timely achieved in year: Target 80%
Timely submission of WP/SPD to EC*	The Annual WP/SPD timely submitted to the EC. Target 100%

Operational

Knowledge uptake	Uptake of the developed ETF knowledge products
Programme design	Geographic and thematic coverage of EU Requests for support to projects and programmes design
Network level of participation	Engagement rate of active members in ETF networks
Stakeholder engagement	Number and typology of stakeholders engaged in ETF activities

Human resources

Administrative support, / operational staff ratio*	(Administrative support and coordination job type category)/(Operational job type category / Neutral job type category) Target <30%
Average vacancy rate*	% of authorised posts of the annual establishment plan which are vacant at the end of the year, including job offers sent before 31 December. Target <5%
Staff engagement*	Rate (%) of staff engagement from satisfaction survey within the agency. (every two years) Target >2% increase

Finance

Commitment appropriation implementation*	Rate (%) of implementation of Commitment Appropriations. Target >98%
Payment appropriations cancellation rate*	Rate (%) of cancellation of Payment Appropriations. Target <2%
Timely payments*	Rate (%) of payments executed within the legal/contractual deadlines. Target >90%
Rate of outturn*	Total payments in year N and carry-forwards to Year N+1, as a % of the total EU funding received in Year Target >96%
Audit recommendation implementation*	Rate (%) of external and accepted internal audit recommendations implemented within agreed deadlines. Target >90%

* [SWD\(2015\)62](#) – Guidelines on KPI's for Directors of EU agencies.

The ETF has a robust principle-based system of internal controls in place. In November 2017 the ETF adopted a framework of 17 Internal Control Principles, in line with the Commission's revised internal control framework.

The ETF internal control framework helps the ETF to reach its objectives and sustain operational and financial performance. It provides reasonable assurance that internal controls are in place and function correctly to mitigate risks, and that any potential weaknesses are addressed in the form of corrective actions.

The ETF monitors the implementation of internal controls on a regular basis through a number of internal control indicators. A robust assessment of the effectiveness of internal controls is carried out every year, the aim of which is to provide evidence-based reasonable assurance the internal controls are in place function as intended, and that any weaknesses are identified and improvement actions put in place accordingly.

In 2023 the ETF will follow up to the IAS audit on complementarity and cooperation mechanisms between the ETF and the EC services (audit that took place in 2021-2022). The aim was to provide reasonable assurance regarding the internal control measures in place to support the effectiveness of cooperation and interactions between the ETF and the EC services, through an assessment of cooperation mechanisms and funding. In addition, the ETF will follow up the internal audit carried out by IAS on digitalisation and review of internal processes in order to have an action plan approved and further implemented. The external evaluation of ETF by DG EMPL which started in Q4 (tbc) of 2022 will continue in 2023 (tbc) and lessons learned will feed into ETF's strategic planning for improvement measures to be implemented in 2023-2024. In parallel, raising internal awareness of risks and controls will continue to be a primary focus for the ETF.

Since 2014 the ETF has put in place an overall approach to develop and implement an in-house anti-fraud culture. In this context an Anti-fraud Strategy has been adopted to identify and assess existing anti-fraud measures as well as the residual areas of intervention needed to strengthen the ETF anti-fraud framework. In line with best practices and guidance issued by OLAF, the strategy has been updated in 2019 and complemented by an annual Action Plan.

Therefore, in 2023 the ETF will continue to strengthen its anti-fraud culture by focussing on the consolidation of the achieved in-house awareness together with further awareness raising with the aim of preventing conflicts of interest, irregularities and fraud. The ETF/OLAF Correspondent will interact with the relevant in-house actors through a working group on "fraud risks" to review key target areas and preventive/mitigation actions in place. This activity will be complemented by regular and tailored actions namely the ex-post evaluation on the use of declarations of interest and conflict of interest forms, ex-post verification of financial transactions, the analysis of the register of exceptions and of the audit recommendations.

Annex XI - Plan for grant, contribution and service-level agreements

The ETF participates in several ongoing EC service level agreements for services provided by other entities such as with DIGIT for IT security support, IT hosting and e-prior services, with DG BUDG for the use of ABAC, with DG HR/PMO for the provision of HR management tools and management of entitlements, with DG SG for HAN services as well as with CDT and EPSO.

Within the ETF mandate and Financial Regulation, and in addition to the EU contribution, the ETF may receive additional revenue from EC/Union bodies through **Contribution agreement or Service level agreement** and from Member states/third countries/international organisations/non-Union bodies through **bilateral cooperation agreement or bilateral agreement** for services performed.

From EC/Union bodies:

- Additional funds through **Contribution agreement** – *for actions compatible with the ETF mandate and objectives, justified by the specific expertise of the ETF, the nature of the additional tasks cannot be within the scope of the tasks already financed by the EC subsidy.*
- Funds/reimbursement through **Service level agreement** – *for provision of services*

From Member states, third countries, international organisations, non-Union bodies:

1. Financial contribution to a specific project through **bilateral cooperation agreement** – *for contribution to ETF specific projects or actions*
2. Reimbursement for services performed through **bilateral agreement** – *for provision of services*

EXTRA SUBSIDY AGREEMENTS IN FORCE

- Service level agreement with DG EMPL (ARES(2021)6598644) for implementation of activities in the area of “The international Dimension of centres of Vocational Excellence: Building a strong international cooperation dimension on Vocational Excellence” (Internationalisation of CoVES) for an overall amount of 1,000,000 € from November 2021 to November 2023;
- Contribution agreement with EU Delegation in Kazakhstan (NDICI ASIA/2022/433-483) for the implementation of the project on “Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia” (DARYA) for an overall amount of 10,000,000 € from June 2022 to June 2027.

EXTRA SUBSIDY AGREEMENTS UNDER NEGOTIATION

- Contribution agreement with DG INTPA (ADM-MULTI/2022/435-528) for Opportunity-Driven VET Seminars for an overall amount of 100,000 € being formalised;
- Implementation of the second phase of the project on the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVES2) through a service level agreement with DG EMPL being formalised;
- Implementation of the second phase of the project on African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF2) through a contribution agreement with DG INTPA and the African Union to be formalised in 2023;
- With DG NEAR discussions are ongoing on the diagnostics of education and training systems.

Annex XII - Strategy for cooperation with third countries and/or international organisations

Cooperation with third countries and international organisations in the field of Human Capital Development is explicitly stated in the mandate of the ETF⁵⁴ i.e. working with partner countries, other international actors, EU Agencies and social partners at European level including participation of third countries who share the EU commitment to supporting Human Capital Development in third countries.

More specifically:

1. To facilitate the exchange of information and experience among donors engaged in human capital development reform in partner countries, and
2. To disseminate information and encourage networking and the exchange of experience and good practice between the EU and partner countries and among partner countries in human capital development issues.

For the ETF there are three main reasons to enter into or establish a partnership.

1. Advance the HCD Agenda in the ETF Partner Countries

A partnership provides the means to an end in creating the potential to achieve a reach the ETF could not achieve alone. It also facilitates the opportunity to increase the dissemination of good practices and ETF proven methodologies. This extends to influencing the reform processes and the development of strategic policies.

2. Access Capacities and Resources Beyond ETF's Current Means

Working in partnership increases the potential to find new or additional resources, enhances efficiency gains and cost saving; it affords the opportunity to make savings based on the economies of scale and provides increased access to resources and capacities outside the organisation. It also enables improvements in operational efficiency (cost/benefit analysis) and creates the opportunity to unlock expertise expansion and sustain policy implementation.

3. Wider Influence

Partnerships allow the opportunity to increase the influence of the ETF and provide opportunities to further advance the Human Capital Development agenda. They enable the ETF to increase its own visibility and credibility, thus enabling a greater capacity for the first reason to partner. Creating strategic alliances will enhance the ETF's international capacities, reach and knowledge base.

In the above context, the ETF strategic approach to cooperate effectively supports the identification of those partnerships that provide the organisation the greatest value to implement the ETF strategy 2021-2027 and to become **a global asset for the EU**, a resource to be used in support to the EU investments in human capital development through **a diversified provision of clearly agreed services**:

⁵⁴ Regulation (EC) No 1339/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 establishing a European Training Foundation (recast) <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/1339/oj>.

- as an important resource for programming and preparing EU investment in human capital development and for monitoring and evaluating the resulting actions. This applies to both individual country assistance and centrally managed regional or thematic programmes;
- a **partner to the EU to enhance the strategic impact of EU funds**. On request, the ETF could upscale selected methodologies, intelligence, diagnosis or policy advice to a wider range of countries with the support of dedicated funds in accordance with the ETF's mandate and the scope afforded by its financial regulation.

Annex XIII - Collaboration with other EU Agencies

ETF-CEDEFOP COOPERATION 2023

Topic	Collaboration
Qualifications development	<p>Shared products (publications) : co-design, development and production, (also with UNESCO) of the fifth edition of the Global NQF Inventory.</p> <p>Joint advice to Commission: in the EQF, exchange of data and intelligence on qualifications systems and frameworks in the Advisory Group's sub-group on EQF to NQF comparison for third countries.</p> <p>Information-sharing, expertise exchange, peer learning: in particular contribute to Skills Agenda implementation in micro-credentials, individual learning accounts, interoperable databases of qualifications, common European VET profiles, upskilling pathways and international qualifications, use of ESCO and Europass in third countries.</p>
Skills matching and anticipation/identification	<p>Concrete thematic cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Platform economy/platform work: Based on the past year's exchanges with Cedefop on the new forms of employment and platform work, the knowledge sharing will continue in 2023, including participation in events, exchanges through peer learning events and technical meetings.- European Skills and Jobs survey (ESJS): ETF and Cedefop will exchange information and findings, will have regular interaction to support the development/adaptation of the survey questionnaire and preparatory work for a joint publication to be developed in 2023, where selected results from the EU and surveyed ETF PCs will be analysed.- Upskilling pathways and addressing the needs of low-skilled adults and/or at social risk.- Flexibilization and individualization of skills development approaches and novel arrangements to access and participate in (re)training via Active Labour Market Programmes (including the potential of individual learning accounts).

	<p>Network building and knowledge sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invitation of Cedefop's experts in the ETF's Network of Experts on new skills needs and skills anticipation. - Exchange and knowledge sharing on calls for innovative proposals from the research community, with possible cooperation on the annual event. - Regular communication and exchange of ETF's recent initiatives with Cedefop, in particular regarding the skills for green transition, use of Big Data in LMI, future of skills needs in selected economic sectors, and future skills needs in craftsmanship.
<p>Effective/Innovative teaching and learning</p>	<p>Network-building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cedefop membership of ETF's expert group to steer its Creating New Learning's project (CNL) (including an informal consultative group between the ETF and the Cedefop to support the ETF's UA Re-Emerge(ncy) activity regarding the micro credentials for VET e-learning and adults' re-skilling and upskilling in Ukraine). - Joint activities engaging support from the ETF's Community of Innovative Educators (under CNL). <p>Co-development of common tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing research tools and experiences in their use, and pooling of data, in respective projects in curricula innovation (notably Key Competences), VET teachers and trainers' professional development; teaching, learning and assessment methods. - Dissemination and enrichment of Cedefop and ETF's practical tools for policy makers and VET practitioners. From ETF's side: READY, Scaffold, Teacher Booster. - Collaboration of ETF/CNL and Cedefop experts on ReferNet work in green skills and digital education for teachers (reference to READY and SELFIE Tools). - Possible partnership and interest of ETF's joining the Cedefop's Pan-European survey of VET teachers and trainers with regard of ETF's PCs (in the initial phase, at least in one ETF partner country). A

	<p>particular interest from ETF - evidence on digital education. Cedefop has consulted ETF at an earlier stage of their development of a survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall benefit for the ETF PCs coming from this cooperation and exchange with Cedefop. <p>Key competence in VET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ETF's (Creating New Learning, CNL) expert engaged in consultations/expert steering group for the Cedefop project on Entrepreneurship competence in VET (continued from 2020, 2021 and 2022) and joint engagement in key competence discussions with partners (JRC, others).
Centres of Vocational Excellence	Exchange of knowledge and expertise.
System change and lifelong learning	<p>Copenhagen/Osnabruck process follow up – Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation in the development and implementation of the joint monitoring framework for the policy objectives and reform priorities under the Osnabruck Declaration and the VET Recommendation. - Joint participation and presentation of findings in the ACVT/DGVT meetings.
Cooperating through the GLAD network	<p>Regular Exchange of input based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening partnerships to foster LLL - Governance and governing bodies - Collaborative governance and financing - Civil society organisations' relevant role in LLL.
Knowledge sharing seminars	<p>Thessaloniki, June 2023.</p> <p>Torino, December 2023.</p>

ETF-EUROFOUND COOPERATION 2023

Topic/Action	Activities and Responsible
Knowledge coordination/ exchange	<p>New forms of employment, including platform work: invitation to Eurofound to participate in the knowledge sharing seminar on platform economies and their policy implications in terms of working conditions and skills development, particularly for young workforce. The knowledge sharing seminar could involve the participation of EC, Cedefop, ELA and other experts.</p> <p>Skills Lab Network of Experts: continuation of active participation of Eurofound in the events of the Network, including dissemination of research results and other relevant information through regular newsletter of the network.</p>
Implementation of surveys, exchange on data collection and joint analysis	<p>E-survey on living and working: after successful roll out in 2022, joint implementation of the second wave in most ETF partner countries next to EU-27 in March-April 2023 (period tbc), publication and dissemination of results in autumn of 2023.</p> <p>Joint collection and sharing of evidence on working life: co-development of Moldova and Georgia working life profiles in 2023 and possible update of Ukraine WLCP. Joint publication of WLCPs and organisation of country workshops.</p>
Administration, shared services, internal control and risk management	<p>Ongoing exchange of info the Agencies' performance indicator methodologies.</p> <p>Exchange and building on good practices in internal control and risk management (including peer review).</p> <p>Continuing collaboration between Eurofound and ETD (including also EU-OSHA and Cedefop) to support the Commission evaluation of four DG EMPL agencies.</p>
Development of Programming Document	<p>In consideration of the different mandates of the Agencies the joint action plan for the next year will be prepared following the exchange of draft work programmes before their approval by the respective Administrative Boards. Both agencies will refer to each other's work and cooperation where appropriate as well as in relevant strategic discussion.</p>
Organisation of the annual consultation	<p>Organisation of annual (online) meetings to discuss and assess progresses on the above and other relevant issues.</p>

Annex XIV – Planned requests from EU services 2023⁵⁵

POLICY ADVICE TO EU FOR POLICY DIALOGUE

Country	Description	Project	Budget	Expertise (WD)	Requestor	Status
Lebanon	Contributing to a targeted strategic dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) on the education priorities highlighted by ETF through the Education Diagnostic (EDA) and support implementation of specific actions.	2.7	0	60	EUD	CONTINUATION
Africa, EE, SEMED	Support the pilot of the comparison of NQFs in Partner country Cape Verde with EQF	2.3	30 000	35	DG EMPL	CONTINUATION
	Support the pilot of the comparison of RQF SADC	2.3	20 000		DG EMPL	CONTINUATION
	Support the pilot of the comparison of NQFs in Partner country Moldova with EQF	2.3	TBC		DG EMPL	No formal request – under discussion
	Support the pilot of the comparison of NQFs in Partner country Georgia with EQF	2.3	TBC		DG EMPL	No formal request – under discussion
All	Peer Learning Event EQF Comparison Hybrid event Q4 2022	2.3	110 000	TBD	DG EMPL	CONTINUATION
All	Updated guidelines for the comparison of qualifications frameworks with the EQF	2.3		TBD	DG EMPL	CONTINUATION
Eastern Partnership	Expertise contribution to EU4Youth,	2.2 2.3		30 (2.2) 10 (2.3)	DGNEAR	CONTINUATION
	Expertise contribution to EU4Digital;	T		TBD		
	Expertise contribution to the new EaP Education programme (TBC)	T		TBD		
	Input to the EaP Summit in 2023;	T		TBD		
Western Balkans	Provision of support and advice to the Western Balkans countries for introducing Youth Guarantee schemes (in partnership with ILO)	2.2	25 000	100	DG EMPL / DG NEAR	CONTINUATION
		2.3	0	10		
		2.8				

⁵⁵ Planned requests with approximate budget and resource allocation without mission costs. Acronyms: T: transversal – TBD: to be defined – TBC: to be confirmed.

Southern and Eastern Mediterranean	Input to UfM CoP Youth Employment (GIZ together with UfM, EC, ETF)	2.2.	0	20	DG EMPL/UfM	CONTINUATION
All⁵⁶	Provision of ad hoc input in the sub-committee meetings on Employment/Education/research	T		15	DG EMPL – DG EAC - EEAS	REGULAR INPUT

Planned resources - Budget € 185 000 (excluding missions) and Expertise 280 WD

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Country	Description	Project	Budget	Expertise	Requestor	Status
SEET	Support to the assessment of Economic Reform Programmes	2.2	0	15 (including time of CLOs)	DG EMPL	REGULAR
SEET + MR, TN, KYR, KAZ	Inventory of Validation of Non formal and informal learning	2.3	85 000	100	DG EMPL	REGULAR (every two years)
ALL	NQF Inventory	2.3	70 000	95	DG EMPL, Cedefop, Unesco, UIL	REGULAR (every two years)
SEET (except BiH and KOS)	Osnabruck monitoring	2.7	55 000 ⁵⁷	70		REGULAR
Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED)	Provision of expertise input in the follow up of the monitoring of the 5th UfM Ministerial Declaration on Employment and labour	2.1		80	UfM DG EMPL	CONTINUATION

Planned resources - Budget € 210 000 (excluding missions) and Expertise 360 WD

⁵⁶ ETF will ensure input in thematic sub-committee meetings according to plan shared by DG EMPL and DG EAC as well as to country team meetings organised by EEAS

⁵⁷ NB: in IP 2023 the amount indicated for expertise/editing is 90,000, but € 35,000 were planned for 2022. We may still be able to commit them in 2022

METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS AND GUIDES

Country	Description	Project	Budget	Expertise	Requestor	Status
Kosovo*	Implementation of the Rapid Education Diagnosis (RED) in Kosovo*	2.7	16 000	60	DG NEAR	CONTINUATION

Planned resources - Budget € 16 000 Expertise 60 WD

DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE EU BILATERAL AND REGIONAL EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT CYCLE

Country	Description	Project	Budget	Expertise	Requestor	Status
Azerbaijan	Provision of content and methodological advice to the EUD on the set of ongoing HCD projects from the Eu annual Action Programme 2018 Education for Employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "VET for the future", implemented by UNDP - Forthcoming FWC "Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and credit transfer in Vocational Education and Training" and TA Project as well as "Support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population fostering decent job opportunities" - "Support to the Ministry of Education in further development of NQF Level 5 qualifications and strengthening the resilience of the education system" - "Support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population fostering decent job opportunities" 	T	25 000	50	EUD	CONTINUATION
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Support to the EU Delegation - support to EU delegation in defining an IPA 2023 programme in the area of digital education	2.5	0	30	EUD	NEW
	Support in the area of Youth Guarantee	2.2	TBC	30	EUD	NEW
Egypt	Support to the EUD in the formulation of a new project intervention in the field of TVET	T	25 000	45	EUD	CONTINUATION
Georgia	Draft the twinning fiche for the Skills Agency and draft the guidelines for a grant scheme (linked to continued support to the skills component of the new DCFTA implementation and SME development)	T		45	EUD	CONTINUATION

Georgia	Provision of support in the identification of new programme in HCD (probably Budget support)	T	25 000	45		NEW
Israel	EU Programming –follow up on twinning to be discussed between EUD and Israeli counterparts	2.3	0	10	EUD	NEW
Israel	EaFA,- supporting Ministry of Economy and Industry (Labour part), in their rolling out the commitments of employers/businesses to joint EaFA.	2.2		15	EUD EC EMPL	CONTINUATION
Israel	"Erasmus Plus - KA2 - Strategic Partnerships in the field of education, training and youth- support and internationalisation within ERASMUS+ Capacity building for VET and Key action 2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practice"	T	0	20	EUD	CONTINUATION
Jordan	Support in the identification of a new project in TVET including support the EU delegation and national stakeholders to design a comprehensive WBL approach mainly in initial VET (to be integrated in next EU funded programme).	T	0	15	EUD	CONTINUATION
Kosovo*	Provision of technical inputs to the implementation of the IPA projects ALLED II (IPA 2017), ESVETPRO (IPA 2018) and ALLED III (IPA 2022), to ERP 2023-2025, EC-GoK Subcommittee meeting and EC progress reports	T	0	25	EUD	CONTINUATION
Lebanon	Provision advice and technical input on the EU interventions in the field of HCD	T	0	20	EUD	CONTINUATION
Moldova	Consultation on EU Action Programme	T	TBD	25	EUD	CONTINUATION
Montenegro	IPA III, 2023, 2024 comprehensive sector programme (under discussion with NEAR)	T	TBD	20	EUD	TBC
North Macedonia	Content and methodological advice to the ongoing EU IPA II projects	T	0	17	EUD	CONTINUATION
Palestine**	Support to the EUREP during implementation of the YEP project, implemented by ENABEL. ETF as observer in the Steering Committee of the project.	2.2	0	23	EU REP	CONTINUATION
Palestine**	Contribution to the VET Sectoral Working Groups (to be confirmed by the EU Rep Office and/or the NTC).	T	0	10	EU REP	CONTINUATION
Serbia	"Social inclusion of Youth through innovative, integrated and tailored services"	T	0	25	EUD	CONTINUATION

	Support in the EU financed/IPA 23 Education and Training Sector Budget Support Erasmus Plus					
Tajikistan	Content and methodological advice during the implementation of the Tajikistan Quality Education Support Programme II (QESP II)	T	0	10	EUD	CONTINUATION
	Provision of input in the new Budget support on TVET through content and methodological advice during implementation (TBC)	T	0	35	EUD	CONTINUATION
Tunisia	Provision of input in the preparation of a new project action in the education sector (PASE)	T	0	25	EUD	NEW
Tunisia	Provision of input in the new migration project (TBC)	T	0	15	EUD	NEW
Türkiye	Support to Türkiye Ministry of National Education through EU-funded projects for active learning, teacher professional development for innovative teaching, innovative pedagogies and learning environments	T	0	35	EUD	CONTINUATION + NEW
Türkiye	EU TA project supporting Turkish Qualifications System and Framework Operation (TUYEP)	2.3		10	EUD	NEW (to be confirmed)
Türkiye	EU Technical Assistant Programme Future of Work- A Future of Work that Works for Women, Gender Equality in the Working Life. EU Technical Assistant Programme Development of Human Resources through Vocational Education and Training and Improving the Quality of VET in Türkiye (IQVET) Project III Sectorial Center of VET Excellence (SCoE) for VET teachers Contribution to IPA III (according to requests)	T		25	EUD	CONTINUATION
Ukraine	Continue support to the EUDEL and DG NEAR Participate in Sector Working Groups for Recovery Participate in EU4Skills Steering Committee	T		TBD	DG NEAR EUD	CONTINUATION
Ukraine	Ukraine Resource Hub (tbc)	2.3 2.1 T	15 000	20	EUD	CONTINUATION
Uzbekistan	Provision of expertise input to UNESCO EU Agriculture TVET project (2020 -2024) for inception phase and launching of granting schemes	2.8		20	EUD Unesco	CONTINUATION

Southern and Eastern Europe	Contribution to programming in HCD in IPA III	TBC			DG NEAR	TBC
Southern and Eastern Mediterranean	Contribution to the new Team Europe Initiative on Jobs through trade and investment in particular in the new technical facility on young NEETs and piloting YG type of schemes	2.2	0	20	DG NEAR	CONTINUATION
Southern and Eastern Mediterranean	Provision of input and advice in the implementation of THAMM II (Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt)	2.3	0	30	DG NEAR	NEW

Planned resources Budget € 90 000 - Expertise 715 WD

** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

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

Annex XV – Cross-checking conditions for ETF operation in countries and regions

ETF's mandate outlined in the [ETF Recast Regulation](#) is to contribute, in the context of EU external relations policies, to improving human capital development, in the following countries:

- (a) the countries eligible for support under Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 and subsequent related legal acts;
- (b) the countries eligible for support under Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 and subsequent related legal acts;
- (c) other countries designated by decision of the Governing Board on the basis of a proposal supported by two-thirds of its members and a Commission opinion, and covered by a Community instrument or international agreement that includes an element of human capital development, and as far as available resources allow.

The countries referred to in points (a), (b) and (c) shall be designated as the 'partner countries'.

Below a check list is included concerning the (c) countries and to review whether the conditions have been met as per the Regulation.

Country/Region	Policy and/or community instrument	HCD component	Availability of resources
Central Asia	1-The new EU Strategy for Central Asia 2- The Joint Communication The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership ⁵⁸ aiming to forge a stronger, modern and non-exclusive partnership with the countries of Central Asia	1- To provide substantial support to vocational education and training, to foster research and innovation with a focus on skills development for youth, and to support economic modernisation, regional competitiveness and job creation 2- To support inter and intra-regional cooperation, to build capacity and to increase the quality of education, higher education and vocational education and training. To promote synergies between education systems and the labour market as well as digital education. To enable the region to develop as a sustainable, more resilient, prosperous, and closely interconnected economic and political space, including through education, employability (including of women and girls) and labour market reform	Action is mainly financed through extra-subsidy project DARYA

⁵⁸ "The EU will strengthen cooperation on vocational education and training, in collaboration with the **European Training Foundation**, to promote the employability of young people and of adults in a lifelong learning perspective, to respond to the needs of the transforming economies of Central Asia and of European investors in the region."

African Union	<p>1- The Africa-EU partnership and the new Africa Communication, as well as the Communication on the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs</p> <p>2- African Continental Qualifications Framework</p> <p>3- Joint Communication “Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa”</p> <p>4- EU-AU Summit of February 2022</p>	<p>1- To foster an Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs as part of the European Union – African Union Partnership by matching skills with the demands of the labour market as well as providing technical and vocational education and training and skills development both through Pan-African and national initiatives to support growth and job creation in strategic development areas</p> <p>2- As part of the multi-annual programme “AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability” the aim is to support the transformation of the continent through skills and qualifications which are strategic in the context of the demographic bulge of the continent, which some see as the ‘youth repository of the world’</p> <p>3- The aim is to working together on five key priorities in line with the SDGs, including SDG 4 (quality education), and through the provision of quality, equitable and inclusive (technical and vocational) education, training and skills to youth, and preparing them for the new opportunities of the future labour market. The five key priorities are: i) partnership for the green transition and energy access; ii) partnership for digital transformation; iii) partnership for sustainable growth and jobs; iv) partnership for peace, security and governance; and v) partnership on migration and mobility</p> <p>4- To include innovative financing solutions for the EU-AU partnership, economic recovery, as well as the twin digital and green transitions, all of which are even more important and urgent in a post COVID-19 world</p>	Action is mainly financed through extra-subsidy project ACQF I
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