

ETF Torino Process Evaluation

Final Report

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Executive summary

This evaluation report has been commissioned by the ETF and developed by a team of evaluators from PPMI to inform the review of the Torino Process (TRP) – one of the flagship projects of the ETF – in preparation for its next cycle. The report analyses relevance, effectiveness, impact, added value, sustainability and efficiency of the Torino Process during its third and fourth cycles (since 2014). The evaluation is based on desk research of literature, documentation, monitoring data and interviews with the ETF stakeholders and staff.

Launched in 2010, the Torino Process is a biannual participatory analytical review of the status and progress of VET in the partner countries¹, which is summarized in the national (in some countries also sub-national) reports. On the basis of the national reports the ETF develops comparative regional reports. Participatory review means that the process involves a multitude of VET policy stakeholders through sub-national, national, regional and international meetings and conferences. The Torino Process has two general objectives: 1) acquisition of up to date knowledge about the policies and their results in partner countries; and 2) strengthening the ownership, participation and evidence base of policy making to improve the performance of policies.

The current evaluation found that the Torino Process is a highly relevant cycle of VET policy monitoring in the partner countries, which has gradually affected other stages of the policy cycle, including policy formulation and implementation. As partner countries across all four geographic regions face the need to improve their VET policy analysis capacity, to empower stakeholders to participate in policy dialogue, and to reflect on VET development priorities, the TRP remains a relevant and much-needed tool for the partner countries.

During the four rounds of the TRP carried out so far, the ETF has gradually made improvements. The reports also became better structured, and their process improved. The TRP national reports evolved from a descriptive approach to a stronger emphasis on policy recommendations, presenting VET issues in an easily understandable and comparable way. They have been a useful tool to monitor VET-related reforms in partner countries and the main source of up-to-date information on the developments in the VET systems.

Throughout the different stages of the TRP, the ETF engaged and supported the involvement of an unprecedented number of new stakeholders in the policy dialogue on VET in the partner countries. By fostering country ownership and empowering multiple new actors at partner country level, the ETF has involved around 1140 stakeholders through the TRP events, most of them on a repeated basis. This

¹ The ETF now works in 29 countries surrounding the EU, covering the Western Balkans and Turkey, the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 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, 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), Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

group of stakeholders in the partner countries now forms a vibrant VET community able to facilitate the exchange of experiences across borders.

The TRP self-assessment modality has stimulated partner country ownership, increased their capacity and self-confidence. In particular, the third and fourth TRP rounds have strongly contributed to the development of a diverse group of stakeholders in each partner country with the capacity to conduct evidence-based assessments. Moreover, the TRP has strengthened the abilities of national stakeholders to influence national strategies and legislation in VET. In many countries, the government is no longer the sole contributor to VET legislation, but social partners have increasingly grown able to formulate and present feedback on VET policy initiatives.

Finally, the Torino Process supported the understanding of specific challenges and the identification of specific needs for VET reforms in each partner country, which has been used time and again by the EU and other international donors in programming their support, in exchanging information with other donors (very often during TRP events) and adjusting their investment plans.

The evaluators have also identified several areas of improvements for the implementation of the TRP. They are presented below, together with recommendations for the future.

1. Clear objectives and indicators of achievement

The multiple objectives of the Torino Process have been difficult to reconcile for the ETF. There was a lack of clarity about what objectives were considered more important. For example, greater partner country ownership meant that the quality of evidence has been more difficult to ensure.

The ETF has made numerous improvements to the Torino Process from one cycle to another. However, it has been difficult to assess the extent to which the changes made have led to positive outcomes in the partner countries, because stakeholder participation, satisfaction and the uptake of the Torino Process results were not measured consistently over time.

The ETF made a correct decision of developing a single Analytical Framework for all the partner countries, which provided the basis for holistic monitoring of VET systems and ensured a degree of comparability across countries. Whilst the Torino Process was meant to monitor against the priorities agreed during the previous TRP rounds (rather than the priorities set out in the national VET strategies), the agreed priorities were lacking indicators of achievement – an objective basis for assessing progress in the next round.

Recommendations

- The ETF needs to achieve more clarity regarding the main objective of the Torino Process. It should consult its stakeholders and clarify the priorities of the TRP.
- The ETF should improve the monitoring of the Torino Process by using more comprehensive indicators on stakeholder participation, satisfaction with and the uptake of the Torino Process results. The key indicators should not be changed from one cycle to another to ensure comparability. Indicators could be added depending on the new priorities and implementation modalities of each subsequent cycle. The proposals of the evaluation team for the key indicators are provided in Annex 1.
- The ETF monitoring system should have a possibility to break down the expenditures of the Strategic Project “Policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring” by key activities, so that the costs of the Torino Process could be differentiated from the costs of other activities, compared between cycles and linked to the quantity and quality of results.

- ETF should seek to agree more specific priorities with each participating partner country along with clear indicators of achievement, which would provide a solid basis for assessing their progress in the next round of the Torino Process.

2. Quality of evidence

The objective of the Torino Process to provide high-quality evidence for decision making is in line with the needs of partner countries and development aid organisations. During the evaluation period, the ETF promoted the national ownership of the Torino Process and its deliverables among other ways through self-assessment modality, which was chosen by almost all the partner countries in the last cycle. The evaluation evidence showed that the country reports were useful sources of information for the EU and international donor organisations and partner countries themselves. The responsibility for writing the reports led to positive capacity building effects (mostly in gathering and understanding data) for the partner country stakeholders.

However, in the absence of strong analytical skills the partner countries have mostly failed to deliver high quality reports. They were an insufficient basis for programming public policy interventions and for cross-country comparisons along key VET policy development indicators. The ETF was unable to organize long-term training in policy analysis for partner country stakeholders due to limited resources.

Recommendations

- At the beginning of the TRP cycle, or before its start, the ETF should ask the partner countries how specifically they are planning to use the TRP in the national policy cycles (its events, reports and support from the ETF). The ETF support during the Torino Process should then be tailored depending on partner countries' objectives (e.g. develop their VET strategy, monitor its implementation or conduct a comprehensive review of VET institutions and systems to pave the way for a major structural reform).
- The ETF should further foster country ownership of the outcomes of TRP and support their capacity development through co-production of country reports. As before, the partner countries should be responsible for collecting and providing most of the data needed for the analysis, while the ETF expert staff should write the analysis and assessment. While capacity building should remain one of the objectives of the Torino Process, and all four of its principles should be observed, its main objective and focus should be on the quality of information and the accuracy of assessment of partner country progress in the development of its HCD policies. This will strengthen the basis for planning partner country HCD policies as well as support to their reforms from the EU and other international donors.

3. The international dimension and buy-in from major donors

Representatives of donor organisations considered the Torino Process reports and events useful for understanding the situation and needs of partner countries in human capital development. However, in the absence of high quality analysis and objective assessment of partner country progress the donor organisations did not include the Torino Process into their own programming calendars and procedures. As a result, the Torino Process only had a limited influence on donor initiatives and their coordination.

An important element of the international dimension of the Torino process is being able to present the partner country data on the development of their VET systems so that it can be easily found on the ETF website and compared across countries. The current Torino Process country reports and the way they are published do not serve this purpose well. The ETF collects and analyses large quantities of partner country information on VET systems and policies but currently does not make this data available on its website in an easy to access way. Furthermore, this information is not aggregated and does not allow swift cross-country comparisons on the development of their VET systems and policies.

Recommendations

- The ETF should consider involving EU institutions and international donor organisations (e.g. World Bank, EBRD and major development organisations of the EU Member States) during the early stages of Torino Process planning. This could be done during the development of the analytical framework and the definition of the process parameters. This would also help increase their awareness and buy-in in the Torino Process. The ETF should seek that the TRP becomes a core process for the donor organisations, feeding into their programming and monitoring cycles.
- ETF should present country data collected through Torino process so that it is easy to find, search and compare. ETF should also consider developing aggregate measurements on the development of partner countries' VET systems such as a VET development index. The latter could include indicators on VET policy inputs (e.g. expenditure on VET, share of VET teachers with university level qualifications), quality of policy process (e.g. number/share of civil society organisations involved in VET policy monitoring through Torino Process) and policy outputs/outcomes (share of upper secondary students enrolled in VET, share of labour force with VET qualifications, etc.). The index and its constituent elements could provide the backbone for Torino Process synthesis report and be launched during the final conference. They would also create new opportunities for benchmarking across partner countries – giving recognition to countries making faster progress and an additional impetus for change to those lagging.

4. The regional dimension

The sharing of experiences at regional level has been highly appreciated by partner country stakeholders. However, the potential for positive effects from regional cooperation was not yet fully exploited. Apart from the ETF's support to the implementation of the Astana Declaration and the Central Asia Education Platform, the collaboration at the level of civil servants and social partner representatives at regional level was not paralleled by cooperation at political level (between partner countries in the region, and between partner countries and the EU). The bottlenecks that were holding back reforms in the partner countries were often of a political nature.

Recommendations

- The ETF should inform the EU policy makers about how regional cooperation within the Torino Process could support the EU regional cooperation at political level with the partner countries.
- Incorporating the Torino Process under the umbrella of the EU political dialogue and collaboration frameworks (as it was already done under the Astana Declaration and the 'Platform 4' of the Eastern Partnership) would raise further the profile of the Torino Process and would provide a much-needed additional political support to VET policy and governance reforms in the partner countries.

5. Participation of countries reporting under the Copenhagen Process

The two activity areas of the Strategic Project “Policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring” (Torino Process and follow-up to Riga MTDs) serve a very similar objective, namely, supporting the partner countries in the monitoring and reporting on the status of their VET systems. Considering that the more advanced partner countries already have functioning VET monitoring systems and that some of them are conducting a more detailed reporting under the Copenhagen Process, their separate reporting under the Torino Process is not necessary or cost-effective. However, there is added value in their continued participation of the EU candidate countries in the Torino Process, such as the collection of evidence, organisation of national events respecting the four principles and participation in regional or international peer learning and dissemination. Same as other partner countries the candidate countries would benefit from a detailed assessment by the ETF of their progress in modernizing and developing VET systems. The continued participation of the candidate countries in the Torino Process provides strong peer learning value for other partner countries.

Recommendations

- Partner countries should be offered different modalities of participation in the TRP depending on their VET policy development stages. For example, the countries which are already conducting a more detailed reporting under the Copenhagen Process should not be asked to develop separate reports for the Torino Process. However, they should be encouraged to participate in all Torino Process data collection efforts, events and to respect the four principles.
- The ETF should make no exception and include the EU candidate countries also in ETF’s external assessments and in aggregate measurements on the development of partner countries’ VET systems such as a VET development index.

6. Unfavourable contextual factors

Limited demand for evidence among decision-makers in the partner countries is one of the main factors that limited the sustainability of the Torino Process. Political instability and low government effectiveness also reduced the sustainability of benefits that partner countries received from the participation in the TRP.

Recommendations

- Faced with unfavourable contextual factors in a partner country, the ETF should make a choice between (a) providing more support to the partner countries so that they are able to participate in the Torino Process, and (b) saving resources while focusing on other partner countries instead. The basis for such decision should be the EU political priorities as communicated by the European Commission.

Introduction

This report is an internal evaluation commissioned by the ETF and prepared by a team of evaluators from PPMI. The objective of this assignment is to analyse the extent to which the Torino Process is effective for policy analysis and system wide monitoring in the ETF partner countries. The evaluation was designed to support critical reflection and learning within the ETF and to arrive to evidence-based policy options and recommendations for the future cycles of the Torino Process as a mechanism to provide relevant and accurate policy analysis for the partner countries, the European Commission (EC) and the ETF. It was conducted between November 2017 and June 2018.

The evaluation examined the following questions:

1. To what extent is the analytical framework of the Torino Process a valid tool for policy analysis in VET?
2. To what extent has the Torino Process methodology helped countries to develop their policy analysis capability?
3. How can the capacity building objective of the Torino Process methodology be reinforced?
4. To what extent is the application of the Torino Process at sub-national level and results at sub national level comparable with national level results and lessons learned?
5. To what extent are the TRP products used by the countries, the EC services, the ETF and other donors?
6. To what extent is the TRP network beneficial to the country, the EC services, the ETF and other donors?
7. Has the Torino Process informed ETF activities and/or EU assistance in the partner countries?

The answers to those questions were clustered under five evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness and impact, added value, sustainability and efficiency.

The evidence for the evaluation was collected through desk research and interviews. Desk research included the ETF's planning and monitoring documents, previous evaluations, the different reports and documents developed during the Torino Process. The evaluation team has conducted around 30 interviews with the ETF staff, representatives of the partner countries and other stakeholders of the ETF representing the EC (DG EMPL, DG DEVCO), the European External Action Service (EEAS), UNESCO, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), ETF Governing Board members from the EU Member States and the Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP).

The first chapter of the report analyses the background for the evaluation and presents the rationale of the Torino Process and the EU policy context, which is driving the content side of this initiative. The second chapter examines the performance of the Torino Process, summarising the evidence from desk research. The third chapter outlines the potential scenarios for the future development of the Torino Process and provides their qualitative assessment. The fourth chapter summarizes the results of the second phase of the evaluation, which included interviews with the ETF stakeholders and discussions with the ETF staff. The report ends with the overall conclusions and recommendations. The annex provides the recommendations for the improvement of indicators to monitor the implementation of the Torino Process.

1. Background and methodology

1.1. Rationale of the Torino Process

All European Training Foundation (ETF) partner countries (PC) aim to reform or improve their vocational education and training (VET) systems. Countries' ability to collect data, analyse evidence and to use it in policy making processes is key to making well-informed public policy choices. Evidence is needed for assessing the need and feasibility of any future policy action and making sure that its design is well fit for addressing the problems that it is supposed to tackle. Moreover, evidence can help partner countries monitor the implementation of various ongoing policies, providing the basis for a quick response to emerging challenges and shifting needs.

Although the availability and use of evidence necessary for effective policy-making in VET is improving, it is still limited in most partner countries². In this context, the Torino Process has two general objectives: 1) acquisition of up to date knowledge about the policies and their results in partner countries; and 2) strengthening the ownership, participation and evidence base of policy making to improve the performance of policies.³

The ETF **Torino Process** (TRP) aims to respond to the needs of partner countries by: (i) providing necessary evidence; (ii) strengthening the institutional capacity to create evidence; (iii) facilitating the use of evidence for making policy choices; and (iv) monitoring the implementation of the chosen policy options. Launched in 2010, the Torino Process is a biannual participatory analytical review of the status and progress of VET in the partner countries, which is summarized in the national (in some countries also sub-national) reports. On the basis of the national reports the ETF develops comparative regional reports.

The ETF guides the implementation of the Torino Process through the **four principles**: 1) stakeholder ownership; 2) broad participation; 3) holistic approach; and 4) evidence-based assessment (see Box 1 below). The Torino Process reports have several important applications. They inform the ETF's advice when supporting the EU's external assistance instruments throughout the project cycle, and help design the ETF's thematic interventions in the partner countries. The reports also help to achieve consensus among the stakeholders participating in the Process on key issues and challenges to the development of VET in the partner countries, providing feedback on the functioning of their VET systems and facilitating the discussion on their priorities for VET development. In addition, by making evidence on the state-of-art, progress and the needs of partner countries VET systems available to donor organisations, the ETF also strives to improve coordination of the international development

² ETF, Work Programme 2017 of the ETF Strategic Project Policy Analysis and System Wide Policy Monitoring Implementation Plan.

³ Please see: http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Torino_process

assistance in the partner countries. The Torino Process is meant to reinforce the partner countries' policy analysis and monitoring capabilities, and to demonstrate the benefits of consultation, participation and strategic dialogue for better evidence-based policy making⁴.

BOX 1. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE TORINO PROCESS

Ownership of both the process and the results in terms of final report and policy development implications by the partner country's policy leaders and stakeholders. This includes seeking complementarity between the Torino Process and the national policy agenda, and with other relevant processes. Ownership is a key factor in ensuring that the outcomes of the Torino Process have a sustained influence on national policy.

Broad participation in the process by relevant stakeholder groups, including parliamentary committees, policy leaders, social partner representatives, school managers, teachers, local authorities, company representatives, researchers and civil society representatives. This provides the basis for reflections and consensus building by local actors, thus making the connection between policy analysis and agreements about policy choices and implementation.

A holistic approach, using a broad concept of VET for both young people and adults, and adhering to a system approach, taking into account not only the elements of the system and how they communicate, but also how the VET system responds to the economic and social environment in which it operates.

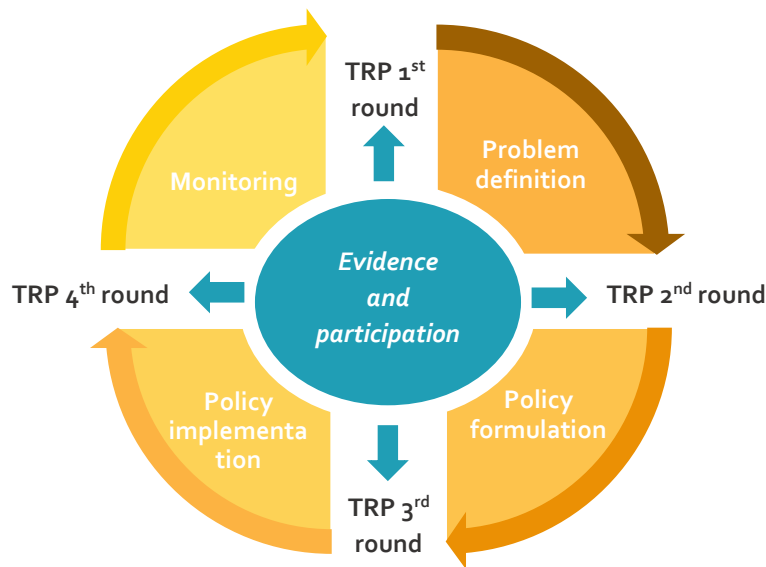
An evidence- or knowledge-based assessment, which is seen as essential for countries to make informed decisions about policy developments and to measure progress and, where relevant or of interest to the country, to benchmark against EU average performance. This evidence-based approach is also fundamental for capturing and scaling up good practice from pilot to system level.

Source: ETF, Torino Process 2016-17, 2016.

The ETF has already carried out **four rounds** of the Torino Process: the 2010–11 (first) round, the 2012–13 (second) round, the 2014–15 (third) round, and the 2016–17 (fourth) round. Through the four rounds already implemented, the focus of the Torino Process has moved from problem definition and policy formulation (the first and second rounds) to monitoring and evaluating VET reforms across partner countries (the third and fourth rounds), as showed in Figure 1.

⁴ ETF, Torino Process 2016-17, Working paper, 2016.

FIGURE 1. THE FOCUS OF THE TORINO PROCESS WITHIN THE POLICY CYCLE



The operational activities of the ETF are organised in seven Strategic Projects (SPs). The implementation of the Torino Process falls under the remit of the Strategic Project – Policy Analysis and System Wide Progress Monitoring. The general objective of the project is ‘to improve policy making in VET by strengthening institutional capacity for the generation and use of evidence throughout the policy making cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and to develop a culture of policy monitoring, feedback and improvement.’⁵ It aims to achieve this objective through the following three outcomes for the period of 2017-2020:⁶

1. Partner country policy reform processes are increasingly holistic and participatory, and take into account the results of the Torino Process, while building capacities for using evidence-based information for policy making;
2. Sound policy analysis and reporting by candidate countries complies with the new methodology for the Copenhagen-Riga Process;
3. Informed, evidence-based transition from policy planning to policy action is facilitated through ex-ante impact assessment methodologies linked to the new mid-term deliverables of the Copenhagen Process.’

The Torino Process has two key components – the process itself and its outputs. The latter range from **country and regional reports** (respectively, single country analysis and multi-country analysis grouped into four geographic regions) to the **cross-country comparative reports** (analysis of all partner countries taking part in the Torino Process). The ETF closes each round of the Torino Process with a

⁵ ETF Strategic Project Policy Analysis and System Wide Progress Monitoring implementation plan – WP 2017: p. 3

⁶ ETF Single programming document 2017-2020

conference which sets priorities and strategic directions for the modernisation of VET systems in participating countries.

Partner countries are responsible for organising the process by applying the following three mandatory steps: **consultation** (including content-generation), **peer review**, and **validation**.⁷ In turn, the ETF guides the implementation through the tools developed specifically for each of these steps (e.g. Analytical Frameworks), mentoring, feedback and monitoring mechanism.

In addition, the countries can choose between two implementation modalities. One modality is a form of **ETF-supported assessment**, which envisages a stronger lead from the Agency. It is most suitable for those countries who lack their own capacity and require greater assistance in organising the process and preparation of reports. Another mode of implementation is a **country-led self-assessment**. The ETF intervenes in the implementation even less and the countries who choose this modality have the capacity to lead the process and draft their own reports.

1.2. The EU policy context

The ETF's Founding Regulation gives a mandate to the Agency to contribute to the improvement of human capital development in partner countries, in ways that contribute to the promotion of the EU's role as a global actor. Furthermore, the Agency should act in line with President Juncker's political guidelines⁸ and remain within the remits of the EU external relations policy. More specifically, by drawing on the EU internal human capital development policies the Agency should support growth and socio-economic development in its partner countries.

The ETF sees the Torino Process as an **extension of the Copenhagen-Riga Process** to all partner countries. On 30 November 2002, the Ministers responsible for VET of the EU and EEA-EFTA Member States, the candidate countries, the European Commission, and the European Social Partners adopted the Copenhagen Declaration launching the Copenhagen Process.⁹ The process consists of:

- 1) A political dimension aiming to establish common European objectives and reform national VET systems;
- 2) The development of common European frameworks and tools that increase the transparency and quality of competences and qualifications and facilitate mobility;
- 3) Cooperation to foster mutual learning at European level and to involve all relevant stakeholders at national level.¹⁰

In line with the **Education and Training 2010 (ET 2010) Strategic framework**, the Copenhagen Declaration set out priorities and the agenda for enhanced European cooperation in VET. These

⁷ ETF Torino Process 2016-2017, working paper

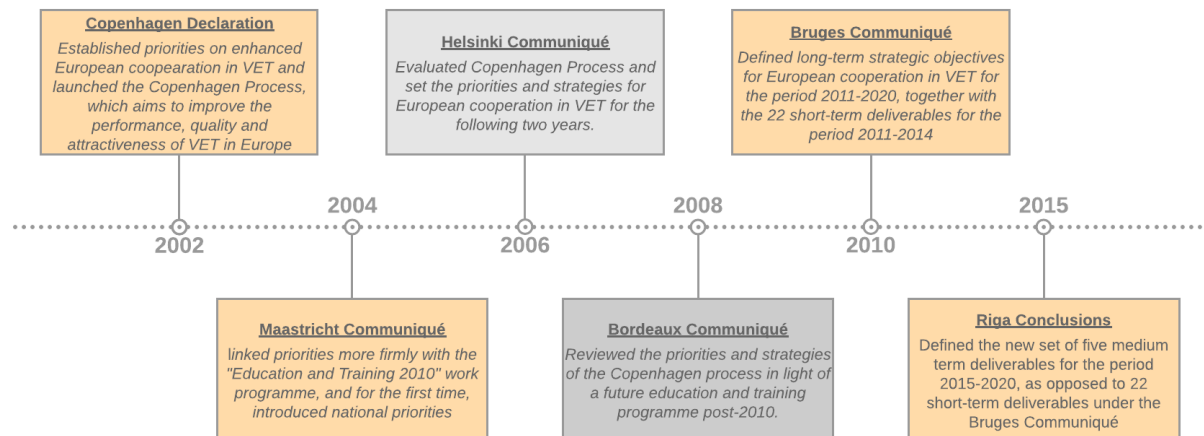
⁸ Available at: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/jean-claude-juncker---political-guidelines.pdf>

⁹ Copenhagen Declaration, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/copenhagen-declaration_en.pdf

¹⁰ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Aef0018>

priorities were since reviewed on multiple occasions, such as in 2008 with the **Bordeaux Communiqué**. The Communiqué was significant as it revised the priorities in light of the then forthcoming education and training programme post-2010.

FIGURE 2. TIMELINE FROM COPENHAGEN DECLARATION TO RIGA CONCLUSIONS



Source: Adapted from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Aef0018>.

Following this, the 2010 **Bruges Communiqué** further revised the European objectives for cooperation in VET by linking them firmly with the EU policy framework provided by the **Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) Strategic framework**. These objectives draw on the achievements and the underlying principles of the Copenhagen Process and aim to address such challenges as skills deficits in the workforce and global competition. For the first time, together with the long-term strategic objectives for the period 2011-2020, the Bruges Communiqué also set out 22 short-term deliverables for the period 2011-2014. These deliverables represented a set of concrete actions at national level for achieving the new objectives.

Based on the assessment of the results of the short-term deliverables set out in the Bruges Communiqué, in 2015, the **Riga Conclusions** defined a new set of five medium-term deliverables (MTDs) for the period of 2015-2020 (see Box 2 below). The Copenhagen Process and Riga conclusions extend to the EU Member States and candidate countries. As a result, within the scope of the Torino Process, the ETF aims to support candidate countries to implement MTDs and monitor progress towards the objectives of the Copenhagen Process. In addition, the Agency also invites the remaining partner countries to take part in the monitoring of the MTDs and benchmarking the progress against the EU targets of the ET 2020 Strategic framework.

BOX 2. MEDIUM-TERM DELIVERABLES FOR 2015-2020

MTD 1: Promote work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships, by involving social partners, companies, chambers and VET providers, as well as by stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship.

MTD 2: Further develop quality assurance mechanisms in VET in line with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) recommendation and, as part of quality assurance systems, establish continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET (IVET) and continuing VET (CVET) systems based on learning outcomes.

MTD 3: Enhance access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible and permeable systems, notably by offering efficient and integrated guidance services and making available validation of non-formal and informal learning.

MTD 4: Further strengthen key competences in VET curricula and provide more effective opportunities to acquire or develop those skills through IVET and CVET.

MTD 5: Introduce systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school- and work-based settings.

Source: Adapted from ETF Torino Process 2016-17, 2016

1.3. Evaluation methodology

The overall objective of this assignment was to evaluate the extent to which the Torino Process was effective for policy analysis and system wide monitoring in the ETF partner countries. The evaluation covered the third (2014-2015) and fourth (2016-2017) rounds of Torino Process implementation. Geographically, it spanned 25 partner countries.

The evaluation has a mixed-methods design with extensive desk research in the first phase and complemented by an interview programme in the second phase. The evaluation also has a distinctive prospective analysis, which included the identification and assessment of scenarios for the improvement of the next round of the Torino Process.

Desk research was the key source of information for understanding the structure and functioning of the Torino Process, for placing the process within a broader European policy context, and for answering the evaluation questions. It was the only method of data collection in Phase I of the assignment. The main sources of information reviewed during desk research include:

- EU internal and external policy documents related to human capital development and especially in the partner countries;
- ETF management and monitoring information and documents;
- Torino Process working documents and reports;
- Studies, evaluations, audit reports, and survey results related to the Torino Process;
- Other documents provided by the ETF staff.

Interviews complemented the desk research and were carried out in the second phase of the assignment. They were used to collect opinions from diverse types of stakeholders, helped interpret desk research findings, plug evaluation data gaps and answer evaluation questions. Interviews took different forms, from non-structured to semi-structured and some of them were combined with

participant observation carried out during the ETF events linked to the Torino Process. Our interview programme included the following types of respondents (~30 in total):

- ETF staff (Torino Process team members, other staff from ETF operations);
- Representatives of the Commission DGs (EMPL, DEVCO, NEAR) and the European External Actions Service (EEAS);
- Partner Country stakeholders (from Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Tunisia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan).

Based on the desk research and preliminary interviews with the ETF staff members, the evaluation team has identified and made a preliminary assessment of **alternative scenarios for the future implementation of the Torino Process**. The scenarios were built considering the strengths, weaknesses and key external factors at play while implementing the Torino Process. The baseline scenario presented how the current situation would evolve if the implementation of the upcoming Torino Process round will continue in such way that the Analytical framework and process requirements remain the same as in the previous round. Then we developed two alternative scenarios each with emphasis on implementing better a different objective of the Torino Process. The scenarios were summarised in an impact matrix, illustrating the main advantages and disadvantages of their different options.

In the second phase of the assignment the evaluation findings and the scenarios were discussed in a workshop with the ETF operations staff. Considering the results of the discussion, the evaluators worked out a **third – preferred – scenario**, which includes the most beneficial options of the initial two alternative scenarios and elaborates them for better consistency and impact.

2. Evaluation of performance - Phase I

2.1. Relevance

According to the EU Better Regulation Guidelines, the analysis of relevance should look at the relationship between the needs and problems in society and the objectives of the intervention. To evaluate the relevance of the Torino Process, we assess the extent to which the process underlying the TRP was in line with the needs of partner countries. Next, we evaluate how far the TRP as a source of evidence correlated with the needs of the ETF partner countries and the ETF's European and international stakeholders.

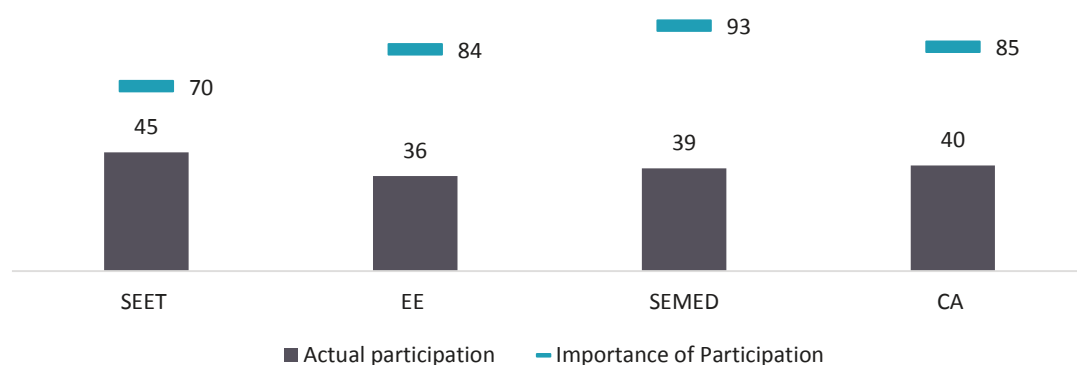
2.1.1. Relevance of the process

During the evaluation period, the TRP aimed to contribute to the development of an effective evidence-based VET policy making culture in ETF Partner Countries. At a practical level, to achieve this objective the TRP engaged a broad range of stakeholders in a biennial process which consisted of evidence-creation and policy-dialogue.

At the heart of policy dialogue we find conferences and meetings, which bring together key partner country stakeholders to learn about good practices, discuss the evidence, identify the needs, and develop a stakeholders' consensus towards common priorities for the modernisation of their VET systems. Hence, the primary purpose of this element was to facilitate the informed participation of a broad range of stakeholders in VET policy making.

Our evaluation demonstrated that the ETF's decision to include policy-dialogue in the Torino Process was a correct choice. Firstly, this is because the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders contributes to the transition to good (multi-level) VET governance models in the ETF partner countries¹¹. Secondly, stakeholders' participation in the decision making remains limited in partner countries across all four regions. Indeed, considerably less survey respondents actually participated, when compared to the number of respondents who think that stakeholders' participation is important (Figure 3).

¹¹ Evaluation of ETF activities in VET governance

FIGURE 3. PARTICIPATION IN EVIDENCE-BASED VET POLICY MAKING

Source: Stakeholder survey 2017 (% of respondents having responded values 4 & 5 – to very high & high extent).

Furthermore, at the heart of the evidence-creation, we find the analytical overview of VET systems following either *self-assessment* or the *ETF-supported* implementation modalities of the Torino Process. Besides production of national reports (an issue to which we return in the next sub-section), the primary objective of engaging stakeholders in the analytical overview and policy dialogue was to increase the policy analysis capacity of the partner countries. The evidence indicates that during the evaluation period most of the partner countries had insufficient capacity to perform VET policy analysis independently.

The TRP interim evaluation found that by the end of the 2nd round, most of the national reports developed through the self-assessment modality lacked analytical depth. The evaluators invited the ETF to develop a monitoring tool which would assess each country's analytical capacity and identify whether a country is ready to undertake the self-assessment modality. In response to this recommendation, ETF developed a process mapping tool which assesses the development stage of a country's VET policy analysis capacity (see Box 3 below).

According to this assessment, during the evaluation period, the need for improving such capacity remained high in most PCs (Figure 4). By the end of the 3rd round most of the countries were either at initial (38%) or structured (50%) stages of development. Although the 4th round has led to considerable improvements, the need for capacity building remained largely at the same level. While some countries (e.g. Bosnia, Georgia, and FYRO Macedonia) moved to defined development stage, most of the countries remained either within initial (35%) or structured (42%) stages.

BOX 3. THE ETF'S CLASIFICATION OF POLICY ANALYSIS CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STAGE

The tool defines policy analysis as the collective ability of VET stakeholders to engage in a systematic investigation of alternative policy options, including problem solving, data collection and interpretation and prediction. It distinguishes between five development stages:

Ad-hoc. Policy analysis is run on an ad hoc basis, with no/limited use of policy analysis results to inform policy definition, monitoring and evaluation. Evidence is collected on an ad hoc basis to fulfil specific needs. There is low/ limited coordination and consultation with stakeholders. Stakeholders are not or only partially organised.

Initial. Policy analysis in connection to policy development is at an initial phase. There is awareness of the need to reinforce the link and the country is actively engaging in increasing participation and evidence processes. There is good communication and interaction among stakeholders, yet this is not organised efficiently and mostly takes place in informal settings and/ or is related to specific actions.

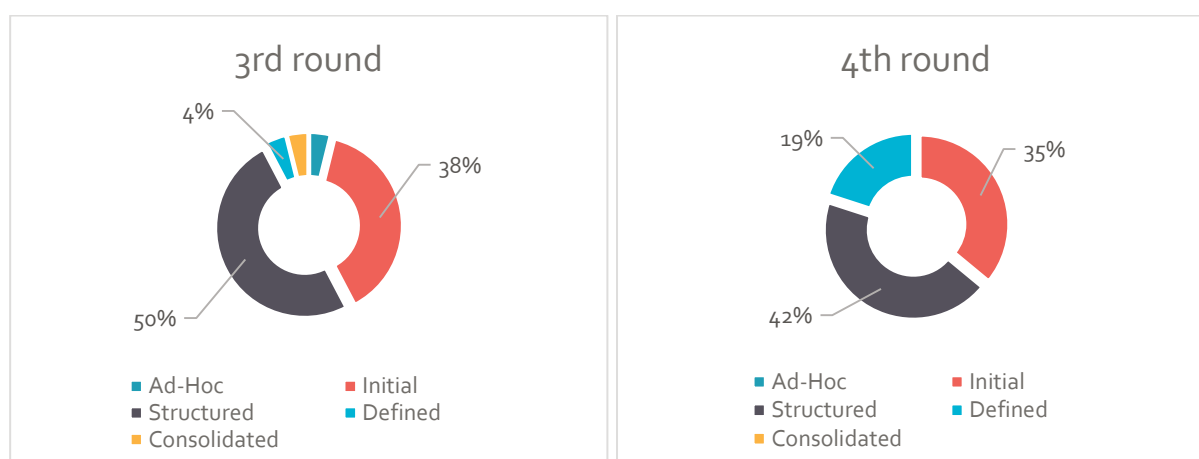
Structured. Policy analysis is frequently used in connection with policy development and forms part of the practices used in sector development. Evidence is collected on a cyclical basis, and the functions and roles of actors are defined allowing for the optimisation of processes and results.

Defined. Policy analysis is clearly connected to implementation. The system itself tracks performance, reflects on results and adjusts the policy cycle management indicators to meet the evolutionary nature of the sector and its development needs

Consolidated. The country's governance of HCD policies is internationally recognised as good practice and is regarded as a reference for policy learning in other countries.

Source: Adapted from the ETF Backstage report, 2014

FIGURE 4. POLICY ANALYSIS DEVELOPMENT STAGE IN THE ETF PARTNER COUNTRIES



Source: Backstage report 2014 and Process Mapping report 2016

Against this background, the decision of ETF to maintain ETF-supported assessment and self-assessment modalities during the evaluation period was a correct decision. However, the ETF has not defined clear rules and procedures for moving a country from the ETF-supported to the self-assessment modality. An overview of internal documentation made available to the evaluators suggests that differences between these two modalities are not well mapped and documented. The Audit report also arrived at a similar conclusion. Nonetheless, the interviews with the ETF team members indicate that it

was countries that choose which modality to take, in turn, the team provided an informed advice based on the outcomes of the previous rounds. There was no predefined threshold or a competence level that a country should satisfy to take part in the self-assessment modality. Since some countries are still at the early stages of their VET policy analysis capacity, they will continue needing more ETF support to participate in the Torino Process.

The evidence suggests that some countries will need more time before they become more independent in their ability to analyse, develop and monitor VET policy. Several countries (Albania, Uzbekistan, and Morocco) that undertook the ETF-supported assessment during the 3rd round but self-assessment during the 4th round, have regressed from the structured to initial development stage. Even the more advanced countries can experience setbacks. This could explain why, according to SP TRP's mapping tool, Israel received a lower score at the end of the 4th round, which downgraded the country from the consolidated stage to defined stage of policy analysis.

We observed that within each modality, countries had further options for the implementation of the TRP. For example, both Albania and Israel took the self-assessment modality, but in contrast to Israel (which fully owned implementation of the TRP), in Albania it was the ETF that developed summary reports. None of the documents made available to the evaluators set out different options for the implementation of each modality. This suggests that these options were developed on an ad-hoc basis and tends to show that the ETF did not have a systematic approach to countries transitioning from ETF-supported assessment to self-assessment.

Furthermore, not all countries needed equally all the components of the Torino Process. According to the SP TRP's self-assessment report (2016), some countries (e.g. Turkey and Israel) already had monitoring systems in place. Therefore, these countries benefited less from the TRP than those countries that needed the development of such systems. However, there is high added value from the continued participation of more advanced countries in the Torino Process. Firstly, participation respecting the four principles of the Torino Process supports good governance in VET, while the national events that would need to take place anyway can be integrated into the calendar of the Torino Process. Secondly, the regional and international dimensions of the Torino process open possibilities for benchmarking and peer learning among VET policy stakeholders in different countries.

Differing levels of VET policy development in different countries put into question the relevance of using a single *Analytical Framework* for all countries. Some countries had developed and monitored the implementation of their strategies for the development of their VET systems, whilst other were still to develop such strategies. The benefits of a single analytical framework was in a broad and holistic monitoring of VET systems and ensuring a degree of comparability across countries through the synthesis reports. On the down side, such an abstract Analytical Framework had less to offer to the most developed partner countries. Whilst the Torino Process was meant to monitor against the priorities agreed during the previous TRP rounds (rather than the priorities set out in the national strategies), the priorities were lacking indicators of achievement. Finally, it was up to the partner countries to link the priorities of the Torino Process and the national strategies where those were available. All in all, the evaluators think that the ETF made a correct decision of developing a single Analytical Framework for all the partner countries. However, the ETF should try to agree more specific priorities with each participating partner country along with clear indicators of achievement, which would provide a solid basis for assessing their progress in the next round of the Torino Process.

2.1.2. Relevance of the reporting and evidence

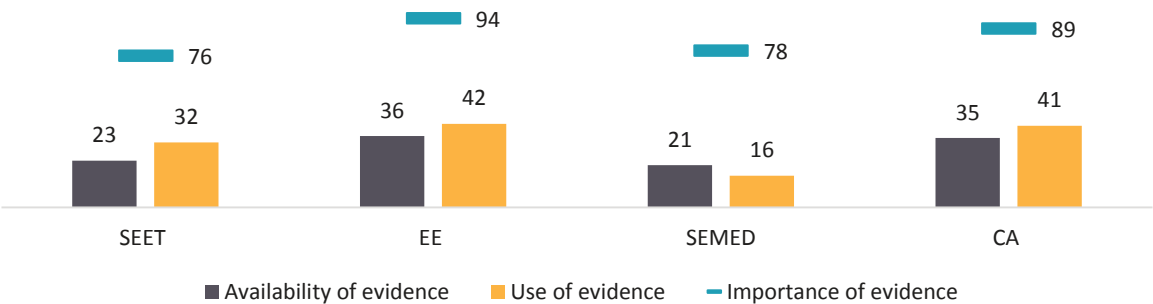
The Torino Process aims to provide the evidence on the status and needs of the VET system in the partner countries. This analysis was summarised in the country, regional and cross-regional reports, which was meant to serve as a 'single reference point' to the programming cycles of the ETF and the Commission for providing EU technical assistance to these countries. Besides, the evidence was also meant to inform policy dialogue between partner country stakeholders and to provide the evidence base for the planning of interventions of other donors in the partner countries. Making assistance evidence-based, well targeted and continuous to previous interventions is at the heart of the academic debate on how to coordinate foreign aid so that it is more effective and serves a recipient's real needs¹².

Provision of rigorous analysis on HCD development issues and challenges in the partner countries proved difficult for the Torino Process to achieve. This was mainly because data gathering and analysis was owned by partner country actors who lacked skills to carry out the analysis or were driven by political correctness when conducting self-assessment. During the first TRP round, most of the national reports were written by the ETF itself. In the second-round, over half of the participating countries (55%) took the self-assessment modality. During the fourth round the number of such cases reached 80% of all countries in total (20 out of 25 participating countries). According to the interim evaluation, the quality issues with the TRP country reports (particularly those based on self-assessment) became apparent during the first two rounds. Our review of the latest country reports as well as the audit report of 2017 has revealed that the quality of the evidence has been compromised in the latest rounds as well. Although the interim evaluation invited the Agency to halt the promotion of the self-assessment modality, the number of countries who could write their own reports continued to grow. The TRP national reports - even when they were descriptive and painting a somewhat more positive picture than the reality - were a useful source of information for the EU, international actors and the partner countries, which did not previously have their own VET research institutes or other capacity in the country to analyse their VET systems and policies.

This issue has been acknowledged within the ETF. According to the self-assessment report from 2016, the Agency has faced the 'dilemma' to choose between the quality of TRP reports and their ownership by the partner countries. The evidence suggests that the ETF chose to prioritise the ownership of the TRP reports by partner countries, betting on positive motivation and capacity building effects for the partner countries. A recent stakeholder survey (2017) results suggest that the TRP team within the ETF has made a correct decision to prioritise country ownership of the process over the rigour of evidence. Partner countries across all regions have developed a demand for evidence, which is not yet matched adequately by the supply. The gap between the perceived importance of evidence among the surveyed stakeholders to the actual use and availability of evidence within the VET system remained very high across all four regions (see **Error! Reference source not found.** below). This means that although the TF immediate stakeholders already acknowledged the importance of evidence for policy making in VET, their access to and use of evidence have mostly remained low. This is not surprising, considering that most of countries are still either at the initial or structured VET policy analysis development stage (see Figure 4 above). Therefore, it is essential to focus on the availability and quality of evidence in the subsequent rounds of the Torino Process.

¹² For instance, see: Bourguignon, F., & Platteau, J. P. (2015). The hard challenge of aid coordination. *World Development*, 69, 86-97.

FIGURE 5. EVIDENCE IN VET POLICY MAKING



Source: Stakeholder survey 2017 (% of respondents having responded values 4 & 5 – to very high & high extent).

At the same time the ETF should keep involving stakeholders in the evidence co-creation, which helps partner country stakeholders develop skills needed for understanding policy analysis and using it in decision making. The partner country stakeholders should maintain ownership of the process in their respective countries even when the drafting of the country reports is in the hands of the ETF. This would (i) lead to an intensive learning experience, and (ii) motivate stakeholders act on the evidence collected.

Key conclusions on relevance

- The process underlying the TRP was highly relevant because ETF partner countries across all four geographic regions faced the need for improving their VET policy analysis capacity, empowering stakeholders to participate in policy dialogue and to reflect on VET development priorities. The relevance was high even for countries at the more advanced stages of VET policy development as the implementation of the four principles of the Torino Process, especially the participation of non-governmental stakeholders and the presence of the ETF, raised the expectations regarding governance standards and contributed to their improvement or prevented them from slipping any further.
- The TRP's objective of providing good-quality evidence for decision making was in line with the needs of the partner countries and development aid organisations. However, this need was not always met, because the reports were written by partner country stakeholders, many of whom lacked skills and sometimes also motivation to provide an honest assessment of their own progress. The TRP national reports overall were a useful source of information on VET systems for the EU, international actors and the partner countries as any better sources of information were not available.
- The Torino Process has led to the increased understanding of the importance of and consequently the increased demand for evidence in the partner countries.
- A single Analytical Framework for all the partner countries provided the basis for holistic monitoring of VET systems and ensured a degree of comparability across countries.
- Whilst the Torino Process was meant to monitor against the priorities agreed during the previous TRP rounds (rather than the priorities set out in the national VET strategies), the agreed priorities were lacking indicators of achievement – an objective basis for assessing progress in the next round.

2.2. Effectiveness and impact

Effectiveness (and impact) is understood as the progress of an intervention in terms of achieving its objectives. This chapter of the evaluation analyses the extent to which the third and the fourth Torino Process rounds contributed to the modernisation of human capital development policies in the 25 ETF partner countries. The external factors that may interfere with the achievement of the intended objectives and are reviewed where relevant throughout the analysis.

2.2.1. Achievement of outputs

In 2014, all partner countries participated in the Torino Process and submitted their self-assessment or ETF-led assessment reports. During the third TRP round, four national reports were submitted from the Central Asian region; Eastern European countries submitted seven reports; the SEET region also submitted seven reports, and; eight national reports were received from the SEMED region.¹³

¹³ ETF, "Torino Process 2014 Backstage report".

During the fourth TRP round the Libyan report was missing due to war and/or political turmoil. Russia and Ukraine conducted the Torino Process on a sub-national level for the first time during the third round. In 2016, this was repeated and was also conducted in Tunisia on a regional level. During the fourth round, 20 countries conducted a self-assessment, compared to 14 in the third round, and five countries conducted an ETF-led assessment.¹⁴ This led to a total of 25 national and 31 regional reports. During the fourth round, about 1200 national stakeholders were involved in the TRP.¹⁵

The national and sub-national reports provide information on the needs of each partner country to modernise their human capital development policies. For each cycle, the national reports were compiled by the ETF into four regional reports, one cross-country TRP report and one key indicators report.

In 2014, the ETF developed the capacity building toolbox for all countries involved in the Torino Process. The ETF also produced guidelines and instruments for capacity building in policy-making, supported by the TRP. The third Torino Process guide was developed in English, Arabic, French and Russian. A new development stage matrix was designed by the ETF in 2015 for policy analysis in support of the TRP planning.¹⁶ The fourth TRP round included the provision of a methodology for the monitoring of policy progress in VET through data collection.¹⁷

Multiple visits and meetings were organised during the TRP rounds. Several national validation workshops were organised in 2014, for example in Serbia and Kosovo (2014) and in Macedonia (2016). Opening workshops for stakeholders and the general public were conducted in Azerbaijan and Montenegro in 2014. Other smaller events may have been organised but were not published on the ETF's website.

A Torino Process Coordinators' meeting was held in February 2016 to initiate the fourth round of the TRP. ETF Governing Board members conducted a TRP peer review and validation visit to Kazakhstan in November 2016. In September 2016, the ETF presented the Torino Process methodology to the British Council, BTC, GIZ and LuxDev as a contribution to the VET Facility under preparation by DG DEVCO.¹⁸

In 2015 and 2017, the TRP final conferences were organised in Italy. In 2015, around 200 stakeholders participated and more than 300 stakeholders attended the 2017 conference. Furthermore, more than 5000 people followed the 2017 conference online.¹⁹ **This shows a strong increase in participation**, both from those invited as from other interested parties online. Aside from the large conference, several regional conferences were organised, namely one in the SEMED region, one in the EE region, one in CA and two in the SEET region.²⁰

2.2.2. Outcomes

Usefulness of the TRP products and services for stakeholders' capacity building

¹⁴ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

¹⁵ ETF, "Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2016".

¹⁶ ETF, "Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2015".

¹⁷ ETF, "Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2016".

¹⁸ ETF, "Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2016".

¹⁹ ETF, "Changing skills for a changing world. Conference Highlights" 2017.

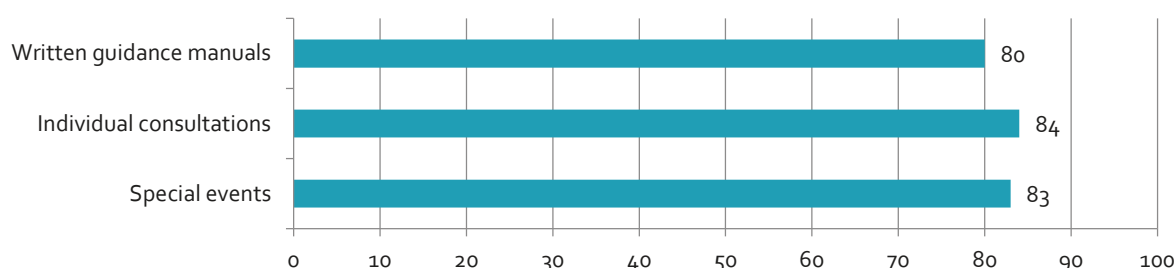
²⁰ ETF, "Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2016".

Interviewees of the 2017 evaluation of ETF activities regarding VET governance indicated that the national Torino Process reports were highly useful due to their ability to address national needs and gaps regarding VET governance. The regional reports of the Torino Process were considered of average value compared to all products offered by the ETF.²¹ During interviews conducted for the 2017 evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET, the respondents indicated the importance of the Torino Process for identifying gaps in their national governance systems.²² However, during the 2017 TRP conference, the participants considered it not extremely likely (2.9 out of 5) that they would use the TRP national reports for leading VET debates in their country.²³ This might be explained by the fact that the reports were already debated in the process of their preparation.

The final conference of the 2017 TRP was considered useful by participants (3.3 out of 5) to gain new knowledge about effective policy making in VET.²⁴ The usefulness of the event to know about the Torino Process was evaluated 3.4 out of 5 and the usefulness to learn about effective policy-making in VET scored 3.2 out of 5. The respondents gave a score of 3.1 on average for the usefulness of the event as a generator of new ideas on how to use innovation for VET development. Participants to the 2017 TRP conference also considered it likely (3.3 out of 5) that the new ideas gained from the conference will be used in their work.²⁵ This indicates that the conference achieved its intended results.

During the 2017 evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance, stakeholders were asked about the usefulness of ETF's guidance helping to make use of ETF's products and services. The figure below indicates that respondents considered the ETF's guidance highly useful.

FIGURE 6. PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING "TO A MODERATE EXTENT" OR "TO A LARGE EXTENT" REGARDING THE QUESTION "HOW USEFUL WAS ETF'S GUIDANCE FOR YOU TO OBTAIN NECESSARY SKILLS FOR USING ANALYTICAL TOOLS IN YOUR WORK?".



Source: PPML (2017), "Evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance – Final report".

In a survey conducted among VET stakeholders in 2017, 74% of the respondents indicated that the ETF contributed to a moderate or large extent to the improvement of capacity in their organisations.²⁶ These results were cross tabulated with the stakeholder categories, providing the following results:

²¹ PPML, "Evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance – Final report" 2017.

²² PPML, "Evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance – Final report" 2017.

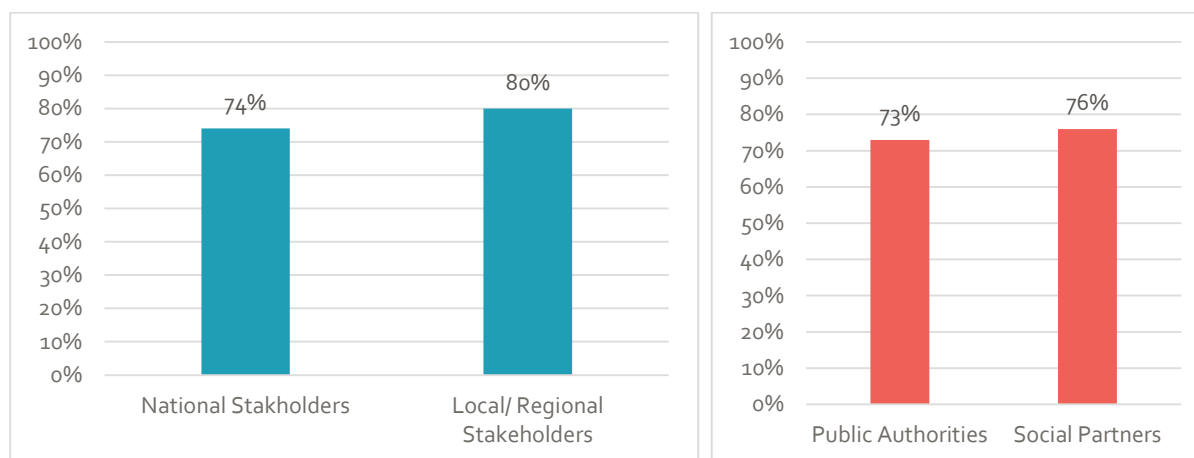
²³ ETF, "Torino Process 2017 Conference Survey Results".

²⁴ ETF, "Torino Process 2017 Conference Survey Results".

²⁵ ETF, "Torino Process 2017 Conference Survey Results".

²⁶ PPML, "Evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance – Final report" 2017.

FIGURE 7. PERCENTAGE OF STAKEHOLDERS INDICATING “TO A LARGE EXTENT” OR “TO A MODERATE EXTENT” TO THE QUESTION ON ETF’S CONTRIBUTION TO STAKEHOLDER CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



Source: PPMI, “Evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance – Final report” 2017

These figures show that around $\frac{3}{4}$ of all types of stakeholders from local/regional to national from public authorities to social partners gave positive assessments on the ETF’s contribution to their capacity development..

Usefulness of the TRP products and services for networking and new contacts

In the survey conducted among VET stakeholders in 2017, the ETF’s conferences and workshops scored high above average on their usefulness for the work of the respondents in the field of VET governance. Overall, the ETF’s conferences and workshops have been considered to be of greater use by stakeholders than the ETF’s methodological products.

More than 300 stakeholders attended the 2017 TRP conference, and 141 participants filled in the survey, which shows an increase in stakeholder participation compared to 200 participants and 84 respondents in 2015. In the survey, respondents indicated a 3.4 out of 5 likeliness that they would contact people they met at the event. The respondents also agreed (3.3 out of 5) that the event offered new opportunities in terms of contacts, knowledge and insights.²⁷

Development of stakeholder capacity through the four principles

Participation

To build the capacity of partner country stakeholders to initiate reforms in VET, the Torino Process guidelines required the countries to continuously involve a diversity of stakeholders into the process. To implement the principle of broad participation in the fourth round of the TRP, the ETF paid particular attention to the **variety of stakeholders** involved and the existence of working groups under the Torino Process umbrella. If different and accidental people were involved just for one event at its different stages, a sustainable accumulation of expertise and capacity could not be created. Therefore,

²⁷ ETF, “Torino Process 2017 Conference Survey Results”.

the ETF sought to institutionalise participation through formal working group membership and/or other means that helped ensuring a repeated exposure to the process and the ETF's support.²⁸

In almost all countries, working groups were created in 2016. These were either newly created or built on existing structures from the previous round.²⁹ There is no evidence that partner countries used existing structures in the third round as well. Aside from Central Asia, most regions scored high on the principle of broad participation due to the involvement of the public sector, business representatives, social partners and the civic sector. In CA (except Kazakhstan), consultations were mostly limited to government officials representing formal education.³⁰

Not all groups of stakeholders were (equally) represented in each country, as indicated in the table below. In the SEMED region, for example, no representatives from NGOs and research institutions participated, except in Lebanon. This follows the conclusion drawn in the 2013 TRP evaluation, namely that research organisations are underrepresented in the TRP.³¹ Smaller and poorer partner countries have no or very few VET-focused research organisations, which means they will naturally continue to be underrepresented in the Torino Process. At the same time, countries which do not have strong VET research organisations highly benefit from ETF's support to data collection and analysis of their VET systems and policies.

The third TRP process report also concluded that businesses and civil society were also underrepresented. In many countries, government officials formed a very strong majority. This was visible in Egypt, Moldova and Morocco where some of the key stakeholder groups did not attend the events. Albania, Belarus, Montenegro, Kazakhstan and Lebanon were good examples of countries with a more diverse stakeholder representation.³² Business sector stakeholders had a very strong representation in Albania, Israel, and Montenegro – matching or exceeding the number of participants from the governmental bodies, which indicates an improvement compared to the results of the 2013 TRP evaluation.

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF PC STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING IN THE TRP IN 2016

	MINISTRY AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS	BUSINESS	NGO AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS	DONORS	OTHER
Egypt	79	0	16	0	5	0
Morocco	76	12	6	0	6	0
Republic of Moldova	67	7	15	0	11	0
Kosovo	63	3	6	11	17	0
Tunisia	63	8	25	0	3	1
Tajikistan	62	5	11	5	14	3

²⁸ ETF, "Torino Process 2014 Backstage report".

²⁹ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

³⁰ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

³¹ ICON Institute "Torino Process Interim Evaluation" 2013.

³² ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

	MINISTRY AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS	BUSINESS	NGO AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS	DONORS	OTHER
Jordan	60	21	2	2	15	0
Uzbekistan	59	31	0	0	10	0
Macedonia, FYR	59	4	22	0	11	4
Armenia	58	0	15	5	23	0
Serbia	58	26	11	0	5	0
Georgia	57	13	9	0	17	4
Kyrgyz Republic	57	24	14	0	5	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	56	25	9	4	5	0
Azerbaijan	55	10	10	3	17	5
Ukraine	51	9	7	25	7	1
Turkey	49	22	19	7	2	2
Israel	40	27	33	0	0	0
Belarus	36	32	14	13	4	2
Lebanon	33	11	22	11	22	0
Montenegro	22	30	38	2	4	4
Russian Federation	21	71	4	3	0	0
Kazakhstan	17	42	13	29	0	0
Albania	14	9	45	0	25	7

Source: Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note

Overall, the increased numbers of participants suggest that many partner countries have realised the value of stakeholder engagement in the Torino Process. However, the balance between the different stakeholders differs strongly per country, while the government representatives in most countries remain a dominant group.

Several countries also involved a **large percentage of donor representatives in the working groups** (for example Lebanon, Albania and Armenia). This highlights the importance of the Torino Process for donor coordination in the partner countries. The Torino Process helped provide a framework for donor coordination, and **donors actively participated in working groups** in most countries or were consulted by working group members during all TRP rounds. They also peer reviewed final reports and provided validation. The involvement in the Torino Process helped donors to develop a better understanding of the needs of partner countries for their assistance to VET reforms.

The 2013 TRP evaluation concluded that from 2010 to 2012, the amount of stakeholder consultations had increased.³³ In a survey conducted for the 2016 ETF evaluation, while partner country respondents felt that the Torino Process was a useful data collection and reporting tool, they also pointed out that

³³ ICON Institute, "Torino Process Interim Evaluation" 2013.

stakeholder involvement was still too low. This indicates that in some countries, the value of stakeholder engagement is not yet fully exploited although its importance is increasingly recognised.³⁴

The increasing stakeholder participation in TRP created potential for growing ownership within Partner Countries of their VET policy monitoring and reporting. Moreover, it created potential for shared ownership, where traditional centres of decision making (e.g. national ministries) increasingly involved other key VET stakeholders into policy dialogue. Other VET stakeholders could offer information and perspective on labour market relevance of VET, on work-based learning and other thematic areas that were traditionally neglected in VET policy monitoring and analysis.

Ownership

The principle of ownership was implemented through the **participation of stakeholders**, especially when this was done not on an ad hoc basis, but through the **establishment of working groups**. Continuous involvement contributed to the development of shared ownership among different stakeholders, rather than having one national coordinator working in isolation on the report. The ETF positively evaluated the role that the working groups played in drafting and validating the reports in 2014.³⁵ The 2016 ETF evaluation report further indicated that stakeholders in partner countries considered complementary instruments like study tours, seminars, conferences as effective tools to facilitate team work among the stakeholders and increase their sense of ownership of the Torino process and its deliverables.³⁶

A sign of advanced ownership of the TRP was conducting the process at sub-national level, which relied almost entirely on the national initiative and funding. The number of countries undertaking the sub-national TRP was growing, gradually encompassing all the large and decentralised or decentralising countries (such as Russia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Tunisia).³⁷

Between the third and fourth rounds, ten partner countries witnessed a decrease in their score for ownership. In three of the four countries where the score for participation dropped, the score for ownership dropped as well. These numbers indicate the connection between decreasing participation and decreasing ownership. Furthermore, in countries where the score for participation increased the score for ownership often also increased (five out of eight PC's with increased participation).³⁸ This indicates that country progress is not necessarily linear and the cycles with a more inclusive Torino Process and greater ownership by the stakeholders can be followed by those with lower levels of inclusion and ownership depending on diverse contextual factors.

Despite adverse effects on the quality of the analysis most interviewees pointed out positive capacity building effects of the self-assessment modality of the Torino Process. This required country stakeholders to conduct report writing work, which was not happening when the reports were written by the ETF using the data collected by the partner country stakeholders. Despite increasing participation in self-assessment modality, the analysis did not show a notable overall improvement in the quality of the Torino Process national reports, with large differences from country to country. While keeping and strengthening the leadership and participation of national stakeholders in the Torino Process

³⁴ EFFECTIV Consortium, "External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)" September 2016.

³⁵ ETF, "Torino Process 2014 Backstage report".

³⁶ EFFECTIV Consortium, "External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)" September 2016.

³⁷ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note " and ETF, "Torino Process 2014 Backstage report".

³⁸ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note " and ETF, "Torino Process 2014 Backstage report".

coordination, data collection and validation, the ETF should do more to ensure a consistent level of quality of the Torino Process reports. Not a single interview respondent disagreed with a suggestion that the national reports should include an **external assessment developed by the ETF**, which would provide a “critical view from outside” along with a more in-depth analysis of HCD problems. Several respondents were concerned if the ETF will have sufficient resources to conduct the analysis and write the external assessment reports for all the participating countries.

Holistic view

The wide coverage of the TRP analytical framework allowed multiple players to come together and **discuss VET from a variety of perspectives**. On average, partner countries scored 20.5 points out of 25 in the 2014 Assessment for Quality and Process section regarding the coverage of all building blocks of the framework. As the Analytical Framework requires country stakeholders to consider different perspectives, this score indicates that diverse topics and viewpoints were reflected in reporting.³⁹ In Tunisia, for example, one thematic coordinator (each from a different stakeholder group) for each building block was appointed.⁴⁰

For the fourth TRP round, the process mapping report of the ETF considered whether the country reports focused on all age groups and on both formal and non-formal forms of VET. Like in the third round, countries put most **emphasis on IVET and lacked evidence on CVET**. Therefore, both rounds do not seem to have made much progress in this area.⁴¹

Between the third and fourth rounds, 14 Partner Countries maintained the same score on their holistic approach, while four countries saw an increase in their score. Almost all countries with a lower score (2) on participation also have a similarly lower score on the holistic approach. This suggests that stakeholder participation is an important precondition for success in implementing the holistic approach.⁴²

Evidence- and knowledge-based assessments

The third TRP round showed an **increase in evidence presented in reports** as well as an **increased compliance with the Analytical Framework** requirements compared to the previous round.⁴³ The Assessment of Quality and Process in 2014 showed an average score of 20 out of 25 on countries’ abilities to provide evidence in the reports, which indicates that most countries have improved their skills in collecting evidence since the previous rounds.⁴⁴ The process report of 2016 noted that countries in the SEET, SEMED and EE regions were well able to obtain data and evidence but **lacked the skills to use evidence for in-depth understanding of challenges and opportunities in VET**. The low score of CA countries is caused also by the lack of data for such policy analysis.⁴⁵

In the fourth TRP round, the ETF placed more focus on the **use of evidence for policy-making** (more thoroughly discussed under ‘impact’) and on the **quality of selected indicators for the assessment**. As a result, the fourth TRP round has shown the **progress of countries in using both quantitative and**

³⁹ ETF, “TRP 2014 assessment quality and process”.

⁴⁰ ETF, “Torino Process 2014 Backstage report”

⁴¹ ETF, “Torino Process 2014 Backstage report” and ETF, “Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note”.

⁴² ETF, “Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note ” and ETF, “Torino Process 2014 Backstage report”.

⁴³ ETF, “Torino Process 2014 Backstage report”

⁴⁴ ETF, “TRP 2014 assessment quality and process”.

⁴⁵ ETF, “Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note ”.

qualitative methods of data collection. For example, stronger ties with national statistics offices were developed in Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Montenegro and Kazakhstan. Labour force surveys were conducted in many countries in each region. Stakeholder questionnaires were used in Macedonia. In almost all regions, major labour market and education indicators were covered.⁴⁶ This is reflected by the fact that 13 countries increased their score on evidence-based assessment between the third and fourth rounds, and only three countries saw a decline in their score.

Most interviewees agreed that the **national reports were a useful tool to monitor reforms** in the partner countries. The reports are a valuable and often the only source of information on VET policy developments in partner countries. However, some interviewees stressed that VET policy recommendations provided in the Torino Process reports were not implemented and lacked follow-up from partner countries. As mentioned earlier the 2017 Torino process conference participants were only moderately assessing the likelihood of using the TRP national reports for VET debates in their country (2,9 out of 5).⁴⁷ Embedding the Torino Process more closely into the national policy cycles, strengthening follow-up processes, particularly the implementation of the agreed priorities (supported by clear indicators of achievement) remain very important goals for the coming cycles of the Torino Process.

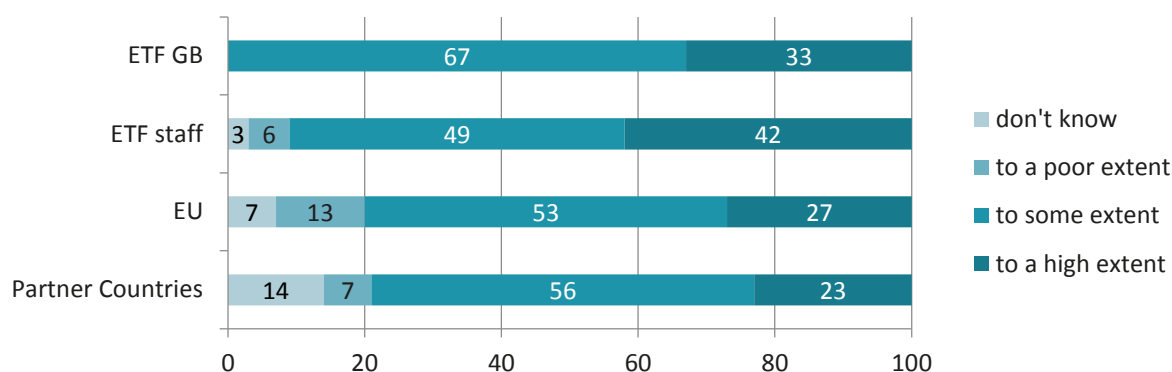
The involvement of stakeholders seems to have increased the ability of partner countries to obtain data and evidence but has not yet led to the higher-level analytical skills needed to develop and use evidence for policy-making, although most countries already score high on this principle. **The low quality of the reports of partner countries is related to the descriptive, instead of analytical, nature of the reports.** Analytical weakness limits the capacity to formulate evidence-based policy conclusions and recommendations.⁴⁸

Overall, stakeholders agreed that the effectiveness of the Torino Process was high. A survey of stakeholders carried out during the last external evaluation of the ETF indicated that a large majority of stakeholders and participants agreed that the Torino Process had been effective in achieving its objectives (see Figure 9 below). The evaluators mostly agree with this general assessment. The quality of the process has gradually increased, which has led to important improvements to VET governance in the partner countries. Partner countries have made significant progress in data collection about their VET systems and understanding data. The analysis in the reports however mostly remained basic and descriptive. There was somewhat more scepticism among some partner country stakeholders, who might have been frustrated by the mismatch between their expectation for reform (based on policy discussions during the Torino Process) and the lack of such progress due to contextual factors.

⁴⁶ ETF, “Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note”.

⁴⁷ ETF, “Torino Process 2017 Conference Survey Results”.

⁴⁸ ETF, “Torino Process 2014 Backstage report” and ETF, “Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note”.

FIGURE 8. STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "HAS THE TORINO PROCESS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES?"

Source: EFECTIV Consortium, "External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)" September 2016.

There are several factors that may negatively influence the ETF's ability to achieve the objectives of the Torino Process. Factors highlighted by the 2016 external evaluation include the fluid and often unstable political environments with high personnel turnover and discontinuities in activities. These changes affect the ability of government officials to implement policy reforms as new staff will first need to pursue a learning curve regarding the Torino Process. Moreover, the improved capacity of civil servants and stakeholders was not always used by government officials.⁴⁹ For some governments, the willingness was present, but the resources to fully engage in the TRP were lacking. The previous evaluation noted that there was an interest in the Torino Process from different stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan, but only if an external actor (like the ETF) took the lead in the organisation of the process, since the country did not have the personnel or the institutions to do it themselves.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The establishment of working groups, involving different groups of stakeholders, has contributed to the capacity building of the stakeholders involved in the Torino Process rounds. In some cases, the composition of the working groups was carried from the previous period, helping to ensure continuity. This increased the ownership of countries of their national events and reports, their ability to identify national policy priorities and to inform the ETF and donors about their needs for assistance. The involvement of diverse stakeholders also contributed to a wider perspective on VET, although the failure to include CVET into policy monitoring and development continued in the latest TRP round. Stakeholder participation also led to high scores of most countries in evidence-based assessments. All the partner countries still need to improve their analytical capacities to make the best use of the data being collected through the Torino Process.

Failure to fully implement the principles by some countries can be explained through external factors as well. Countries occasionally witness changes in political power which can remove trained and experienced stakeholders and replace them with persons without this experience. Furthermore, political

⁴⁹ EFECTIV Consortium, "External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)" September 2016.

⁵⁰ ETF, "Torino Process 2014 Backstage report"

instability in a region can prevent countries from being able to fully commit to the implementation of the Torino Process or can explain the lack of data (such as in the SEMED region).

In terms of the objectives of the ETF Torino Process, it can be concluded that the last two rounds led to an increase in stakeholder participation and stakeholder capacity to collect and understand data on the labour market situation and on human capital development policy. Ensuring quality of analysis requires additional effort by the ETF as the two rounds have shown a shortage of analytical skills in most partner countries.

Overall, the reports developed by the partner countries have led in most cases to an increased coordination with donors and an increased knowledge of the ETF of the needs of these countries. The TRP has contributed to the capacity of stakeholders in the Partner Countries through the sharing of knowledge, development of working groups and improvement of the skills of stakeholders to gather evidence for the reports. Despite progress made, most countries have not yet achieved the critical mass of stakeholders who have knowledge, skills, share values, are committed to positive change and are working together as a team in the modernization of human capital development policies in their respective countries. The capacity building process was often disrupted by political instability, or other factors.

2.2.3. Impact

This section reflects on how the increased capacity of the stakeholders in the partner countries has been used to influence policy-making. This includes policy debates becoming more evidence based, increased collaboration between stakeholders, Torino Process implemented with a greater responsibility in the hands of more broadly represented national stakeholders, the changes in the national policy agenda, the development of new strategies, action plans and legislation, their adoption, and the empowerment of countries to coordinate external support to VET according to the national priorities.

During the 2016 ETF evaluation, a wide range of interviews were conducted to determine the impact of the Torino Process. The results show that the TRP contributed to making the **policy debates more evidence based** and led to unprecedented **collaboration between stakeholders** than before. Simulation exercises involving all stakeholders were held, which stimulated team work among the stakeholders. A Kazakh respondent indicated that “discussions became more fact-based and data-driven” as a result of the Torino Process. Furthermore, a survey conducted for the same evaluation indicated that the ETF was either the main driver (15% of respondents) or provided some (35%) or important (45%) support for stronger collaboration and coordination among relevant stakeholders.⁵¹

The extent to which the capacity building of stakeholders has led to an **increase in their responsibilities** throughout the TRP rounds and in modernising VET in general differs within and between regions. In some countries, the role of social partners is still small compared to the involvement of government officials. Sometimes, only one institution had a leading role, therefore not enabling other (social) partners to take responsibility.⁵² In Uzbekistan, for example, it was reported that stakeholders contributed to the report but were cautious about the value of the TRP within their policy cycle.⁵³ In

⁵¹ EFFECTIV Consortium, “External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)” September 2016

⁵² ETF, “Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note”.

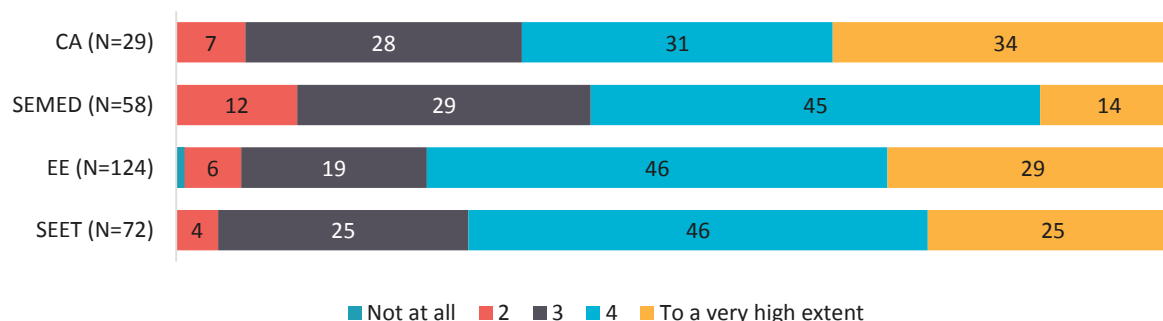
⁵³ ETF, “Torino Process 2014 Backstage Report”.

Azerbaijan, the third round of TRP was used to enlarge the consultation among stakeholders and benefit from their contributions to policy analysis. In Georgia, 26 stakeholders from different organisations were represented in the fourth round of the TRP and their broad participation provided the basis for consensus between different parties and supported agreements about policy choices and implementation.⁵⁴ The main stakeholders were actively involved in the discussions on policy issues and had equal opportunities to comment on policy documents.⁵⁵ As of 2014 the responsibility for the TRP implementation and report drafting in Kazakhstan has moved to the hands of national stakeholders. In the fourth round, the process as well as the analysis was fully managed by the national team.⁵⁶

These examples show that although diverse groups of stakeholders take part in the process the roles and responsibilities of social partners in national policy making differ strongly per country and region. In some countries, the stakeholders are only informed and can voice their opinion during the Torino Process where in others they are more actively involved in data collection, analysis and developing suggestions for policy priorities.

The 2016 survey of stakeholders indicates that over 70% of respondents from Eastern Europe or South-Eastern Europe and Turkey agreed that the **Torino Process contributed to the strengthening of the participation of stakeholders in shaping the VET policy**. Respondents from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region and the Central Asia region also agreed with the statement, but to a lesser extent (respectively 59% and 65% gave a 4 or 5 out of 5).⁵⁷

FIGURE 9. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE TORINO PROCESS CONTRIBUTED TO THE STRENGTHENING OF THE PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN SHAPING THE VET POLICY AGENDA? (PERCENTAGE)



Source: Torino Process (TRP) Stakeholder Survey – Main results.

The use of the TRP evidence also differs per country and region. In the CA and SEMED regions, the lack of understanding of the assessment potential in terms of monitoring and collecting feedback on previous policy prevents countries from using the results for policy-making. In the SEET region, there is no clear strategy (or necessity) yet to use the Torino Process results for shaping policy priorities in the

⁵⁴ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

⁵⁵ EFFECTIV Consortium, "External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)" September 2016.

⁵⁶ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

⁵⁷ ETF, "Torino Process (TR) stakeholder survey – Main Results" 2016.

field of VET, except for using it as one of many sources that can be looked at while reporting on a specific issue, planning specific activities or when there is a need to share it with other (international) actors.⁵⁸

The Torino Process rounds did contribute to the development of new strategies and legislation in several partner countries. In Azerbaijan, the Torino Process played an important role within the **strategic roadmap for VET** and the work on the monitoring system. In Albania and Turkey, the third TRP round results were used for the **development of national strategies** and reinforcing ongoing reforms.⁵⁹ In some countries, actions such as training the members of the analytical centre led to increased ownership of the Torino Process and an advanced monitoring of national VET policies. In Kazakhstan, for example, the government initiated legislation on the inclusion of the Torino Process as part of the country's general monitoring system.⁶⁰ Kazakhstan, as a notable exception in CA, has understood the Torino Process report as a strategic document that helps the Ministry of Education to **review its progress and priorities in the VET sector** and to build local capacities.⁶¹ In Serbia, a case study revealed that the TRP formed a foundation for the framework for VET policies and was a pivotal contribution to VET developments.⁶² The 2017 survey of ETF stakeholders indicated that 75% of the respondents believed that the ETF's analytical tools supported them to monitor the implementation of VET policies.⁶³

The interviewees who took part in the 2017 evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance revealed the **role and importance of the ETF in developing the national reports** even when they were largely written and fully owned by the national stakeholders. Several interviewees maintained that the analysis developed by the government officials or other national stakeholders was not as trusted as the one developed by the Agency itself. The reason was the ETF's "European prestige" and know-how whilst local stakeholders were thought to have limited capacity. The interviewees seemed to suggest that stakeholders would be more effective in convincing the key decision makers on the utility of the VET governance approaches promoted by the ETF if they clearly carried the Agency logo but were developed in collaboration with the relevant national actors.⁶⁴

The national strategies developed by the partner countries following these reports included space and potential for better cooperation with donors. Furthermore, the TRP supported partner countries in **obtaining support from bilateral and international agencies**. For example, the third TRP round helped to coordinate project identification support in Tajikistan by the EU and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Needs identified by the TRP in Palestine in 2014 formed the basis for joint donor activities.⁶⁵

The following box highlights examples of countries where the ETF support directly contributed to national strategies or action plans.

⁵⁸ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

⁵⁹ ETF, "TRP 2014 assessment quality and process".

⁶⁰ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

⁶¹ ETF, "Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note".

⁶² EFFECTIV Consortium, "External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)" September 2016.

⁶³ PPML, "Evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance – Final report" 2017.

⁶⁴ PPML, "Evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance – Final report" 2017.

⁶⁵ EFFECTIV Consortium, "External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)" September 2016.

BOX 4. ETF'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL STRATEGIES OR ACTION PLANS

In **Kazakhstan**, significant progress has been made in terms of ownership of the Torino Process. In 2010 and 2012, the Torino Process assessment was fully ETF-led. As of 2014, the responsibility for the implementation and report drafting has moved to the hands of national stakeholders. In the third round, the role of the ETF country desk was significant to organise stakeholder meetings and analyse evidence. In the fourth round, the process was officially endorsed by the Ministry of Education and resources were allocated to run the assessment. The process and the analysis was fully managed by the national team. In the third and fourth rounds, upon the formal submission of the report, the recommendations were then reviewed by the Ministry that has adjusted the policy priorities in the VET sector. As a result, in 2014, a stronger focus was put on the issue of access and entrepreneurial learning was introduced into the curricula. Finally, the value of the Torino Process is recognised by the initiation of the assessment at the regional level for which resources have been allocated and Kasipkor – the holding set up to establish and disseminate best practices in the VET sector – has been commissioned to implement the review in several regions (which is to be spread to all regions as of 2018). **The Torino Process report in Kazakhstan is understood as a strategic document** that helps the Ministry of Education to review the progress and priorities in the VET sector. At the same time, the process that has underpinned its preparation has helped build local capacities.

In **Ukraine**, the self-assessment start-up for the regions has been facilitated by an introductory training for the stakeholders involved. After that, the sub-national TRP has been implemented as a self-assessment with no direct budget support for meetings or other actions from the ETF. The regional dimension within Ukraine became extremely important not only in creating dialogue among stakeholders, but it also became the principal source to be used for the decisions on decentralization modalities and funding. In the country, the national TRP reports are less used, but **the sub-national reports are highly important** for creating dialogue among stakeholders and as a principal source for decisions on decentralisation modalities and funding. The evaluation of the ETF activities in the field of VET governance (2017) showed that in Ukraine (and Tunisia), main stakeholders particularly mentioned the highly useful VET context analysis they developed at regional level with the assistance from the ETF experts. In their opinion, this type of cooperation supported the involvement of regional stakeholders in the decentralisation process and the ETF's decision to focus on VET decentralisation in both countries was said to fully converge with broad national consensus. Countries have been more successful and managed to run a process following the TRP principles when initial coaching/mentoring was provided by the ETF.

Source: Kazakhstan: Torino Process (TRP) 2016 Implementation Mapping Note. Ukraine: Torino Process 2014 Backstage report and Evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance. The 2016 external evaluation highlighted that a loss of momentum could take place over time, when countries face implementation challenges and slow progress. However, until now, no such phenomenon has taken place and no countries have suggested stepping out of the TRP.⁶⁶

Conclusion

Many partner countries have made progress and improved their capacity at least in some aspects of participatory and evidence-based policy making in human capital development policies. Stakeholders are increasingly taking part in the collection of data for TRP reports, policy consultations and policy development. Furthermore, stakeholders are more actively sharing knowledge and experiences through diverse workshops and networking opportunities.

Furthermore, evidence suggests that although the involvement of stakeholders has strongly increased, the involvement of social partners (contrary to government officials) outside the TRP report is not always clearly visible. This suggests that the working groups for the Torino Process do not always continue afterwards and contribute to other stages of the policy cycle, such as designing national action

⁶⁶ EFFECTIV Consortium, "External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation (ETF)" September 2016.

plans for VET. Efforts need to be made to develop the analytical capabilities of VET stakeholders in the partner countries, which will in turn empower them to use the evidence throughout the national policy cycle.

The TRP rounds have directly contributed to the development of new strategies and policies in several countries. In many others no such direct contribution could be observed, but the Torino Process contributed to increasing the knowledge, capacity of and cooperation between stakeholders. Several partner countries experienced unfavourable contextual conditions, which reduced the gains achieved through the Torino Process. The TRP has also contributed strongly to an increase in understanding of the needs of Partner Countries by donor organisations. Interviewees from donor organisations and the EU Delegations mentioned that the TRP reports and events were useful sources of information for them when developing their interventions.

Key conclusions on effectiveness and impact

- The TRP national reports are a useful tool to monitor reforms in partner countries. Their development has stimulated partner country ownership, increased their capacity and self-confidence.
- The third and fourth Torino Process rounds have contributed strongly to the development of a diverse group of stakeholders in each partner country, with the capacity to gather and understand data used in evidence-based assessments in their country. This capacity has grown significantly since the first and second rounds.
- The quality of the evidence and the use of evidence for policy-making still require improvement in almost all partner countries. Although stakeholders improved their data gathering skills, their skills for analysis of data need development.
- The ETF, through the TRP, has strengthened the abilities of national stakeholders to influence national strategies and legislation in VET. In many countries, the government is no longer the sole contributor to VET legislation and VET system development. Social partners have increasingly grown able to feedback on and to contribute to public policy initiatives.
- The Torino Process supported the identification of specific needs and challenges for VET in each country, which has in turn contributed to better targeting and coordination of donor support for VET.
- The sharing of experiences at regional level has been highly appreciated by partner country stakeholders. However, the potential for positive effects from regional cooperation were not yet fully exploited. Apart from the ETF's support to the implementation of the Astana Declaration and the Central Asia Education Platform, the collaboration at the level of civil servants and social partner representatives at regional level was not paralleled by cooperation at a political level (between partner countries in the region and the EU). The bottlenecks that were holding back reforms in the partner countries were often political.

2.3. Added value

The purpose of this section is to discuss the added value of the Torino Process. The added value of the TRP is defined as the additional value created by the actions of individual stakeholders in the partner

countries or by the actions of other international organisations supporting human capital development in those countries.

The 2016 external evaluation of the ETF⁶⁷ reported the added value of the agency lied in: its thematic and geographical expertise; its use of participatory approaches to involve all stakeholders; the continuity of its interventions; its impartiality and independence; the European dimension of its work; and the complementary nature of its activities with respect to other services of the European Commission.

TABLE 2. PERCEIVED ADDED VALUE OF ETF AND TRP (N=201)

	ESTABLISHED OPEN DISCUSSION ON VET GOVERNANCE ISSUES WITH A BROADER RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS	BROUGHT COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE FROM MULTIPLE COUNTRIES AND REGIONS	PROVIDED FAST ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION
CA and Russia	***	***	***
EE	***	***	***
SEET	***	***	***
SEMED	***	***	***

Source: Adapted from stakeholder survey, PPMI Group, Evaluation of ETF Activities in the Field of VET Governance, 2017. The table shows the most rated answers to the question "How did ETF add value to what other international actors were doing in the field of VET governance in your country" from the survey of VET governance stakeholders. Three asterisks: the answer was chosen by more than 45% of respondents; two asterisks: 33 – 45%; one asterisk: less than 33%.

The 2017 evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance⁶⁸ concluded that the ETF offered unique products and services in the field of VET governance that were not easily substitutable by other international actors. These conclusions are relevant for the evaluation of the Torino Process because partner country stakeholders were unable to differentiate between the support provided to them through the different strategic projects of the ETF. According to the evaluation, the most important added value was the establishment of open discussions on VET governance issues with a broad range of stakeholders. The ETF also brought a comparative perspective from other relevant countries and provided fast access to knowledge and information on VET governance. The data from the survey⁶⁹ showed that more significant added value was created by an open discussion between stakeholders rather than by the access to knowledge and information (see Table 2 above).

The current evaluation has established that the Torino Process has created added value by addressing important issues that were not sufficiently addressed at national level.

⁶⁷ ECORYS, External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation, 2016.

⁶⁸ PPMI Group, evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance, 2017

⁶⁹ PPMI Group, evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance, 2017

Firstly, **the TRP supported the participation of stakeholders in policy dialogue.** According to the ETF's stakeholder survey⁷⁰, most respondents stated that the participation of stakeholders was important for shaping the VET policy agenda in their country. Nevertheless, the perceived involvement of stakeholders was relatively low (overall, 39% of respondents claimed that different stakeholders participated in the VET policy agenda discussion to a high/very high extent). The lack or limited communication among stakeholder groups seemed to be the largest obstacle to the participation of stakeholders in the VET policy making. The TRP offers opportunity to enlarge stakeholder participation and bridge that gap. In the 25 participating countries, a total of more than 2400 national stakeholders were directly involved in the TRP events. Half of participants come from ministries and other government agencies, 18% from the educational providers, 15% from the business sector and the remainder from international and non-governmental organisations⁷¹. Moreover, the TRP provided a unique opportunity for peer learning and dialogue between partner countries and with the international organisations active in human capital development.

Secondly, **the TRP created added value by fostering evidence-based policy making culture.** The partner countries are lacking evidence-based policy-making capacity. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index⁷², most partner countries are lower-ranked countries. Corruption correlates with less effective governance, including a lower importance attached to evidence in VET policy decision-making. The results of the TRP stakeholder survey confirm that the main reasons for the limited use of evidence were the lack of capacity and no interest in evidence for decision making across all four regions⁷³. The Torino Process allowed policymakers and stakeholders to identify evidence gaps and helped them gather and interpret existing data. Most of the indicators gathered in partner countries came from the international partners such as Eurostat, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the World Bank, the OECD, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the International Labour Organization (ILO). In some cases, stronger links to the national statistical offices were made in order to complete the TRP statistical annex (e.g. Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Montenegro, and Kazakhstan)⁷⁴. For the qualitative evidence, countries used stakeholder consultations, interviews or focus groups to enrich the TRP analysis (e.g. Georgia)⁷⁵. Overall, all the countries participating in the TRP have recognised the importance and relevance of evidence-based policy making and monitoring systems for ensuring the quality and implementation of VET reforms⁷⁶.

Finally, **the TRP generated added value by encouraging VET policy learning.** The ETF conducted a comparative analysis between partner countries which led to new insights and improved the knowledge base available to policy makers and stakeholders. According to the ETF, most partner countries are at VET policy development level 2, meaning that countries are for the most part focusing

⁷⁰ ETF, Torino Process Stakeholder Survey – Main Results, 2017.

⁷¹ ETF, Torino Process 2016 Implementation Mapping Note, 2017.

⁷² Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2016. Retrieved from: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016

⁷³ ETF, TRP stakeholder survey, 2017.

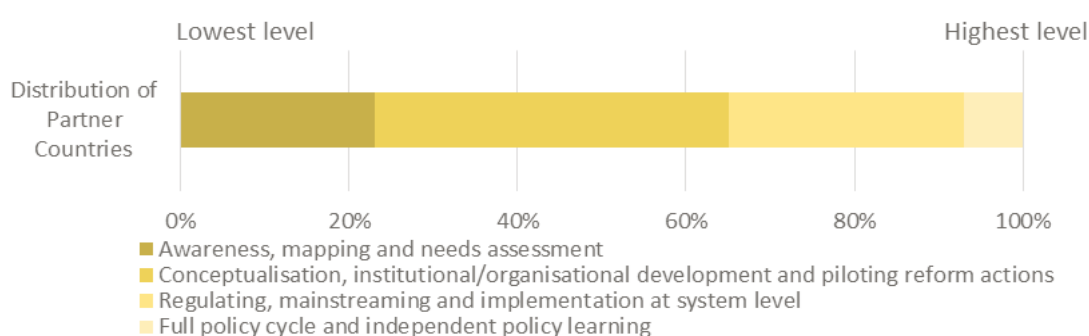
⁷⁴ ETF, Torino Process 2016 Implementation Mapping-note, 2017.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ ETF, Policy Development in ETF partner countries – Baseline Assessment, 2017.

on conceptualisation, institutional/organisational development and piloting reform actions. 28% of partner countries are at level 3, focusing on regulating, mainstreaming and implementation at system level. The remaining 30% is distributed for the most part at level 1 – awareness, mapping and needs assessment, while only 7% reach level 4 or the full policy cycle and independent policy learning (see Figure 10 below)⁷⁷. The added value of the Torino Process to bring change to national reform processes was demonstrated in countries where it was used for donor coordination and as input to the EU programming. This was the case in Lebanon, Egypt, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Jordan, Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro⁷⁸.

FIGURE 10. POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN PARTNER COUNTRIES (N=25)



Source: ETF, Policy Development in ETF partner countries – Baseline Assessment, 2017.

Overall, The TRP made a large contribution to the added value of the ETF as no other strategic project of the Agency had such a dedicated focus on stakeholder participation, collaboration and empowerment. The highest added value was created in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and Russia, where countries were involved to a very high extent in the Torino Process – they used it to inform the policies, review the situation in VET and discuss the priorities and strategies in this specific education sector⁷⁹. In the SEET region, EU candidate countries were reporting and monitoring progress under the Copenhagen process⁸⁰. Therefore, the TRP duplicated the efforts to some extent and generated lower added value⁸¹. In the CA and SEMED regions, countries were less involved in the Torino Process. The ETF recognised that the difficulties stemmed mainly from their limited capacities to implement the TRP, and external factors such as political instability, but also a lack of understanding of the TRP potential in terms of policy monitoring and shaping⁸². In addition, the presence of different

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ ETF, Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2016, GB/17/DEC/005, 2017.

⁷⁹ ETF, Torino Process 2016 Implementation Mapping-note, 2017.

⁸⁰ CEDEFOP, Stronger VET for better lives - Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies 2010-14, 2015.

⁸¹ ETF, Torino Process 2016 Implementation Mapping-note, 2017.

⁸² Ibid.

donors, especially in the SEMED region, and the analysis produced in the context of sector support hindered the opportunities to see the TRP added value⁸³.

Key conclusions on added value

- The Torino Process created added value by addressing important issues that were not sufficiently addressed at national level in the partner countries. Firstly, it supported participation of stakeholders in policy making. Secondly, it fostered an evidence-based policy culture. Finally, the TRP generated added value by encouraging VET policy learning within and between the partner countries.
- The highest added value was for the Eastern Partnership countries and Russia, which were involved to a very high extent in the Torino process. In the South Eastern Europe and Turkey, the EU candidate countries were reporting and monitoring progress under the Copenhagen process, therefore, the TRP generated lower added value. Many of the Central Asian and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries mainly could not benefit equally well from the Torino process due to political instability or uncertainty.

2.4. Sustainability

Sustainability is mainly understood as the ability of the ETF to adapt the TRP to the evolving needs of the partner countries. In this section, we describe how the Torino Process evolved over time and analyse the extent to which the results and impacts achieved after each round were sustained. We also discuss factors, which enabled or hindered the sustainability of the TRP results and impacts.

2.4.1. Evolution and continuity of TRP

Through the four rounds already implemented (in 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016), the ETF noticeably improved the TRP to match the needs of partner countries. The focus of the Torino Process has moved from problem definition to the monitoring of VET reforms across partner countries. The Torino Process documents (see Figure 11 below) evolved from being initially descriptive to emphasising VET policy recommendations and presenting VET issues in a more easily understandable and comparable way. During these four rounds, the most noticeable changes occurred in the 4th round. Firstly, the TRP became more structured in collecting evidence, because within the analytical framework the countries were guided by detailed questions. Secondly, the ETF placed more attention on the capacity building (e.g. support meetings within countries with stakeholders, provision of support to data analysis). Third, the ETF has started to digitalise the TRP and to provide a more user-friendly access to information about VET policies in the partner countries. Moreover, digitalisation is expected to lead to a better management of evidence and stakeholder network within the ETF.

⁸³ Ibid.

FIGURE 11. TORINO PROCESS REPORTS (2010–2017)

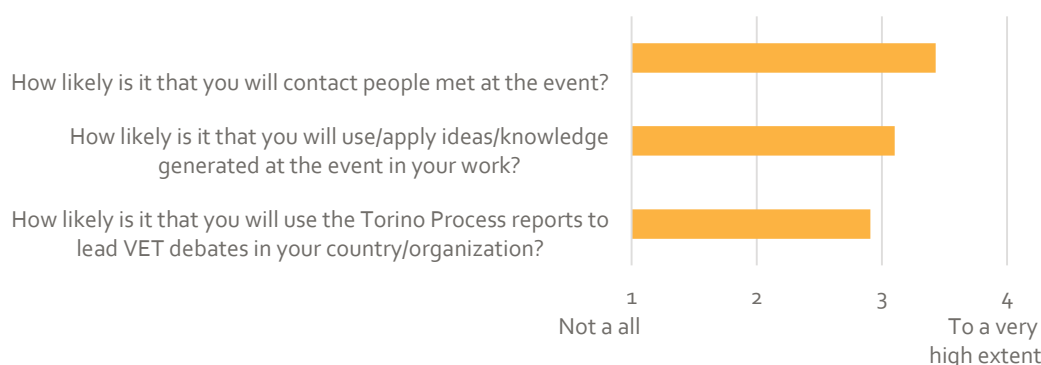
2010-11	2012-13	2014-15	2016-17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 national reports • 4 regional briefing-notes • 1 cross-country briefing-note 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 national reports • 4 regional reports • 1 cross-country report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 national reports • 4 regional reports • 1 cross-country report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 national reports (executive summaries) • 4 regional reports • 4 regional overviews

Source: ETF, Publications Catalogue (2017, January 17). Retrieved from http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Publications_catalogue.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the changes of the TRP have been effective, because stakeholder perceptions and usage of the reports were not measured consistently over time. Every two years, the ETF conducts a survey to monitor the developments of the Torino Process, but the survey methodology has varied by round. For example, in 2011, stakeholders were asked about the purposes for which the reports had been used. In the opinion of respondents, reports were more useful for the “future ETF work in the country” than for “country policy making”. In the subsequent round this question was modified, therefore no data is available for comparisons with the later rounds. Moreover, there is limited comparability of the TRP performance indicators between different years. This obstacle is both conceptual and technical, because it includes the different definitions and inconsistencies in units of measurement. If TRP managers cannot compare indicators between rounds, they may be unable to learn which approaches are working better and to improve the TRP (see also section 2.5 Efficiency, SP TRP indicators).

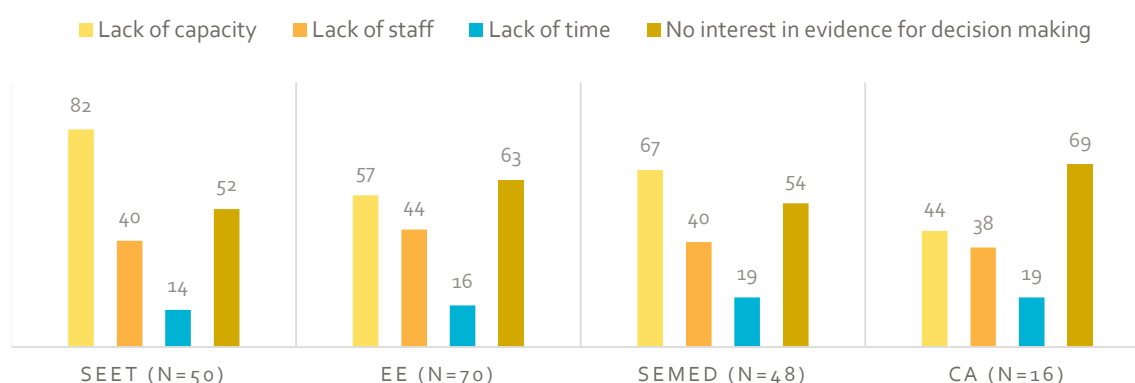
Feedback from the ETF post-conference survey suggests⁸⁴ that the most sustainable outcome of the TRP is expected to be a network of policy stakeholders and the knowledge they have acquired. Most respondents stated that it was likely that they would contact people they had met at the conference and would use ideas and knowledge generated. Fewer respondents, however, reported that they were likely to use the reports to lead VET debates in their country or organisation. This may be due to the reason that the TRP reports as such often were a result of VET policy debates.

⁸⁴ ETF, Post conference feedback survey, Torino Process conference 2017 - Changing Skills for a Changing World, Torino, 7-8 June 2017.

FIGURE 12. STAKEHOLDERS' EXPECTATIONS ON TRP SUSTAINABILITY (AVERAGE SCORE, N=128)

Source: ETF, Post conference feedback survey, 2017.

Whether the benefits of the TRP continue mostly depends on the actual use of evidence in policy-making. The ETF stakeholder survey shows⁸⁵ that the use of evidence for policy making in the partner countries is limited. According to the survey, around 40% of respondents from the EE and CA regions rated the use of evidence in their countries as part of the decision-making process in VET as “high” or “very high”. The corresponding proportion among respondents from the SEET region was 32%; among SEMED respondents it was just 16%. However, the majority (76 – 94%) of respondents rated the importance of evidence as “high”. The main reasons given for the limited use of evidence are the lack of capacity and the lack of interest in evidence among decision-makers across all four regions of the partner countries (see Figure below)⁸⁶.

FIGURE 13. REASONS FOR LIMITED USE OF EVIDENCE IN THE ETF PARTNER COUNTRIES (% , N=184)

Source: ETF, Torino Process Stakeholder Survey – Main Results, 2017.

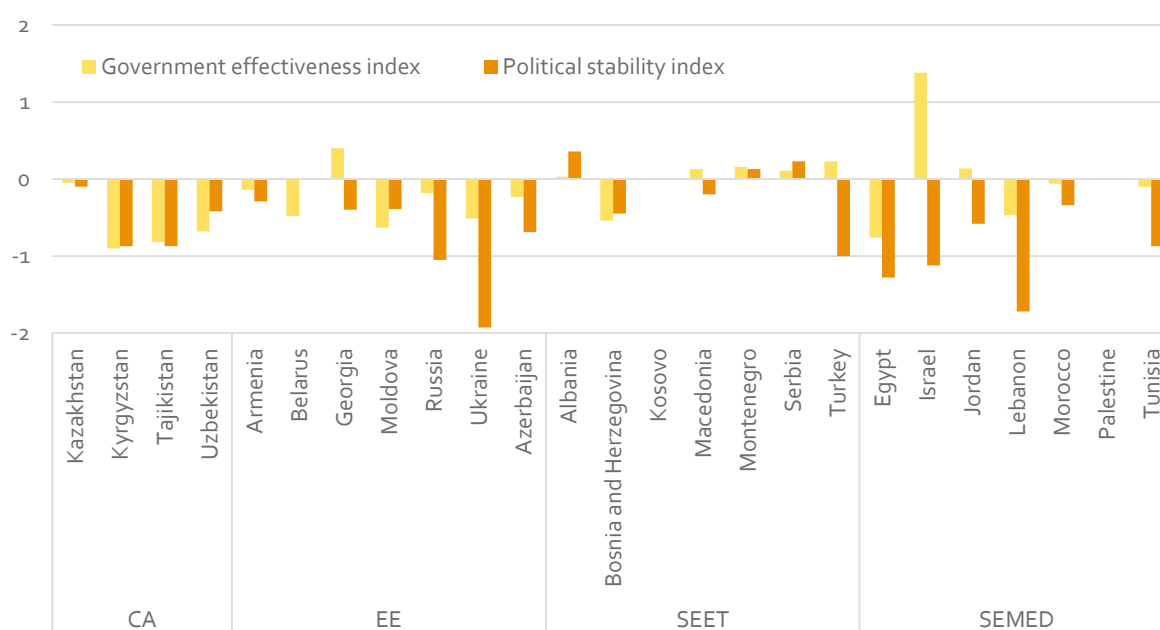
These findings underline potential shortcomings related to the application of the policy cycle approach to the Torino Process. It mainly focuses on the supply of evidence by applying a complex analytical

⁸⁵ ETF, Torino Process Stakeholder Survey – Main Results, 2017.

⁸⁶ ETF, Torino Process Stakeholder Survey – Main Results, 2017.

framework, biennial reporting and the dissemination of knowledge through regular events. According to an ETF survey carried out in 2013⁸⁷, nearly two-thirds of stakeholders surveyed stated that the Torino Process should be carried out less frequently than every two years. Some other respondents commented that the analytical framework was too complex and did not respond to each country's needs⁸⁸. Recently, policy researchers have begun to consider the need to stimulate the demand for evidence⁸⁹. That demand, in this context, encompasses both the capacity to find, evaluate and use evidence, and the motivation to use it to formulate evidence-informed public policy⁹⁰. The mismatch between the supply of, and demand for, evidence is one of the main factors that may limit sustainability of the Torino Process.

FIGURE 14. POLITICAL STABILITY AND GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN PARTNER COUNTRIES



Source: Adapted from TheGlobalEconomy.com, the World Bank.

The 2017 evaluation of ETF activities in the field of VET governance⁹¹ analysed the external factors that affected the sustainability of ETF's work. Surveyed stakeholders from CA and Russia, EE and SEET regions agreed that the scarcity of financial resources and the lack of competencies were the top factors that hindered sustainability and effectiveness of the ETF's interventions in their countries. In turn, respondents from SEMED region observed that the most important constraints were a lack of consensus

⁸⁷ ETF, Stakeholder survey, Torino Process 2012- Lessons Learnt, 2013.

⁸⁸ ETF, Stakeholder survey, Torino Process 2012 - Lessons Learnt, 2013.

⁸⁹For example, Newman et al. Stimulating Demand for Research Evidence: What Role for Capacity-building? IDS Bulletin Volume 43 Number 5 September 2012; Cairney, Paul The politics of evidence-based policymaking: maximizing the use of evidence in policy, 2016

⁹⁰ Newman et al. Stimulating Demand for Research Evidence: What Role for Capacity-building? IDS Bulletin Volume 43 Number 5 September 2012

⁹¹ PPMI Group, Evaluation of ETF Activities in the Field of VET Governance, 2017

and political changes or instability in their countries. The *index of Political Stability* also shows that the countries in SEMED region are the most vulnerable (Figure 14). According to the *index of Government Effectiveness*, which captures perceptions of the quality of policy formulation and implementation, the CA region suffers from lower government effectiveness (with Kazakhstan as notable exception). Lower governance effectiveness indicates very high relevance of the TRP for those countries, but at the same time it may prevent some countries from making a full use of the Torino Process for improving capacity of stakeholders and improving the quality of governance (making it more inclusive and evidence-based). The external factors might have limited the partner countries' engagement in long-overdue, governance-related processes, especially in the SEMED and CA regions.

The 2016 external evaluation⁹² stated that sustainability of the ETF strategic projects was largely affected by circumstances beyond the ETF's control, e.g. the political situation in partner countries. Evaluators recommended to strengthen the follow-up activities by ensuring linkages to subsequent funding opportunities such as EC programming, more systematic provision of networking platforms, and increasing the number of stakeholders involved.

Key conclusions on sustainability

- During the four rounds of the Torino Process, the ETF has gradually made improvements. The national reports evolved from being initially descriptive to emphasising VET policy recommendations and presenting VET issues in a more easily understandable and comparable way. The reports also became better structured and several process improvements have been made.
- It is difficult to assess the extent to which the changes made to the Torino Process have added to sustainability of positive change in the partner countries, because stakeholder perceptions, involvement and usage of the reports were not measured consistently over time.
- Limited demand for evidence among decision makers in the partner countries is one of the main factors that limited the sustainability of the Torino Process. Political instability and low government effectiveness also reduced the sustainability of benefits that partner countries received from the participation in the Torino Process. The partner countries in the SEMED and CA regions needed relatively more support to be able to participate in the Torino Process.

2.5. Efficiency

According to the EU Better Regulation Guidelines, the analysis of efficiency should look at the correlation between the resources the ETF used and the changes its intervention generated in Partner Countries during the evaluation period. However, our analysis is limited by incomplete information. The ETF internal planning and monitoring documents provide limited information on time and

⁹² ECORYS, External Evaluation of the European Training Foundation, 2016.

resource use within TRP, which limits the evaluation of the cost-effectiveness. Despite this limitation we analyse the indicators the ETF used to monitor the implementation of the TRP. We conclude the chapter with the analysis of the changes in the expenditure of the ETF on this strategic project.

2.5.1. SP TRP indicators

The Better Regulation guidelines suggest that indicators should follow the RACER principle⁹³. The RACER indicators are Relevant, Acceptable, Credible, Easy and Robust. We also use SMART criteria for indicators, which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited. The indicators of the TRP, defined in the Corporate activity reports and Strategic project “Policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring” implementation plan, provide an incomplete view of the TRP performance. Our findings point to three main methodological challenges:

First, indicators are difficult to interpret. For example, “*At least 10 countries make progress in one of the principles vis-a-vis 2015 assessment*” or “*At least 3 countries move to a higher development stage*”⁹⁴. These indicators are very specific and relevant, but this is at the expense of credibility. Clear formulations and definitions would make indicators more accessible to non-experts and help better communicate the objectives of the TRP to stakeholders.

Second, indicators do not show trends over time. The indicators of the TRP change from one year to another, therefore it is difficult to evaluate the progress. For example, three indicators – “*Number of countries taking part to the 5th round of the TRP is maintained against the 4th round of implementation*”⁹⁵ (2018), “*70% of partner countries participate in the TRP*” (2016), and “*TRP is implemented in the majority of ETF partner countries respecting the four principles*” (2014) – measure the same object (participating countries). However, these indicators lack consistency in the way in which the number of countries has been measured in different years. There is limited comparability of the TRP indicators between different years and rounds. The challenge is both conceptual and technical, because it includes the different definitions and inconsistencies in units for measurement. Moreover, if the ETF managers cannot compare indicators across different rounds, they may be unable to prove with evidence which approaches are working well and which are not.

Third challenge relates to the measurability of indicators. It is true that VET policy developments and the other objectives of the TRP are better captured by qualitative indicators. Most of the outcome indicators are qualitative and do not have numeric measures. For example, indicator “*Partner countries’ stakeholders acknowledge the added value and influence of TRP in the VET reform in their countries*”⁹⁶ has no figures and no timed targets. Therefore, the indicator cannot be planned and used to evaluate the progress made. The indicators of TRP should include the perceptions of stakeholders or policy makers about the quality and benefits of TRP, because more numeric measures are needed to gauge whether TRP is moving in the right direction. Every two years, the ETF conducts a survey to monitor the developments of the Torino Process. This survey can be used to collect and monitor qualitative indicators.

⁹³DEVCO (Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation), Indicators to measure Social Protection Performance, 2017.

⁹⁴ ETF, strategic project policy analysis and system wide policy monitoring implementation plan – WP 2017.

⁹⁵ ETF, strategic project policy analysis and system wide policy monitoring implementation plan – WP 2018 (draft version).

⁹⁶ ETF, strategic project policy analysis and system wide policy monitoring implementation plan – WP 2016; ETF, Torino Process implementation plan – WP 2014

A detailed evaluation of indicators presented in the Torino Process implementation plan (2018)⁹⁷ is provided in the Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. EVALUATION OF TRP INDICATORS (2018)

NO.	INDICATOR	TYPE	QUALITY ⁹⁸	COMMENTS
1.	<i>Increased transparency of VET policies and results in ETF partner countries.</i>	Impact indicator	*****	Indicator is specific (it focuses on TRP objectives), but it is not measurable (it has no formula), achievable (it has no quantifiable target), time-limited (it is not attached to a time frame). Criterion "Realistic" is not applicable, because indicators has no formula and target.
2.	<i>Number of countries data mapped.</i>	Outcome indicators	*****	Indicator is specific, measurable, but is not achievable (it has no quantifiable target), time-limited (it is not attached to a time frame). Criterion "Realistic" is not applicable, because indicator has no formula and target.
3.	<i>Number of countries taking part to the 5th round of the TRP is maintained against the 4th round of implementation.</i>		*****	Indicator is specific, measurable, achievable, time-limited and realistic.
4.	<i>Missions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 mission for each CC for what's up meetings and representation of Riga monitoring findings; - 2 missions in Tunisia; - 2 missions CAEP; - Other. 	Output indicators	*****	Indicator is measurable, achievable, realistic, but it is not specific (the term "mission" is lacking definition), time-limited (it is not attached to a detailed time frame).
5.	<i>Expertise FWC:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expertise FWC and Turkey contract for data collection; - Expertise FWC national experts; - Other. 		*****	Indicator is measurable, achievable, realistic, but it is not specific (the term "expertise" is lacking definition) and time-limited (it is not attached to a detailed time frame).
6.	<i>Meetings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expert meeting; - Kick off meeting. 		*****	Indicator is measurable, achievable, realistic, but it is not specific (the term "meeting" is lacking definition) and time-limited (it is not attached to a detailed time frame).

Source: SP TRP implementation plan 2018

In addition, the ETF uses a special approach to the monitoring of the Torino Process which is called *TRP implementation mapping*. The ETF is monitoring and evaluating the TRP to determine if it is making progress in implementing the established principles (ownership, participation, holistic approach and evidence-based assessment). According to Method Report⁹⁹, qualitative indicators are used to give a score based on the level of partner country implementation of a given principle, where level 1 stands for the weakest performance and level 5 for the strongest performance vis-à-vis one of the four principles. The method of *TRP implementation mapping* is well developed and highly sophisticated.

⁹⁷ ETF, strategic project policy analysis and system wide policy monitoring implementation plan – WP 2018 (draft version).

⁹⁸ According to SMART indicators (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited).

⁹⁹ ETF, TRP 2016 Implementation Mapping – Method Report, 2016.

However, it raises the question about how *TRP implementation mapping* is employed to foster the improvement of the TRP. There is little evidence that *TRP implementation mapping* information is being used in the decision making process.

2.5.2. TRP costs

Besides the Torino Process the SP TRP has other activity areas. According to the SP's annual work programmes, during 2016-2017 the team structured its work under the two activity areas: (i) implementation of the TRP and (ii) monitoring and reporting of Riga MTDs in Candidate Countries. In 2018, the team introduced two additional areas: (iii) capacity development for policy analysis, monitoring and evidence-based policy making, and (iv) evidence and statistics hub. There are visible synergies between these areas and other SPs. For instance, the findings from the TRP reports feed into the "Evidence and Statistics Hub", which aims to synthesize, and quality assure evidence collected across the remaining six SPs. In turn, capacity development area among other things also aims to prepare all countries for the implementation of the 5th TRP round.

Our review of the planning and monitoring documents has revealed that the system the ETF applied to plan and monitor the costs of the Torino Process was not clustering unit costs under the activity areas mentioned above. The lack of such clustering makes it impossible to separate the total costs of the Torino Process from the costs of other activities carried out by the SP TRP. If the ETF plans to continue monitoring Torino Process rather than the overall work of the SP TRP, clustering costs by SP's activity areas is important not only for this evaluation, but also for the future ones.

Interestingly, in the budget plan of 2016, the SP team has disaggregated the expenditure¹⁰⁰ (but not Full-time equivalent (FTE) costs) for the respective year by activity areas. The distribution of planned expenditure during this year, suggested that the largest share of SPs budget was spent on the Torino Process. The team allocated about 77% (552,000) of the planned expenditure to the implementation of the first year of the 4th TRP round, whereas, the remaining 23% (160,000) were allocated to the follow-up activities for the Riga Conclusions. The ETF continue disaggregating during the following years.

Another important limitation of the existing monitoring system of the TRP is noted in the 2017 audit report. Following the overview of the ETF's work time registration system, the auditors found that inputs of other staff members beyond the Core Team, were not recorded as the time dedicated for the implementation of the Torino Process. They emphasised the investment of the working hours of the country desk and communication officers. Inclusion of their inputs into the analysis is crucial for the assessment of efficiency. For example, existing evaluation and audit reports suggest that increasing country ownership for the process could have considerable efficiency gains for ETF by removing the strain on the TRP core team. Since the country desk officers support partner country stakeholders during the consultation process and report drafting, analysis of their input is needed to conclude with certainty whether this would be the case.

Such an analysis is particularly relevant if we consider that despite the 25% increase in number of countries taking self-assessment, the total costs of the SP TRP during the implementation of the 4th TRP

¹⁰⁰ According to the audit report largest units under this Title are 'the costs for the final conference (which completes the cycle), organising seminars and workshops in the partner countries, hiring experts to support the partner countries in data gathering, stakeholder consultation and report drafting, and communication (including the publication of the many reports produced in the process).'

round have also increased by 39% in comparison to the costs incurred during the 3rd round (Table 4). This happened mainly due to the introduction of the new activity area – follow-up to Riga Conclusions in the Candidate Countries. It is possible that the resources that became free due to more countries making self-assessments, were allocated to other capacity building activities, such as supporting the partner countries during the implementation of sub-national level TRP¹⁰¹. Besides, increased costs can be linked to the new or enhanced items, which SP TRP introduced during the fourth round. For example, about 50% more individuals attended the TRP concluding conference during the 4th round than during the 3rd round. As another example, the SP digitised the TRP, introducing the new interactive tools for the comparative analysis on the website dedicated specifically to the Torino Process, which was also fully redesigned. Although being a step in the right direction digitisation of the Torino Process so far has not gone far enough to improve the presentation of the partner country data on the development of their VET systems so that it can be easily found on the ETF website and compared across countries. The current Torino Process country reports and the way they are published do not serve this purpose well. The ETF collects and analyses large quantities of partner country information on VET systems and policies but currently does not make this data available on its website in an easy to access way. Furthermore, this information is not aggregated into an overall index or several indices that would allow swift cross-country comparisons on the development of their VET systems and policies.

TABLE 4. SP TRP COSTS DURING THE EVALUATION PERIOD

ROUND	YEAR	FTE COSTS	EXPENDITURE	MISSION COST	TOTAL (PER YEAR)
3 rd	2014	630,751	218,559	28,929	878,239
	2015	714,294	799,634	30,153	1,544,081
Total (per round)		1,345,045	1,018,193	59,082	2,422,319
4 th	2016	800,616	1,078,082	55,770	1,934,469
	2017	759,831	629,968	43,657	1,433,456
Total (per round)		1,560,446.80	1,708,050.01	99,427.31	3,367,924.12
Change in total per round		+ 16%	+ 68%	+ 68%	+ 39%

Source: SP TRP self-assessment reports and the information received directly from ETF via email

Finally, several 3rd round TRP national reports pointed out that some Partner Countries (e.g. Israel and Turkey) had established monitoring systems for VET policies. Hence, the involvement of these countries into a parallel TRP monitoring process with the aim of learning and introducing such a process, had a much more limited relevance and efficiency than in the Countries that did not have such national processes. However, the participation of the Candidate or other more advanced Partner Countries in the TRP has a learning value for the rest of the Partner Countries by making available good practices, and valuable peer-to-peer discussions. The evidence shows that peer learning and dialogue are among the most appreciated elements of ETF's support by the Partner Countries (please see also section on the added value of TRP). Such ETF support also adds high value because it is unique and cannot be readily

¹⁰¹ During the 4th round, four countries (Ukraine, Tunisia, Russia and Kazakhstan) extended TRP to the sub-national level together covering above 30 regions in these countries

replaced by any other actor. Therefore, keeping the more advanced countries in the TRP could still be efficient through a better achievement of TRP objectives in other Partner Countries.

Key conclusions on efficiency

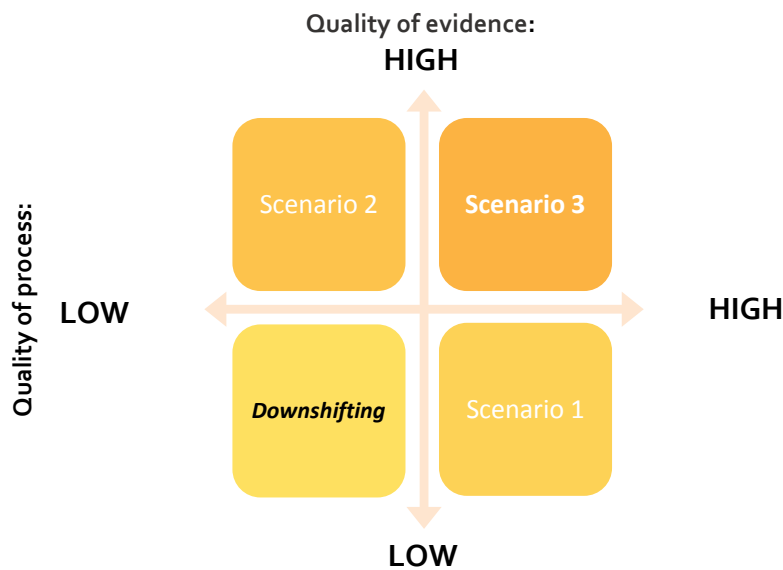
- Like in other ETF operations, the cost of inputs of the Torino Process is still incomparable over time. The indicators do not differentiate between the Torino Process and other activities of the Strategic project “Policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring”. The system the ETF applied to plan and monitor the expenditure of human and financial resources was not clustering unit costs under specific activity areas of the strategic project. This means individual cost items could not be linked to TRP outputs. As a result, a quantitative evaluation of cost-effectiveness of the TRP has been impossible. Overcoming these challenges is important if the ETF plans to continue implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Torino Process.
- The two activity areas of the Strategic project “Policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring” (Torino Process and follow-up to Riga MTDs) serve a very similar objective, namely, supporting the partner countries in the monitoring and reporting on the status of their VET systems. Considering that the more advanced partner countries already have functioning VET monitoring systems and that some of them are conducting a more detailed reporting under the Copenhagen Process, their separate reporting under the Torino Process is not necessary or cost-effective. However, there is added value in their continued participation of the EU candidate countries in the Torino Process, such as the collection of evidence, organisation of national events respecting the four principles and participation in regional or international peer learning and dissemination. Same as other partner countries the candidate countries would benefit from a detailed assessment by the ETF of their progress in modernizing and developing VET systems. The continued participation of the candidate countries in the Torino Process provides strong peer learning value for other partner countries.

3. Scenarios for the future

The analysis above has highlighted several difficulties in implementing simultaneously the objectives of the Torino Process. It has concluded that the ETF has a difficulty in ensuring the quality of evidence and analysis in the Torino Process reports as the growing number of Partner Countries decided to undertake the self-assessment modality. Moreover, during the implementation of the first four rounds of the Torino Process the policy landscape and the capacity within the Partner Countries has changed. Some of the countries have acquired an EU Candidate Country status, most have developed their VET strategies. Most if not all Partner Countries have made progress in modernizing their VET policies and systems, while the gaps and the differences in the needs of the countries have grown larger.

This invites us to rethink the logic and the implementation modalities of the Torino Process. In this section of the report, we identify and analyse alternative scenarios for the implementation of the Torino Process in the future. A scenario can be defined as a description of a possible future situation, including the path of development leading to that situation¹⁰². The analysis below provides a broad picture of the relative positive and negative effects of the different scenarios, which should allow the ETF to make its own judgements if and how the Torino Process should be revisited in the coming cycles.

FIGURE 15. SCENARIO MATRIX



Two of the most important variables that determine the scenarios of the Torino Process are *the quality of evidence* and *the quality of process*. By *quality of evidence*, we mean having a sufficiently large set of

¹⁰² Kosow H., Gaßner R., Methods of Future and Scenario Analysis: Overview, Assessment, and Selection Criteria, Studies 39, German Development Institute, 2008.

(SMART) indicators for each of the partner countries that help diagnose their levels of development in VET policy and help understand the underlying causes behind the higher or lower levels. By *quality of process*, we mean the quality of policy dialogue coordinated by a responsible national ministry, with a diverse representation of other VET stakeholders, who have complementary information and perspectives on VET. For good quality the same stakeholders must be engaged multiple times on a regular basis, sharing their perspectives on VET policy challenges and needs, and contributing to the development of the Torino Process country reports.

These variables are presented in the axes of scenario matrix (Figure 15). The horizontal axis corresponds to the quality of the process, while the vertical axis represents the quality of evidence. By arranging these two variables into 2x2 matrix we define three possible change scenarios for the TRP. The scenarios place different emphasis on the quality of the process and the quality of evidence. In the **Scenario 1** the starting point is: What happens if the ETF prioritises the quality of the process above all else seeing this as the key to making an impact on capacity-building and on promoting evidence-based policy making? By implication in this scenario the agency seeks to empower national VET stakeholders to own the process and to draft their country report and cedes the direct control over quality of evidence and quality of analysis. In the **Scenario 2**, the situation is exactly the opposite: the ETF prioritises the quality of evidence over the quality of the process even if it means taking charge of the country reports, including correcting, complementing and reinterpreting the data and analysis provided by the partner country stakeholders.

TABLE 5. ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FUTURE TRP ROUNDS

SCENARIO/ OPTION	DESCRIPTION	LIKELY POSITIVE EFFECTS	LIKELY NEGATIVE EFFECTS
"No-change" scenario	ETF makes no change to pursuing all the current objectives of TRP, keeps the same analytical framework (AF) and process parameters.	+++ Potential to make gradual improvements in performance through accumulation of expertise and strengthening networks.	<p>--- Decreasing relevance of a single analytical framework to Partner Countries increasingly able to define and implement their own VET strategies.</p> <p>--- Stakeholders' (especially those representing the EC services and donors) expectation to obtain rigorous and high-quality information on the status and the needs of VET systems in ETF Partner Countries are not met.</p>
Scenario 1: Facilitation of a high-quality process	<p>Our evaluation demonstrated that participation in the Torino Process correlates with improved policy analysis capacity of PC stakeholders and their broad representation in the VET policy making. One of the main drivers for this improvement was the country ownership for the process, which intensified the learning of PCs involved in the TRP. Despite this positive development, the need for improving both policy analysis capacity and stakeholders' representation in the VET policy making remains high across all regions.</p> <p>The first scenario focuses TRP exclusively on policy dialogue and capacity building. As a result, the provision of the in-depth and rigorous country</p>	+++ Partner Countries would gradually acquire full ownership of their reports and increasingly use them for different national purposes (monitoring the implementation or development of new strategies). As a result, their capacity for evidence-based policy making and the quality of decisions made would improve faster.	--- The TRP country reports would continue providing insufficient basis in the years to come for informing the EU and other donors' support to the Partner Countries.

SCENARIO/ OPTION	DESCRIPTION	LIKELY POSITIVE EFFECTS	LIKELY NEGATIVE EFFECTS
	<p>analysis will fall beyond the scope of this intervention. The data collection and reporting will be owned fully by PCs with ETF directing the process and acting as a “critical friend”. The EC and donors’ expectations will be managed accordingly by communicating clearly that the sole objective of the TRP is facilitation of the policy dialogue and capacity building in PCs, rather than the provision of rigorous analysis on the status and needs of PC VET systems.</p> <p>We also found that the Torino Process could have achieved better results in capacity building if it employed such an analytical framework and implementation timeline, which would be aligned with the national strategies and policy cycles of individual PCs. In light of this findings, we think that this scenario has two further options – (1.1) developing flexible Analytical Framework, and (1.2) in addition to the first option also developing flexible implementation timeline for the process.</p>		
Option 1.1: Flexible analytical framework	<p>Our findings point out that most PCs have already adopted strategies that shape VET policy developments (e.g. in some countries this is overall education strategy whereas in others a specific VET strategy). Besides, Candidate Countries are already reporting about the development of their VET systems against the Riga MTDs. As a result, the relevance and the added value of the fixed analytical framework as a tool for monitor the status of VET systems gradually diminished across the evolving context in PCs.</p> <p>Against this background, this option offers a flexible analytical framework for the PCs that have already adopted their strategies in the field. In practice, such a framework could be introduced by developing specific sub-option within the self-assessment implementation modality. However, several countries are still lacking capacity to carry out VET policy analysis themselves and/or have not developed VET strategies. ETF would continue</p>	<p>+++ Flexible analytical framework would reflect the growing need of partner countries, most of which have developed VET strategies that can be used as analytical frameworks for monitoring under TRP.</p> <p>+++ With a flexible analytical framework, the EU candidate countries would take part in TRP by reporting under the Copenhagen process (no need to report separately also under TRP).</p>	<p>--- Flexible analytical framework would require more resources from ETF to maintain the same levels of engagement with partner countries (because of the need to tailor their advice more to the individual country context).</p>

SCENARIO/ OPTION	DESCRIPTION	LIKELY POSITIVE EFFECTS	LIKELY NEGATIVE EFFECTS
	offering ETF-led assessment with a higher degree support from the Agency and an ETF-developed analytical framework. Once these countries will transition to structured policy analysis development stage and adopt VET strategies, the need for ETF supported assessment based on ETF-provided analytical framework will eventually disappear.		
Option 1.2: Flexible analytical framework and timeline	<p>Although several countries (e.g. Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan) developed Torino Process into a national VET system monitoring tool, in most countries it is not integrated into national policy cycles. In addition, in several countries (e.g. Turkey and Israel) Torino Process report production evolves in parallel to other monitoring processes. As a result, such countries – although willing to take part in the TRP and benefit from the peer review or policy dialogue – are obliged to duplicate reporting.</p> <p>In addition to option 1.1, this option 1.2 offers also a flexible timeline for data collection and reporting depending on the national policy cycles. PC reports are then developed at different times and have a different function based on PC needs. E.g. some reports serve the monitoring of implementation of PC strategies at around mid-term, while others provide an analytical input into a strategy that is being newly developed. ETF differentiates support by groups of PCs that are in similar stages of policy cycles. As a result, TRP becomes fully integrated into national policy cycles.</p>	+++ Flexible timeline would allow aligning TRP process fully with the national policy cycles of individual countries, which would strengthen the capacity building effects.	--- Flexible timeline would eliminate the economies of scale (from explaining the same aspects of TRP to all countries at the same time, through the same events) and require additional resources for more individualized work with countries or their groups.
		+++ Flexible timeline would enable countries to learn and make progress at their own pace, which would reinforce TRP link with the national policy agenda and strengthen capacity building effects.	<p>--- Flexible timeline and partner countries making progress at their own pace might lead to some countries making a slower progress than if they had to obey a common deadline.</p> <p>--- If the national policy cycles tended to gradually converge under a strict TRP timeline, a flexible timeline may lead to their divergence.</p>
		+++ With a flexible timeline and analytical framework advanced	--- It may become more challenging for the ETF to find

SCENARIO/ OPTION	DESCRIPTION	LIKELY POSITIVE EFFECTS	LIKELY NEGATIVE EFFECTS
		partner countries would not duplicate reporting effort and benefit from other elements of the TRP. They would also keep providing learning value for the rest of the Partner Countries.	common grounds and suitable dates for discussion between partner countries using TRP for different purposes and moving at a different pace.
Scenario 2: Provision of high quality analysis	<p>Since most of the Torino Process country reports were produced by PC stakeholders who lacked policy analysis capacity, the quality of evidence has suffered to the extent that it was not rigorous enough to serve as a single reference point for programming the activities of the ETF, the EU and development aid organisations. Three out of five surveyed partner country stakeholders did not expect to use their country reports, the biggest value being in the process leading to their preparation. The actual use could be even lower than expected.</p> <p>The second scenario focuses TRP exclusively on rigorous data collection and analysis supporting evidence-based policy making. Within this scenario Partner Countries do not own and write their TRP reports. They just provide information to ETF based on a data collection framework where each value of each indicator is checked by the SP team and where possible independently verified. The ETF writes high quality analytical reports that provide a reliable basis for programming PC national policies, ETF activities and the EU or other donor support to the PCs.</p> <p>Since the scope and the depth of the analysis strongly correlates with the cost of its production we see three further options within this scenario. These are the provision of evidence from (2.1) general monitoring, (2.2) detailed monitoring, and/ or (2.3) in-depth evaluation exercises.</p>	<p>+++ Analytical quality of country reports improves as ETF imposes a more rigid data collection framework where each value of each indicator is checked by ETF and where possible independently verified. Country and synthesis reports make available reliable evidence for programming the EU and other support to partner countries and the partner country national policies.</p>	<p>--- Partner countries continue reporting based on the Analytical Framework, but their reporting is only a major source of information for the ETF when conducting analysis and formulating conclusions in the TRP reports. Some partner countries might see this as a reduction in their role. This may reduce a level of challenge for them leading to slower capacity development.</p>
		<p>+++ Partner countries benefit from a robust comparative analysis placing their country within a wider region and across ETF regions.</p>	<p>--- Partner countries that are doing badly and not improving are exposed in comparative perspective potentially leading to some of them either hiding information or withdrawing their cooperation with ETF.</p>

SCENARIO/ OPTION	DESCRIPTION	LIKELY POSITIVE EFFECTS	LIKELY NEGATIVE EFFECTS
Option 2.1: General monitoring	This option entails a general monitoring of labour market situation, VET systems and policies across the PCs comparable in scope to the last cycle of the Torino Process. The main difference is that the process will be led and owned by ETF, allowing the production of more rigorous and reliable analysis.	+++ Low cost as there would be no need to develop new indicators and to align data collection systems across ETF SPs.	--- Analysis is lacking detail and depth.
Option 2.2: Detailed monitoring	This option deepens and details monitoring by adding numerous additional indicators, some of which are already used in the PC inventories developed by other ETF's strategic projects (SPs). This option would gradually integrate and consolidate all the PC intelligence and analysis conducted by different SP teams at ETF.	<p>+++ Substantial savings in recurring operational cost of ETF as Partner Country intelligence and analysis is integrated and consolidated across SPs.</p> <p>+++ More in-depth, reliable and comparable evidence across partner countries leads to better targeting of Partner Country policies, and the activities of international actors in the Countries.</p>	--- Initial development cost as the monitoring is deepened by developing numerous additional indicators, agreeing them across ETF SPs, and adjusting the structures and procedures within ETF.
Option 2.3: In-depth evaluation	This option adds an additional layer of depth to Option 2.1 or 2.2 through a possibility of ETF undertaking an in-depth review and evaluation of VET system and policies in a selected PC. This review is undertaken only in exceptional cases upon a request of a PC government as a prelude to a planned or ongoing reform and/or a request from the European	+++ A very high value for a specific Partner Country that has a political will to undertake a large-scale evidence-based VET system/	--- A tangible development cost because evaluation methodology needs to be adapted to specific country context and needs.

SCENARIO/ OPTION	DESCRIPTION	LIKELY POSITIVE EFFECTS	LIKELY NEGATIVE EFFECTS
	Commission (as a prelude for a large EU support programme to that PC) and when additional funding is made available to ETF from the external source.	policy reform but is lacking a clear plan. A high value for donor organisations, which are keen to provide substantial funding programmes to support such a reform.	----- A very high operational cost in conducting every in-depth country review, which would include primary data collection on the ground. Within its current budgetary limits ETF might be able to implement an in-depth country evaluation only in very exceptional circumstances (e.g. a high EU political priority plus a high-level political commitment from a Partner Country).

4. Evaluation of performance - Phase II

4.1. Regional dimension of the Torino Process

South Eastern Europe and Turkey (SEET), Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED), Eastern Partnership and Russia (EE) and Central Asia (CA) represent four regions of the TRP. Events and benchmarking of VET policies in the regions constitutes a regional layer for the activities of this strategic project. The evaluation team has taken a separate look at this layer to understand its relevance and added value for the TRP.

Although many interviewees were aware of the internal heterogeneity within the four regions in terms of development issues and policy learning preferences, most have agreed that the **current subdivision of the regions was relevant and useful** for the participating countries. Countries within regions often shared similar political or socio-economical contexts and faced comparable issues in the development of their human capital development systems. E.g. one respondent stated that SEMED countries constitute real region because they share common problems such as high youth unemployment and informal sector. According to another interviewee, the biggest potential for cooperation lied in SEET because countries in this region shared common EU enlargement issues. One respondent voiced an opinion that EE countries despite divergent geopolitical orientations constituted an effective region because they shared a common developmental background and faced some of the similar issues. Finally, one interviewee stated that despite having very different levels of development the countries in CA region have a strong common identity and a willingness to collaborate. A widespread knowledge of Russian language opened an opportunity for experience sharing within and between EE and CA regions.

BOX 5. WHY A REGIONAL TRP? THE VIEWS OF PARTNER COUNTRIES

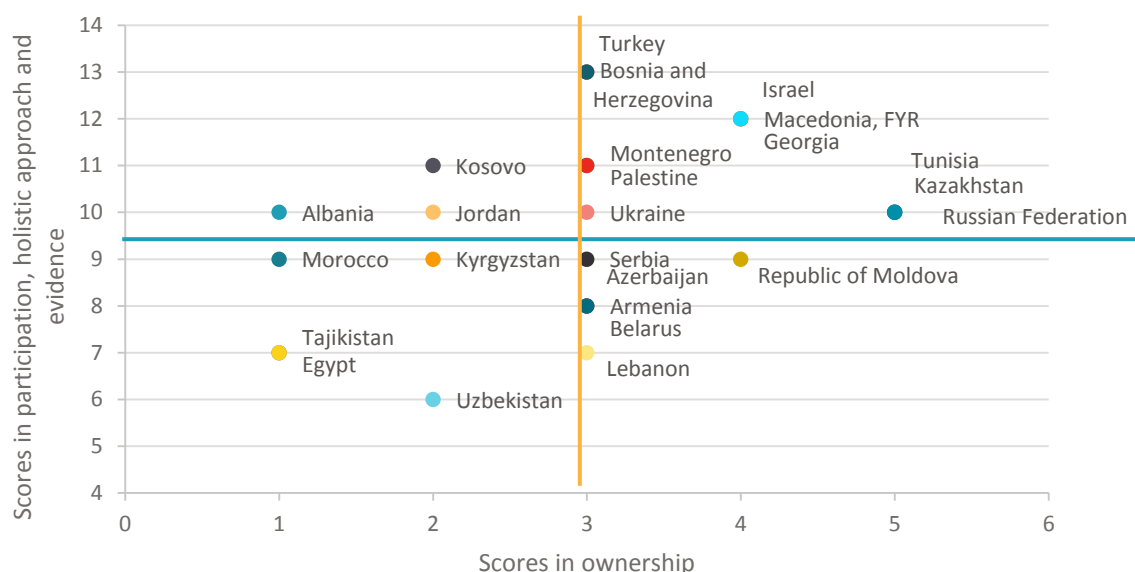
- **Uzbekistan:** "There is a need to learn from the experience of other countries. E.g. how to optimise the country's VET system, develop the NQF and occupational standards."
- **Ukraine:** "The exchanges with other partner countries within our region as well as learning about the experiences of the EU members were both very useful."
- **Russian Federation:** "We are motivated by the opportunity of comparison and sharing experience between the regions of the Russian Federation (as part of sub-national reporting), with other countries in the region and beyond."

Source: PPML, interviews with stakeholders from partner countries, February 2018.

While most of interviewees agreed that changing experiences within regions was useful, they also indicated that **learning across regions** also had a strong potential. Peer learning between countries of similar size and similar level of development was also promising good results if language barrier could be overcome. The development level in terms of inclusive evidence-based policy making in HCD could

be based on the TRP mapping scores¹⁰³. Given the large and diverse group of partner countries, the TRP mapping scores are useful to identify subgroups among partner countries that have made similar progress and have addressed similar kinds of issues (please see the figure below). The differences between countries are the largest in the implementation of the ownership principle. The scores for the implementation of other principles were averaged and put on the same axis.

FIGURE 16. COUNTRY GROUPING BASED ON THE TRP SCORES



Source: adapted from ETF, Torino Process 2016 Implementation Mapping Note, 2017.

Some interviewees indicated that sharing of experiences at regional level could have a greater impact if the collaboration at the level of civil servants and social partner representatives were paralleled by **cooperation at a political level** - between partner countries in the region and between the countries and the EU. A good example of this was already taking place in Central Asia (under Astana Declaration), where ministerial collaboration at regional level was supported by the EU politically and technically - via project Central Asia Education Platform, in which the ETF was also closely involved, and its work highly appreciated by the stakeholders. In the Eastern Partnership region, the activities of the TRP can contribute to regional meetings under "*Platform 4*" of *Eastern Partnership*. It is a forum for discussion in fields including education, training, research, youth, culture, media and information society¹⁰⁴. Political collaboration might be able to unblock the bottlenecks that are holding back reforms in some countries and to create political demand for technical solutions. The same goes for political support stemming from the bilateral EU – partner country collaboration, where the political dialogue and different incentives offered by the EU institutions can strengthen the reform agenda that the ETF is often best placed to inform, guide and support.

¹⁰³ ETF, Torino Process 2016 Implementation Mapping Note, 2017.

¹⁰⁴ European Commission, Contacts between people – "Platform 4" of the Eastern Partnership. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation/eastern-partnership_en

4.2. International dimension of the Torino Process

The interviewees from the **international donor organisations** active in the partner countries **have found the participation in the TRP events and the information provided in the TRP reports very useful for their work**. However, some of the interviewees believed that the potential of TRP was not yet fully exploited. The TRP has not become a reference model or a core process for the international organisations providing support to modernisation of VET and labour market in the partner countries (e.g. World Bank or EBRD). The TRP analysis and the identified priorities were not used systematically as the basis for international donor programming of support to investment in the modernisation of VET. Some interviewees thought that involving international partners from the early stages of TRP planning (including the development of its analytical framework, defining process parameters) might help to increase the relevance and importance of the TRP for the international donor organisations.

BOX 6. HOW TO INCREASE THE TRP'S RELEVANCE TO INTERNATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS?

- **GIZ and the ILO.** Currently, GIZ and the ILO are organising a joint initiative, the National employment dialogue. The ETF could use this forum to discuss the findings from the TRP and to seek other relevant synergies between parallel processes for the mutual benefit.
- **UNESCO.** The ETF could help by conducting more methodological work particularly on policies for digitisation, innovation in VET teaching and learning methodologies. There is a potential for joint VET policy country reviews with UNESCO, particularly for African countries.
- **Cedefop.** The ETF should boost relationships with Cedefop and move from a Eurocentric perspective in VET to a global one.
- **EU Delegations.** Not all the EU Delegations understand and use the expertise of the ETF. The ETF could conduct trainings to the relevant staff of the EU Delegations. Locating the offices of ETF country desk officers within the premises of the EU Delegations during their missions in the partner countries could help in developing closer links and a more systematic collaboration.
- **European Commission.** DG DEVCO needed the ETF to strengthen its methodological work on the links between VET and labour markets and on the support to development of VET in low-income countries (which could be applied also beyond the current geographic coverage of the ETF). More joint meetings at operational level between DG DEVCO, the EEAS and the ETF could improve the awareness and use of the ETF's expertise in the EU external assistance project cycle.

Source: PPIM, interviews with the ETF's European and international stakeholders, May 2018.

An important element of the international dimension of the Torino process is being able to present the partner country data on the development of their VET systems so that it can be easily found on the ETF website and compared across countries. The current Torino Process country reports and the way they are published do not serve this purpose well. The ETF collects and analyses large quantities of partner country information on VET systems and policies but currently does not make this data available on its website in an easy to access way. Furthermore, this information is not aggregated into an overall index or several indices that would allow swift cross-country comparisons on the development of their VET systems and policies. The availability of such comparisons would create a more immediate urgency for policy makers to improve their country's international standing in VET. This would also bolster ETF's position as the main source of information on VET systems and policies in the partner countries. **Other findings from stakeholder interviews**

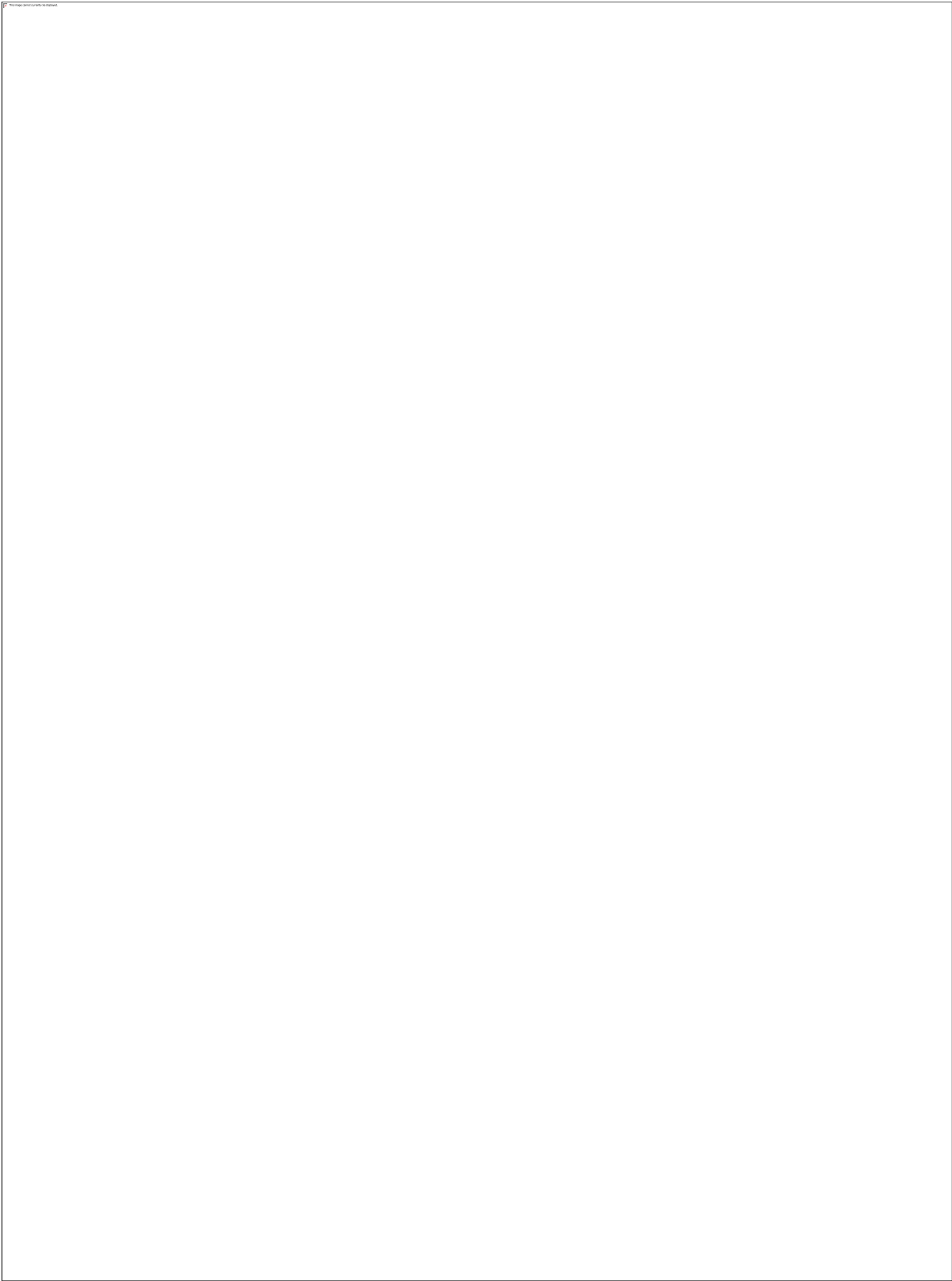
In the box below, we provide stakeholders' opinions on how the quality of the Torino process national reports could be improved.

BOX 7. HOW TO IMPROVE THE TRP NATIONAL REPORTS? SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDERS' OPINIONS

- **Focus on barriers to VET reforms.** This requires more detailed context and problem analysis, e.g. on how economic reforms are being implemented, how is the labour market changing and what this means for VET. Reports could better explain barriers and provide context-specific recommendations.
- **Assess VET policy reforms.** Reports need more information on missing or unsuccessful reforms. Also, the reports could show more detailed examples of reforms and their outcomes.
- **Improve structure of the analytical framework.** The structure of the TRP analytical framework could be simplified and improved to avoid repetition across the five thematic sections. Detailed guiding questions help partner countries to provide their answers, but often result in provision of descriptive information with little analytical insight.
- **Provide more critical information.** National reports should provide an unbiased view of development in a country (including on missing or unsuccessful reforms) and present critical issues in a direct language. To achieve this, the self-assessment might need to be complemented with the external assessment by the ETF.
- **Increase relevance for practitioners.** Reports present generic analysis and broad recommendations. National reports "need to get closer to reality" and become more in-depth so as to become more relevant for practitioners at national and international level. They should also be improved to become more useful tools for the programming of the EU assistance in the partner countries.
- **Include a clear follow-up plan.** Reports should lay down concrete action plans for the future at partner country level. They should aim to ignite the beginning of or sustain a reform process.

Source: PPIM, interviews with ETF stakeholders from the EU and international organisations, May 2018.

4.3. The intervention logic of the Torino Process



4.4. The preferred scenario for the implementation of the Torino Process

Our analysis provided in this report pointed to the need to continue high quality process (based on active partner country participation and ownership, which produce strong capacity building effects) and at the same time ensure the production of higher-quality evidence that could be more readily used for programming the EU support (as well as that of other international donors).

What is the substance of the preferred scenario?

To achieve this, we propose building on the second scenario listed in the Section 3 of this report. Based on the discussions with the ETF staff the evaluators suggest that the self-assessment process conducted by the partner countries would be complemented with an external assessment conducted by the ETF. The ETF would need to write its own separate reports assessing partner country progress considering the evidence provided in the self-assessment reports and collected independently by the ETF. The external assessment would provide an objective evidence-based feedback for each partner country on its progress and identify areas for future development and capacity building. This would provide a reliable basis for programming the EU external assistance and that of other donors. The preferred scenario should not allow for a flexible analytical framework or timeline – to secure comparability of data across countries and to utilise the economies of scale. However, all the four principles of the Torino Process should be closely followed - leading to an increasingly inclusive policy dialogue and participatory monitoring process. The ETF should place the main emphasis on the Option 2.2 (Detailed monitoring), while additional external funding could open possibilities for topping it up with Option 2.3 activities in high priority countries with high readiness for reform.

What changes the ETF will need to make to be able to implement it?

Delivering external assessment reports by the ETF for all partner countries would require profound changes to work organisation within the ETF and the partner countries. The new Torino Process would require a longer cycle and the ETF would not have sufficient capacity to prepare all the external assessment reports at once.

One team within the ETF would need to continue supporting data collection, policy dialogue and capacity building activities within partner countries. Country indicators and policy analysis needed for rigorous external assessment would have to become a separate activity area within the ETF, integrating elements now divided across all its Strategic Projects. The quantity and quality of evidence collected by the ETF on the Partner Countries would increase. This could be achieved without extra cost. Instead of collecting additional data the responsible staff members within the ETF should integrate the country inventories developed by different ETF SPs.

The reporting by PC stakeholders should be used to inform the external assessment with the data and insights about how Partner Countries see their situation and what they want or prioritize.

What are the expected positive effects?

- Substantial savings in recurring operational cost as Partner Country intelligence and analysis is integrated and consolidated within the ETF.
- More in-depth, reliable and comparable evidence across partner countries leads to better targeting of Partner Country policies, external support from the international aid donors including the EU and the ETF's activities in the countries.
- If the four principles of the Torino Process are closely followed the quality of the process will not diminish. Building on the previous cycles the ETF be able to ensure an increasingly

inclusive policy dialogue and participatory monitoring of VET systems and policies in the partner countries. Single analytical framework will ensure a holistic approach and comparability across countries.

What are the potential negative effects?

- Initial development cost as the monitoring is deepened by developing numerous additional indicators, discussing and agreeing them, and adjusting the structures and procedures within the ETF.
- Some of the strongest partner countries might feel their level of responsibility diminished as the ETF takes over the main (external assessment) report writing process.
- Policy makers in all the partner countries might feel unease about the ETF providing more critical assessment of their country progress and might become defensive.

On balance, the evaluators - considering the evaluation evidence – firmly believe that the positive effects would far outweigh the negative effects.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

With the Torino Process, the ETF has established a highly relevant cycle of VET policy monitoring in the partner countries which has gradually affected other stages of the policy cycle, including policy formulation and implementation. The TRP remains highly relevant as the ETF partner countries across all four geographic regions face the need to improve their VET policy analysis capacity, to empower stakeholders to participate in policy dialogue, and to reflect on VET development priorities.

During the four rounds of the Torino Process the ETF has gradually made improvements. The national reports evolved from being initially descriptive to emphasising policy recommendations and presenting VET issues in a more easily understandable and comparable way. The reports also became better structured and several process improvements have been made.

Through the Torino Process, the ETF engaged and supported the involvement of an unprecedented number of new stakeholders in VET policy dialogue in the partner countries. By fostering country ownership and empowering multiple new actors at partner country level, the ETF has involved around 1140 stakeholders through the Torino Process events. Most of them have been repeatedly engaged in this process to form a vibrant VET community in the partner countries and facilitate the exchange of experiences across borders.

The self-assessment modality has stimulated partner country ownership, increased their capacity and self-confidence. The third and fourth Torino Process rounds have strongly contributed to the development of a diverse group of stakeholders in each partner country with the capacity to conduct evidence-based assessments. This capacity has grown significantly since the first and second rounds. The ETF, through the TRP, has strengthened the abilities of national stakeholders to influence national strategies and legislation in VET. In many countries, the government is no longer the sole contributor to VET legislation, but social partners have increasingly grown able to formulate and present feedback on VET policy initiatives.

The TRP reports have been a useful tool to monitor VET-related reforms in partner countries and the main source of up-to-date information on the developments in the VET systems. Moreover, the Torino Process supported the understanding of specific challenges and the identification of specific needs for VET reforms in each partner country, which has been used time and again by the EU and other international donors in programming their support, in exchanging information with other donors (very often during the Torino Process events) and adjusting their investment plans.

The evaluators have also identified several areas of concern where the implementation of the Torino Process could still be improved. They are presented in the table below.

AREA OF CONCERN	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Clear objectives and indicators of achievement</p>	<p>The multiple objectives of the Torino Process have been difficult to reconcile for the ETF. There was a lack of clarity about what objectives were considered more important. For example, greater partner country ownership meant that the quality of evidence has been more difficult to ensure.</p> <p>The ETF has made numerous improvements to the Torino Process from one cycle to another. However, it has been difficult to assess the extent to which the changes made have led to positive outcomes in the partner countries, because stakeholder participation, satisfaction with and the uptake of the Torino Process results were not measured consistently over time.</p> <p>The ETF made a correct decision of developing a single Analytical Framework for all the partner countries, which provided the basis for holistic monitoring of VET systems and ensured a degree of comparability across countries. Whilst the Torino Process was meant to monitor against the priorities agreed during the previous TRP rounds, the priorities were lacking indicators of achievement – an objective basis for assessing progress.</p>	<p>The ETF needs clarity on the central objective of the Torino Process. It should consult its stakeholders and clarify the priorities of the TRP.</p> <p>The ETF should improve monitoring of the Torino Process by using more comprehensive indicators on stakeholder participation, satisfaction with and the uptake of the Torino Process results. The key indicators should not be changed from one cycle to another to ensure comparability. Indicators could be added depending on the new priorities and implementation modalities of each subsequent cycle. The proposals of the evaluation team for the key indicators are provided in Annex 1.</p> <p>The ETF monitoring system should have a possibility to break down the expenditures of the Strategic Project “Policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring” by key activities, so that the costs of the Torino Process could be differentiated from the costs of other activities, compared between cycles and linked to the quantity and quality of results.</p> <p>ETF should seek to agree more specific priorities with each participating partner country along with clear indicators of achievement, which would provide a solid basis for assessing their progress in the next round of the Torino Process.</p>
<p>Quality of evidence</p>	<p>The objective of the Torino Process to provide high-quality evidence for decision making is in line with the needs of partner countries and development aid organisations.</p> <p>During the evaluation period, the ETF promoted the national ownership of the Torino Process and its deliverables among other ways through self-assessment modality, which was chosen by almost all the partner countries in the last cycle. The evaluation evidence showed that the country reports were useful sources of information for the EU and international donor organisations and partner countries themselves. The responsibility for writing the reports led to positive capacity building effects (mostly in gathering and understanding data) for the partner country stakeholders.</p> <p>However, in the absence of strong analytical skills the partner countries have mostly failed to deliver high quality reports. They were an insufficient basis for programming public policy interventions and</p>	<p>At or before the start of the Torino Process cycle, the ETF should ask the partner countries how specifically they are planning to use the Torino process – its events, reports and support from the ETF – in the national policy cycles. The ETF support during the Torino Process should then be tailored depending on a country objective, e.g. to develop its VET strategy, to monitor its implementation or to conduct a comprehensive review of VET institutions and systems to pave the way for a major structural reform.</p> <p>The ETF should further foster country ownership of the outcomes of TRP and support their capacity development through co-production of country reports. As before, the partner countries should be responsible for collecting and providing most of the data needed for the analysis, while the ETF expert staff should write the analysis and</p>

AREA OF CONCERN	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>for cross-country comparisons along key VET policy development indicators. The ETF was unable to organize long-term training in policy analysis for partner country stakeholders due to limited resources.</p>	<p>assessment. While capacity building should remain one of the objectives of the Torino Process, and all four of its principles should be observed, its main objective and focus should be on the quality of information and the accuracy of assessment of partner country progress in the development of its HCD policies. This will strengthen the basis for planning partner country HCD policies as well as support to their reforms from the EU and other international donors.</p>
<p>The international dimension and buy-in from major donors</p>	<p>Representatives of donor organisations considered the Torino Process reports and events useful for understanding the situation and needs of partner countries in human capital development. However, in the absence of high-quality analysis and objective assessment of partner country progress the donor organisations did not include the Torino Process into their own programming calendars and procedures. As a result, the Torino Process only had a limited influence on donor initiatives and their coordination.</p> <p>An important element of the international dimension of the Torino process is being able to present the partner country data on the development of their VET systems so that it can be easily found on the ETF website and compared across countries. The current Torino Process country reports and the way they are published do not serve this purpose well. The ETF collects and analyses large quantities of partner country information on VET systems and policies but currently does not make this data available on its website in an easy to access way. Furthermore, this information is not aggregated and does not allow swift cross-country comparisons on the development of their VET systems and policies.</p>	<p>The ETF should consider involving the EU institutions and international donor organisations (e.g. World Bank, EBRD and major development organisations of the EU Member States) already during the early stages of Torino Process planning. This could be done during the development of its analytical framework and the definition of the process parameters. This would help increase their awareness and buy-in in the Torino Process. The ETF should seek that the Torino Process becomes a core process for the donor organisations, feeding into their programming and monitoring cycles.</p> <p>ETF should present country data collected through Torino process so that it is easy to find, search and compare. ETF should also consider developing aggregate measurements on the development of partner countries' VET systems such as a VET development index. The latter could include indicators on VET policy inputs (e.g. expenditure on VET, share of VET teachers with university level qualifications), quality of policy process (e.g. number/share of civil society organisations involved in VET policy monitoring through Torino Process) and policy outputs/outcomes (share of upper secondary students enrolled in VET, share of labour force with VET qualifications, etc.). The index and its constituent elements could provide the backbone for Torino Process synthesis report and be launched during the final conference. They would also create new opportunities for benchmarking across partner countries – giving recognition to countries making faster progress and an additional impetus for change to those lagging.</p>
<p>The regional dimension</p>	<p>The sharing of experiences at regional level has been highly appreciated by partner country stakeholders. However, the potential for positive</p>	<p>The ETF should inform the EU policy makers about how regional cooperation within the Torino Process could support the EU regional</p>

AREA OF CONCERN	CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>effects from regional cooperation was not yet fully exploited. Apart from the ETF's support to the implementation of the Astana Declaration and the Central Asia Education Platform, the collaboration at the level of civil servants and social partner representatives at regional level was not paralleled by cooperation at a political level (between partner countries in the region and between the countries and the EU). The bottlenecks that were holding back reforms in the partner countries were often political.</p>	<p>cooperation at political level with the partner countries.</p> <p>Incorporating the Torino Process under the umbrella of the EU political dialogue and collaboration frameworks (as it was already done under the Astana Declaration and the "Platform 4" of the Eastern Partnership) would raise further the profile of the Torino Process and would provide a much-needed additional political support to VET policy and governance reforms in the partner countries.</p>
<p>Participation of countries reporting under the Copenhagen Process</p>	<p>The two activity areas of the Strategic Project "Policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring" (Torino Process and follow-up to Riga MTDs) serve a very similar objective, namely, supporting the partner countries in the monitoring and reporting on the status of their VET systems. Considering that the more advanced partner countries already have functioning VET monitoring systems and that some of them are conducting a more detailed reporting under the Copenhagen Process, their separate reporting under the Torino Process is not necessary or cost-effective. However, there is added value in their continued participation of the EU candidate countries in the Torino Process, such as the collection of evidence, organisation of national events respecting the four principles and participation in regional or international peer learning and dissemination. Same as other partner countries the candidate countries would benefit from a detailed assessment by the ETF of their progress in modernizing and developing VET systems. The continued participation of the candidate countries in the Torino Process provides strong peer learning value for other partner countries.</p>	<p>Partner countries should be offered different modalities of participation in the Torino Process depending on their VET policy development stages. For example, the countries which are already conducting a more detailed reporting under the Copenhagen Process should not be asked to develop separate reports for the Torino Process. However, they should be encouraged to participate in all Torino Process data collection efforts, events and to respect the four principles.</p> <p>The ETF should make no exception and include the EU candidate countries also in ETF's external assessments and in aggregate measurements on the development of partner countries' VET systems such as a VET development index.</p>
<p>Unfavourable contextual factors</p>	<p>Limited demand for evidence among decision-makers in the partner countries is one of the main factors that limited the sustainability of the Torino Process.</p> <p>Political instability and low government effectiveness also reduced the sustainability of benefits that partner countries received from the participation in the Torino Process.</p>	<p>Faced with unfavourable contextual factors in a partner country, the ETF will have to make a choice between (a) providing more support to the partner countries so that they are able to participate in the Torino process, and (b) saving resources while focusing on other partner countries instead. The basis for such decision should be the EU political priorities as communicated by the European Commission.</p>

ANNEX I: Indicators for monitoring the Torino Process

Clear objectives are critical in defining indicators. The current objectives of the TRP are broad and difficult to measure, and in some cases their achievement depends on factors unmanageable by the ETF (e.g. “to improve the performance of policies”¹⁰⁵). Therefore, we reformulated the objectives according to ‘SMART’ principles¹⁰⁶. The indicators defined in this section are based on these reformulated objectives:

- Expand policy dialogue and capacity-building support to partner countries in order to improve the evidence base of VET policy making;
- Increase and share knowledge in order to improve the evidence base of VET policy making in partner countries.

Each scenario for the future of the TRP combines one or two of these objectives (see table below).

TABLE 6. THE PROPOSED OBJECTIVES FOR FUTURE SCENARIOS

SCENARIO	PROPOSED OBJECTIVES
Scenario 1: Facilitation of a high-quality process	Strengthen policy dialogue and capacity-building support to partner countries to improve the evidence base in VET policy making.
Scenario 2: Provision of high-quality analysis	Increase knowledge production and sharing to improve the evidence base in VET policy making in partner countries and further support the programming of EU and international assistance.

¹⁰⁵ ETF, description of the Torino process (2018, February 22). Retrieved from http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/torino_process.

¹⁰⁶ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited.

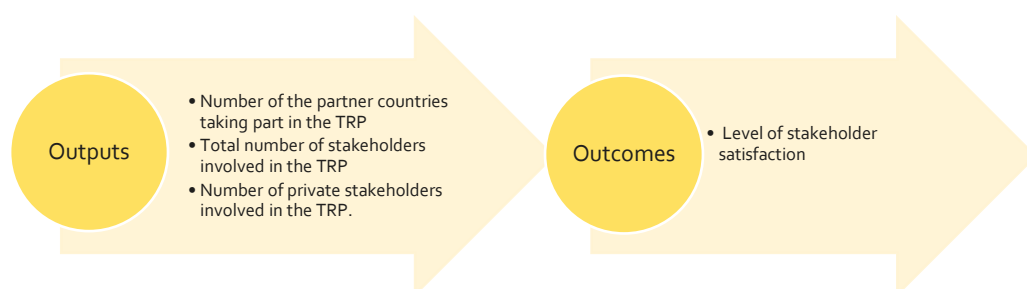
TABLE 7. THE PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES	PROPOSED INDICATORS
1. Strengthen policy dialogue and capacity-building support to partner countries to improve the evidence base in VET policy making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partner countries taking part in the TRP. • Total number of stakeholders involved in the TRP (both public and private). • Number of private stakeholders involved in the TRP. • Level of stakeholder satisfaction.
2. Increase knowledge production and sharing to improve the evidence base in VET policy making in partner countries and further support the programming of EU and international assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of TRP reports developed. • Total number of stakeholders involved in the TRP (both public and private). • Number of private stakeholders involved in the TRP. • Uptake of Torino Process results by the partner countries.

Further we provide a description for each indicator: the interpretation of the indicator, the potential sources of data and the desirable trend (target). The measurement frequency of indicators depends on the ETF planning cycle.

FIGURE 17: INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVE 1

Objective 1: Strengthen policy dialogue and capacity-building support to partner countries to improve the evidence base in VET policy making



Number of partner countries taking part in the TRP. This indicator shows the coverage of the TRP. The partner country is considered to take part in the TRP, if stakeholders representing the organisations of that country participate in the TRP activities provided by the ETF. This indicator is based on previously used indicators measuring the implementation of the TRP strategic project: “Number of countries taking part to the 5th round of the TRP is maintained against the 4th round of implementation”¹⁰⁷ (2018), “70% of partner countries participate in the TRP”¹⁰⁸ (2016), and “TRP is implemented in the majority of ETF partner countries respecting the four principles”¹⁰⁹ (2014). The advantages of the proposed indicator are

¹⁰⁷ ETF, Strategic project policy analysis and system wide policy monitoring implementation plan – WP 2018 (draft version).

¹⁰⁸ ETF, Strategic project policy analysis and system wide policy monitoring implementation plan – WP 2016.

¹⁰⁹ ETF, Strategic project policy analysis and system wide policy monitoring implementation plan – WP 2014

simplicity and comparability. The data source for the indicator may be the *TRP implementation mapping* report. The target is to maintain countries involved.

Total number of stakeholders involved in the TRP. The ETF aims at increasing the total number of stakeholders (from public and private/non-governmental stakeholders) in order to develop a critical mass of support for VET policy change. Stakeholders are defined as individuals who benefit from the ETF consultancy, training or events related to the TRP. The indicator consists of unduplicated number of stakeholders – policy leaders, civil society or business representatives, educational providers and other. The definition of stakeholders could be adapted to fit pre-existing data. The data source for the indicator may be up-to-date list of stakeholders (created by ETF). The target is to increase the number of stakeholders. This indicator could be disaggregated by region, country or stakeholder group.

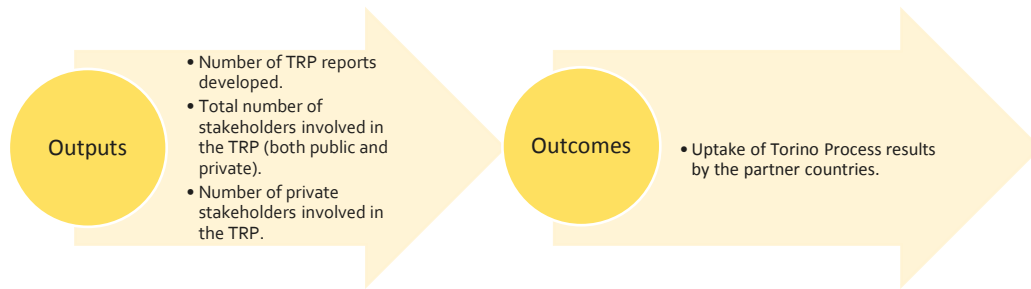
Number of private stakeholders involved in the TRP. This indicator is almost exactly the same as the one above, except that only the number of private/non-governmental stakeholders taking part in TRP would be calculated. Increasing the number of such stakeholders within TRP and more generally within policy dialogue on human capital development in the partner countries is an important goal in itself as it helps improve governance by making it more transparent, improving accountability and drawing on private sector initiative and expertise in reforming VET. It is important to draw a clear distinction between public and private/non-governmental stakeholders and to apply it consistently across very diverse countries. We suggest considering the following stakeholders as private: representatives of companies that are privately owned (by natural persons or privately-owned legal entities), representatives of employer associations and trade unions (where they are not integrated within state structures and on the payroll of the state), representatives of civil society organisations and local community groups, representatives of academia and of private educational institutions. Only private stakeholder institutions that have a permanent legal residence in a partner country should be considered.

Level of stakeholder satisfaction. The ETF aims at making the TRP more responsive to stakeholder needs. This indicator shows the relevance of the TRP. The data source for the indicator could be a stakeholder survey. E.g. answers to questions from TRP conference attendee survey “13. How far was the event useful to gain new knowledge about effective policy making in VET?” and “14. How far was the event useful to generate new ideas for your work on how to use innovation as priority for VET development?” E.g. the average score for these questions in 2016 was 3.15¹¹⁰, where score 1 indicated that stakeholders were unsatisfied with this event and score 4 meant that they were very satisfied. This indicator enables to monitor how level of satisfaction changes over time. The target of the indicator is to maintain or improve the level of satisfaction. This indicator could be disaggregated by region, country or stakeholder group.

FIGURE 18: INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVE 2

Objective 2: Increase knowledge production and sharing to improve the evidence base in VET policy making in partner countries and further support the programming of EU and international assistance

¹¹⁰ ETF, TRP conference feedback survey, 2016.



Number of TRP reports developed. The reports demonstrate the capacity of the TRP to deliver quality evidence and to enable HCD policy decisions to be made in the partner countries and by the international donors. This indicator should count national reports produced by the ETF and by the representatives of the partner countries. The target is to maintain the number of reports the same as the number of countries participating in the Torino Process (so that the process in each country produces a good quality report with the assessment of country progress and specific policy recommendations by the ETF for the next period).

Uptake of Torino Process results by the partner countries. The purpose of the Torino Process is ultimately to improve the governance of human capital development in the partner countries. Therefore, the TRP reports and the processes surrounding them should be used in national policy making. This indicator should count the number of countries which after completion of their TRP reports over the course of the year for which indicator is measured: (a) had their TRP reports directly cited or referred to in new national policy documents, (b) had their TRP reports serving an official function (e.g. being recognized in the law or national policy documents as part of national monitoring system) and/or (c) implemented the specific policy recommendations provided in the reports by the ETF. The target is to increase the number of countries with the uptake of Torino Process results.