

TURKEY

VET GOVERNANCE ETF PARTNER COUNTRY PROFILE



1. GENERAL GOVERNANCE

Turkey is a parliamentary representative republic. It is an EU accession candidate since 1999 with an emerging market, and it belongs to the OECD and the G20. Executive power is exercised by the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, which make up the government, while the legislative power is vested in the unicameral parliament, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The president is elected for a five-year term by direct elections where the first direct voting took place in 10 August 2014. The president who heads the State appoints the Prime Minister – most often the head of the party having most seats in parliament – and the appointed Prime Minister submits his/her Council of Ministers for the election by the parliament through a vote of confidence in the government.

The country is divided into 81 provinces and 892 districts and, administratively, these are further divided into municipalities and villages.

Labour (blue collar) and public service unions are affiliated to various confederations. There are also employers' unions, affiliated to one confederation.

2. VET GOVERNANCE

Key roles and functions

Nationally, the main actors in VET governance are the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), responsible for higher vocational schools (post-secondary VET is under the Council of Higher Education); the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS); the Ministry of Development (MoD); and the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology (MoSIT). MoNE is engaged in six out of seven functions of VET governance. Both MoD and MoLSS are involved in four.

Other strategic actors are MoNE's directorates – Board of Education, Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education, Directorate General for Lifelong Learning and Directorate for Strategy Development. All are involved in the majority of governance functions. The Vocational Education Council (VEC) has a crucial role, as it is engaged in six out of seven governance functions. It comprises representatives of the ministries, trade and employers' unions, public institutions and agencies and other key social partners.

VEC decides on planning and implementation of VET programmes.

The government sees social dialogue in VET as very important. NGOs and social partners are involved in decision-making. The most active are the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), business confederations and associations, and other trade and employers' unions and associations. They are involved in many functions of governance, through public bodies like VEC or public-private partnerships for skills development or capacity building. At regional and local level, the provincial and district national education directorates, the Provincial Employment and Vocational Education Board and the Provincial Employment Agency are in charge of both implementing VET policy and developing public-private partnerships at provincial, district and municipal levels.

Financing

Central and provincial governments are responsible for personnel and financial management of schools. Although funding has increased in the past decade, data suggests primary and secondary education is under-funded compared to other OECD countries. Tertiary institutions have more autonomy than schools, but central authorities oversee their funding and entrance exams. VET is financed mainly by the central government budget. The Ministry of Finance and MoNE agree an annual subsidy for VET schools in Organised Industrial Zones. Other sources are funds from international projects, and income from the public sector and NGOs, and from revolving fund enterprises in schools.

International donors support initiatives and projects. The Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) finances vocational courses for unemployed people. Private (non-profit) education providers, like NGOs, and sometimes industry finance level 5 short-cycle post-secondary education. Lifelong learning is financed by the state and the private sector. Citizens also finance it through fees, unemployment insurance, union membership and charitable donations. Several employers finance VET through training, and contributing to employers associations' training funds.



Coordination mechanisms for VET policy making

Legislative or normative-orientated mechanisms exist in the framework of targets and roadmaps for VET and lifelong learning in the government's Vision 2023, the Tenth Development Plan 2014–18 and the Medium-term Plan 2013–15. This framework includes the Vocational and Technical Education Strategy and Action Plan 2014–18 by MoD, MoLSS, and NGOs representing business. It focuses on improving the VET and training system through flexibility, transparency, innovation and involvement from stakeholders, so it supports economic and social development, linking individuals' needs to labour market needs. The strategy emphasises access to VET by improving capacity and enhancing employment outcomes for graduates with vocational guidance and a stronger qualifications system. It also focuses on efficient management and quality assurance, and better financing systems for schools and institutions. Implementation is the responsibility of MoNE's Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education.

The National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014–18 complements the national strategic framework. It aims to get more adults into lifelong learning by building awareness, increasing provision and access, developing guidance and counselling, and developing systems for monitoring and evaluation, and recognising prior learning.

The 2010 Action Plan for Strengthening Links between Education (TVET) and Employment focuses on qualifications, curricula based on occupational standards, guidance and counselling, and accrediting VET institutions. It also aims to strengthen the links between public and private stakeholders. All parties were involved in designing the action plan, coordinated by MoLSS with support from the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA). The Basic and Vocational Skills Development Programme 2014–18 aims to build skills like ICT, languages, communication and job searching, and strengthen links between education and business. The 2012 law lets Organised Industrial Zones set up private VET upper secondary schools, while a programme designed by MoLSS with help from agencies, social partners and communities aimed to close the gap between skills supply and demand. With a new regulation in March 2016, apart from Organised Industrial Zones, the private sector had the right to set up private VET upper secondary schools where available. They are called generally 'thematic VET schools'.

The National Education Quality Framework was accepted in 2015. It was developed due to the need of updated information for students,

teachers, schools, districts, provinces, and the entire country to increase the quality of education. The framework includes 14 basic evaluation and monitoring areas and 80 subdomains.

Turkey has developed and approved the Turkish Qualifications Framework in line with the European Qualifications Framework. The Cabinet Decision approved the Regulations on the Procedures and Principles for the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) in 2015.

Institutionalised policy advice-orientated mechanisms include central and local government bodies, boards and councils, which have a decision-making role in VET policy centrally and locally. The Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education in MoNE manages VET schools and students' education. It is responsible for education and training programmes, materials and equipment. It also develops, implements and coordinates VET strategies and policies. The National Council for Education is MoNE's most significant consultative and decision-making body, developing the education system and monitoring quality. The Board of Education advises MoNE, developing educational vision, carrying out research and preparing educational plans, curricula and educational materials.

The Directorate for Strategy Development coordinates the evolution of education strategies and policies, and their targets and goals. The Directorate for Guidance and Inspection is an inspection unit, while the Directorate General for Innovation and Education Technologies and the Directorate General for European Union and Foreign Relations coordinate engagement in international assessment studies. The Vocational Education Council (VEC) includes representatives of ministries, trade and employers' unions, public institutions and agencies and other social partners, and decides on planning and implementation of vocational and technical education programmes. The VQA is responsible for linking qualifications with professional standards, while the National Council for Teacher Training coordinates the Council of Higher Education and MoNE. Provincial Employment and Vocational Education Boards deal with issues around local unemployment and labour market needs through social dialogue. They include representatives from public authorities, workers', employers', and trade organisations, industry chambers and other local organisations. ISKUR identifies labour market and skills needs for particular social groups.

Public-private structure-orientated mechanisms aim to narrow the gap between labour market needs and skills. MoNE has collaborated with business confederations and associations for private sector training. ISKUR funds vocational

courses for the unemployed in VET schools and the Directorate General for VET has signed protocols with private sector stakeholders to foster them. In 2014, research aimed to improve private sector TVET partnerships with other stakeholders, while MoNE, MoSIT and the Technological Research Council of Turkey worked with Techno Enterprise Capital Support to boost managers' and teachers' awareness of entrepreneurship. The Specialised Vocational Training Centres Projects (UMEM) is a partnership between ISKUR, MoNE, TOBB and the TOBB University of Economics and Technology to provide vocational training in VET high schools, and internships in TOBB businesses. The National Vocational Qualification System has been developed to support this, and training providers are chosen on quality and performance criteria, rather than on cost alone.

Knowledge creation-orientated mechanisms include data on VET from research on secondary graduates from the Information System for Determining Educational Needs, and on VET learning opportunities from the VET Strategy and Action Plan. The National Vocational Information System (NVIS) has been developed to support vocational guidance services in schools. Labour market data comes from labour force and employers' surveys, a vacancy monitor, and data on jobseekers and employment insurance claimants. MoNE has developed a lifelong learning database through a portal offering information on courses and services. It is also intended to integrate this into the national e-government system and have a common database with MoLSS, ISKUR and MoNE's directorates.

Country typology

VET governance is centralised. The system of administrative structures, public units and councils, private stakeholders, social partners and NGOs is complicated. While some social partners' representatives are involved in VET governance, MoNE and its directorates are mainly in charge of VET policy making. The provincial and district National Education Directorates support VET and they are responsible for implementing it regionally and locally. There has been rapid recent progress on VET reform in line with the European Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) work programme. Several laws, strategies and policies have been adopted. Social partners are engaged in VET governance and in decision making. However, the private sector needs to become more involved in VET policy making and public-private partnerships.

VET institutions have some autonomy, but financing is also centralised. Public spending on VET is increasing, but funding is not adequate for a quality VET system and effective VET schools. Central and provincial governments are in charge of personnel and financial management of VET schools. In addition, financing

of lifelong learning is complicated, as funding comes from at least five ministries. For multi-level, multi-actor VET governance, Turkey needs to focus more on VET reform, and strengthen private sector stakeholders' involvement in policy making. Enhancing the network of VET providers and private sector organisations will help enable partnerships to focus on apprenticeships and narrow the gap between skills supply and demand.

Development assessment

VET governance development is structured. A unified and comprehensive vision and strategy exist alongside many public-private partnerships. Key actors have efficient and adequate capabilities, and there is social dialogue and negotiation on VET policy decisions. Engagement from public and private sectors, employers' organisations and trade unions, sectoral organisations and society is high at almost all governance levels. Two online systems provide data on VET and lifelong learning. However, there are shortcomings around coordination, mainly at local level, involvement of local stakeholders in policy making, especially decision making, and development of local public-private partnerships. In addition, social partners and private sector stakeholders only have limited involvement in VET monitoring and evaluation. Even though public spending on VET has increased, financing and funding are inadequate, VET providers' financial autonomy is limited, and there is a lack of institutionalised financial incentives for public-private VET financing. Also, while social partners, NGOs and private sector stakeholders are actively involved in many stages of VET policy making, decision making, strategic planning and management are down to public bodies and their affiliated directorates, and provincial, regional and local authorities. Public bodies' tasks are often not defined. However, reform has made significant steps towards a better quality VET and lifelong learning system in line with EU standards aimed at increasing social inclusion and competitiveness. Better regulation, fine-tuning and simplification of processes have enabled Turkey to move towards 'defined' multi-level VET governance.

Ongoing work in policy development

The many strategies and action plans enacted to push VET reform are examples of a national legal and policy framework. They also contribute to establishing multi-level, multi-actor governance. VET does likewise as an example of public-private partnerships, bringing together ministries, trade and employers' unions, public institutions and social partners. EU financial backing has helped make major progress on data and statistical provision for developing methodologies, coordination between institutions and cooperating with Eurostat, the EU statistical office. Turkey reports on all the EU ET 2020 data and benchmarking. The government has also developed two online



information systems for VET, employment and lifelong learning.

3. POLICY POINTERS

Policy makers may wish to consider the following points for reflection, with a view to working towards their implementation in line with national priorities and in the context of national, regional, and local needs.

Overall planning and management

1. Increasing the involvement of all stakeholders, as well as civil society and business, in VET policy making to meet labour market needs and challenges.
2. Define a comprehensive framework for private sector, employers' and social partners' involvement in VET.
3. Develop a comprehensive system for career development, connecting all quality-assured academic, general and vocational qualifications in line with the TQF (in line with the EQF) for lifelong learning.
4. Improve access to a quality system of initial and continuing VET to develop skills and narrow the gap between education and the labour market.
5. Create incentives to get businesses more involved in VET.
6. Further promote entrepreneurship and strengthen links between enterprises' needs and learning.
7. Further enhance, for social impact, the implementation of the government's policies and programmes to give specific target groups and rural areas equal access to education as well as social services and assistance.
8. Develop policies to meet the local needs of VET and labour markets.
9. Make VET governance more efficient in terms of public administration.

Finance and funding

1. Increase financial resources for VET and define a coherent framework for allocation of funding.
2. Simplify financing and budget allocation for lifelong learning.
3. Develop a legal framework for VET providers' financial autonomy.

4. Promote the financial autonomy of secondary VET schools.
5. Promote public bodies' autonomy for budget allocation at all levels of governance.
6. Consult social partners and VET providers on financial incentives for public-private VET financing.
7. Provide financial incentives for VET financing by the public sector, social partners and, especially, the private sector. In addition, develop a framework of incentives and institutionalise it through legislation engaging all the beneficiaries.

Coordination mechanisms for VET policy making

1. Promote closer dialogue with the clients and users of the public human resources development system.
2. Establish better coordination between the private sector and vocational schools. Moreover, get social partners, NGOs and private sector stakeholders more involved in VET monitoring and evaluation.
3. Strengthen local stakeholders' engagement in policy decision making and public-private partnerships and initiatives that meet local skills development needs.
4. Further, strengthen the involvement of public and private stakeholders as well as social partners and NGOs in VET policy making at all levels of governance. Strengthen private sector involvement in VET governance and in the consultation process to meet the needs of local communities and local labour markets.
5. Foster the use of the European Credit System for VET (ECVET) for validating non-formal, informal and prior learning.
6. Improve the capacity building of NGOs to involve them further in education, employment and VET policy making and monitoring, to foster young people's social inclusion.
7. Enhance the network of VET and lifelong learning providers and private sector stakeholders to foster public-private partnerships to create apprenticeships and address the mismatch between VET and labour market skills needs, especially at local level.
8. Further develop the National Vocational Information System and the lifelong learning web portal.