



GEMM

GOVERNANCE FOR
EMPLOYABILITY IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN

FINAL REPORT SUMMARY



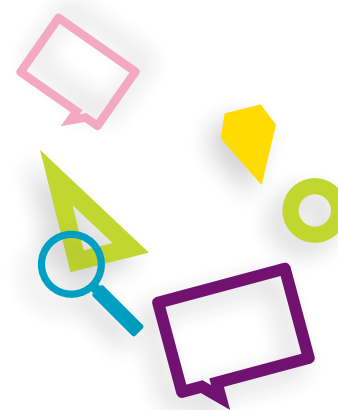
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GEMM: GOVERNANCE FOR EMPLOYABILITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

MAKING THE MOST OF PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE YOUTH SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

1. Facts and key figures in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean: A complex context for youth employability

The political and economic context in the countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region is marked by profound socio-economic challenges, high volatility and instability. Economic growth was heavily affected by the uprisings in the region and the crisis in Europe with a decrease in tourism revenues, a slow-down of foreign investment and exports, and a decrease in remittances. The trend towards moderate growth is recent and the foundations are still shaky given the persistent instability.

Low activity rates (40 to 50%) characterise the region, mainly due to low female participation (on average less than 22% of working-age women are active). Unemployment rates remain high (12%), and are persistently higher for women and youth (3.7 times higher) (ILO, 2015).

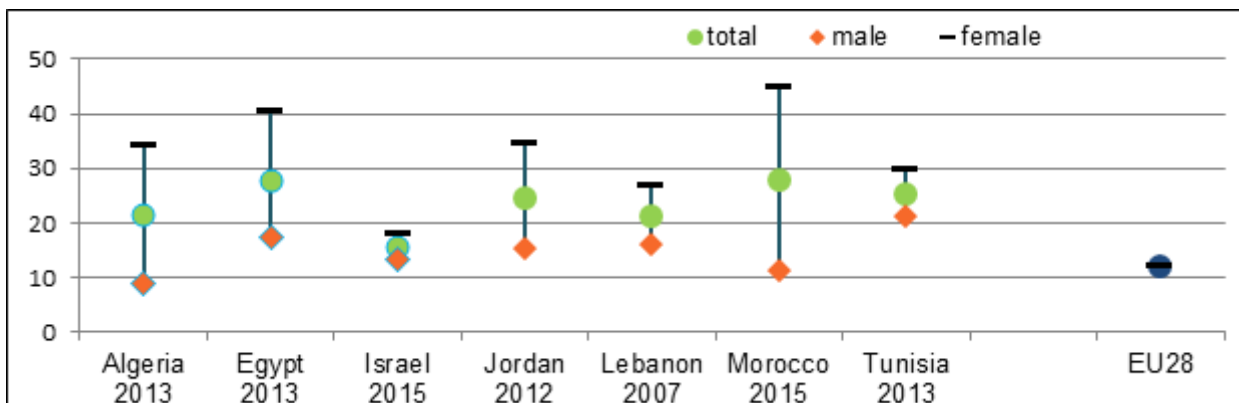
The combination of low activity and high unemployment lead to an extremely low level of total employment: on average, less than one third have a job among the working-age population. This

implies a de facto exclusion of women and youth from the labour market.

As regards young people, the youth activity rate is slightly over 30% (45% for males and 15% for females) compared to a world average of 50% (ILO, 2013). One out of three young people is economically active – either employed or unemployed. Another third is estimated to be in school while the remainder are not in employment, education or training (NEETs – see **graph 1**), hence not covered by any statistics.

Furthermore, the region has the highest average rate of youth unemployment in the world (29.5% in 2014), and this has been increasing over the last decade (ILO, 2015). Youth unemployment rates vary from less than 20% for Morocco and Lebanon, 25% in Algeria, above 30% for Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia, and with peaks above 40% for Palestine and Libya. The majority of unemployed people (up to 80% in Egypt) are first-time job-seekers (especially women) with no previous work experience. Moreover, most of them have intermediate and higher education. This means that educational attainment actually decreases opportunities to find a job (see **graph 2** overleaf).

Graph 1: Percentage of NEETs and EU average

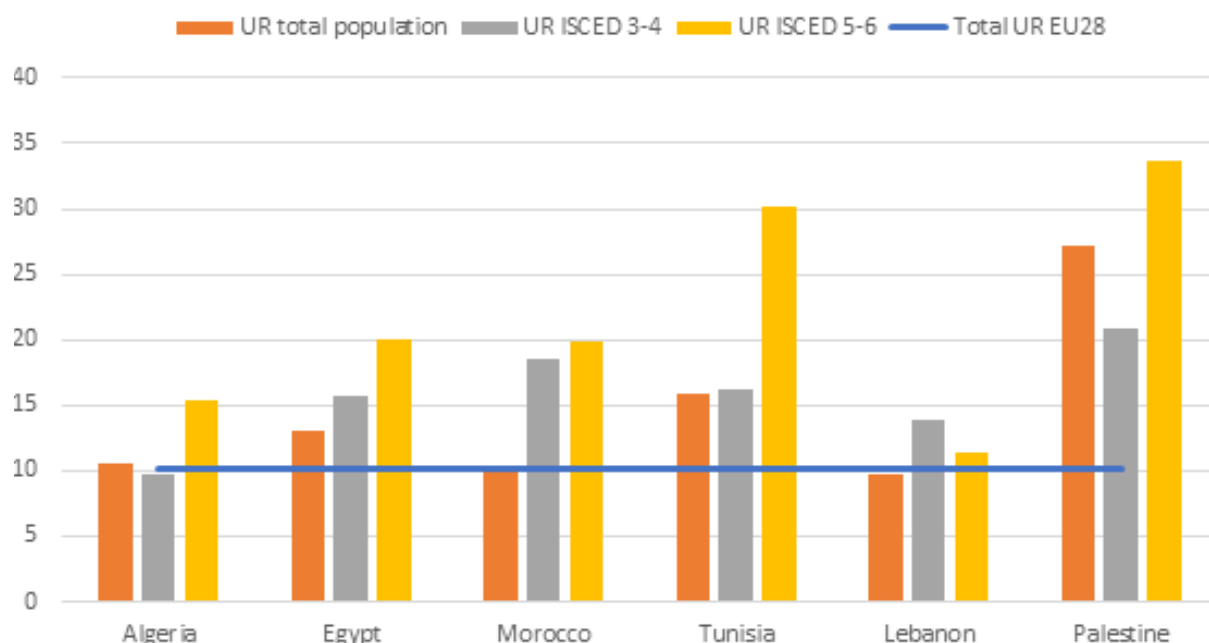


Sources: ILOSTAT, Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel) and Haut Commissariat au Plan (Morocco)

¹ No data available for Libya



Graph 2: Unemployment rates of total population, medium educated (ISCED 3-4) and higher educated (ISCED 5-6)



Source: Eurostat
Year: 2014 (2013 for Libya, Tunisia and Jordan; 2012 for Lebanon)

While economic globalisation has led some multinational companies to establish branches in some countries as part of global supply chains (e.g. in the automotive industry), the main employer often remains the State and public services, including health and education services, reaching up to 40% of total employment (40% in Algeria, 39% in Jordan, 23% in Palestine, 22% in Tunisia). The private sector is dominated by informal employment with high precariousness, long working hours, low incomes and a lack of social protection. The informal economy is estimated to employ two-thirds of the labour force and produce one-third of GDP in the region (World Bank, 2011; ILO, 2015). Moreover, the informal economy is growing due to the deteriorating geopolitical situation in the region, including the increase of uncontrolled migratory and refugee flows.

In response to higher demand for employment, vocational education and training (VET) and employability measures have moved up the political agenda in recent years. Some countries have worked on comprehensive VET strategies, but these are not yet integrated into a broader economic and social vision. Progress can be observed in some countries in terms of enhanced participation in the design of a shared vision. The main challenge is to keep high

levels of VET and employment actors' participation while moving from vision to implementation. Areas for further improvement include monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies and VET system performance.

Countries are aware that shifting from supply-driven to demand-driven VET systems implies improved participatory governance of skills development. This requires support both in terms of achieving greater coordination among key partners as well as increased devolution of responsibilities to territorial levels.

2. Multi-level governance: Making the most of partnerships

Multi-level governance is a process-driven approach and a coordinated action. It can be defined as an arrangement for making binding decisions that engages a multiplicity of politically independent but otherwise interdependent actors – private and public – at different levels of territorial aggregation in more or less continuous negotiation, deliberation, implementation, and that does not assign exclusive policy competence or assert a hierarchy of political authority to any of these levels².

² Schmitter, P. (2004), definition applied in the ETF position paper on Good Multi-Level Governance, source: "Neo-functionalism," in A. Wiener and T. Diez (eds), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 45–74



Within the GEMM project, the definition of good multi-level governance adopted is as follows: “Good multi-level governance in VET can be defined as a model for VET policy-making management based on coordinated action to effectively involve VET public and private stakeholders at all possible levels (international, national, sectoral, territorial/ local, training provider, etc.) for objective setting, implementation, monitoring and review. Good multi-level governance in VET aims to reinforce interaction and participation of such stakeholders whilst improving relevance, accountability, transparency, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of VET policies.”³

The EU focuses on five principles that underpin good governance⁴: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. Each principle is important for establishing more democratic governance and more effective delivery of public policies.

Openness	is the capacity of different institutions to communicate with each other and with the citizens. This is particularly important when it comes to improving confidence in institutions and the decisions they make.
Participation	is about an inclusive approach to policy development and implementation. Wide participation ensures the quality, relevance and effectiveness of policies.
Accountability	is about clarity of roles and responsibilities in the legislative and executive processes.
Effectiveness	is about delivering policies on time, on the basis of clear objectives, on an evaluation of future impact and, where available, on past experience. Effectiveness depends on implementing policies in a proportionate manner and on taking decisions at the most appropriate level.
Coherence	is about the complementarity of policies and action by different institutions, and of different policy objectives. Coherence requires political leadership and a strong responsibility on the part of the institutions to ensure a consistent approach within a complex system.

The principles of good governance recognise that “policies can no longer be effective unless they are prepared, implemented and enforced in a more inclusive way” and ensure the participation of different actors.

Good multi-level governance aims at the coordinated participation of different actors. There is no single model of multi-level governance as each country decides on which actors should be involved in the different phases of the policy cycle, their specific role and responsibility and the way they interface.

Multi-level governance is applied across two dimensions. The vertical dimension refers to the links between higher and lower levels of government (supranational, national, regional, local), including their institutional, financial, and informational aspects. The horizontal dimension refers to cooperation arrangements between authorities and society in the context of social dialogue.

Coordinated actions on the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the different stakeholders should be conceived as a tool for improving the effectiveness of local public service delivery and for the implementation of development strategies. In the context of the GEMM project, stakeholders are defined as:

- at national level: VET governmental authorities (e.g. ministries, agencies), social partners representatives (employers’ associations and trade unions);
- at territorial/local level: authorities involved in VET (e.g. territorial offices of relevant ministries), VET providers (public, private), territorial representation of social partners (employers’ associations, professional branches, trade unions), civil society (e.g. parents and students’ associations), etc.

With regard to VET governance, responsibility is usually diverse and shared between multiple levels of government and various social partners. VET is closely linked to the labour market and therefore often under the jurisdiction of several ministries typically covering education, labour, economic development, etc.

The multiple objectives that VET needs to fulfil and the multiple stakeholders that it needs to serve create a strong imperative for governance models that ensure the participation of stakeholders, leadership and coordination of actions.

³ Source: ETF based on Cedefop (2011) and EU Committee of the Regions (2009)

⁴ White Paper on European Governance (2001)

The ETF approach to VET governance is a functional approach, not based on institutional arrangements models but focusing on institutional roles and responsibilities related to functions in VET; this is the approach followed in the GEMM project.

In addition to the five EU principles for good governance, the ETF adds entrepreneurial

governance which is part of the entrepreneurial continuum. While the entrepreneurial continuum is about complementarity and concurrent co-action of the policies, institutions, communities and citizens, the entrepreneurial governance is mainly emphasizing the capability of the institutions to be anticipatory, to be innovative and foster innovation.

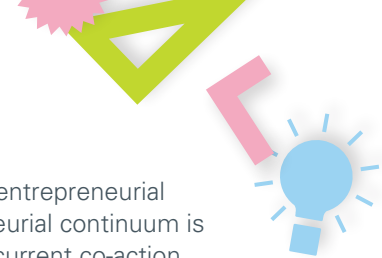
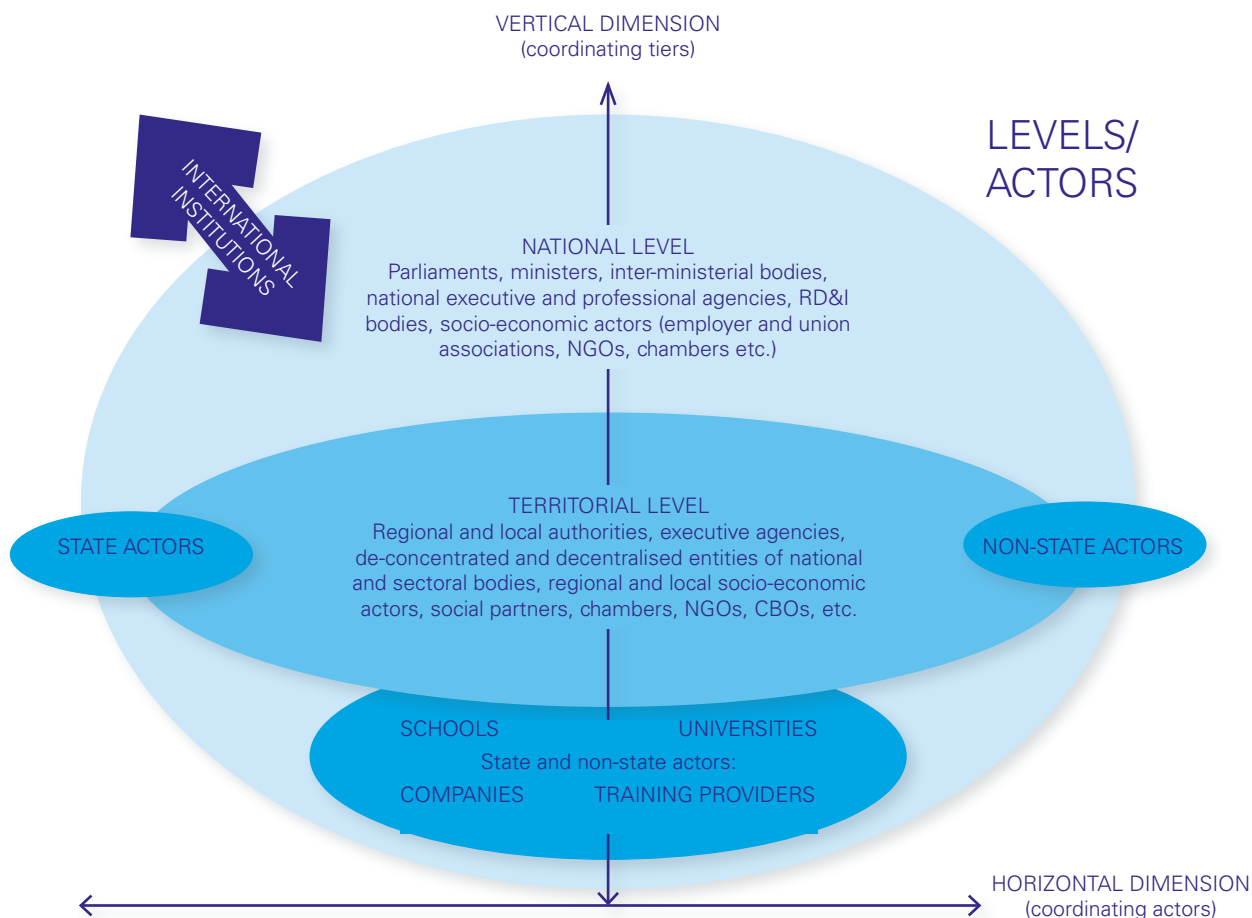


Figure 1: The actors in VET multi-level governance across the two dimensions (vertical and horizontal)



3. GEMM⁵: A new response to a changing neighbourhood

In most of the countries, the VET systems are centralised and the State plays a predominant role in financing and providing education and training. There is a lack of systematic and systemic cooperation with the business world and employers, i.e. the lack of direct links to the actual labour market. The hesitation of public authorities to involve social

partners in the governance of the VET systems is aggravated by the limited, sometimes lack of capacities of the latter to deal with VET matters in a reform context.

Civil society and social partners play either a limited or no role at all in VET and skills development. This situation was reinforced by links to political power. Consequently the capacities of individuals and stakeholders to play an active role in society remained underdeveloped and the sense of active citizenship is almost completely absent. In principle

⁵ Extracts from Grant ENPI/2012/302-153



the state should become more responsive and accountable to citizens and allow them to take a more proactive role in all social affairs. The European Economic and Social Council considers governance in the region a paramount issue: "Governance at all levels of the system is often considered as the major impediment to the improvement of VET systems as a whole (relevance, quality, responsiveness, etc.) and takes much of the policy-makers' attention."⁷

The improvement of governance in VET in the region depends on three factors:

- 1. increased involvement of social partners at all the stages of the policy cycle and decision-making process in a structured and coordinated manner;**
- 2. increased flexibility in training provision decision-making processes to allow VET agencies and training providers to be more autonomous and responsive to the labour market;**
- 3. setting up and enforcing mechanisms for accountability of all actions carried out by the public institutions and stakeholders⁶.**

A regional project: Two levels, two components

Few platform opportunities are offered at regional level (South-South) to share experiences between peers, build partnerships and learn from good practice. Therefore, the GEMM project is designed as a multi-country project. The project proposes to build the capacities of the target stakeholders by enhancing networking and sharing among the countries of the region, i.e. mutual learning at (cross-country) regional level. The countries themselves have shown interest in a multi-country approach by already setting up some regional associations of trade unions, employers, etc.

The project covers all the countries in the region (with the exception of Syria as EU cooperation with Syria is suspended).

Two levels

The project addresses the multifaceted problem of youth and female employability focusing on the

improvement of the quality and relevance of the VET systems at regional level by enhancing the capacities of different stakeholders in VET governance both at national (system) and local level. The project engages the two levels separately and together:

- **national:** VET policy makers, authorities in charge of VET, social partners (employers and employee representatives);
- **territorial/local:** VET providers (public, private) or actors involved in a territorial initiative on skills development and the local stakeholders involved in the projects (local employers and trade unions, parent and student associations, trainers, local authorities involved in VET and employment services, civil society).

The project aims to enhance the capacity of governments and social partners to play an active role in shaping VET systems and the capacities of VET providers/schools, in partnership with other local stakeholders to efficiently provide high quality and relevant VET. It will also enhance the cooperation between the central and territorial/local levels by mutual learning and sharing of experience within the countries and among them.

The choice of these levels (national/sub-national) is justified by the need to continuously and coherently involve social partners in cooperation with governments in VET policy making at all levels. VET providers and others skills development actors at local level need to be capable to adapt national policies to local labour market context and needs. Partnerships are key in ensuring that VET providers have the necessary capabilities to provide relevant and high quality skills. The project has put in place activities to foster work at national and sub-national levels (separately and together) with a view to increasing the capacities of stakeholders to address skills and employability-related problems through a multi-level governance approach that is currently lacking in the region and impacts on VET quality and relevance.

The role of the territorial authorities and local stakeholders is quintessential to promote co-ordination, cooperation, and joint actions at the territorial level. In this light, the dissemination activities and feedback from pilot projects have ensured the broad involvement of actors at subnational level in all the beneficiary countries.

⁶ ETF (2011)

⁷ European Economic Council, EcoMed.Mediterranean (2015), Prerequisites and opportunities to ensure sustainable economic development in the Southern Mediterranean region, Report to the president of the European Commission with the participation of the chief executive officers at the largest Mediterranean corporations, July 2008

Two components

The first component focuses at national level on building the capacities of governmental actors and social partners to work in partnership to increase the relevance and quality of VET. The component has a policy learning approach where experiences from different countries are disseminated and discussed with a view to exchanging and maximising peer learning opportunities.

Reinforcing capacities included a series of actions including study visits, workshops, and peer learning activities focusing on VET governance related topics identified through a training needs analysis at the beginning of the project. This component is complemented with the creation of a platform for these different groups of stakeholders facilitated by the ETF to exchange and disseminate project related information. Exchange with EU governmental and social partner representatives provided further opportunities for networking and learning.

The second component focuses on the local/territorial level through selected skills development

projects, with a double capacity-building objective:

- to test innovative skills development practice at local/territorial level as a means of enhancing local youth and female employability; and
- to increase the ability and competencies of VET providers to provide high quality and relevant VET and be able to adapt VET policies to local labour market needs.

Innovative and small scale country pilot projects are at the core of this component. Through national dissemination events and in cross regional events, the experience, results and lessons learned have been presented and discussed. At cross country level, this has created opportunities for sharing and networking; at the national level, results have been discussed with a view to assessing their potential for sustainability and to contribute to on-going national VET reforms. The pilot projects acted as laboratories for new practice.

Summary of main achievements

Mapping (national level, component 1)	Pilot projects (territorial/local level, component 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A methodology for mapping and analysing VET multi-level governance developed. ■ One cross country mapping and analysis report on VET multi-level governance in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries published, based on eight country reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Eight innovative and action-oriented pilot projects addressing local partnerships developed of which five have clear identified plans for sustainability. ■ Seven accomplished dissemination events with interactive discussions.
<h3>Capacity building and publications (national and local/territorial levels, components 1 and 2)</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A specific capacity-building methodology and two related programmes for policy-makers and pilot project representatives: three regional conferences; three study visits; two cross-country seminars covering anticipation and matching, quality assurance and multi-level governance. ■ One compendium of pilot projects highlighting lessons learned and success stories from the participating countries. ■ One final report highlighting key project achievements, lessons learned and recommendations for future similar initiatives. ■ Online virtual community making available all the methodologies, tools, publications, media coverage and other materials open to partner countries, EU institutions, international organisations, etc. ■ An award ceremony for the good practices within the pilot projects organised at the final project conference (July 2016). ■ The project has also contributed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - facilitating the placement of hundreds of young VET graduates directly and indirectly; - reinforcing regional networking, platforms and peer learning in the region; - disseminating local innovative initiative within the system and cross borders; - establishing/reinforcing partnerships at national and local levels; - stimulating dialogue on issues linked to skills development and employability at national and regional levels; - enhancing awareness on gender gaps. 	

4. Main achievements:

Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, working together is success

The following achievements (at national and territorial levels) have contributed to the GEMM project results⁸.

4.1. Mapping and analysis of VET governance

This activity consisted in mapping and analysing the governance of vocational education and training through self-assessment and field research in the participating countries.

The mapping focused on three key functions of both initial and continuing VET: (1) planning and management, (2) finance and funding, and (3) quality assurance.

The methodology applied has been designed by the ETF⁹. It includes specific data collection and self-assessment tools. Through the direct involvement of VET actors in each country (through the national committees) the exercise has supported the reinforcement of analytical and deliberative capacities of actors who, at the same time, by working together have experienced the benefit of developing approaches to support a more participatory management of the VET policy cycle. These include:

- Description of roles and functions at the different VET management levels (international, national/sectoral, territorial/local and training providers) and information on roles of different actors who have (or could have) a role to play to contribute to the whole policy cycle (from strategy formation through planning, implementation, monitoring and review to reformulation).
- Analysis and assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the current VET governance systems and identification of ways in which weak areas can be strengthened, with particular reference to the role of government and its agencies, social partners, VET providers and the wider civil society.

- Enhancing awareness and knowledge on good VET multi-level governance modes and models
- Reinforcing institutional capacities of national authorities and social partners to better work together and implement and monitor VET policies for better employability of young and female groups.

The mapping process has been designed to be flexible and adapted to capture each specific country context. Where possible, the mapping has made use of existing data and information as well as any complementary study/research carried out in the country.

The recommendations of this analysis also informed the other project activities: capacity-building measures and the pilot projects.

The outputs of this component are nine national reports¹⁰ produced and one cross-country report published and disseminated in several events and gatherings (both GEMM-related and others).

Main findings of the mapping exercise:

- There are three models for the organisation and management of VET at national level.
 - Type 1: A lead ministry has overall responsibility for the management of VET (e.g. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Lebanon).
 - Type 2: Different subsystems are managed by different ministries, and a coordinating council is in place to achieve greater coherence between the subsystems (e.g. Jordan).
 - Type 3: Different VET subsystems are operated through ministries such as education, industry and higher education, but there is no coordinating body (e.g. Egypt, Israel, Libya and Palestine).
- The VET systems are highly centralised in all countries and mainly government-led.
- Social partners are engaged, but partnership is still not efficient in the entire policy cycle. Civil society is not yet part of the policy dialogue.
- Continuing vocational training is a neglected area in most countries.

⁸ As per approved project log

⁹ The Data Collection Tool is an ETF document composed of four sections to support mapping of general planning and management, financing and funding and quality assurance (sections A, B & C) and (self) assessment (section D).

¹⁰ Two national reports (Algeria and Egypt) have been produced but not validated and therefore not published.



- The territorial dimension is getting important.
- There is very little (if any) responsibility for innovation at local level.
- Quality assurance is now on the VET policy agenda, but is focusing mainly on auditing and inspecting rather than on outcomes and quality management and improvement.
- Labour market information systems are underdeveloped in most countries, which limits the information available to steer and evaluate progress.
- Financing and funding procedures are subject to audit in all countries. However, they remain centralised, often lack transparency, and access to information is difficult for both stakeholders and researchers.

4.2. Capacity building and peer-learning measures

The capacity-building activities were designed to empower institutions on specific thematic areas defined through a skills needs analysis carried out at the beginning of the project among project beneficiaries.

GEMM capacity-building measures also drew information from the VET governance mapping exercise. All information collected was used to adapt the capacity-building methodology and to develop a programme for both policy decision makers and pilot project representatives. These programmes, which included a set of activities and a specific logframe, guided the interventions within this component.

Activities aimed to support participation, relationship building and shared ownership among different stakeholders. Each activity was evaluated and benchmarked against the capacity-building programme objectives and indicators. In 2016, the project team has been evaluating the overall results (see below) of this component to analyse progress and achievements and, at the same time, to draw lessons for future similar activities.

Specific activities under this component included:

- one regional conference to identify/assess capacity-building needs;

- three study visits; two on quality assurance of the VET system (in Romania and in the Netherlands) and one on labour market information systems for matching and models of VET governance (in Morocco);
- one cross-country event for pilot projects on labour market information systems and VET governance, including site visits to the regional observatory, a vocational school and an enterprise implementing a higher apprenticeship programme (in Italy);
- one regional conference for both policy-makers and pilot projects in labour market information systems for matching;
- one regional workshop for policy-makers on quality assurance in VET.

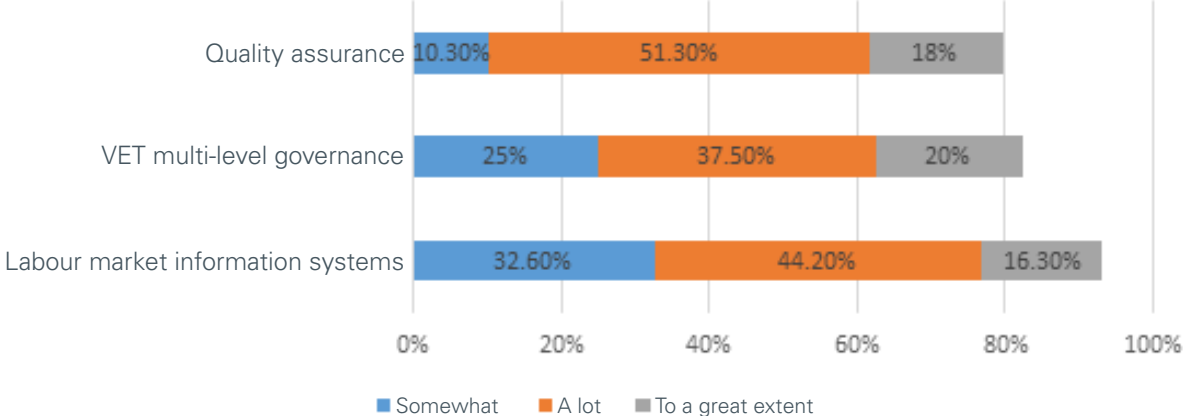
The final project conference that took place in July 2016 was an opportunity to analyse the lessons learned from the project, including the capacity-building measures and the methodology adopted.

Each action carried out in the framework of the capacity-building programme was evaluated through a series of self-assessment questionnaires designed on the basis of the indicators of achievements of the capacity-building programme logframe.

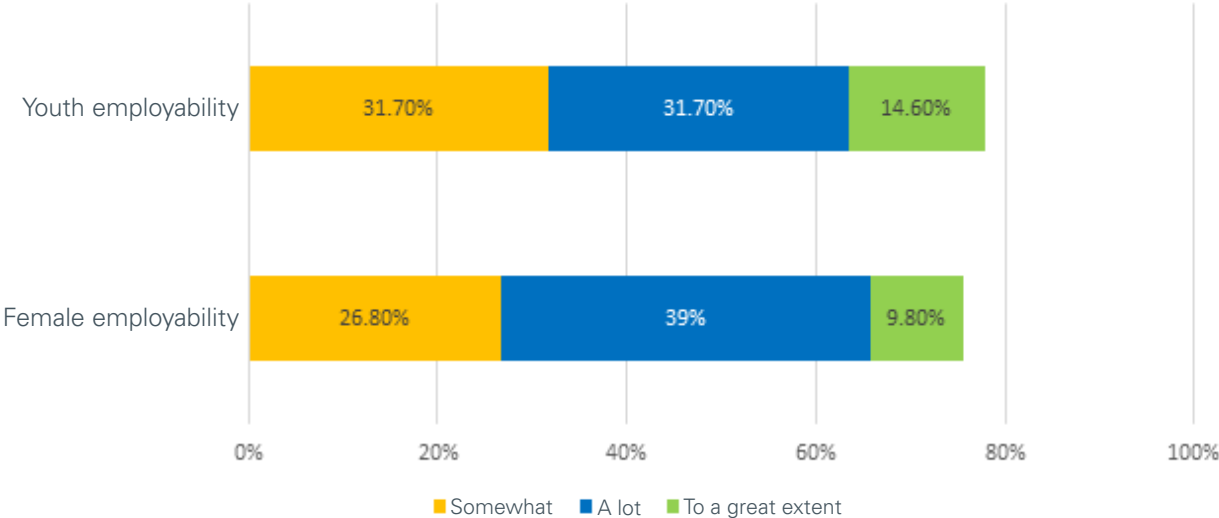
In addition to the evaluation of the single events, in April 2016 an online survey was launched to evaluate the capacity-building programme among social partners and policy-makers. They have been the main beneficiaries of regional events and study visits. This overall evaluation aims at assessing the actions with respect to the perceived individual increase of knowledge and awareness on the selected thematic areas (see above), the acquisition of additional tools and methodologies and the ability to apply them in the daily work. The analysis of the responses shows that for each of the three thematic areas participants declare they now possess additional knowledge and tools (see **graph 3**).

Responses also indicated that the majority of participants have increased their awareness of tools and approaches to raise youth and female employability (see **graph 4**).

Graph 3: Results of evaluation by thematic area (has GEMM enabled you to acquire additional knowledge and tools?)

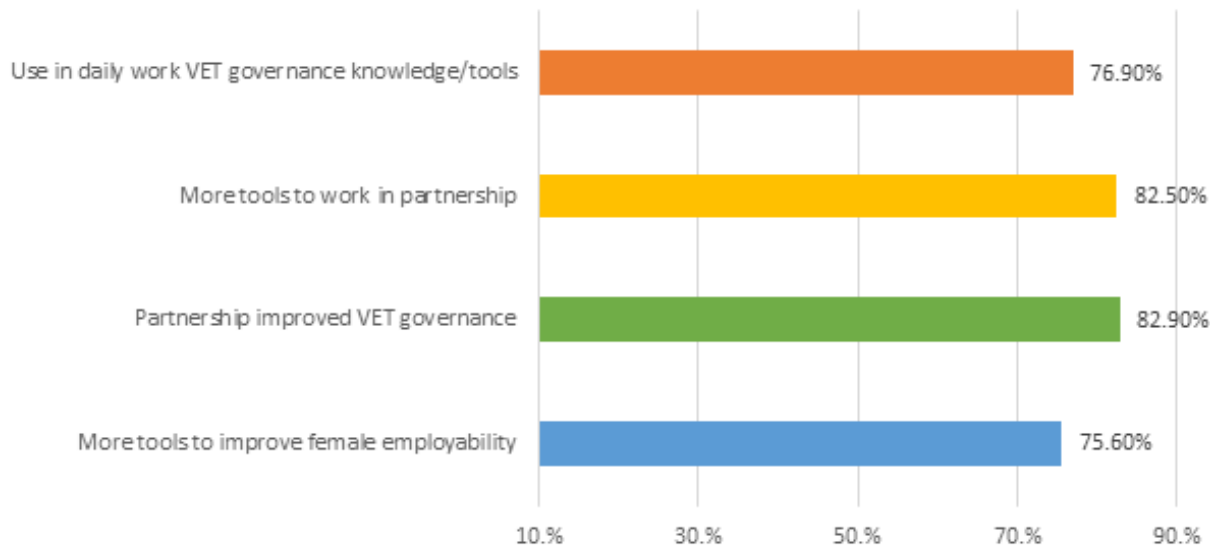


Graph 4: Awareness raised on tools and approaches to improve youth and female employability





Graph 5: Overall evaluation outcomes




The overall evaluation outcomes show that partnership has improved VET governance, and that participants are using the tools acquired in their daily work. **Graph 5** is a graphic representation of the key evaluation outcomes.

Participation of women in the capacity-building events was planned to be 30% (indicator of achievement in the logframe). This target was met looking at the overall total participation of women, although some differences have been identified looking at the individual countries and events.

The analysis of the responses to both the individual evaluation and the online survey indicates that:

- Increase of knowledge – The majority of participants declared that they substantially increased their knowledge and awareness on the thematic areas proposed for the capacity-building activities. Besides, these thematic areas were considered very relevant. In the evaluations all the regional events and study visits’ participants stated that the objectives were almost fully met.
- Opportunities to contextualise practice from EU and partner countries – The GEMM capacity-building events provided useful tools and good practices for the pilot project representatives that could be used and adapted to the local context during the pilot project implementation, e.g. gathering of EU experience in quality assurance in VET, skills anticipation and matching, partnership and synergies between VET and employment stakeholders, etc. The majority of participants declare they obtained additional tools to enhance their work. However, not all participants were sure of being able to apply those tools in their daily work and contexts.
- New perspectives for female employability – Through the online survey 91.2% of the participants indicated that the GEMM project raised their awareness of tools to develop approaches to improve female employability.
- Mutual learning and sharing – What people have appreciated most about the regional events and study visits is the mutual learning and sharing among peers in the region. All the evaluations have shown that participants learned a lot from discussing common challenges, experiences from other partner countries or practices they have been exposed to during the events and in particular the study visits
- Learning from real cases – Among the different types of capacity-building activities, the study visits, practical exercises, exposure to concrete models, and interactive-exchange sessions were much more appreciated than theoretical presentations.
- Learning through interaction – The combination of short and practical explanations of basic principles and different approaches to the main GEMM topics followed by reflexions and exercises in country teams has contributed to a better understanding and appropriation and contextualisation of the topics.
- Greater and deeper understanding of own VET systems – Through the intensive analysis by stakeholders of their own approach and system for multi-level governance and the identification



of main challenges and opportunities, notably through self-assessment, SWOT analysis, etc. VET stakeholders stated they strongly increased their insight in the elements that a VET system is composed of, in the role of different stakeholders and in the technical jargon of the system.

- Looking forward, what is next? – It has been very useful to integrate into the regional capacity-building events the discussion on sustainability of the results of the GEMM project in general and those of the pilot projects in particular. In this way and through a well thought through dissemination of lessons learnt throughout the duration of the project, participants have become aware of the need to develop long-term visions for reform and to integrate these into their pilot projects or other interventions. Following this work, pilot projects have developed clear and concrete plans for sustainability.

Recommendations

- Increase South-South cooperation and mutual learning – Participants indicated that more regional activities need to be organised in GEMM partner countries, including site visits to showcase relevant good practices from similar country contexts.
- More focus and more time – The number of thematic areas per event should be reduced as participants often indicated there was too little time dedicated to in-depth analysis and discussion of specific subjects. It was suggested that smaller sub-regional groups could be formed to share experiences among countries with similar systems and challenges.
- Need for more training – Participants indicated the need to continue to receive capacity building, in particular to be able to go in depth in technical aspects, such as methodologies for skills needs analysis, career guidance and internal/external quality assurance of training providers
- Participants' profiles should be more homogenous – Heterogeneity of participants' profiles impacted on the level of understanding and experience of participants which was very diverse on the different subjects. This also hampered a very focused and technical capacity building through specific training by modules. To further deepen the specific subjects, participants were referred to background information.
- Continuity of participation should be better ensured – For each event, participants were selected on the basis of their knowledge of the

subject of the specific event. This impacted on the continuity of participation of the same person in the full capacity-building programme. The way knowledge and tools acquired were further disseminated to the institutions in the countries was not always clear and should be built in the process in future similar actions.

- Languages – Main background and supporting documents/training material should be made available in English, French and Arabic.

4.3. Pilot projects

The main objective of the pilot projects was to contribute through action-oriented and innovative projects at local level to the wider GEMM objective of improving multi-level governance of VET by increasing the relevance and quality of VET for better employability of young people and women.

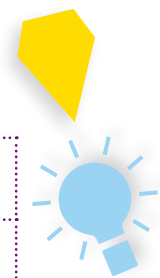
The pilot projects have been an opportunity to test the governance of the skills matching supply and demand practices at territorial and local levels. They targeted stakeholders awareness raising and gained experience of active and effective partnerships that promote the role of skills development as an important driver for territorial and local economic growth.

The GEMM pilot projects, which complement the other two project activities, were selected by the countries on specific criteria (partnership, local and skills development focus). They were originally designed to test models of multi-level governance at local level, and turned out to be structuring initiatives that raised an increased interest at national level for their mainstreaming and sustainability.


Most of the projects were designed and implemented in cooperation with social partners, NGOs and government agencies and some tested and built on tools developed in previous projects. All EU Delegations have been directly involved in the identification and design of the pilot projects. Other international organisations were also consulted.

All projects focus on matching local labour market needs and training provision revealing a real need for local actors and vocational schools to be equipped with tools to better identify the needs of companies in terms of skills and align their provision to these needs in order to improve the employability of young and female groups.

Overview of the pilot projects



Country/ region	Focus	Sector	Achievements
Algeria Blida + national	Training needs analysis in enterprises	Multi- sectoral	FNAC (National Fund for the Development of Apprenticeship and Continuous Training) counsellors trained and supported in the development of a methodology, guidelines and related tools for assessing the training needs of companies and developing related training plans. The guidelines and tools are recognised as a valuable instrument that could be used by FNAC as well as by other actors involved in the context of continuing training mechanisms (e.g. process of submission of reimbursement requests, identification of enterprises' training needs) as well as ready-to-use tools in the framework of on-going or future EU-funded projects.
Egypt Manouffa	Labour market needs analysis	Agro-food sector	A decentralised partnership developed between enterprises and TVET providers to contribute to high quality and relevant TVET provision to address the labour market needs in the agro-food sector in Manoufia region. The methodology and tools developed should reinforce the culture of skills needs analysis in the country and enhance the matching process in other sectors.
Israel South	Labour market needs analysis – skills matching	Multi- sectoral	Capacities of stakeholders at VET institutions/providers level enhanced to develop strategies for human resources development to boost the socioeconomic development of the south of Israel. The VET authorities (ministries of economy and education) intend to create an institutionalised local platform to provide regular reporting on skills needs analysis and matching at local level. This will also feed into national reflections on how to create and develop further local partnerships.
Jordan Zarqa	Labour market needs analysis, curriculum development and tracer study	Sales and retail sector	Support for local VET partners and stakeholders to cooperate better to increase the employability of young people and women in the Al-Zarqa Governorate. This included a skills needs analysis, design/adaptation of curricula based on the skills needs analysis and a tracer study in the retail sector. The model will be replicated in other sectors and governorates.
Lebanon Beirut and Mount Lebanon	Employment orientation	Industrial sector	Guidance and employment offices established and dedicated staff trained in six public vocational schools to facilitate young vocational graduate transition to the labour market. A ministerial decree of May 2015 officialises the position of guidance employment officer within public schools, which is a strong sign of the government's will to mainstream this function at national level. Further 12 VET schools will establish guidance and employment offices in the framework of the on-going EU project "CLOSER" using the GEMM approach.
Libya Tripoli	Labour market needs analysis	Tourism sector	The objective of the project was to strengthen the alignment of the training provision of the College of Tourism and Hospitality of Tripoli with the demands of the tourism sector. Due to the security situation, the project was suspended after the completion of preliminary activities (i.e. skills needs analysis).



Country/ region	Focus	Sector	Achievements
Morocco Tangier-Tétouan	Labour market analysis and skills matching	Automobile and logistics sector	Local partnership established in the Tangier-Tétouan region and supported in the development of tools to identify labour market skills needs, mapping and assessing current training provision and identifying emerging skills needs. The local partnership will be used as a model to formalise and enforce the VET regional commissions foreseen by the recent VET strategy. The matching tools developed will be used in other regions notably through the upcoming EU budget support project.
Palestine West Bank	VET graduate tracer study	Multi-sectoral	A tracking system for VET graduates developed and tested in 15 schools from the public sector, schools managed by the UNRWA and different NGOs. The tracking system is to be mainstreamed in all schools in the framework of the multi-donors and multi-actors on-going monitoring of the VET system reform process.
Tunisia Gabès	Recruitment needs analysis, complementary training and job placements	Maintenance and construction sectors	Local actors' capacities developed to address the employability of young people in the region through skills upgrading and job placements of a selected group of unemployed VET graduates. The model of multi-actors partnership for upgrading and job placements has been formalised in the framework of GEMM and will be extended to two regions through ETF support in 2016 and then to eight other regions through the EU project "IRADA" to support VET regionalisation.

5. The road ahead: The future belongs to those who prepare for it today

The GEMM project team addressed sustainability from an early stage, in close cooperation with partner country representatives. An analysis of the outcomes of these reflections resulted in the identification of some concrete proposals for sustainability.

Pathways for sustainability for VET mapping and capacity building

The national and/or local committees set up through the project have become, in almost all countries, a platform for knowledge sharing notably on multi-level governance and monitoring of VET-related issues. It is likely that these committees will continue to play a role in the above-mentioned areas.

The methodology and specific tools developed and used to map VET governance could be of interest for future country or similar donor-led initiatives. They could be the basis for a regular updating of country-related VET governance analysis. For example, the ETF has already started to deploy the reports, methodologies and tools as a basis for developing

and regularly updating a general inventory on VET governance in the region and beyond.

For capacity building, in addition to the use and application in each country of the capacities that have been reinforced at institutional and individual level, some concrete ideas for sustainability include:

- GEMM community: this repository of documents and analyses of VET governance could be expanded and opened to other countries in other regions.
- Methodology developed and piloted on capacity building: to feed the overall capacity-building approach of the ETF and share with other donors, other EU projects, partner countries, etc.
- Capacity-building programmes and their evaluation: the results could feed the reflection on capacity-building approaches and provide lessons for future similar interventions.

Pathways for sustainability of pilot projects

Although pilot project results are diverse, a common need for their continuity and sustainability emerges in all countries.

Pathways and actions proposed could be grouped in two main axes:

- institutionalising local partnerships; and
- mainstreaming/scaling up outcomes into the national level.

It should be considered that in most of cases the two axes are combined, meaning that the institutionalisation of partnerships would include mainstreaming or scaling up and vice-versa. The examples below illustrate the main features of the sustainability of the pilot projects.

a. Institutionalising local partnerships

In order to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the pilot projects, dedicated local committees were set up and, in line with multi-level governance principles, they involved all relevant actors. These multi-actors local committees were set up in coordination with national committees, reflecting as much as possible the same composition. The local committees included local representatives of the authorities and social partners, as well as other relevant partners depending on the project (VET providers, local enterprises, etc.). The work of local committees was regularly reported to the national committee through working meetings and in the main pilot project events (launching and dissemination of results). Throughout the implementation of the GEMM project, these committees have progressively gained interest and increased engagement.

The implementation of some pilot projects has shown that institutionalisation requires putting in place specific mechanisms and actions to lead to a sustainable partnership. It also needs willingness from central governments to give more space to local partnerships to be active and effective.

So far, priorities identified by local actors include: (1) enlarging participation to other relevant stakeholders; (2) having tools such as observatories at their disposal; and (3) benefitting from capacity-building support. Two countries are clearly going into this direction: Morocco and Tunisia. This can be linked to the on-going VET and employment decentralisation process in both countries.

Furthermore and in both countries, the European Union has decided to follow up and further develop the concrete experience of the pilot projects through important and structured bilateral projects.

For Algeria, given the national scope and importance of the pilot project further discussions among European and national authorities are taking place

to identify opportunities for the use of the project outputs, (e.g. possible use in the framework of the EU-funded AFEQ (Adéquation Formation-Emploi-Qualification) programme).

Based on the pilot project, Israel intends to create an institutionalised local platform to provide regular reporting on skills needs analysis and matching at local level. This will also feed into national reflections on how to create and develop further local partnerships.

Egypt could potentially go into this direction although this needs to be further analysed.

b. Mainstreaming/scaling up the pilot project's outcomes into the national level

The recognised interest and value of the methodologies, tools and products developed through the pilot projects led to several proposals to mainstream their use at national level or enlarge it to other localities.

In the case of Jordan, the Vocational Training Corporation under which the Zarqa Training Institute operates, plans to implement the course developed in other cities where a demand for qualified salespersons has been identified. Furthermore, the National Centre for Human Resources Development has officially asked the ETF for the authorisation to use the project material in its community colleges graduates' rehabilitation project.

In Lebanon, the pilot project supported the setting up of employment guidance offices in six public vocational schools. For the first time in Lebanon, a ministerial decree was issued to create the employment guidance officer function. This provides the legal framework to mainstream this function to all vocational schools in the country and donors have already expressed interest in continuing this initiative. One component of an EU-funded project (CLOSER) includes specific activities to mainstream and consolidate the employment guidance office services.

In Palestine the pilot project has developed a model and tools for tracer studies of graduates (free-to-use software) at all levels of the education system, including VET. The project is already listed in the national VET monitoring and evaluation system. In 2016, the model will be mainstreamed in all vocational schools through the support of the ETF, GiZ and the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC).

In addition to the projects mentioned above, the GEMM project experience has taught us many important lessons.



6. Conclusions and recommendations

In order to increase vertical participation and horizontal coordination of VET stakeholders in VET policy making it is important to enhance and support local partnerships. They can boost the effectiveness and relevance of the implementation of governmental (national) policies by involving multiple actors, and at least incorporating information and feedback from private and third sector actors to better inform and monitor national policy-making processes.

Stakeholders have gained good insights into the challenges and opportunities of their VET governance system either through self-assessment or learning from one another (through the cross-country report/comparative analysis and discussions in regional events).

The mapping and analysis of VET governance has been rich in information and helps policy makers to gain insight on their own and other systems, and to learn about other project activities (capacity-building programme and pilot projects).

However, the mapping and analysis report(s) did not cover issues related to gender inequality sufficiently, even though this was identified as a major issue in the region, especially with respect to labour market entrance and career opportunities for young women. This is mainly due to the limited availability of data broken down by gender also linked to the overall low perception in the countries concerned of the gender gap as a problematic issue. Having a clear picture of the challenges and opportunities in managing gender equality in employment promotion would have led to a more concrete identification of capacity-building needs in this area and in proposing concrete actions and experiments as part of the pilot projects.

The process towards a multi-level and multi-actor governance needs to be transparent, inclusive and participatory and it should be characterised by an entrepreneurial continuum shared by individuals, communities, institutions and public policies.

Territorial and local governance is a lengthy process that needs strong and long-term continuous political support. Major investments have been made to actively involve local authorities and VET stakeholders in identifying and formulating project activities, in implementing and disseminating them, and in planning sustainability and spin-offs of the project results. Experience has shown that it is extremely important to continuously raise awareness among local social partners on the importance of investing in skills development in order to contribute

to socio-economic growth in the region and to the competitiveness of companies and sectors. Territorial development needs to be integrated and enlarged to all HRD actors (including universities and research institutions) and combining bottom-up and top-down approaches based on partnership.

The pilot projects increased understanding among national policy-makers on challenges, conditions and opportunities for the governance of VET at territorial or local level. This was especially the case as regards efforts to align VET provision/supply with the needs of the local labour market. The experience from the projects made it clear that increased local VET governance requires more flexibility at central level and more autonomy and capacity among regional or local actors.

Involvement of decision and policy-makers from the start and in all phases of the pilot projects enhances their implementation, and even more importantly, the impact and sustainability of the project results. Furthermore, mobilising leadership is highly important in order to develop and follow-up on the results.

Most of the pilot projects have managed to develop and test tools and methodologies that support stakeholders to analyse and reduce the gaps between local skills supply and demand. In several cases, this has convinced relevant stakeholders to support the project or national decision-makers to disseminate and apply the project results to other regions.

Most pilot projects have learned through practice that a better understanding of the skills demands and the existing skills gap is a pre-condition for successful regional economic development. The locally created partnerships have learnt that improving labour market information is an important issue for exchange between stakeholders.

Finally, the multi-level partnership approach to formulating project proposals applied in the pilot project design phase has led to projects that fit well into innovative strategies for reform at national level. Support at the national level will improve the sustainability of local partnerships, encourage complementarity of actions, and can result in sustainable reforms.

For the GEMM project capacity building and networking, a flexible approach was applied in which a broad programme was elaborated initially based on the results of the mapping exercise and a needs analysis among project participants representing the main VET stakeholders.

Throughout the project implementation the programme was continuously monitored and outcomes evaluated. This allowed the project to be proactive and to react to developments and the evolving needs of stakeholders.

For the capacity-building actions, the practical experience and the progress of the pilot project have been a major input for the 'learning by doing approach' of the GEMM project.

The experience of the study visits has shown that in a regional setting it is more relevant and valuable to learn from practices and approaches of countries from the same region, which have similar contexts and challenges. For example, the Moroccan stakeholders in the study visit to Casablanca demonstrated that tripartite governance solutions are indeed possible and that the Moroccan state has been able to pilot and finance new models for VET governance.

Regional interventions can have an added-value in fighting youth unemployment. Capitalisation, ownership and impact on national systems and policies are often mentioned by partner countries as a challenge in regional initiatives. This is certainly due, amongst others, to the fact that participating countries are not moving at the same pace and that their needs could be quite different.

The GEMM project confirms that in case of a regional approach countries do not have to be treated in the same way: the ambition to have all countries moving at the same speed needs to be abandoned and flexible and context-specific approaches adopted, even within more global

interventions. The variable geometry approach is also to be applied in fighting the main challenge in the region: youth unemployment.

Bilateral assistance remains key, but regional interventions can have an added-value as they tackle issues from a different angle, and can therefore complete support to single countries. A number of reasons justify such an approach: economies of scale, exchanges of good practice and peer learning, involvement of existing regional platforms and representatives of on-going initiatives, development of new tools for cross-country application, better access to finance, greater visibility of EU policies and investment in youth employment in the region, etc. To continue South-South cooperation, stakeholders should be alert to identify local, national and international partners. The closing conference revealed that there is a strong interest of stakeholders to continue the exchange of approaches, methodologies and tools used in the VET and employment systems in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

Finally, while specific measures can have a localised impact on the employability of women and young people, a substantial, regional strategy will be required in the short and longer-term to make substantial inroads into the major challenges and barriers facing the employment opportunities and the skills acquisition of these groups across the region. To support this change process initiated by the GEMM project, efforts and engagement of all stakeholders should continue to follow up on the above-mentioned recommendations seeking a better coordination and coherence between national and regional (cross country) initiatives.



Annex: Short description of the pilot projects: Working together, learning for life

Based on the outcomes and recommendations of the analysis of VET governance and using specific selection criteria (partnership, local and skills development focus), the GEMM national committees developed project proposals.

In order to tailor the pilot projects to the specific country needs, the GEMM national committees organised workshops and group discussions with the ETF's support to define the pilot project components and partners. In a second phase, the project proposals were taken up by VET actors at the local level for validation of activities and implementation.

Algeria – Tuning training towards the real needs of the labour market

Algerian vocational education and training has traditionally been driven by national planning, more than by actual local demands. Increasing changes in the labour market now call for closer collaboration between local training providers and enterprises so as to fine-tune training opportunities to the actual needs of local labour markets.

The Algerian ministry responsible for vocational education and training operates a public agency with counsellors that maintain and improve the link between trainers and employers. This is the National Fund for the Development of Apprenticeship and Continuous Training, or FNAC. The 13 FNAC counsellors were the main target of the Algerian GEMM pilot project.

Originally focusing on the Blida region in the north of the country, the project helped FNAC counsellors to develop a methodology and guidelines for assessing the training needs of companies and tools to translate them into training plans.

The project was coordinated by FNAC in close cooperation with the VET Ministry. Enterprises were involved in testing the methodology as well as the tools for the training needs analysis.

The methodology and tools were tested locally and then adapted to make them more generically applicable on a broader, national scale. This fits into the FNAC's development plan, which points towards closer relationships with local enterprises, decentralised training development and the establishment of local counselling agencies throughout the country.

Implementation of the project's results across Algeria now awaits validation by the VET Ministry (still pending at the time of writing).

Egypt – Local answers to national fragmentation

The Egyptian GEMM pilot project addressed VET in the agro-food sector in the Menoufia region, northwest of Cairo.

The project aimed for a broad cooperation platform, taking in the education ministries, social partners, national and regional labour market observatories and training providers. It aimed to build a regional partnership to identify skills needs and gaps in agro-food employment and to find ways to address them. The main lessons learned from the analysis have been used to deliver training to selected agro-food technical schools, in order to align their programmes and processes to the needs of the labour market.

The aim for broad cooperation exposed many of the challenges brought about by the fragmentation of education and training in Egypt. Cooperation among national institutions was difficult to achieve. A study covering the agro-food sector in the Menoufia region was abandoned when existing data could not be accessed for procedural reasons. This in turn hinted at another problem: most data required for labour market analysis exists, but is gathered and managed by different bodies that have no history of sharing it with each other.



While national fragmentation presented challenges, local cooperation initiated through the project has been very encouraging. The regional observatory of Sadat City supported the pilot project from the very beginning. The local Investors' Association helped to establish links with the enterprises selected for a survey of training needs. They also supported its implementation. All this support was given on a voluntary basis. This strong local support presented a good argument for promoting the decentralisation processes. Local cooperation can tap into personal commitment and engagement. This, in turn, can effectively override the limitations of institutional hesitation.

Israel – Formalising partnership

Many employers in Israel find it hard to recruit mid-level professionals to fill existing vacancies. The problem is worse in the south of the country, which is poorer than other regions and has higher unemployment. There are vacancies, but existing vocational schools cannot match the demand, partly because of the gap that exists between what is taught in schools and what is needed in the labour market. As an added consequence, vocational schools are not very popular.

The GEMM project in Israel set out to tackle this problem by increasing the involvement of all labour market partners in education. The project operated as a local trial around the cities of Ashdod, Be'er Sheva and Ashkelon, but was set up in a way that can, and probably will, be reproduced in other parts of the country.

The pivotal point of the project was a TVET National Committee, focusing on the coordination and formalisation of the partnership among authorities, labour market partners and schools.

The project partners first set out to collect information on the discrepancy between labour market demand and supply. In Israel, statistics are plentiful but not always appropriate so existing data were supplemented with the help of local surveys of employers and vocational school principals and teachers. At the same time, the project mapped the existing TVET structures in the south of Israel.

One key conclusion of these exercises was that the majority of skills shortages are in intermediate and technical occupations in traditional sectors, rather than in occupations requiring higher education. The pilot project showed that labour market relevance of TVET in (southern) Israel needs to be improved and that the best tools to achieve this would appear to be policy measures that drive closer cooperation between education and industry.

The preliminary results of the pilot project were presented during a national workshop in December 2015. This kick-started a broad discussion on the evidence needed to inform TVET reforms in Israel, so the National Committee decided to hold a further meeting one month later where the decision was made to continue the pilot project on a self-funded basis.

Many lessons were learnt through this modest but effective project. The one that stood out, however, was how important it is for VET governance to formalise partnership among all stakeholders, including not only schools and labour market partners but also local and national education authorities.

Jordan – Tackling female unemployment

In Jordan, some 60% of job-seekers are under 25 years of age. Indeed, youth unemployment is one of the main challenges of the country, indicating either that there are no jobs or that job seekers are insufficiently qualified to fill existing vacancies.

For the retail sales sector in Zarqa Governorate, east of the capital Amman, the latter appeared to be the case. The GEMM project set out to better match training with the actual needs of the retail sector by promoting closer cooperation between local employers and trainers.

In Jordan, training programmes are normally planned, designed and evaluated centrally by the Vocational Training Corporation, which operates a network of TVET schools throughout the country. A collaborative governance network was therefore set up in which not only local stakeholders were represented but also all relevant national bodies. A local project committee took on the project management guided by a GEMM national committee which had representatives from all relevant public sector institutions and a number of

international organisations. The local project committee was made up of local employers in retail sales, the Zarqa Chamber of Commerce, the municipality and the Zarqa Training Institute.

The network developed a retail sales training curriculum. While this curriculum had its roots in existing national standards, these standards were validated for local relevance by local employers and experienced workers using a training needs analysis questionnaire developed by the ILO office in Amman. Eventually, the GEMM project opted for a combined programme of school-based and work-based learning.

The four-month school-based pilot training programme was delivered in the Zarqa Training Institute retail sale workshop with learning materials that were also developed through the project. This was followed by a supervised two-month on-the-job training course in local shops and enterprises, in line with the Vocational Training Corporation apprenticeship methodology. Of the first 19 trainees, 17 were women.

Finally, the effectiveness of the training programme was validated with a tracer study. Based on the ETF methodology for tracer studies, it analyses whether the trainees have found employment that can be linked to their training and whether the training course gave them the right preparation for the job. Even though the study took place six months after graduation (not enough to draw sound conclusions about the quality of the training and its relevance to the labour market), it suggested some areas for improvement in particular in the fields of information and career guidance to allow students and their parents to make informed choices as well a need to focus more on soft skills.

One of the key lessons learned through the project is that reform in governance and management of vocational training institutions requires capacity building of local management staff, as well as the political will to delegate more authority.

Lebanon – Guiding students towards employment

Until the start of the GEMM project, Lebanese public vocational schools could do little to smoothen the transition from school to work of their students. Proper guidance and counselling, backed by current labour market research, can help students to choose training tracks for competencies and professions that are in demand.

A recent project by the French development organisation IECD successfully established guidance employment offices at Lebanese private vocational schools. This was received so positively that the Lebanese GEMM project sought to do the same in public schools.

The project was carried out in close collaboration with the Directorate-General for Vocational Training Education of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon helped to establish contact with enterprises. The National Employment Office was also involved and was interested in contributing to the initiative and is likely to use and consolidate the data collected by the schools.

Six pilot schools were identified for the trial. In these schools, a guidance employment officer was appointed by the ministry. These officers underwent training in career guidance, in using job placement tools and techniques, in market research and local needs analysis, and in communication techniques.

The guidance officers selected and approached local companies, mapped their recruitment needs for specific occupations and identified the skills profiles for these specific occupations. Updating and expanding this information with feedback from companies will be one of their ongoing tasks. They will use this information to help students make career choices and to match vacancies with candidates.

The ministry laid the foundations for expanding the network of guidance employment offices by preparing the legal framework, officially appointing the officers with a clear job description and providing a coordination office at the ministry. The long-term plan is to set up guidance and employment offices in all schools.



Morocco – Linking local evidence with national policy

The Moroccan VET system is centralised and controlled by national government agencies that traditionally take the leading role in policy development and implementation. A strong consensus has recently grown among public and private sector actors that the governance of VET has to be improved, that closer and more meaningful partnerships have to be developed and that the whole system should become more effective and responsive.

The Moroccan GEMM project tapped into this growing consensus by setting up a formal collaborative governance network of all the main local stakeholders in one region and two trades. The network was empowered to review the local relevance of current training opportunities and to improve it. Subsequently, the experiences of the project were shaped into a collection of examples of good practice that can be used elsewhere in the country.

The project settled on the Tangier-Tétouan region and narrowed down its scope to the automobile industry and logistics. A broad local partnership of public and private stakeholders was backed by an equally broad national project committee. Together, they made sure that the goals identified were achieved.

The project developed tools to identify labour market skills needs, to map and assess current training provision and to strengthen the links between training provision and skills needs. The latter explicitly covered emerging skills needs too. The pilot study made extensive use of methods of skills needs analysis that had already been developed and tried in Morocco, such as the sector approach adopted by the Vocational Training Department.

This work provided evidence of gaps that were difficult to ignore, such as the need for better training for supervisory and middle management functions and the need for more training in soft skills and quality management.

The establishment of the regional working group improved communication and collaboration on training, skills needs and employment among all stakeholders. Its work clearly showed that partnership is a powerful tool for TVET governance, be it locally or nationally. But the partnership cannot operate without political commitment, as partnerships can only reach their goals if there is a clear political will to recognise the evidence they produce and act upon it.

The project also demonstrated the need for capacity building among partners that have a strong stake in each other's activities, such as trainers and employers, but which also have no tradition of collaborating.

National stakeholders will have to give tangible support to the local developments. Effective communication between the national and local levels will be needed and participation of both public and private sector partners must be on a formal and permanent basis, enshrined in legislation.

Palestine – Tracing forward

The Palestinian education and training system is undergoing an unprecedented level of structural reform at all levels. One key objective of this reform process is to better match what is taught in education and training with what is needed in the labour market and society. Finding out whether that objective is met requires close monitoring of how graduating students fare in the labour market they enter. Tracking students after graduation has proven to be an effective tool for this, but tracer studies were never used nationwide in Palestine. The GEMM project sought to introduce them, teach people to use them and, most importantly, help people to act on their results.

To give the project the necessary support, not only in schools, but also from decision-making authorities, it was governed through a dual structure, with a core group of representatives from ministries and social stakeholders acting as a steering board and a project committee with representatives of the 15 institutions that piloted the tracking scheme and was responsible for implementation.

Schools (15) prepared databases with contact details of students graduating in 2016 while the project developed its Graduate Tracking System on the basis of existing models developed jointly by the ETF,



Cedefop and the ILO. The models were customised and translated into Arabic. Both groups benefited from intensive capacity training. Workshops helped people in the field to understand survey design, monitoring and evaluation, the use of targets and indicators, and to increase their capacity to develop policy, set targets, and conduct analytical studies. Supported by the ETF, IT experts developed the online system for tracking.

The first results will come in after the 2016 graduation round. They will be conveyed to policy-makers in the relevant ministries so they can use the results when making decisions on adapting existing curricula and initiating new programmes. Moreover, the results will also help school principals and managers of TVET institutions to identify problem areas that require closer cooperation with local companies and labour market institutions.

This GEMM pilot project is closely connected to a broader project, also with ETF involvement, through which a TVET monitoring and evaluation system is being introduced in Palestine. The results of the GEMM project will be embedded in this system and the model will be gradually implemented in all Palestinian TVET institutions, providing constant feedback on the transition from education to work. Eventually the tracking system should be linked to or embedded in a broader labour market information system.

Tunisia – Making regional partnerships work

Since the 1990s the reforms of the Tunisian VET system have concentrated on developing a competence-based approach to education and training, the beginnings of an approach to lifelong learning and growing emphasis on quality assurance. Now a key challenge is to devolve more responsibility to training and public employment service providers to better engage local employers and social partners to increase the employability of VET graduates.

In a country and system that are built around a central planning and command structure, this is not so easy. Away from central government in schools and among local authorities, people simply lack the capacity to react more proactively to local needs. Because of this, the central authorities are less likely to devolve power and breaking this cycle requires capacity development.

The GEMM project in Tunisia was designed to reinforce institutional capacities and establish partnerships for placing VET graduates. This has been done by setting up parallel national and local partnership structures to improve youth employability in two sectors in one region: Gabès, on the Mediterranean coast in central Tunisia. The sectors addressed are construction and maintenance.

Working closely with the ETF, the local partnership group established with social partners, employment offices, training providers and other stakeholders, conducted a careful labour market needs analysis, focusing on job opportunities, in the construction and maintenance sectors. It was followed by the development and delivery of appropriate training by the professional training partners involved.

As indicated earlier, capacity development was one of the cornerstones of the project. One important target of training and coaching activities was the Regional Directorate of Vocational Training and Employment, which had to manage the project locally. Others included employment counsellors, apprenticeship counsellors and schools and enterprise human resources managers who needed to be trained in methodologies for identifying skills needs and translating them into training needs.

The project set up a pilot training and apprenticeship initiative for job-seekers. This involved identifying a target group of job-seekers and analysing their qualifications, then setting up relevant training in both technical and soft skills based on the actual needs of the local labour market. Job-seekers received tailored training, guidance and support that have secured them employment in specific occupations where employers had identified vacancies. Linking up employers and job-seekers, labour market analysis and training through the regional pilot project produced innovative and concrete results.

The partnership model was sufficiently generic to be replicated in other regions. In fact, if contact between different sectors can be made, other industries could also benefit from it. In order to make it easier for others to draw on the positive results of the project, a factsheet has been prepared which describes the project approach for adaptation and application in other regions or sectors.



The ETF is an EU agency that helps transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU's external relations policy.

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