



# PROJECTING REFORM IMPACT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (PRIME) 2014

# MONTENEGRO

# PRIME



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Montenegro is the first country in the South Eastern Europe and Turkey region to run an ex-post policy analysis under the Bruges Communiqué. As the country is preparing for accession to the European Union (EU), vocational education and training (VET) national reform is influenced by medium- to long-term EU policy objectives and targets to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET as expressed in the Copenhagen/Bruges Process. The country has been formally participating in the Bruges Process since 2012, and has made serious efforts to contribute to the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué (2010), which sets out 11 strategic objectives for the period 2011–20, and 22 short-term deliverables to be achieved at the national level by 2014. As learners, European citizens are at the heart of the process. On a broader scale, the Europe 2020 agenda, education and training 2020 objectives and the Bruges Communiqué aim at improving their quality of life, one of the core priorities for Montenegro also.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) ex-post policy analysis that was conducted in Montenegro between June and December 2014 is an analysis of a set of policy measures taken to address a specific policy challenge. The key challenges for Montenegro relate to the VET system's ability to develop a capacity to support the employability of its citizens by building and recognising skills and qualifications that are relevant for the current economy and opening up opportunities for learning and career development for the future. In that context, the key issues relevant for this ex-post policy analysis are as follows: How far has the VET system been able to adapt and to make creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship an integral part of its structure? To what extent is the system inclusive and supportive of different at-risk groups, including low-skilled people? To what extent does it offer training opportunities that meet the learning and practical needs of adults.

To this end, the ETF has elaborated a methodology that entails a strong participatory approach, including the ETF philosophy of policy learning. This approach has been chosen not only because it provides a good insight into and information on the policy options but also because it creates alignment among key actors, fostering mutual awareness of the interdependence of their actions and stressing the importance of coordination and finding opportunities for mutual reinforcement and support. This also contributes to stakeholders' ownership of the results achieved. When there is a stronger sense of ownership of the process outcome, it is more likely that stakeholders will act on the recommendations. It also provides benefits in terms of strategic planning and ensures the coherence and effectiveness of the policy-making process.

An ex-post policy analysis (often referred to as a retrospective policy analysis) as used in the case of VET reform in Montenegro, using distinctive methods and tools, takes into account the multiple perspectives of different stakeholders, and critically examines various facts, information and arguments. Through this approach, an ex-post analysis can uncover and explore evidence that otherwise may go unnoticed by stakeholders and policy makers. This is one of the major reasons why the ex-post or retrospective policy analysis is useful; it provides and contributes to a greater understanding of past and current policies, which is an important step in deciding on the best policy options and in determining the possible courses of action in the policy process.

The exercise was carried out at a critical time, when the Ministry of Education was preparing a new VET strategy and the working group was summing up the Bruges Process results. Policy analysis is often seen as a dual question – 'analysis of policy' or 'analysis for policy' – and although the two may look similar, their approaches are different. In this context, the 'analysis of policy' took the form of a VET self-assessment exercise led by the Ministry of Education and based on the analytical framework defined in the Torino Process. The 'analysis for policy' was designed as an ex-post analysis of policy options as presented in the short-term deliverables of the Bruges Communiqué. The ETF facilitated

the exercise and provided technical and thematic expertise through inputs and work with country key stakeholders involved in VET, the labour market and skills. The objective was to ensure broader bases of knowledge and promote the availability of evidence that could be useful for the VET policy cycle.

Acknowledgements are due to the Ministry of Education for the effort it put into organising the national process of dialogue and exchanges with stakeholders, the collection of information and evidence, and the drafting of the self-assessment report for the 2014 Torino Process. Acknowledgements are also due to the members of the working group – key policy actors from different institutions and bodies that are concerned with VET in Montenegro – who have been fully engaged in a series of ex-post policy analysis workshops. The following Montenegrin organisations and key policy actors have been part of the process: the Ministry of Education, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the Bureau for Educational Services, the National Council for Education and particularly its division for the Council for Vocational Education and Training, the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, the Union of Employers of Montenegro, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Employment Agency of Montenegro, the Statistical Office of Montenegro, the Directorate for the Development of SMEs, the secondary vocational school Spasoje Raspopović, and the main decision-making bodies and representatives of the Ministry of Education in the Directors General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVT) body and the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT).

Charged with the objective of answering the critical question ‘Which, if any, of the policy objectives have worked for the VET system in Montenegro?’, the ex-post policy analysis was conducted for Strategic Objectives 5 and 6. The focus was on 66 policy options that are covered within short-term deliverables (STDs) 13 to 19 and relate to the period 2010–14 and the following criteria:

- How have Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 been achieved and which of the short-term deliverables contributed the most?
- What are the most effective and efficient policy options put into practice within each short-term deliverable?
- What are the most significant effects and who are the main beneficiaries?
- What future policy development steps should be taken – in the legislative, financial and operational (implementation) contexts – to further promote existing or new policies and measures?

### **Strategic Objective 5. Fostering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as the use of ICT<sup>1</sup> in both initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET)**

This strategic objective addresses the policies and measures that the country has implemented within the framework of three short-term deliverables, namely STD 13 ‘Partnership for creativity and innovation’; STD 14 ‘Effective, innovative and quality-assured use of technology by all VET providers’; and STD 15 ‘Entrepreneurship’. Overall, this strategic objective has been covered by the implementation of 25 policy options. The ex-post policy analysis concludes that among these three short-term deliverables, STD 15 on entrepreneurship contributed the most to achieving significant progress with regard to Strategic Objective 5.

‘Entrepreneurship and a sense of initiative’ is an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve objectives. Montenegro is strategically focused on promoting entrepreneurship, and a strong public vision governs its development. Entrepreneurship is included in all key aspects of educational reform. As a key competence for lifelong learning, entrepreneurial learning is thoroughly incorporated into the VET reform interventions and well covered in a series of key policy documents. This short-term

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<sup>1</sup> ICT = Information and communication technology

deliverable is considered the most successful in contributing to the achievement of Strategic Objective 5 as significant progress was recognised in the majority of policy options and measures taken in policy design, implementation and promotion. The reason for this success is related to the existence of strategic and systemic commitments to develop entrepreneurship as a key competence.

The ex-post policy analysis demonstrated that Policy Option 10 'Learning methods in VET including simulated or real business experience', Policy Option 8 'Training VET staff to help learners acquire entrepreneurship skills', and Policy Option 9 'Involving enterprises and experts from business in VET', have progressed the most compared to 2010.

A number of policy options require further policy dialogue in order to streamline the impact and strengthen the policy outcomes. One example is focusing the partner institutions on the measures in and implementation of the new **Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning 2015–19**. Montenegro has an immense opportunity to excel with this strategy. The central role in the management and coordination of the strategy will be played by the National Partnership for Entrepreneurial Learning, building on the experience gained from the implementation of the previous strategy. The Directorate for SME Development will lead the partnership. Its key role as coordinator will determine the efficient functioning of the National Partnership and the implementation of activities within the annual action plans. The successful facilitation and development of dynamic and sustainable cooperation with the public sector and between the public and private sectors in the implementation of the measures in the field of entrepreneurial learning can further foster innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

Further analysis of the policy options in STDs 13 and 14 indicates partial achievement, mainly due to the lack of effective policy partnership mechanisms and a shortage of on-going financial resources that would ensure sustainability. As an example, of the nine policy options under STD 13 'Incentives for innovation partnerships or creativity clusters involving VET providers' (Policy Option 6) was not achieved, while 'Creativity and innovation as an underlying principle of VET' (Policy Option 2) was mainly achieved by enhancing the quality of VET teaching and learning processes. Some 50% of all teachers completed a one-day teacher training programme, which included entrepreneurship as a key competence. This programme is accredited and published in the catalogue of professional development programmes on offer for teachers.

Using innovative technology in VET serves multiple purposes. It stimulates creativity and innovation, supports the labour market relevance of VET, and ensures its quality. Although the working group's members recognise the importance of most of the six policy options under STD 14 and have contributed successfully to the achievement of the results, much more remains to be done in the future. There are good examples of the effective and innovative use of technology in quality-assured initiatives where VET providers and businesses have worked together to organise practical courses for students and training for teachers. There are also examples of particular cases geared towards the use of the learning outcomes approach, such as competitions, and donor-funded actions for equipping workshops and other facilities. The most successful policy options were mainly those related to an extensive VET teacher training exercise implemented during the reporting period and which contributed to an improvement in the quality of the teaching process. However, the main concern here centres on the fact that for the most part this training was supported by international donor-funded activities, which renders the future sustainability of these actions questionable.

Overall, the ex-post policy analysis of all 25 policy options in three short-term deliverables for Montenegro VET reform in the period from 2010 to 2014, concerning innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, reveals that entrepreneurship (STD 15) has been very prominent in shaping Strategic Objective 5. For future policy development, it is very important to mainstream the successfully implemented measures under STD 15. In particular, it should be noted that the development of entrepreneurship skills is very much based on the opportunity to gain practical

experience in enterprises and other contexts, problem-based teaching and learning and involving professionals from businesses in VET provision. The school-based approach is only part of the answer for successfully preparing students for their future participation in the labour market and economy. Work-based learning, with a focus on different types of apprenticeship training and the active engagement of social partners, VET providers and companies, will further strengthen innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in VET.

The ex-post policy analysis revealed in particular that focusing more on services that assist VET providers in finding partners in the business world is likely to deliver better results (Policy Option 7/ STD 15). It is also important to further promote the cost-effective use of technology by VET providers as the incorporation of technology in everyday teaching and learning can boost innovation and creativity. The VET sector cannot achieve this on its own. Extensive and dynamic dialogue between social partners and other partners in the National Council for Education and its VET and adult education committees can uncover the best approaches suitable for Montenegro. As it also became clear that there are no incentives in place for establishing public-private partnerships regarding state-of-the-art technology in VET (Policy Option 3/STD 14), and as this gradually needs to become common practice in the country, Montenegro should continue efforts in the next period to find better solutions.

### Strategic Objective 6. Realising inclusive IVET and CVET

This strategic objective addresses the policies and measures that the country has implemented within the framework of four short-term deliverables, namely STD 16 'Maximising the contribution of VET in combating early leaving from education', STD 17 'Raising the participation of low-skilled and other at-risk groups in education and training', STD 18 'Using ICT to maximise access to training and to promote active learning' and STD 19 'Using existing monitoring systems to support the participation of at-risk groups in VET'. In total, 41 policy options cover the implementation of this strategic objective. Overall, this strategic objective is concerned with facilitating access to VET for all. Particular importance is therefore given to issues such as equal opportunities, guidance and flexibility of learning. The focus is on equity in VET, in both IVET and CVET. The ex-post policy analysis indicates that, despite the number of achievements and examples of good practice, policy makers have work ahead of them in all the short-term deliverables in order to achieve more inclusive and equitable VET. In short, significant progress needs to be made in relation to Strategic Objective 6.

Overall, relevant national legislation as well as different strategies in the sector recognise that improving access for all is a guiding principle. Examples of good practice include training programmes and targeted guidance services for different at-risk groups, e.g. low-skilled individuals and those who find it challenging to make their way through the system. To stimulate the participation of low-skilled individuals and other at-risk groups in routes to qualification other than regular VET, and which are seen as valuable by the labour market, flexible training programmes have been put in place over the last few years. Another idea is to create and differentiate the student status to allow low-skilled or at-risk students to attend either regular lessons or part-time studies. The ex-post analysis revealed that, as the reform of the qualifications framework is advancing steadily, an overall strategic framework for acquiring qualifications through alternative routes is already well established. Therefore, it is expected that, in the near future, the possibility of prior recognition of qualifications obtained through non-formal education will be fully functional.

In relation to STD 16 'Maximising the contribution of VET in combating early leaving from education', a number of policy measures are needed to make VET in Montenegro more proactive in preventing early leaving from vocational schools. This is despite the fact that when it comes to early school

leaving this is not considered to be a significant challenge for VET policy in Montenegro<sup>2</sup>, The challenge is that the current VET system takes the treatment of at-risk groups into consideration, but only in the course of regular practice. Although strategically planned actions and measures are embedded in vocational schools' practice, greater attention needs to be paid to at-risk groups. Future policy development actions should focus on measures that make the system more flexible in terms of the needs of potential dropouts and capable of providing alternative options for completing the VET programme. The system should focus more on prevention by developing actions for the future, which can be applied before students leave school. In addition, more detailed and precise indicators should be defined at VET provider level as well as at VET system level to support this objective. In particular, attention should be given to policies that strengthen the apprenticeship programmes and routes (Policy Options 5 and 6). Further policy dialogue and measures are needed particularly in relation to Policy Option 16 'Incentives for enterprises to provide training or employment'.

In relation to STD 17 'Raising the participation of low-skilled and other at-risk groups in education and training', the policy options most in need of attention relate to adult learners. Policy Option 2 'Strategies or guidelines enabling adult learners to access higher VET (EQF<sup>3</sup> level 5)'; and Policy Option 3 'Guidelines to ensure that CVET qualifications are valued by the E&T<sup>4</sup>/labour market'. Further attention in terms of policy is needed in relation to developing and improving legislation that would integrate the employers who provide training into the system. Although the CVET qualifications are well established in the VET system, further improvement is necessary to integrate provision at the operational level. Policy Option 12 'Opportunity for those with a migrant background to learn the host country language', and Policy Option 15 'Incentives for enterprises to provide training or employment' were both considered crucial for the improvement of the policy development process and much needed in terms of future policy development.

In relation to STD 18 'Using ICT to maximise access to training and to promote active learning', the ex-post policy analysis reveals that many strategies take the development of ICT skills into consideration, but the impression remains that the actions which have been implemented refer to the development of general ICT skills, and concentrate on the ICT literacy of teachers. Therefore, the specific and specialised use of ICT skills is still not fully developed, especially in the use of joint learning platforms. Future developments should also focus on the development of didactic tools, particularly taking into account the short life cycle of software and hardware. Almost all the six policy options covered under the short-term deliverable need further improvement and strengthening in terms of practical implementation. Policy Option 3 'Incentives helping at-risk groups to cover the ICT and internet costs' was considered as very important for the progress of future policy development, while Policy Option 5 'VET platforms or web portals tailored to the needs of at-risk groups' is most in need of further promotion.

In the case of STD 19 'Using existing monitoring systems to support the participation of at-risk groups in VET', it should be noted that Montenegro's Ministry of Education has put in place a very comprehensive Education Management Information System, which collects data from all public schools, including IVET schools. The ex-post policy analysis concluded that there are already mechanisms in place that can support the monitoring of at-risk groups' progression through the system, but also that there is a problem regarding a lack of institutional support and exchange of data. In future policy development it will be important to ensure that particular attention is paid to the monitoring of at-risk groups in VET. Otherwise, it could remain a major obstacle in targeting VET provision more effectively to their learning needs. The working group therefore concluded that focusing more on

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<sup>2</sup> In relation to the EU education benchmark for early school leaving, Montenegro stood at 5.7% in 2013, thus achieving the EU 2020 target of 10% and performing better than the EU average of 12%.

<sup>3</sup> EQF = European Qualifications Framework

<sup>4</sup> E&T = Education and training

Policy Option 3 'Preventive VET responses for groups at risk, taking account of monitoring data' could make a significant contribution, and make VET in Montenegro more inclusive.

Horizontal findings of the ex-post policy analysis indicate that good performances have been delivered in VET policy reform in the case of Strategic Objectives 5 and 6, namely 'Fostering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as the use of ICT (in both IVET and CVET)' and 'Realising inclusive IVET and CVET'. The VET vision is focused on preparing the country to develop as a knowledge-based society. A set of important strategic developments supports the VET vision. It has been concluded that a number of policy options are not relevant in general or at this particular time. Some policy options were estimated as 'leading' in the country context. This means that, if fully implemented, these policy options would lead to the development of other policy options in the future. In addition, some short-term deliverables were identified as long-term objectives or as having results specific to Montenegro's particular situation. In some cases, short-term deliverables and their policy options were presented as guiding principles for the overall VET policy development process.

It should also be noted that, although the ex-post policy analysis was limited to only some of the short-term deliverables and policy options in the Bruges Communiqué, it is clear that the exercise was by no means a simple one, as it was required to focus on comprehensive VET reform. To identify and to some extent measure the impact of each policy option on the relevant short-term deliverable in comparison with other policy options is a demanding task. Another challenge was that of having to move continually 'back and forth in time', since the baseline decided upon was 2010. The crucial question was whether each specific policy option has made a difference in the VET reform process – whether or not it has an added value. The ex-post policy analysis exercise in Montenegro has proved that it is possible to measure the impact of the policy options, and, more importantly, through a well-structured approach, to gather valuable evidence about what works and what does not work within a country-specific context of VET reform.

# 1. EX-POST POLICY ANALYSIS UNDER THE BRUGES COMMUNIQUÉ FOR MONTENEGRO: THE IMPACT

## 1.1 Why ex-post policy analysis?

Given the scarce resources available for VET reform, the public interest in the results of that reform, and the importance it holds for national policy makers, as well as the diversity of opinions and approaches that exist with regard to the subject, the ability to assess and evaluate what works in VET is critical. The resulting increased need for policy analysis and structured information is answered by the ETF's Projecting reform impact in vocational education and training (PRIME) initiative, which addresses the need for evidence-based policy making through a country-specific and context-based approach. Policy analysis is often seen as a dual question: is it the 'analysis of policy' or the 'analysis for policy'? Although the two formulations look similar, the approach and methodology used to tackle them can be very different. We can perform either an ex-ante analysis or an ex-post analysis of policy options (such as those implemented by the ETF through PRIME).

In each case, the findings should support an evidence-based approach to policy making. In this paper, we use the term ex-post policy analysis to refer to the analysis of a sequence of steps taken to address a specific policy challenge. This analysis focuses on the effects of the policy (for example, the consequences of introducing a new curriculum in VET or of establishing a new agency or body in the education and training system) using the information available after the policy has been introduced or during its implementation, when the performance and results of the policy can be observed. In this way, ex-post policy analysis is useful for producing factual information about policies, its aim being to support the evidence-based policy cycle and thus contribute to an improved policy process.

An ex-post policy analysis (often referred to as a retrospective policy analysis) as used in the case of VET reform in Montenegro, using distinctive methods and tools, takes into account the multiple perspectives of different stakeholders, and critically examines a variety of facts, information and arguments. Through this approach, ex-post analysis can uncover and explore evidence that otherwise may go unnoticed by stakeholders and policy makers. This is one of the major reasons why ex-post or retrospective policy analysis is useful; it provides and contributes to a greater understanding of past and current policies, which is an important step in deciding on the best policy options available and in determining the possible courses of action in the policy process.

## 1.2 Why start with Montenegro in the region?

Montenegro is the first country in the region to run ex-post policy analysis under the Bruges Communiqué. As the country is preparing for accession to the EU, VET national reform is influenced by medium- to long-term EU policy objectives and targets to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET, as expressed in the Copenhagen/Bruges Process. The country has made serious efforts to contribute to the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué (2010), which sets out 11 strategic objectives for the period 2011–20 and 22 short-term deliverables to be achieved at the national level by 2014. The country has been a formal participant in the Bruges Process since 2012.

**The role of VET in reducing skills mismatches and preparing students for the labour market is the focus of major policy developments in the country.** Significant changes took place in 2013. In July 2013, the parliament adopted amendments to the Vocational Education Act and the General Law on Education, which is expected to strengthen the reform process. For VET students who wish to continue their education at university, the vocational *Matura* is external. Regarding the establishment

of the national qualifications framework, the Council for Qualifications has considered 55 initiatives for skills development, including initiatives related to levels VI and VII. It has adopted more than 30 occupational standards, 15 qualification standards and 11 examination catalogues. Cooperation between the Council for Qualifications and the Council for Higher Education is on-going. The Centre for Vocational Education and Training develops learning outcomes-based qualifications in the field. Two modularised and credit-based curricula in post-secondary VET have been developed and their implementation is on-going. A total of 41 examiners have been licensed to assess the knowledge required for attaining national vocational qualifications. The Examination Centre has formed commissions of examiners to evaluate the skills and knowledge acquired by candidates through non-formal and informal learning. The first assessment was conducted in November 2014.

### **VET's part in supporting innovation, job creation and entrepreneurship needs to evolve further.**

The principles and guidelines for entrepreneurial policies in Montenegro are the responsibility of the Directorate for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEDD) within the Ministry of Economy. The SMEDD is responsible for creating and implementing SME policy, and specifically for developing the relevant national strategies: the Strategy for SME Development, the Strategy for Enhancing Competitiveness at the Micro-level and the Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning. A new Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning for the period 2014–19 has been prepared following a rigorous process of policy dialogue organised by the SMEDD, in coordination with the Ministry of Education, and closely followed up and monitored by the National Coordinator of the Small Business Act. In 2014, the National Partnership for Entrepreneurial Learning was re-established. This has resulted in the improved promotion of entrepreneurship as a key competence in elementary, vocational and higher education. The purpose of the strategy is to outline a set of goals for entrepreneurship learning which will foster its development across a wide range of sectors over the coming years. After a public consultation process has been completed, by the end of November 2014, the SMEDD will prepare the process for adoption by the government in December 2014.

In February 2014, Montenegro reported on its progress in meeting some of the **Bruges short-term deliverables**. The Bruges Communiqué, its short-term deliverables and policy objectives have and will continue to have an influence on the prospects for the long-term evolution of education and training in the country, including the development of strategies, concrete initiatives and actions. Regarding the priorities of the Montenegrin government, a number of policy issues are closely interlinked with Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 of the Bruges Communiqué. For example, the government's National Development Plan 2013–16 sets out the country's aims of strengthening the consistency of structural and institutional reforms, as well as thematic programmes and documents in the field of public investments, and initiating the programming of investments aligned with the EU's strategic guidelines. This policy document consolidates the important strategic guidelines with the priorities of the government's socio-economic policies and their mutual effects.

The Strategy for Regional Development 2010–14 emphasises cluster development to strengthen SME-sector competitiveness and introduce innovation. Under the Strategy for SME Development 2011–15, the second strategic goal – providing education and advisory services to SMEs – also involves the development of a network of organisers of entrepreneurial learning for adults in all Montenegrin municipalities. The Strategy for Improving Competitiveness at the Micro-level 2011–15 further recognises entrepreneurial education as one of the key factors for improving competitiveness and innovation.

The EU accession process is accelerating change and requires a new way of working in order to harness the opportunities that accession will bring. Montenegro is the first country in the region to implement a policy foresight exercise, as part of the preparatory process for IPA II (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance), through the FRAME initiative. In 2013 and 2014, the ETF worked together with national policy leaders and stakeholders to define the sector's vision for skills and what should be

achieved in the medium term (by 2020). What are the possible, feasible and preferred options, based on the available resources and capacities? How should the education, training and lifelong learning system be adapted in order to produce the necessary skills? The vision-building process for Montenegro has resulted in the following shared vision:

In 2020 Montenegro has a competitive economy. It is a learning society of innovators, ready to face global, regional and domestic challenges. Its people have high employability. They have the knowledge, skills and competencies for personal and career development as well as social inclusion (ETF, 2014).

Ex-post policy analysis of Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 – ‘Fostering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as the use of ICT (in both IVET and CVET)’, and ‘Realising inclusive IVET and CVET’ – will help to create a better understanding of the value of each of the policy options in the reform process and how they serve the purpose of VET improvement in Montenegro. Furthermore, these objectives are highly relevant to the country’s agenda for better economic governance in general, and link with the aims of achieving growth and competitiveness. This has been confirmed also through the Torino Process policy analyses.

In terms of timing, Torino Process rounds have coincided with the Bruges reporting cycles in 2012 and 2014. Thus the 2012 Torino Process country report for Montenegro and the 2014 Torino Process consultations were used also as a source of solid evidence and diagnostics for the national VET policies to feed into the ex-post analysis exercise. The objective is to support the country in preparing for the next phase of Bruges. This entails following a more systemic approach, with effective monitoring of VET policy implementation.

### 1.3 What are the objectives?

VET policies need to be strategically linked to the broader framework of lifelong learning. They must be firmly related to concrete national policy priorities and anchored in country-specific institutional contexts. The need for a better understanding of policy processes is greater than ever, and that is the reason why there is a great demand for methods and instruments that enable VET experts and policy makers to analyse and evaluate systems – to recognise strengths and weaknesses as well as to identify possible areas for system development and ensure performance monitoring. Policy makers are increasingly interested in what VET delivers and what policy analyses can reveal on this score. This need is even more acute in pre-accession countries, where there is a mixture of home-grown policies influenced by EU strategic objectives, as countries prepare for accession, and donor-driven VET reforms.

The objective with PRIME in Montenegro is to analyse the influence of Bruges on national reform, and assess the process in place to gain a better understanding of the progress of the policies alignment between specific national reform needs and the Bruges priorities. With a particular focus on the analysis of selected strategic objectives, the PRIME ex-post policy analysis exercise elaborated on and provided evidence of policy options and results achieved. Another important objective was to support the Ministry of Education in establishing a more structured policy dialogue in relation to the objectives of the Bruges Process. The focus was on identifying the ways in which different policy options have been addressed – why some policy options have been selected or implemented and others not. What has worked and what has not worked in terms of the policy options? What progress has been made and what value has been added as a result of the actions? This objective ensured the identification not only of the policy options that have been selected for implementation in the country, but also the type of actions primarily focused upon (e.g. ‘action categories’ such as legislation, finance, implementation and promotion).

In that respect, ex-post policy analysis forms an important tool within the VET policy cycle and can help to improve the relevance of VET policies. Moreover, the results of the ex-post policy analysis can be used in the policy-making cycle to prioritise policy measures and actions based on which options can offer more in terms of added value and better respond to the institutional challenges that often arise when measures fail to bring results.

## 1.4 What kind of methodology has been applied?

The ex-post policy analysis methodology was elaborated following the logic of the participatory approach. It was chosen not only because this provides good insights and information for considering policy options, but because it creates alignment among key actors, fostering a mutual awareness of the interdependence of their actions and the need for coordination and creating opportunities for mutual reinforcement and support. This approach also contributes to a sense of ownership of the results of the ex-post policy analysis. When there is a stronger sense of ownership of the strategic outcomes of the process, stakeholders are more likely to act on the recommendations. This provides benefits in terms of strengthening strategic planning in the country, and ensures the coherence and effectiveness of the policy-making process.

The Copenhagen Process and the Bruges Communiqué exert a continuing influence over the long-term evolution of education and training in the country, including the development of strategies, concrete initiatives and actions inspired by EU-driven initiatives. The basis for the methodology in PRIME is the Bruges Communiqué and, in particular, the Montenegro country fiche for progress towards the Bruges short-term deliverables. Taking a concrete approach, the Ministry of Education and the ETF decided to focus on Strategic Objectives 5 and 6, which include 66 policy options that are covered under STDs 13 to 19. In addition, to strengthen the impact of the results of the ex-post policy analysis and to better embed them in the national system, the ministry decided to establish a working group<sup>5</sup>. This working group includes representatives of the main decision-making bodies: the Directors General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVET) body and the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT).

At the beginning of the process a qualitative analysis was elaborated. It looked at the relevance of the Bruges policy options (STDs 13 to 19), including the coherence of the policy decisions as implemented in the national VET reform process. It focused in particular on how the policy options are addressed in different VET policy and programming documents. For this purpose, the main VET and VET-related strategic documents were reviewed as a desk research exercise. The qualitative analysis looked at both the policy options selected for implementation and the type of actions the country has primarily focused upon. To complete the qualitative analysis, two workshops were designed and implemented.

The first workshop focused on the progress of each of the 66 policy options, and was designed as a self-assessment exercise for the institutions as members of the working group. Its aim was to verify the results of the Bruges 2014 country fiche, focusing on all 66 policy objectives covered by STDs 13 to 19. The methodological approach of the first workshop was built on the following elements:

- analysing the responses to the Bruges questionnaire (2014);
- identifying the scope of the contribution of the specific policy options within the Bruges short-term deliverables to the transformation of VET policy in Montenegro (2010–14);

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<sup>5</sup> The group includes representatives from the Ministry of Education, Centre for Vocational Education, Bureau for Educational Services, National Council for Education (and particularly its division the Council for Vocational Education and Training), Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, Union of Employers of Montenegro, Employment Agency of Montenegro and Statistical Office of Montenegro.

- understanding which of the policy options best serve the purpose of national VET reform;
- identifying policy choices that are more relevant within the specific country context.

Following the first workshop, a questionnaire was developed to collect information through quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative part used a Likert scale for rating the contribution of certain policy options in achieving particular short-term deliverables. In addition, a set of questions was designed to produce a qualitative analysis that would supplement the quantitative outcomes under each short-term deliverable, focusing on six different dimensions:

- why and how the best-rated policy options have contributed to the achievement of the relevant short-term deliverable;
- the type of policy options and their level of relevance which have not worked in a satisfactory way in Montenegro;
- the type of actions the country has primarily focused upon, as specified in the four main areas of intervention – legislation, finance, implementation and promotion;
- the reasons behind choosing particular policy options for implementation;
- the extent to which the short-term deliverable has been achieved;
- the most successful short-term deliverables, that is, those which have contributed the most towards progressing the specific policy options in question.

The questionnaire was implemented through structured individual interviews with all the members of the working group. Its aim was to help both the interviewees and the interviewer gain a common understanding of the impact of different policy options. It also aimed to collect valid information for an analysis of the policy options that most influenced the national VET reform process and the reason why they did. In this way, the results provided a deeper awareness of the policy choices that were particularly relevant, and the reasons why certain actions were preferred within the specific country context.

Following this, the second workshop was held with the aims of verifying the results of the questionnaire and drawing conclusions regarding the progress made by Montenegro towards Bruges STDs 13 to 19 in the light of the latest policy developments and EU benchmarks. In addition to reviewing the progress of the Bruges Process, two main aspects were observed: how the national VET policies are influenced by the EU-driven policy exercise and how the national VET policies contribute to the achievement of the Bruges strategic objectives.

The qualitative analysis was further elaborated with the findings from the two workshops held with the working group's members in Podgorica in September and November 2014, and in this way served as a basis for the development of the final ex-post analysis report. The overarching objective of the ex-post analysis was to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Bruges policy options as part of the next phase in Montenegro's national reform strategy. The analysis of findings and the main conclusions arrived at in the course of the entire project will support the country in preparing for the next phase of Bruges.

## 1.5 What are the findings of the ex-post policy analysis?

The ex-post policy analysis exercise was conducted in Montenegro between June and December 2014. It is of particular relevance for the country, as the Ministry of Education and other decision-making authorities were in the process of developing a new national VET strategy. Thus, the ex-post analysis opened up a meaningful way for policy makers to align VET strategy – contextually and

specifically – with the objectives of the Bruges Process. It also provided support for an improved understanding among the relevant stakeholders concerning joint objectives and overarching and cross-cutting issues at the national level.

In relation to the progress of each of the 66 policy options under STDs 13 to 19, the PRIME ex-post policy analysis in Montenegro was conducted as a working group participatory exercise, using the methodology presented above. A map of the current status of the 66 policy options under these short-term deliverables was developed in order to capture the progress made in the period 2010–14, structured around the following criteria:

- How have Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 been achieved and which of the short-term deliverables contributed the most?
- What are the most effective and efficient policy options put into practice within each short-term deliverable?
- What are the most significant effects and who are the main beneficiaries?
- What policy development steps should be taken in the future – in the legislative, financial and operational (implementation) contexts – to further promote existing or new policies and measures?

The results of the ex-post policy analysis exercise are presented in the following chapters.

## 2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: FOSTERING INNOVATION, CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AS WELL AS THE USE OF ICT (IN BOTH IVET AND CVET)

### 2.1 Short-term deliverable 13: Partnerships for creativity and innovation

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are closely related and should be considered as part of a process that places more emphasis on the operational level. For instance, teaching methods should be developed to foster creativity and innovation as part of a broader framework of life skills rather than purely within the context of business needs. The well-developed practice of organising skills competitions and festivals is an example of good practice, which introduces innovative and creative methods into the teaching process. Innovation and creativity are also emphasised in the learning process, and in this spirit a large number of schools are involved in competitions to highlight and promote these principles. In some cases, the resulting innovations are even accepted as leading principles in VET practice. However, a discrepancy has been observed in implementation among different segments of the VET system, and the relevant stakeholders are insufficiently involved.

Montenegro has focused primarily on implementation under this short-term deliverable. In practice, a non-systematic approach has been taken, with activities carried out under different policy options covering various levels of implementation. A number of projects, especially those related to school competitions, were led by proactive teachers and local schools' initiatives. Capacities for implementation require significant improvement, and the potential for inter-institutional cooperation needs to be increased.

The policy objectives under this short-term deliverable are considered to be only partially achieved, mainly as a result of the lack of effective partnership mechanisms and the shortage of continuing financial resources needed to ensure sustainability. In the nine policy options under STD 13, incentives for innovation partnerships or creativity clusters involving VET providers (Policy Options 5 and 6) are less promoted, while creativity and innovation are encouraged mainly by enhancing the quality of VET teaching and learning processes.

## Short-term deliverable 13: Partnerships for creativity and innovation

<p>Strategic and legal framework (main documents)</p>	<p>The <b>Strategy for the Development of the Information Society (2012–16)</b> envisages the introduction of e-education, holding that the movement of society towards the introduction of ICT in all spheres of life, as well as the many specific requirements of modern technology, has generated a need for the alignment of educational systems to this environment. ICT is also a very important link in the open system of lifelong learning. The main priorities in the process of introducing ICT into the education system are, firstly, the construction of a modern education system in which students in elementary and secondary schools and university students acquire basic computer literacy, enabling them to participate in the modern information society; and secondly, the development of curricula and practical programmes in ICT to promote specialised and expert knowledge in order to ensure the on-going involvement of ICT in the educational process at all levels.</p> <p>The <b>Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro (2010–14)</b>, together with the General Law on Education, stipulates the participation of social partners in defining policy and in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating vocational education at the central level. Moreover, it encourages partnership among the actors who stimulate internal motivation at the school level in alignment with industrial development and skills demands.</p> <p>The <b>Strategy for Adult Education (2010–14)</b> outlines the overall responsibility of the government for the successful implementation of the strategy by providing an environment in which a wide range of social partners (public sector, private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) enact the strategies and tasks pertaining to their areas.</p>
<p>Institutional bodies most actively involved in implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ministry of Education</li> <li>■ Bureau for Educational Services of Montenegro</li> <li>■ Centre for Vocational Education</li> <li>■ Ministry of Science and University of Montenegro</li> <li>■ Working group – with representatives from Ministry of Education, Employment Agency of Montenegro, Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, Union of Employers of Montenegro and other social partners</li> <li>■ Wide range of public, private and NGO sector agencies</li> <li>■ Project ‘Creative Teaching’</li> <li>■ Project ‘Reform of Vocational Education Towards Employment Improvement’ (GIZ)</li> <li>■ Foundation: Young Researchers from Montenegro</li> </ul>
<p>Most successfully achieved policy options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 2: Creativity and innovation as an underlying principle in VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 4: Creativity and innovation competitions open to VET learners and institutions</li> <li>■ Policy Option 9: Skills competitions</li> <li>■ Policy Option 8: Cooperation to develop learning methods in VET fostering creativity and innovation</li> </ul>
<p>Policy options that achieved moderate progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 5: Incentives for creativity and innovation partnerships including VET providers</li> <li>■ Policy Option 1: Innovation strategy including VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 3: Guidelines for encouraging partnerships fostering creativity and innovation in VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 7: Knowledge exchange platforms for encouraging creativity and innovation among VET providers</li> </ul>

## Short-term deliverable 13: Partnerships for creativity and innovation

Policy option less well achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Policy Option 6: Innovation or creativity clusters involving VET providers</li></ul>
Future policy development might focus on the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Establishment of a framework for innovative and sustainable partnership approaches to stimulate the active involvement of stakeholders</li><li>■ Clear identification of initiators and activity owners and sharing of activities among all stakeholders</li><li>■ Creation of a basis for providing systematic financial support, including the initiation of a framework for public-private partnerships</li><li>■ Development of institutional capacities for implementation and for inter-institutional cooperation</li><li>■ Development of the human resources capacities to create mechanisms for institutional support and monitoring</li><li>■ Implementation of measures to have life skills-related creativity and innovation competences recognised by the system and society</li></ul>

## 2.2 Short-term deliverable 14: Effective and innovative, quality-assured use of technology by all VET providers

Most of the six policy options under this short-term deliverable are considered important and have contributed successfully to the achievement of results under the short-term deliverable's objectives. There are good examples of the implementation of effective, innovative and quality-assured technology use in the cooperation that exists between VET providers and businesses in organising teacher training and practical courses for students. In some cases, a learning outcome approach has been used, for example through the organisation of competitions, exchange of tutors, and donor-funded actions to equip workshops.

Incentives for establishing VET provider networks or public-private partnerships to ensure cost-effective use of technology (Policy Options 2 and 3) are in the process of being devised and implemented. The only policy option that is not considered to be effective is Policy Option 1 'Strategy to ensure state-of-the-art technology in VET'. It appears that there is little motivation among industry representatives to organise training programmes in this area. Currently there are few successful examples of cooperation among VET providers in offering qualitative training to students, and no obvious systematic solution to this problem. While representatives from the education and VET fields acknowledge the dominant role of Policy Option 4 'Networks/joint ventures between VET and/or enterprises for the use of technology' and Policy Option 6 'VET teachers/trainers trained to use modern technology and learning methods' in the success of policy development, determining what is required in terms of legislation to achieve these goals remains an open question. However, legislative intervention is undoubtedly required to enable cooperation among all VET providers.

The policy options selected as the most successful relate mainly to the significant VET teacher training exercise, which was implemented during the reporting period and which contributed to an improvement in the quality of teaching in the sector. The main concern here centres on the fact that most of this training was supported by international donor-funded activities, which places a question mark over the future sustainability of these actions. Implementation is recognised as the primary focus of the actions conducted under this short-term deliverable, especially for those related to cooperation between schools and employers, mainly at the local level, and the promotion of cooperation through individual cases.

The legislative framework was considered insufficient. Furthermore, the approach was not adequately systematic to allow the short-term deliverable to be achieved on a much bigger scale – a factor particularly stressed by the employers' representatives. This short-term deliverable was assessed as

partially achieved, due to the lack of a systematic approach or a sustainable solution for motivating employers to cooperate with schools. This was mainly the result of there being no legal framework to define public-private partnerships and no effective mechanisms for providing government subsidies and incentives. Some policy options are more fully implemented due to the support of outside donors. The promotion of proactive institutions and schools will be a matter for future development.

Short-term deliverable 14: Effective and innovative, quality-assured use of technology by all VET providers	
Strategic and legal framework (main documents)	<p>The <b>Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro (2010–14)</b> sets as one of its strategic goals the establishment of a labour market-oriented schools network. The network’s material, human resources and spatial capacities should correspond to the modern teaching standards defined in the curricula. Its aim is to create competent and competitive human resources in the labour market. In order to achieve this, more and better equipment for schools is required: for example, facilities for vocational and theoretical subjects, workshops and laboratories for practical teaching, resources for foreign language teaching and computer rooms.</p> <p>The <b>Strategy for Development of the Information Society (2012–16)</b> stipulates that it is necessary to integrate ICT into all aspects of the education process in order to achieve more effective and efficient education. A law on public-private partnerships, which should define incentives for their formation in line with their role in the education process, is currently in preparation. The current discussion focuses on legal provisions that will offer tax concessions to employers who have established cooperative links with schools.</p>
Institutional bodies and parties most actively involved in implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ministry of Education</li> <li>■ Networks of schools; schools’ infrastructure</li> <li>■ Training of employers and cooperation agreements</li> <li>■ Support of donors (for example, GIZ, KulturKontakt, Lux Development, DVV International)</li> </ul>
Most successfully achieved policy options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 6: VET teachers/trainers trained to use modern technology and learning methods</li> <li>■ Policy Option 4: Networks/joint ventures between VET and/or enterprises for the use of technology</li> </ul>
Policy options that achieved moderate progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 5: Cooperation with business/industry to ensure relevance of technology used in VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 1: Strategy to ensure state-of-the-art technology in VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 2: Incentives for VET provider networks to ensure cost-effective use of technology</li> </ul>
Policy option less well achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 3: Incentives for establishing public-private partnerships regarding state-of-the-art technology in VET</li> </ul>
Future policy development might focus on the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sustainability of VET teacher training and the establishment of quality assurance in the teaching process</li> <li>■ Provision of governmental support – through subsidies and incentives – to stimulate employers’ interest in participating</li> <li>■ Structured financing mechanism</li> <li>■ Establishment of a legal definition of the public-private partnership model</li> <li>■ Development of proactiveness on the part of institutions and schools’ with regard to future development</li> <li>■ Intervention in legislative terms to encourage cooperation among all VET providers</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Short-term deliverable 15: Entrepreneurship

Montenegro is strategically focused on promoting entrepreneurship, a strategy that is supported by a strong public vision and policy developments. Entrepreneurship is, therefore, one of the key elements of educational reform. This short-term deliverable was considered the most successful in contributing to the achievement of Strategic Objective 5, since significant progress was recognised in most domains and levels (policy, implementation, promotion). The reason for this success is related to the existence of strategic and system commitments to implementation. All 10 policy options under STD 15 are well covered in policy documents and in most cases are supplemented by examples of successful implementation. Entrepreneurial learning is firmly incorporated into the VET reforming interventions as a key competence for lifelong learning and is well addressed in a series of important policy documents.

There are good examples of the implementation of entrepreneurial learning as a key competence in curricula at all educational levels and in practical teaching. School-based training firms provide VET students with valuable insights into how real businesses function. In addition, a comprehensive training programme that will enable VET staff to teach entrepreneurship has been established. The recent implementation of numerous projects and donor-funded activities has also helped greatly to promote entrepreneurial learning in different forms and entrepreneurship in general. This includes the development of a curriculum and materials for starting businesses, the organisation of national fairs on the subject and participation in international events. It also covers effective collaboration among VET providers and businesses at a local level, but also at a national level, where the increased involvement of social partners and institutions in the labour market can be noted.

Campaigns to encourage enterprises to provide or invest in VET sometimes include financial support for apprenticeship places or incentives for enterprises to strengthen cooperation with VET institutions by supporting the development of teacher and trainer competences. Close cooperation between the academic and business communities needs further strengthening to encourage shared insight into the objectives of the local economy and to enable companies to train staff in such a way that individual skills are developed and the desired business results are achieved.

This short-term deliverable was considered to be implemented, although Policy Options 1 to 6 were seen as less successful in contributing to the achievement of the deliverable's objectives. The weaknesses to be addressed lie in the cooperation between VET institutions and social partners, and better networking needs to be established in the introduction and promotion of entrepreneurship. The general lack of cooperation between social partners and schools is caused by the insufficient involvement of business representatives, a lack of entrepreneurship service providers, and no financial mechanisms for the establishment of sustainable business-school partnerships. Forging links between schools and different organisations promoting entrepreneurship, while strengthening the institutional approach to joint financing schemes, could thus be included in the next policy development priorities. Policy Option 7 'Services that assist VET institutions in finding partners in the business world' was considered both very important for the future policy development process and key to the further promotion of entrepreneurship.

The challenge in this area is to further develop an integrated cross-sectoral VET policy approach to the business world in order to meet the needs of the small Montenegrin economy more effectively. In addition, entrepreneurs need to receive strong institutional support, not only through tax incentives and benefits but also in the quality of educational institutions. Entrepreneurship would further benefit from a legal system that creates confidence in the future. An improvement in the institutional framework for entrepreneurial education and the creation of the capacity to monitor and support innovative and talented students within the VET system would also be beneficial.

## Short-term deliverable 15: Entrepreneurship

<p>Strategic and legal framework (main documents)</p>	<p>The <b>Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning</b> and the <b>Strategy for Adult Education for the Period 2005–15</b>. Entrepreneurship is taught at all school grades, and guidance for teachers on implementing entrepreneurial learning across all subjects has been provided. Thus, entrepreneurial learning is a cross-curricular area that contributes to an integrative approach to education. This type of learning is carried out with reference to all educational subjects. It can complement and connect the content of the curriculum, promoting both the lifelong learning principle and the contribution of adult education to economic growth and social development.</p> <p>To support the development of entrepreneurship skills and attitudes, the <b>National Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance (2011–15)</b> prioritises the provision of good-quality career guidance services that will help individuals to develop their working lives over the long term according to their abilities, interests and labour market needs.</p>
<p>Institutional bodies and parties most actively involved in implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ministry of Education</li> <li>■ Centre for Vocational Education</li> <li>■ Employment Agency of Montenegro, incorporating the Directorate for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</li> <li>■ Employers' associations</li> <li>■ Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>■ Union of Employers of Montenegro</li> <li>■ Projects providing grants to deliver entrepreneurship training, for example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECO NET project (supported by the Austrian organisation KulturKontakt)</li> <li>• Project 'Strengthening Vocational Training in North East Montenegro' (supported by Lux Development)</li> <li>• Project MNE/011 (Lux Development) – sponsoring entrepreneurship centres</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Entrepreneurs from the north of Montenegro</li> <li>■ Vocational schools</li> <li>■ Service centre supporting virtual enterprises at the Centre for Vocational Education and Training</li> </ul>
<p>Most successfully achieved policy options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 10: Learning methods in VET including simulated or real business experience</li> <li>■ Policy Option 8: Training VET staff to help learners acquire entrepreneurship skills</li> <li>■ Policy Option 9: Involving enterprises and experts from business in VET</li> </ul>
<p>Policy options that achieved moderate progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 1: Entrepreneurship strategy including VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 2: Lifelong learning or VET strategy which promotes entrepreneurship skills</li> <li>■ Policy Option 3: Entrepreneurship as an underlying principle in VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 4: Guidance and counselling strategies supporting entrepreneurship</li> <li>■ Policy Option 5: Incentives to VET providers to promote entrepreneurship skills and attitudes</li> <li>■ Policy Option 6: Funding scheme specifically targeted towards entrepreneurship activities</li> </ul>
<p>Policy option less well achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 7: Services that assist VET institutions in finding partners in the business world</li> </ul>
<p>Future policy development might focus on the following</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cooperation with business</li> <li>■ Entrepreneurship service providers</li> <li>■ Financing mechanisms to promote partnerships between businesses and schools</li> <li>■ Forging of links between different institutions promoting entrepreneurship</li> <li>■ Strengthening of the institutional approach and joint financing</li> <li>■ Cooperation between social partners and schools in promoting entrepreneurship.</li> </ul>

## 3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6: REALISING INCLUSIVE IVET AND CVET

### 3.1 Short-term deliverable 16: Maximising the contribution of VET in combating early leaving from education

Generally the working group's members considered this short-term deliverable not particularly relevant to the Montenegrin context. The national VET system takes the treatment of at-risk groups into consideration, but mainly through general policies, which are strategically planned and well embedded in school practice. The system is already geared to supporting the general well-being of families and keeping students in VET. Interventions that are implemented include working with teachers and vocational services in schools, as well as undertaking preventive work with students. In addition, the number of students in every class and school in Montenegro is tracked, and VET teachers are provided with training in psychological and pedagogical theory. There are also cases where VET institutions have developed mechanisms to subsidise employers and to involve at-risk groups in further education.

The successful policy options are mainly those relating to the implementation of practices. However, the picture is unclear and an identification of needs should be undertaken by all stakeholders in the process. A number of strategies also carefully consider the issue of inclusion in education. The types of actions on which the country is primarily focused refer mostly to the legal framework in the context of establishing effective networks at an institutional level.

This short-term deliverable is seen as partially implemented since the diversity of alternatives for educational inclusion is not deemed satisfactory. The question of reducing the rate of early dropouts from vocational schools sparked an interesting debate, which raised several options for limiting early school leaving. A possible measure to combat early dropout, which can be observed in the three-year VET programmes, might be to transform the three-year programmes into four-year courses. Policy makers regard the three-year VET programmes, which do not provide entry to higher education degree qualifications, as suitable for adult training purposes.

Policy Options 1 to 10 are not considered successful in contributing to the achievement of the short-term deliverable. This is due to a lack of systematic two-way communication in the form of shared databases, information exchange, the identification of issues, and evaluation and reporting mechanisms. Some policy options are relevant, but the system is not geared towards taking action, and the treatment of at-risk groups is considered only in the context of regular practice. Strategically planned changes are embedded in schools' practice, but there is an impression that at-risk groups receive only scant attention. Future policy actions should focus on measures that make the system more flexible in responding to potential dropouts, and capable of providing alternative options. The system should focus more on prevention. In other words, preventive actions should be taken before students leave school, and, to this end, more detailed and precise indicators should be defined. The policy options still to be implemented relate to apprenticeship programmes and routes (Policy Options 5 and 6), and to the social inclusion of migrants (Policy Option 10). For the development of active prevention measures, Policy Option 14 'Incentives for learners and their families to remain in VET' would be the most important for further development. The policy option in most need of further promotion is Policy Option 16 'Incentives for enterprises to provide training or employment'.

## Short-term deliverable 16: Maximising the contribution of VET in combating early leaving from education

<p>Strategic and legal framework (main documents)</p>	<p>The <b>General Law on Education</b> stipulates that three- and four-year programmes of vocational education are open to everyone who has finished elementary school.</p> <p>The <b>National Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance (2011–15)</b> has been expanded to support IVET learners.</p> <p>The <b>Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro (2010–14)</b> sets out priorities and goals up to 2016. These include ensuring personal, social and professional development for each individual, and encouraging fairness, social cohesion and the active participation of all citizens. One of the strategy's priorities is to make VET accessible to all target groups – young people and adults, early school leavers, vulnerable groups and those without qualifications – and to provide for progression through the system. Furthermore, the strategy advocates following up students who leave education without any qualifications.</p> <p>This strategy, together with the <b>Strategy for the Development of VET in the Northern Region of Montenegro (2011–14)</b>, provides the basis for the development of the vocational education system.</p> <p>The <b>Law on Vocational Education</b> allows for the introduction of educational and other qualification programmes that could lead to individuals acquiring a qualification based on occupational standards. Despite the fact that the VET law provides students with the opportunity to be taught either by schools or by schools and employers, the predominant type of practical training takes place in school workshops – there are very few examples of workplace-based apprenticeships. However, in some fields there are examples of cooperation between schools and employers. A package of measures to prevent early school leaving has been operational since 2012.</p> <p>These measures include establishing a career guidance system in elementary and secondary schools; improving enrolment policy; modularising curricula; supporting continuing teacher improvement programmes; providing systemic support for teachers working with students with behavioural problems; strengthening cooperation with employers and parents; providing financial support to students; and offering incentives for employers to take on certain categories of unemployed people.</p> <p>The <b>New Strategy for Inclusive Education (2014–18)</b>, recently adopted by the Montenegrin government, provides new training methods at all levels of education for working with children with special education needs. A number of secondary legislative documents form the framework for organising complementary lessons and other types of individual and group assistance, or for providing professional assistance to students with special education needs. The <b>Strategy for the Introduction of the Montenegrin Qualifications Framework (2008–13)</b>, the <b>Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning (2008–13)</b> and the <b>National Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance (2011–15)</b> are also relevant for social inclusion in vocational education.</p>
<p>Institutional bodies most actively involved in implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ministry of Education</li> <li>■ Centre for Vocational Education</li> <li>■ Bureau for Education Services</li> <li>■ Montenegrin education information system – operational in all vocational and elementary schools (as of school year 2013/14)</li> <li>■ Vocational schools</li> <li>■ Project 'Support to Inclusion in Secondary Vocational Schools' (KulturKontakt)</li> </ul>

## Short-term deliverable 16: Maximising the contribution of VET in combating early leaving from education

<p>Most successfully achieved policy options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 4: Work-based learning elements in school-based IVET programmes</li> <li>■ Policy Option 11: Guidance and mentoring for learners in IVET programmes</li> <li>■ Policy Option 12: Psychological and social support to learners in IVET programmes</li> <li>■ Policy Option 13: Training for VET teachers/trainers to support disadvantaged learners</li> <li>■ Policy Option 14: Incentives for learners and their families to remain in VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 15: Incentives for VET institutions to prevent dropouts</li> </ul>
<p>Policy options that achieved moderate progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 1: Lifelong learning or VET strategy supporting early school leavers and those at risk</li> <li>■ Policy Option 2: Regulations easing access to VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 3: Modularised IVET programmes</li> <li>■ Policy Option 5: Apprenticeships or similar programmes</li> <li>■ Policy Option 6: Alternative routes within mainstream VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 7: Routes outside regular VET for qualifications valued by the labour market</li> <li>■ Policy Option 8: Opportunity to acquire underdeveloped key competences in VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 9: Opportunity to obtain missed qualifications in VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 10: Opportunity for those with migrant background to learn the host country language</li> </ul>
<p>Policy option less well achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 16: Incentives for enterprises to provide training or employment</li> </ul>
<p>Future policy development might focus on the following</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Systematic database sharing, information exchange, identification of issues, and evaluation and reporting mechanisms</li> <li>■ Promotion of concrete actions</li> <li>■ Clear identification of the needs of all stakeholders</li> <li>■ Diversity of alternatives for educational inclusion</li> <li>■ Reform of lower-level VET qualification for adult education</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Short-term deliverable 17: Raising the participation of low-skilled and other at-risk groups in education and training

All of the 15 policy options covered under STD 17 are presented as policies in progress. However, almost half of them are not considered to be contributing substantially to the achievement of the short-term deliverable. As stated above, the existing policy framework ensures easy access to VET. Flexible training programmes have been put in place in Montenegro during the last few years. Their purpose is to stimulate the participation of low-skilled and other at-risk groups in routes to qualification that are outside regular VET and are valued by education and training authorities as well as by the labour market. In addition, the creation of a different student status is proposed, allowing low-skilled or at-risk students to attend either regular lessons or part-time studies. The policy options selected as contributing the most to the achievement of the short-term deliverable's objectives are those that improve the possibility of the prior recognition of qualifications obtained through non-formal education. The strategic framework for acquiring qualifications through alternative routes is already well established. The types of action on which the country is primarily focused are enshrined in the legal framework and backed up by different forms of legislation.

This short-term deliverable is generally considered as only partially achieved due to a lack of financial resources, mainly for the enforcement of strategic prescriptions to develop alternative routes to gaining qualifications. The exercise recognised that Policy Options 5 and 13 contributed the most to achieving this short-term deliverable's objectives and that the focus should be on encouraging companies to provide training by strengthening the legislative framework.

Policy Options 4 and 5 were not considered particularly significant: while having guidelines and routes outside formal VET was regarded as important for those benefitting from the training, it was seen as less important from the point of view of the employers. The legal framework enables further development and the incorporation of the treatment of at-risk groups within the regular system, but there are no specifically designed activities or programmes adapted to the needs of these groups. Thus, implementation is weak in some areas. As VET provision is not adjusted to the needs of the at-risk groups, they are not motivated to attend these programmes. Furthermore, teachers' skills are not developed to deal with at-risk groups since they are not considered a priority. A complete national framework is needed, together with strong social partnerships, flexibility and good working relationships with the NGO sector. There is also a lack of infrastructure, leading to the partial implementation of training opportunities.

The following policy options might need further evaluation before implementation: the inclusion of migrants through VET and language learning (Policy Option 12); interventions aimed at supporting adults into work (i.e. providing guidance and professional advice); teacher training for working with at-risk adults (Policy Options 13 and 14); and the development of incentives for employers to provide on-the-job and job-related training activities as part of an integrated approach building coherence between VET sector, labour market and employment policies. The need for promotion in the future was also identified in the case of Policy Option 2 'Strategies or guidelines enabling adult learners to access higher VET (EQF level 5+)', and Policy Option 3 'Guidelines to ensure that CVET qualifications are valued by the E&T/labour market'. Further development should focus on improving legislation that would integrate the employers who provide training (qualifications) into the system. Although the CVET qualifications are well established in the VET system, further improvement is necessary to integrate provision at the operational level. Policy Option 12 'Opportunity for those with a migrant background to learn the host country language', and Policy Option 15 'Incentives for enterprises to provide training or employment', were both considered as crucial for the improvement of the policy development process and much needed in terms of future policy development.

### Short-term deliverable 17: Raising the participation of low-skilled and other at-risk groups in education and training

#### Strategic and legal framework (main documents)

The **Law on VET** stipulates that the VET qualification obtained in informal education should be recognised.

The **Law on National Qualifications Framework**, the **Action Plan for the Implementation of VET 2012–13** and the guidelines for developing curricula and modularisation and credit ranking, in addition to the well-established institutional bodies, provide the basis for the validation of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning. Links have been established with the active labour market measures through VET interventions in the labour market based on the VET law. Since 2011 this law has provided flexibility in terms of the methodology and adoption of the curricula for adults. The appeal of VET for adult learners, and particularly for those with low qualifications or those at risk of exclusion from the labour market, has thus increased. The **National Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance** proposes that professional counselling and advice should be included in the curricula of all schools.

## Short-term deliverable 17: Raising the participation of low-skilled and other at-risk groups in education and training

<p>Institutional bodies most actively involved in implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ministry of Education</li> <li>■ Council for Qualifications and sectoral committees</li> <li>■ Centre for Vocational Education</li> <li>■ Bureau for Education Services</li> <li>■ Vocational schools licensed as providers of adult education</li> <li>■ Private institutions licensed as providers of adult education</li> <li>■ Employment Agency of Montenegro</li> <li>■ Career centres</li> <li>■ Seven centres for counselling in the employment services</li> <li>■ Montenegrin Tourism Association and Centre for Vocational Education and Training – Memorandum of Understanding</li> <li>■ Employers' associations</li> </ul>
<p>Most successfully achieved policy options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 5: Routes outside regular VET for qualifications valued by the E&amp;T/labour market</li> <li>■ Policy Option 13: Legal provisions or guidelines improving guidance and counselling for adults</li> <li>■ Policy Option 14: Training for VET teachers/trainers to work with adults, including at-risk groups</li> <li>■ Policy Option 7: Guidelines on time arrangements for VET that suit adult learners' needs</li> <li>■ Policy Option 4: Guidelines to ensure that labour market training is valued by the E&amp;T/labour market</li> <li>■ Policy Option 10: Opportunity to acquire underdeveloped key competences in VET</li> </ul>
<p>Policy options that achieved moderate progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 3: Guidelines to ensure that CVET qualifications are valued by the E&amp;T/labour market</li> <li>■ Policy Option 1: Regulations easing access to VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 2: Strategies or guidelines enabling adult learners to access higher VET (EQF level 5+)</li> <li>■ Policy Option 6: Guidelines on easily accessible learning venues for VET</li> <li>■ Policy Option 8: Guidelines on helping learners to combine (C)VET with family obligations</li> <li>■ Policy Option 9: CVET or lifelong learning strategies promoting the acquisition of key competences</li> <li>■ Policy Option 11: Opportunity to obtain missed qualifications in VET</li> </ul>
<p>Policy options less well achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 12: Opportunity for those with a migrant background to learn the host country language</li> <li>■ Policy Option 15: Incentives for enterprises to provide training or employment</li> </ul>
<p>Future policy development might focus on the following</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Further implementation of the legal framework</li> <li>■ Improvement of legislation to integrate the employers who provide training into the VET system</li> <li>■ Further adjustments of existing programmes to the needs of at-risk groups – increasing the motivation to attend</li> <li>■ Development of teachers' skills to work with at-risk groups</li> <li>■ Creation of an integrated policy framework</li> <li>■ Strong social partnerships and effective relationships with the NGO sector</li> <li>■ Development of infrastructure as a precondition for overcoming the partial implementation of training offers</li> <li>■ Financial resources for the development of alternative routes to achieving qualifications</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Short-term deliverable 18: Using ICT to maximise access to training and to promote active learning

Policy options under this short-term deliverable were identified as not particularly relevant within the country context. At-risk groups are defined very broadly in Montenegro and only a very small number of students belong to any one of the at-risk groups. There is no need therefore for the system to design specific mechanisms to achieve the relevant policy options. The system already reaches these groups through the regular education programmes, which are adapted to the needs of specific individuals. A system wide solution for introducing ICT in schools is very well designed and all teachers already possess good ICT skills, which are sufficient to satisfy, or can be adapted to meet, the needs of specific at-risk groups. The policy makers considered that financial support is vital in achieving the objectives in this area, and this short-term deliverable is probably the most expensive one. Almost all the policy options under this short-term deliverable are in the process of implementation. However, a systematic approach is lacking, as the current system has not been developed to handle policy options in this way.

This short-term deliverable is assessed as moderately achieved, mainly due to discrepancies in implementation in different parts of the system. Problems in implementation arise from the different approaches to at-risk groups applied within the system. Most of the activities focus on using ICT in the education system in general, but there is a lack of interaction between institutions. The development of a web portal, which could be used by both the at-risk groups and institutions, might be a solution in the future. Many strategies take the development of ICT skills into consideration, but the impression remains that the actions that have been implemented relate to the development of general ICT skills and concentrate on the ICT literacy of teachers. Therefore, the specific and specialised use of ICT skills is still not fully developed, especially in the use of joint learning platforms. Future developments should also focus on the development of didactic tools, particularly taking into account the short life cycle of the software and hardware. Almost all of the six policy options covered by this short-term deliverable need further improvement and strengthening in terms of practical implementation. Policy Option 3 'Incentives helping at-risk groups to cover the ICT and internet costs', was considered as very important for the progress of future policy development, while Policy Option 5 'VET platforms or web portals tailored to the needs of at-risk groups' is most in need of further promotion.

Short-term deliverable 18: Using ICT to maximise access to training and promote active learning	
Strategic and legal framework (main documents)	The <b>Strategy for Information Society Development in Montenegro (2012–16)</b> , which states that it is necessary to integrate ICT into all aspects of the education process and equip the education system with modern ICT technology, and the <b>Strategy for Development of Vocational Education (2010–14)</b> provide the policy framework for achieving this short-term deliverable. At the same time, the two strategies promote adult learning within the context of lifelong learning and provide the basis for the development of VET statistics in an easy-to-use form.
Institutional bodies and parties most actively involved in implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ministry of Education – Department for ICT Technologies</li> <li>■ ICT coordinators in all secondary schools</li> <li>■ Centre for Vocational Education and Training and DVV International (Germany)</li> <li>■ Employment Agency of Montenegro – Centre for Information and Professional Guidance</li> <li>■ Broadcasting Agency of Montenegro</li> </ul>

## Short-term deliverable 18: Using ICT to maximise access to training and promote active learning

Most successfully achieved policy options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 4: Training VET teachers and/or trainers to help at-risk groups in using ICT</li> <li>■ Policy Option 2: Lifelong learning or VET strategy which promotes using ICT for at-risk groups</li> <li>■ Policy Option 6: Development of ICT-based learning tools/methods to help at-risk groups learn</li> </ul>
Policy option that achieved moderate progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 1: ICT strategy or digital agenda considering at-risk groups</li> </ul>
Policy options less well achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 3: Incentives helping at-risk groups to cover the ICT and internet costs</li> <li>■ Policy Option 5: VET platforms or web portals tailored to the needs of at-risk groups</li> </ul>
Future policy development might focus on the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implementation of a legal framework</li> <li>■ Development of common approaches to at-risk groups to overcome the discrepancies in implementation between different parts of the system</li> <li>■ Development of didactic tools, particularly taking into account the short life cycle of the software and hardware</li> <li>■ Interaction between institutions</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Short-term deliverable 19: Using existing monitoring systems to support the participation of at-risk groups in VET

There is a well-established network for statistical data monitoring, which is carried out by the Montenegrin Statistical Bureau, the existing Montenegrin education information system at the Ministry of Education, and the social security database (linked to a 'social card' which is under development at the Ministry of Labour). Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT) data is taken into account in general policy making and in decision making related to employment programmes and adjustments to VET, such as providing special guidance in particular areas, adapting existing training programmes and delivering second chance projects. Based on the methodology and regular implementation of the labour force survey by MONSTAT, Montenegro compiles regular updates in relation to labour force statistics by sector, but also by type of education.

This short-term deliverable should be seen as a cross-cutting coherent approach to linking VET provision with employment and labour market policies, for instance by providing evidence-based guidance for at-risk groups and unemployed people and ensuring the social inclusion of other vulnerable groups in the labour market. In addition, alternative routes to awarding vocational qualifications have been made possible through close cooperation between the education and labour ministries. Citizens can obtain recognition for their skills through the formal vocational qualification and certification process. This flexible system is an important step towards acknowledging non-formally and informally gained skills and competences.

A good preventive monitoring system is in place, which entails institutions gathering and regularly updating statistical data. As a result of this system, a large number of measures have been undertaken by institutions to increase employment opportunities for groups at risk. The types of actions on which the country is primarily focused in this area are related to the establishment of a general legal framework.

A number of mechanisms, which are contributing to the achievement of this particular short-term deliverable, are already in place. However, a problem has been identified in the lack of institutional

interpretation of data or participation in information exchange. Policy Option 3 ‘Preventive VET responses for groups at risk, taking account of monitoring data’ is contributing the most to progress under this short-term deliverable, with an effective information system in place which also oversees at-risk groups. However, Policy Option 2 ‘Legislation allowing the combining of data on learning, labour market entry and careers’ was considered not at all relevant to Montenegrin practice. This is due to the restrictions that might be caused by the lack of specific secondary legislation and low levels of institutional engagement in defining a model for data exchange and cooperation between different institutions that facilitates analytical observation.

This short-term deliverable was considered as partially implemented due to a lack of specific engagement with this issue by the VET institutions, and because of the need for further financing and alignment between data provided by different institutions. The strategic framework has been adjusted but it is difficult to implement because of the variety of needs that at-risk groups have.

Further analysis might be valuable to assess the use of VET statistics and the current monitoring system for defining VET content in compliance with labour market demands from short- and medium-term perspectives. Such analysis could also be used as a basis for developing a methodology and tool kit for the permanent monitoring of the market’s needs in terms of labour supply by region and sector.

Short-term deliverable 19: Using existing monitoring systems to support the participation of at-risk groups in VET	
Strategic and legal framework (main documents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ General Law on Education</li> <li>■ National Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance (2011–15) and Action Plan 2013</li> <li>■ Law on the Education of Children with Special Needs</li> <li>■ National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development</li> <li>■ National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Montenegro</li> <li>■ Agenda of Economic Reforms</li> <li>■ Action Plan: A Decade of Roma Inclusion</li> <li>■ Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms</li> <li>■ Strategy for Improving the Position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro (2012–16)</li> </ul>
Institutional bodies most actively involved in implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ministry of Education</li> <li>■ Centre for Vocational Education</li> <li>■ MONSTAT labour force survey</li> <li>■ Ministry for Human and Minority Rights</li> <li>■ Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare</li> <li>■ Employment Agency of Montenegro</li> <li>■ Second chance project</li> </ul>
Most successfully achieved policy options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 3: Preventive VET responses for groups at risk, taking account of monitoring data</li> </ul>
Policy options that achieved moderate progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 1: Laws or regulations to consider at-risk groups in existing monitoring systems</li> <li>■ Policy Option 4: Remedial VET responses for groups at risk, taking account of monitoring data</li> </ul>
Policy option less well achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policy Option 2: Legislation allowing the combining of data on learning, labour market entry and careers</li> </ul>
Future policy development might focus on the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Specific structure and methodology for the interpretation of data for analytical purposes</li> <li>■ Institutional interpretation of data and information exchange</li> <li>■ Financing</li> <li>■ Alignment between different data</li> <li>■ Institutional capacity</li> </ul>

## 4. EX-POST POLICY ANALYSIS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Overall, the trends in social and economic development seen in Montenegro are similar to those currently experienced by all EU countries. Montenegro, however, faces higher numbers of unemployed people who are threatened by exclusion from the labour market, especially those with lower-level or no qualifications. On the positive side, employers now have greater expectations of the national VET system meeting their needs for a workforce with particular skills and knowledge, although VET graduates' entry into the labour market is not necessarily guaranteed. At the same time, the number of students dropping out before completing their studies remains high, especially in programmes leading to lower levels of qualifications, and the integration of VET and employment policies remains weak. Within this context, the EU-driven Bruges Process provides an important basis for a policy dialogue in the following main directions:

- setting the national strategic goals up to 2020;
- harmonising Montenegrin policies with European priorities up to 2020;
- fostering the country's commitment to comply with the EU VET policy development process;
- strengthening cooperation with various EU institutions (for example, the ETF and Cedefop) which form strategic partnerships with Montenegro in the process.

The overall conclusion drawn from the ex-post policy analysis is that a number of policy options are judged to be not relevant in general or at this particular time. Some policy options were estimated as 'leading' in the country context, meaning that fully meeting their objectives would lead to the development of other policy options in the future. In addition, some short-term deliverables were identified more as long-term goals or as having results particular to Montenegro. In certain cases, some of the short-term deliverables and their policy options were presented as providing guiding principles for the overall VET policy development process.

The general findings of the ex-post policy analysis indicate that VET policy reform has performed well in the area of Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 ('Fostering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as the use of ICT (in both IVET and CVET)' and 'Realising inclusive IVET and CVET'). The VET vision is focused on preparing the country to become a knowledge-based society. A set of important strategic developments support the VET vision. The ex-post policy analysis identified the following horizontal trends under STDs 13 to 19.

- Positive VET reform, with key stakeholders capable of guiding the development and revision of VET policy but also motivated and able to continue to introduce EU VET-level policies in the system.
- The presence of a high-level political commitment to VET reforms in line with the EU VET agenda. This is shown by the on-going development of existing strategic national programming documents and action plans for VET reform, correlated to the developing needs of areas such as the digital society, entrepreneurship for innovation and growth, and social inclusion and employability.
- A VET system with key stakeholders and institutions that can judge the relevance of policy options in the context of country-specific needs, acknowledging that the Bruges Communiqué policy recommendations are optional rather than obligatory. However, making progress in the Bruges short-term deliverables and policy options is recognised as a precondition for alignment with the European VET environment.

- On-going strengthening of institutions' capacity to ensure policy development. The key role of the Ministry of Education, with its subordinate structures – the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the Bureau for Education Services – is highlighted both in the strategic documents and in practice. The Ministry of Education has also established good collaborative relationships with the Ministry of Labour, employment services and the employers' associations.
- A well-promoted participatory process, in which all the appropriate stakeholders are included, taking into account their particular understanding and knowledge of the sector.
- The creation of platforms for mutual learning and to facilitate communication and coordination of the policy framework through the establishment of such bodies as the National Working Group for Coordination of the Torino Process and policy developments in the field of VET, and the National Council on Education and its sectoral committees.
- The on-going focus on significant achievements and the delivery of accountable results, as identified in the 2014 Bruges country fiche.

It should also be noted that although the ex-post policy analysis was limited to only some of the short-term deliverables and policy options in the Bruges Communiqué, it is clear that the exercise was not actually a simple one, as it was required to focus on comprehensive VET reform. To isolate and measure, to some extent, the impact of each policy option on the relevant short-term deliverable in comparison with other policy options is certainly a time-consuming and demanding task. Another challenge was that of having to continually move 'back and forth in time', since the baseline decided upon was 2010. The central question was whether, in fact, each specific policy option had made a difference in the VET reform process – whether or not it had added value. The ex-post policy analysis exercise in Montenegro proved that it is possible to measure the impact of the policy options. More importantly, it also proved that a well-structured approach will enable the gathering of valuable evidence concerning what works and what does not within a country-specific context of VET reform.

The ex-post exercise piloted in Montenegro could serve as a point of reference for other candidate countries in the pre-accession region. The methodology as well as the results obtained in a relatively short time (about four months) clearly show its suitability for use in developing similar exercises to support other countries in the region. The ETF is committed to promoting the capacity of countries to apply evidence-based methods and tools for the development, monitoring and assessment of policies in VET (ETF Mid-term Perspective 2014–17). Although all ETF activities and projects use evidence-based policy development as a principle for taking action, a targeted effort has been made since 2010 to enhance this approach through the Torino Process. This process is a participatory instrument for VET analysis and policy assessment, which is implemented in partner countries on a biannual basis. It could, thus, also serve as a capacity-building exercise for authorities and policy makers in the field of VET and such experience could be successfully multiplied in other similar cases.

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>Cedefop</b>	Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)
<b>CVET</b>	Continuing vocational education and training
<b>E&amp;T</b>	Education and training
<b>EQF</b>	European Qualifications Framework
<b>ETF</b>	European Training Foundation
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communication technology
<b>IPA</b>	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
<b>IVET</b>	Initial vocational education and training
<b>MONSTAT</b>	Statistical Office of Montenegro
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>PRIME</b>	Projecting reform impact in vocational education and training (ETF project)
<b>SME</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprise
<b>SMEDD</b>	Directorate for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
<b>STD</b>	Short-term deliverable

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