

TORINO PROCESS

KOSOVO

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Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244/99¹)

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¹ Hereinafter referred to as Kosovo.

List of acronyms

AAHE	Accreditation Agency for Higher Education
ALMP	Active Labour Market Programmes
CBERP	Capacity Building and Education Reform Project (SIDA)
CVET	Council for VET
EC	European Commission
ECLO	European Commission Liaison Office
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPAP	European Partnership Action Plan
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
FDI	foreign direct investment
GDP	gross domestic product
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
IDEP	Institutional Development in Education Project (World Bank)
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession to European Union
ICT	information and communications technology
KOSVET	Kosovo Vocational Education and Training Project (EU)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RAE	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian
SOK	Statistical Office of Kosovo
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
TTU	Teacher Training Unit
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
VET	vocational education and training
WB	World Bank

Introduction

The Torino Process is a participatory review of progress in vocational education and training (VET) policy carried out every two years by all ETF partner countries² with the support of the ETF. The objective of the Torino Process is to provide a concise, documented analysis of vocational education and training (VET) reform in each country, including the identification of key policy trends, challenges, constraints, good practices and opportunities, in order to:

- support countries' evidence-based policy making, with a view to improving the contribution of VET to sustainable development, and in particular competitiveness and social cohesion;
- serve as a basis for the design of the ETF's support strategy to these countries;
- inform the ETF's recommendations to the European Commission for EU external assistance;
- assess the extent to which EU approaches and policies are relevant to ETF partner countries.

In the mid to long term (2013 and beyond), the Torino Process should become a guided self-assessment exercise for monitoring VET policies. It should eventually foster a reinforced, country-led 'policy learning approach', whereby countries are able to learn from reform initiatives being implemented elsewhere. It is based on a sound methodological approach, defining the scope and content of the review (analytical framework), the possible information sources, the implementation process (stakeholder participation) and the expected outputs.

The analytical framework (see annex 2) lists the thematic areas for review and, for each of them, raises the main policy questions to be documented in order to assess the VET system and policy progress. It encompasses the various main dimensions of VET (e.g. underpinning political vision and priorities, external efficiency, internal efficiency, governance and financing).

This study also includes a review of the cooperation between education (VET and professionally-oriented higher education) and business. The review will focus on mapping cooperation between education and business; identifying the extent to which EU approaches and policies are relevant to the ETF partner countries, and providing tailored recommendations to local policy makers and donors for future programming initiatives and capacity building measures.

The outcome of the study will be an inventory of practice, experience, constraints and challenges, together with recommendations drawn from a set of country and cross-country reports.

² ETF partner countries: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Foreword

We are pleased to present the Kosovo review of progress in VET policy carried out with the support of the ETF. The Torino Process analysis in Kosovo has been a participatory process, engaging all the key Kosovo institutions and stakeholders including the development partners active in the VET sector in Kosovo.

The aim of this report is to provide a concise, documented analysis of VET reform in Kosovo, including the identification of key policy trends, challenges, constraints, good practices and opportunities. The analysis of the report builds on a range of complementary quantitative and qualitative evidence, such as statistical data and indicators, good practices, qualitative assessments and existing studies and reports, drawn from different stakeholders in Kosovo and the donor community.

This report would have not been possible without the broad participation of, and consultation with, a wide range of stakeholders (policy makers, practitioners and researchers from both the public and private sectors) at different stages of the process – collection of all the evidence produced by the Kosovo authorities and development partners, including data collection, discussion of the findings of the review exercise, and the formulation of recommendations. Particular attention was paid to involving national institutions in the collection and analysis of the different types of evidence, and eventually to enhancing their capacity for evidence production and use.

It is impossible to name all the Kosovo institutions and development partners' organisations and staff who contributed their knowledge and expertise towards drafting this brief analysis of the Kosovo VET system.

With sincere gratitude for all inputs provided during the focus group meeting in March 2010 and insights shared during the interviews in March and May 2010, the team would like to thank all concerned for their contributions, support and commitment to cooperation in the preparation of this report.

A. Executive summary

In the last two years the Government of Kosovo, and particularly its Ministry of Education and Science and Technology, have taken major steps towards developing a unified education and training strategy, covering areas such as initial VET, adult education and non-formal education. A key initiative supporting systemic reform is the introduction of the sector-wide approach in the education sector and the drafting of the Comprehensive Strategy for Education 2011–2016, which will be used also for annual planning and harmonised in line with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

In considering the overall vision for VET, and its governance and management, policy efforts to focus on Kosovo's National Qualification Framework (NQF) are making progress in establishing the new building blocks. The government has designed an overarching framework and set ambitious goals for it. Achieving these goals requires time and policy commitment, because the gap between the desired system and the present one is wide and an incremental approach should be taken into consideration. On the other hand, the centres of competence can be seen as the most prominent initiatives to raise the attractiveness and prestige of VET and to articulate vocational training with the labour market on a sectoral basis. In this respect the centres of competence can be decisive in exemplifying the critical reform features such as autonomy, multi-services, work-based learning and flexible pedagogical organisation. Success will largely depend both on the involvement of enterprises and their sectoral representatives and on building linkages with tertiary education.

Overall reforms are in progress, but there is still great scope for improvement. The capacities and institutional culture of policy evaluation are not up to the declared strategic goals. One of the most serious concerns is the issue of administrative capacity: policy making in the public institutions remains weak. It continues to be affected by political agendas, a chronic lack of adequate human resources, high turnover and insufficient implementation and monitoring capacities. Successful implementation of the VET Comprehensive Strategic Plan 2011–2016 and other reform efforts will depend greatly on a coordinated approach by all the institutions and other stakeholders involved in the process.

In the case of Kosovo, an evidence-based VET policy review must take the importance of the country context fully into account. Kosovo must be seen as a post-conflict transition country with aspirations to European integration. For decades the education and training system has experienced deep crises and post-conflict traumas, where the logic of planning first and then implementing evidence-based policies is displaced by the need to tackle urgent issues, such as getting students into schools, reducing shifts from three to two (and ideally to one) and ensuring that all students have textbooks. Consequently the process of policy making cannot be anything else but both rational and non-linear.

The policy-making process is distorted even more in an environment, such as Kosovo's, in which there are many international donors and aid agencies, all of whom, though well-intentioned and committed, have their own views on what to reform in the given sector and how to do it. Sometimes they offer different and conflicting advice based on their own models and priorities (all of it evidence-based). This leads to even greater confusion in government VET policies.

Because of the lack of institutional capacity, different donor approaches can sometimes hamper the consolidation of evidence-based policy making. Here, a policy learning approach that develops national capacities to inform policies by drawing lessons from the available evidence and experience is necessary. This includes the capacity of Kosovo institutions and policy makers to learn from their own experience and from that of other countries.

However, so far there has not been a stocktaking review of the impact of the VET policies already implemented, and there is not enough analysis to enable understanding of (i) to what extent the VET policies achieved their objectives, and (ii) if they did not achieve or only partially achieved them, the reasons this, so as to be able to realign policies and measures to the desired outcomes. In the absence of monitoring and evaluation, policies may be failing without anyone knowing it. For instance, there is a concern that stakeholders are not fully involved in discussions before policy decisions are made. It is also the case that in general no sound evidence is provided for policy maintenance, succession or termination.

With respect to the quality and relevance of VET, the large school-based system with little interaction with the business world continues to be the norm. The quality and provision of professional skills is

low. The attractiveness of the VET system to both individuals and enterprises is currently quite limited, owing to its 'bad' image and very limited resources and capacities.

For individuals, VET currently does little to upgrade skills, support gainful employment, foster active citizenship and personal development, or promote equal opportunities on the labour market. Access and discrimination can be seen as recurring issues across the sector. For instance, while gender-based discrimination is often attributed to 'the past' or glossed over as a global issue of concern, the nature of gender discrimination evident in Kosovo allows a strong case to be made for promoting the participation of young women in education and training.

For employers, critical skills mismatches and shortages hinder Kosovo's economic competitiveness. Alongside these gaps, the lack of active involvement by social partners in the steering and management of the system remains a major issue for the VET system, even though some employers' organisations and trade unions occasionally take part in policy discussions. The reactivation of the CVET represents good, although insufficient, progress on this front. To date the government has failed to find the right incentives to involve employers in the steering and management of the system.

With respect to labour market information, transparency and accountability, at present neither systematic labour market skills analysis nor school-to-work transition surveys have been done, and no institutions are responsible for carrying out these functions. In fact, only some ad-hoc donor-funded skills analysis and tracer studies, and some anecdotal evidence, may indicate the relevance of VET provision to current labour market and economic needs. Of even greater concern is the lack of comprehensive data on gross and net enrolment rates at each level, on which to base analysis of how successful the VET system has been in addressing access and equity challenges. Many efforts to improve the functionality and reporting of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) are currently under way, accompanied by the reorganisation of the structure of the system at the municipal, inspectorate and central levels.

In different parts of this report, the authors propose a number of measures with the potential to deepen the reform process in inclusive education and training policies on the basis of the evidence acquired during this study. Though the details of implementation are of course for Kosovo VET policy makers and stakeholders to decide, the authors believe that the VET system should consider:

- Enhancing the institutional arrangements for the development, implementation and monitoring of VET/employment policies, and enhancing the administrative capacity of institutions involved in programming and managing policies;
- Connecting education strategies to other key development strategies of Kosovo – e.g. economic, social and cultural strategies;
- Improving the quality and equity of the VET system so as to enhance access and ensure better learning outcomes for all students, and in particular for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds;
- Attracting and retaining more women in the VET system and tackling the gender bias in education, training and recruitment;
- Ensuring a better balance between general and vocational education at secondary level, by reviewing the Kosovo Curriculum Framework and ensuring that it is a base for the development of the competences required by the current socio-economic system in Kosovo, and leaving educational options for learners open;
- Looking into the diversification of higher education with the introduction or enhancement of post-secondary vocational education and professionally oriented university programmes, as well as ensuring better links between universities and enterprises;
- Enabling the development of adult learning and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, in order to provide opportunities and incentives for adults to enhance their skills and hence their adaptability and employability;
- Responding to new occupational needs, promoting a more entrepreneurial culture; reinforcing entrepreneurship education and training;

- Facilitating school-to-work transition and broadening youth access to the labour market, tackling the labour market relevance of school curricula, facilitating the acquisition of work experience, and supporting young people in setting up their own businesses;
- Strengthening social partners' capacities and giving them an equal role and say in setting the education and training agenda, formulating and implementing education, training and employment policies;
- Harmonising the methodology of data collection at school and central level with the Kosovo Statistical Office's education data collection, so as to improve the process of education data analysis and the use of statistical indicators for either quality improvement or planning purposes. Further human and financial support, including extra qualified statistical staff, will improve policy making based on comparable information,
- Enhancing the human and financial capacity of the system to move from strategies to actions. Significant investments need to be committed to increase the capacity of VET Department to plan, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategic operation plan for the period 2010–15.

B. Vision and state of the art in vocational education and training (VET)

Kosovo's vision and state of the art in VET can only be understood in the context of the political and socio-economic situation in Kosovo, which may best be understood in terms of its location in the Western Balkans region.

Kosovo has emerged from the post-conflict and transition phases, and its first efforts at nation building have focused on establishing its legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks. Its economy has managed only very modest growth; it continues to be uncompetitive (IMF, 2010). The informal ('grey') sector of the economy is a serious problem in Kosovo and represents up to 50% of the economy. In its draft industrial strategy for Kosovo for 2010–2013, the Ministry of Trade and Industry aims to increase the share of the industrial sector in GDP to at least 25% and to reach 33% in the next ten years (European Commission Liaison Office, 2010).

Kosovo remains one of the poorest countries in Europe, with a GDP per capita of €1,760 (World Bank, 2010). According to the Kosovo government's Employment Strategy 2010–2012, adopted by the Government of Kosovo on 23 December 2009, growth was mainly driven by strong domestic demand (consumption and investment), a significant increase in public investment, and sustained levels of worker remittances and donor activity. Macroeconomic projections for 2009–2012 suggest an average GDP growth rate of 4.6%, even after taking into account the potential impacts in 2009 and 2010 of the present global economic crisis.

Remittances and pensions from abroad form a significant source of income for Kosovars in general, and Kosovo Albanians in particular. However, the generosity of the diaspora is weakening and the first signs of this are already evident. The impact of the last year's economic crisis is affecting remittances, which form part of a significant proportion of GDP. Lower remittances are also hampering the continuation of existing small businesses and the development of new ones. As Elizabeth Pond points out,

'the listless [i.e. informal] economy offers few jobs for the average of 50 per cent unemployed, or the 70 per cent unemployed among the more than half of the population who are under the age of 24 – and few incentives for them to enter the legitimate market. To the contrary, both the spending of the international community in the country and remittances from family members abroad are now dropping sharply, competing property claims deter even local investment' (Pond, 2006: 98).

Kosovo has the youngest population in the region and a population that is growing faster than any other in Europe. Around 32% of Kosovo's estimated 2.2 million population is under the age of 15, with only 6.5% over 65 years of age. With a 47% unemployment rate and a very low employment rate (29%), Kosovo has the weakest employment track record in Europe. The unemployment rate is

particularly high among young people, women and minorities, at over 60% for all these groups, with some variation depending on the data source and category.

Recent studies by the World Bank and UNICEF Kosovo show clearly that poverty is persistent and widespread: it is estimated that 45% of the population is living below the national poverty line. According to the UNICEF report on child poverty in Kosovo (Stubbs and Nestić, 2010), 46.2% of the Kosovo population lives in poverty, as does 48.6% of those aged 0–19. Other groups fall into the extreme poverty category, the most affected being elderly people, households with disabled members and female-headed households.

The socio-economic and demographic background described above indicates several important issues related to human capital in Kosovo which have a big impact on education and employment policies and related expenditure throughout the system. In this context, the education and training system, labour supply and labour demand also require an appreciation of general economic growth patterns, changes in trade and investment, regional markets, the role of the informal economy, and the new nation's initial steps on the road to European Union membership.

In the last two years, the Government of Kosovo and the management of the education sector have launched ambitious positive reform efforts with support from external partners and many international counterparts and partners in exchanges. The education and training sector in Kosovo is a top priority for the government and parliament and is destined to receive more government and donor funding over the coming years. Building an inclusive education system and human capital which is also internationally competitive is necessary for Kosovo's socio-economic development and its accession to the EU in the long term. In order to fulfil this mission, the government is focusing its efforts on improving the implementation and performance of the sector strategy at all levels.

This has been translated into substantial reforms in the education and training system. Several systemic and permanent institutional arrangements are already in place and are supported by an important amount of legislative activity including the law on a national qualifications framework.

The most important reform efforts include:

- (i) decentralisation of public education service delivery to municipalities and, linked to that, a gradual shift to a per-student funding formula;
- (ii) development of the National Qualifications Framework, including the development of outcome-based and demand-driven qualifications and the set-up of quality assurance mechanisms;
- (iii) the design and gradual implementation of a professionalisation and licensing mechanism for teachers;
- (iv) the design and set-up of new institutional arrangements, including the creation of a National Qualifications Authority, the activation of the CVET, the State Council for Teacher Licensing and the authority for curricula, assessment, and standards.

The government, with the support of donors, has established a detailed VET strategic document for the period 2011–2016. The main objective is to develop 'sustainable links between VET and global social and economic developments'. This objective is linked with the achievement of eight key targets (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010):

- (i) Students' professional practice in VET is to be carried out in close cooperation with enterprises;
- (ii) By 2016 vocational schools must have financial and operational autonomy;
- (iii) Centres of Competence must become an integral part of the national VET system;
- (iv) Professional profiles offered by VET institutions must become relevant for the labour market;
- (v) There must be a comprehensive and functioning evaluation system in VET;
- (vi) VET curricula must be in line with the needs of the labour market and meet international standards;
- (vii) There must be an increased mobility and employability of the graduates from VET both in the local and foreign market;
- (viii) A functional national qualifications system and procedures for equivalence and accreditation must be in place.

These reforms are at an early stage of their development and implementation and it is too early to evaluate their impact. The analysis in the following sections will therefore focus on examining the overall vision for VET, its emerging governance and management arrangements and its capacity to fulfil the ambitious goals set by the government for the sector. In this context, questions concerning the current state of play in VET reform perhaps apply less to the identification and conceptualisation of key objectives and targets than to the relevance of the diagnosis of Kosovo's education system and labour market realities and the envisaged policy options. The analysis will take into account the present situation of the system including the previous institutional setting, the role allocated to social partners and the need to mobilise enterprises with a genuine understanding of human resources issues.

The government's vision and policy ambition for VET does not correspond to the reality that the latter is poorly represented or absent in the central structures and the government's budget. The low management capacity is being identified as a major weakness of the system. The lack of or inadequate administrative procedures and the absence of human resource development policies and plans are hampering operations. The FRIDOM project report, *Whole of government review* (FRIDOM, 2009), underscores the central weaknesses in the oversight of vocational training, as supported by the authors' observations, even though it is an area receiving massive donor attention and support. During the period of writing this report, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology management has confirmed that the Division for Vocational Education and Training within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has become the Department for Vocational Education and Training. This department is now working on a job description and organigram, but because of scarce human resources in the department, work is moving forward slowly. Without increased human resources and expertise in the new department, its capacity to manage the VET reform will remain weak.

C. External efficiency: Addressing economic and labour market needs

Low international competitiveness is a key barrier to economic growth in Kosovo, and the burden of adjustment to international market forces lies heavily on the ability of the economy to deliver improvements in productivity. Further privatisation and the process of the entry and growth of new small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are required to ensure effective industrial restructuring, innovation, productivity improvement and job creation.

Although consistent information about labour market trends in Kosovo is limited, what information there is indicates that some sectors are declining, others are growing, and a third category shows a potential for growth but needs substantial changes. Recent economic and labour market data confirm that trade is the most important sector of the economy (16.9% of all employment), followed by agriculture (14.6%), education (12.1%), manufacturing (10.4%), public administration (9.6%), health (7%) and construction (6.6 %) (European Commission, 2009). In contrast, the industrial sector has lost some of its importance in the economy owing to the neglect of the economy during the 1990s and the devastation of war. Mining has also declined because of insufficient investment and an unsecured future. However, there are some pockets of success in industries such as processed food, vegetable products, machinery and electrical equipment, and plastic and rubber products, which have all increased their exports in recent years, although still on a relatively small scale. Currently, the main industries in the manufacturing sector are wood processing, metal processing and food processing, all of which have a huge potential for growth (ibid.).

The agricultural sector also has high potential for future development because of Kosovo's favourable geographical position of and mild climate (ibid). To achieve this, however, radical changes are required to transform the current situation of the sector, which is dominated by inefficient, near-subsistence farming resulting from small plots, limited mechanisation, lack of technical expertise among farmers, and lack of quality control mechanisms. Finally, the smallest sectors in Kosovo are finance and insurance, mining, and real estate and business services, indicating that Kosovo still lags far behind in development toward a modern service-oriented economy.

To date, Kosovo has privatised 50% of its state-owned enterprises, and the remainder will be privatised in the near future. Privatisation is also closely linked to foreign direct investment (FDI), which has not been extensive in Kosovo because of many obstacles, of which energy supply is usually cited as the most important (ibid).

People in Kosovo have a strong entrepreneurial spirit and SMEs make a large contribution to GDP, accounting for approximately 40% of GDP, 60% of employment and 99% of businesses. Although there are about 90,000 registered businesses, the tax administration reports that only 35,000 of these are active and only 5,000 make a profit and pay taxes (ibid). The main barriers identified in the SME agency survey include lack of access to finance or excessively expensive credit, problematic electricity provision and the lack of qualified workers. In addition, Kosovo is burdened with a large informal economy with all the associated problems of unfair competition in relation to the formal sector, non-payment of taxes, and lack of social protection and pension schemes for employees. The informal economy in Kosovo is estimated to account for some 50% of total employment activity (ibid).

Kosovo has also a large diaspora, estimated to account for between 470,000 and over a million people (SOK, 2010, data for 2009; Hoti, 2009). Migrants tend to be working-age males, from rural areas and with upper secondary education (Hoti, 2009). The majority of them are in Germany and Switzerland and are typically employed in non-vocational and non-professional work (56%), such as construction, hospitality and production (EC, 2009). Migration has reduced domestic unemployment but increased the propensity of migrants' household members to remain economically inactive. Finally, remittances constitute some 13% of GDP (Hoti, 2009).

It is difficult to assess how successful the VET system has been in addressing the economic challenges and, in particular, ensuring the availability of skills that are in demand. Although lack of qualified staff and skills is commonly cited as one of the main barriers to economic prosperity and SME development, the labour market does not send clear and articulate signals about the demand for labour and skills. As mentioned above, the labour market is underdeveloped, informal activities and unemployment are prevalent, and job demand is slack. The labour market activity rate of Kosovars is low – 65.8% for men and a mere 26.1% for women. Unemployment is very high, at 47.5% (SOK, 2009) and it strongly affects women (59.6%) and young people (73%). Most of the unemployment is long-term (81.9%). Underemployment is also widespread (17.8% work part-time, 65.3% on a temporary basis).

A number of key features affect the quantity and quality of jobs and the effective allocation of human resources. First, most businesses are engaged in low-value-added activities; industry and agriculture still have not recovered and the modern service sector remains very limited; and the widespread informal economy distorts the picture of the current labour market. Second, there is no systematic data collection and analysis of labour market demand. Skills demand assessments and training needs assessments are carried out ad hoc and their usefulness may vary for different reasons, including the uncertain future of the companies surveyed (PEM, 2007). Third, the quality of jobs may not match the aspirations of potential job takers, creating the impression of a skills mismatch. Fourth, there are also some indications that the relevance of VET to the labour market is hampered by the quality of the VET provided rather than the content and design of qualifications as such, as a result of poor instruction, little practical training (GTZ, 2009), and a lack of focus on transversal competencies. However, the information available indicates that completing university or college education is relatively attractive in terms of labour market opportunities. Labour market experience indicates that people with the lowest qualification are the most likely to become or remain unemployed (65%), and this rate decreases to 48% for people with secondary education, while persons with college or university education exhibit an unemployment rate of only 15% (SOK, 2010). In this respect, it is the public sector that absorbs the largest part of the highly skilled workforce, in particular women.

Infrastructure for evidence-based policies

Several features hinder any evidence-based policy decision making on labour market and skills development. First, accurate unemployment rates by type of education, gender and age, which would normally indicate the supply and demand mismatches for specific types of qualification and skills, are not available. In an underdeveloped labour market with few jobs available, such as that of Kosovo, the indicator becomes more problematic, inasmuch as young people may face problems in finding jobs that are not due to irrelevant or bad education or skills but to the lack of jobs in general. Often employers prefer to employ people with work experience rather than recent graduates. Also, job seekers are more likely to find jobs in the informal sector or in activities where their education and skills cannot be fully appreciated and utilised. A second major obstacle to evidence-based policy making is the functioning of the public employment services (PES). While the databases of the Kosovo PES could potentially be useful in comparing the profiles of unemployed people and of vacancies, currently the PES does not have the capacity to collect and process such information. In addition, taking into account the level of interaction of the PES with private enterprises and the labour

market in general, it is obvious that the vacancies reported to the PES do not necessarily reflect the overall labour market demand. The third feature is related to information about the transition to the labour market of graduates of the education system (see below).

Relevance of VET

Kosovo's upper secondary education system is segmented into two main tracks, general and VET. As shown in annex 1, table 1, the majority of secondary school pupils are enrolled in VET programmes and only a few pass the Matura exam. At present, no systematic school-to-work transition surveys have been carried out in Kosovo and only some tracer studies and anecdotal evidence may indicate the relevance of VET provision to current labour market and economic needs. For instance, one of the small-scale tracer studies conducted in 2008 in the framework of the Vocational Education Support project by Swisscontact suggests a certain mismatch between the education and training received and labour market demand. The survey, although limited in scope, showed that 59% of graduates continued their education and that, out of those who entered labour market, 68% remained jobless at the time of interview and as many as 88% of those who had found a job were working in a different field from that in which they were trained (Swisscontact, 2008).

There are also some indications that the relevance of vocational education and training is hampered by the quality of VET provided rather than just the content of qualifications offered, since the focus tends to be on theoretical subjects rather than the practical training parts of the curriculum. In fact, even where new curricula had been prepared, school equipment was inadequate, teaching materials were missing, among other problems. In addition, several types of VET curriculum are implemented in vocational schools (GTZ VET baseline study; 2010); this situation means that standards and quality across the system are uneven, and in general poses some doubts about the labour market relevance of the education and training offered in general. This is not to downplay the importance of the donor-driven interventions that have developed appropriate approaches to ensure the relevance of VET profiles and curricula to labour market needs. The main issue here is that no formal and systematic approach to analyse the labour market or to translate that analysis into qualifications and curricula exists currently at system level. In addition, where there are available curricula, the strategic and operational capacities to implement them are lacking.

The links between education and business are still weak. Although Law No. 02/L-42 on Vocational Education and Training, supporting work-based learning, was adopted in April 2006, students or trainees still have few chances to obtain parallel on-the-job or practical training or to undergo internship. Some projects with internship components have been implemented, but there are no clear rules as to how such internships should be organised, many aspects are unclear (e.g. programme, supervision, insurance and allowances paid to the interns), and there is no incentive system in place for schools, teachers or enterprises. Furthermore, the basic and transversal competences of vocational students, although mentioned in the formal curricula, are often neglected, hampering the future capacities of VET graduates to learn, upgrade their skills, retrain or change vocation. In the wider perspective this may pose a greater problem than the limited relevance of VET profiles and curricula to narrowly defined labour market demand which is difficult to map and react to in a short time perspective.

Active labour market programmes (ALMPs)

In Kosovo, several programmes and initiatives can be considered as active labour market measures: training targeting job seekers, entrepreneurship skills development, on-the-job training, and so on. Most of these programmes and initiatives are organised with the support of donors. The government has developed one key programme targeting job seekers through the network of vocational training centres (VTCs) under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. VTCs are the main institutions providing training for the unemployed. Currently their training provision constitutes only a fraction of all VET supply in Kosovo and is confined to short-term training (1–3 months) in a limited range of occupational profiles, with a tendency to concentrate on basic-level and narrow skills. Notwithstanding the effort put in by some VTCs, in reality the latter have limited discretion and flexibility in terms of introducing new occupational profiles to meet the changing needs of the regional or local labour markets. This not to underestimate the good use of practical training facilities made by VTCs on their premises, the emphasis on a competence-based training and assessment approach, the flexibility of their modular-based training or the use of trainee-centred pedagogical approaches (KOSVET VI Inception Report). There is, however, little evidence that VTCs are providing significant amounts of advanced training, up-skilling or business-led skills training for existing employees. Although VTCs vary in the quality of their facilities they are by international standards poorly equipped in many

occupational areas. Finally, the capacities of VTCs remain underutilised because of some institutional bottlenecks as well as limited demand (KOSVET VI Inception Report).

Apart from the VTC training, there have also been several projects implemented by donors with the involvement of PES, covering an internship or on-the-job training component. These projects have been usually trainee-centred (enterprises were contacted to accommodate the training needs of job seekers) and some small financial incentives to companies were used. However, the success rate of such initiatives, measured in terms of the employment of former interns, is largely unknown, although a tracer study conducted by the UNDP and the ILO in 2007 found that 46% of former ALMP participants were employed at the time the survey was run, compared to 20% of the control group. This is a high percentage, in view of the situation in the labour market, and even despite some doubts about the reliability of the figures (ILO/ UNDP, 2008).

Finally, with regard to improving the investment climate, the employment strategy passed in December 2009 is trying to respond in the first place to the challenge of adequate job creation. The issue of skills and migration has been taken up by the employment strategy through the proposal of special migration schemes.

Adult education and training

The concept of adult education and training in Kosovo is broad and covers several types of training and target group. Programmes and forms of non-formal and adult education are severely underdeveloped in Kosovo. Some VET training is offered by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to adults on existing school premises. There are a few for-profit and non-profit VET providers, including the Don Bosco Training Centre, Women for Women International Kosovo and the Employment and Promotion Agency of Kosovo (EPAK). In addition, a few major public companies such as KEK and PTK, some commercial banks and some public institutions have training centres and offer training, mainly to their employees. This is the case with several ministries and public institutions: the Ministry of Health, which offers courses to nurses; the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration (KIPA), which is responsible for training of civil servants; and the Kosovo Centre for Public Security and Education and Development (KCPSD), an integral part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Regarding in-service training organised within private companies, there is little evidence of enterprise-based or enterprise-funded training. This is mainly due to the prevailing structure of the economy and businesses, and the absence of an incentive system designed to encourage enterprises to invest in upgrading the skills of their employees. Furthermore, the existing legal framework (Law No. 02/L-24 on Adult Education and Training, adopted in June 2005) hampers the expansion of private VET providers, as the law is unclear and difficult to apply and the institutional framework supporting adult education, including the incentive and governance system, accreditation and certification, remains underdeveloped (Adult Learning and Non Formal Education baseline study, 2010). Recognition and validation of informal and prior learning is part of the new National Qualifications Framework, but is currently non-existent.

As regards institutional arrangements, there is no coordinated approach to the governance and management of adult and non-formal education and training. For instance, there is a non-formal education section within the Vocational Education Division of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, responsible for adult basic education programmes. At the same time, non-formal VET for the labour market rests largely within the realm of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Both institutions are insufficiently staffed and there is little coordination between different subsystems. Adult and non-formal education, including VTCs in enterprises, has not been paid much policy attention in any of the previous strategies and action plans – although this situation might change under the government's new strategic plan. The government set as an objective 'the development of a sustainable and quality system for continuous education and training of adults that meets individual, social and needs of the Kosovo economy by contributing to the development of lifelong learning'. Among the targets set in the proposed action plan are the revision of laws and regulations, the establishment at national level of a functional system of adult and non-formal education, the development of partnership between social partners in the field of adult education, and the provision of sustainable and efficient financial support for adult and non-formal education.

Donor support

Since 2003, substantial positive changes have been brought about in vocational schools by means of donor-driven initiatives by GTZ, SDC, EAR/EC, SIDA, the governments of Denmark, Norway,

Luxembourg and Austria, Swisscontact, USAID and many other bilateral donors. These donors have invested in different areas of VET, such as infrastructure improvement, curriculum development, teacher training, workshop equipment, development of learning resources and school management. Various strategies have been also elaborated, for example the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Kosovo for the period 2003–2008; the strategic plan for 2010–2015, and others.

There are, however, certain deficiencies in the institutional capacities of the bodies responsible for education and training policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Donor initiatives have often lacked coordination and proper follow-up, and sustainability has suffered as a result. The strategies and action plans were either not approved or not implemented for a variety of reasons related to financing, staffing, governance, and so on. The pilot projects have not been upscaled and the incentive system for individual, companies and education and training providers is not in place. Although much legislation has been passed, many of the laws are unclear, contradictory or simply not used, while others are still in the process of being redrafted.

D. External efficiency: Promoting equity and addressing social demands for education and training

The main social challenges that shape the demand for skills include low educational levels among the population in general; very high long-term unemployment rates and high inactivity rates, especially among women; a relatively young population structure; and finally, deep inequalities in particular between urban and rural areas, and poverty in particular of ethnic (non-Serb) minorities.

The majority of Kosovars aged 15+ (55.8%) have not completed upper secondary education (42.3% of men and 69.1% of women). 36.3% have upper secondary education (47.2% of men and 25.5% of women) and only 7.9% have some tertiary education (10.5% of men and 5.3% of women) (SOK 2009). Some of those with low education were students in the 1990s but had to leave the educational system and never went back to complete their education. The illiteracy level of the population in Kosovo was 6.5% in 2000, one of the highest in Europe, and functional illiteracy is probably even more widespread, although no data exist. It is typically higher in rural than in urban areas. Almost 14% of women living in rural areas are defined as illiterate, while the corresponding share of illiterate men is 4% (SOK, 2010). Illiteracy levels are higher among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities (up to 20% in general and 25% for women). The majority of RAE adults have not also completed compulsory education (KFOS/COMPASS, 2009). Kosovo has also the youngest population in the region and a population that is growing faster than any other in Europe. Young males and females aged less than 25 years make up 49% of the population, 19.1% of these aged between 15 and 24 years. This exerts and will continue to exert considerable pressure on both the education system and the labour market.

The overwhelming majority of the unemployed, who constitute almost half of the workforce, are long-term unemployed (jobless for more than 12 months). Unemployment is also highly correlated with educational attainment. Low-skilled people have the lowest chances of getting a job. Low-skilled people and those whose skills have become obsolete due to long-term unemployment are also very unlikely to enter sectors with higher productivity and their chances to learn on the job are minimal. Kosovo also has very high economic inactivity rates, in particular among women. Two-thirds of inactive men and 80% of inactive women have less than upper secondary education. Women in general are more likely to refrain from entering the labour market or drop out, firstly because of their family and household-related obligations and secondly because they are more likely to become discouraged since, being both low-skilled and female, they have very few chances of getting a job.

Minority issues are better addressed in the education and training system. In 2008 the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology launched a strategy for inclusion of RAE communities in the education system, but this strategy does not consider higher education and has not been widely implemented (Pupovci, 2010). Curricula for VET are available in the minority languages of Kosovo. Teacher training includes minority staff as well. All non-Serb minorities are included in the VET system.

Educational deficit remains an issue, and it is greater among the poor in general and socially and economically vulnerable ethnic groups in particular. Financial problems and inadequate income are

uniformly identified as the main reasons for dropout (World Bank Drop out Study and RIINVEST, 2009).

As regards ethnicity, the surveys conclude that dropout is very prevalent among the RAE community (KFOS/COMPASS, 2009). Ethnic minorities also suffer from even higher unemployment and economic inactivity than the population in general. Only some 25% of RAE adults have some sort of permanent or temporary job (not including informal activities) and 45% of adult men are seeking a job (KFOS/COMPASS, 2009). Partially as a result of low skills and unemployment, most members of RAE communities live in extreme poverty, which again negatively affects the younger generation's opportunities to continue their education and break the vicious cycle (ibid.). Ethnic minorities are also underrepresented in the civil service and Publicly Owned Enterprises (POEs).

It is difficult to analyse the capacities and success of the VET system in addressing these challenges, for there are no comprehensive data on gross and net enrolment rates at each level. According to some estimations, Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs have primary school enrolment rates of 95.9% and 94%, respectively (RIINVEST, 2009). With regard to age, 71% of boys and 54% of girls aged 15–19 are in school. In the 20–24 age group, some 16% of men and 14% of women attend school or university (SOK, 2007). The number of students in higher education is growing and, according to the higher education strategy, by 2015 the higher education sector should admit some 35% of the cohort, which is still low compared to many other countries.

These data indicate, therefore, that young people in Kosovo rarely continue their education to tertiary level and many do not even enter secondary school, especially girls and members of ethnic minorities. The low level of participation in secondary education in rural areas is often a result of the very bad economic situation and the long distances students have to travel to school.

Members of the Serb-speaking community stay longer in education, and there is some evidence that they achieve higher standards than those in other communities. They continue to follow the curriculum of Serbia. RAE communities are the most disadvantaged, especially girls and women. Some 25–30% (depending on the source) of all RAE children do not attend primary education. The situation is more serious in relation to secondary education, where approximately 78% of females and 62% of males are out of school and only a small number of RAE community members have completed or attended university (UNMIK, 2005). The obvious achievements in integrating Bosnians, Turks and others into the current education system do not guarantee their integration into Kosovo society as well, due to the low quality of classes in Albanian as a second language and the lack of any instruction in Albanian during their pre-university education (ETF, 2009).

As mentioned above, currently 57% of secondary school pupils attend VET programmes (63% of secondary school boys and 49% of secondary school girls). However, many vocational students enter the programme only after failing to enrol in general secondary education; VET remains a 'second choice' programme. The dropout rate in VET reaches 4.6% while it is only 1.6% in general secondary education. There are no data on how many VET graduates continue their education. The enrolment rate in higher education is low, but the Swisscontact tracer study found that 59% of VET graduates continued their education. With the very high unemployment rate, the alternative of continuing education is a relatively 'cheap' option as opportunity costs are very low (no lost income). The inadequate quality of VET also brings into question the role of VET in alleviating the impact of social exclusion due to poverty, ethnicity, place of domicile, etc., as training may not lead to the acquisition of the basic and vocational skills sought on the labour market and necessary to participate in public life.

The situation is even worse with regard to adult education and training. Despite the relatively low educational levels in Kosovo, access to 'second chance' education is very limited, as is involvement in lifelong learning in general. The reduction of dropout rates, the development of alternative programmes for adults and the provision of life skills for early school leavers have been part of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's strategy on pre-university education. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has developed curricula for catch-up classes and intensive programmes for adult and non-formal education, but in the years 2005–2008 only 8,039 people were trained and 4,652 certified, and 33 vocational schools were certified to deliver adult courses (Pupovci, 2010). With regard to training of unemployed The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has established eight vocational training centres (VTCs) in the seven Kosovo regions, plus one in North Mitrovica and five other mobile centres. However, training is offered only to job seekers registered with the PES in the regional and municipal employment offices.

Young people aged 16–25, women, minorities and disabled people should be given priority in these services. According to Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare statistics, the percentage of trainees from ethnic minorities is 4–5% and that of trained women approximately 40%. However, access and equity in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare vocational training network remain an issue. For instance, disadvantaged groups such as women or minorities with low educational levels may need special services including remedial education, activation services, improved job-search assistance, career guidance and counselling, and non-standard locations or training intensity, but these are currently not being systematically offered. Also, the number of unemployed people undergoing training is negligible. In 2009 some 3,200 unemployed people were trained (compared to 359,000 of registered unemployed). The ratio of registered job seekers to vacancies was 501:1 in 2009 and the ratio of registered unemployed to the staff is 1,845:1. These data show the low current capacity of the PES to address the needs of unemployed.

Some training is provided by other public, for-profit and non-profit organisations, vocational or more general in kind, but lack of data makes it impossible to assess the scale of these properly. They also tend to be conditional on the presence and interest of donors and are therefore of limited sustainability. Training for farmers and small-scale rural entrepreneurs has been provided on an ad-hoc basis by NGOs, community-based organisations and farmers' organisations which are funded by donors. Training is mostly on the job, with an emphasis on practical skills. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development has implemented a programme offering non-formal education and in-service training to farmers, public service agricultural officers, private agricultural professionals and future advisers, through the establishment of training facilities at the Agriculture Institute of Peje (Adult Learning and Non Formal Education baseline study, 2010). There are also examples of successful initiatives aiming to offer education to women and girls in both urban and rural areas (including RAE minorities). Special curricula and textbooks were prepared in 2004 for women's literacy classes. UNICEF, in cooperation with UNESCO and government (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), non-government and local organisations, has been successfully implementing non-formal education programmes for around 2,000–3,000 women and girls (depending on the source) throughout Kosovo. The programmes offer basic education to illiterate women and girls throughout the country. This initiative has also supported skills training for income generation for women, including processing, marketing and basic business skills (USAID Kosovo, 2009).

As for gender issues in general, there is little or no mention of gender or gender approaches in the sectoral strategies and action plans. No efforts have been made to analyse the reasons for girls' and women's low participation in education, training and employment, and no specific measures have been proposed to tackle them (Swedish Institute for Public Administration International, 2009), although some studies on gender issues in education were carried out with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology involvement in 2003 (UNICEF, 2003).

Kosovo performs well with regard to general awareness among teachers of what constitutes an inclusive approach in teaching. Teachers, however, complain about the problems of implementing this approach in practice, citing lack of teaching resources, large class sizes, lack of community awareness and the attitudes of school principals as obstacles (ETF *Country Plan 2009*). Another problem is the very selective understanding of 'inclusive education': there is a tendency to equate it with special needs education or reduction of dropout rates, and to refer to it in the context of the withdrawal of various donor and civil society organisations from supporting inclusion initiatives, combined with the still limited capacities of public administration bodies to carry an inclusion agenda forward (ibid).

Finally as regards financial assistance for students from poor social backgrounds, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology annually provides a number of scholarships to higher education students exempting them from tuition fees and accommodation costs. No financial assistance is offered to vocational students.

Career guidance is in a state of gestation. Some pilot projects have been implemented in the school system and the PES offers some career guidance (Zelloth, 2008). However, only a few specialised personnel are engaged in careers guidance and the scope of services is very limited. In 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports to introduce and develop careers guidance in Kosovo. In schools the provision of formal careers guidance is currently limited to individual initiatives by some teachers. In the future (2014–2015), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology envisages setting up a national centre to provide

online careers counselling. In addition, all vocational schools will have a professional staff member for careers guidance and counselling by 2013.

To improve the access of vocational students to university education, the Matura exam should be reformed. The new pre-university education reform also envisages abolishing the 13th grade from upper secondary education. That means that, to graduate from vocational school, students will have to pass a final exam, enabling them to enter the labour market and/or the study programmes of higher schools so as to gain qualification NQF 5.

At present there is also relatively little provision that might be considered to be at post secondary education-Level 5. The provision that does exist is non-formal and mainly found either in the private universities or in training centres funded by companies. National certification is not available to confirm the successful outcomes from such training. There is therefore a certain gap in the system (KOSVET IV report).

VET currently does little for skill upgrading, gainful employment, active citizenship and personal development, or the promotion of equal opportunities in the labour market, due to its very limited resources and capacities. Civil society organisations and donors undertake some initiatives, such as literacy and entrepreneurship courses for women, as described above. Some awareness-raising campaigns aimed at improving the participation of RAE children in education and the greater involvement of parents has been undertaken, as was some awareness raising about the role of lifelong learning (through 'lifelong learning festivals' organised since 2006) (Pupovci, 2010). The impact is uncertain, however. The ALMPs implemented so far have also tried to target some vulnerable groups, mainly young job seekers and the long-term unemployed, but with limited success. Other broad measures aimed directly at job creation (public works and support to self-employment), foreseen in the employment strategy passed in 2009, should target vulnerable groups, including poor and low-skilled people (depending on the scheme).

The current education reform aims at extending the period of compulsory education from 9 to 13 years, and this should increase the educational levels of the population. Implementation of the NQF should increase the transparency and permeability of VET progression paths as well. The reforms aimed at increasing the quality of VET should help the VET system to support the more vulnerable groups to increase their employability and basic competences. There is still a need to address gender equality and minority issues better, as well as the educational needs of adults.

E. Internal efficiency, quality, governance and financing

Five key challenges for strengthening the internal efficiency of the VET system are identified and examined in this section.

Given the overall 'low' performance and 'low' attractiveness of the VET system for both enterprises and individuals, there is a need to improve the quality and enhance the relevance of the system so as to respond to labour market and individual needs.

The poor articulation of education subsystems is a typical example highlighting the need for Kosovo's policy efforts now to build consistency across the set of education reforms, including higher education.

The government gives high policy priority to critical features of the reform, namely centres of competence and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Ensuring that these tools are embedded in the wider reform vision and that their promise and potential are fully scaled up throughout the system is part of the challenge.

The quality of several aspects of VET needs to be addressed, including curriculum design and implementation, quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms, and the quality of training and professional development for teachers.

In considering the emerging governance and financing model of the VET system in Kosovo, there is a need to find the 'right' incentives to encourage enterprises and their representatives to get involved in the management of VET, to link decentralisation with quality and to build consistent institutional arrangements for the governance of the system.

1. Overall performance of the VET system

The preceding section of this report discussed the ‘bad’ perception of VET among students and society in general and the low outcomes of the system as regards both economic and social needs. In addition, there is evidence that the VET system is not efficient. Two key aspects are discussed here. First, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has developed new competence-based curricula with the support of donors. They are in line with labour market needs and follow a structure based on learning-outcomes and awarding credits. However, according to the GTZ research on the implementation of the new curricula (GTZ, 2009), these curricula are not fully implemented, so the students are not acquiring the skills required by the labour market and, consequently, the labour market is receiving new students without the relevant profiles. For instance, 45.8% of the 33 teachers/instructors interviewed by GTZ reported that they had no practical learning for their module at their school. Another key piece of evidence of the low efficiency of the VET system is the dropout and repetition rates, which are estimated at 4.5% in 2009.

2. Articulation of education sub-systems

As mentioned above, the upper secondary education system is segmented into two main tracks, general and VET. At present, there seems no linkage between the general upper secondary and VET tracks. The reform of both subsystems is ongoing but with very little strategic coordination or articulation. For example, the work on the Kosovo Curriculum Framework has not taken VET into consideration. In addition, pathways between the two tracks are non-existent. This reflects the traditional way of organising and delivering secondary education, a way which reinforces inequality and the low profile of VET.

Considering the current VET strategy, a number of points regarding the policy options envisaged for subsystem articulation stand out. The first is that no change is being made to the design of upper secondary education, in particular regarding access, alternatives and pathways through the system. The second concerns the comparative value of general academic and vocational education: the general academic strand opens high-quality pathways to tertiary education without dead ends, whereas VET remains isolated. In this context, it is important to stress that if the VET sector fails to gain a foothold at the level of higher qualifications, then it will be left with no remit except training for the trades and lower-skilled occupations. This will both reinforce the severe segmentation of general secondary education and VET and strengthen the belief that VET is a dead-end track, and will thus limit its contribution to the competitiveness of the Kosovo economy.

Two key instruments already under way have potential added value for addressing these issues: the centres of competence and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

3. The NQF and centres of competence: the promise and the risks

The NQF is an important building block in the reform of Kosovo’s education and training system. In 2008, with the support of the EU-funded project KOSVET III, Kosovo designed a national qualifications framework and adopted it through a new law. The NQF aims at increasing the reliability and credibility of the qualifications offered to individuals and employers (NQF Handbook, 2009). The NQF has been designed to cover almost all the features of an ‘ideal’ NQF: an overarching framework, quality assurance, a credits system and openings for the validation of prior learning. The NQF also comes with the establishment of a new institution, the national qualification authority, and new processes for qualifications development and validation (ibid.). The NQF is already in the implementation phase, supported mainly by a new EU-funded project, KOSVET V. It is expected to bring radical changes in the quality and labour market relevance of VET qualifications and at the same time boost the recognition of vocational qualifications as entry points for access to higher education.

However, the gap between the desired system and the present one is wide and an incremental approach should be taken into consideration. Institutional reform such as that undertaken by the NQF can take many years of continuous commitment, and the government and donors should not expect reforms to be completed on a project cycle of two or three years. In this case, it is important to select interim outputs and outcomes consistent with a long-term commitment to such reforms. For instance, the target of registering all qualifications offered by VET in the NQF by 2011 (Ministry of Education,

Science and Technology, 2007: 27) does not seem realistic, taking into account the qualifications design and validation process envisaged.

There is also a concern regarding the policy option for the quality assurance framework. According to the strategy document, the government plans to accredit programmes, not institutions (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007: 27). This is a clear policy option; however, it entails a potential missed opportunity, since accreditation can be used as a driver for changing institutional cultures by putting and keeping the issue of quality on the agenda of the management and staff (see below). More fundamentally, although the NQF has been envisaged as an overarching framework, when one examines present developments it appears that the emphasis is on the VET framework. This can be seen as an early stage in a much longer process of developing NQFs, starting with sub-frameworks – which is how the Scottish, English and Australian frameworks all started. However, this comes with problems and delays in articulating VET with higher education development and in harmonising the approaches across the system.

The NQF is a tool for reform ('Kosovo County Report, ETF, Turin, 2010'), and its success depends heavily on the wider policy framework in which it is embedded and its combination with other policy measures and institutional arrangements. In this respect the policy vision for the centres of competence can be decisive. Centres of competence are a new generation of vocational schools that are sector-specific and have new features in terms of autonomy and management, size, infrastructure and pedagogical organisation. Seven centres of competence are envisaged, covering sectors ranging from construction to ICT, with around 7,000 potential new training places. The first centre of competence, in the construction sector, is expected to start in September 2010.

The focus on the centres of competence is due to the policy priority given to them by the Kosovo government and the donor community. It is also important to discuss the centres of competence because they hold a promise of addressing key challenges for increasing the efficiency and quality of VET and contributing to the competitiveness of the economy. Although it is early to judge the impact of such initiatives, the centres of competence can be seen as the most prominent initiative to increase the attractiveness and prestige of VET and to articulate vocational training with the labour market on a sectoral basis.

The centres of competence are also promising because they are intended to act from the outset as effective autonomous institutions and to benefit from high investment in infrastructure and human resources. In addition, they are supposed to play a key role in developing teachers' capacities in their respective sectors and to act as resource centres and benchmarks for other vocational schools.

Ensuring that the critical reform features are introduced in their design is part of the challenge facing the Government of Kosovo. At present, key elements are missing in the vision. First, given the level of qualifications to be delivered in centres of competence (levels 3 and 4), the government might fail to play a role in bringing VET closer to the tertiary non-university subsystem and opening pathways for vocational students. Second, the vision for an effective VET institution model in the context of Kosovo is still in its infancy; further analysis and development are required to ensure that new institutions will genuinely differ from the 'old' ones.

There is also a concern that the high priority given to centres of competence compared to the rest of the VET system might be seen to cause tension between quick policy wins through rapid implementation and the longer-term vision of a high-quality, equitable system. From the point of view of the costing targets for VET (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2010: 21), centres of competence, which will at best constitute 20% of the enrolment, will benefit from 54.1% of the overall budget allocations (development costs and recurrent costs) in the next five years.

Although much lip-service is paid to employers' involvement of in the COCs, the linkages between employers and COCs are relatively weak at present. Key evidence of this is the absence of employers in the steering and governance of these institutions and the limited interaction at this stage with sectoral employers' bodies. The use of international qualifications content and curricula and the rush to implement them might also make the system less willing to develop formal mechanisms to gather information from employers and their representatives on sectoral labour market needs. On the other hand, 'imported' qualifications content could actually be used to engage with employers and to adapt the programmes to local needs. Finally, at this very early stage of the VET reform design and implementation, little support might be expected in the short term from the central level and national institutions (for example the NQA), in the absence of a clear status of the centres of competence.

4. Quality improvement and assurance

This section considers different dimensions of VET quality including how to improve the quality of curriculum design and implementation, the expected impact of a quality assurance framework and accreditation mechanisms, and the quality of teacher training.

4.1 Curriculum

The secondary education curriculum reform process is following good international practice: the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, with the support of donors, has defined its vision, aims and objectives for secondary education; it has defined standards, the main educational domains and areas of study, and has specified subject syllabuses and courses of study; finally, it has started a public consultation involving key stakeholders. Every curriculum reform comes with immediate additional costs (investment and recurrent), and yet few curriculum reforms factor cost implications in at the design stage, thus often failing to achieve the desired outcomes. This has been the case of the recent curriculum reform of VET where, as mentioned earlier, in most schools (GTZ, 2009) the new curricula were not fully implemented.

In view of the scarcity of public resources in Kosovo, the effective delivery of the curriculum poses a key policy question. Overall, high priority is given to VET curricula by donors, as shown by the number of projects, but the government gives lower priority to the implementation of VET curricula in comparison to that of general secondary and higher education, as evidenced by the resources and capacities available to the VET department unit, as well as the resources allocated for the investment in infrastructure necessary for VET student practice (€1,682,800) and the amount envisaged for recurrent cost implications (€88,360). This is in a context where, as pointed out by the GTZ report on VET curriculum implementation (GTZ, 2009: 20), 'There is a general lack of workshops, equipment and consumables.' Meeting that lack entails a need for heavy investment in educational infrastructure, school buildings, workshops, learning and teaching equipment.

4.2 Quality assurance

The introduction of a quality assurance framework linked to NQF is a key development in the education and VET system. Its impact on institutions, public perception and the quality of teaching and learning will be decisive in improving the attractiveness of VET both for individuals and for enterprises. Quality assurance provided by the assessment and accreditation of both institutions and programmes is key in this context. New curriculum objectives and outcomes require new forms of assessment. Addressing the problems identified in the implementation of the VET Matura exam is also an urgent task. Vocational students are at a disadvantage when sitting for the Matura exam. Many analyses show that the exam is old-fashioned and too content-based; it is basically tailored for grammar students, therefore vocational students' results tend to be very low.

Earlier in this chapter it was mentioned that a quality assurance framework can become more effective if accreditation covers vocational schools and not only programmes. The accreditation of institutions and programmes should be an opportunity for the schools to develop and improve the quality of their programmes. Several of the vocational schools have been upgraded in recent years through the support of donors. Those schools might be ready for accreditation. Others are not, and will need greater support to meet the desired quality levels. An intermediate option would be to accredit some of them and to set deadlines for others to meet the accreditation requirements.

The policy emphasis on designing evaluation and controls (programme accreditation, assessment, validation, etc.), intended to direct the VET system without developing capacities that support VET institutions, teachers and learners, could turn out to be ineffective. For instance, this approach risks further frustrating education stakeholders. The NQA is not mandated to support schools in improving their service delivery. Other institutions, such as the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute, should be mobilised for this purpose and should have a clear mandate for supporting the schools. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should also set up a quality assurance unit that will have support to the schools in its mandate.

4.3 Professional development of teachers

Developing the capacities of teachers is one of the seven key objectives of the pre-university strategy for the years 2007–2017, which aims to set up an 'effective system of in-service and pre-service teacher education'. The present vision is comprehensive and consistent with international experiences. However, one additional dimension – an important one, in view of the strategy for

expanding VET institutions and the development of the COCs – should consist of setting up induction programmes which are not offered by the system and are not part of the vision developed. On-the-job training, coaching and mentoring for new teachers, with a view to facilitating their integration and improving their teaching methods, will be key for the hundreds of teachers to be recruited. There is also a need to design new processes so that the system can genuinely take teachers' qualifications and experience into account, as well as introducing a teacher performance assessment system which, along with professional development for teachers, would determine teachers' salaries and promotion in their career development paths. Portfolio-based assessment mechanisms can be helpful in this respect.

5. Governance and management

5.1 Decentralisation

Decentralisation is a strategic policy option in Kosovo and it is unlikely that there will be a major return to the previous centralised arrangements. The concrete moves toward decentralisation are focused mostly on funding mechanisms and less on school-based reform with an emphasis on autonomy and accountability. What is not clear, for the different stakeholders, is the relation between 'decentralisation' and the quality of VET and education in general. The aim should be, as much as possible, to take the process right down to the school level and to progress beyond financial decentralisation or to tie financial decentralisation to quality assurance and pedagogical management decentralisation. For example, greater use of performance-based agreements tied to resource allocations is to be considered if quality is the aim. This requires a clearer and more explicit conceptualisation of the decentralisation system, allocation of precise functions at each level, and capacity building. As pointed out by the World Bank report on the progress of decentralisation (World Bank, 2009), the impact and implications of the decentralisation seem to have been underestimated, especially in terms of human and financial resources. For the success of the reform it is important that decentralisation and school-based reform go hand in hand.

5.2 Funding

At present the VET sub sector has no specific budget line in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology budget. This situation has an impact on the transparent governance and steering of the system and in general on its accountability to Kosovo society: strategic planning and decisions about financial allocations to VET are weakened and the planning and execution of activities is made difficult. This can explain, for instance, the problems mentioned above regarding the failure to implement new curricula. For VET, diversifying the revenue base seems inevitable in view of the scarcity of national resources. This can be achieved by accepting the idea of offering productive activities and services to enterprises and local communities. This is already being done in some pilot schools supported by donors (for example Swisscontact in the agriculture sector). But it is still administratively complicated and is not supported by clear guidelines from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The risk at present is that the decentralisation initiative may fall short of completion and the present hybrid arrangements, partly new (formula funding) and partly old (input-based funding), will become permanent.

5.3 Enterprise involvement

The above-mentioned target of developing professional practice in VET in close cooperation with enterprises is very important. But, so far, government approaches are failing to consider strategically the incentives for enterprises to get involved in steering and managing VET. Enterprises have no incentives to invest in human resources for several reasons, including the composition of family-owned enterprises, the fight for survival rather than long-term sustainability, the high unemployment rate, which ensures a cheap and readily available labour force, recruitment decisions based on connections rather than on competences. This raises serious questions about the involvement of enterprises and social partners in general in the design and implementation of the reform. The revival of the Council for VET (CVET) is an important move towards involving the social partners further in the VET reform process. However, the proposed leadership role for the social partners seems irrelevant in the light of their present situation. Policy discussion is urgent on at least three issues: improving the capacities of companies to express their needs for skills; defining incentive mechanisms to increase and enhance the role of the private sector in VET; and developing the institutional capacity to deliver these services.

5.4 Institutional arrangements

The government is envisaging the establishment of new institutions, such as the NQA and the State Council for Teacher Licensing, which will have an important role in managing the system. (See annex 1 for a detailed presentation of these institutions.) At the same time, the creation of new institutions comes with a risk of duplication and overlapping of functions. For example, there could be considerable overlap in setting education standards between the NQA, the CVET and the new curriculum authority. There is a need to clarify the respective mandates and responsibilities of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the NQA and the new authority for assessment. It is also urgent to address the gaps between 'in law' and 'in practice' with respect to the functioning of institutions, particularly in the case of the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute. Decentralisation does not mean the disappearance of the national level: in fact, the role of the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute in a decentralised system should be stronger, not weaker. But since its establishment the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute has not acquired an approved organisational structure and consequently has no clear budget; neither has it any special cadre of staff equivalent to those in similar institutions in the Ministry, and as a result its status is low and it cannot play a direct role in improving quality of education.

Recently, there has been a good move toward enhancing the strategic management capacities of VET through the establishment of the VET department at Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. However, in view of the time and policy pressures and the lack of resources and expertise, there is a risk that the VET department will not be able to oversee the implementation of the strategy or provide the necessary support to most institutions. In this context, and given the recent establishment and actual functioning of central government institutions, there is a need to invest in capacity-building efforts while at the same time strengthening the mechanisms to hold agencies accountable for their performance. For instance, it is urgent to develop an action plan (AP) for each institution, alongside the work plans applying to donor-funded projects. Such an action plan that should detail:

- (i) the institution's objectives;
- (ii) the targets and indicators that will be used to measure their achievement;
- (iii) the activities that will be carried out to achieve the objectives; and
- (iv) the timeline for completion of each activity and achievement of each target.

Finally, it is essential to design and implement a monitoring and evaluation system, including key indicators, responsibilities and reporting lines, to measure the system reform. The work on the present Torino process report showed the lack of key data and indicators necessary for effective policy making.

F. Innovation, partnership and entrepreneurship

1. Innovation

From an administrative point of view, the donors' support to the Kosovo government's education strategy (2010–2015) through a sector-wide approach is an important breakthrough, enabling coordination of the various efforts under the umbrella of the medium-term expenditure framework. By 2015 all vocational schools will have financial and operational autonomy, an important step towards more effective school management. Also by 2015, a functional qualification framework will be in place together with procedures for accreditation and recognition of degrees.

Innovation in agricultural education

An interesting initiative to strengthen social partnerships and school autonomy is ongoing in Kosovo through the 'Employment Promotion through Business and Skills Development' project.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the DANIDA Cooperation Office supports capacity development for self-governance in four upper professional secondary schools in Pea, Vushtrri, Ferizaj and Gilan. The goal is for the school boards and school management to have the know-how needed for school administration. Decentralised school management is the stepping stone to improving local and regional cooperation between

VET stakeholders. In addition, during this project, linkages between the schools and the labour market are strengthened through agreements with companies for work placements. Other activities include building rehabilitation, the provision of equipment, building greenhouses, and developing textbooks and learning materials for each of the four schools.

2. Partnerships

The 2006 Law on VET regulates the formal VET education system within broader social and economic developments. The law provides the basis for in-company training and internships, but regulations to implement the law still need to be elaborated. Municipalities will have a greater role in advising and career counselling together with the schools. Clear criteria need to be developed for companies to host practising students, and a company register will be established.

The entrepreneurship education strategy is supported by a cross-stakeholder partnership and with a formal monitoring role provided by the Prime Minister's office. In addition, the government has made it a priority that a student's professional practice be organised in close cooperation with enterprises by 2011.

In the area of business–education cooperation, several donors are active in tertiary education, creating opportunities to strengthen the cooperation between faculties and companies. For example, the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Prishtina University, supported by USAID, have formed a partnership with the University of Pittsburgh in the USA and have established the Faculty's advisory board, where key businesses and stakeholders in the telecommunications sector are represented. This initiative promotes the provision of a number of elective entrepreneurship-related courses at the Faculty. Similarly, based on a Memorandum of Understanding, the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Applied Business Sciences have been working together with the Business Start-up Centre of Kosovo (an NGO supported by the Dutch government) to develop a number of entrepreneurship courses which will be included in the curricula of these two Faculties. This joint work involved some activities that contributed to improving the teaching of the existing modules by bringing entrepreneurial elements into teaching practices. However, this remains an ad-hoc initiative for promoting learning on entrepreneurship as only two entrepreneurship-related courses at the Faculty of Economics have been amended based on the outcomes of this joint work.

3. Entrepreneurship

Policy commitments have been made at the highest political levels by three ministries (Education, Labour, and Economy and Trade) involving a wide range of stakeholders and social partners in the National Strategy for Entrepreneurship and Training (2006), which comprises all levels and sectors of education. This high-level policy commitment created a positive environment for education and business cooperation which was noted by the European Charter for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Western Balkans in its 2009 progress report. The Chamber of Commerce of Kosovo, the main Kosovo employers' organisation, together with the American Chamber of Commerce and other business organisations, has expressed awareness of the links with education and readiness to contribute towards improving them.

In 2010, the new Curriculum Framework will be introduced. It will be competence-based and outcome-oriented and will promote the development of core competences such as problem solving, working in teams and communication skills. These competences are in great demand in the private sector and also constitute the hard core of entrepreneurship competences.

4. Impact and sustainability

A shortage of data and limited experiences make it difficult to assess the impact of the activities at the various levels of intervention. Kosovo is building up its institutions and reforming its education system with limited financial and human resources over a relatively short time span. However, the need for monitoring and evaluation is well accepted. In 2009, the Chamber of Commerce launched an initiative to monitor human capital development in the SME sector systematically. There are also plans to develop the capacity to conduct enterprise-related skills surveys through the regional chambers of

commerce so as to obtain more data on start-ups and growing businesses. From the interviews conducted on a limited scale for this study, it can be seen that companies are very interested in working more closely with educational institutions, especially in VET, as a way to contribute to the training of students and to have an opportunity to pre-select future employees. This engagement would also help employers to voice their views on the skills needed in the workplace. Figures about the impact of in-company training on future employment are not available.

5. Key challenges and drivers of innovation

Kosovo's main challenges are its limited financial resources and its relatively young institutions facing a daunting set of tasks. The limited availability of human and financial resources is probably the most important challenge to implementation of the government's very ambitious reform programme, which aims to bring Kosovo's education system into line with the demands of a global knowledge economy. At this stage, Kosovo's governance and administrative capacity is developing, but, given the important tasks ahead, there is a strong need to set priorities and to aim for realistic targets. It is time to scale up successful experiences and to grow out of the pilot phase.

Appropriate incentive schemes to promote business-education cooperation are lacking and platforms for social partnerships are still in an early stage of development. There is high awareness of the importance of education-business cooperation in Kosovo at all levels of policy and implementation. However, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has not allocated any specific funds to promote education-business cooperation or to organise public awareness activities. In addition, there are no tax incentives in place for companies willing to invest time and effort in training students and participating in educational institutions. More specific legal regulations on insurance for students in workplaces and the responsibilities of schools and companies need to be elaborated further. Social partnerships are emerging at the national and regional levels but need further strengthening.

EU policies will trigger important innovations in VET and other sectors of the education system to foster cooperation with the business sector. EU support to the NQF establishes a platform for a systematic reform. The implementation of the NQF faces various challenges due to a lack of resources and limited institutional capacity at present. The Bologna process continues to be an important vehicle for reforms in tertiary education in Europe. With its recent focus on labour market relevance and quality assurance, it is expected that the Bologna process will fuel initiatives in business-education cooperation in Kosovo.

Annex 1: VET system scope, legal and institutional frameworks, additional data

Structure of the education system in Kosovo

All upper secondary vocational education programs of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology are classed at ISCED Level 3. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, through the division of Vocational Education has under its auspices 57 vocational schools which are spread in 26 main towns of Kosova, and systemized in 6 main regions. According to their type, the schools are divided as: Technical (18), mixed (12), Economic-Judicial (9), Medical (7), Artistic (1 school of art and 5 musical schools), Agricultural (3), Hotel-Tourism (1) and Religious (1). The total number of students which have attended the vocational schools during the school year 2007/08 was over 51 500 students, which represents 60 % of the overall number of students of higher secondary schools.

In 2002, in line with the new National Curriculum Framework of Kosovo (developed by the international administration in 2001), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology decided to restructure the pre-university education system from the 4-4-4 structure then in force into the new 5-4-3(4) system: five years of primary education, four years of lower secondary education and three years of upper secondary education (see table 1 for more details). Compulsory education goes up to grade 9, starting at the age of six. Grade 9 serves as an orientation year for further possible post-compulsory education. Upper secondary education is divided into a general and a vocational system.

There are entrance exams for upper secondary education, for both the general and the vocational strands. These structural changes in education have been implemented with the purpose of making Kosovo's education system compatible with those in the EU and other developed countries. Primary and secondary education in Kosovo is mainly public, though the participation of private education is growing. Public primary and secondary education is financed by the government with funds transferred to the municipalities, while private secondary education is financed by private resources. Schools providing instruction in Serbian and observing Serbian state curricula have maintained the old 4–4–4 structure, which is also applied in the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: Structure of the education system in Kosovo)

Education authorities are organised on two levels in Kosovo. The central level, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, is according to Article 3 (a–l) of the Law on Education in the Municipalities of Kosovo, responsible inter alia for developing and promoting:

- a non-discriminatory system of formal and non-formal education and lifelong learning;
- inclusive policies for the integration of persons with disabilities in the education system;
- a comprehensive system of certification for all teachers in Kosovo;
- parent and community participation in educational activities and other forms of school–community partnership at the local level.

According to the new Law on Education in the Municipalities, local education authorities are organised in Municipal Education Departments responsible for issues such as:

- the hiring of teachers and school principals;
- the payment of teacher and staff salaries;
- infrastructure and school maintenance;
- training of teaching and administrative staff;
- monitoring of schools at all pre-university levels.

On top of this, minority communities in municipalities are entitled to additional rights in education. These extend to issues such as the organisation of higher education institutions, including teacher education institutions (in municipalities such as Mitrovica North).

Table1. Enrolment by type of upper secondary school, grade and gender, 2008/09

School type	Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		Grade 13		All upper secondary	
	Total	F	Total	F	Total	F	Total	F	Total	F
Gymnasium	15,098	52.5%	12,770	51.3%	11,504	56.7%	2,060	65.1%	41,432	53.9%
Vocational	17,358	35.9%	13,377	39.3%	12,458	39.1%	11,547	40.0%	54,740	38.3%

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Table 2. Enrolment in VET upper secondary by subject, grade and gender, 2008/09

School Type	Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		Grade 13		All Upper Secondary	
	Total	F	Total	F	Total	F	Total	F	Total	F
Arts	113	61.1%	98	48.0%	110	61.8%	138	56.5%	459	57.1%

Agriculture	914	35.2%	718	37.7%	692	38.3%	515	36.5%	2,839	36.8%
Business	3,693	41.4%	3,252	44.4%	2,632	44.4%	2,666	45.9%	12,243	43.9%
Medical	1,954	75.6%	1,670	73.7%	1,517	69.7%	1,477	67.7%	6,618	72.0%
Music	172	52.9%	118	53.4%	112	47.3%	98	58.2%	500	52.8%
Technical	7,661	23.0%	5,608	27.2%	5,399	28.5%	5,007	28.7%	23,675	26.4%
Theology	189	38.6%	154	42.2%	155	42.6%	141	34.0%	639	39.4%
Commerce	152	44.7%	95	61.1%	100	44.0%	55	29.1%	402	46.3%
Mixed	2,510	33.4%	1,664	33.4%	1,741	35.0%	1,450	38.8%	7,365	34.8%
Total Vocational	17,358	35.9%	13,377	39.3%	12,458	39.1%	11,547	40.0%	54,740	38.3%

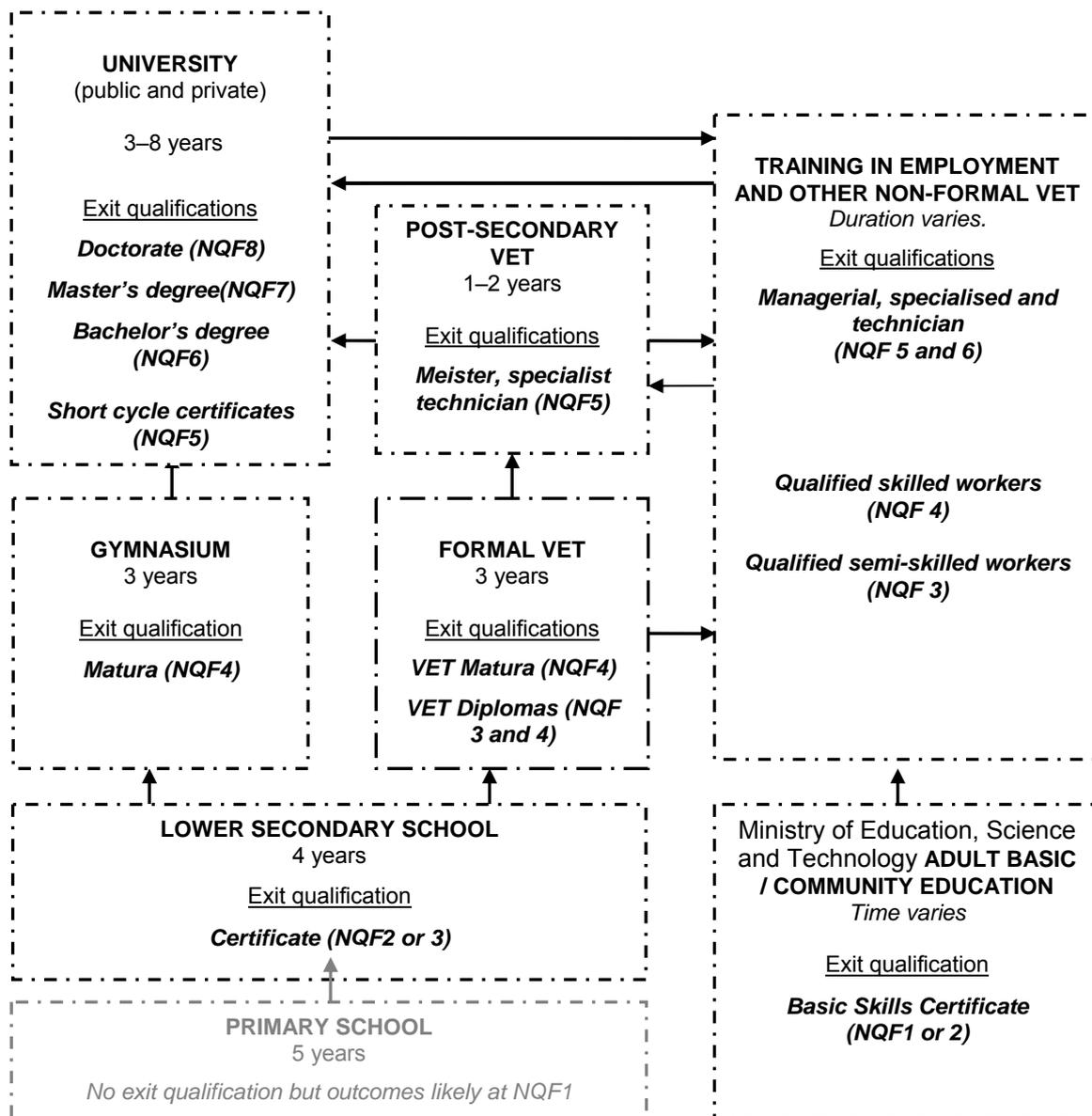
Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Qualification levels and the pathways between general education and VET

The new Law on National Qualifications was established in November, 2008, and provides a legal foundation for a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which will be regulated by a National Qualifications Authority (NQA). The NQF will establish all types and levels of qualification and certification, while the NQA will be responsible for developing policies and strategies for the establishment and implementation of the National Qualifications System, including the approval of standards, assessment and certification arrangements for each qualification, accreditation, monitoring of assessment bodies and external quality assurance of assessments. The NQA will also maintain databases and verifiable documentary records of qualifications, including certificates and diplomas awarded. Finally, the NQA will carry out periodic reviews and international comparisons of qualifications provisions and will advise the institutions responsible for recognising foreign qualifications for academic and employment purposes. The development of this new system is being supported by the European Commission.

The diagram below is taken from the documents prepared under the EC-funded project KOSVET III (Pantaleev and Likaj, 2008). It describes the different routes through the education system, their specificities and qualification levels, and the pathways between general education and VET and between VET and higher education. The diagram shows also the main education and training areas (segmented) in Kosovo, together with the typical exit qualifications in each area, and the most common progression routes between the areas. This diagram identifies eight potential areas of education and training in the national system of education and training (or the national system of lifelong learning). Each of these is linked to a particular type of qualification which is likely to be included in the NQF. These areas are:

1. primary school education
2. lower secondary school education
3. gymnasium education
4. formal VET education and training
5. post-secondary VET education and training
6. adult basic education / community education organised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
7. training in employment and other non-formal VET
8. university education.



Governance of the education sector: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and agencies' staff structure

The central organisations of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology include 213 staff members (120 males and 93 females). Seventy-seven of them work either in the regional inspectorate or didactic offices, or the other entities at the centre, 46 of them are education inspectors in the regions. Pre-university education has a reasonable staff complement and performs important functions in relation to the sector. A major part of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's establishment for pre-university functions consists of the inspectorate with its 57 regionally based employees; there are also regional didactic centres with 13 staff members. It will be crucial for the performance of the pre-university department to streamline the use and role of the inspectorate. There are problems with regard to the inspectorate's role, competence development and related legislation that need attention; solving these problems could improve utilisation of the inspectorate. The VET Unit has been upgraded to a VET Department and it has one Head of Department and four staff (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Organigramme, 2010).

In addition to the permanent staff there are the political positions at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: the Minister and two Deputy Ministers. There are also three political advisors to the Minister and numerous experts on three-month contracts, mainly employed for accreditation reviews and the like.

Other bodies governed by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology:

Kosovo Accreditation Agency

This body has one acting Director and three administrative staff members. The agency has a board with nine members, three of whom are foreign experts (from the UK, the USA and Austria); five of the national members represent different academic fields and one represents industry. The agency utilises 60 international experts to carry out assessments for accreditation of tertiary-level institutions, including some higher vocational training institutions (level 4).

National Qualifications Authority

The NQA was established in 2010 with a mandate to align the national qualifications education with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The appointment of the Director and five staff was completed in June 2010.

Kosovo Pedagogical Institute

The Kosovo Pedagogical Institute has been set up with the support of the Italian government and it has an unclear status directly under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology with a staff component of 26 employees. The Kosovo Pedagogical Institute appears to be part of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

There are also five councils:

1. State Council for Teacher Licensing
2. National Council for Curricula and Textbooks
3. National Matura Council
4. Council for Vocational Education and Training for Kosovo (CVET)
5. Kosovo Education Parents' Council.

The first two of these councils were created by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology through administrative instructions and have an advisory status to the ministry. The other three are established by law. The councils do not have any permanent staff, but constitute advisory councils to the Minister with a chairperson and other appointed council members, and receive administrative support from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

The *State Council for Teacher Licensing* was established 2009 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. It has 15 members, some of whom work in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, some outside. Its major role is to take care of and organise teacher licensing. There are no support structures apart from the Ministry's Teacher Training Unit, which has now been attached to the council.

The *University of Prishtina* (UP) also falls under the central government budget with its own budget line and has a largely autonomous status.

The establishment of the *University in Prizren* is at an advanced stage.

The *University in Mitrovica* serves the Serb community there and has few, if any, links with the Kosovo government.

Research

There is also a *National Research Council* established by law under Parliament. A national research programme is approved by Parliament. There are only a very few established research institutions in Kosovo, and as yet there has never been any designated research and development funding in the

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology or the government's budget. The following two institutes fall under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology portfolio and have been established by law with research mandates: The *Albanological Institute* and the *Historical Institute*. There are only scattered in-country training programmes at doctorate level. The establishment of such facilities and programmes are, however, on the agenda for the Research Council and its programme, and external support and partnerships are sought for this.

Two centres are connected to the department for Higher Education; (1) the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education, Science and Technology, and (2) the Centre for Innovation and Technical Transfer.

Kosovo: Main indicators, 2007–12

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
		Est.	Proj.	Proj.	Proj.	Proj.
Real growth rates (in per cent)						
GDP	5.0	5.4	4.0	4.3	4.7	5.0
Private sector disposable income	3.0	2.8	2.4	2.9	5.0	4.9
Private sector consumption	8.1	3.2	1.9	3.7	4.0	4.4
GDP per capita	3.8	3.8	2.3	2.8	3.2	3.4
Private consumption per capita	6.8	1.7	0.4	2.1	2.5	2.8
Price changes (in per cent)						
CPI, period average	4.4	9.4	-2.2	1.4	1.7	1.8
CPI, end of period	10.5	0.5	0.2	2.0	1.8	1.9
GDP deflator	3.3	5.7	-1.9	1.8	2.1	2.3
General government budget (in per cent of GDP) ^{1/}						
Revenues	25.9	25.3	29.5	25.4	25.1	24.8
Expenditures	18.9	25.3	31.3	29.7	27.1	26.4
<i>Of which: Capital and net lending</i>	2.8	7.4	12.1	11.8	9.6	9.6
Primary balance	7.0	0.0	-1.8	-4.3	-2.0	-1.7
Overall balance	7.0	0.0	-2.0	-4.6	-2.3	-2.0
Stock of government bank balances (excl. escrow)	12.1	11.2	9.2	4.5	2.4	0.9
Stock of government bank balances (incl. escrow)	12.1	9.8	6.3	0.2	0.0	0.0
Savings-investment balances (in per cent of GDP) ^{2/}						
Domestic savings	-12.2	-15.5	-15.6	-12.6	-8.8	-6.6
Transfers excluding general government (net) ^{3/}	14.3	14.6	11.8	12.1	12.4	11.8
Net factor income	5.3	4.0	4.2	5.1	5.0	5.3
National savings	7.4	3.2	0.3	4.6	8.6	10.6
Investment	26.2	27.2	27.6	29.0	31.5	32.0
Current account (excl. official grants)	-18.8	-24.1	-27.3	-24.4	-23.0	-21.4
Current account balance (incl. official grants)	-10.2	-16.3	-18.4	-17.3	-18.1	-17.4
Foreign assistance ^{4/}	8.6	7.7	8.9	7.1	4.9	4.1
Net foreign direct investment	16.7	13.1	10.7	9.9	11.4	11.3
Main aggregates (in millions of euros)						
GDP	3,464	3,724	3,792	4,028	4,306	4,625
GDP per capita (in euros)	1,629	1,726	1,731	1,812	1,908	2,019
Transfers excluding general government (net) ^{3/}	496	545	447	486	534	547
Population (in thousands)	2,126	2,158	2,190	2,223	2,256	2,290

Sources: Kosovo authorities; and IMF staff estimates.

^{1/} IMF staff forecast for 2010, forecast for outer years based on authorities' medium-term expenditure framework.

^{2/} Savings-investment balance of entire economy, including donor sector.

^{3/} Including pensions from abroad and remittances.

^{4/} Total foreign assistance excluding capital transfers.

Source: World Bank 2010.

Annex 2: Analytical framework for reviews of vocational education and training systems and policies

A. Executive summary

B. Vision and state of the art in vocational education and training

1. What is the country's vision (visions) and understanding (understandings) of VET?
2. What has changed over the last years?
3. How does the country translate the adopted vision/s or understanding/s into policy measures?
4. What are the priorities?
5. What are the major difficulties (e.g. in designing, implementing, monitoring policies and/or addressing priorities) and issues at stake?

C. External efficiency: Addressing economic and labour market needs

1. What are the three main economic challenges that shape the demand for skills (e.g. economic restructuring, competitiveness, informal economy, migration, SME development, the economic/financial crisis, sustainable development)?
2. How successful has the VET system been in addressing these challenges (e.g. in terms of ensuring the availability of skills for the economy; improving the labour market prospects of individuals; facilitating the transition of VET graduates; involving the private sector; providing opportunities for VET at higher levels of education; developing adult training; ensuring career guidance; promoting recognition and validation of informal/non-formal learning)?
3. To what extent are enterprises involved in VET policy developments?
4. What blocks the current VET system from ensuring a better response to changing economic needs?
5. What actions are foreseen for breaking down such barriers and for addressing the challenges?

List of key indicators that will be used as evidence for external efficiency

- changes in employment by sector

- changes in employment by type (wage employment, self-employment, employer), by gender
- activity rates by educational level and gender
- employment rates by educational level and gender
- Unemployment rates by educational level and gender, 15+
- Youth unemployment rates, by gender (15–24 and 25–34 by educational level).

D. External efficiency: Promoting equity and addressing social demands for education and training

1. What are the three main social challenges that shape the demand for skills (illiteracy, long-term unemployment, high inactivity rates, demography, migration, refugees, returning soldiers, etc.)?
2. How successful has the VET system been in addressing such challenges?
3. What has been done to improve the attractiveness of VET (e.g. increasing transparency and flexibility through enhancing the permeability of pathways to abolish dead ends and facilitate the progression from VET to post-secondary education, higher education and continuing training)?
4. How successful has the VET system been in providing learning opportunities to all citizens (including the most vulnerable) for skill upgrading, gainful employment, active citizenship and personal development, and in promoting equal opportunities on the labour market?
5. What actions are foreseen for addressing such challenges?

List of key indicators that will be used as evidence for external efficiency

- educational attainment of population by age and gender
- educational attainment by income groups and urban/rural
- percentage of 25–64-year-olds who have participated in lifelong learning , by gender
- percentage of 25–34-year-olds who have participated in lifelong learning, by gender
- Participation in lifelong learning by educational level and gender
- Illiteracy rates
- Total number of vocational students compared to the total number of pupils and students at ISCED 2, 3A-C, 4, 5a (& 5B), by gender (UIS)
- Percentage of vocational students who continue to higher levels of education
- Expenditure on active labour market policies (ALMP) as percentage of GDP
- Percentage of (registered) unemployed covered by ALMPs.

- Number of (registered) unemployed per staff in the public employment services – if possible, by education level or by age
- Number of (registered) unemployed per vacancy – if possible, by education level or by age

E. Internal efficiency, quality, governance and financing

1. What are the three main problems concerning internal efficiency and effectiveness in the VET system (e.g. high dropout rate, low-quality provision, governance and/or financing issues, capacity/institution building, etc.)?
2. How is the overall performance of the VET system assessed and how is quality defined, assured and measured at provider level and at system/policy level?
3. Which governance and financing mechanisms are implemented and/or envisaged to improve efficiency and quality (social partner involvement, decentralisation, school autonomy, new funding mechanisms, etc.)?
4. How successful have VET reforms been in involving the main stakeholders in the design and management of VET policies, and how are their capacities developed?
5. Which elements of VET provision have been prioritised for increasing efficiency and quality (e.g. teacher training and teaching processes; curriculum modernisation e.g. modularisation, learning outcomes; key competences; introduction of a qualifications framework; VET infrastructure diversification and improvement, in particular practical training, apprenticeship schemes, etc.)?
6. What actions are foreseen for addressing the efficiency and quality challenges of the VET system? In particular what actions are foreseen for strengthening the institutional setting for better management and implementation of VET policies?

List of key indicators that will be used as evidence for internal efficiency

- Dropout rates in upper secondary, general and VET (by gender) (UIS)
- Teacher/student ratios in VET and in general education (UIS)
- Participation in VET as percentage, by field of study and split between technical and vocational
- Public expenditure on VET as percentage of GDP and government expenditure
- Public expenditure on VET and on general education by level (ISCED 2, 3 and 4)
- Public expenditure on VET as share of total public education expenditure
- Cost per VET pupil (ISCED 3) compared to cost per pupil in general upper secondary education
- Completion rate in VET and general education

- Teacher salaries as percentage of average wage and teacher salaries after 15 years and at the end of the career, compared to entry level
- Share of teachers in teacher training per year, by gender
- Percentage of apprentices in the VET system, by gender and by level

F. Innovation, partnership and entrepreneurship

1. What have been the major areas of innovation in VET provision (e.g. developing adult training in vocational schools; encouraging partnership with businesses, labour offices and other local actors; engaging in wider networks with other education and training institutions, including universities; promoting entrepreneurship in VET institutions)?
2. Has innovation been supported by donor projects, national projects, VET policies?
3. Are VET policies conducive to innovation; and if so, how?
4. Which obstacles have been met to upscale or mainstream innovation?
5. What measures are foreseen to support innovation in VET, and in which areas?

List of key indicators that will be used as evidence for entrepreneurship:

- The process indicators for entrepreneurship learning (at what stage is the country?)

Annex

VET system scope, legal and institutional frameworks, additional data

1. Main structure of the system and subsystems, and identification of the main flows inside and outside the system:
 - What does the term 'VET system' mean?
 - Concerning initial training, what are the different routes and their specificities and qualification levels, including apprenticeship, and the pathways between general education and VET and between VET and higher education?
 - Give brief description of post-secondary non-tertiary routes and of short vocational higher education courses.
 - Concerning continuing training, briefly describe the different subsystems including adult education and labour market training.
 - What is the role of the private sector in both initial and continuing training, and how important is it?

2. Legal, institutional, regulatory and policy framework governing the different subsystems identified, in particular:
 - existence of dedicated agencies, councils and committees
 - governance of the system and subsystems
 - autonomy of VET institutions
 - strategy/policy for adult training and what it covers
 - lifelong learning strategy (on-going or in preparation, main objectives, role of VET in the strategy).
3. Key data: main statistics or estimations (budget allocation, students, teachers, public/private sectors) and main trends in relationships with the subsystems and routes identified above.
4. Key elements of VET reform (curriculum reform, occupational/certification standards, qualification frameworks, etc.).

Indicators which will be collected through the ETF Key Indicators project and can be used by the Torino process.

NB (For the Torino process, the ETF will gather information on the following indicators from international sources; if international sources cannot provide data, national sources will be contacted):

- GDP by economic sector (World Bank)
- employment rates of older workers (55–64 years) by gender
- Enrolment rates in early childhood education (4+ years) by gender
- Graduates in mathematics, science and technology as share of total graduates (UIS)
- Private education as percentage of total, by educational level and by type (VET/general) (UIS)
- Dependency rates (UN Population Division)
 - 0–14 as percentage of working age population
 - 64+ as percentage of working age population.

Achievements of 15-year-olds in reading (PISA, for countries covered)

Annex 3

Concluding Note following the workshop of 29 June 2010 on the ETF Torino Process Review and Education and Business Reporting in Kosovo in support to Education and Training Sector in Kosovo – Strategic Plan 2011–16

In 2010 the ETF launched a review of VET policies and systems in Kosovo; this exercise, known as the *Torino process*, will be carried out every two years and will review and analyse the internal efficiency of the Kosovo VET system and of the contribution of VET policies and systems to broader policy objectives of sustainable economic and social development.

On 29 June 2010, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, jointly with European Training Foundation (ETF), organised a one-day workshop to discuss vocational education and training (VET) sector developments in Kosovo. Over 100 participants attended the validation workshop of the Kosovo *Torino Process Review and Education–Business Cooperation Study*. These analyses will contribute to the Kosovo Education Sector Strategic Plan 2011–2016 by positioning VET as one of the important sub sectors of the system.

ETF Director, Madlen Serban, Kjartan Björnsson of the European Commission Liaison Office, Head of Operation Unit, Kosovo's Minister of Education, Enver Hoxhaj, and the Minister of Trade and Industry, Lutfi Zharku, opened the meeting and framed the platform for the discussions from the points of view of the EC and the Government of Kosovo.

Participants included deputy ministers and other high-level staff from other key ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the Ministry of Youth, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of European Integration; directors of departments in these ministries (including the Director of the SME Agency); members of the Education Committee of Kosovo Parliament; all the agencies of the Ministry of Education; the Council of VET; social partners; education and training providers; all donors in the education, training and employment sector; all the donor-funded implementing agencies in the education, training and employment sector; municipal education directorates and inspectors; vocational school directors; VET teachers and students; the Kosovo youth network; minorities' and women's NGOs; and business associations.

All participants agreed that the Torino Process was an excellent exercise and the only of its kind carried out in the country so far that is assisting both the government and the donor community. Stakeholders are now looking at building on this exercise to develop a long-term vision for 2020 for the VET sector, inspired by the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework of the EU.

The European Commission and the Government of Kosovo asked the ETF to continue its in-depth analysis of the education and training sector further in the coming years and in 2011 to facilitate and support their joint initiative to develop the Kosovo 2020 Education and Training Manifesto (Kosovo Education and Training Strategy, based on the EU 2020 Education and Training Strategic Framework).

A. Opening session

The workshop was opened by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Mr Enver Hoxhaj, who considered the discussions as a crucial moment in the development of VET in Kosovo. Mr Hoxhaj noted that even though the education sector is expensive, this does not mean that the society should rely on ignorance. He underlined that Kosovo's economy is losing a lot as a result of the low-skilled students that come out of the VET system. Addressing the needs and problems of vocational education requires an intergovernmental approach. Mr Hoxhaj reiterated that for Kosovo's society, VET is considered a second choice sub sector. He continued that this is a short-sighted approach and that the economy proves the opposite. 'It's the economy and its needs that invite us to such reforms', continued Mr Hoxhaj.

The Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Lutfi Zharku, considered the report very important in promoting the contribution of social dialogue and partnerships in all cycles of education and training policies.

Each year since 2003, the SME Agency has carried out a survey looking at barriers to SMEs. These recently published reports bring evidence that Kosovo employers are not happy with the present state of education, putting emphasis on critical shortages of secondary and university graduates with trade and technical skills, and poor exposure to actual practice at all levels. The lack of skills significantly affects the performance of enterprises. Mr Zharku cited the lack of statistical data on the labour market and other factors and concluded that improvements in the sector will be reached only through cooperation with other ministries and relevant stakeholders.

Among other issues, Mr Kjartan Björnsson from the European Commission Liaison Office stated that the European Commission sees the ETF as a strong partner for the European Commission as well as Kosovo. With the support of ETF, the EC will support the Kosovo Strategic Plan 2011–2016 process, which is in harmony with the European Commission's 2020 Strategy for Education and Training.

Ms Madlen Serban, director of ETF, praised the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and other partners and stated that ETF overall objectives in Kosovo are: (i) to support the European Commission in the development and deployment of external assistance; and (ii) to support the continuing enhancement of partner country capacities in human capital development. The future focus will be on specific initiatives emerging from current developments in education and training, as well as employment and active labour market policy. Ms Serban added that ETF does not formulate recommendations but facilitates open debate and discussion in order to find the best solutions jointly. The Torino Process Review and Education and Business Reporting support Kosovo's evidence-based policy making, with a view to improving the contribution of VET to sustainable development and in particular competitiveness and social cohesion.

Ms Serban added in her closing speech that policies must be based on reliable data and need to be used by all parties involved in the sector. She also noted that key challenges for VET in Kosovo include the governance of the system, the need for strong institutions and capacity building. Ms Serban concluded that the prioritisation of the findings of the reports will serve as the basis for ETF support to Kosovo.

B. Main messages

Vision setting: In the last two years the Kosovo government, and particularly the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, has taken major steps to develop a unified education and training strategy, covering areas such as initial VET, adult education and non-formal education. A key initiative supporting a systemic reform is the introduction of the sector-wide approach in the education sector and the drafting of the Comprehensive Strategy for Education 2011–2016 incorporating VET, which will be used also for annual planning and harmonised in line with the Mid Term Expenditure Framework. However, this will require political commitment and patience in order to reach a long term and consolidated overall vision for VET. There are many key challenges that require strong political commitment, discussions on policy options and decisions on policy choices. The ETF team identified three main directions to achieve greater policy coherence:

- (i) Strengthen the governance and management of the VET sector, including the further development of the Kosovo National Qualification Framework (NQF);
- (ii) Clarify the implication of the Kosovo National Curriculum Framework for pre-service and in-service teacher training;
- (iii) Develop national capacity for teacher development as new building blocks of the system.

The imperatives for better internal efficiency in the VET system: The pressures arise from four key challenges. First, given the overall 'low' performance and 'low' attractiveness of VET system both for enterprises and individual, there is a need to improve the quality and enhance the relevance of VET system to labour market and individual needs. Second, the issue of the articulation of education subsystems will decide how Kosovo's policy efforts will build consistency across the set of education reforms, including higher education. Third, the high policy priority given to Centres of Competence (COCs) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) will result in successful policy implementation only if it is ensured that these tools are embedded in the wider reform vision and that they are fully scaled up throughout the system. Last, but not least, the emerging governance and financing model of VET system in Kosovo is at risk, given the context and the capacity of the institutions and social partners. There is a need to find the 'right' incentives for enterprises and their

representatives to get involved in the management of VET, to link decentralisation with quality and to build consistent institutional arrangements for the governance of the system, including autonomy for VET institutions.

Raising input quality through the Kosovo National Curriculum Framework (KCF), teacher training development and investment in infrastructure: Work on the finalisation of the draft Kosovo curriculum framework, especially the implementation plan, has proved to be more difficult than expected. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology VET Department and VET donors/implementers need to be fully engaged in order to develop a coordinated approach to Kosovo curriculum framework implementation, especially for grades 10–12. This will need to be further addressed during the coming months by supporting the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology VET Department and VET donors/implementers to discuss all remaining issues in a constructive and transparent way. Particular attention should be given to capacity implications, and especially to ensuring that the training needs of teachers in vocational schools are fully met, given the substantial number of students in those schools in upper secondary grades. Finally, to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the poor physical infrastructure of VET institutions requires a major capital injection.

Increasing institutional capacity: In the Kosovo context it is widely agreed that evidence-based policy requires:

- (i) strong capacity as regards methodological and analytical instruments (i.e. researchers);
- (ii) strong *technical* capacity in the institutions of public administration;
- (iii) connections between policy makers, policy implementers and beneficiaries as a crucial factor for the evaluation of the impact of policy;
- (iv) good data collection instruments;
- (v) good access to information and to established information diffusion processes;
- (vi) good communication between policy makers, practitioners and the world of research and analysis.

In order to expand and improve the performance of the education and training sector in Kosovo and to pave the way for a coherent and coordinated sector-wide plan supported by external partners (sector-wide approach), development of the capacity of the key performers at central and service delivery levels is crucial. Central coordination, planning, control, funding and support capacity are important foundations on which to build and develop the sector sustainably. It was concluded at the workshop that any successful education and training policy would have to include some of these key elements.

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SME Support Agency	http://www.sme-ks.org
World Bank	http://www.worldbank.org/kosovo
UNDP	http://www.ks.undp.org
UNICEF	http://www.unicef.org/kosovo/

The Torino Process is a project of the European Training Foundation. For further information please contact:

European Training Foundation
viale S. Severo 65
I - 10133 Torino

E: info@etf.europa.eu
T: +39 0116302222
F: +39 0116302200

WWW.ETF.EUROPA.EU/TORINOPROCESS