

Various Countries

## Final Report

EVALUATION OF ETF ACTIVITIES IN WORK BASED LEARNING IN VET

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
AppSS	Apprenticeship Support Service
BC	British Council
Cedefop	Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle (French: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)
DG EMPL	DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DG NEAR	DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EaFA	European Alliance for Apprenticeships
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Economic Area
EQF	European qualifications framework
EMIS	Education management information system
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HE	Higher Education
IAG-TVET	Interagency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO-ITC	ILO International Training Centre
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
KKA	Kulturkontakt Austria
MTD	Medium-Term Deliverable
MTP	Mid-Term Perspective
NAVETQ	National Agency of Vocational Education Training and Qualifications
NQF	National qualifications framework
NVETC	National Vocational Education and Training Council
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PASO	Social Partners Relationship Coordinator/ school-business liaison officer
PLA	Peer Learning Activity
SEET	South Eastern Europe and Turkey
SEMED	Southern and Eastern Mediterranean
SDU	School Development Unit
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEVOC	UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VET	Vocational education and training
WB	World Bank
WBL	Work-based learning

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## Executive summary

### A. The context of the ETF's actions in work-based learning

Work-based learning (WBL) has been a high policy priority at European level in recent years as evidenced by:

- Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020
- Riga 2015, the Member States agreed to “promote work-based learning in all its forms”
- European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) brings together stakeholders to strengthen the quality, supply and demand and image of apprenticeship in Europe
- the Youth Guarantee, adopted in 2013, explicitly mentions apprenticeships and internships as ways in which to prevent young people being unemployed
- Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships in March 2018
- launch of the EC launched the Apprenticeship Support Service (AppSS) during the European Vocational Skills Week 2018.

Work-based learning is rising on the political agenda of the EU candidate countries as well as on that of other ETF partner countries. The candidate countries have committed to the Riga Conclusions and have chosen work-based learning as a priority Riga medium term deliverable for ETF support until 2020. Many other countries are adopting and implementing policies to raise the esteem of VET; improve employer engagement and experiment with inserting WBL components into their VET systems.

However, in many of the EU candidate countries, VET is deeply rooted in the formal system and there is generally limited emphasis on work-based learning components. Most of the practical training takes place in the VET schools' workshops and there is limited capacity on the employers' side to be engaged in the governance and delivery of WBL components. Furthermore, in the majority of the Candidate Countries, robust mechanisms for the financing of WBL are still missing.

### B. The ETF actions in Work Based Learning

At global level, since 2013, the ETF has played a very active role in international collaboration in the area of WBL. In co-operation with UNESCO in the frame of the Inter-Agency Working Group on TVET, ETF organised a series of workshops on the topic for international organisations and bilateral donors, as well as the European Commission and Cedefop (including ILO, OECD, World Bank), contributing to joint work on definition, analytical and policy frameworks as well as advocacy tools for work-based learning. Furthermore, ETF, in cooperation with ILO-ITC

(International Training Centre) developed and implemented capacity building seminars (held at ILO-ITC in Turin).

At regional level, in 2015, the ETF launched a regional multi-annual project (2015-2017) on WBL targeting VET policy makers and employer representatives in the Eastern Partnership region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) and Kazakhstan with a peer learning approach (learning from both EU countries and between the countries in the project). Mapping of WBL policies and provision in the countries was followed by a feasibility-check process of WBL schemes through an ETF readiness tool, developed within the project.

At country level, the ETF conducted many different activities. The ETF supported national developments through organising workshops; providing ad hoc expert support; providing small-scale support and building capacities. Besides the country-specific interventions, ETF also facilitated and supported the Candidate Countries' integration into the EAfA.

## C. Effectiveness and added value of the ETF activities in work-based learning

### International context

- The ETF is well connected with international stakeholders: it is highly involved in events and initiatives at EU level, its contribution in the IAG-TVET is highly valued and it effectively cooperates with partners in developing and delivering training programmes.
- ETFs publications such as the Handbook for policymakers and social partners on WBL, Handbook on Financing of WBL, WBL Readiness Tool are appreciated and used by development partners. What is valued in particular is that they are practical and policy oriented.

### Connecting partner countries to international developments

- Supported by the ETF, all five candidate countries became members of the EAfA and made formal commitments to concrete actions for apprenticeships and WBL.
- ETF effectively opened doors internationally and provided the partner countries with examples and experiences from other (European) countries.
- Across countries, the ETF kept track of the developments in relation to MTD1 and provided support to the main stakeholders on the initiatives the countries linked to MTD1.

### National policy formulation, review, policy design and policy implementation

- ETF is able, more than other organisations, to provide support in a more flexible and tailored (non-project-base) way. These small interventions have quite a large impact exactly because they were provided in a timely manner.
- The evaluation obtained evidence from the three countries visited (Albania, Montenegro and Georgia) that ETFs activities supported national policy formulation, review, policy design and, to a lesser extent, policy implementation.

### Capacity building

- The capacity building support of ETF is emphasised in the regional project approach in the Eastern Partnership (EaP). Here national stakeholders have been engaged in Peer Learning Activities (PLA), study tours and e-learning courses that were highly appreciated.
- ETF has been effective demonstrating good practices of WBL in other countries and facilitating learning.

### Methodologies applied by the ETF

- What is most valued by stakeholders is the direct advice and feedback of ETF staff on draft documents. ETF is able to combine in-depth understanding of the national context, the national needs and the EU priorities and developments. As some respondents indicated, the quality of any document significantly increases when ETF experts have contributed to its drafting.
- Another aspect that is valued a lot are PLAs to learn from other countries and build networks, especially because business sectors are also involved on a structural basis and this is not done as systematically by other donors.
- What is furthermore appreciated is that ETF always tries to cover the costs for participants when it organises an event. Especially internationally, this opens doors that would otherwise remain closed for stakeholders (including employers) in the partner countries.

### Sustainability

- At country level, the results achieved show signs of sustainability especially in the case of Montenegro, it is evident that the actions by the ETF are based on sufficient levels of country ownership.
- At international level, the ETF has guided the process of arriving at a clear and short text that explains work-based learning being agreed upon by the European Commission, Cedefop, ETF, ILO, OECD, and UNESCO. Given the conceptual differences between the organisations on WBL and apprenticeships, arriving at one text is a major achievement. Furthermore, the implementation of training programmes together with other international partners is another key achievement at international level.

## D. What could the ETF consider for the future?

### Programming

For the analytical work (including the developed and published tools) there should be a clear rationale why this is needed, for whom and how this is distributed and to which (measurable) processes this work will have to contribute.

Stakeholders indicated that it would have been better if the countries were clustered based on similar stages of development. This could also mean cluster countries between Eastern Partnership and SEET, as well as EU countries or countries outside the Partner Countries

### Stakeholder involvement

More sustainable impact could be pursued by guiding more national stakeholders in doing the work themselves. This means, to focus more on building capacities in the key institutions so that national stakeholder can conduct more activities and create more ownership. More could be done by ETF and others such as UNDP and GIZ to capacitate national stakeholders to work on the necessary changes in legal frameworks and regulations.

A criticism to ETFs and other development partners support to policy formulation and development is that too often the work is done for the national stakeholders and not by the national stakeholders. This reduces the ownership level.

### Increased synergies within the ETF and with EU actions

What would be helpful is to better connect the different areas of expertise of ETF, NQF and WBL are both based on the foundation that employers need to be involved in the organisation and delivery of VET. It is for this reason that NQF developments prepare the ground for WBL implementation. ETF could think of better linking these areas to build more synergies. ETF could bring together all its experts touching upon employer engagement as underlying mechanism for NQF development; governance; WBL; and teachers and trainers.

At a broader, strategic level, the communication could be strengthened between ETF, EU Delegations, DG EMPL and DG NEAR and even DG DEVCO to present more a 'One EU' approach in supporting the Partner Countries (and other countries).

As more ETF activities and projects work on similar topics, such as employer engagement, more could be done to establish synergies.

## E. Emerging topics in relation to WBL

The topic that remains of key importance in the partner countries is to increase the employer engagement in the VET governance and delivery. However, a number of new topics are identified by the evaluators:

- WBL at higher levels
- WBL and an even increasing responsiveness to the needs of the labour market
- WBL beyond IVET: lifelong learning
- WBL and the use of digit tools
- WBL and teachers and trainers
- WBL and gender



## F. Recommendations

- i. Work Based Learning in a broader context - Besides more traditional topics such as employer engagement, governance, financing, teachers and trainers, ETF explores opportunities to work more on WBL at higher levels, WBL and digital tools and WBL and lifelong learning in the Partner Countries.
- ii. Reliable partner - ETF continues fulfilling its role of critical friend and reliable partner mainly in supporting policy formulation and design.
- iii. Embedding capacity building - ETF integrates even more capacity building aspects in its support to policy formulation, design and implementation to increase ownership for work-based learning reforms among national stakeholders.
- iv. Integrated approach - ETF strengthens its overall line of reasoning on how the set of ETF activities as a whole support country reforms.
- v. Differentiation on stages of development - ETF reconsiders its way of clustering countries for peer learning and exchange of experience, and allowing more cross-links between different countries based on their stage of development and the system weaknesses they would like to work on.
- vi. Continued cooperation - ETF to be more active in the framework of European Commission supported projects, but also cooperate even more with the other international organisations, to contribute to value addition and synergies.
- vii. Better alignment - Map how the different projects within ETF contribute to developing employer engagement, and how the different approaches might mutually enforce each other at country level.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Aim of the evaluation and evaluation questions

The evaluation was tasked to provide an assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the European Training Foundation (ETF) actions in developing work-based learning in both South Eastern Europe and Turkey (SEET) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries during the period 2015 – 2018.

Upon further discussions with the ETF staff involved in work-based learning and the evaluation unit of ETF on how the evaluation would best support the future of ETF's work in work-based learning, the evaluation was split in two – interconnected – strands:

- Strand 1: ETF's in-country and regional role in further stimulating work-based learning. In this strand the evaluation team assesses the role of ETF in the SEET and Eastern Partnership countries in stimulating work-based learning in VET. It looks at the activities conducted, assesses (to the extent possible) the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of ETF's actions. It also assesses ETF's role in comparison with other international organisations active in the countries.
- Strand 2: ETF's role in the international community on work-based learning. In this strand the evaluation team explores the complementarity of ETF compared to other internationally operating organisations. In further explores the perceived importance by international organisations of work-based learning for VET reforms and whether ETF has a(nother) role to play here in the future.

The evaluation both had a summative and formative purpose. It looked back at ETF's plans and activities in the years 2015-2018; and explored, in consultation with the ETF team, which routes are open to improve ETF's work in work-based learning (recommendations). For structuring the evaluation questions, the OECD DAC criteria are applied.

The following evaluation questions are associated with this overall objective; the two strands and the summative (S) and formative (F) character of the evaluation.

### **In-country support strand:**

- Relevance:
  - o S: How has the importance of work-based learning in VET developed at national level in the last 3 years? What are the drivers for this development? What are consequences of this development?
  - o F: How will nationally the importance of work-based learning in VET develop post 2020? What will be emerging topics and priorities post 2020?
- Effectiveness / efficiency:
  - o S: How far has ETF been effective at informing national policy formulation, review, policy design and, to a lesser extent, policy implementation (i.e. Montenegro) with respect to work-based learning? (through: Generation and dissemination of relevant data, e.g. surveys; Drafting and publication of National Reports and Summaries; Drafting and publication of ETF tools, such as Handbook for policymakers and social partners on WBL, Handbook on Financing of WBL, WBL Readiness Tool, ETF Position Paper;
  - o S: To which extent ETF helped EU Candidate Countries to achieve the Medium-Term Deliverable (MTD) on WBL 2015-2020
  - o S: To what degree have ETF interventions facilitated learning from international good practice, from European methodologies and policies and among Partner Countries?
  - o S: To what degree do the ETF interventions succeed in enhancing stakeholder capacities for:
    - policy formulation (identifying potentials for development; analysing needs and problems; clarifying objectives)?
    - policy design (planning interventions; establishing a baseline; defining goals; describing the inputs/resources that are needed for national interventions)?
    - policy implementation (implementing activities; analysing outputs and outcomes; providing feedback)?
  - o S: To what extent have the different methodologies used by the ETF proven to be effective and efficient methods to support the development of work-based learning in the targeted partner countries? What internal and external factors contribute to the success or failure of ETF interventions?

- F: How could the role of ETF change post 2020 at national level? What would be needed for a changed role of ETF post 2020? What would be priorities, initiatives, activities ETF should focus on in the future? Could effective approaches be replicated to other regions/countries?
  - Impact and sustainability:
    - S: How effective has the ETF been in supporting policy development and implementation strategies relating to work-based learning systems in the SEET and EaP countries between 2015 and 2018?
    - F: How could ETF post 2020 achieve more sustainable impact in the area of work-based learning at national level?
  - Complementarity:
    - S: To what extent are ETF methods and actions complementary and coordinated with EU-funded and other major donor-supported initiatives (e.g. KulturKontakt Austria and UNDP in Georgia), UNEVOC, WB, GIZ, ILO) policies and projects in the partner countries been achieved?
    - F: Compared with other international organisations active in the countries, what could be the added value of ETF post 2020? What would be needed to provide this added value in the future?
- International strand:**
- Relevance:
    - S: How has internationally the importance of work-based learning in VET developed over the last 3 years? What are the drivers for this development? What are consequences of this development?
    - F: How will internationally the importance of work-based learning in VET develop post 2020? What will be emerging topics and priorities post 2020?
  - Effectiveness / efficiency:
    - S: How far has ETF been effective at informing international policy formulation and review with respect to work-based learning? (through: Generation and dissemination of relevant data, e.g. surveys; Drafting and publication of National Reports and Summaries; Drafting and publication of ETF tools, such as Handbook for policymakers and social partners on WBL, Handbook on Financing of WBL, WBL Readiness Tool, ETF Position Paper.
    - S: How has the role of the ETF developed in the international context in work-based learning in the last 3 years? What are the drivers for this development? What are consequences of this development?
    - F: How could the role of ETF change post 2020? What would be needed for a changed role of ETF post 2020? What would be priorities, initiatives, activities ETF should focus on in the future?
  - Impact and sustainability:
    - S: Internationally, what are key achievements or contributions of the ETF on work-based learning in the last 3 years?
    - F: How could ETF post 2020 achieve more sustainable impact in the area of work-based learning?
  - Complementarity:
    - S: Compared to other international organisations, what has been the added value of ETF in work-based learning in VET in the last 5 years in the international context?
    - F: Compared with other international organisations, what could be the added value of ETF post 2020? What would be needed to provide this added value in the future?

## 1.2 Methodological approach

The methodology was developed from discussions within the evaluation team and with ETF staff and consisted of four key activities:

- (1) **Desk research:** The evaluators analysed in detail the available documents in order to extract information considering the evaluation questions.
- (2) **Interviews with ETF staff:** In addition to document analysis (based on the documents made available by ETF), a significant share of information, needed to answer the evaluation questions, came from the responsible staff at ETF and in the countries. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the inception phase and the data collection phase.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Avoiding bias in data collection: It is unrealistic for any evaluation to rule out any bias in the collection of data. Consider the possibility where people provide answers, they think the interviewer wants to hear, or try to impress with a skewed answer. The methodological approach therefore ensures that each question will always be collected by multiple ways of data collection or by approaching more than one type of stakeholder. Words of praise or disapproval are for example not quantifiable, or quantifiably 'valuable' and should be cross-checked (triangulated) with data obtained from other sources (desk research, site visits and online questionnaires), to ensure corroboration. Where discrepancies arise, these will be investigated further by means of multiple sources.

(3) **Field visits in two SEET countries and one Eastern Partnership country for in-depth assessment of ETFs activities in WBL:** In addition to the desk research and interviews with ETF staff, the evaluation team will conduct 3 field missions were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation dynamics, implications and results on the ground. These field missions allowed to meet with involved stakeholders in detail, get a deeper understanding of the results achieved on the ground, and most importantly allow to interact with **final beneficiaries** of WBL-related activities, i.e. national policymakers, schools, companies, teachers/trainers, and students and other development partners. The three countries will portray a diversity in terms of the region (both SEET and EaP) and the level of ETF activity (medium and high activity level (NB: it was agreed not to visit a country with a low activity level as not much could be learned from this country). Based on the consultation with ETF staff, the evaluation team visited:

- **Montenegro:** Montenegro experienced a gap-year in IPA support and ETF was the only organisation to provide technical support on ToT programmes and improving monitoring. While in other countries ETF focused more on upstream policy support, in Montenegro there was more technical assistance provided (still not to the extent that other organisations can do).
- **Albania:** In Albania work-based learning is high on the agenda and it received a lot of support from other development partners on WBL (Austrian KulturKontakt, Swisscontact, GIZ). ETF has provided technical support in the further development of by-laws in close cooperation with other donors.
- **Georgia:** Georgia is a small but active country on work-based learning. A concept paper is written on work-based learning and the government cooperates with other donors as well on work-based learning. As Georgia is still an agriculture-based economy with many small companies, it is interesting to see how ETF's regional project supported policy developments in this context.

The evaluators organised interviews in the countries with Ministries; TVET authorities; beneficiaries of ETF activities (VET institutions; companies; teachers/trainers; students); development partners (e.g. GIZ, Swisscontact, BC); EU delegations.

(4) Interviews with international level stakeholders and experts: Interviews were conducted with experts from UNESCO, UNESCO UNEVOC, EC DG EMPL, EC DG DEVCO, ILO, EBRD, GIZ. In total twelve interviews were conducted (four pending). The list of interviewees is annexed to the report.

The findings from all research activities were analysed and formed the basis of the draft final report.

## 2 Reconstructing the Theory of Change<sup>2</sup>

In this section the Theory of Change is presented. Theory of change is a concept that is applied to initiatives with ambitious and complex goals, which require both operational and strategic planning. It is commonly understood as an articulation of how and why a given intervention will lead to specific change.<sup>3</sup> Theory of change starts from a baseline analysis of the context and issues. It then maps out the logical sequence of activities and expected changes, including underlying assumptions, which are anticipated as being necessary amongst stakeholders and in the contextual conditions to support the desired long-term change. This is based on the analytical framework for mapping the Theory of Change as presented in the table below.

Figure 1 : Approach to theory of change

Line of reasoning towards achieving results (mechanism and expected outcomes)	Problem Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the challenge the ETF activities in WBL seek to overcome?</li> <li>• What are the underlying causes of the challenge?</li> </ul>
	Overall Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the objectives of the ETF activities in WBL?</li> <li>• How do such objectives relate to the challenge(s)?</li> <li>• How can success of the ETF activities in WBL be measured?</li> </ul>
	Change Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What actions / activities are planned in order to achieve the objectives?</li> <li>• What is the mechanism of change linking the inputs to short-term output/outcomes and long-term goal (How are the project activities envisaged to lead to the expected results)?</li> </ul>
	Change Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the milestones, indicators or other tools to assess/measure extent of change?</li> </ul>
	Meta-Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the underpinning theory that justifies the chosen change process?</li> </ul>
Implementation (planned interventions)	Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the (financial and human resource) input related to the ETF activities in WBL?</li> <li>• What is the timeline associated with reaching the objectives?</li> </ul>
	Institutional / organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What coordination mechanisms are put in place?</li> <li>• What institutional rules and requirements have a likely effect on project implementation?</li> </ul>
	Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What actors are involved in the change process, what is their role and relationship to the ETF activities in WBL? Differentiate between:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- End-users / Intended beneficiaries</li> <li>- Implementing actors</li> <li>- Points of collaboration with partners/other agencies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Practical implementation (Outcomes and context)	Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the beliefs, values, and unquestioned elements for each step of the change process?</li> </ul>
	Internal Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the potential modalities of the activities that may undermine its success?</li> </ul>
	External Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are external risks to the activities with the potential to undermine its success and outline plans to overcome these?</li> </ul>
	Obstacles to Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are obstacles likely to threaten the change process?</li> <li>• What plans are outlined to overcome them?</li> </ul>
	Knock-On Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the potential unintended consequences of ETFs activities in WBL, both positive and negative?</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The development of a Theory of Change helps to understand strategic and operational planning of initiatives with ambitious and complex goals. It starts from a baseline analysis of the context and issues. It then maps out the logical sequence of changes that are stakeholders expect to be necessary in the contextual conditions to support the desired long-term change.

<sup>3</sup> Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding ‘Theory of Change’ in international development: a review of existing knowledge, p. 2.

## 2.1 Introduction to WBL in the EU and ETF Partner Countries

### 2.1.1 Increased emphasis on work-based learning: high on the EU agenda

Work-based learning has been a high policy priority at European level in recent years. The **Bruges Communiqué** on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020 indicates that the “work-based component contributes substantially to developing a professional identity and can boost the self-esteem of those who might otherwise see themselves as failures.”<sup>4</sup> In **Riga in 2015**, the Member States agreed to “promote work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships, by involving social partners, companies, chambers and VET providers, as well as by stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship” (MTD 1).<sup>5</sup> Related to the broad involvement of stakeholders at European level, the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships** (EAfA) brings together governments with other key stakeholders, such as business, the social partners, chambers, vocational education and training (VET) providers, regional authorities, youth representatives, and think tanks to strengthen the quality, supply and demand, and image of apprenticeships in Europe.<sup>6</sup> Additionally the **Youth Guarantee**, adopted in 2013, explicitly mentions apprenticeships and internships as ways in which to prevent young people being unemployed.<sup>7</sup> The **Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships** in March 2018<sup>8</sup> further reflected the importance of well-functioning apprenticeship systems as key factors for e.g. the job market integration of young people. Finally, during the European Vocational Skills Week 2018 (Vienna), the European Commission launched the Apprenticeship Support Service (AppSS), to support Member States in the further development of apprenticeship systems.

### 2.1.2 Work-based learning and apprenticeships in Europe<sup>9</sup>

Work-based learning, and in particular apprenticeships and internships/traineeships can play a role in easing the transition from school to work. The employment outcomes of apprenticeship programmes, especially those associated with the dual training system, has led Member States such as Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, to either introduce schemes akin to this system, or to embark upon major reforms of their apprenticeships.<sup>10</sup>

Work-based learning refers to knowledge and skills acquired through carrying out – and reflecting on – tasks in a vocational context, either at the workplace or in a VET institution.<sup>11</sup> The Interagency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG-TVET) applies a broad definition of work-based learning: “Work-based learning refers to all forms of learning that takes place in a real work environment. It provides individuals with the skills needed to

<sup>4</sup> Full citation: “Work-based learning is a way for people to develop their potential. The work-based component contributes substantially to developing a professional identity and can boost the self-esteem of those who might otherwise see themselves as failures. Learning on the job enables those in employment to develop their potential whilst maintaining their earnings. A well performing VET, which enables learning on and off-the-job on a part-time or full-time basis, can thereby also strongly contribute to social cohesion in our societies.” European Commission (2010), The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020, 2010: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom_en.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2015), Riga Conclusions 2015: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/european-ministers-endorse-riga-conclusions-vet>.

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&langId=en>.

<sup>7</sup> All Member States committed to 'ensure that all young people up to the age of 25 years receive a quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education'. See EC 2013/C 120/01.

<sup>8</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=EN)

<sup>9</sup> Part of this section is taken (amended) from another publication by Ockham IPS (Broek, S.D. et al (2017), Study on "Skills development and employment: Apprenticeships, internships and volunteering"; European Parliament

<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2013), Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors: A Guidebook for Policy Planners and Practitioners.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission (2013), Workbased learning in Europe: Practices and Policy pointers.

successfully obtain and keep jobs and progress in their professional development."<sup>12</sup> In line with the IAG-TVET definition ETF also emphasises that learning needs to relate to real work that leads to the production of real goods and services.<sup>13</sup>

Work-based learning can be offered in the form of an apprenticeship or an internship/ traineeship:

- The Council Recommendation defined **apprenticeships** as ‘formal vocational education and training schemes that combine substantial work-based learning in companies and other workplaces with learning based in education or training institutions, that lead to nationally recognised qualifications. These are characterised by a contractual relationship between the apprentice, the employer and/or the vocational education and training institution, with the apprentice being paid or compensated for her/his work.<sup>14</sup>
- An **internship/ traineeship** is defined as a work practice (either as part of a study curriculum or not) including an educational/training component which is limited in time. They are predominantly short to medium-term in duration (from a few weeks up to six months, and in certain cases lasting one year).<sup>15</sup> Roughly, three broad categories of traineeships/internships can be distinguished:<sup>16</sup> 1) Internships that are part of vocational/academic curricula or are part of (mandatory) professional training; 2) Internships associated with active labour market policies (ALMPs); 3) Internships in the open market.

### 2.1.3 ETF and work-based learning in the Partner Countries

In many of the Candidate Countries, as analysed by ETF in 2017<sup>17</sup>, VET is deeply rooted in the formal system and there is generally limited emphasis on work-based learning components. Most of the practical training takes place in the VET schools’ workshops and there is limited capacity (and sense of urgency) at the employers’ side to be engaged in the governance and delivery of WBL components. Furthermore, in the majority of the Candidate Countries, robust mechanisms for the financing of WBL are still missing.

Like the EU countries, work-based learning is high on the political agenda in the EU candidate countries and many of the other ETF Partner Countries. The Candidate Countries committed to the Riga Conclusions and have chosen work-based learning as a priority Riga medium term deliverable for ETF support until 2020. Many countries are adopting and implementing policies to raise the esteem of VET; improve employer engagement and experiment with inserting WBL components in the VET systems.

## 2.2 From problem statement to change process: line of reasoning

The ETF programmatic documents do not express or formulate the problem statement and ETFs objective in relation to WBL very clearly. The annual plans formulate annual specific objectives

<sup>12</sup> IAG-TVET (2019), Investing in work-based learning (leaflet), p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> ETF (2018), Work-based learning: A handbook for policy makers and social partners in ETF partner countries, p. 5. “Some enterprises, particularly large ones, have their own training classrooms or workshops, and employees take time away from work to attend training sessions in them. This type of training was very common in many countries of the former Soviet Union. This is not work-based learning. It is simply classroom-based learning that happens to take place in an enterprise rather than in an educational institution.”

<sup>14</sup> European Council (2018), COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (2018/C 153/01) [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=EN)

<sup>15</sup> European Commission (2012), Apprenticeship Supply in the Member States of the European Union, p 22.

<sup>16</sup> Based on an analysis of European Commission (2012), Study on a comprehensive overview on traineeship arrangements in Member States and European Commission (2013), Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors.

<sup>17</sup> ETF (2017), Work-based learning in EU candidate countries

at the level of the Strategic Project ‘VET provision and WBL’ that slightly changed over the years:

- 2015: Improving VET provision and quality assurance in VET
- 2016: Improving VET provision and quality assurance in VET in key policy areas.
- 2017/2018: To support partner countries to improve both initial and continuing VET in terms of VET provision and quality assurance. The project will do so by enhancing work-based learning; improving quality assurance mechanisms and making continuing professional development of teachers and trainers in VET more effective.

The stated foreseen annual outcomes refer to strengthen “policy development in WBL and VET business cooperation” (2015); enhancing “work-based learning in different forms [...] with special attention to apprenticeships and internships/traineeships, by involving social partners, companies, chambers and VET providers” (2017/2018).

More specifically, the 2018 report indicates that “The project contributes to national policy developments by exploring policy options for WBL, facilitating national discussions and providing policy advice and expertise for preparing legal, institutional and financial frameworks for WBL (e.g. Albania, Armenia, North Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine). In relation to EU policies the goal is to strengthen WBL within VET and to diversify VET provision in partner countries. The project’s contribution to expertise development and international debate lies in the further development of existing tools (i.e. handbook on financing) and in publishing findings and good practice examples. It is expected that all candidate countries implement policy options for WBL and actively participate in the EAfA. A majority of EaP countries develop further or implement WBL schemes and at least one Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) country follows-up the recommendations from the policy review.”<sup>18</sup>

From the above statements in ETFs workplans, the following overall problem statement is formulated by the evaluators on which ETF is directing its activities in work-based learning:

*WBL is seen as a way to improve VET systems and to make education and training better and faster responding to labour market needs. ETF Partner Countries also feel the need to develop VET systems through incorporating more WBL components. Reforming VET and installing WBL components is however a complex and challenging task for which many ETF Partner Countries lack the political will, human resources, expertise and information. ETFs activities in WBL are directed to support Partner Countries in reforming systems towards more WBL integration.*

Related to this problem statement, the **change process** behind ETFs activities in WBL is:

*to provide demand-driven, tailored small-scale support through providing expertise; providing information; bringing people together; and financing small-scale initiatives in countries to keep momentum for system changes and VET reforms towards integrating WBL in the SEET and the Eastern Partnership countries. Furthermore, close relationships are maintained with international-level development partners and development partners that operate at the regional and national level.*

Results and impacts are more related to the specific activities and projects conducted at national level; regional level; and finally, global level. Given this change process, results and impacts are difficult to formulate holistically for WBL.

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<sup>18</sup> ETF (2018), Strategic project VET provision and quality assurance Implementation Plan 2018, p. 4-5.



## 2.3 Implementation

At global level, since 2013, the ETF played a very active role in international collaboration in the area of WBL. In co-operation with UNESCO in the frame of the Inter-Agency Working Group on TVET, ETF organised a series of workshops for international organisations and bilateral donors, as well as the European Commission and Cedefop (including ILO, OECD, World Bank) on the topic, contributing to joint work on definition, analytical and policy frameworks as well as advocacy tools for work-based learning. Furthermore, ETF, in cooperation with ILO-ITC (International Training Centre) developed and implemented capacity building seminars (held at ILO-ITC in Turin).

At regional level, in 2015, the ETF launched a regional multi-annual project (2015-2017) on WBL targeting at VET policy makers and employer representatives in the Eastern Partnership region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) and Kazakhstan. A regional approach was chosen to promote WBL policy development and implementation in the countries concerned by applying a peer learning approach (learning from both EU countries and between the countries in the project). Mapping of WBL policies and provision in the countries was followed by a feasibility-check process of WBL schemes through an ETF readiness tool, developed within the project. Country specific recommendations drafted in 2017 provided the basis for ETF support by 2018.

At country level, ETF conducted many different activities. ETF supported national developments through organising workshops; providing ad hoc expert support; providing small-scale support; and building capacities. Besides the country-specific interventions, ETF also facilitated and supported the Candidate Countries' integration into the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA). Meanwhile all five candidate countries became members of the EAfA and made formal commitments to concrete actions for apprenticeships and WBL.

The tables below present a further break-down of the planned activities and achievements as listed in the implementation plans and annual reports in the period 2015-2018. In the section on effectiveness, the achievements are discussed in more detail. The activities are either fully achieved (F); Partly achieved (P); Changed / postponed (C); or not achieved / not mentioned (N). Furthermore, the activities are classified as analytical work (A); capacity building (C); networking / outreach (N); or support (S). In total, 65% of the activities were achieved; 14% was partly achieved; 12% was changed/postponed and finally 9% was not achieved/ not mentioned in the annual report. The activities were mainly characterised as analytical work (35%); followed by networking / outreach (25%) and support to countries (23%). 18% of the activities were characterised as capacity building activities.

Figure 2: Planned activities and achievements 2015-2018

2015			
Activity	Output	Remark	Type
Mapping of WBL policies and good practices in ENPI region, incl. drafting publication	F		A
1 PLA on innovative practices in WBL	F		C
Preparation work for a pre-feasibility study on enterprise demand and potential for WBL	C	replaced by PLA	A
Development of a strategic capacity building course on WBL for policymakers, designers, employer representatives, intermediary bodies and VET managers	C	carried out in 2017-2018	C
Preparatory work for establishing a WBL Platform (incl. Ambassadors network, regional policy network)	F		N
Finalising flagship publication on WBL	N	no publication	A
Finalising policy brief and position paper on WBL	F		A
Contribution to ET2020 TWG on VET	F		N
Organising a joint workshop on WBL with Inter-Agency Group (IAG)	F		N
Update WBL study SEMED region (co-operation with UNESCO)	N	Postponed	A
Co-operation EBRD feasibility study Turkey	F		A
INAP Conference Australia	F		N
<i>Fully achieved</i>	67%	Analytical work	50%
<i>Partly achieved</i>	0%	Capacity building	17%
<i>Changed / postponed</i>	17%	Networking / outreach	33%
<i>Not achieved / not mentioned</i>	17%	Support	0%
2016			
Activity	Output	Remark	Type
Drafting 7 reports on the feasibility of WBL implementation in EE and Kazakhstan, incl. "feasibility check process" and recommendations note for policy makers and social partners	F		A
Organizing 3 PLA (incl. one regional meeting) on innovative WBL practices and thematic priorities of EE countries	F	2 PLAs on WBL implemented	C
Testing WBL Platform for EE and SEET region (incl. WBL Ambassadors, regional policy and expert network)	F		N
Design of a strategic capacity building course on WBL for policymakers and social partners in EE and SEET (preparatory and testing phase)	F		C
Organising workshops for implementation of the ET2020 medium-term deliverable on WBL, incl. facilitation of EAFA participation and mapping of WBL in SEET	F		C
Supporting the development of a questionnaire/needs analysis on dual system and VET and expertise input to a Matching Conference organized by the Austrian Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (follow-up to Vienna Summit 2015)	N	Not reported on	A
Supporting Turkey on WBL and apprenticeships in co-operation with the EBRD (feasibility study)	N	Not reported on	S
Reviewing WBL in SEMED region (co-operation with UNESCO)	P	Experts were contracted. No evidence of a report	A
Publishing and dissemination of WBL reports (WBL-option or must for VET, policy brief, country mapping reports – their executive summaries)	P	Series of factsheets are published	A
Contribution to ET2020 TWGs on Adult Learning/Continuing VET, career guidance and the DG EMPL Expert Group of European VET providers	F		N
Supporting the implementation of National Action Plan for Career Guidance 2016-2018 (Armenia)	C	Not reported on	S
Career guidance course for policymakers and policy designers (jointly with ILO-ITC), 13-17 June, Turin	C	Not reported on	C
Thematic expertise will be provided to other SPs, in particular SP Torino Process and SP EUSUP, e.g. reviewing TRP country reports, ERP documents etc	F		A
<i>Fully achieved</i>	46%	Analytical work	38%
<i>Partly achieved</i>	23%	Capacity building	31%
<i>Changed / postponed</i>	15%	Networking / outreach	15%
<i>Not achieved / not mentioned</i>	15%	Support	15%
2017			
Activity	Output	Remark	Type
Albania: VET school-enterprise based liaison persons (PASOs)	P	still under development in 2019	S
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: National working group on WBL	F		S
Montenegro: (Web-based) Information system for VET internships	F		S
Serbia: Survey on quality of internships	F		A
Turkey: Quality assurance framework for VET internships	F		A
Turkey: Apprenticeship and on-the-job review (co-operation with EBRD)	P	Postponed	A
All candidate countries: EAFA regional seminar (jointly with DG EMPL), Tbc	F		N
All EE countries and Kazakhstan: WBL course for policy makers/social partners	F		C
All EE countries and Kazakhstan: WBL Virtual Platform	P	active participation is a challenge	N
Moldova: Demonstration project (tbd after Focus Group 2016)	F		S
Georgia: Demonstration project (tbd after Focus Group 2016)	F		S
Ukraine, Kazakhstan: Study Financing WBL (tbc)	P	Event was cancelled	A
Armenia, Belarus, Azerbaijan: Mini-PLAs	F		C
Morocco, Tunisia: Review of WBL (finalisation, follow-up)	F		A
Interagency Working group on WBL	F		N
ILO-ETF career guidance course for policy makers	F		C
<i>Fully achieved</i>	75%	Analytical work	38%
<i>Partly achieved</i>	25%	Capacity building	23%
<i>Changed / postponed</i>	0%	Networking / outreach	23%
<i>Not achieved / not mentioned</i>	0%	Support	38%
2018			
Activity	Output	Remark	Type
Support Riga MTD: All candidate countries: EAFA regional seminar (jointly with DG EMPL)	F		N
Support Riga MTD: Albania: VET school-enterprise liaison persons (PASOs)	P		S
Support Riga MTD: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: National working group on WBL	F		S
Support Riga MTD: Montenegro: Exploring options for apprenticeship implementation	F		S
Support Riga MTD: Serbia: Quality improvement of traineeships and dual education	F		S
Support Riga MTD: Turkey: Quality improvement of traineeships	F		A
Support Riga MTD: Turkey: Follow-up to apprenticeship and on-the-job review (co-operation with EBRD)	C		A
Follow-up Skills Connexion Project: All EE countries, Kazakhstan and CCs	F		N
WBL course for policy makers/social partners	F		C
Follow-up Skills Connexion Project: All EE countries, Kazakhstan and CCs: WBL Virtual Platform (incl. short briefing notes on potential of WBL, on achievements of the actions)	F		N
Follow-up Skills Connexion Project: Moldova: Quality improvement of internships	N	Planned action cancelled	S
Follow-up Skills Connexion Project: Georgia: Financing of WBL	C	ran in 2019	A
Follow-up Skills Connexion Project: Armenia: National Working Group on WBL	F		N
Follow-up Skills Connexion Project: Ukraine: WBL policy development	C	ran in 2019	S
Follow-up policy reviews on WBL in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria and UNESCO co-operation	F		A
Interagency Working group (IAG) on WBL	F		N
<i>Fully achieved</i>	69%	Analytical work	31%
<i>Partly achieved</i>	6%	Capacity building	8%
<i>Changed / postponed</i>	19%	Networking / outreach	38%
<i>Not achieved / not mentioned</i>	6%	Support	46%

Source: ETF implementation plans and annual reports

To provide a better idea what activities ETF conducted at country level, the following box provides an overview for Albania, Montenegro and Georgia.

### Albania

In **2015** ETF commented on the draft Law on Crafts before it was adopted on 30 June 2016. In addition to commenting, in **2016** ETF commissioned an Ex - ante assessment Report on the Operationalization of the Law on Crafts and developing a dual training system in the crafts sector in Albania. This study set out the steps to take to develop a dual training system. With the institutional set-up being in the process of completion in 2019 (no involvement of ETF), the steps as identified in the report will be taken as starting point for the further development of the dual training system.

In **2016**, ETF conducted the ex-ante assessment to follow up on the Riga conclusions MTD1 on work-based learning. This ex-ante assessment is not a 'pure' ex-ante assessment but is specifically used to re-establish attention to a specific aspect of improving WBL in Albania, namely institutionalising the role of PASO in public VET providers (PASO: Social Partners Relationship Coordinator/ school-business liaison officer). PASOs are responsible for establishing and maintaining connections with businesses; coordinating meetings in enterprises for learners along with site visits; establishing connections and internship contracts for VET students; organising meetings and discussions with businesses at local level to support curriculum development. In the past development agencies rolled out this function, but somehow the efforts were then abandoned. In this context ETF held a workshop on the introduction of the school-business coordinator function in schools.

In **2017/2018**, ETF is involved in the development of the Bylaws for the new VET law. These bylaws are important as they set out what stakeholders will have to do when implementing the VET law. ETF in this focused on the regulations concerning the School Development Unit. In the SDU, the PASO function is included.

Furthermore in **2018**, ETF was involved in the regulation on WBL that sets out the rules under which employers can take in apprentices (in terms of labour conditions, safety and health, agreements etc.). In a joint donor effort with Kulturkontakt Austria (KKA) and Swisscontact, ETF worked on a draft national regulation on WBL. ETF paid for the local expert and provided major contributions to the draft regulation and workshops. Two workshops were financed by KKA. Swisscontact organised a survey among employers who are offering company internships to students concerning their issues regarding WBL and what needs to be regulated. KKA also implemented another survey under schools. The draft national regulation is currently being reviewed by NAVETQ and expected to be adopted by June 2019.

Besides these, ETF gathered experiences and tools from previous development projects (such as school-business agreement forms; assessment forms etc.) to be used in any future development (not re-inventing the wheel). Furthermore, ETF involved Albania in comparability studies (Work-based learning in the EU Candidate Countries: 2017) and supported Albania's familiarisation with the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA). Albania became a member and participated in the first EAfA Regional Seminar for Candidate Countries in Turkey in 2016. In 2018, Albania hosted the third EAfA Regional Seminar for Candidate Countries in Tirana.

### Montenegro

In **2016** ETF supported the **ex-ante impact assessment** in relation to the Riga conclusions and the five new medium-term deliverables (MTDs)<sup>19</sup>. Montenegro decided to focus on MTD1: Promote Work based learning in all its forms. As explained in the report on Montenegro, "the ex-ante impact assessment contributes to the quality of policy-making by providing sound evidence for the choices in terms of the policy measures to be implemented. Ex-ante impact assessment operates at the early stage of the policy cycle, when proposals are being developed and various policy options are considered before policy choices are made. Thus, ex-ante impact assessment is conducted before the actual measure is decided, to better understand what the problem is, what kind of solutions exist, whether the solution can actually achieve the objective, and what effects it brings. It provides decision-makers with valuable empirical data and evidence as well as with a comprehensive framework in which they can assess their options and the possible consequences of their decisions."<sup>20</sup>

In **2017** (October 2017), ETF organised together with the European Commission and the Ministry of Education of Montenegro a **Regional Seminar** for Candidate Countries on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA). This meeting was attended by the 70 participants from all five candidate countries and EAfA stakeholders from almost half of the EU member states. Participants from the OECD, the EBRD, and regional bodies active in the area, such as the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) were also present.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/2015-riga-conclusions\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/2015-riga-conclusions_en.pdf) [accessed 31-05-2019]

<sup>20</sup> ETF (2016), Ex-ante Impact assessment report – Montenegro; ETF support to the follow-up of the Riga conclusions 2015: policy options for work-based learning, p. 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> See report on that meeting provided by ETF

Furthermore, in **2017**, as indicated in the Implementation Report 2017, “in Montenegro, the ETF will support the **development of a (web-based) information system for internships** to improve the evidence base and planning process for WBL”<sup>22</sup> This resulted in work on the WBL component for their Education management information system (EMIS or MEIS in local language).

In **2018**, ETF supported the development and roll out of **training programme for in-company trainers**. This was an urgent request from the MoE; the originally planned evaluation of the first year of dual VET was postponed to 2019. ILO is also involved in this.

### Georgia

Over the years a number of activities were undertaken in Georgia by the ETF in the context of the regional project:

- Activities that provided specific input in the development of a concept paper on WBL model implementation in Georgia that was published in 2018. This included a situational analysis (mapping study) in 2015, and an analysis of international experience / practices. The Concept Paper has been developed by the thematic working group on Work-Based Learning under the National Vocational Education and Training Council (NVETC) with the support of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Swiss Cooperation Office of the South Caucasus. The Concept Paper represents a shared vision of the stakeholders about the introduction of a new Work-based learning (WBL) Model in VET in Georgia. A broad consultation process with relevant stakeholders, policy makers, social partners and VET institutions informed the development of the Model appropriate to the current context and requirements of the country.
- ETF undertook a feasibility study in 2017 of financial incentives for companies for WBL in Georgia. The study demonstrated the different policy options/incentives for financing of WBL. The report was produced by a national expert with support from the ETF. The report is based on international and national studies of different financial and non-financial incentive mechanisms for employers’ participation in work-based learning schemes and makes a case for applicability for selected incentives for Georgia. The aim of the report is to provide an information base for a further research in this area and political decisions in the area. A workshop was held on 29 November 2017 raising awareness and reaching common understanding on the financing mechanisms and tools to support WBL, as well as to explore policy options for Georgia. Expert assignment was extended until end January 2018.
- As follow-up to the study on financing of WBL, an agreement was reached between ETF, the Ministry of Education and UNDP to design a methodology on cost-benefit analysis that is applicable to Georgia. An international expert was contracted, and this person presented a number of cost/benefit models. This activity will finish in 2019.
- For 2019, ETF will further provide recommendations and advice to support the development of a WBL system, including QA and financing WBL.

Overall, there is a shifting focus in ETF operation in Georgia, starting with providing inputs for the concept paper on WBL (2015-2016), that formed an important element for the upcoming legislation on WBL, moving towards support on the implementation of WBL, including support to WBL financing, governance issues, including quality.

In the Eastern Partnership Region, ETF implemented a three-year project on WBL (see box).

### ETF activities in Eastern Partnership Region

Given the many common policy challenges in WBL, which countries in the Eastern Europe region are facing, the ETF launched a regional multi-annual project of three years (2015-2017) on WBL targeting at VET policy makers and employer representatives in the Eastern Partnership region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) and Kazakhstan. The 3-years action aimed to promote WBL policy development and implementation in the region, notably by: mapping the WBL landscape in seven countries, analysing the feasibility of WBL schemes in the PCs of the region, identifying ways to increase employer engagement in WBL, supporting policy development in WBL, reviewing, developing and testing practical implementation mechanisms, improving stakeholders’ co-operation at various levels, supporting the capacity development of VET stakeholders. The project supported the following activities:

- A series of **Peer Learning Activities (PLAs)** was implemented for 2016 and 2017 with the objective to learn from European examples, as well as from interesting practices in the Eastern Partnership region and

<sup>22</sup> ETF (2016), Strategic project VET provision and quality assurance Implementation Plan 2017 4/10/2016, p. 8.

- Kazakhstan, in the perspective to support the development of work-based learning in each country. In 2016, two PLAs on WBL were implemented in Kazakhstan (for Armenia, Georgia and Moldova) on practical implementation issues of a dual system; and in Spain with participants from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine on comparison between internship and dual training approach, cooperation between education and businesses in organising WBL, regional approach of VET and partial qualifications
- In 2016, **seven Country Snapshots on WBL** for EaP countries and Kazakhstan and a synthesis report were revised, finalised, and published.
  - **EaP Annual Forum on WBL** in VET held in Georgia in 2018. In total 40 policy makers/social partners participated in this event. The event aimed to take stock of recent development related to WBL in EaP countries, as well a site visit (company) on WBL took place in Georgia.
  - **Implementation of the modular training course for policy makers / social partners.** These modules are based on the handbook<sup>23</sup>. In the beginning there were ten modules offered, but these have been reduced to eight. There are in total two e-learning modules (one on in-company trainers and one on financing of WBL). More specialized modules will be added at a later stage.
  - **WBL Virtual Platform.** The Platform has been used to inform members about ETF activities within the project and for the e-learning component of the WBL course. However, active participation of countries remained a challenge and further reflection is needed how to make it better work.
  - Implementation of the feasibility check for WBL (based on the ETF readiness tool developed) in seven countries through national focus groups.

In terms of resources, ETFs activities in WBL are supported by three specialists and additional support is provided by the country desks (country coordinators). Furthermore, there is funding for small project work or the organisation of workshops and conferences and studies (also in the context of regional projects). The following table provides an overview of the total expenditure for ETFs activities in WBL.

*Figure 3: Total expenditure, missions and FTE for ETFs activities in WBL*

Year	Direct Expenditure €	Mission		FTE		Total
		Nr.	€	FTE	€	
2015	169,479	6	7,590	0.7	60,900	237,976
2016	271,610	9	9,191	1.4	121,800	402,611
2017	403,150	14	18,245	1.5	130,500	551,911
2018	306,171	20	21,664	1.8	156,600	484,457
	<b>€ 1,150,410</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>€ 56,690</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>€ 469,800</b>	<b>€ 1,676,954</b>

Source: ETF

## 2.4 Actors

The actors involved in ETFs activities in WBL are first and foremost the national stakeholders. These are the national government and ministries responsible for VET and VET authorities. Furthermore, ETF cooperates with the development partners in VET in the countries and the Delegation of the European Union in the countries. Other stakeholders, or beneficiaries of ETFs activities are employers’ associations, VET schools, employers, teachers and trainers, and finally VET/ WBL students and apprentices.

<sup>23</sup> ETF (2018), Financing work-based learning as part of vocational education and training: A handbook for policy makers and social partners

On the international level, ETF works together with the EC (DG EMPL) and European agencies (Cedefop); the members of the Interagency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG-TVET) and with other organisations such as ILO-ITC and UNESCO-UNEVOC.

## 2.5 Assumptions underlying the change process

There are a number of key assumptions behind that ETFs activities can support VET reforms in the number of countries ETF supports. These assumptions not being met in countries is a risk for reaching results. The following assumptions are identified by the evaluators:

- ETF experts and expertise are acknowledged and valued by the national stakeholders: ETF staff have the authority and expertise that is required for their actions to be followed up by national stakeholders. If this expertise is absent, small-scale interventions would not be leading to changes.
- ETF activities are positioned within a larger policy agenda that is accepted by the national stakeholders: ETF is working towards objectives that are agreed upon by national stakeholders and this provides legitimacy to ETFs activities.
- ETF is not seen as competitor for other development partners: ETF needs to work together with other development partners and needs to coordinate its activities with national stakeholders and development partners to avoid overlap and competition.
- ETF implements the right combination of activities (analytical work, support, capacity building and networking) to support the line of reasoning (to provide demand-driven, tailored small-scale support through providing expertise; providing information; bringing people together; and financing small-scale initiatives in countries to keep momentum for system changes and VET reforms towards integrating WBL).
- ETF has the flexibility to support initiatives at an ad hoc basis (opportunity driven): ETF
- ETF is able to engage employers in VET reforms and, together with government, assure the willingness of employers to support WBL.
- There are sufficient capacities (quantitatively and qualitatively) within the government, VET authorities and VET schools to support reforms.
- There is sufficient funding to support reform processes at the side of national stakeholders.

## 3 Main findings in relation to the evaluation criteria

### 3.1 Relevance

#### 3.1.1 The importance of WBL at international level

##### **Attention to WBL from international organisations**

In the last decade, interest in all forms of work-based learning in VET, and especially in apprenticeships, has steadily increased in Europe. At the **European policy level** VET and WBL entered centre-stage in agenda-setting documents such as the Bruges Communiqué (2010); Renewed European Adult Learning Agenda (2011); Rethinking Education (2012); European Alliance for Apprenticeships (2013); Riga Conclusions (2015); and the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (2018). The European developments in work-based learning are analytically supported by **Cedefop**. Important initiatives in this regard are the Thematic Country Reviews and the Cross-nation overview of apprenticeship schemes.<sup>24</sup> Another main development in Europe is the recent establishment of the Apprenticeship Support Service, intended to help countries in their reforms towards apprenticeship systems.<sup>25</sup>

At the global level, in the last ten years work-based learning and apprenticeships have received more attention. For instance, **UNESCO** through its TVET Strategy (2010-2015) explicitly recognises the value of TVET in addressing a host of issues, such as youth unemployment and socio-economic inequalities, making a case for increasing the involvement of employers in TVET delivery. The 2012 World Congress on TVET held in Shanghai stated clearly that TVET needs transforming to respond to the changing world. Profound transformations are needed in the conceptualisation, governance, funding and organisation of TVET in which ministries of education, workers' associations, civil society and private industry together in the planning, design, delivery and governance of TVET. In such a context, the role of government is changing. While it used to be seen as a provider of TVET, it is now acting as a regulator, setting standards for training and employment. The 2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning technical and vocational education and training (TVET) mentions that Member States, according to their governance structures, should consider establishing or strengthening governance models for TVET institutions involving relevant local stakeholders and cooperating, when relevant, with business associations in supporting work-based learning.

The **ILO** also has a long tradition on focusing on work-based learning and apprenticeships. In 2012, the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers concluded that countries should promote, and where necessary, strengthen quality apprenticeships systems. ILO conducted analytical work<sup>26</sup> and provided toolkits<sup>27</sup> in this context emphasizing the need for robust social dialogue and public-private partnerships.

The **OECD** turned to emphasising skills development in their Skills Strategy 2011 and the report on Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A strategic approach to skills policies (2012). They started their main activities on work-based learning in 2015 with a study of work-based learning

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/apprenticeships-work-based-learning#1> [accessed 30-05-2019]

<sup>25</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&intPageId=5235&langId=en> [accessed 30-05-2019]

<sup>26</sup> ILO (2012), Overview of apprenticeship systems and issues: ILO contribution to the G20 Task Force on Employment

<sup>27</sup> ILO (2017), ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships - Vol. 1: Guide for Policy Makers

in VET<sup>28</sup>, aimed to analyse policy issues, document global experience in policy and practice and deliver key policy messages. In 2017, OECD started another study on Work-based learning in school-based vocational education and training.<sup>29</sup> While organisations such as ETF, UNESCO and ILO over the years had a positive attitude towards VET and work-based learning, this was less obvious for the OECD (and the World-Bank) emphasising that VET is more costly compared to general education.<sup>30</sup>

The international organisations jointly work together in the **Interagency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG-TVET)**<sup>31</sup>. This group was convened by UNESCO in 2008 to ensure a good coordination of activities by the key international organisations involved in the delivery of policy advice, programmes and research on TVET. Within the IAG-TVET a working group is established to focus on work-based learning. This group agreed on a common understanding of WBL.<sup>32</sup>

All in all, the interest in WBL increased within all international organisations working in the area, leading to main agenda-setting publications and documents that are taken on board by their constituencies (Member States and stakeholders). Additionally, work-based learning is more and more seen as a cost-effective way of education and training.<sup>33</sup>

### Drivers for increased attention

Many drivers can be mentioned that influenced that WBL has obtained a more prominent position at international level. There are intrinsic drivers pointing to the various benefits of work-based learning. Work-based learning can raise enterprise productivity and innovation; work-based learning is a powerful form of pedagogy; work-based learning can improve individuals' career development; work-based learning can lead to better youth transitions; work-based learning can raise the quality of vocational education and training.<sup>34</sup>

External factors relate to indications that countries having comprehensive apprenticeship systems showed lower unemployment rates, particularly for youth, in times of crisis compared to countries not having such systems. When young people are not able to make a relatively quick transition into the labour market after completing their studies, it can inhibit the accumulation of the human,

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/work-based-learning-and-apprenticeships.htm> [accessed 30-05-2019]

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/work-based-learning-in-school-based-vocational-education-and-training-vet.htm> [accessed 30-05-2019]

<sup>30</sup> See as well: OECD (Kathrin Hoeckel) (2008), Costs and Benefits in Vocational Education and Training

<sup>31</sup> The IAG-TVET comprises the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank (WB). Regionally based members include the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Commission (EC), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

<sup>32</sup> That is: all forms of learning that takes place in a work environment which provides individuals with the knowledge, skills and competences needed to obtain and keep jobs and progress in their professional careers) and has been conducting collective work in three areas: (i) develop a policy framework for identifying and promoting policy levers for quality WBL and related improvement of employability of learners, (ii) establish analytical framework of agencies' methodologies on country reviews of WBL, and (iii) create an advocacy tool to promote common key messages on WBL's benefits. See IAG-TVET (2016), Interagency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) NEWSLETTER July 2016, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> See the overview of evidence provided by Manuela Samek Lodovici IRS- Istituto Ricerca Sociale during the expert workshop Costs and benefits of apprenticeship – a company perspective: Lodovici, M. (2014), Costs and benefits of apprenticeship: review of available evidence: [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/02\\_costs\\_and\\_benefits\\_of\\_apprenticeships\\_-\\_review\\_of\\_available\\_evidence\\_manuela\\_samek\\_irs\\_italy.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/02_costs_and_benefits_of_apprenticeships_-_review_of_available_evidence_manuela_samek_irs_italy.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> Sweet, Richard (2013), Work-based learning: Why? How?, in: UNESCO-UNEVOC (2013), Revisiting global trends in TVET, p. 164-203.



social and economic capital that will help develop their careers<sup>35</sup> and the longer the period of disengagement from the labour market – or education – the higher the risk of social and economic exclusion.<sup>36</sup> Apprenticeship and work-based learning allow young people to obtain work experience and increase their chances in the labour market.

Another external factor of why work-based learning is gaining importance is the changing nature of work and the workplace. Given the fast changes in technological development and modes of working, school-based systems have difficulties to keep up with the pace of developments. This calls for organising education and training closer to the labour market to incorporate changes in work quicker in the education and training programmes. Work-based learning is therefore better suited compared to school-based VET or general education to develop skills that are directly relevant in the labour market and that respond to employer's needs.

Furthermore, work-based learning seems to be better suited for applying a lifelong learning perspective. The changing nature of work demands that workers should keep developing themselves lifelong. This does not fit well with a front-ended approach in which young people receive 15/20 years of schooling, then make the transition to the labour market and never see an education institute again. Work-based learning on the other hand, softens the distinction between education and work and trains people to learn while working.

All in all, the drivers for increased attention to WBL are predominantly linked to intrinsic characteristics that remain valid even when some external drivers (e.g. economic crisis) are no longer present: WBL seems to be better able to prepare young people for employment and learning while working and better responds to labour market needs compared to school-based VET or academic pathways.

### 3.1.2 The importance of WBL at the level of the PCs

#### Increasing importance of WBL in the Partner Countries

This positive trend is clearly felt in the Partner Countries as well. ETF reports show an emergence of attention to WBL in the Partner Countries in the last years. This is a reaction as well on the Riga Conclusions from 2015 and the adoption of five EU Candidate Countries (Albania, the North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) together with the EU Member States of medium-term deliverables that includes WBL. The five Candidate Countries are all members of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EaFA).<sup>37</sup> The increased importance of WBL is clearly felt in North Macedonia and Serbia. Both countries have started reforms to improve WBL systems. North Macedonia for instance, introduced compulsory WBL in 4-year programmes. When looking more specifically at the three countries visited in the context of the evaluation, this confirms the general trend.

Work-based learning gained importance in **Albania** in the last five years, especially from 2013 onwards. In that year the government made the statement that education should be directed more to labour market needs and be delivered in a dual education form. Different development partners (mainly from the German-speaking countries) are already active for 25 years in the country implementing projects that always have some components on work-based learning. Only the last five years developments are taking off. Work-based learning is specifically addressed in the VET law, the bylaws (to be adopted) and the WBL regulation (to be adopted in 2019).

<sup>35</sup> Tomić, I. (2016). What drives youth unemployment in Europe?. Radni materijali EIZ-a, (1), 5-40. Preuzeto s <http://hrcak.srce.hr/152600>.

<sup>36</sup> Eurofound (2015), Social inclusion of young people, Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Link: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef1543en.pdf](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1543en.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1148&langId=en> [accessed 31-05-2019]

In **Montenegro** this development is noticed as well and is even stronger. The 2010-2014 Vocational education Development strategy<sup>38</sup> already included priorities concerning strengthening social partnership and connecting VET to the labour market. In the latter, key focus was on the NQF; occupational standards and curriculum development and the engagement of the employers in this process. In the Vocational Education Development Strategy (2015–2020) the role of work-based learning is even more pronounced. The Law on National Qualifications Framework was adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro in December 2010 and the NQF was referenced to the EQF in November 2014. Within this process, the engagement with employers was already strengthened.

In 2015, Montenegro decided to focus on the MTD1 priority (work-based learning). In 2017 changes to the VET law were effectuated which relaunched the work on WBL. The pilot in 2004–06 partly did not success due to a lack of engagement of employers. In the ex-ante impact assessment, stakeholders agreed that the overall conclusion was that challenges “are mainly caused by the lack of coordination among stakeholders involved in the implementation of WBL, and also by the lack of data integration when it comes to continuous revision of the WBL implementation process.”<sup>39</sup> The relaunch tried to resolve these obstacles.

The current implementation of Dual Education is running in its second year. The first year enrolled 280 students; the second 290 students (the objective was to have 100 students a year). The students are enrolled in the 3-year VET programmes (which are more labour market oriented than the 4-year programmes). The first 2 years the government paid the (reduced) wages to make it more attractive for employers. In the third year the employer will pay. There is also a scholarship scheme for deficit occupations to attract students to those occupations. In the context of the relaunch, main communication campaigns are launched towards employers and students (“Vocational education is the key”). The final objective is to have a large percentage of students in Dual Education. Given the strategies and the changes in the VET law, it is safe to say that WBL is a priority in Montenegro VET policies.

### Georgia

Work based learning was already existing in Georgia, however, Work-based Learning gained more importance in Georgia in the last five years, especially from 2015 onwards. In 2015 a situational analysis (quantitative and qualitative research) was implemented by ETF on the WBL system, also including an analysis of international experience. This all feed the development of the concept paper on WBL, and approval of a pilot action plan, including five pilot projects (run by GIZ and UNDP). The concept paper was endorsed by the Parliament and reflect on changes to be made in the VET regulation mechanism. The concept paper strongly lobbies for an increased role and responsibilities for social partners in policy as well as implementation of dual model of WBL, cost-sharing, better governance and implementation mechanisms and capacity building for all sides. New pilots of dual schemes were launched in tourism in Autumn, 2017. However, regulatory, institutional and financial framework for dual VET model to be provided within New Law on VET under development still has not catch up with the pilots to enable the full launch of the model. The Ministry of Education and Science works intensively to enlarge the share of WBL. Focus is currently on adopting the governmental degree and implementation of WBL.

All in all, in the Partner Countries, WBL gained importance and this is clearly evidenced by the changes in legislative frameworks and the (pilot) implementation of WBL schemes.

### Drivers for increased importance of WBL in the Partner Countries

The increased attention to WBL is on one hand because of the **global re-valuation of WBL**, and on the other hand because of country-internal drivers. In Albania, WBL is seen as a way to improve the VET system and **better support the national labour market**. This is especially relevant given the steep decline of the population in recent years: people lack prospect in the country. VET and WBL could partly provide better prospects. In Montenegro, the drivers for improving practical training in companies in VET were that there was **inconsistency in how in-company training is provided**; to **respond to the demand** from the labour market. Furthermore, the **experiences with NQF** are mentioned as a trigger to further stimulate the engagement of employers in the delivery (they are already involved in the development of the occupational standards, and curricula).

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Education of Science (2009), Montenegrin Vocational Education development strategy (2010-2014)

<sup>39</sup> ETF (2016), Ex-ante impact assessment report – Montenegro: ETF support to the follow-up of the Riga Conclusions 2015: Policy options for work-based learning, p. 13.

In Albania and Montenegro, the EU priorities such as the **Riga MTD1** are also mentioned as drivers to improving the VET system. This driver is not officially present in the Eastern Partnership countries as these countries could not sign up to the MTD. The Eastern Partnership however agreed on in 2016 on 20 deliverables 2020. These include as well VET-related actions. It formulated the target for 2020 to increase the enrolment in vocational education and training and to increase the percentage of vocational education and training graduates in employment or further study after six months.<sup>40</sup> Work-based learning can play an important role in working towards these targets. In Georgia for instance, the Social-economic Development Strategy of Georgia indicates the weaknesses in the current VET system in meeting labour market demands. For developing VET, the strategy refers to improved governance; increasing the capacity of professional training establishments; effective financing mechanisms; full access for all social groups; training of vocational teachers and instructors; and high-quality career planning and career-guidance systems.<sup>41</sup>

## 3.2 Effectiveness / Efficiency

### 3.2.1 ETFs role in national policy formulation, review, policy design and policy implementation

#### **ETF informing national policy formulation, review, policy design and, to a lesser extent, policy implementation**

The evaluation obtained evidence from the three countries visited that ETFs activities supported national policy formulation, review, policy design and policy implementation. In **Albania**, for instance, ETF managed to have effect on national policy formulation and design. This is best noticeable in the work done on the development of the WBL regulation. In **Montenegro**, ETF has been effective at informing national policy formulation and design and implementation. Different from other countries, ETF was engaged in some activities that go in the direction of technical assistance and implementation. In terms of policy formulation, ETFs work on the ex-ante impact assessment was important. The WBL topic was already considered a priority in Montenegro but it was still unclear what actions need to be taken to take it further. In terms of policy design, ETF is asked by the Ministry of Education to support the development of the IPA proposal. It is recognised by the EU delegation that of all policy fields, the proposal for education most advanced and this is visible in the achievements<sup>42</sup>. In terms of implementation, ETF's activities (IT support and in-company trainer training) contributed to solving deficits in the system that could be solved with limited resources. ETF is able, more than other organisations, to provide support in a more flexible and tailored (non-project-base) way. These small interventions have quite a large impact exactly because they were provided in a timely manner. In **Georgia**, ETF played an important role establishing the decree on the national VET council, that was approved in 2018. This legal framework assures the role and coordination of the national VET council. The box below showcases examples of support to policy formulation, review, design and implementation.

#### **ETF support to policy formulation and design in Albania**

<sup>40</sup> European Commission (2016), Joint staff working document: Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020 Focusing on key priorities and tangible results, SWD (2017) 300 final, p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> Government of Georgia (2014), Social economic Development Strategy of Georgia "GEORGIA 2020" p. 45.

<sup>42</sup> While for some areas the achievements were below expectations or even disappointing, "in Education (Measure 2.1), results were mostly achieved, and the implementation of 10 new educational programmes in schools across the country was a key success." See: GDSI (2018), EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT 2012-2013 (IPA COMPONENT IV) Final Report June 2018 p. 75.

ETF supported the establishment of the dual training system for crafts. The feasibility study<sup>43</sup> conducted by ETF identified the steps to be taken to establish this system. Currently this study is taken as guideline in the further development of the system.

The development of the WBL regulation: the study conducted by ETF<sup>44</sup> and complemented by KulturKontakt Austria and Swisscontact led to the draft regulation which is currently reviewed for adoption by National Agency of Vocational Education Training and Qualifications (NAVETQ).

In addition, ETF's work on the bylaws (especially about the functions of the School Development Unit (SDU) has found its way to near adoption. Also, other development partners play a key role in these developments.

#### **ETF support to policy formulation, design and implementation in Montenegro**

2017: **development of a (web-based) information system for internships:** here ETF provided 6,000 Euro to build an additional module on WBL in the overarching education information system (MEIS). Through this, the schools and authorities (VET centre) can gather information about the number of WBL students; their results, the quality of the supervision etc. This ETF activity directly contributes to a better knowledge and evidence base for further policy development. This issue was raised in the ex-ante impact assessment (option 1)

2018: development and roll out of **training programme for in-company trainers:** ETF supported the development of modules to train in-company trainers to better guide apprentices from take-in to assessment. ETF provided input for the development and hired the consultant to further develop the modules and train the VET school instructors who will train the in-company trainers (cascade-model). The in-company trainer interviewed indicated that it supported her in better supervising the student and better giving feedback. Also, she is more engaged with the VET school and the development of the VET programmes. This contribution of ETF was also a response to the identified deficit in the ex-ante impact assessment. The idea is that the VET Centre will further roll out the training programme to more schools and employers.

ETF supported through advice the VET centre in the relaunch of the Dual Education initiative. This already shows impact. For instance, in tourism, in the coastal region, in the school system waiters were not trained for 30 years as hotels would not employ them. Now in the Dual Education system one hotel is already training 19 employed waiters and facilitates the training of another 70 waiters. An issue in this regard is that school directors hesitate with the Dual education initiative as it might cost them students and they will have to let go teachers that are no longer needed.

#### **ETF support to policy formulation and design in Georgia**

ETF concept paper provided an important input for the legislation, including (good practice) examples of other countries and including concrete recommendations. The decree also had an important impact on the design and implementation of WBL reform, since the ETF concept paper also recommended that working groups should be established on specific themes within VET, amongst else WBL. As a result, stakeholders are starting to work together on the topic WBL (which was less the case before). In this working group the government, social partners, schools, and two donors are represented (GIZ and UNDP). ETF is not part of this working group, since ETF does not have a local presence. Nevertheless, they are a close 'friend' to the working group.

### **ETF support of capacity building**

The capacity building support of ETF is emphasised in the Regional project approach in the Eastern Partnership. Here national stakeholders have been engaged in PLA's, study tours and e-learning courses. In this, the PLA's and study tours were highly appreciated. For instance, Albanian business-school liaison officers went to Georgia to provide a workshop on the topic. This contributed to the self-consciousness at the Albanian side that what is developed in Albania might be relevant for other countries. **The modular Training Course for policy makers / social partners** (including the two e-learning modules on in-company trainers and financing of WBL) were considered helpful as well, but at the same time very basic and only useful for people that are less familiar to the topic. Stakeholders also indicate that modules were not disseminated

<sup>43</sup> Rama, L. (2016), Operationalization of the Law on Crafts and developing a dual training system in the crafts sector in Albania.

<sup>44</sup> Rama, L. (2016), Riga Medium-Term Deliverables (MTDs) – Identification of Priorities Ex-ante assessment – Albania Institutionalising the role of school-business liaison persons (PASOs) in VET institutions.

widely. ETF has been effective showing examples of WBL in other countries and facilitating learning. Especially the PLA (e.g. to Spain) was appreciated, where stakeholders learned how to organize tripartite contracts (employers, school, and student) as well as establishing an online platform registering students and monitor their progress. Stakeholders also refer to lesson learned from their visit to Cardiff about financial support to companies (every year companies receive less for the student).

Across the SEET countries, building capacities within the key institutions is not strongly emphasised. In Albania for instance, ETF is more focused on providing specific input in legislative and policy developments. Not so much through building capacities, or guiding national stakeholders to develop the policies themselves, but by providing studies and text suggestions. This has also to do with the limited human resources at national level in VET and WBL. In Montenegro, ETF's activities in Montenegro are not aimed directly at enhancing stakeholder capacities to pursue policy development, design or implementation. Rather than that, ETF provided targeted support when that is requested by the stakeholders. An issue raised by interviewees in different countries is that development partners do little to put the authorities in the position to supervise and manage the processes. More could be done by ETF and other development partners to build capacity of national stakeholders to work on the necessary changes in legal frameworks and regulations. This type of support ETF is already providing in some countries (for instance in North Macedonia, ETF supported the national working on WBL).

Besides the specific activities at Regional level and in the countries, ETF is engaged in international level capacity building through the development and delivery of seminars and courses (e.g. together with ILO ITC and UNESCO-UNEVOC).

### 3.2.2 Connecting Partner Countries to European methodologies, policies and priorities

#### **Linking Partner Countries to international developments and policy learning**

Supported by ETF, all five Candidate Countries joined the EAfA. Furthermore, the countries hosted European Commission meetings on the EAfA and are regularly invited (by or through ETF) to international/ European conferences. Furthermore, ETF staff members, during European meetings put forward examples and experiences from the Partner Countries. The need to be exposed to international experience through ETF can differ per country. In Albania for instance, the learning from other Partner Countries is not something that is emphasised in the interviews. This might be because there are already development partners from advanced countries in the country that support developments. In Montenegro on the other hand, the international comparison is highly valued by the respondents. Given that the Western Balkan countries share a similar history and (sometimes) institutional set-up, Montenegro can learn a lot from how other countries developed their systems. Montenegro feels that it in terms of NQF, employer engagement, and dual education is already further advanced and can look at more advanced European countries. In this context, the regional meetings on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) are considered very important. This together with the Torino process and other publications that compare different countries. All in all, ETF effectively opened doors internationally and provided the Partner Countries with examples and experiences from other (European) countries.

#### **ETF support to achieving the MTD1 on WBL**

MTD1 was, as for all Candidate Countries selected as the key priority for 2015-2020. In line with this, ETF supported the **Albanian** government to work on the legal frameworks for WBL. It also worked together with other development partners on implementation of specific programmes in which WBL plays a crucial role. In this sense ETF helped Albania in the development towards the MTD1 on WBL. Still however, it can be asked to what extent the national institutions have

the capacities and resources (even with budget support) to roll-out the systems that are (on paper) developed. There is a huge reliance on development partners, not only in policy formulation and design, but also in designing the practicalities of a dual education system. National stakeholders are not heavily involved in this. This jeopardises the national ownership and sustainability. ETF's work is supporting **Montenegro** to implement the Dual Education. It is still early days of implementation (second year), but it seems that there is sufficient interest from students and companies to participate. This might also be partly due to the financial incentives provided for students (scholarship for deficit occupations) and employers (payment of students' allowances in the first two years). What is more important is that the Dual Education seems to be based on a sustainable employer engagement that is further anchored in the NQF development and the involvement of the employers in the development of occupational standards and curricula. Across countries, ETF kept track of the developments in relation to MTD1 and provided support to the main stakeholders on the initiatives the countries linked to MTD1.

### 3.2.3 The role of ETF in the international context in WBL

#### **ETF in the international landscape**

ETF is well connected with international stakeholders. There is close contact with the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL), DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR)); European agencies (Cedefop, Eurofound); and other international organisations such as UNESCO, OECD, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and ILO.

ETFs contribution in the IAG-TVET is highly valued. Each organisation brings its expertise for the benefit of collective knowledge sharing on a topic. In this context, it is important that interventions are coordinated in line with mandates of the organisations. A challenge for all organisations in the IAG-TVET is that cooperation is based primarily on personal relationships. When people change, this can hamper the institutional cooperation.

#### **Use of ETFs resources and services by the international community**

By international stakeholders, **ETFs publications** such as the Handbook for policymakers and social partners on WBL, Handbook on Financing of WBL, WBL Readiness Tool are appreciated and used in other contexts. Especially by development partners that work in specific countries. They often lack the resources to conduct analytical work and develop support materials and tools for WBL implementation. Some experts see the need to increase the analytical work and academic work in order to maintain at the forefront of expertise development. Similarly, a stakeholder indicated that ETFs publications could be stronger when it comes to new ideas and conceptual development. Furthermore, at the global level, there is a demand for more comparative studies and analysis. It is a pity that in this context the flagship publication on WBL as indicated in the workplan 2015 was never published (working title in 2016: Work-based learning: An option or essential for VET?). What is however valued in ETFs publication is that they are practical and policy oriented.

ETF is **highly involved in events and initiatives at EU level** on work-based learning. The ETF staff members are frequent contributors to events, workshops, conferences and are members of some of the ET2020 Working Groups.

ETF also effectively cooperates with other partners in **developing and delivering training programmes**. ETF is for instance involved in the UNEVOC TVET leadership programme in 2017, 2018 and 2019 (in 2019 ETF is also involved in the programme specifically for Africa),

delivering a course on Work-based learning in theory and practice.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, ETF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ILO International Training Centre (ITC). Part of this memorandum is to co-organising training courses; among them WBL, such as a course on quality apprenticeships.<sup>46</sup>

All in all, ETF is well positioned within the IAG-TVET and plays an important and valued role in this community. Furthermore, ETF has been effective in informing the international policy formulation on work-based learning and provided through its publications practical and policy-oriented tools. ETF however but did not utilise its full potential in bringing forward conceptual work. It could be that this area needs some strengthening to maintain a forerunner in seeing emerging issues and conceptual developments.

### 3.2.4 Effectiveness and efficiency of different methodologies applied by ETF

Besides country- or region-specific activities, ETF conducted cross-national analytical work and networking activities (for instance attending European meetings and conferences). In line with the figure 2 in Section 2.3 (Planned activities and achievements 2015-2018), the table below provides an overview of the type of activities and whether these activities were completed (achieved) or not.

*Figure 4: ETF type of activities and the achievement rate (2015-2018)*

	Analytical work	Capacity building	Networking / outreach	Country support (small-scale technical assistance)	Total
<b>Changed / postponed</b>	15%	20%	0%	15%	7 (12%)
<b>Fully achieved</b>	50%	70%	93%	54%	37 (65%)
<b>Not achieved / not mentioned</b>	15%	0%	0%	15%	5 (9%)
<b>Partly achieved</b>	20%	10%	7%	15%	8 (14%)
<b>Total activities 2015-2018</b>	20	10	14	13	57

*Source: ETF annual work plans and annual reports*

The table shows that networking and outreach activities are almost always fully achieved (93%). Capacity building activities also show high achievement rates (70%). The analytical work and in-country support show a lower achievement rate (50 and 54% respectively). For both types of activities, they can be partly achieved, changed or not achieved at all. The overall achievement rate is 65% and only 10% of the activities is not achieved or not mentioned in the annual report.

In terms of efficiency, the total FTE on WBL ranged from 0.7 in 2015 to 1.8 in 2018 (see figure 3, section 2.3). In these years also the number of missions increased from 6 in 2015 to 20 in 2018. The total budget for WBL (including direct expenditure and staff costs was 1,676,954 Euro. The total costs per activity can be calculated as nearly 30,000 Euro (total budget divided by the number of activities). This budget seems reasonable given that these activities can be time-consuming (such as supporting specific countries; conducting analytical work) or demand only limited time investment (attending a series of meeting).

As a side-note on the content of the implementation plans and annual reports, there is no evident link between the specific objective and the activities proposed. Why are these activities the best to do and not others? While the needs are identified in relation to the ex-ante impact assessment

<sup>45</sup> UNESCO-UNEVOC (2018), UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme 2018 Capacity building for Transformational TVET leaders: Vision, knowledge and skills

<sup>46</sup> ILO ITC (2019), Promoting quality apprenticeships in enterprises 6 – 10 May 2019 Turin Italy.

in SEET and consultations with the Partner Countries, what type of activities are implemented seems rather ad hoc and without a clear line of reasoning on how the different activities at different levels support each other. Furthermore, there are a number of unplanned conducted activities which are a bit surprising such as the comparative report on WBL in candidate countries. While this followed from the ex-ante impact assessment, this report is not clearly integrated in a version on how this report supports the countries developing their WBL systems (and progress in line with Riga). The mapping is not an ad hoc activity (such as participating in a conference), but something that needs to be done on the basis of a clear rationale concerning how its publication supports country developments. As the drafting of this publication was not foreseen (in annual plans), the validity of the publication (in terms of expressed prior demands) could be questioned. The side-note (no clear line of reasoning on why specific activities are conducted) can partly be explained by the nature of ETFs work. ETF is not a project organisation and responds to requests from the European Commission, the Partner Countries and international partners. Nonetheless, especially for the analytical work (including the developed and published tools), there should be a clear rationale why this is needed, for whom, how this is distributed and to which (measurable) processes this work will have to contribute.

ETF conducted different activities in different countries. The choice of activities mainly depends on what is needed in a country, what is done by other developing partners and what are the available resources. In Albania, ETF's activities consisted mainly in providing direct advice and working directly with national stakeholders and organising meetings with development partners; in contracting consultants to develop feasibility studies and the ex-ante impact assessment. This also involved organising some workshops and consultation meetings. Given the limited investment and the traceable results in terms of contributions to regulations, bylaws and action plans, this seems effective and efficient. In Montenegro, ETF's activities were more related to support to implementation. ETF supported for instance the development of a (web-based) information system for internships; and the development and roll out of training programme for in-company trainers. The Montenegrin policies on WBL are already enough advanced to shift ETFs focus to implementation. Also, different from Albania, in Montenegro there are no other development partners active in supporting work-based learning (ILO is currently getting involved in small-scale activities together with ETF). In relation to the in-company trainer training, this more down-stream policy advice is also highly valued by respondents. This would be more difficult to organise in more project-based interventions (such as in Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)). ETFs support in this was therefore very much appreciated.

What is most valued by stakeholders is the direct advice and feedback of ETF staff on draft documents. ETF is able to combine in-depth understanding of the national context, the national needs; and the EU priorities and developments. As some respondents indicated, the quality of any document significantly increases when ETF experts have contributed to its drafting. An example is the IPA proposal for education in Montenegro (as discussed in section 3.2.1). Another aspect that is valued a lot are PLA's to learn from other countries and build networks. Especially because ETFs insists of involving business sectors as well in PLAs. Not many donors involve the business sector on a structural basis like ETF does. In countries not having a strong tradition of social dialogue, involving employer representatives in joint activities can stimulate better cooperation between businesses and government.

The platform-building and module development (within the Eastern Partnership Region project) were less appreciated. There are some mixed perspectives in the interviews on the value of the comparative and analytical work. This is highly valued by the bilateral organisations to get a good overview of the state of play of the country. For some country stakeholders however, the country reports and comparative reports are not detailed enough for insiders to be informative for policy development.



### 3.2.5 Factors that contribute to success

What contributed to the success of ETFs activities is the close relationships with other development partners; the long-term and continuous involvement of ETF with VET in the country and the expertise of the ETF staff. Hampering factors concern the volatility of the government attention and direction and the limited resources at the side of the national stakeholders (for instance in Albania). In Montenegro, a factor that allowed very specific ETF contributions to have a big impact is that the national stakeholders are already at an advanced stage of development and are able to formulate specific requests for support that are aligned with national needs.

A general reflection on what are contributing factors to success is that:

- ETF is able to provide timely feedback, services and suggestions and respond to national needs;
- ETF experts have a good level of expertise; know the country context; know the regional context and have a broad network.
- ETF experts operate in a consistent manner (no different opinions expressed by different experts).

What is furthermore appreciated is that ETF always tries to cover the costs for participants when it organises an event. Especially internationally, this opens doors that would otherwise remain closed for stakeholders (including employers) in the Partner Countries.

## 3.3 Impact and sustainability

### 3.3.1 ETFs key achievements in WBL at national level

In the section on effectiveness, the evaluation already concluded that ETF was effective in supporting in-country developments. Examples of key achievements in the countries examined in the evaluation concern developed legal frameworks (Albania); support implementation of dual education reform (Montenegro); raising awareness of the importance of WBL to all stakeholders (Georgia). In **Albania**, ETF has been effective in providing input in the policy formulation (law, bylaw, regulations). ETF has not actively been engaged in implementation of strategies in WBL in Albania, but ETF has been involved in shaping of projects and programme activities of other development partners together with national stakeholders. In the **Montenegrin** context, the ETF activities have been beneficial to the development of WBL systems. WBL is, also under influence of ETF's work in WBL, but also in National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), firmly established as a priority in the national VET policy and ETF was able to provide small, but effective pushes in the right direction. Especially the in-company trainer training is felt as filling a gap in the system. There was nothing to prepare in-company trainers to take this role in a quality manner. ETF through advice, the ex-ante impact assessment and the contribution to the training development, made stakeholders aware of the importance to have in-company trainers properly trained. In **Georgia**, stakeholders indicated that ETF showed them the importance of WBL. Furthermore, it created a national working group on WBL, working together on the design and implementation of WBL. ETF reinforced the cooperation between government and employers.

The results achieved show signs of sustainability as well. Especially in the case of Montenegro, it is evident that what is supported by ETF is based on sufficient levels of country ownership to be taken forward. In other countries, the sustainability is less ensured when no additional attention is provided. In Albania, changes in the VET governance might hamper the implementation of the new VET law and bylaws. In Georgia, the policy formulation and design of the draft decree on WBL is still in conceptual development and not fully formalised.

A criticism related to sustainability is that more sustainable impact could be pursued by guiding more national stakeholders in doing the work themselves. Although ETF is doing this, this approach could be more prominent. This means, to focus more on building capacities in the key

institutions so that national stakeholder can conduct more activities and create more ownership. This reflection was found in Albania and Georgia. In Georgia, although there is a **working group on WBL**, the development partners do little to put the authorities in the position to supervise and manage the processes. More could be done by ETF and others such as UNDP and GIZ to capacitate national stakeholders to work on the necessary changes in legal frameworks and regulations.

Hence, ETF managed to impact national developments in VET and WBL. The examples showcase impact on awareness raising and policy formulation; policy design and to a limited extend policy implementation. Sustainability of the achievements requires in many cases continuous follow-up by ETF and more emphasis on working with national stakeholders to have them own reforms even more.

### 3.3.2 ETFs key achievements in WBL internationally

ETF, together with other international organisations, enabled the further thought-development in VET and WBL and activated countries in the region to emphasise work-based learning in (new) VET policies. More concretely, main achievements in the context of the IAG-TVET is the publication of the leaflet on work-based learning and the development of the WBL indicator set<sup>47</sup>. On the leaflet, ETF guided the process of arriving at a clear and short text that explains work-based learning being agreed upon by the European Commission, Cedefop, ETF, ILO, OECD, and UNESCO.<sup>48</sup> Given the conceptual differences between the organisations on WBL and apprenticeships, arriving at one text is a major achievement. Furthermore, the implementation of training programmes together with other international partners is another key achievement at international level.

## 3.4 Complementarity

### 3.4.1 ETFs complementarity at national level

ETF is in close contact with bilateral organisations working on WBL in the countries. In Albania there is a large donor community (KulturKontakt Austria, Swisscontact, GIZ, UNDP). Within this, ETF has found its own recognised place. ETF works more on the policy level compared to other donors (except UNDP, but UNDP works more on the employment side). ETF is valued as the ‘consciousness’ of VET developments, the ‘memory’ of what approaches and policies have already been tested and what tools are already developed. Other words used are ‘guardian’ and ‘watchdog’ of whether the government is delivering what it promised.

In Montenegro there were a number of development partners active. The most important ones were GIZ, KulturKontakt Austria, and LuxDev. All their projects finalised before 2014<sup>49</sup>. Montenegro was seen as a country that is facing accession and would not need that type of support. IPA funding remained under IPAII (2014-2020: €270.5m (not including the allocation for Cross-border Cooperation)).<sup>50</sup> €28.1m is allocated to education, employment and social policies. Within the IPA programme the British Council is involved as implementing partner. ETF is highly

<sup>47</sup> ETF (2018), Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Working Group on Work-based Learning (WBL) WBL indicators, 23 Feb 2018

<sup>48</sup> IAG-TVET (2019), Investing in work-based learning.

<sup>49</sup> Such as: Strengthening Vocational Training in North-East Montenegro (LuxDev); Reform of vocational education as a contribution to the promotion of employment (GIZ); National Qualifications Framework and quality in higher education (IPA 2007); Labour Market Reform and Work Force Development (IPA 2008); The social protection and child’s care reform: improvement of social inclusion (IPA 2010).

<sup>50</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/montenegro\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/montenegro_en)

(informally) engaged in IPA. They support the Ministry of Education and receive the final proposals from the EU delegation for review. They do not have a formal role, but their informal role is much appreciated by all stakeholders. The projects within IPA generally work complementary to each other and provide the building blocks for a functioning VET system. Under IPA for instance, the further modularisation of VET curricula is established, making it easier to deliver the programmes in different learning venues.

In Georgia there are three other important development partners active: UNDP; GIZ; and Swiss cooperation. These partners seem to cooperate well and are complementary. UNDP is more in the lead providing inputs on policy development (concept paper); GIZ is implementing the bulk of pilot projects (4 out of 5) and Swiss contact is involved in another pilot. ETF is more seen as technical advisor (at policy level) and bringing in the international dimension. ETF has budget for supporting the international dimension (while UNDP does not have this; only local travel budget). Besides ETF, the development partners all have a local presence in the country.

ETF has a good cooperation with the Delegation of the EU in Georgia, actively contributing to their work programme (several programmes in a row). Only concern raised is that the delegation and ETF could better operate under one flag (European Commission) to increase its visibility. At the same time, it was indicated that it is good that ETF works autonomously. Other development partners argue that it is not always clear how ETF cooperates with the Delegation, and what is its exact role.

ETF could be more transparent **to stakeholders concerning what is the workplan of all ETFs thematic areas** together in a country. In Montenegro, respondents are generally satisfied with how ETF provides its support and this support leads to sustainable changes due to the fact that what ETF is doing is based on the expressed needs of national stakeholders. What would be helpful however is to better **connect the different areas of expertise of ETF**. NQF and WBL are both based on the foundation that employers need to be involved in the organisation and delivery of VET. It is for this reason that NQF developments prepare the ground for WBL implementation. ETF could think of better linking these areas to build more synergies. ETF could bring together all its experts touching upon employer engagement as underlying mechanism for NQF development; governance; WBL; and teachers and trainers.

At a broader, strategic level, the communication could be strengthened between ETF, EU Delegations, DG EMPL and DG NEAR and even DG DEVCO to present more a ‘One EU’ approach in supporting the Partner Countries (and other countries).

### 3.4.2 ETFs added value compared to others in the international context

In the context of the evaluation of UNESCO’s TVET strategy 2010-2015<sup>51</sup>, a mapping exercise was conducted of internationally operating organisations according to their key roles and responsibilities in TVET.

*Figure 5: Mapping of roles of UNESCO and of other organizations active in the field of TVET (v = limited role; vvv = important role). (slightly adjusted)*

	UNESCO TVET	OECD	European Union			World Bank	ILO	Bilateral organisations
			Cedefop	ETF	DG DEVCO			
Knowledge developer (conceptualising, researching, evaluating and monitoring TVET)	vvv	vvv	vvv	vvv	v	v	vv	v
Policy advice and support (pointing to particular policy solutions or options to respond to particular issues)	vvv	vv	vv	vvv	vv	vv	vv	vv

<sup>51</sup> UNESCO IOS (2015), The Evaluation of the UNESCO Thematic Area “TVET” (Technical and Vocational Education and Training), p. 23.



Provider of a platform for networking (connecting organizations in the field of TVET)	√√√	√	√√	√√	√	√	√√	√
Agenda setting organization (e.g. for the post-2015 agenda)	√√√	√√√	√√	√√	√	√	√√	√
Clearing house and Knowledge management (gathering, transferring, disseminating and sharing available information, knowledge and best practices)	√√√	√√	√√√	√√√	√	√	√√	√
Advocacy organization for TVET	√√√	√√	√√√	√√√	√	√	√√√	√
Capacity builder (institution-building and training TVET stakeholders)	√√	√	√	√√	√√√	√√	√√√	√√√
Cooperation partner (starting up cooperation projects with mutual ownership)	√√	√	√	√√	√√√	√√	√√√	√√√
Coordinator of donors/other organisations working in TVET	√√	√	√	√√	√	√	√√	√
Donor organisation	√	√	√	√	√√√	√√√	√√	√√√

Source: UNESCO IOS (2015), *The Evaluation of the UNESCO Thematic Area “TVET” (Technical and Vocational Education and Training)*, p. 23. This mapping was based on interviews with national and global stakeholders and a survey of UNESCO Member States representatives and partners in TVET.

The mapping shows that UNESCO, Cedefop and ETF have on many aspects overlapping roles, for instance, in knowledge development; policy advice and support; clearing house and knowledge management; and advocacy organisation for TVET. Their regional focus makes the three organisations different.

In the SEET and EaP region, there are only few organisations that have specific regional activities. ILO will work on WBL in the region but is just starting up from their Budapest office and UNDP has project activities in various countries. An interesting complementary partner is the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)<sup>52</sup>. EBRD works in more or less the same regions as ETF (currently a strong focus on Turkey, Kazakhstan, Jordan, Egypt, and Serbia). The bank works on skills for inclusion in both project work (financing private sector projects) and policy development. While ETF has strong national networks, mainly in the education area and in the government; EBRD is strong in private sector engagement.

The international stakeholders and experts emphasise that the organisations cooperate and work complementary to each other. Hence, the overlap in areas covered does not lead to duplication as the organisations are different in terms of mandate, approach and instruments available. This difference between the organisations make that the international community is able to respond to emerging trends and development.

### 3.5 Emerging topics in relation to WBL

Despite a high priority to work-based learning at international and national level, this does not necessary lead to a speedy development and implementation of policies. Changing school-based VET systems into work-based VET systems take time and require a complete change of mind-set at the level of ministries, VET schools and employers (“Re-building a vocational education and training system from scratch in an economically fast changing and politically sensitive context is a generation task.”)<sup>53</sup>. Often insufficient employer engagement remains one of the key barriers to overcome to install effective WBL systems. The topic that remains of key importance in the Partner Countries is to increase the employer engagement in the VET governance and delivery.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.ebrd.com/home>

<sup>53</sup> Jäger, M. (2012), *Meandering through Policy Development: Observations on Vocational Education and Training in Albania*.

Hence, as evidenced by the three countries visited, there is still enough to be done on ‘old’ topics (governance, financing, employer engagement) before starting to consider new topics. However, a number of new topics are identified by the evaluators:

### **1) WBL at higher levels**

In the context of the project ‘Changing nature and role of VET in Europe’<sup>54</sup>, Cedefop conducted a scenario study on what VET would look like in 2035. The study, based on a broad survey among stakeholders and VET experts in Europe, identified a number of key trends. One of these is an increase of work-based learning in all VET programmes, irrespective of level and national system. This includes further development of apprenticeships as well as a stronger focus on practice in school-based VET and higher education. Respondents also envisage VET provision increasing at tertiary level, within and outside the traditional higher education sector.<sup>55</sup> Research points to blurring lines between vocational and academic orientations.<sup>56</sup> Many European countries in the last 20 years have introduced a separate strand of higher education or introduced new vocationally or professionally oriented higher-level degree programmes (professional HE). Furthermore, there has been expansion and diversification of vocationally oriented education and training offered at higher levels in European countries over the last two decades.<sup>57</sup> The topic of WBL in higher education is received more and more attention. Other international organisations such as ILO have already started studies on the topic as they see that higher education graduates with no experience in the workplace are likely to be less successful in making the transition to the labour market. In countries such as Spain it became a normal pathway for a bachelor or master graduate to enrol in an EQF level 4 VET programme in order to get a job. Work-based learning however might not work for all academic disciplines (it might be more challenging for humanities for instance).

Also in the Partner Countries, WBL at higher levels is currently being discussed. In Albania, the Law on Crafts and the related establishment of the dual education system for crafts is currently taking shape and this will continue in the coming years. There are discussions on having a crafts qualification after VET. It is however unclear whether this means that the qualification is at Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level 5 or even 6. In Serbia recently a draft law on WBL in tertiary education was put forward for consultation and is discussed with private sector stakeholders.

The expansion of work-based learning into higher education, raises a challenge for the ETF. ETFs mandate specifies that the ETF has to contribute, in the context of EU external relations policies, to human capital development, defined as work that contributes to the lifelong development of individuals’ skills and competences through the improvement of vocational education and training systems. In this, one could ask whether ‘VET systems’ is meant as denominating an educational sector, opposed to general and higher education, or whether it primarily refers to an orientation within the education system. In terms of interpreting ETFs mandate, one could argue for an interpretation that does justice to how VET and work-based learning are developing instead of strictly sticking to increasingly artificial sectoral distinctions.

### **2) WBL and an even increasing responsiveness to the needs of the labour market**

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/changing-nature-and-role-vocational-education-and-training-vet-europe> [accessed 03-06-2019]

<sup>55</sup> Cedefop (2018), Briefing Note: What future for VET in Europe, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Cedefop (2019), The changing nature and role of vocational education and training in Europe Volume 6: Vocationally oriented education and training at higher education level

<sup>57</sup> Cedefop (2019), The changing nature and role of vocational education and training in Europe Volume 6: Vocationally oriented education and training at higher education level, p. 7-10.

Another trend<sup>58</sup> concerns an increased **responsiveness to labour market** needs based on (more) effective skills anticipation and stronger feedback mechanisms between industry and VET. Furthermore, more **flexibility in pathways** and permeability of different systems is seen as a trend. Interestingly, the permeability of VET and HE is at the same time seem as a key strength of existing apprenticeship systems and seem as a weakness. In countries such as Austria, the apprenticeship system is the mainstream pathway for young people. The fact that the apprenticeship system allows higher education entry is one of the attractive elements of the system. However, for employers, mainly the SMEs, this permeability is becoming a challenge: employers pay part of the training costs of their apprentices, but when the learners continue their studies in higher education, the costs do not directly lead to benefits in the sector. It makes the apprenticeship system less attractive for SMEs.

### 3) WBL beyond IVET: lifelong learning

Another trend mentioned by respondents, concerns the link with **lifelong learning (WBL for training older workers)** and the need to obtain **wider (social/civic) skills** than only occupation-specific skills through work-based learning. Transferable skills need to be acquired through work-experience.

### 4) WBL and the use of digital tools

Other key future developments in VET and WBL concern the use of **digital tools**. There are already many simulation software packages on the market that support the training of specific occupation-specific skills or support in the assessment of skills. Obviously, this is a positive development in terms of reducing training costs. It is however not uncontested to refer to this learning when talking about work-based learning. ETF for instance explicitly keeps this outside of work-based learning.<sup>59</sup> As ETF mentions: “the boundary between simulation and ‘real-work experience’ is increasingly blurring due to increased digitalisation of the workplace and the improvement of simulation software.”<sup>60</sup> Pedagogies for skills development will change due to ICT in education. This is also true for the learning in the workplace. In any case, the use and application of digital tools in WBL will increase in the future, as well as the need to update and develop new pedagogical approaches that make best use of the available possibilities.

### 5) WBL and teachers and trainers

A further future focus area for WBL concerns the competences and **training of teachers and trainers**, both in the VET schools and the companies. Especially, policies and systems that ensure skills to facilitate cooperation between VET schools and employers are clearly in demand.<sup>61</sup>

### 6) WBL and gender

Furthermore, the **gender issue** will continue to be the issues that needs to be taken into account. VET programmes usually have traditional gender patterns. Research shows that countries with

<sup>58</sup> Cedefop (2018), Briefing Note: What future for VET in Europe, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> “Work-based learning refers to learning that occurs when people do real work. This work can be paid or unpaid, but it must be real work that leads to the production of real goods and services. Some enterprises, particularly large ones, have their own training classrooms or workshops, and employees take time away from work to attend training sessions in them. This type of training was very common in many countries of the former Soviet Union. This is not work-based learning. It is simply classroom-based learning that happens to take place in an enterprise rather than in an educational institution”. See: ETF. (2018). Work-based learning: A handbook for policy makers and social partners in ETF partner countries, p. 5 Retrieved from: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/work-based-learning-handbook-policy-makers-and-social-0>

<sup>60</sup> See for a further discussion on this topic: ETF. (2018). Digital skills and competence, and digital and online learning, section 5.1. Retrieved from: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/digital-skills-and-competence-and-digital-and-online>

<sup>61</sup> See for instance: Broek, S.D., Cino Pagliarello, M., de Vreede-Van Noort, R., Vroonhof, P. (2017), Teachers and trainers in work-based learning/apprenticeships

apprenticeship as main pathway show more pronounced educational gender segregation compared to countries where general education is the main pathway.<sup>62</sup> Hence, increasing work-based learning could lead to more gender segregation.

All in all, major developments post 2020 in VET and WBL concern the future blurring of sectoral lines between VET and HE and the further increased emphasis on combining learning and working throughout all stages of life. Education and training systems will have to accommodate this better through providing the right skills (balance occupation-specific and key competences for a lifelong learning); applying digital support tools in a way that does not run counter to obtaining work experience; and most importantly increase the engagement of labour market stakeholders (including employers) in the VET and WBL governance, financing, delivery and assessment.

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<sup>62</sup> Heiniger, M., Imdorf, C. (2018), The role of vocational education in the transmission of gender segregation from education to employment: Switzerland and Bulgaria compared, in: Journal for Labour Market Research December 2018, 52:15.

## 4 Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1: Work-based learning emerged as a key topic in the last ten years within VET and skills development and it is likely that work-based learning remains a priority for years to come within VET and skills development policies. Besides employer engagement, WBL at higher levels, key competences, lifelong learning and the use of digital tools are emerging issues.**

WBL is both at international level and at country level in SEET and EaP an important topic in VET reforms. It became evident that education and training and skills development, will have to be organised, both in terms of governance and delivery, as closely as possible to the labour market, in order to respond to developing skills needs (changing nature of work) and to provide smooth transitions from education to the labour market and back.

Reforming VET and skills development systems towards more WBL takes a long time and many countries supported by ETF have just started implementing reforms. Core issues that still play a key role are employer engagement; governance (including employers in governance); financing; and the esteem of VET and work-based learning pathways. Internationally, and in the Partner Countries, new topics also emerge, such as work-based learning at higher levels (tertiary education), paired with the developments in ‘blurring the lines’ between vocational and academic orientations in education and training. Furthermore, the development of key competences within VET and work-based learning has gained importance, just as lifelong learning. Finally, future attention should be paid to the incorporation of digital tools; decreasing gender inequalities; and the professionalisation of teachers and trainers and cooperation between VET institutions and employers.

**Conclusion 2: ETF supports alignment of Partner Countries reforms to EU priorities to stimulate work-based learning.**

In the Partner Countries work-based learning is stimulated through European initiatives such as the commitment to the Medium-term deliverable 1 of the Riga Conclusions (2015); and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA); but also, the 20 deliverables 2020 for the Eastern Partnership. ETF supports countries to initiate and continue implementing reforms that are in line with the EU initiatives on WBL.

**Conclusion 3: ETFs role at international level is seen primarily as a knowledge institution that provides practice guidance and expertise on reforming VET towards work-based learning in the Partner Countries.**

ETF is perceived less as a developer of new ideas and concepts, and more as an agency that can provide high-level advice on how to approach reforms. ETFs reports and tools are better valued by organisations active in supporting developments, compared to those organisations that are more analytically oriented. With the membership of the Interagency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG-TVET), ETF is well connected to the international community and valued for its unique contribution which is mainly related to practice-oriented expertise in reforming systems towards WBL.



**Conclusion 4: ETF has been effective and efficient in policy formulation, policy design and, to a lesser extent, policy implementation in work-based learning in the Partner Countries.**

ETF plays an important role in shaping the national policy developing environment. ETF is able to flag specific issues; provide specific (ad hoc) advice; and support specific advice, consultations, or research to inform policy developments. ETF also conducted some small-scale projects that supported policy implementation. Given the size of the ETF initiatives, the impact is modest and important within the whole policy implementation process. ETF is valued by national stakeholders for timely responding to national needs; for their level of expertise and knowledge about countries' systems; and for being a critical friend, keeping countries' reforms in line with EU priorities.

With the resources available in terms of direct costs and staff costs, ETFs activities in work-based learning have led to observable developments in a cost-effective way. With 1.7 million Euro, European Commission clients; EU Delegations; international organisations; and a wider audience are served. Furthermore, and most importantly, a considerable number of Partner Countries have been served (SEET and EaP) in their initiatives to develop work-based learning. Furthermore, there is some evidence that ETF support has contributed to improved policy and project planning within IPA which could have resulted in higher value for money within IPA implementation.

**Conclusion 5: Building capacities while providing support is valued by many stakeholders and should be pursued more in the Partner Countries through peer learning.**

National stakeholders value the possibility to learn from other countries in study tours, peer learning activities, and conferences as provided by ETF in the period 2015-2018. A criticism to ETFs and other development partners support to policy formulation and development is that too often the work is done *for* the national stakeholders and not *by* the national stakeholders. This reduces the ownership level. ETF is aware of this, but sometimes forced to continue this track due to limited human resources and lack of political directives at the side of the country.

**Conclusion 6: Clustering countries in a project-like approach is a cost-effective way to provide support to countries, mainly because it facilitates peer learning.**

The Eastern Partnership project allowed ETF, with limited budget, to support the Eastern Partnership countries in policy formulation and design to implement work-based learning. The project supported stakeholders, both government and employers, to link up to international developments and experiences and to learn from the experiences in other countries. Furthermore, it supported the stakeholders in building an international network on work-based learning. Aspects that were less beneficial were the virtual platform due to a limited number of users, and the learning modules developed, being felt too basic for some stakeholders. Furthermore, stakeholders indicated that it would have been better if the countries were clustered based on similar stages of development. This could also mean cluster countries between Eastern Partnership and SEET, as well as EU countries or countries outside the Partner Countries.

**Conclusion 7: ETF work complements that of other organisations, especially at country level.**

ETF has a long involvement with the country and has a specific role, being more of a critical friend, than an implementor. Stakeholders do not expect ETF to do projects and question whether ETF should do any of this. ETF works closely with other developing partners at country and region level and there are effective mechanisms in place to ensure that they work complementary and that actions lead to synergies.

### Conclusion 8: Putting forward 'one' ETF and 'one' Europe in activities on work-based learning.

Within ETF, there is a need to establish synergies between different teams (WBL, qualifications, governance, teachers etc.) as more ETF activities and projects work on similar topics, such as employer engagement.

Furthermore, ETFs work has to be seen in the context of the work of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations. In this, ETF cooperates closely, internally, with Brussels and with the EU Delegations in the countries. How this cooperation is set up can differ per country. The evaluation encountered both appraisal and concerns from EU Delegations on how ETF operates in general in the countries. Some concerns related to the unclear (no formal) relationship between the EU Delegation and ETF when it concerns organising country activities.

### Conclusion 9: The selection of ETF activities in WBL lacks a firm grounding in an overall vision of how conceptual work, in-country support, project work, networking activities all relate to each other and support a common goal in relation to WBL.

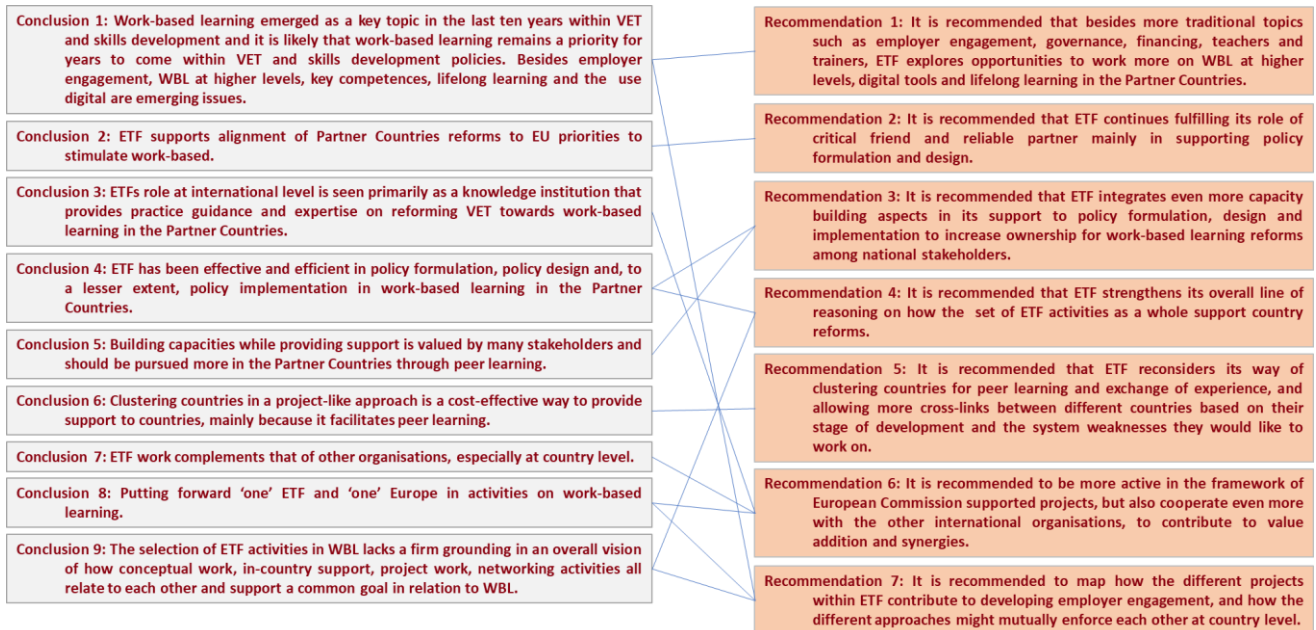
The change process behind ETFs activities in WBL is to provide demand-driven, tailored small-scale support through providing expertise; providing information; bringing people together; and financing small-scale initiatives in countries to keep momentum for system changes and VET reforms towards integrating WBL in the SEET and the Eastern Partnership countries. Furthermore, close relationships are maintained with international-level development partners and development partners that operate at the regional and national level. The demand-driven approach is clearly visible in the SEET where the ex-ante impact assessment is used to determine the countries' needs and identify what country-specific support is needed.

This demand-driven and tailored support results in activities that are clearly desired at country level but might not be sufficiently situated in a development vision that informs in what (development) context, what kind of activity or support is best suited to reach results. From an external perspective, the choices for what activities to support appear somewhat arbitrary. A vision would explain how the conceptual work, in-country support, project work, networking activities all relate to each other and support a common demand-driven and tailored objective in relation to WBL.

## 4.2 Recommendations

The following figure provides an overview of the conclusions and the recommendations. Below the figure, the recommendations are discussed in more detail.

Figure 6: Mapping conclusions and recommendations



**Recommendation 1:** Besides more traditional topics such as employer engagement, governance, financing, teachers and trainers, ETF explores opportunities to work more on WBL at higher levels, WBL and digital tools and WBL and lifelong learning in the Partner Countries.

More traditional topics, especially employer engagement, remain valid topic for future work, but there are emerging topics that require attention. With regard to the expansion of work-based learning into higher education, a reflection is needed on ETFs mandate. The ETF recast regulation, adopted in December 2008, specifies that the ETF, in the context of EU external relations policies, has to contribute to human capital development - defined as 'work that contributes to the lifelong development of individuals' skills and competences through the improvement of vocational education and training systems'. In this, one could ask whether 'VET systems' is meant as denominating an educational sector (as opposed to general and higher education), or whether it primarily refers to an orientation within the education system. In terms of interpreting ETFs mandate, one could argue for an interpretation that does justice to how VET and work-based learning are developing instead of strictly sticking to increasingly blurring sectoral distinctions.

**Recommendation 2:** ETF continues fulfilling its role of critical friend and reliable partner mainly in supporting policy formulation and design.

ETF is a reliable partner of governments, other national stakeholders, development partners and EU Delegations and should continue fulfilling this role in the future. In this, ETF should be mainly involved in policy formulation and conducting preparatory work and supporting activities for policy design. Furthermore, small-scale policy implementation should be considered when no other developing partners could provide the needed support and when the support is needed to continue reforms processes.

**Recommendation 3: ETF integrates even more capacity building aspects in its support to policy formulation, design and implementation to increase ownership for work-based learning reforms among national stakeholders.**

Capacity building should be better embedded in all ETFs activities in work-based learning. In support to policy formulation, design and implementation, the role of ETF should be that of providing support to national stakeholders so that they do the work themselves. This is currently not always the case. While this suggested approach also poses a challenge (e.g. developments take longer), it also increases the national stakeholders' ownership, which is needed to build effective reforms. Capacity building could be facilitated through having stakeholders participate in seminars (such as the UNEVOC or ILO-ITC one) or through peer learning activities, study tours and conferences and providing country comparative overviews.

**Recommendation 4: ETF strengthens its overall line of reasoning on how the set of ETF activities as a whole support country reforms.**

ETF is engaged in networking, analytical work, in-country support and capacity building. All these types of activities are valued by stakeholders. The links between the different activities could however be strengthened in an overall line of reasoning of how the activities together mutually lead to the desired impact. This for instance relates as well to defining mechanisms on how in-country support contributes to ETFs knowledge development; or how analytical work is used for capacity building and support to peer learning.

**Recommendation 5: ETF reconsiders its way of clustering countries for peer learning and exchange of experience, and allowing more cross-links between different countries based on their stage of development and the system weaknesses they would like to work on.**

ETF is serving nearly 30 countries and stimulating work-based learning would be relevant in most countries. Clustering countries, based on the stage of development they are in or the system aspects they would like to work on the coming years, is an effective way to support peer learning and developing national level ownership (shared experiences) with national stakeholders. ETF could work on a model that supports this peer learning, e.g. inspired by the recent European Commission benchlearning concept<sup>63</sup>. Benchlearning is the process of creating a systematic and integrated link between benchmarking and mutual learning activities, that consists of: identifying good performances through indicator-based benchmarking systems, including data collection, data validation, data consolidation and assessments, with appropriate methodology, and of using findings for tangible and evidence-informed mutual learning activities, including good or best practice models.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Based on European Public Employment Services experiences (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1100&langId=en>) and also implemented in the Western Balkan (<https://www.esap.online/themes/3/benchlearning-among-public-employment-services>) and currently being developed for apprenticeships in Europe.

<sup>64</sup> European Council (2014), Decision No 573/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES), [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2014.159.01.0032.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2014.159.01.0032.01.ENG)

**Recommendation 6: ETF to be more active in the framework of European Commission supported projects, but also cooperate even more with the other international organisations, to contribute to value addition and synergies.**

Any broadening of the geographical scope of ETF should be based on a clear idea of: what would be the benefit for ETFs main clients (European Commission, Partner Countries); what would be the added value of ETF providing services to other countries as compared to other international organisations; and what would be the benefit for the other countries of ETF providing the services (instead of other international organisations). One area for which there is a clear added value of expanding the geographical scope is the analytical and networking work of ETF: being a knowledge centre, ETF should be well connected to developments in other parts of the world and the countries bordering the Partner Countries. This could be done by getting involved in European Commission supported activities on work-based learning in countries other than the Partner Countries (through DG DEVCO). Furthermore, ETF could be asked to be involved in a steering committee, advisory board or asked to be active in the monitoring.

**Recommendation 7: Map how the different projects within ETF contribute to developing employer engagement, and how the different approaches might mutually enforce each other at country level.**

Within ETF, there are some work areas that touch upon the main underlying mechanism for VET and WBL reforms, namely increasing employer engagement. Employer engagement is worked upon in ETFs activities in qualifications development; governance; work-based learning; and CPD for teachers and trainers. More could be done to align ETFs work across different teams and projects and to see how activities of different work areas contribute to reaching results.

## Annex 1: Sources

### People interviewed

Name	Organisation	Position	Country
Matilda Naco	Albanian Tourism Association	Executive director	Albania
Alessandra Frontoni	EU delegation	Programme manager	Albania
Etleva Vertopi	GIZ office Tirana	Senior Programme Coordinator, VET programme	Albania
Alma Shkreli	GIZ/GFA	Expert for VET and Private Sector Involvement	Albania
Nina Besirevic	Kulturkontakt Austria Regional Project Office Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia	Programme manager	Albania
Ejvis Gishti	National Agency for VET and Qualifications (NAVETQ)	Director	Albania
Fation Dragoshi	Swisscontact, Skills for Jobs	Project Manager	Albania
Sonila Limaj	UNDP	National Consultant, Skills Development for Employment	Albania
Barbara Rambousek	EBRD	Director, Gender and Economic Inclusion	EBRD
Dragana Marjanovic	EBRD	Independent consultant Western Balkan	EBRD
Marko Stermšek	EBRD	Associate, Inclusion Specialist	EBRD
Didier Gelibert	ETF	Specialist in Private Sector Engagement in VET - Country Coordinator Armenia Operations Department	ETF
Evelyn Viertel	ETF	Country Coordinator Albania	ETF
Helmut Zelloth	ETF	Senior Specialist in VET Policies and Systems	ETF
Sofia Sakali	ETF	Strategic Development Coordinator	ETF
Stefan Thomas	ETF	Specialist in VET Policies and Systems	ETF
Ulrike Damyanovic	ETF	Country Coordinator for Montenegro - Focal Point for South Eastern Europe and Turkey Operations Department	ETF
Jean-Paul Heerschap	European Commission International Cooperation and Development	International Aid / Cooperation Officer	European Commission
Norbert Schöbel	European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	Team Leader Skills for the Young	European Commission
Nino (Nika) Kochishvili	EU Delegation		Georgia
Mikheil Kordzakhia	Georgian Employers Association	Vice-President	Georgia
Nicolas Meskishvili	Georgian Farmers Association	Project manager / former Head of Partnership Development Division (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia)	Georgia
Dariko Gogol	GIZ	Programme expert	Georgia
Ekatarina Meskhidze	GIZ	Programme Expert for Communication and Event Management	Georgia
Lela Maisuradze	GIZ	Programme expert TVET	Georgia

Marika Zakareishvili	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia	Head of Partnership Development Division / former Head of Department Adult Education Division VET Development Department	Georgia
Elza Jgerenaia	Ministry of Employment	Former Head of Department	Georgia
Thea Siprashvili	National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement / former ETF expert	Expert	Georgia
Tamar Kitiashvili	UNDP	Project manager Modernization of the VET and Extension Systems Related to Agriculture in Georgia	Georgia
Lasha Khakhutaishvili	VET college "Akhali Talga"	Director	Georgia
Andreas Meyn	GIZ	Consultant (Kosovo)	GIZ
Alessandra Molz	ILO	ILO Skills and Employability Specialist	Hungary
Ashwani Aggarwal	ILO	Global Team Lead for Work-based Learning, Apprenticeships and RPL	ILO
Stefano Merante	ILO ITC	Skills Development / TVET	ILO ITC
Employer (hairdresser) and student			Montenegro
Romain Boitard	EU delegation	Programme manager	Montenegro
Marko Vukasinović	Ministry of Education	Head of Department for International Cooperation and European Integration	Montenegro
Zora Bogičević	Ministry of Education	Head of VET Department	Montenegro
Vesko Mihailović	The Secondary Vocational School "Spasoje Raspopović"	Instructor	Montenegro
Duško Rajković	VET Centre	Director	Montenegro
Anthony Mann	OECD	Senior Policy Analyst (Vocational Education and Adult Learning)	OECD
Sibylle Schmutz	Donor Committee Dual VET	Director secretariat Donor Committee Dual VET	Switzerland
Philipp Gonon	UZH - Institute of Education	Professor	Switzerland
Hélène Guiol	UNESCO	TVET Project Officer	UNESCO
Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo	UNESCO Regional Office Southern Africa	Head of the Education Unit	UNESCO Regional Office Southern Africa
Shyamal Majumdar	UNESCO UNEVOC	Head of the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training	UNESCO UNEVOC

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## Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

For the purpose of this evaluation, based on what was indicated in the Terms of Reference and further analysis, a **detailed evaluation matrix** was developed, which gave directions on the evaluation questions, the related indicators/judgement criteria, sub questions and indications on how the questions were to be answered.

Evaluation criteria / questions	Strand	Sum. or Form.	Indicator / evidence	Data collection
<b>Relevance</b>				
How has internationally the importance of work-based learning in VET developed over the last 3 years? What are the drivers for this development? What are consequences of this development?	Int.	S	Emergence of work-based learning in key publications at international and European level  Acknowledgement among experts and international organisations about the developments related to work-based learning	Desk research: review key international publications on VET  Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations
How will internationally the importance of work-based learning in VET develop post 2020? What will be emerging topics and priorities post 2020?	Int.	F	Emergence of work-based learning in any forecasting reports about VET and the changing labour markets  Acknowledgement among experts and international organisations about the developments related to work-based learning  Consultation with ETF staff	Desk research: review forecasting reports  Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations  Consultation with ETF staff
How has the importance of work-based learning in VET developed at national level in the last 3 years? What are the drivers for this development? What are consequences of this development?	In-c.	S	Emergence of work-based learning in key publications at national level  Acknowledgement of national stakeholders about the developments related to work-based learning	Desk research: review key national publications on VET  Interviews with national stakeholders
How will nationally the importance of work-based learning in VET develop post 2020? What will be emerging topics and priorities post 2020?	In-c.	F	Emergence of work-based learning in any forecasting reports about VET and the changing labour markets  Acknowledgement among national stakeholders about the developments related to work-based learning  Consultation with ETF staff	Desk research: review forecasting reports  Interviews with national stakeholders  Consultation with ETF staff
<b>Effectiveness / efficiency</b>				
How far has ETF been effective at informing international policy formulation and review with respect to work-based learning? (through: Generation and dissemination of relevant data, e.g. surveys; Drafting and publication of National Reports and Summaries; Drafting and publication of ETF tools, such as Handbook for policymakers and social partners on WBL, Handbook on Financing of WBL, WBL Readiness Tool, ETF Position Paper.	Int.	S	Evidence on whether and how ETFs international level activities fed international developments	Desk research: review key international publications on VET; ETF documentation  Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations
How has the role of the ETF developed in the international context in work-based learning in the last 3 years? What are the drivers for this development? What are consequences of this development?	Int.	S	Evidence on a changed role of ETF in work-based learning	Desk research: review key international publications on VET; ETF documentation  Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations

Evaluation criteria / questions	Strand	Sum. or Form.	Indicator / evidence	Data collection
How could the role of ETF change post 2020? What would be needed for a changed role of ETF post 2020? What would be priorities, initiatives, activities ETF should focus on in the future?	Int.	F	Information on possible future orientations from interviews and publications that identify future priorities in VET and work-based learning and consultation with ETF staff	Desk research: review key international publications on VET; ETF documentation  Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations  Consultation with ETF staff
How far has ETF been effective at informing national policy formulation, review, policy design and, to a lesser extent, policy implementation (i.e. Montenegro) with respect to work-based learning? (through: Generation and dissemination of relevant data, e.g. surveys; Drafting and publication of National Reports and Summaries; Drafting and publication of ETF tools, such as Handbook for policymakers and social partners on WBL, Handbook on Financing of WBL, WBL Readiness Tool, ETF Position Paper.;	In-c.	S	Map evidence of effects of ETFs interventions in the countries. The questions deal with different levels of effects and impact, in line with the Kirkpatrick model <sup>65</sup> :  Did intervention reach the target group? Did the target group learn anything? Did it changed their behaviour? Did it impact developments in the country? (see impact)	Desk research: review key national publications on VET; review ETF documentation  Interviews with national stakeholders
To which extent ETF helped EU Candidate Countries to achieve the MTD on WBL 2015-2020	In-c.	S		
To what degree have ETF interventions facilitated learning from international good practice, from European methodologies and policies and among Partner Countries?	In-c.	S		
To what degree do the ETF interventions succeed in enhancing stakeholder capacities for:  • policy formulation (identifying potentials for development; analysing needs and problems; clarifying objectives)? • policy design (planning interventions; establishing a baseline; defining goals; describing the inputs/resources that are needed for national interventions)? • policy implementation (implementing activities; analysing outputs and outcomes; providing feedback)?	In-c.	S	Map the evidence and compare this with the ETF activities conducted and against the national context (CMO configuration)	
To what extent have the different methodologies used by the ETF proven to be effective and efficient methods to support the development of work-based learning in the targeted partner countries? What internal and external factors	In-c.	S		

<sup>65</sup> See the Kirkpatrick Model. The model considers the value of any type of training, formal or informal, across four levels. Level 1 Reaction evaluates how participants respond to the training. Level 2 Learning measures if they learned the material. Level 3 Behaviour considers if they are using what they learned on the job, and Level 4 Results evaluates if the training positively impacted the organization (Kirkpatrick (2016). Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Training Evaluation Paperback).

Evaluation criteria / questions	Strand	Sum. or Form.	Indicator / evidence	Data collection
contribute to the success or failure of ETF interventions?				
How could the role of ETF change post 2020 at national level? What would be needed for a changed role of ETF post 2020? What would be priorities, initiatives, activities ETF should focus on in the future? Could effective approaches be replicated to other regions/countries?	In-c.	F	Information on possible future orientations from national interviews and consultation with ETF staff	Interviews with national stakeholders Consultation with ETF staff
<b>Impact and sustainability</b>				
Internationally, what are key achievements or contributions of the ETF on work-based learning in the last 3 years?	Int.	S	Map evidence of key contributions of ETF to the international context	Desk research: review key international publications on VET; ETF documentation Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations
How could ETF post 2020 achieve more sustainable impact in the area of work-based learning?	Int.	F	Information on possible future orientations from interviews and consultation with ETF staff	Desk research: review key international publications on VET; ETF documentation Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations Consultation with ETF staff
How effective has the ETF been in supporting policy development and implementation strategies relating to work-based learning systems in the SEET and EaP countries between 2015 and 2018?	In-c.	S	(see effectiveness)	Desk research: review key national publications on VET; review ETF documentation Interviews with national stakeholders
How could ETF post 2020 achieve more sustainable impact in the area of work-based learning at national level?	In-c.	F	Information on possible future orientations from national interviews and consultation with ETF staff	Interviews with national stakeholders Consultation with ETF staff
<b>Complementarity</b>				
Compared to other international organisations, what has been the added value of ETF in work-based learning in VET in the last 3 years in the international context?	Int.	S	Map the complementarity of ETF to other organisations	Desk research: review key international publications on VET; ETF documentation Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations
Compared with other international organisations, what could be the added value of ETF post 2020? What would be needed to provide this added value in the future?	Int.	F	Map the complementarity of ETF to other organisations; map potential blank spots	Desk research: review key international publications on VET; ETF documentation Interviews with key experts and representatives of international organisations Consultation with ETF staff
To what extent are ETF methods and actions complementary and coordinated with EU-funded and other major donor-supported (e.g. UNESCO, IAG (interagency working group), UNIVOC, WB, GIZ) policies and projects in the partner countries been achieved?	In-c.	S	Map the links of ETF interventions with EU-funded and other projects. Gather evidence on coordination and complementarity.	Desk research on national projects on work-based learning Interviews with national stakeholders and donors (incl. EU delegations)

Evaluation criteria / questions	Strand	Sum. or Form.	Indicator / evidence	Data collection
Compared with other international organisations active in the countries, what could be the added value of ETF post 2020? What would be needed to provide this added value in the future?	In-c.	F	Map potential future orientation for ETF in relation to other organisations active in the country	Desk research on national projects on work-based learning Interviews with national stakeholders and donors (incl. EU delegations) Consultation with ETF staff

## Annex 3: Data collection templates

### Checklist for international stakeholders

*The evaluation is tasked to provide an assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the ETF actions in developing work-based learning in both SEET and EaP countries during the period 2015 – 2018. The evaluation will both have a summative and formative purpose.*

*The aim of the interview is to understand better ETFs position within the international context; what their role is in comparison to other organisations; and what are emerging topics and opportunities for ETFs work on work-based learning.*

#### **Introduction:**

- Please, describe your position and relationship with the ETF and your involvement with WBL.

#### **Relevance:**

- How has internationally the importance of work-based learning in VET developed over the last 3 years?
- What are the drivers for this development?
- What are consequences of this development?
- How will internationally the importance of work-based learning in VET develop post 2020?
- What will be emerging topics and priorities post 2020?

#### **Effectiveness / efficiency:**

- How far has ETF been effective at informing international policy formulation and review with respect to work-based learning? (through: Generation and dissemination of relevant data, e.g. surveys; Drafting and publication of National Reports and Summaries; Drafting and publication of ETF tools, such as Handbook for policymakers and social partners on WBL, Handbook on Financing of WBL, WBL Readiness Tool, ETF Position Paper.
- Could you provide an example of how ETF insights have influenced the international policy context?
- How has the role of the ETF developed in the international context in work-based learning in the last 3 years?
- What are the drivers for this development?
- What are consequences of this development?
- How could the role of ETF change post 2020?
- What would be needed for a changed role of ETF post 2020?
- What would be priorities, initiatives, activities ETF should focus on in the future?

#### **Impact and sustainability:**

- Internationally, what are key achievements or contributions of the ETF on work-based learning in the last 3 years?
- Could you share an example of key achievements and contributions of ETF?

- How could ETF post 2020 achieve more sustainable impact in the area of work-based learning?
- What would this require in terms of vision, funding, staff, scope of activities, geographical scope?

**Complementarity:**

- Compared to other international organisations, what has been the added value of ETF in work-based learning in VET in the last 5 years in the international context?
- Where do other organisations focus on?
- What makes ETF different?
- Is what makes ETF different a strength or a weakness?
- Compared with other international organisations, what could be the added value of ETF post 2020?
- What would be needed to provide this added value in the future?

**Checklist for national stakeholders****Introduction:**

- Please, describe your relationship with the ETF and your involvement with WBL
- In which partner countries were you involved with WBL?
- What types of ETF interventions were you involved in?
- What was your role in these ETF interventions?
- How was/is WBL integrated in ETF strategy for the period 2014 – 2017 and 2017-2020?

**Relevance:**

- How has the importance of work-based learning in VET developed at national level in the last 3 years? What are the drivers for this development? What are consequences of this development?
- How will nationally the importance of work-based learning in VET develop post 2020? What will be emerging topics and priorities post 2020?

**Effectiveness / efficiency:**

- How far has ETF been effective at informing national policy formulation, review, policy design and, to a lesser extent, policy implementation (i.e. Montenegro) with respect to work-based learning? (through: Generation and dissemination of relevant data, e.g. surveys; Drafting and publication of National Reports and Summaries; Drafting and publication of ETF tools, such as Handbook for policymakers and social partners on WBL, Handbook on Financing of WBL, WBL Readiness Tool, ETF Position Paper)
- To which extent ETF helped EU Candidate Countries to achieve the MTD on WBL 2015-2020
- To what degree have ETF interventions facilitated learning from international good practice, from European methodologies and policies and among Partner Countries?
- To what degree do the ETF interventions succeed in enhancing stakeholder capacities for:



- policy formulation (identifying potentials for development; analysing needs and problems; clarifying objectives)?
  - policy design (planning interventions; establishing a baseline; defining goals; describing the inputs/resources that are needed for national interventions)?
  - policy implementation (implementing activities; analysing outputs and outcomes; providing feedback)?
- To what extent have the different methodologies used by the ETF proven to be effective and efficient methods to support the development of work-based learning in the targeted partner countries? What internal and external factors contribute to the success or failure of ETF interventions?
  - How could the role of ETF change post 2020 at national level? What would be needed for a changed role of ETF post 2020? What would be priorities, initiatives, activities ETF should focus on in the future? Could effective approaches be replicated to other regions/countries?

**Impact and sustainability:**

- How effective has the ETF been in supporting policy development and implementation strategies relating to work-based learning systems in the SEET and EaP countries between 2015 and 2018?
- How could ETF post 2020 achieve more sustainable impact in the area of work-based learning at national level?

**Complementarity:**

- To what extent are ETF methods and actions complementary and coordinated with EU-funded and other major donor-supported (e.g. UNESCO, IAG (interagency working group), UNIVOC, WB, GIZ) policies and projects in the partner countries been achieved?
- Compared with other international organisations active in the countries, what could be the added value of ETF post 2020? What would be needed to provide this added value in the future?