ETF
Working together
Learning for life

TORINO PROCESS 2014

KYRGYZSTAN

TORINO PROCESS 2014
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vocational education and training (VET) reform in the Kyrgyz Republic evolves in a complex political and socio-economic environment.

The political and institutional changes that were initiated since 2010/11 when the country was transformed into a parliamentary democracy have led to the introduction of new accountability and governance mechanisms as of 2012/2013. Thus, a National Skills Council was set up in 2012, followed shortly after by a number of sectoral skills councils. First experiences with new approaches have been gained, but a lot remains to be done before these can be considered to be fully operational.

The Education Development Strategy 2012-2020 continues to serve as the reference point for all education developments, including VET. A second generation of action programmes for Initial and Secondary VET, for the period 2015-2017 is under development. Yet, as was already noted for the Torino Process report 2012, no co-ordination between the two sub-systems exists, so that it is impossible to speak about a common VET policy. One important consequence of this lack of coordination is an increasing disintegration of VET.

As was the case in previous years, education and training, including VET, represented a priority for the country and accounted for 20% of government expenditure. Yet, with 41 % of the population aged 19 years and younger, the available budget per student was extremely limited. Staff salaries, and in the case of initial VET also social support for students, accounted for most of the education budget, leaving hardly any resources for the teaching process.

Though economic performance in the period 2012-2014 was characterised by GDP growth, the overall economic situation continued to be challenging, with 37% of the population living below the national poverty line. Labour market and employment trends in the Kyrgyz Republic reflect the growing working-age population, limited labour demand, high underemployment and precarious (informal) employment. This situation is particularly challenging for young people. Youth unemployment rose to almost 18%, and thus exceeded general unemployment by nearly 10%.

The high level of informality goes hand in hand with a low level of organisation in employers' representation. It remains difficult to engage employers in a systematic manner in VET governance.

Despite the difficult situation, a number of positive developments have taken place since the last Torino Process report was prepared in 2012. VET stakeholders who participated in the preparation and validation of the report noted the following:

The setting up of the National Skills Council is considered an important step in the right direction to ensure better inter-ministerial coordination on VET, while sectoral councils are recognised as important player for the improvement of VET offer in line with labour market demand. A number of sectoral skills councils have started to operate and are active in common projects with IVET system, especially on the definition of occupational standards

Work at different levels has been initiated to better understand labour market demand: the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth has been working on a medium-term prognosis on staffing requirements, while the VET Agency and the Republican Scientific Methodological Centre have been involved in sectoral analysis.

In terms of teaching and learning content, considerable progress has been made in recent years to agree content with employers at school and sector level. Many Initial VET curricula have been updated using a competence-based approach. First experiences have been gained in developing occupational profiles with employers and then based on these, curricula for short courses and even

entire study programmes. In this context the important role undertaken by the Republican Scientific Methodological Centre was noted, as an important resource and expertise centre for the development of occupational profiles and competence-based curricula.

VET stakeholders scored progress on VET reform at 2-3, noting numerous cases of good practice and policy piloting, but few cases of systematic policy implementation. VET stakeholders identified several key challenges which VET reform in the Kyrgyz Republic should address over the coming years and in which they recommend European Training Foundation (ETF) intervention as of 2015.

A better understanding is needed of economic and labour market needs and how these can be addressed through VET. For this purpose the VET system requires appropriate tools and methods that will generate good quality evidence. It also requires the capacity to analyse evidence in order to develop policy measures and monitor developments. Since both initial (IVET) and secondary (SVET) levels require better labour market knowledge, agreement should be reached between these two VET levels to work on issues together, so as to ensure shared understanding and effective use of resources. Joint work on these issues will also make it easier to engage employers in the process.

The operationalisation of social partnership needs to continue at all levels — from provider-enterprise level to education sector-economic sector level — in order to improve the relevance of VET. Further development of the work of sectoral councils should represent a priority for IVET and SVET. While some councils have started to become active, many questions concerning their institutional set-up and their role need to be agreed and implemented, including regarding the delivery of sectoral analyses and inputs concerning the development of professional standards and VET content. Interaction between sectoral councils and the National Skills Council should, where possible, be further developed.

Capacity development for VET provider staff at different levels should be developed, if planned VET reforms are to be implemented smoothly. Capacity development should be accessible to large numbers of staff from all regions of the country and should cover in-service training as well as complementary measures like enterprise-based training and peer learning.

In relation to the availability of data on the VET system in general, VET stakeholders recommend the Ministry of Education and Science and the VET Agency to seek the means to ensure that the following data are collected in a systematic manner for both VET sub-sectors: data on transition from class 9 and 11 into IVET or SVET, data on IVET students transitioning into SVET and higher education and data on SVET students transitioning into higher education and dropout rates. Furthermore, data for IVET and SVET should be gender disaggregated and information should be provided on enrolment of students from vulnerable backgrounds (from low-income families, with disabilities); for IVET in addition, data should be collected on the number of students without basic education.

INTRODUCTION

The Torino Process was launched by the European Training Foundation (ETF) as a participatory review of progress in vocational education and training (VET) policies and systems. It is carried out every two years in ETF partner countries with the objective of providing a concise, documented analysis of VET reforms in each country that includes the identification of key policy trends, challenges, constraints, good practices and opportunities so as to build consensus on possible ways forward in VET policy and system development.

The added value of the Torino Process lies in the fact that it considers VET within the socioeconomic context and ensures that analyses are informed by relevant evidence and take place through structured dialogue. Torino Process objectives are as follows:

- to support evidence-based policy making in partner countries with a view to improving the contribution of VET to sustainable development and especially competitiveness and social cohesion;
- to serve as the basis for the design of an ETF support strategy to partner countries;
- to inform ETF recommendations to the European Commission regarding future European Union (EU) external assistance to the countries.

The Torino Process was inspired by policy assessment processes at the EU level, notably the Copenhagen Process. It complements the review of progress towards common VET policies, objectives and tools in the EU. This complementarity facilitates mutual learning between the EU and its partner countries.

This country report reviews VET policies as applied in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2014. It updates the 2010 and 2012 Torino Process reviews and provides a concise analysis of VET reform undertaken in recent years. This 2014 report is based on input provided by a wide group of VET stakeholders in the Kyrgyz Republic, who provided statistical and administrative data and actively participated in interviews, group meetings and focus group discussions. Information was compiled by the ETF for a draft report that was discussed during a validation seminar in Bishkek on 30 September 2014. This seminar brought together representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour, the VET Agency, the Republican Scientific Methodological Centre, the Confederation of Trade Unions, the National Statistical Committee, the International Chamber of Commerce and other employer representative bodies, initial and secondary VET providers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in the VET field. This group also provided further input on the assessment of progress made in policy reform and in the formulation of recommendations. The draft report was subsequently circulated to all seminar participants for further written comments and suggestions.

The ETF is grateful for insights provided by all participants in discussions and meetings.

1. VISION FOR THE NATIONAL VET SYSTEM

1.1 Introduction to the VET system

Vocational Education and Training (VET) provision in the Kyrgyz Republic is made up of four segments:

- initial VET (IVET) – sometimes also referred to as primary VET;
- secondary VET (SVET);
- higher education VET (HVET, not covered in this report); and
- continuing education and training for adults.

See Annex 1 for an overview of the entire education system, including VET (in blue).

Depending on the entry level of a student (either after grade 9 or 11), IVET programmes last from one to three years. The three-year programme, which combines general education with a strong professional component, leads to a combined secondary/professional diploma that allows access to either SVET or HVET on the basis of the results of an entrance examination taken at the chosen institution.

As for SVET, depending on the entry level of students (grade 9 or 11), programmes typically last 2-3 years and allow access to the second year of HVET in their area of specialisation through an accelerated programme that bypasses general entrance examination procedures.

The 2003 Law on Education recognises the principle of continuing education and training for adults. However, many issues in relation to institutional coordination, policy and implementation remain to be developed, in particular concerning the interplay between formal and non-formal education. What is referred to as complementary education of adults covers further training and retraining for qualified staff, training (for a first qualification) and retraining for unemployed people and general professional, technical, cultural and other kinds of training. It is provided by different types of state-funded and private providers. State-funded providers generally focus on the formal education sector, with graduates obtaining recognised certification, whereas most private providers focus on non-formal training in the form of courses of varied duration, without officially recognised certification or formal documents. By 2014 the Ministry of Education had issued 2,500 licences for the provision of Continuing education and training for adults (Ministry of Education, 2014).

State funding of adult education, including training for unemployed people, is nearly exclusively dedicated to programmes resulting in state-recognised qualifications. By 2014 about 70% of participants of re-training courses funded by the employment services took part in courses offered by IVET providers (Ministry of Labour, 2014). No data are available describing the overall situation and volume of adult education. Data collected by the Kyrgyz Association for Adult Education indicates that there is considerable readiness by people to invest in training.

IVET is administered by the Agency for Professional and Technical Education (VET Agency) under the Ministry of Labour, while SVET and HVET are administered by the Ministry of Education and Science, which is also responsible for the licensing of non-formal training providers. Within SVET all state-funded institutions are linked to specific line ministries.

IVET and SVET not only provide different levels of qualification, they also operate under differing conditions and philosophies. IVET has a strong social mandate and provides second-chance opportunities, while SVET, rather academic in outlook, is strongly integrated with HVET.

While enrolling for a first profession in an IVET school (called litsei/lyceum) is free of charge — with state funding provided for the vast majority of IVET students studying in long-term courses — about 83% of SVET students enrolled in a VET college in 2013/2014 paid their own fees (National Statistical Committee, 2014).

The network of IVET providers has remained fairly stable over the years (105 providers by 2014 compared to 110 providers in 2012). Although the legal framework provides for the possibility of private provision at all levels of the education system, all IVET schools in 2014 were state owned. IVET schools (47 urban and 58 rural) exist in all regions of the country.

The network of SVET providers has expanded considerably, from 49 colleges in 2007/2008 to 131 colleges in 2013/2014. Private providers appeared early on in SVET. In 2013/2014, 35 colleges were privately owned and 96 were state-owned. SVET colleges are mainly located in urban environments.

As can be seen from Table 1.1, IVET enrolment remained fairly stable from 2006 to 2013, although there was a small but noticeable decline in student numbers for 2013. In contrast, SVET enrolment in the same period more than doubled.

Table 1.1 Enrolment in public and private IVET and SVET 2006-2013.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
IVET	29 319	28 835	29 993	31 010	31 225	31 032	31 041	29 393
SVET	40 254	43 413	48 991	59 555	64 287	72 323	83 340	91 623

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2014.

1.2 Vision for the VET system

The medium-term vision for the entire education sector, including IVET, SVET and adult continuing education is defined in the Education Development Strategy 2020 (EDS 2020) adopted in March 2012 as the first education strategy to cover both IVET and SVET in a systematic manner. For both education sub-sectors, quality is defined in terms of labour market relevance, graduate employability and enhanced interaction with employers. The Education Development Strategy 2020 attaches importance to access for vulnerable groups and mentions, for the first time, people with special needs and with disabilities, although mainly at the basic education level. Only IVET takes into account improved access for vulnerable groups and gender equality.

The Education Development Strategy 2020 was the first education strategy to be subject to relatively extensive consultation with social partners, civil society organisations and practitioners. This approach resulted in changes to the strategy: adult education, for instance, was included as a separate sub-sector. As for the development of action programmes for 2015-2017, differences in stakeholder involvement for IVET and SVET were reported. Thus, while a working group involving different stakeholders (including employers, donors and national NGOs) was set up for IVET, SVET programme preparation was led by the Ministry of Education. During Torino Process 2014 discussions, representatives from both sub-sectors pointed to the fact that vision continued to be defined from the point of view of the sector and that stronger stakeholder involvement should be aimed at in the future.

Action programmes covering a three-year period are developed for each sub-sector of the system, with such programmes first developed for 2012-2014. The current action programmes covering 2015-2017 were close to completion in mid-2014. For the preparation of these latest programmes, a new overarching strategic document — the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2013-2017 — had to be taken into consideration. This strategy, which covers economic and social development, refers to key problems to be addressed in the education sector, including in VET. It stresses, in particular, the labour market relevance of IVET and SVET and the need to ensure better cooperation with the private sector. Specific adaptations in relation to the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2013-2017 cover, for instance, topics related to the environment and the green economy (IVET) and adjustment by budget-funded centres to economic priorities (SVET).

Though IVET and SVET to some extent aligned their actions to better reflect key elements in the National Sustainable Development Strategy, several other sectorial strategies developed over recent years, hardly ever consider skills requirements, the corresponding education and training needs and the role VET could play. This leads to the conclusion that overall, inter-ministerial communication and inter-action could be improved. It remains unclear to what extent the National Council for Skills Development (set up in March 2012) has been fostering better cooperation between ministries, even though it is tasked with the coordination of state bodies as well as other stakeholders with an interest in VET, includes seven key ministries and is chaired by the Vice-Prime Minister in charge of Social Issues.

Interaction between public administrations in charge of VET (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and the VET Agency) is limited and action programmes for IVET and SVET are developed in isolation from each other. So, while these two sub-sectors define increasingly convergent priorities, they fail to make better use of very limited resources. Although the main reason given is that the sub-sectors report to different ministries, the fact remains that it is not necessary to work in the same structure in order to develop solutions for common problems, such as, for instance, the lack of sustainable analytical tools (sector analyses, tracer studies, employer surveys) or capacity building for VET providers with regard to management-related issues (functioning school boards, development plans for schools and colleges).

1.3 Capacity for innovation and change

Numerous innovations have been introduced in VET in recent years. Examples cited in Torino Process 2014 discussions include new views and approaches to social partnership at all levels, innovative approaches to guidance, a shift towards learning outcomes and new content and formats for training that correspond better to labour market needs and new views on inclusion.

The IVET system has especially been involved in numerous national and international projects that have led to important innovations and the accumulation of considerable expertise and experience. It should be noted that this involvement has often only been made possible through additional funding by donors, so, from the outset, this innovation operates under special conditions. Once additional funding ends such conditions will be difficult to maintain and nearly impossible to disseminate further. At the national level no resources are being made available for innovation; all resources earmarked for VET go to routine operations.

External incentives for change do not exist. At this stage VET schools and colleges and individual staff engage in change and innovation because they feel the need for it and because engaging in change is seen as a positive experience in itself. This means, however, that change and innovation are very much dependent on the organisational culture of individual schools and colleges and the enthusiasm of staff.

1.4 Drivers of innovation and change

Torino Process 2014 discussion participants rated national VET research capacity as very poor,[1] mainly because, prior to independence, all VET-related research was carried out in other parts of the Soviet Union. Since the VET Department of the Academy of Education of Kyrgyzstan was disbanded, no higher education institution has engaged in VET research. VET research is mostly carried out by donor organisations, usually with the involvement of private sector companies. Most of this research is organised on a one-off basis and does not support the development of national capacity.

VET research may be used for the development of innovative approaches. However, the possibility of mainstreaming is limited, as innovative approaches or pilot projects are not typically evaluated or analysed by national authorities. As yet there is insufficient evaluation and analytical capacity within VET public administrations.

1.5 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

Torino Process 2014 participants scored progress on vision for the VET system at 2/3 out of 5, noting in particular that strategy implementation was being planned and budgeted for in medium-term action programmes. However, the vision and corresponding action programmes do not sufficiently consider lifelong learning, nor is the link between sub-sectors and how they influence each other considered. In this respect, participants recommended closer interaction between VET sub-sectors.

Participants also stressed the need to develop the capacity of VET public administrations regarding the use of data/evidence to analyse the system and monitor priorities outlined in both the Education Development Strategy 2020 and the corresponding action programmes. Evaluation capacity also needs to be developed, as it is urgently required for informed decision making on the mainstreaming of new approaches.

In terms of interaction between VET public administrations and donor organisations, participants recommended both sides to pay more attention to sustainability aspects and such issues as sufficient documentation of new approaches in national languages and sufficient capacity building.

[1] Participants rated progress as follows: 0 = no progress was made, 1 = policy options have been identified and validated by stakeholders, 2 = policies have been piloted by the country and/or by a donor, 3 = policies have been systematically implemented by the country, 4= policies have been monitored and progress has been discussed by stakeholders, 5= policies have been evaluated and results have been documented/measured in an objective manner.

2. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN ADDRESSING ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET DEMAND

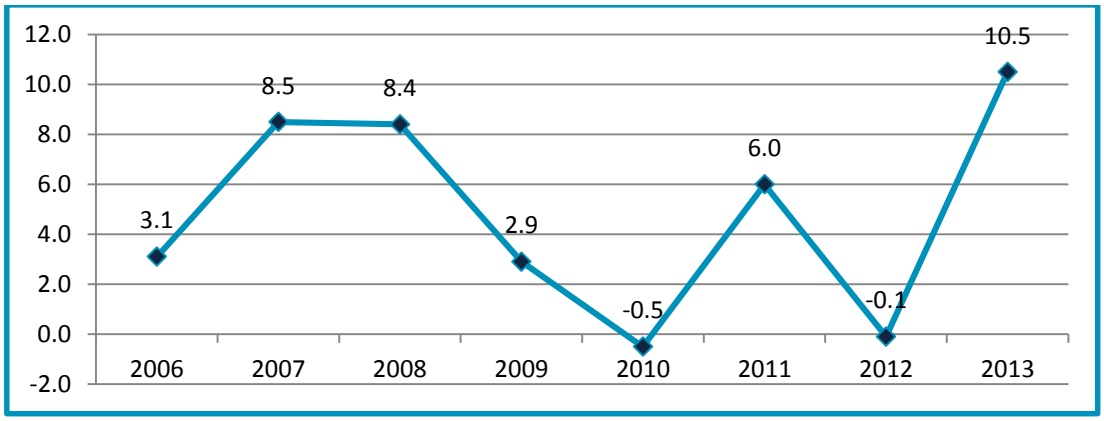
2.1 Economic and labour market factors that shape demand for skills

The Kyrgyz Republic is a lower-to-middle income economy; gross domestic product (GDP) per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) was USD 2 370 in 2012. The country ranked 125 of 187 countries in the Human Development Index in 2012. Although migration outflows are significant, the Kyrgyz Republic has a very young and growing population and a high fertility rate (3.1 children per woman in 2012).

Migration is very significant in the Kyrgyz Republic. According to the World Bank (2011), the stock of Kyrgyz emigrants abroad was 621 000 (11.2% of the population) in 2010, mainly working in the Russian Federation (90%) and to a far lesser extent in Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The net migration rate for 2010-2015 has been estimated as -6.4 migrants/1 000 population. Emigration is mainly a response to unemployment and poor wages and to the demand for labour in the Russian Federation. Highly skilled emigrants are few in number. The share of remittances in GDP has been rising constantly from 2010 (26%) to 2013(31%,) making it the second highest share of GDP after Tajikistan (World Bank Development Indicators). The Kyrgyz Republic also hosts 222 700 immigrants (4% of the population), mainly from the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

Growth of the Kyrgyz economy (Figure 2.1) has been erratic in recent years, going from positive to negative in 2010, rising to 6% in 2011, dropping into negative figures in 2012 and then shooting up to an estimated 10.5% in 2013. This volatile pattern of economic growth is partially the result of political instability, weak governance and violent clashes in the south of country. A less than favourable geographic location and regional context and an underdeveloped or obsolete infrastructure has further aggravated economic problems (GIZ, 2013). A particularly worrying feature is a high poverty rate and continuing inequality: 21.6% of the population subsists on USD 2 a day (PPP) and the Gini coefficient was 33 in 2011.

Figure 2.1 GDP growth (%) 2006-13



Source: World Bank World Development Indicators, 2014.

The economy continues to be dominated by services and agriculture (in particular, cotton and wool production). Land reforms in agriculture have resulted in the creation of farms, leading to an increased number of people employed in agriculture and thus absorbing some of the surplus labour force. Most farms, however, are small in size and can be classified under subsistence agriculture. Since 2006, both GDP and employment shares of agriculture have declined (Table 2.2). The GDP contribution of agriculture decreased from around a third in 2006 to a fifth in 2012. The employment share of agriculture decreased less dramatically, from 36% in 2006 to 30% in 2012. The contribution of agriculture is still significant, in particular in employment terms.

The services sector (such as small trade, repair of vehicles, education, health, household appliances and private utensils, tourism services, restaurants) has been growing both in terms of GDP contribution and employment share. Contribution to GDP grew from 47% in 2006 to almost 55% in 2012. The services sector's contribution to employment overall is significant and growing, accounting for nearly half of all employment in 2012.

Table 2.2 GDP contribution and employment by sector (%) 2006-12

	AGRICULTURE		SERVICES		INDUSTRY	
	GDP	Employment	GDP	Employment	GDP	Employment
2006	32.8	36.3	47.2	44.3	20.1	19.4
2007	31.1	34.5	49.6	45.2	19.3	20.3
2008	27.0	34.0	49.4	45.4	23.5	20.6
2009	21.1	32.4	52.4	46.4	26.6	21.2
2010	19.4	31.2	51.4	47.7	29.2	21.1
2011	18.6	30.7	50.6	48.3	30.8	21.0
2012	19.7	30.1	54.9	48.2	25.4	21.7

Sources: World Bank World Development Indicators (GDP), 2014 and National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010-2013 (employment), 2014.

The industrial sector has hardly changed since 2006, following a dramatic decline in the early years of independence (in particular in mining and processing, construction and transport). Recovery commenced in 2004 — in particular in terms of GDP contribution and employment share — mainly linked to increasing gold production (GIZ, 2013). In 2012, this sector contributed 25% of GDP — a sharp drop from the 31% of 2011. With exports dominated by gold (which is dependent on production volumes and international prices), the industrial sector's contribution to GDP tends to be volatile, although its employment share is relatively stable, at almost 22% of the labour force. The sector shows low employment elasticity, with little change in employment since 2006.

A number of employment-relevant economic growth sectors have been identified (GIZ, 2013), namely, construction; electricity, gas and water supply; hotels and restaurants; wholesale, retail, repair of vehicles, household appliances and private utensils; textile/garment sector; transport, storage and communication; and financial intermediation.

The ratio of male to female employment in agriculture is more or less equal, in contrast with services, where women (59%) predominate over men (41%), and industry, which is heavily male dominated (29% against 11%).

Key labour market trends

The Kyrgyz labour market is mainly characterised by the following four factors: a growing working-age population, limited or no labour demand, high underemployment coupled with poverty in rural areas and a large share of precarious (informal) employment. Indeed, since independence, the labour force has steadily grown faster than employment and available jobs. The lack of employment opportunities for more specialised positions requiring advanced skills can be assumed to derive from the characteristics of the labour market: most employed people work as skilled/unskilled workers (especially women and poorly educated individuals) and mainly in the agricultural sector. Yet employers regularly refer to problems in attracting or keeping qualified staff. This problem is usually cited in combination with emigration, as qualified staff emigrate to countries where higher wages are on offer (TRP, 2014).

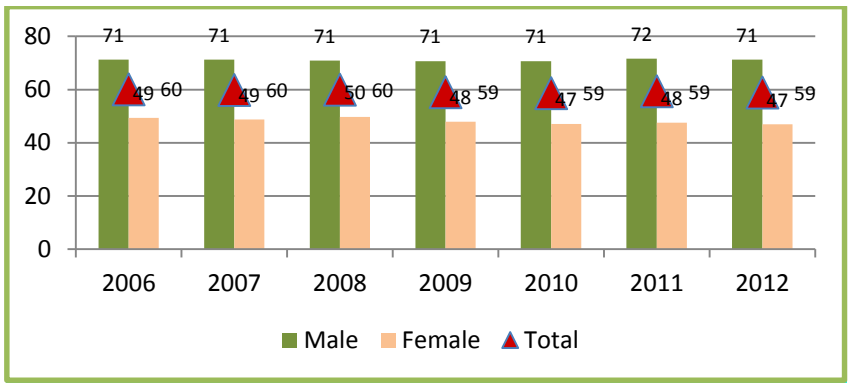
Underemployment is linked to subsistence agriculture in rural areas, where both higher poverty rates and a lower intensity of unemployment are observed compared to urban areas. This is due to the high levels of under-employment and seasonal employment. Consequently, employment rates appears high, as they include large under-employment, and the unemployment rate appears low. Indeed, there is no positive correlation between levels of unemployment and poverty observed in the country; and the share of working poor (living on USD 2 or less a day) in total employment is very high, at 25.5% in 2007 (GIZ, 2013).

As for informal employment, according to the National Statistical Committee, in 2012 about 70% of the active labour force was employed informally (including in agriculture). Informality is much higher in rural areas (79%) but is also significant in urban areas (52.8%). Consequently, up to four out of five jobs in rural areas are non formal, while over half of the employed in urban environments work informally (GIZ, 2013). Self-employment dominates the informal economy: in 2012, 60.3% of those employed in the informal sector were self-employed (the National Statistical Committee defines such persons as non-hired workers). Long working hours are typical of self-employment in sectors such as trade, repair of vehicles and household appliances, transport and communication, hotels and restaurants, construction, etc. The sectoral composition of the informal sector consists mainly of agriculture, trade, hotels and restaurants, transport and communication and industry. Hence, almost everybody in agriculture and a large proportion of workers in the services sector are working informally; as for industry, 68% of all employment was informal in 2012.

There is an ongoing shift from regular wage employment to self-employment (especially in privately owned agricultural land and the services sector). During the period 2003-2010, although the total number of jobs increased by about 315 000, regular jobs in enterprises grew only by about 44 000 while self-employment and employment of individuals hired by other individuals almost doubled, from 550 000 to 910 000. Consequently, the share of employment in enterprises, institutions and organisations decreased to 31% in 2010 (GIZ, 2013). Overall only about 57% of the employed population in 2012 worked as employees, while the rest worked mainly as self-employed or unpaid family workers.

The total employment rate is rather stable (Figure 2.2) at around 60%, while there has been a slight decrease in the employment rate of women over the years. There is also a big difference between male and female employment rates, at around 71% and 48%, respectively. The fact that the employment rate is relatively high is explained by a high level of underemployment and the broad definition used for labour force surveys.

Figure 2.2 Employment (%) by sex (15+ population) 2006-12



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010-2013.

Overall unemployment (Table 2.3) has been around 8% over the past years — a relatively low rate that, again, is explained by high underemployment and the broad definition used in labour force surveys. Women and poorly educated individuals are at higher risk of unemployment. In 2012 the male and female unemployment rates were 7.7% and 9.5%, respectively. The unemployment rate by education levels reveals that the highest unemployment is among those with incomplete higher vocational education (20%), followed by primary and basic education — levels of education that are more common among women.

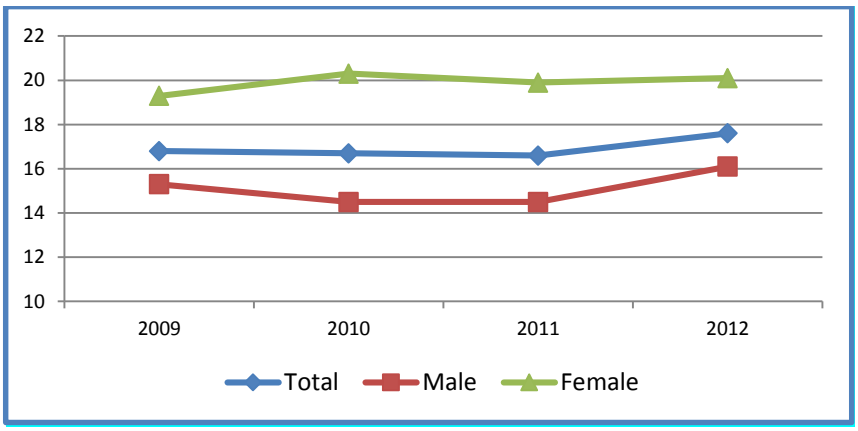
Table 2.3 Unemployment (%) by sex and education level (15+ population) 2009 and 2012

Education	2009			2012		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Primary/less	10.8	8.6	14.6	12.8	6.2	26.9
Basic	12.8	10.9	16.7	15.9	14.8	18.2
Secondary general	9.8	7.9	12.6	8.5	7.3	10.5
Primary vocational	5.6	5.3	6.6	7.8	7.6	8.4
Secondary vocational	5.0	5.1	5.0	6.5	7.2	6.1
Incomplete higher professional	20.9	19.5	22.7	20.0	13.0	30.3
Higher professional	4.4	4.7	4.1	5.6	5.7	5.6
Total	8.4	7.4	9.8	8.4	7.7	9.5

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

The share of long-term unemployment increased from 12% in 2010 to 18% in 2012. Interestingly, a higher share occurs among persons with higher education and VET qualifications. This would suggest a lack of opportunities (and, consequently, higher competition) for more specialised jobs. Youth unemployment (almost 18% in 2012) is higher than overall unemployment, suggesting some problems in the transition from education to work (Figure 2.3); moreover, the female youth unemployment rate is higher (20%) than the male youth unemployment rate (16%).

Figure 2.3 Unemployment in the population aged 15-24 years by sex (%) 2009-12



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010-13

Youth unemployment is a central issue, as around 60% of the population was 29 years and younger in 2013, suggesting future problems in terms of greater pressure on the education system and labour market. In terms of education levels, those with incomplete higher professional, primary and basic education face the biggest challenges.

The number of registered unemployed people decreased from 73 400 people in 2006 to 60 400 people in 2012, with more or less equal numbers of men and women. The fact that economic performance has largely improved in recent years may explain decreasing numbers of registered unemployed, yet total unemployment levels have remained rather stable. Reasons may be restrictions with respect to access to the benefits or to levels of benefits (some people may opt not to take up small amounts of benefits because it may not seem worthwhile to apply) and the informality of the economy (unemployment benefits can only be received in relation to registered jobs). Persons working in the informal sector are more likely to lose jobs, especially in times of economic instability — as has happened in the Kyrgyz Republic in recent years. Thus, although unemployment levels may be stable, the number of people eligible to receive unemployment benefits remains low.

The ETF 2011/12 Transition Survey (ETF, 2013) indicated that a relatively large share of surveyed respondents were unemployed or inactive in the six years prior to interview. Factors that increased the chances of employment were higher education, being male and living in urban areas. A large share of the youth population worked for their families (especially poorly educated people and women) or in unregistered jobs. The chance of being registered and of obtaining more stable employment increases consistently with the level of education. The high share of employment in family businesses may help explain the relatively low level of unemployment and of youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs) aged 15-29 years (15.4% in 2013). The ETF survey also confirmed that most young people who have ever worked obtained their first job largely with the help of family and social networks.

To sum up, labour market and employment trends in the Kyrgyz Republic reflect a growing working-age population, limited labour demand, high underemployment and precarious (informal) employment, mainly in agriculture. The relationship between education and the labour market is straightforward: education visibly increases employment chances. Yet the economy and labour market are insufficiently developed, with a lack of formality/protection and a lack of jobs requiring more advanced skills. This opens up a debate about the quality of education and of active labour market interventions by the state.

Active labour market measures

Regarding the number of people who took part in different state-funded active labour market measures in the period 2011-2013 (Table 2.4), according to Ministry of Labour statistics, in 2013 a

total of 7 335 people participated in training (58% women), 2 019 people received micro-credits to start their own business (48% women) and 21 078 people took part in different public works schemes (36% women). The number of beneficiaries has been relatively stable over the years (except for a decrease observed in 2012 in all categories, likely due to budget constraints). The gender imbalance in public-works beneficiaries was especially significant.

Table 2.4 Beneficiaries by type of active labour market intervention 2011-13

	2011	2012	2013
Training	8 594 total 54% women	6 514 total 57% women	7 335 total 58% women
Micro-credits	1 977 total 51% women	4 479 total 40% women	2 019 total 48% women
Public works	25 807 total 36% women	19 861 total 36% women	21 078 total 36% women

Source: Kyrgyz Ministry of Labour (for the 2014 Torino Process).

Since 2013, employers are obliged to announce vacancies to employment offices, although it is unclear to what extent this really happens. There is not as yet a national database that compiles and makes available data on vacancies, despite ongoing donor support in this area for several years.

According to a Ministry of Labour representative (TRP, 2014), the employment services define the training offer in accordance with local vacancies, with about 70% of trainees participating in courses delivered by IVET schools. It is up to the local employment offices to follow up on the employment rate of course participants (the Ministry of Labour sustains that about 70% find employment after training).

Nevertheless, the course offer seems to be limited in terms of the professional skills offered. Furthermore, the budget available per participant is not defined in accordance with the resource intensiveness of a given course. Consequently, certain courses are under-resourced and cannot guarantee sufficient practice when costly supplies are required (as happens with welding).

A positive development is the newly introduced possibility for persons with a disability to register as unemployed and thus also to benefit from the training offer. Until 2012, status as a person with a disability meant exclusion from the possibility of being considered as unemployed (viewed as a double use of state benefits). In the first quarter of 2014, according to the Ministry of Labour, 25 persons with disabilities took part in training (no data for 2013 overall were available).

2.2 Mechanisms for identifying demand for skills and matching skills supply

Few mechanisms currently exist to identify the demand for skills, although progress has been made since 2012. The National Development Strategy 2017 and the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2013-2017 define priority sectors and provide an initial prognosis on expected new jobs to be created in these sectors. It should, however, be noted that strategy documents prepared by most line ministries still lack explicit information on skills requirements in quantitative and qualitative terms.

The Ministry of Labour has been working on a medium-term prognosis on staffing requirements by sector and region that has been circulated to other ministries and is now available for the period 2014-2017. The Ministry of Education has been using this prognosis to adapt its planning for state-funded SVET and higher education.

No regular employer surveys are being implemented as yet. This is partly due to the high level of informality and because most sectors are dominated by small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are often unable to define their staffing and skills needs. Sectoral employer associations are not yet well established for all sectors, although progress can be noted since 2012.

With donor support, first steps have been taken in sector analyses in light industry, agriculture and tourism. These analyses, which do not necessarily reflect the full sector, have focused on qualitative elements. All three cases included translating identified skill needs into the development of standards or teaching content.

Sectoral skill councils are an important interface for such work. While in 2012 such structures existed mostly on paper, progress has been made in their operationalisation since 2013. In total seven such councils have been set up. Of these, Torino Process 2014 discussion participants consistently cited three (light industry, construction and agriculture) as being more active and as having common projects with the IVET system. Sectoral skill council work is also frequently supported directly or indirectly by donors, to compensate for the fact that there is no experience in the country of working with similar structures. A proposal made by the VET Agency to define the role of these councils is actively being debated. It remains to be decided what the role and mandate of councils could be and which resources could be used to support their functioning.

At provider level, first steps have been taken (with the support of the ETF) in developing and implementing a tracer study methodology. A number of IVET and SVET providers have started to carry out regular tracer studies and many more have committed to implement such studies in 2015. It is expected that tracer study data will provide valuable input on the labour market, including on skills matching.

Meanwhile, some IVET and SVET providers have excellent connections with enterprises, which they use to fine-tune the content of teaching programmes and even to introduce new professions, organise high quality practice for students and training opportunities for staff. Nonetheless, many providers mention how difficult it is to establish communication and joint work with enterprises; many employers sustain the same about VET providers and can even cite cases where they have approached providers, without success.

During Torino Process 2014 discussions, spontaneous judgements by employers regarding the skills and competences of VET graduates tended to be negative, at both a technical and behavioural level (for example communicating in a work environment, finishing a task) etc. Yet many employers expressed a readiness to work with VET as they were aware of the need for skilled staff. A key precondition for employers is, however, to gain some certainty that the time and resources they invest in this cooperation will benefit them and that students participating in work placements and employees are really ready to commit.

2.3 Potential of the VET system to influence economic and labour market needs

Entrepreneurial key competences and entrepreneurship skills are not yet considered in a systematic manner by the VET system. With the support of an International Labour Organisation (ILO) project, the IVET system has introduced specific entrepreneurship modules (Foundations of the Market Economy, Foundations of Entrepreneurship) in all its full-time courses; as yet no similar approach exists for SVET. Unfortunately, it is not clear to what extent this component has had an impact on entrepreneurship among IVET graduates and to what extent these lessons develop competences such as capacities for risk assessment, team working and resource management. It is important to note that many of the competences employers cited as little developed in VET graduates are related to entrepreneurial key competences.

At a policy or strategic level, entrepreneurship is not considered by authorities at any education level. In the Torino Process discussions, it was noted that entrepreneurship possibilities also depend on other factors, such the existence of credit facilities, which are little developed to date.

2.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

Torino Process 2014 participants scored progress made in addressing economic and labour market needs at 2/3 out of 5, especially as some policy measures are by now being implemented at the national level — in particular, the Ministry of Labour's work on a medium-term prognosis and involvement of employers in defining priority professions, standards and contents.

Participants noted that, between IVET and SVET, there is a shared understanding on the importance of preparing students for the labour market and a joint desire to better understand labour market needs. While work on tools and methods was initiated in 2013, participants confirmed the urgent need for further work on this topic, with a focus on capacity building in the use of appropriate methods and analyses of evidence and in the development of follow-up actions related to the relevance and quality of VET provision. Participants also stressed the desirability of joint work by IVET and SVET providers and public administrations in this area, so as to ensure shared understanding and effective resource use. Joint work by the IVET and SVET sectors is also expected to foster the engagement of employers.

Further operationalisation of sectoral skill councils and their interaction with the National Skills Council was defined as another urgent area for action.

3. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN ADDRESSING DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND INCLUSION DEMAND

3.1 Demographic and social factors that shape demand for VET

The Kyrgyz Republic faces numerous socio-demographic challenges. Those having the biggest impact on VET demand are a large population of young people (requiring both access to appropriate education and training and labour market opportunities), high levels of international and internal migration, high poverty levels combined with important urban/rural disparities, a basic/general education system with poor outcomes in terms of student achievements and dropout rates, and in general, as yet underdeveloped approaches for vulnerable groups.

With average annual population growth of 1%-1.2% over recent years (WB-WDI, 2014), the population of the Kyrgyz Republic has grown from 5.3 million in 2009 to 5.7 million in 2013; people aged 19 years and younger made up 40.6% of the population and those in the 20-29 age group represented another 19.6% (National Statistical Committee, 2014). This demographic situation clearly puts pressure on the education system overall, as well as on the labour market.

High poverty levels persist (Table 3.1), with 37% of the population living below the national poverty line in 2013. Poverty rates demonstrate strong regional and urban/rural disparities, being particularly high in the southern regions (especially Jalal-Abad and Batken). The Bishkek and Chuy regions have consistently had the lowest poverty rates.

Table 3.1 Population below the national poverty line (%) 2010-13

Oblast	2010			2011			2012			2013		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Total	33.7	23.6	39.5	36.8	30.7	40.4	38.0	35.4	39.6	37.0	28.5	41.4
Batken	33.6	26.6	35.8	35.6	25.4	38.9	34.2	38.7	32.9	53.9	md	md
Jalal-Abad	44.7	32.7	49.7	45.3	43.5	46.0	55.7	61.7	53.4	46.4	md	md
Issyk-Kul	38.0	26.4	42.7	29.5	29.4	29.6	28.1	22.4	30.4	39.5	md	md
Naryn	53.5	39.3	56.1	49.9	39.7	51.7	39.9	26.9	42.0	43.8	md	md
Osh	41.9	47.0	40.0	44.7	48.1	43.2	51.4	54.8	50.0	43.4	md	md
Talas	42.3	34.3	43.7	50.2	47.8	50.6	39.6	23.6	42.2	23.1	md	md
Chuy	21.9	24.2	21.4	28.6	25.2	29.4	16.6	24.0	15.0	23.6	md	md
Bishkek city	7.9	7.9	-	18.4	18.4	-	21.4	21.4	-	20.4	md	md
Osh city	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.9	md	md

md: missing data.
Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2014.

Educational attainment for those aged over 15 years demonstrates divergent trends (Table 3.2). There has been a steady reduction in attainment among those with primary or lower education levels (6.6%

in 2012). On the other hand, there has been a steady increase in general secondary education (46.6% in 2012) and higher education (14.6% in 2012) attainment. These rates were accompanied by stable attainment for those with basic education (11.2% in 2012) and for persons with IVET and SVET, which together achieved an attainment rate of 18.6% in 2012. Educational attainment in the population aged 15 years and older, like poverty levels, demonstrate strong urban-rural disparities.

Table 3.2 Educational attainment (%) of population aged 15+, 2010-12

EDUCATION	2010			2011			2012		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Higher professional	13.6	22.8	8.3	14.3	23.6	9.0	14.6	23.7	9.6
Incomplete higher professional	3.4	4.8	2.6	2.8	4.2	2.0	2.4	3.8	1.7
SVET	10.9	14.0	9.1	11.1	14.5	9.2	10.8	14.6	8.7
IVET	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.8	7.5	7.8	8.0	7.7
Secondary general	46.0	34.8	52.4	45.9	35.3	51.9	46.6	35.4	52.8
Basic	11.2	10.3	11.8	11.4	10.1	12.2	11.2	10.3	11.7
Primary/less	7.2	5.5	8.3	6.9	4.6	8.2	6.6	4.2	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

In 2012 the rate of those with very low education levels (primary or less) was 7.9% in rural environments, against 4.2% for urban areas. Only 9.6% of the population aged 15 years and over in rural environments had higher education, as opposed to 23.7% of those in urban settings. An opposite trend occurs, however, for complete general education, which, at 52.8% for rural areas compares favourably to 35.4% for urban environments. For IVET the difference between rural and urban populations is relatively minor (7.7% versus 8%), but the gap is considerable for SVET (8.7% versus 14.6%).

Access to good quality education is a prerequisite for all other development opportunities. The importance of quality education is recognised in all education policy papers of recent years. Yet education outcomes have been poor, as demonstrated by the international Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies for 2006 and 2009 and the National Sample-Based Assessment, with most students scoring below the basic level in reading and mathematics. While measures have been taken to address these poor results, no evidence of improvement could be found for the Torino Process 2014, which raises the question as to whether the measures are, in fact, producing (as yet) better outcomes for students.

Quality problems are most damaging for pupils from low-income families. The above studies broken down according to urban/rural populations reveal that pupils in rural environments perform less well than students in urban environments. The language of instruction also plays an important role, as students studying in Russian have been demonstrated to obtain better results than those studying in Kyrgyz. These results can be explained by the drawbacks affecting schools in poorer areas: greater staff shortages, difficulties in attracting well qualified teachers and poorer access to textbooks and technology, including internet access.

Poverty combined with poor education quality are important markers of the large group of children who do not complete basic education or who abandon education after grade 9. Without relevant skills these

young people face poor labour market prospects. Several studies (such as the ETF 2011/12 Transition Survey and the ETF 2014 Tracer Study) point to the fact that many young people need to earn money to support their families and so simply cannot afford to spend time in education, even when this education is free.

This would suggest that opportunities for people in the Kyrgyz Republic are very much conditioned by location and family background. Most SVET and higher education provision is located in urban areas and is fee-based. Since only a relatively small number of people are assigned a budget-funded place (16.9% of those in SVET in 2013/2014 according to the National Statistical Committee), only those with sufficient financial resources can afford this level of education.

Basic and general education and IVET provision are equally well represented in rural and urban environments and are provided free. They thus represent the only opportunity for most students, but certainly for those with low incomes. The fact that general education has seen a marked increase in enrolment over recent years, while IVET has remained stable, may indicate that no specific benefits are perceived from choosing IVET; in other words, IVET is viewed as a less attractive option.

Meanwhile, data on employment rates by education level (Table 3.3) very clearly show that labour market specific skills are a decisive factor in enhancing employment chances. Looking at the data for 2012, there was a steady increase in employment rates from the lowest education level up to secondary general education (from 18.9% to 61.9%); as for the population with IVET, the employment rate (75.7%) was comparable with that of the population with higher professional education (75.6%); in fact, both these sub-populations — followed by SVET (69.2%) — achieved the highest rates of employment overall. Thus, while persons with secondary education and with IVET spend the same number of years in the education system, the outcome is far better for those with labour market specific skills (that is, IVET).

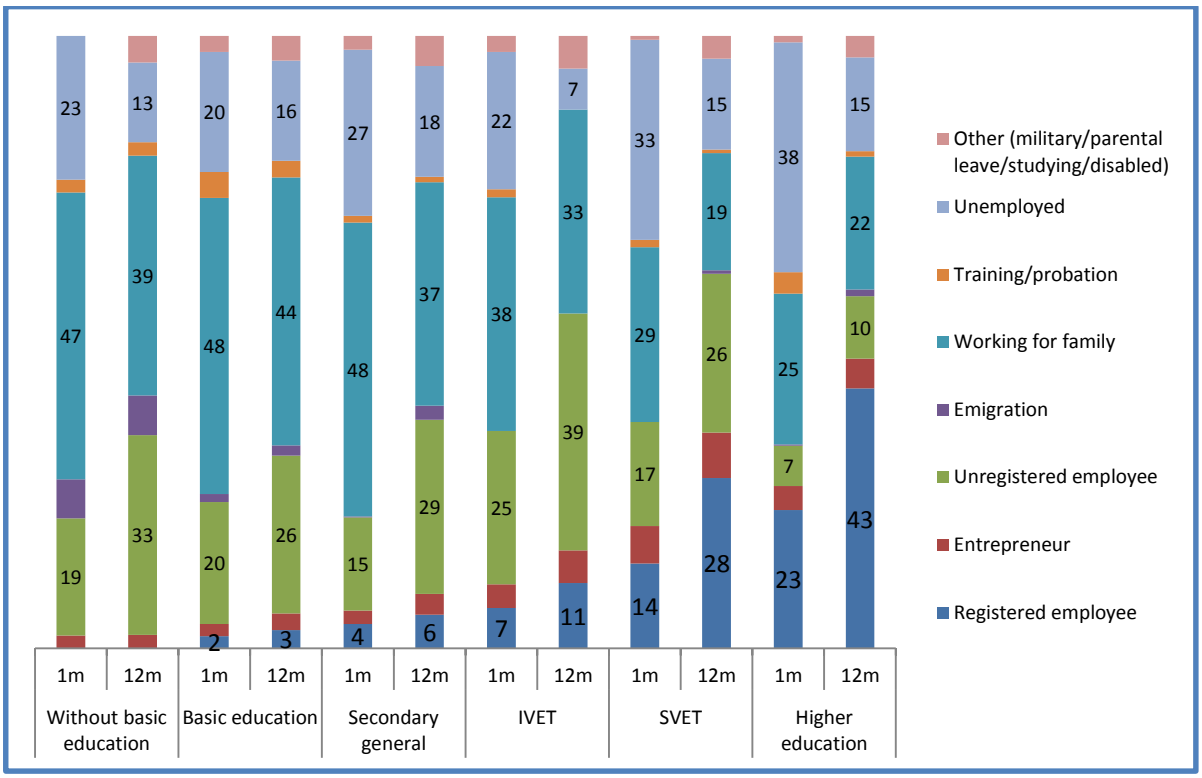
Table 3.3 Employment (%) by educational attainment (population aged 15+) 2006-2012.

EDUCATION	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Higher professional	76.9	76.1	77.1	77.5	75.1	74.9	75.6
Incomplete higher professional	43.6	48	47.5	43.5	44.1	44.2	37.3
SVET	71.6	71.2	70	69.8	68.7	68.6	69.2
IVET	78.9	78.4	77	77.0	77.4	76.6	75.7
Secondary general	65.9	65.4	64.8	62.3	61.6	62.9	61.9
Basic	32.8	30.4	31.5	33.3	33.3	33.8	30.0
Primary/less	16.9	16.6	18.4	18.8	19.2	18.0	18.9
Total	**60.1**	**59.8**	**60**	**59.0**	**58.6**	**59.3**	**58.8**

Sources: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

This trend is also confirmed for young people up to the age of 26 years by the ETF 2011/12 Transition Survey (Figure 3.1). The overall employment rate for those with IVET is considerably higher than for those with secondary education. Furthermore, IVET graduates have the lowest unemployment rate. Finally, although employment rates are similar, the main difference between IVET and higher education graduates is that the latter are more likely to work in the formal sector.

Figure 3.1 Activity status for education system graduates after 1 and 12 months (%)



Source: ETF calculations based on ETF Youth Transition Study in the Kyrgyz Republic 2011/12, 2013.

3.2 Delivering to the individual demands and aspirations of learners: access, participation, progression

While higher education is still the education sub-sector attracting most students at the professional level, there are signs of a slowdown in this trend (Table 3.4), especially between 2011 (some 239 000 students) and 2013 (some 223 000 students).

Table 3.4 Enrolment in education by level/programme 2006-13

EDUCATION	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Preschool	59 156	62 823	68 031	75 955	85 236	98 706	115 812	132 481
General	1 095 242	1 080 061	1 053 668	1 036 834	1 018 868	1 015 172	1 012 303	1 027 123
— Primary (1-4)	17 879	16 903	9 774	8 861	8 674	8 409	7 960	7 856
— Basic (5-9)	37 907	38 881	33 554	33 303	32 822	34 374	38 711	34 257
— Secondary (9-11)	1 036 368	1 021 193	1 007 379	991 692	974 448	969 314	962 614	982 167
— Special needs	3 088	3 084	2 961	2 978	2 924	3 075	3 018	2 843
IVET	29 319	28 835	29 993	31 010	31 225	31 032	31 041	29 393
SVET	40 254	43 413	48 991	59 555	64 287	72 323	83 340	91 623
Higher professional	236 929	250 460	243 028	233 605	230 379	239 208	231 562	223 241

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2014

SVET has consistently enrolled growing numbers of students, with numbers more than doubling since 2006. IVET numbers have remained relatively stable, although 2013 saw a drop to some 29,000 students, and it continues to be the least favoured option.

Access and progression

The longer IVET study programmes that can be enrolled in after grade 9 lead both to a state diploma for a given profession and a certificate of completed secondary education that enables IVET graduates to continue to further education. As no data are being collected on the number of IVET graduates who successfully apply for further education it is not possible to say whether this pathway from IVET is functioning effectively.

No smooth progression path exists between IVET and SVET — even within the same subject area. Course programmes in the two sub-sectors are organised differently and no tools exist as yet for the recognition of prior learning. Thus, an IVET graduate wishing to progress to the next level of VET qualification has to enrol in the first year of an SVET institution. This lack of easy progression is an inefficiency of the education system that can be expected to have a negative impact on the attractiveness of IVET. It discourages IVET graduates from entering SVET, while those who chose to do so duplicate study time and resources by covering elements they have already studied.

In addition to delivering a higher qualification level and good labour market outcomes, SVET also offers much better transition opportunities into higher education. SVET graduates may enter the second year of higher (professional) education in their area of specialisation through accelerated programmes. This means that they can bypass the general entrance examination procedure and save both study years and tuition fees. That SVET is closely integrated with higher education can be seen both from the fact that around a third of SVET colleges have been set up by higher education institutions and by the 2012 decision of the Ministry of Education to shorten the duration of SVET courses by a year. This decision was made in order to keep SVET courses competitive in terms of duration in comparison with the newly introduced bachelor education delivered by higher education institutions. It is as yet unclear what this means for the labour market competitiveness of SVET graduates who have studied under this new format (the first generation graduated in the summer of 2014); so far, no evaluation seems to be in the pipeline.

Some concern was expressed by Ministry of Education staff that SVET now represents too easy a route into higher education and that the SVET option is chosen more for this reason than for the desire to work in a given profession. There are therefore plans to restrict this preferential route, as the intention is, clearly, to attract more students into SVET and thereafter for these to directly enter the labour market.

Dropout

Dropout remains an as yet unexplored issue within education overall and VET in particular; hence, no systematic data regarding abandonment and the reasons and consequences are being collected. Enrolment and graduation statistics for SVET(and for higher education) point to considerable dropout rates, given that graduation figures three to four years after enrolment are consistently lower (by around 50%) than initial enrolment (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 First-year enrolment and graduation from SVET 2009-14

SVET	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
First-year enrolment	24085	23744	29208	33810	32020
Graduation	11570	12842	15516	16399	17856

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2014

Discussions with SVET providers and government staff would indicate that this is a well-known problem. Moreover, discussions — and evidence from the ETF 2011/12 Transition Survey and data collected for the ETF 2014 Tracer Study — indicate that financial reasons (students lacking the ability to continue paying fees) are an important factor. It remains unclear which pathways SVET dropouts follow and whether they continue in the education system or enter the labour market. It is abundantly clear that this is an important inefficiency and inequity element for which solutions should be sought.

Career guidance

The action programmes for 2012-2014 for several education sub-sectors foresaw an intensification of career guidance activities. However, because the different sub-sectors do not coordinate, there is still no overarching career guidance policy nor a pooling of resources to develop good quality materials and methods. The focus of each sub-sector lies mainly on attracting and keeping students in its particular sub-sector.

The IVET sector has certainly made most progress in terms of innovation and the development of a system-wide approach. Between 2011 and 2013, some 300 IVET staff were trained in guidance methods. In August 2014, the VET Agency introduced a new regulation on guidance, defining possible approaches and encouraging IVET staff to engage in guidance actions and to cover the whole system (rather than individual IVET schools) all year round. Guidance is also used as a tool by IVET to address the gender imbalance in student intake (only 31% of IVET students in 2013 were women). Guidance actions not only aim to attract more female students, but also to raise interest in atypical professions.

IVET and SVET provider representatives involved in Torino Process 2014 discussions noted that, with the introduction of per capita financing in general education, it has become more difficult for VET providers to implement guidance actions, as some schools are not keen to cooperate with centres who may be attracting away future students.

VET attractiveness

Although IVET is provided free of charge to students (and may even include benefits such as free meals, stipends and hostel places) and although it provides access to higher education, it is mostly a second-choice option. Employers and VET providers involved in Torino Process 2014 discussions commented that too little information is available to the public on opportunities provided by IVET, such as good employment outcomes and pay levels. They also pointed to the need to include understandable labour market information in guidance activities and to provide more and earlier opportunities to pupils to familiarise themselves with working professions in a tangible manner.

IVET also has a poor image because of the student population it attracts, as it is associated with certain socially disadvantaged groups (low-income families, complex social backgrounds, orphans, etc.) that make up a high percentage of its student intake. This is due to the fact that IVET is conceived as a social safety net. Torino Process 2014 discussion participants agreed, however, that recent years have witnessed a change, with some IVET schools clearly recognised by students and

parents as competitive and valid education providers. These schools are in high demand and, while they still enrol students from socially vulnerable groups, some offer fee-paying full-time courses.

3.3 Delivering to socioeconomic and inclusion demand

Although the Education Development Strategy 2020 stresses the overall importance of equal rights to education, within VET a specific social role is only assigned to IVET. Consequently, within the 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 action programmes, measures referring to improved access of different disadvantaged groups have only been identified for IVET. Specific reference is made to access of persons with disabilities and of out-of-school young people, improving the gender balance and enhancing the offer in short courses. The IVET action programmes also refer to improving conditions in both urban and rural VET schools.

As mentioned earlier, not only is IVET education provided free of charge; the system also provides free meals — accounting for 14% of the overall IVET budget in 2014 (VET Agency, 2014) — as well as stipends and hostel places. Of the existing 105 IVET schools, 17 have what are called rehabilitation groups, for children affected by difficult social circumstances (including homelessness) and also cater for orphans (including social orphans) and children with special needs (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Students from vulnerable groups enrolled in IVET 2013 and 2014

	2013	2014
Orphans	403	331
Students with special needs	207	141
Students in rehabilitation	944	941

Source: VET Agency data provided to the Torino Process 2014

IVET legislation also foresees the option for IVET schools to provide education and training to students who have not acquired basic education (normally required for accessing IVET). The VET Agency estimates that the system admits about 1 000-1 500 students from this category per year but does not systematically collect statistics. IVET is also provided in six penitentiary institutions to some 1 000-1 400 students per year.

The needs of students with disabilities were considered for the first time in an explicit manner in the 2012-2014 action programme, which also refers to the development of inclusive approaches. In 2012/2013 initial experiences in the development and delivery of inclusive short courses were developed with donor support. As of 2013/2014 efforts were invested in preparing modules for students with disabilities taking part in longer courses. Physical access has been improved in a number of VET schools with donor support; furthermore, regulations for future refurbishment and construction have been adapted so that access can be considered in a systematic manner in the future.

The number of students from vulnerable groups has been relatively stable in recent years, except for a slight decrease in 2014. In comparison to the overall numbers of students who could benefit from long or short IVET courses (for instance, those without basic education — which in 2014 are estimated as some 100 000 persons — and students with only basic education or with disabilities), the number of those actually attending is small. The problems facing vulnerable groups in accessing IVET or SVET are little explored and few data exist on the overall number of students potentially belonging to a given category.

Gender balance is another inclusion aspect that finally appeared on the IVET agenda under the 2012-2014 action programme — reflecting the strategy adopted by the Kyrgyz Republic to achieve gender equality by 2020. IVET has traditionally attracted a majority (70%) of male students and the choice of courses is usually gender-specific. Goals regarding the intake of female students have not yet been achieved, in part because the targets set were unrealistically high. As of 2012 the VET Agency started to address gender in a systematic manner. Although the Women's Day that was organised in 2012 could not be repeated, gender aspects have been introduced in guidance approaches and information materials (including short films shown on national television in 2014) have been produced for atypical professions. This work alone seems already to have led to results in terms of enrolment in courses for atypical professions. Furthermore, gender training has been carried out with school directors and staff and is now a regular part of most retraining programmes offered by the Kyrgyz Scientific Methodology Centre. Gender analysis has been carried out for a small number of schools and is scheduled to be taken further. It can thus be hoped that the statistical data on enrolment will reflect the success of these changes by the time the Torino Process for 2016 comes round.

Short courses

For several years, the IVET system has been providing short courses that now account for a sizeable part of its training offer. Short courses provided by IVET (and SVET) typically result in the delivery of a certificate. The courses reach different target groups: unemployed people, whose courses are funded by the employment services, adults paying their own course fees and company employees sent for retraining by employers. Such courses also represent an attractive opportunity for SVET schools to earn additional income.

Enrolment in courses (Table 3.7) has been relatively stable, with a drop in 2012, due to economic hardship and budget cuts, which explains the large drop in training provided for unemployed people. The numbers of people paying their own fees may be a sign that IVET is indeed capable of providing attractive short courses.

Table 3.7 Students enrolled in short IVET courses 2009-13

Enrolment (1 Jan)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	12 206	12 603	13 138	9 514	11 717
Unemployed (state-funded)	4 005	4 071	4 807	3 075	3 132
Enterprise-funded	785	830	847	798	746
Self-funded	7 416	7 702	7 484	5 641	7 839

Source: VET Agency data provided to the Torino Process 2014.

Due to the socioeconomic situation the demand for short courses providing labour market relevant skills is likely to rise, for instance, among potential migrants. This assertion also seems to be supported by data collected by the Kyrgyz Association for Adult Education, which mainly covers informal learning. In this respect, Torino Process 2014 discussion participants noted that certified short courses do not yet allow training participants to work towards a full qualification. It is thus not possible to take a number of short courses to obtain an IVET diploma, a fact which limits their potential as flexible tools. Furthermore, there is as yet no recognition of non-formal learning, although first exploratory steps have been taken.

3.4 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

Torino Process 2014 participants scored progress made in the area of demographic, social and inclusion at 2 out of 5, as policies in this area are not as yet being implemented in a systematic manner. It was noted that progress has been made in IVET over the last two years to implement

improved approaches to guidance at system level and that new methods had been piloted in the area of gender equality and inclusion of students with disabilities.

It was also noted that efforts on access and inclusion have been undertaken at IVET level — despite the overarching nature of these elements, as outlined in the Education Development Strategy 2020. The IVET action programme 2015-2017 foresees measures on gender and inclusion of students with disabilities. It also refers specifically to improvements in rural IVET provision. Nothing similar is as yet foreseen for SVET.

It was noted that missing are key statistical and administrative data which would permit a better understanding of the social and inclusion aspects of VET as well as the links and pathways between education sub-sectors. The following data needs to be systematically collected and published: the percentage of students transitioning into IVET and SVET after grades 9 and 11, the percentage of IVET students transitioning into SVET and higher education and the percentage of SVET students transitioning into higher education. For IVET, SVET and higher education the following information should also be collected: gender disaggregated data on choice of programmes/professions, etc., data on abandonment and enrolment of students with disabilities and students from vulnerable backgrounds. For IVET, administrative data should be collected on the enrolment of students without basic education. The availability of such data would make it possible to assess key developments in access and inclusion and to track progress.

The image of IVET and SVET continues to be poor in comparison with higher education, although positive changes in recent years are evident. Torino Process 2014 participants noted that the image of VET is one issue which the Ministries of Education and Labour and the VET Agency could address jointly (along with employers). Furthermore, if VET is to represent an attractive education option, the link between IVET and SVET and progression pathways to the next education level should be considered jointly by the VET Agency and the Ministry of Education.

4. INTERNAL EFFICIENCY OF THE VET SYSTEM

4.1 Quality assurance

Planning

The Education Development Strategy 2020 places strong emphasis on quality. The relevant sections on IVET and SVET specify that quality is understood in terms of VET relevance to the labour market. Quality also relates to competent staff and effective results-based management. Greater labour market relevance is expected to be achieved by updating professional standards in cooperation with employers and by updating programmes in accordance with new standards. At both the IVET and SVET levels there is a need to improve resources in terms of equipment and learning aids and to introduce new methods. In particular, a stronger focus on competence-based training is required. Inclusion is considered neither for IVET nor for SVET in connection with quality but tends to be perceived as an issue apart.

VET provider and programme accreditation

For several years the Ministry of Education and the VET Agency have been working with donor organisations on the introduction of independent accreditation, with a pilot involving both IVET and SVET providers to be implemented over 2012-2014. The principle was, in the end, however introduced at the initiative of parliament and a National Accreditation Council was set up in September 2014 (involving both the Ministry of Education and the VET Agency) with the task to oversee the introduction of the process. This body, among others, will oversee selection of independent accreditation bodies, which will then carry out the accreditation of providers.

Torino Process 2014 discussion participants noted that, so far, the process remains unclear to them. They were aware neither of accreditation criteria nor of the possible cost of an accreditation procedure. The regulation which introduces accreditation specifies that the cost of accreditation (including travel costs for assessors) must be born by providers, yet no resources have been included for this cost in the IVET budget.

It is expected that donor support will support the accreditation introduction process. Yet the fact that key issues like costs have not yet been considered is reason for concern. With the introduction of independent accreditation the old approach to licensing and attestation will be revoked, although licensing of education providers continue to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Assessment and evaluation

Assessment in VET is carried out in a continuous manner. It seems, however, to be the provider's decision as to what extent continuous assessment results are taken into account in customising approaches to the needs of students. Overall, the course offer is standardised, with little or no choice for students to opt for specific courses/classes. Typically testing takes place once a topic is concluded.

The final exam is the most important assessment step. Typically it is organised with the participation of employers, but the extent to which these play a role in final decision making differs from one VET provider to another. The better VET providers usually allot a key role to employers and also introduce project work as part of the final assessment. Completion of a practical, profession-specific task is always part of the IVET final exam; however, the way this is organised usually does not permit the VET provider to be certain that the task has really been carried out by the student. This also means that the school-based exam cannot ascertain to what extent a graduate is able to operate under real-life working conditions (for instance, carrying out a task in a given time or using specific equipment)

For some years, pilot work has been ongoing (with the support of donor organisations) to explore the possibility of independent certification for IVET graduates, in addition to the school-based final exam. The assessment approaches explored — vested in competences — stipulate that practical tests should cover all skills required for a given profession. The explored approaches allot a leading role to employers and assume that examiners are themselves experts in the tasks being certified and have undergone training in certification.

Feedback from providers, students and employers has been positive. However, no solution or agreement could be found as to who should bear the additional costs of such a process. It should be noted that IVET providers are seriously underfunded regarding teaching supplies and consumables, while many IVET students come from low-income families. Thus, neither schools nor students can afford to bear the cost of certification.

Qualifications

The Education Development Strategy 2020 foresees the introduction of a national qualification framework (NQF), although the exact approach to be used remains unclear. Various donor-supported NQF projects have been ongoing since 2006, although, unfortunately, in a fragmented manner. First projects are focused mainly on VET and potential corresponding levels, while an ongoing EU Tempus project focuses mainly on the levels which could be covered by higher education provision. A sectoral framework on tourism has been prepared and adopted by the Ministry for Tourism.

As of summer 2014 contacts between stakeholders involved in various NQF-related actions have been intensified and a working group to explore the development of an NQF has been set up by the Ministry of Education, also involving VET stakeholders.

4.2 Policies for VET trainers and directors

Qualification requirements for teachers — and also for VET managers — in IVET and SVET are defined both in the 20013 Law on Education and in administrative qualification requirements.

IVET employs teachers for general education components, for which the same requirements apply as for teachers working in secondary education; IVET also employs teachers for special subjects and as master teachers. Teachers for special subjects are expected to have either a higher education qualification or to have been trained in a SVET college in special courses combining both technical and pedagogical elements. There are, however, few such specialised courses for IVET teachers provided by SVET colleges.

Master teachers should, as a minimum, have IVET training and basic pedagogical training as well as practical experience in their area of work. Those who do not have any pedagogical training are expected to take part in special in-service training courses run by the Kyrgyz Scientific Methodology Centre within a year after taking up their post. While the training itself is free, the school has to cover travel and subsistence costs for their staff members. Especially remote or rural schools do not usually have the necessary resources, which often means that the training does not take place. There is also a system of mentorship/apprenticeship (*nastavnichestvo*) for young master teachers by which they are trained by a more experienced staff member at their school. It should be noted that due to the low salaries (especially in comparison with wages paid in industry) it is difficult for many schools to attract master teachers with work experience, so many IVET schools take on masters with limited or no experience, typically a graduate from the school itself.

According to a 2014 IVET school mapping exercise carried out by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), 42% of IVET staff possess a higher education qualification, 31% a SVET qualification and 27% (most likely mostly master teachers) an IVET qualification. Overall, more women (55%) work in IVET than men (45%). In terms of age structure, only 22% of IVET staff was are under 35 years old, while

70% are 35-60 years old and 10% are older than 60. These data would indicate that IVET has problems attracting sufficient numbers of young staff.

Teachers in SVET are by now expected to have a higher education qualification (the case for 96% of teaching staff in 2013/2014, according to the National Statistical Committee). No gender- or age-related information is published for SVET. SVET does not employ master teachers. Instead there are teachers for general subjects and those who teach profession-specific subjects. It remains unclear to what extent SVET providers are able to attract staff with professional experience.

There are no incentives for staff development, except the private motivation of a Teacher/master/director or a supportive school environment that furthers staff development. Participation in staff development activities is in not linked to salary increases.

In-service training provision is only available in a systematic manner in IVET and is provided by the Republican Scientific Methodological Centre. The Centre was set up in 2012 and is partially based upon the old in-service training institute. In its new guise the Centre has taken on many new functions, such as the provision of methodological support and guidance.

In-service training participation is obligatory for VET staff every five years. While participation in courses is free of charge, schools have to fund travel-related costs for their staff, which is a major financial burden for many schools. The budget allocation of the Republican Scientific Methodological Centre for the delivery of training in regions is very limited and inadequate for a system with so many outlying schools.

The Republican Scientific Methodological Centre has implemented important changes in its training offer. It offers and delivers nearly twice as many courses as its predecessor and since 2013 it does so based upon an analysis of school demand and consultation with the VET Agency. It has developed new courses — including for school managers — using innovative approaches and, where possible, flexible formats. This is important as it is difficult for schools with staff shortages to forego a staff member for the standard two-week course.

No systematic in-service offers exist for SVET. Typically SVET staff take part in retraining courses offered by higher education institutions, although many SVET colleges see these as little adapted to a VET environment. The SVET action programme for 2015-2017 foresees the establishment of an in-service training capacity for SVET, although it remains unclear on which basis.

Salaries in education and thus also in VET have not undergone any changes since 2011, when the salary scheme was reformed. Although salaries in 2011 were considerably raised, the reform also suspended some aspects (for example the 13th pay). Salaries in VET are considered by many stakeholders to be insufficient to attract good teachers and even more, to attract master teachers with real industry experience, as salaries offered in the market are higher. VET providers earning additional resources may use these to provide additional incentives to valuable staff, but not all providers have such additional income. Some providers also seek staff who are able to act both as teachers and masters, offering them a double salary. Overall, IVET staff try to take on more than the average teaching load in order to improve their income. However, this often has a negative impact on their capacity to prepare new materials and to devote time to lesson preparation and follow-up.

Schools in rural and remote locations experience difficulties in finding staff, so higher salaries are foreseen as incentives. This situation does not usually result in vacant places but can result in the selection of staff that are not fully prepared to cover a given subject. Such schools may also adapt timetables and include more lessons for subjects they can cover with the available staff.

4.3 Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning environment

Teaching and learning environments provided by IVET schools differ tremendously. Until a first mapping exercise was carried out in 2014 (with the support of the ADB) no overall picture existed. The mapping of 2014 revealed the situation based on a self assessment of schools (Table 4.1).

As can be seen, many IVET schools, but especially those in rural environments, face great difficulties or are even unable to provide satisfactory learning environments and hostel facilities. The mapping revealed that less than 50% of workshops, the available equipment and hostel facilities were considered as satisfactory by rural school, though hostel facilities also are a major bottleneck for urban schools. State funding for school refurbishments and the purchase of equipment have been minimal over recent years and any refurbishment which has taken place has been mainly funded through donor support, which typically focuses on schools in urban areas.

Table 4.1 IVET infrastructure (%) in a satisfactory state in 2014

Component	Urban	Rural
Classrooms for teaching general subjects	70%	94%
Classrooms for teaching special subjects	73%	65%
Workshops	62%	47%
Workshop equipment	89%	42%
Hostels	46%	42%

Source: VET school mapping data prepared by Helvetas, 2014.

At this stage, few enterprises are ready (or able) to support VET schools financially, although cases of close school-enterprise cooperation can be cited — again, mostly in urban environments and for schools associated with growth sectors. First cases can also be noted of school-enterprise cooperation resulting in agreements for students to be trained using enterprise equipment and for school staff to receive training in enterprises.

Practice in enterprises is an integral and substantial part of IVET. On average, 40% of teaching time in IVET is devoted to theory and 60% to practice (school-based workshops and in-company training). The quality of in-company practice can vary considerably, depending on the contacts of the school and the sector. Schools that cooperate closely with enterprises usually work jointly to update their curricula in accordance with the latest labour market developments. In these cases the in-company practice is well integrated. However, many schools are associated with economic sectors where SMEs or even micro-enterprises predominate and for which practice time is difficult to organise.

SVET is more academically oriented. Although SVET foresees in-company practice as mandatory, the duration tends to be considerably shorter than for IVET. With a shortening of SVET study time by nearly a year as of 2012, the time available for practice has decreased even further to a mere few weeks. The Ministry of Education intends to expand practical training again, but so far concrete plans have not been drawn up.

Learning content

In IVET considerable work has been ongoing in recent years to agree learning content with employers both at school and sector level (light industry, agriculture). Many curricula have been updated using a competence-based approach. At present, relatively detailed study plans are being developed and issued by the Republican Scientific Methodological Centre. Schools are free to vary 15% from this

plan in accordance with regional/local needs. It should be noted, however, that school staff are often ill-prepared or feel insecure to take the initiative to vary the plan. Methodological support to IVET schools is also being provided by the Republican Scientific Methodological Centre at national level.

For SVET also, a definition of standard hours/curriculum exists with the possibility for colleges to vary this up to a certain level. Standard curricula in the case of SVET are typically developed by colleges defined as “leading colleges”.

Teaching materials represent a challenge for the system. There is a major shortage of materials in the Kyrgyz language. For Russian-speaking course textbooks can be purchased on the Russian market, provided the VET provider has the necessary resources.

4.4 Efficiency of use of resources

State budgets for IVET schools are allocated on an annual basis (Table 4.2) on the basis of historic data and expected student numbers as defined by the schools and endorsed by the VET Agency.

Table 4.2 State budget allocation (in KGS) to IVET 2008-14

Item	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Salaries	166 542.0	235 330.0	287 606.8	459 709.7	567 053.6	567 053.6	561 600.7
Social contributions	31 883.8	44 813.7	50 078.6	79 573.4	97 816.2	97 816.2	96 935.6
Current expenditure*	56 588.7	80 048.7	97 690.6	86 785.1	87 251.1	87 251.1	84 251.0
Food	99 523.0	140 585.0	140 232.7	142 338.3	142 500.0	142 500	131 670.8
Building repairs	14 833.0	11 607.9	3 087.8	3 949.0	20 000.0	-	40 162.8
Equipment	1 976.0	2 800.0	68.6	-	-	-	30 000.0
Total	371 346.7	515 185.3	578 765.1	772 355.5	914 620.9	894 620.9	944 620.9

* utilities and coal, medicines, stipends, transport

Sources: OECD, 2010; VET Agency 2010-2012 and 2013-2014 data provided to the Torino Process 2012 and 2014

The IVET budget has risen steadily since 2008, with a marked increase from 2010 to 2011. The slight decrease which can be noted for 2014 is due to the rationalisation of the school network (reduced from 110 to 105 VET schools). In 2014 70% of the budget is allocated to staff-related costs, while only 4% is devoted to building repairs and 3% to equipment. This is, however, already an improvement compared to previous years, when far less was allocated to these latter budgetary items — explaining why the teaching infrastructure of many IVET schools is in such a poor state.

Torino Process discussion participants stressed the underfunding regarding teaching supplies, which make it impossible for many schools to provide sufficient practice to students unless these contribute financially.

The IVET system had, according to the VET Agency, 6 111 teachers in 2012 and, according to the ADB mapping exercise, 5 746 teachers in 2014. The staff to student ratio is relatively good. The ADB mapping exercise calculated an average student/teacher ratio of 10:1 (11:1 in urban schools and 9:1 in rural schools) for 2014 — far below the OECD average for VET. Managers, teachers/masters and support staff make up 10%, 47% and 45% of total staff numbers.

It is clear that IVET could, in terms of its staffing levels, cater for more students than are currently enrolled. Rural schools in particular have low student numbers (in some cases under 100). Centres would, however, have to attract fee-paying students.

No budget overview is available for SVET. This in part because the sub-sector is funded by both the Ministry of Education and by line ministries. It should however be noted that SVET colleges have to earn their income through student fees. In line with rising student enrolment, the number of staff employed in SVET has risen from 4,800 in 2009/2010 to 7,230 in 2013/2014 (National Statistical Committee, 2014). The student/teacher ratio for SVET was therefore 13:1 in 2014.

Budget spending rules for IVET and SVET continue to be highly regulated, including for additional resources earned by providers themselves. Especially for IVET there are therefore few incentives to manage a school efficiently — for instance, by saving on staffing — as the potential savings would not benefit the school. Even for additional income, schools need to provide a proposed breakdown of spending to be approved at the central level. A positive development was the revocation in 2012 of the 20% tax that VET providers had to pay on the provision of services, including teaching services. This change has in particular benefited SVET providers, who earn a relatively larger share of their budget through student fees (on average 12,700 KGS per student)

The pilot on per capita funding initially planned for 2012 has been postponed to 2014 and is expected to involve up to 10 IVET schools. No per capita funding approach is planned for SVET, but the action programme for 2015-2017 plans to liberalise spending rules applicable to colleges and to allow greater autonomy.

4.5 Action and assessment of progress since 2010

Torino Process participants scored progress in the area of internal efficiency of the VET system at 2 out of 5, as most new developments remain at pilot level, while key areas of concern, such as more financial autonomy for VET providers, have not yet been addressed at all.

The availability of competent staff represents a top priority. Measures supporting this should be addressed, such as the development of up-to-date qualifications for teaching staff and managers, available and accessible staff development opportunities for IVET and SVET (both in terms of in-service training and training provision within enterprises) and new approaches on staff motivation. A comprehensive package on staff development is so far only foreseen within the IVET action programme. For SVET the development of in-service training capacities is an aim for 2015-2017. Given that, so far, no such function exists for SVET, cooperation between IVET and SVET on staff development may represent a good option and would represent an efficient and effective use of resources.

The efficient management of VET providers, including in terms of budgetary management, is an area both IVET and SVET plan to address as of 2015. The IVET action plan foresees a series of detailed steps aimed at covering the rationalisation of the VET school network, step-by step introduction of per capita financing and explorations of new ways in which schools can interact with business and generate additional resources. Plans for SVET are similar but remain at a much more general level.

5. GOVERNANCE AND POLICY PRACTICES IN THE VET SYSTEM

The governance of the VET system takes place at national and local level. Prior to 2010 also regional mechanisms and structures existed, but were abolished in the framework of rationalisation measures.

National level

Vocational Education and Training is under the responsibility of two different Ministries. IVET is administered by the Agency for Professional and Technical Education (VET Agency) under the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth, while SVET and Higher education lie under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry of Education also holds the responsibility for policies in the area of Continuing education and training for adults and for the licensing of all education and training providers. The majority of state funded SVET providers are also linked to specific line ministries.

In 2012 a National Skills Council was established as a consultative body with the purpose to improve the coordination between Ministries as well as social partnership. The Council is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. It involves seven Ministries in addition to the Agency, representatives of industry associations and trade union representatives. The role of secretariat has been assigned to the VET Agency.

In order to improve the inter-action of VET with industry, a total of 7 sectoral skills councils were set up as of 2012/2013. These typically involve VET Agency or RSMC representatives, VET provider representatives and industry representatives. The RSMC acts as the key inter-face to Sector councils.

Local level

In addition to the traditional supervision through school and college managers, as defined by the VET Agency (IVET) and the Ministry of Education (SVET) VET providers were asked to set up school/college boards as of 2012. School boards typically involve representatives of local authorities and local enterprise and employer representatives, in addition to school staff and parent representatives. Boards are expected to be involved in strategic planning and support close cooperation between a provider and the local economy. While the majority of providers had formally established boards, there are also signs that few boards are able to fulfil the ambitious tasks defined for them.

5.1 Defining vision and strategy for VET

While the Ministry of Education and Science holds the overall responsibility for the Education Development Strategy 2020, responsibility for the development of vision and policies for the different sub-sectors is divided between the VET Agency (IVET) and the Ministry (SVET). Although some convergence at a very general level can be noted between the sub-sectors, there is no cooperation between the two levels, which continue to be guided by different principles. As a result, an increasing disintegration of VET can be observed.

Although the National Skills Council was set up to support the coordination of VET among different Ministries, it is not yet fulfilling this task. This can be explained through the contradiction between the tasks defined for the Council, which are of technical nature (covering such issues as the development of occupational standards) and its mandate, which is a consultative one. The Council does however have the potential to develop into a body that can provide instructions for the development of a better integrated VET policy and its implementation.

MATRIX 1. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Who is responsible?	Ministry of Education (MoE) holds overall responsibility for the Education Development Strategy but sections on IVET are under the responsibility of the Agency and SVET under the MoE	IVET: VET Agency SVET: Ministry of Education	Both the Ministry and the Agency report to Government and Parliament on the implementation
Who is accountable?	For IVET – VET Agency and Ministry of Labour For SVET – the MoE	For IVET – VET Agency and Ministry of Labour For SVET – the MoE	For IVET – VET Agency and Ministry of Labour For SVET – the MoE
Who is consulted?	Social partners and VET providers but not on systematic basis	Social partners and providers but not on a systematic basis	
Who is (only) informed?	Social partners and providers	Providers	

MATRIX 2. MODE OF ACTION/DECISION MAKING OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Full autonomy/unilateral			
After (obligatory) consultation[1]	Legislation changes and new strategies/programmes should typically undergo public consultation		
If consultation, with whom? (please list)	Social partners, civil society organisations, providers		

(1) Consultation could be both because of an obligation to involve and for accountability purposes.

5.2 Effectiveness and efficiency in addressing economic and labour market demand

Both IVET and SVET aim at addressing economic and labour market demand. Yet, it remains unclear how this can be achieved and how different stakeholders (including also different line ministries) can be involved in the process at national, sectoral and regional level.

The Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth is responsible for labour market related policies, including also a broad forecast of labour market demand. Line Ministries are expected to provide indications on skills requirements in their strategic documents and inter-act with the Ministry of Education to define the distribution of state-funded SVET places. For IVET, it is up to VET schools to investigate local demand and request an adequate number of study places. These are then approved by the VET Agency. Since 2013 the VET Agency and the RSMC have started to be involved in sector analysis actions.

Seven sectoral skills councils have been set up since 2012, as a means to enhance social partnership and involve employer representatives in VET development through better definition of labour market

demand. As of 2013 some councils have become involved in the development of occupational standards and the validation of learning programmes. The Agency has made a proposal for the functioning of sectoral councils, which is under discussion. It remains however to be decided what the role and mandate of councils could be and which resources could be used to support their functioning.

MATRIX 3. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Who is responsible?	Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth for labour market policies and determining overall demand Ministry of Education has to comply with requests by line ministries for SVET	Ministry of Labour Ministry of Education VET Agency	Ministry of Labour Ministry of Education VET Agency
Who is accountable?	Ministry of Labour Ministry of Education	Ministry of Labour Ministry of Education VET Agency	Ministry of Labour Ministry of Education VET Agency
Who is consulted?	Line Ministries		
Who is (only) informed?			

5.3 Effectiveness and efficiency in addressing social and inclusion demand

Only IVET has a well defined social mandate and foresees specific measures to enhance this specific aspect.

MATRIX 4. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

	Objective setting	Implementation	Monitoring
Who is responsible?	VET Agency	VET Agency	VET Agency
Who is accountable?	VET Agency		
Who is consulted?	VET providers, civil society organisations		
Who is (only) informed?			

5.4 Internal efficiency and effectiveness of the VET system

MATRIX 5. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR QUALITY STANDARDS

	Responsible for setting	Accountable for compliance	Monitoring and assessment
Quality standards: learning environment	IVET:RSMC SVET: MoE/colleges	IVET: schools SVET: colleges	IVET: Agency SVET: MoE
Quality standards: learning outcomes	IVET: RSMC SVET: MoE	IVET: schools SVET: colleges	IVET: Agency SVET: MoE
Quality standards: teaching	IVET: RSMC. Schools SVET: Colleges	IVET: schools SVET: colleges	IVET: Agency SVET: MoE
Standards for provider[1] accreditation	IVET: Agency SVET: Ministry New independent accreditation under development	IVET: schools SVET: colleges	IVET: Agency SVET: MoE

(1) This can also refer to individual programmes.

MATRIX 6. MODE OF DECISION MAKING WHEN SETTING QUALITY STANDARDS

	Unilateral	Obligatory consultation	If consultation, with whom
Quality standards: learning environment	IVET: RSMC SVET: Ministry/colleges	IVET: confirmation	IVET: Agency
Quality standards: learning outcomes	IVET: RSMC SVET: Ministry for framework	IVET: confirmation	IVET: Agency
Quality standards: teaching	IVET: RSMC, schools SVET: colleges		
Standards for provider[1] accreditation	IVET: Agency SVET: Ministry New independent accreditation procedure under development		

(1) This can also refer to individual programmes.

MATRIX 7. RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRICULUM CONTENT AND TEACHING STANDARDS

	Responsible for determiniing	Obligatory consultation	If consultation, with whom
Curriculum content	IVET: RSMC SVET: colleges based on Ministry framework matrix	confirmation	IVET: Agency SVET: Ministry of Education
How curriculum is taught	IVET: schools SVET: colleges		

5.5 Assessment of progress since 2010

As of 2012 a number of new governance structures have been introduced, Torino process 2014 participants scored progress made on governance as 2/3 out of 5, as most bodies were recognised to be formally operational, but lacking practical working processes.

Participants noted that the setting up of the National Skills Council and Sector Councils could be considered as important steps. Participants also confirmed the need for such bodies and clarified that their mandate and tasks should be reviewed and adequate financial and human resources considered for their functioning. In this respect, it was recommended that the role and tasks of the National Council should become more strategic, with a focus on coordination and inter-ministerial involvement in VET planning. Sector councils require a clear mandate from the National Skills Council and should be resourced to take part in sector analysis, occupational standards development and qualification assessment requirements.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HVET	Higher Vocational Education and Training
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration IVET Initial VET
KGS	Kyrgyz Som (currency)
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
NQF	National qualification framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Purchasing power parity
RSMC	Republican Scientific Methodological Centre
SME	Small/medium enterprise
SVET	Secondary Vocational Education and Training
USD	US dollar
VET	Vocational education and training

REFERENCES

Abrillo, H., Proposed rationalisation strategy for the primary vocational education system, Report for the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth, Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Bishkek, May 2014

Agency for Vocational Education and Training under the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth, Administrative data on student enrolment, staffing and financing in Initial VET, Bishkek 2014

European Training Foundation (ETF), Torino Process 2012: Kyrgyz Republic, Turin, 2013

European Training Foundation (ETF), Transition from school to work in Kyrgyzstan: Results of the 2011/2012 Transition survey, Turin, 2013

Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Labour market and employment policy in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, 2013

IOM, https://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/where-we-work/europa/south-eastern-europe-eastern-eur/kyrgyzstan.html

Ministry of Education and Science of the of the Kyrgyz Republic, Education Development Strategy 2020, Bishkek, March 2012

Ministry of Labour Kyrgyz Republic, Administrative data on active labour market measures, Bishkek, 2014

National Council for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, National Sustainable Development Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period 2013-2017, Bishkek, 2013

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Population and Housing Census of the Kyrgyz Republic of 2009, Bishkek, 2009

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Employment and Unemployment, Bishkek, 2011

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Employment and Unemployment, Bishkek, 2013

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Statistical Yearbook of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, 2012

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Statistical Yearbook of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, 2013

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Education and Science in the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, 2014

National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, on-line statistical data, Bishkek, 2014

OECD, The Kyrgyz Republic 2010: Lessons from PISA, OECD Publishing, 2010

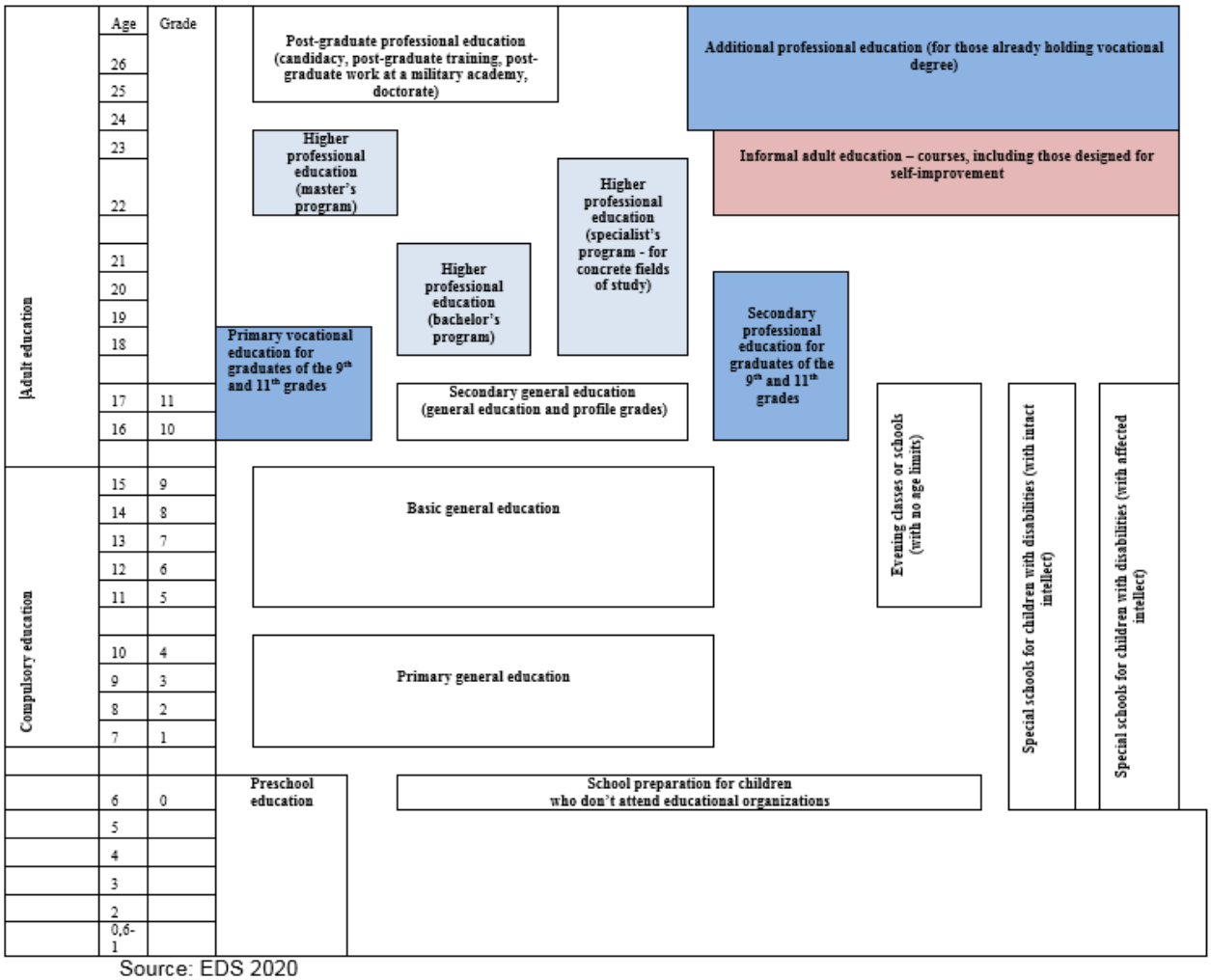
World Bank, The Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011: The Kyrgyz Republic, 2011

World Bank, World Development Indicators, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN, 2014

World Bank, “Remittances to developing countries to stay robust this year, despite increased deportations of migrant workers”, Press Release 11 April 2014,

ANNEX THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

(as foreseen in the Education Development Strategy 2020)



Source: EDS 2020

CONTACT US

Further information can be found on the ETF website:
www.etf.europa.eu

For any additional information please contact:

European Training Foundation
Communication Department
Villa Gualino
Viale Settimio Severo 65
I – 10133 Torino

E info@etf.europa.eu
F +39 011 630 2200
T +39 011 630 2222