



REPUBLIKA E KOSOVËS / REPUBLIKA KOSOVA / REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO  
QEVERIA E KOSOVËS / VLADA KOSOVA/ GOVERNMENT OF KOSOVA  
MINISTRIA E ARSIMIT, SHKENCËS DHE TEKNOLOGJISË  
MINISTARSTVO OBRAZOVANJA, NAUKE I TEHNOLOGIJE  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

# **Strategy for improvement of professional practice in Kosovo**

**2013 – 2020**



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova-Republic of Kosovo  
Qeveria -Vlada-Government  
Ministria e Arsimit e Shkencës dhe e Teknologjisë- Ministarstvo za Obrazovanje, Nauke i  
Tehnologija--Ministry of Education Science and Technology

Kabineti i Ministririt/Kabinet Ministra/Cabinet of the Minister

Numër: 01-B-101  
Datë: 17-01-2014

Ministri i Ministrisë së Arsimit, Shkencës dhe Teknologjisë, në mbështetje të neneve 4, 21, 22 të Ligjit nr. 03/L-189 për administratën shtetërore të Republikës së Kosovës, (Gazeta zyrtare, nr. 82, 21 tetor 2010), si dhe duke u bazuar në nenin 8 paragrafi 1.4 dhe shtojcën 6, nenit 33 paragrafi 1 dhe 2 të Rregullores nr. 02/2011 për fushat e përgjegjësisë administrative të Zyrës së Kryeministrit dhe Ministrive dt. 22.03.2011, nxjerr:

#### V E N D I M

##### Për miratimin e Strategjisë për përmirësimin e praktikës profesionale 2013-2020

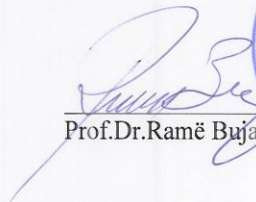
1. Miratohet Strategjia për përmirësimin e praktikës profesionale 2013-2020.
2. Vendimi hyn në fuqi me nënshkrimin e tij.

#### A r s y e t i m

Duke u mbështetur në dispozitat e lartshënuara dhe kërkesën me nr. ref. 3/10 2627 të dt. 22.11.2013, u vendos si në dispozitiv të këtij vendimi.

Vendimi u dërgohet:

1. DAP;
2. Divizionit për arsimin profesional;
3. Kabinetit të ministrit;
3. Zyrës së SP/MASHT;
4. Arkivit.

  
Prof. Dr. Ramë Buja, ministër



The development of the Strategy has been supported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with financial contribution from Government of Norway

## **TABLE OF CONTENT**

List of abbreviations	5
1. Introduction	6
2. Context	7
3. Overview	9
4. SWOT Analysis	11
5. Strategy	14
6. Monitoring and Evaluation	21
7. Implementing the strategy	21
8. Action Plan	22

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALMPY	Active Labour Market Program for Youth
AVETA	Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adults’
CBK	Consolidated Budget of Kosovo
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CoC	Centres of Competences
CVET	Council for Vocational Education and Training
CVETAE	Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adults’ Education and Training
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
EC	European Commission
EUOK	European Union Office to Kosovo
EPAP	European Partnership Action Plan
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoK	Government of Kosovo
GIZ	German International Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
JAR	Joint Annual Review
KAS	Kosovo Agency for Statistics
KCC	Kosovo Chamber of Commerce
KCF	Kosovo Curriculum Framework
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan
KOSVET	Kosovo Vocational Education and Training Project (EU)
LUX-DEV	Luxemburg Development Cooperation
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development and Food
MED	Municipal Education Directors
MEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECVET	Office for Economic Cooperation with VET
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
VET	Vocational Education and Training

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The current Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2011-2016 links education policy to national development priorities, recognising the need for the education and training system to be more responsive to labour market needs and emphasising the need for broader learning opportunities, including opportunities for the professional practice of Vocational Education and Training (VET) students in enterprises.

An increased role of enterprises is foreseen in achieving the strategy's objectives and the first out of eight specific targets for VET system development is calling for students' professional practice in VET to be carried out in close cooperation with enterprises.

To pave the road for achieving this target, a set of milestones were established including development of a strategy for improvement of professional practice, establishing criteria and incentives for host enterprises, agreements to be signed between VET schools and host enterprises, and insurance of health and safety regulations for VET.

According to the new Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF), professional practice programs form part of the VET secondary school curriculum, which is based on competence-based education and learning outcomes, providing for the following framework Grade 10: Theory 60% vs. Practice 40%; Grade 11: Theory 50% vs. practice 50%; Grade 12: Theory 40% vs. practice 60%. These programs enable students to spend a planned period of time in enterprises, gaining practical experience, assisting their career choices and building their industry skills.

VET secondary schools in Kosovo offer two main types of work-based learning programs – work-based learning in VET schools own workshops and professional practice in enterprises. VET students are generally placed in an enterprise of their choice, reflecting the type of work they plan to do after completing their studies. For most of the VET students the professional practice is their very first experience of the workplace.

The concept of professional practice is based on six dimensions which are central to a consideration of how individuals learn through work:

- a) the purpose of professional practice;
- b) the assumptions about learning and development;
- c) the content of professional practice;
- d) the management of professional practice;
- e) the roles of the VET teachers and host enterprise tutors;
- f) the outcome of professional practice.

Professional practice in enterprises provides a strong and a very high quality learning environment, allowing students to acquire practical skills on up-to-date equipment and under trainers familiar with the most recent working methods and technologies.

Thus, supporting the development of a mutually beneficial and supportive partnership between VET schools and businesses, aiming to improve and reinforce students' skill development and supplement classroom curriculum with relevant learning experiences in enterprises, has to be central pillar of the Vocational Education and Training reform in Kosovo.

## 2. CONTEXT

The scale and character of professional practice programmes for VET students in Kosovo are influenced by a number of economic, demographic, labour market, educational and cultural factors.

According to Ministry of Finance (MoF) the average real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in Kosovo for the years 2006-2009 was 4.8%. Evidence shows that the Government of Kosovo (GoK) decision to increase the level of public investment by more than 120% in 2008 has been a major driver of economic growth. Furthermore, this shift in resources allocated for public investment has proven to be a timely stimulus for the economy in 2009, and has maintained its ability to generate growth of above 4%, at a time when most of regional countries faced economic recession.

Due to Kosovo's relatively low level of integration into the global economy and lax fiscal policy, its economy was largely shielded from the global economic crisis. It grew in 2009 and continued to grow in 2010. Economic growth was increasingly driven by government expenditure, while external trade imbalances remained significant (EC Kosovo 2010 Progress Report). Based on World Bank reports much of the economic progress in the recent period has been based on donor aid and remittances, which cannot be the foundation of a sustainable economic strategy.

The **MTEF 2012-2014** shows the limited fiscal space available in Kosovo. The total revenue budget by the end of 2014 is expected to reach a total of € 1.444 million, or to be around 27% higher than in 2010. The total expenditures during the period 2012-2013 are expected to increase continuously, reaching a value of € 1.487 million during 2013, or an increase of about 4% compared to 2011. While the foresights suggest that during 2014 the overall expenditure budget is expected to mark a slight decline compared with 2013, to return again in similar level of projected spending in 2011. This suggests, therefore, that the fiscal space for new expenditures such as fiscal or financial incentives for professional practice host enterprises is limited, at least in the short- to medium-term.

According to the most recent data of Kosovo Businesses Registration Agency, sectoral distribution has remained stable over time. Around 43% of all active businesses are operating in the trade sector characterized by low and unproductive investments, which limits the capacity of the SME sector to generate jobs. In terms of sector breakdown, SMEs are mostly concentrated in: trade (around 43%); transport, storage and distribution (12%); hotels and restaurants (9%); and, construction (7%). This structure of Kosovo economy, with a manufacturing sector of about 10%, limits the opportunities for organising professional practice in a wide range of industrial type of profiles.

The existence of an overwhelming number of microenterprises is another factor with major implications for professional practice in Kosovo. According to the SME Development Strategy in Kosovo, those that employ less than nine people account for around 98% of all enterprises and around 80% of all employment in the private sector. In addition, Individual Businesses clearly dominate the ownership structure with 90% of the total registered businesses. This severely limits the number of professional practice places that can be offered by an enterprise and as a consequence, jeopardise the quality of training due to the limited monitoring capacity of vocational instructors.

Kosovo is experiencing significant underemployment and is having a large informal sector. According to the report on the 'Government Programme for Prevention of the Informal Economy in Kosovo 2010-2012' the estimated size of the informal economy ranges from 39-50% of GDP. Such a high rate of unregistered businesses is also an important factor limiting the number of potential professional practice places for VET students.

The country has the youngest population in the region and the population is still growing far more rapidly than in Europe (+0.6% fairly constant). Around 28% of the population is younger than age 15, nearly two-thirds (65%) belong to the age-group 15-64 (known as economically active) and the rest of 7% is older than age 65 (KAS, 2010). This places considerable pressure on GoK to find jobs, education and training for young people.

With a 45% unemployment rate and a very low employment rate (28%), Kosovo has the weakest employment track record in Europe, and Kosovo's 48% percent labor participation rate among the working age population is substantially below the average among all transition economies (KAS, 2009). Over 93.8% of the registered unemployed are long-term unemployed and nearly 48.6% of them are female. Nearly 60% of the registered unemployed refer to the educational level "unskilled" and more than 72 % of all registered unemployed dispose an educational level below secondary school (MLSW, 2012). The youngest age group - from 15-24 years - faces the highest unemployment rate at 73% (KAS, 2009), and the highest yearly inflow to unemployment of 0.7%.

The proportion of people aged 15 or above, having completed at least the upper secondary level was 37.8% in 2009, with a significant gender gap (males: 47.3% in 2009 and females count for only 28.3% with this level of education in 2009). The educational attainment presents high disparities when considering the urban/rural factors: approximately 50% of rural children attend secondary school, compared to more than 70% from urban areas, with significant gender gap (male: 56% and female: 44% students).

In Kosovo, early school leaving is a significant problem. Two out of three youngsters leave the education system without any qualifications (ETF, 2008). By the end of school year 2009/2010, the percentage of students that dropped out of the entire upper-secondary education was 2.98%, whereby 81.12% of them were of the vocational track (KAS, 2011). A recent study found that those missing out on education opportunities are challenged by difficulties in access to catch-up or vocational training programmes/courses, with particular struggles observed amongst rural women and the poorest (UNDP, 2012). Another study reports that RAE community has the highest drop-out tendencies, with even higher rates observed in RAE girls (RIINVEST, 2009). The lack of financial means/poverty and as a response the need to find a job was reported as one of the main factor for school drop-outs among VET students.

With a GDP per capita of €1,850, Kosovo is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Poverty remains persistent and widespread: according to the latest available data (from 2007) 45 percent of the population is living below the national poverty line, and an estimated 17 percent are extremely poor – i.e., unable to meet basic nutritional needs. (World Bank, 2010). The Survey's findings report that young people 15-25 years old in Kosovo are 21.4% of the population, most are single and live in households with more than 6 members. (ILO, YEP 2006). It is estimated that between 20-30% of VET students are from families' beneficiary of social assistance and they do not participate in professional practice, if available, due to the absence of financial means.



Cultural factors such as gender stereotyping and the role of the family influence the attractiveness of vocational education and training for women. Their representation in the labour market remains still very low (28,7%) and less than half of those employed (12%) work under a permanent full-time contract (SOK - LFS, 2009). Women's abstention or reluctance to enter the labour market or drop out of school is explained by a number of factors: "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 "(ETF, Torino Process Report 2012). Technical field are reported to be the typical male-dominated fields where women comprise only around 28% of the student body mostly in the region of Prishtina (Framework Programme for Gender Equality 2008-2013). The situation is far more concerning in other regions.

### **3. OVERVIEW**

The Vocational Education and Training sub-sector in Kosovo is part of the upper-secondary level (ISCED 3) and serves the age group 15-18. These students are distributed among 59 general VET schools and 2 more specialised VET schools (Centres of Competences), which operate under shared responsibility between Ministry of Education Science and Technology and Municipal Directorates for Education. These VET schools are spread in 26 main towns of Kosovo, and systemized in 6 main regions. According to their type, the schools are divided as: Technical (19), Mixed (9), Economy (10), Medicine (7), Artistic (2 schools of art and 7 musical schools), Agricultural (3), Hotel-Tourism (1), Theology (1) and Centres of Competences (1 centre for Building and Construction and 1 centre for Commerce, Administration and Trade). The total number of students which have attended the vocational schools during the school year 2011/12 was over 59.600 students, which represents 56% of the overall number of students of upper secondary schools. It is estimated that there are 17 vocational fields and 90 profiles, 60 modular qualifications and 20 occupational standards developed so far.

The ETF Torino Process 2012 report indicates that despite the problems with the organizational and practical matters of the professional practice for vocational schools students, data reveal other problems. A study conducted by Kosovo Pedagogic Institute in 2011 reports that:

- (i) 18 % of vocational schools do not offer practice-based learning due to the lack of infrastructure/workshops and lack of mechanisms to achieve cooperation with enterprises that could potentially accommodate a certain number of students as part of their practice hours;
- (ii) 54% manage to offer practice-based learning by sending their students to enterprises, whereas
- (iii) 43% of schools offer the professional practice in the school as they have fully equipped workshops and rarely need to send their students to the enterprises.

The percentage of students that do not undergo any practice is relatively high, been reported anecdotic to count for about 40% of all VET students. As a direct result, these students will enter the labour market as unskilled or low-skilled, having very low prospects to find employment and as a consequence, they will fall in the poverty trap.

## **Challenges**

Economic and demographic factors have been identified as main reasons for the shortage of professional practice places in Kosovo. In addition, other long-term structural factors are also having a major impact, such as:

- a) a dramatic decrease in the number of professional practice places in large enterprises due to the low number of such enterprises;
- b) in the craft trades, which are numerically more important in terms of professional practice provision, enterprises are increasingly unable to provide training and experience for the breadth of tasks and knowledge demanded of new occupational profiles;
- c) the growth of the tertiary sector of the economy has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in professional practice places in service and infrastructure occupations.

## **Good practice**

Listed below are some lessons from successful professional practice placements. These are pre-requisites for VET students to get the most out of it.

- a) Clear purpose, aims and objectives which are discussed and agreed with the VET student, VET school and employer.
- b) Planning and preparation to ensure that all parties understand their role and responsibilities, including induction once the VET students starts their placement.
- c) Ensuring that VET students owns basic practical skills related to the companies work area and make aware the employers prior to the agreement conclusion;
- d) Matching individual VET students with appropriate placements according to their interests and needs, and considering what support they may need while they are on the placement.
- e) Monitoring and review during and after the placement, to help the VET student make use of what he or she has learnt.

## **Guiding principles for VET schools**

- a) VET schools are responsible for organising professional practice for their students;
- b) VET schools should ensure that enterprises have sufficient facilities and potential for learning and have staff to guide their students;
- c) VET schools should train enterprise staff and run tutor programmes to ensure that staff understands professional practice program objectives;
- d) VET schools should make formal agreements with enterprises, including timetables, definition of learning objectives, curriculum content and occupational safety and health. They must also nominate workplace and practice instructors to coordinate the programme;
- e) VET schools are responsible for evaluating outcomes of professional practice program.

## 4. SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT Analysis is a useful technique for understanding the Strengths and Weaknesses of organising professional practice in enterprises, and for identifying both the Opportunities open to VET schools and the Threats they face. This technique implies an analysis of the internal factors and an analysis of the external factors.

The analysis of the internal factors, as *strengths* and *weaknesses*, is generally based on the key components of VET school-enterprise partnerships: People, Resources, Innovation, Marketing, Operations and Finance.

The analysis of external factors, as *opportunities* and *threats*, is generally based on Political, Economic, Social and Technological trends, development options and possibilities.

The SWOT analysis was produced during a brainstorming session, and it was discussed and agreed in a workshop with the working group. Previous to that a number of structured interviews and focus groups with different stakeholders took place and were reviewed relevant strategic documents, various reports and legal framework, all included into an assessment report.

### STRENGTHS

Strengths refer to abilities which enable and facilitate the sustainable development of professional practice in enterprises. They are very important because strengths can be used to take advantage of opportunities, address the weaknesses and also to avoid the threats. In the context of professional practice development in Kosovo, 9 strengths have been identified.

- S1. VET teachers update their knowledge and skills from interaction with skilled employees;
- S2. Students participating in professional practice are more motivated and interested during classroom training.
- S3. Statistical data show some improvement in participation of VET students from vulnerable groups;
- S4. Students participating in professional practice were employed by host enterprises;
- S5. Significant improvement in VET schools management, teaching, facilities and material development;
- S6. Most of the VET schools have tradition and good reputation in the community;
- S7. Centres of Competences are helping to raise the attractiveness and prestige of VET;
- S8. More than half of the VET schools manage to organise by themselves professional practice in enterprises;
- S9. VET schools who organised professional practice reported a good cooperation with enterprises.

### WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses are the elements that prevent the implementation of a sound professional practice system. Weaknesses are also factors that do not meet the required standards of the curriculum and deteriorate VET schools success and growth. In total 10 weaknesses were identified for professional practice in Kosovo.

- W1. VET schools principals and teachers do not have essential management skills of establishing effective VET school-enterprise partnerships;
- W2. Low morale of school principals and teachers due to low salaries and additional travel costs for performing their duties during professional practice;
- W3. Due to various reasons, a significant number of students do not participate in professional practice;
- W4. Participation of vulnerable groups of VET students is unsatisfactory, being far from the corresponding proportions in the working age population;
- W5. VET schools lack of promotional materials to strengthen their message when approaching employers for establishing new partnerships;
- W6. There is no clear vision about who is responsible, who may provide support and how the professional practice is to be organised;
- W7. Professional practice programmes are not designed through genuine working partnerships between VET schools and employers;
- W8. Occupational health and safety training is marginally addressed;
- W9. Child protection policies are not seen to be of highly importance by VET schools;
- W10. Low involvement of VET schools in community programmes.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Opportunities are chances to improve performance in organising professional practice. These are presented by the overall external environment within which professional practice is organised. The working group identified a number of 12 opportunities.

- O1. Increased participation of social partners in VET policy process;
- O2. Employers involvement in the identification of training needs and formulating proposals for the improvement of vocational education and training;
- O3. Increasing demand of employers for skilled workers at the level of “secondary school”;
- O4. Increasing demand for workers in mining, civil construction, health/social protection, services and NGOs/international organisations;
- O5. Enterprises are having more updated equipments, materials and tools;
- O6. Former VET students provide support for professional practice to their schools as employers;
- O7. Donors are expected to increase their support to teachers’ professional development, capacity building and adult education
- O8. New methods to link VET schools with enterprises implemented within the context of donor funded projects increased employers participation and quality of training;
- O9. Guidelines, Handbooks or Toolkits developed within the context of donor funded projects enhanced the capacity of VET school principals and teachers to establish successful partnerships with employers;
- O10. Financial incentives provided to enterprises within the context of donor funded projects increased the number of professional practice opportunities;
- O11. Financial incentives provided to VET students within the context of donor funded projects increased their participation rate at professional practice in enterprises;
- O12. Baseline studies taken for some profiles show that around 46% of the enterprises interviewed are willing to co-finance the VET system.

## THREATS

These are changes in the external environment which might have a negative impact for organising professional practice in enterprises. In addition, these might be any external circumstance or trend which will unfavourably influence organisation of professional practice. During the SWOT analysis 19 threats were identified.

- T1. The VET system is not flexible and does not allow for a fair amount of local autonomy and innovation to adapt professional practice to local circumstances;
- T2. Mismatch between the structure of local economy and VET school profiles due to the changes occurred in the past ten years;
- T3. Mismatch between demand and supply on the labour market and high unemployment, especially among the young people;
- T4. Microenterprises continue to represent the overwhelming majority of enterprises in Kosovo, limiting thus the number of VET student placements per enterprise;
- T5. Opportunities for professional practice and employment in rural areas are very limited;
- T6. Kosovo has the youngest and fastest growing population in Europe;
- T7. Wrong perception that VET students are low achievers;
- T8. Increasing number of students from families which are beneficiary of social assistance scheme;
- T9. The cost of travel for participating at professional practice in enterprises located outside the municipality increase the family expenditure on schooling their children;
- T10. Local partnerships for education and/or employment are inexistent or eventually at their very early stages, depriving VET schools of the very much needed support;
- T11. Providing places for professional practice is unattractive for employers;
- T12. Employers reported that VET schools do not equip students with the skill they needs;
- T13. Neglect commitments under agreements signed by both VET schools and employers;
- T14. Limited number of students that can be placed for professional practice in an enterprise;
- T15. Insufficient number of employers provides opportunities for professional practice;
- T16. Occupational safety and health training is not yet embedded into the business culture and practice in Kosovo;
- T17. Paperwork and bureaucracy is seen as a major barrier by employers;
- T18. Missing incentives (legal, financial or motivational) for employers do not encourage them to provide professional practice opportunities;
- T19. Donors are reducing support to vocational training.

## **5. STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN KOSOVO**

### **Our Mission**

To support the development of a mutually beneficial and supportive partnership between VET schools and businesses, aiming to extend knowledge and skills of VET students within a practical environment, so they may be prepared for productive employment and further learning.

### **Our Vision**

Vocational Education and Training system in Kosovo aspires to have a high quality competency-based professional practice which support business growth and give for all students the knowledge and skills they need in a safe and healthy work environment.

### **Our Guiding Principles**

- Professional practice activity involving VET schools and businesses contribute to local and national skills needs.
- All students have the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills through participation in professional practice.
- Both VET schools and businesses clearly define the benefits that they wish to achieve through the professional practice.
- All activities have clear curriculum learning objectives for the participating students and that these are monitored, evaluated and recorded.
- All due care is taken to ensure occupational health and safety and child protection issues are adhered to during professional practice activities.

### **Our strategy**

Our strategic plan provides a clear blueprint for the future of professional practice in Kosovo. At its core, the plan shows the way toward building a high quality professional practice experience for all VET students. It outlines a focused direction for sharing the knowledge, supporting the acquisition of the required skills to establish successful school-enterprise partnerships and addressing the barriers faced by all involved parties, through the development of an appropriate cooperation framework.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1**

#### **Increasing the number of employers providing places for professional practice**

When considering any policy interventions to support the VET schools in expanding the nature and extent of professional practice, allowance must be made for employer-related issues as well. The challenge here involves motivating employers and individual employees to see value and engage in professional practice. Directing more energy and effort towards sharing information, simplifying procedures, providing an attractive and sustainable incentives mechanisms, together with public recognition instruments and events, will enable a more positive attitude of employers towards professional practice.

## **MEASURES**

### **1.1 Making it easier for employers to take on professional practice by introducing an employer toolkit and simplifying the process;**

Organizing periods of professional practice is an extremely demanding task. Not only is it difficult, even in a buoyant, healthy economy to find employers willing to offer placements it is also a major problem to ensure that the period of professional practice is a successful one. Therefore, in order to remove obstacles faced by employers, there is a need to provide them with clear, detailed and well structured information about every step of the professional practice process. Such structured information can take the form of an “Employers’ Handbook” that will be made available to all employers willing to conclude a professional practice agreement with a VET school. It also has to be accompanied with a number of handy instruments, a so called “Employers’ Toolkit”, comprising a set of checklists, forms, templates etc., to help guide them through the professional practice process.

### **1.2 Supporting employers to take VET students for professional practice through appropriate incentive mechanisms;**

The process of professional practice involves a series of costs for the host enterprise, such as supervising staff time, raw materials and maybe additional tools/equipments or personal protective clothing and equipment. For smaller enterprises, which forms the vast majority of enterprises in Kosovo, there is an expectation that they efforts to host professional practice to be recognized and supported by the Government.

Therefore, should be performed a careful and detailed analysis to support the development of an appropriate set of incentives (fiscal, financial or non-financial) based on a sound financial modelling exercise. A first step in this direction has been made with an enabling provision within art.33 par.3 of the new Law on Vocational Education and Training, which suggest as an appropriate incentive, lowering the taxes for host enterprises.

### **1.3 Promoting the recognition, value, and work of the employers who provided professional practice opportunities;**

Employers’ involvement in the VET system plays a central role for development of a high quality competency-based professional practice, aimed to match labour market needs and provide Kosovo with highly skilled labour force. Without their contribution, the VET schools’ graduates would not be prepared for productive employment and further learning.

That’s why their support is as important as the work of school teachers and instructors. Therefore an Employer Recognition Program is needed to publicly acknowledge the importance of employers who support the professional practice of VET students by providing suitable places and required human and material resources. Such a program can enhance motivation of the current host enterprises to continue, but also may inspire other enterprises to get involved.

### **1.4 Making professional practice better understood by employers.**

To make employers more comfortable with the process of professional practice and to raise their awareness, there is a need to provide them with various promotional materials that will

briefly explain to them and their staff the concepts of professional practice. It will explain the professional practice programs running in VET schools, the support available to employers, and their roles and responsibilities when hosting students in their workplace.

In addition, organizing regional meetings with employers to advocate for the need to support professional practice will support removing communication barriers between VET schools and enterprises. Also will support both sides to better understand their concerns and find together solutions for strengthening cooperation.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2**

### **Increasing the number of VET students participating in professional practice**

One goal of professional practice is to provide access for all VET school students, including academically talented students, those having lone parents, those with health problems, disabled people including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young carers, substance misusers, and students of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Therefore, identifying their specific needs and addressing them accordingly through a joint effort of all involved parties, including their parents, will enable an increased participation at professional practice.

## **MEASURES**

### **2.1 Ensuring that all professional practice is appropriate to the needs and abilities of the individual VET student;**

All students, including those with disabilities, must be provided access to and can benefit from professional practice. The law in force requires VET schools to prepare students with disabilities for further education, employment and independent living. Therefore additional efforts are required to ensure that all students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum, receive a free appropriate public education designed to meet the student's unique needs and receive transition planning and services to assist in the preparation for post school living, learning and working.

VET schools should provide host enterprises with relevant information about students, for example about their health. They should know and inform employers about any factors which might be expected to affect their students' ability to understand and respond to information and instructions about health and safety at work, or for example, to provide information about any learning disabilities or language problems.

In various occasions and reports, a number of additional barriers to VET students participation at professional practice were emphasized. Due to the scarcity of data, further analyses are expected to be performed in order to identify those elements which negatively impact students in achieving the full curriculum outcome, and support them to overcome any specific barriers they may face.



## **2.2 Making sure that additional support funding is made available to qualifying VET students.**

Insurance issues are a concern for both the VET school and the employer in a professional practice situation. Insurance concerns generally arise over injuries to student participants at work sites or in transit, injuries to others, and damage to the employer's property or business. Current Kosovo law in force do not provide specific provisions regarding these issues. In addition, are missing own student's health insurance policies or employer general liability insurance. Since current donor funded projects identified various solutions for student's health insurance coverage, negotiations should continue with central and/or local authorities for reaching an agreement on the most suitable funding mechanism.

Due to the current mismatch between VET school profiles and local economic structure in some of the municipalities, a number of VET schools have to organise professional practice in enterprises located at more than 20-30 km away from the school location. In exceptional circumstances, travel between the school location and professional practice location is provided by the enterprise. For most of the other situations, travel cost represents an additional burden for the students' families, especially for those families which are beneficiaries of social assistance scheme. Therefore, a detailed analysis should be performed in order to identify the exact size of this situation, to be clearly defined the group of qualifying students and to be determined the funding mechanism.

## **2.3 Communicating the benefits of professional practice to VET students and their parents;**

Through the interaction of study and professional practice, VET students can enhance their academic knowledge, personal development, and professional preparation. Parents, family members, and tutors can help young people become self-determined and access career preparation resources.

Unfortunately, many families do not see professional practice as part of the school experience. In addition, some of them are concerned about the potential harmful environment at worksite, or others are concerned about their children exposure to physical or verbal abuse.

Therefore it is essential that we give parents and families the appropriate information and support they need to allow, encourage and help their children to develop, learn and participate at professional practice.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3**

### **Enhancing the quality of professional practice**

In order to ensure that all VET students get the maximum benefit from their professional practice experiences, there are several factors that require consideration. Among these are connections between job and curriculum, clear expectations of student activity at the workplace, clearly defined roles of teachers and worksite supervisors, well-structured feedback on student performance and skills achievement recognition. Providing training and technical assistance for both, teachers and workplace personnel, is also an important feature of creating a welcoming and supportive environment in which students can learn.

## **MEASURES**

### **3.1 Ensuring that all professional practice provided meets the occupational standards as per newly introduced curricula.**

High quality of VET provision is a prerequisite for its attractiveness. In order to guarantee improved quality, increased transparency, mutual trust, the mobility of workers and VET students, and lifelong learning, has to be ensured that all professional practice meets the occupational standards and quality assurance frameworks provided by NQA. In addition, actions should be undertaken to ensure that key competences are integrated into curricula and are developed appropriate means of assessment.

A good starting point is the work in progress related to the occupational profiles of the Centres of Competences. Based on this experience and lessons learned, then the process should be gradually expanded to the other profiles from the VET schools network.

### **3.2 Ensuring that Occupational Safety and Health and Child Protection issues are adhered to during professional practice activities.**

Preliminary steps were done in this direction within a number of donor funded projects. However, a stock taking exercise should be performed, identifying the gaps and making recommendations for the revision or completion of the current documents. Nevertheless, attention should be paid to the provisions of the law in force in relation to special conditions required for employees under 18 years of age, as well as employees with disabilities.

With a growing awareness that abuse of children can occur in all areas of the lives of children and young people, parents and carers are increasingly vigilant. Having their behaviour under increased scrutiny is a professional challenge for teachers and workplace supervisors. It is important to remember that the privilege and many benefits associated with employment in a role that involves work with children also carries with it expectations of the highest standards of care and protection for them.

### **3.3 Recognising vocational skills achievements and successes;**

In order to motivate and support VET students has to be developed a framework for recognising personal achievements in terms of knowledge and technical skills that is based on objective criteria. This framework should be linked explicitly to practice in personal learning planning to support young people in evaluating their development in terms of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Examples of ways in which recognition might be given are school certificates and awards, school notice boards, on-line portfolios and awards ceremonies.

### **3.4 Developing an effective information system about available places for professional practice;**

As indicated by the strategic priority VET-1 of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016 and within the new Law on Vocational Education and Training, a register of enterprises hosting VET students for professional practice has to be established.

The structure of this register, the flow of information and regular updates has to be established. In addition, further consultation is required to determine if publishing selected information from this register on the MEST website is acceptable by enterprises, for increased transparency and public exposure. This can be seen also as a marketing tool or additional information regarding future employees' recruitment.

### **3.5 Equipping VET school principals and teachers with knowledge, skills and appropriate support materials to establish successful partnerships with enterprises;**

Whilst initial teacher training and some elements of further training have introduced many teachers to the concepts of co-operation with enterprise there is still a wide spread need to provide them with an informed perspective on modern labour practices and processes. Although technical skills are an important element of VET they should be provided within a framework that recognizes that all skills must be adaptable to increase employability. VET schools should also be encouraged to seek diversity in their contacts with enterprises, reflecting the full range of local economic activity to the greatest extent possible.

Therefore VET school directors and teaching staff should be assisted with an understanding of the wider skills associated with employability. These may include:

- identification of common core skills used across modern businesses - communication, numeracy, literacy, team working, IT, commercial awareness;
- emphasis on the value of experiential and reflective learning and means by which both staff and students can adopt this approach to all elements of their personal development;
- development of a training culture which prepares for adaptation and change, developing personal career management skills;
- introduction of enterprise related training to all elements of the curriculum to strengthen commercial awareness.

Training modules should be developed in association with members of the target audience – VET school directors, teaching staff, representatives of enterprise and inspection staff. Training will reflect the content of the modules with a number of activities centring on reflection on experiences of working with enterprises and examination of real case studies.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4**

### **Providing a framework for co-ordinated work of local actors aiming at improving professional practice in enterprises**

It is important for VET schools to build strong partnerships with parents, businesses and the community. Making sure that VET students have the opportunity to extend their knowledge and skills within a practical environment, so they may be prepared for productive employment and further learning, it is everyone's business and everyone's responsibility.

## **MEASURES**

### **4.1 Increasing the dissemination of good practices in linking VET schools and enterprises for successful professional practice placements;**

There is a need for a stock taking exercise, aimed to collect analyze and develop a good practice brochure. This will incorporate a selection of inspiring experiences gained until now and will make them available to a wider audience (schools, employers, employer organizations, municipalities, regional development agencies, other interested parties).

This activity should be focused on finding answers to at least the following questions:

- What types of VET schools established partnerships?
- Who partnered with VET schools?
- What were the main reasons for setting up these partnerships?
- What evidence was used to identify student need or opportunity?
- How did partners contribute?
- What benefits were reported?
- What evidence was used to measure these benefits?

Providing the opportunity for people to meet during annual dissemination events and share their experiences or concerns, is a powerful tool to strengthen collaboration among enterprises and their education partners and to capture the range of initiatives across the country.

### **4.2 Increasing awareness and reinforce the commitment of all relevant actors for supporting professional practice activities;**

Quite often people use to say “I have not been informed” or “I never knew that I can take part of this process” or “I wanted to get involved, but I didn’t knew where to start”. Therefore, a well conducted awareness rising campaign, using various instruments such leaflets, advertisements in printed or audio-visual media can bring the right message to the target audience and make them react.

### **4.3 Establishing partnerships between the formal and non-formal education and training sectors, business, voluntary and community actors at the regional and local levels;**

During the past decade, have significantly increased all over the world various forms of partnerships between social partners, enterprises, education and training providers, employment services, public authorities, research organizations and other relevant stakeholders, in order to ensure a better transfer of information on labour market needs and to provide a better match between those needs and the development of knowledge, skills and competences.

However, recent case studies show that the positive effects of these partnerships are not guaranteed. The success of such partnerships is largely determined by how thoughtfully these partnerships are planned and with whose input. Therefore is needed to explore which type of model for coordinated work at regional and local level will be feasible in Kosovo, to identify who might be the most relevant partners and to facilitate the establishment of these partnerships.

## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation plays a critical role in providing information needed to support evidence-based policy making as well as any changes in policy direction. Monitoring and Evaluation will be handled by the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adults' or other designated body<sup>1</sup>.

**Monitoring** refers to the process of systematic collection and analysis of data on specific indicators in order to generate information on progress and achievement of a given strategic priority, to support effective decision-making.

The Action Plan matrix provides a sound basis for this activity. The strategic priority statements reflect an end state, while the outcome-related indicators are key performance indicators. Both are appropriate descriptors. Data will be reported on quarterly basis by VET schools to the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adults' or other designated body.

Key tools that will be used to help make these assessments, and which support effective management and monitoring during the implementation stage include quality criteria and standards, Action Plan matrix, activity/work programme schedules and resource/budget schedules, checklists for planning short-visits, conducting interviews and managing regular review meetings and a set of specific instruments designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

Every six months, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adults' will submit a progress report to the Department for Pre-University Education and to the Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education and Training.

**Evaluation** is a periodic assessment of the relevance and fulfilment of strategic priorities, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Implementation of the strategy will be evaluated annually by the Council for Vocational Education and Training against key performance indicators and targets. The findings will be reported to the Director of Department for Pre-University Education and the Minister. The Action Plan will be updated annually to expand what works and change what does not work.

The primary tools available to support the strategy evaluation include the Action Plan matrix, quarterly monitoring reports and updated Annual Plans.

## 7. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

The **Professional Practice Coordinator** provides the linkage between the VET student, the VET school, the Office for Economic Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (OECVET) and the employer. The Professional Practice Coordinator is the key figure in any professional practice program. Any teacher/practitioner in the relevant occupation should take over the role of a Professional Practice Coordinator.

---

<sup>1</sup> for example the Office for Economic Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training

The **VET school management** plays a pivotal role in the organisation of professional practice programs. Therefore, Professional Practice Coordinators and VET School Directors should seek opportunity where possible to develop broader scope partnerships within local networks, to support employers in providing high quality professional practice placements for learners. The work of the OECVET and the MEDs may be useful starting points to assist with developing quality VET school-enterprise partnerships.

The **Employer's** role in the successful delivery of a professional practice program cannot be underestimated. His major responsibility is to ensure that the VET students obtain skills and practical experience pre-dominantly related to the occupational profile of the student. He has to provide a final assessment of the VET student performance based on criteria given in the rules for professional practice.

The **Parents** could share their own experiences of work with the student and discuss any uncertainties the student may have. They should discuss the day's activities with the student, and if any problems are identified, encourage the student to follow correct procedures to deal with the problem. The parents should also discuss the placement with the student and ensure that the student has reflected sufficiently upon his or her experiences in the workplace.

The primary role of the **Office for Economic Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training** (OECVET) is coordination between industry and schools in obtaining new professional practice placements. OECVET is required to work in consultation with industry, VET schools, KCC, MEDs, RECs/MEOs, RDAs, NGOs, to identify appropriate professional practice placement opportunities, particularly in industry areas with strong vocational outcomes, and to facilitate and coordinate access to these placements for VET students.

In order for the VET School Directors and Professional Practice Coordinators to effectively develop and manage professional practice programs, **Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adults'** (AVETA) must ensure they are equipped with the required knowledge and managerial skills for establishing successful VET school-enterprise partnerships. In addition, AVETA should make available relevant guidelines and procedures for organising professional practice, assisted by appropriate support materials (brochures, leaflets, manuals, templates, forms, model contracts, etc.), to ensure countrywide consistency, comparability and a high quality of professional practice programs.

The role of the **Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education and Training** is to support the development of social partnership in all aspects of VET, ensuring links between education, training and work in the context of lifelong learning. As a main policy advisor for MEST, CVETAET should make proposals for appropriate incentives mechanisms to support both VET students and employers during professional practice.

## **8. ACTION PLAN**

The Action Plan at Annex A describes the programme of activity to implement this strategy and the resources required to support it. Delivery of the plan will require effort from the full range of social partner organisations and the workforce as outlined in the Implementation Plan.

Other partners, including current or upcoming donor funded projects are expected also to provide support for delivery of the strategy through their ongoing activity with stakeholders across the sector.

Strategic Priorities	Measures	Actions	Performance indicators	Timeframe	Responsibilities
<p><b>1. Increasing the number of employers providing places for professional practice</b></p> <p><b>Baseline indicator:</b> In 2012 there is no reliable information regarding the quality of professional practice offered in enterprises to VET students</p> <p><b>Target indicator:</b> By 2020 new partnerships created with at least 1,500 enterprises to provide quality assured places for professional practice to VET students</p>	1.1 Making it easier for employers to take on professional practice by introducing an employer toolkit and simplifying the process	1.1.1 Develop the employer handbook	Employer handbook developed (criteria established and well defined)	Q2 2014- Q4 2020	MEST VET Schools
		1.1.2 Develop the employer toolkit	Employer toolkit developed		
		1.1.3 Make available the employer handbook and toolkit to those employers who signed partnership agreements	Number of employers who received employer handbook and toolkit		
	1.2 Supporting employers to take VET students for professional practice through appropriate incentive mechanisms	1.2.1 Conduct a feasibility study on the need to develop a model for incentive mechanism (in line with VET law)	Feasibility study conducted	Q4 2014 - Q2 2015	MEST MLGA MoF MEDs
		1.2.2 If, feasible, develop the new legal framework for incentive mechanism	New legal framework developed		
		1.2.3 Make the proposal for incentive mechanism to the appropriate decision making body	New legal framework submitted for approval		
	1.3 Promoting the recognition, value, and work of the employers who provided professional practice opportunities	1.3.1 Establish criteria for rewarding employers	Set of criteria agreed	Q4 2014 - Q4 2020	MEST KCC
		1.3.2 Develop rewarding instruments	Rewarding instruments developed		
		1.3.3 Organise annual rewarding event	Number of events organised Number of employers rewarded Number of people attending the event		



	1.4 Making professional practice better understood by employers	1.4.1 Develop promotional materials to explain the purpose, role and responsibilities of employers supporting professional practice	Number of materials developed	Q2 2014 - Q4 2020	MEST KCC
		1.4.2 Distribute promotional materials to relevant employers	Number of employers who received promotional materials		
		1.4.3 Organise regional meetings with employers to advocate for the need to support professional practice	Number of regional meetings organised; Number of employers who attended the events		
<b>2. Increasing the number of VET students participating in professional practice</b>  <b>Baseline indicator:</b> <b>In 2012 there is no reliable information regarding the quality assured professional practice attended by VET students in enterprises</b>  <b>Target indicator:</b> <b>By 2020 at least 10,000 VET students will be provided quality assured professional practice</b>	2.1 Ensuring that all professional practice is appropriate to the needs and abilities of the individual VET student	2.1.1 Develop instruments for individual VET student needs analysis	Number of instruments developed	Q2 2014 - Q3 2014	MEST MLSW MEDs VET Schools
		2.1.2 Identify individual VET student needs	Individual VET student needs identified		
		2.1.3 Take appropriate actions to meet identified needs	Number of appropriate actions taken		
	2.2 Making sure that additional support funding is made available to qualifying VET students	2.2.1 Determine categories of VET students entitled to receive financial support	Set of eligibility criteria agreed	Q4 2014 - Q2 2015	MEST MLGA MoF MEDs
		2.2.2 Develop the financial model for financial support mechanism	Financial model developed		
		2.2.3 Develop the new legal framework for financial support mechanism	New legal framework developed		
		2.2.4 Make the proposal for financial support mechanism to the appropriate decision making body	New legal framework submitted for approval		
	2.3 Communicating the benefits of professional	2.3.1 Develop promotional materials	Number of promotional materials developed	Q3 2014 - Q4 2020	MEST MEDs

<b>opportunities in enterprises and institutions</b>	practice to VET students and their parents	2.3.2 Disseminate promotional materials to parents	Number of parents who received promotional materials		VET Schools
		2.3.3 Organise meetings with parents	Number of meetings organised Number of people attended the meetings		
<b>3. Enhancing the quality of professional practice</b>  <b>Baseline indicator:</b> <b>In 2012 the quality of existing mechanisms to adapt VET to changing demands of labour market is estimated as low</b>  <b>Target indicator:</b> <b>By 2016 the professional practice programs will match major elements of occupational standards requirements (60%) and all relevant teachers have the skills to establish succesful partnerships</b>	3.1 Ensuring that all professional practice provided meets the occupational standards as per newly introduced curricula	3.1.1 Analysis of current professional practice programs matching elements of the occupational standards	Number of professional practice programs analysed	Q2 2014 - Q4 2016	MEST VET Schools
		3.1.2 Consultation with relevant employers	Number of consultation meetings organised Number of employers attending the meetings		
		3.1.3 Revise professional practice programs against occupational standards	Number of professional practice programs revised		
	3.2 Ensuring that Occupational Safety and Health and Child Protection issues are adhered to during professional practice activities	3.2.1 Develop Occupational Safety and Health handbook	Occupational Safety and Health hanbook developed	Q3 2014 - Q4 2014	MEST VET Schools
		3.2.2 Develop Child Protection hanbook	Child Protection handbook developed		
		3.2.3 Distribute both handbooks to all VET schools	Number of VET schools who received both handbooks		
	3.3 Recognising vocational skills achievements and successes	3.3.1 Establish criteria for certification of skills achievement during professional practice	Set of criteria agreed	Q3 2014 - Q3 2016	MEST MEDs VET Schools
		3.3.2 Develop certification instruments	Certification instruments developed		
	3.4 Developing an effective information system about available places for	3.4.1 Create national register of enterprises which provide professional practice	National register developed	Q2 2014 - Q4 2016	MEST VET Schools

	professional practice	3.4.2 Regular register update	Number of register updates		
		3.4.3 Publish register on MEST website	Register published on MEST website		
	3.5 Equipping VET school principals and teachers with knowledge, skills and appropriate support materials to establish successful partnerships with enterprises	3.5.1 Plan teacher training program for work with enterprises	Teacher training program planned	Q3 2014 - Q4 2020	MEST VET Schools
		3.5.2 Develop professional practice manual for teachers	Professional practice manual for teachers developed		
		3.5.3 Deliver teacher training program	Number of teacher training sessions delivered Number of teachers trained Number of new partnerships with companies established		
<b>4. Providing a framework for co-ordinated work of local actors aiming at improving professional practice in enterprises</b>	4.1 Increasing the dissemination of good practices in linking VET schools and enterprises for successful professional practice placements	4.1.1 Collect, analyse and develop good practice brochure	Good practice brochure developed	Q3 2014- Q3 2016	MEST VET Schools
		4.1.2 Organise semi-annual dissemination workshops< roundtable discussions	Number of dissemination events organised Number of people attended dissemination events		
<b>Baseline indicator: In 2012 none of the VET schools were partners in formally established local partnerships</b>  <b>Target indicator: By 2016 at least 80%</b>	4.2 Increasing awareness and reinforce the commitment of all relevant actors for supporting professional practice activities	4.2.1 Plan awareness campaign	Awareness campaign planned	Q3 2014 - Q4 2014	MEST
		4.2.2 Develop awareness campaign instruments	Number of instruments developed		
		4.2.3 Implement awareness campaign	Number of awareness raising events organised Number of people attended awareness raising events		

<b>of the VET schools will be partners in formally established local partnerships</b>	4.3 Establishing partnerships between the formal and non-formal education and training sectors, business, voluntary and community actors at the regional and local levels	4.3.1 Develop a model for co-ordinated work at regional and local level	Model for co-ordinated work developed	Q2 2014 - Q4 2014	MEST MEDs VET Schools MLSW RDAs
		4.3.2 Identify local counterparts and information gathering	Local partners identified Required information gathered		
		4.3.3 Facilitate establishment of regional and local partnerships	Number of meetings organised Number of people attended the meetings Number of partnerships established		