



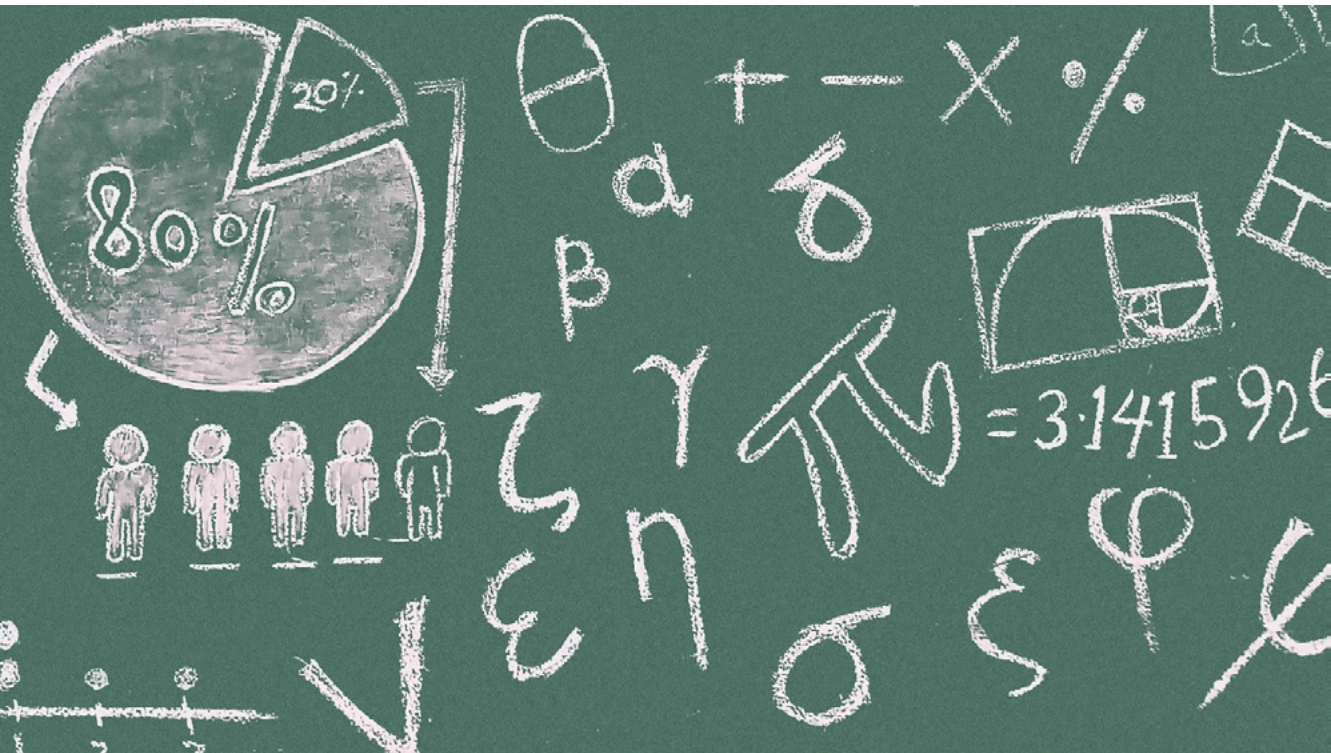
WESTERN BALKANS  
ALLIANCE FOR  
WORK-BASED  
LEARNING

**ERI  
SEE** | Education  
Reform  
Initiative of  
South  
Eastern  
Europe

With funding from

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Cooperation

# TOWARDS REGIONALLY BASED OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS (TO REGOS) PROJECT IN A NUTSHELL



# *Towards regionally based occupational standards (TO REGOS) Project in a Nutshell*

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## Abbreviations

<b>ADA</b>	Austrian Development Agency
<b>ADC</b>	Austrian Development Cooperation
<b>AL</b>	Albania
<b>AT</b>	Austria
<b>BA</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>CC</b>	Chambers of Commerce
<b>ERI SEE</b>	Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe
<b>F2F</b>	Face to face
<b>ME</b>	Montenegro
<b>MK</b>	Republic of North Macedonia
<b>NAVETQ</b>	National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualifications
<b>NCP</b>	National Contact Point
<b>OS</b>	Occupational standard
<b>QS</b>	Qualification standard
<b>RS</b>	Serbia
<b>TO REGOS</b>	Towards Regionally Based Occupational Standards
<b>VET</b>	Vocational education and training
<b>WB</b>	Western Balkan
<b>WB6 CIF</b>	Western Balkans Chambers 6 Investment Forum
<b>WBA4WBL</b>	Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based Learning
<b>XK</b>	Kosovo*



## I Introduction

Over two years ago, for the first time in the Western Balkan region, the project endeavouring to develop regionally based occupational standards had its kick-off in Belgrade, Serbia. Six economies from the Western Balkan- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia - joined together to discuss methodologies, work on occupational and qualification standards and above all, increase sectoral and regional cooperation.

Today, the project has achieved its goals of producing methodologies and developing occupational and qualification standards, faced COVID 19 pandemic and adjusted the work to it, and it is time to proudly present the results.

This publication will try to outline what was done and offer the glimpse on what the plans are for the future. In addition, the project will be presented through the thoughts and perspectives of the TO REGOS partners and colleagues that was collected through a survey.

This publication is also a way to show appreciation to all of those who made this journey possible. First and foremost, the donor institution the Austrian Development Agency, and the local partner- Western Balkans Chambers & Investment Forum WB6 CIF Secretariat. The outputs would not be reached without the support from implementing and associate partners - VET and qualification agencies and chambers of commerce from all six economies. On individual level, the special acknowledgement goes to the national contact points and occupational standards experts who worked hard on implementing project activities at the national level: Ejvis Gishti, Diana Xhelili, Klotilda Binjaku, Dušan Sarajlić, Siniša Gatarić, Elma Kovačević-Bajtal, Ryve Prekorogja, Agon Jusufi, Valbona Fetiu-Mjeku, Besim Mustafa, Sandra Brkanović, Duško Rajković, Dušan Bošković, Srđan Obradović, Mladen Perazić, Chedomir Dimovski, Zoran Jovchevski, Branko Aleksovski, Natsha Janevska, Gojko Banović, Maja Todorović, Radiša Mikarić, Mirjana Lazarević, Ana Stojanović, Mirjana Kovačević, Časlav Mitrović, Tatijana Glišić. The support from the external experts and associates should not go amiss: gratitude goes to Monika Mott (OeAD), Maja Jukić, Ana Tecilazić Goršić, Marina Matešić, Sonja Ristovska, Niklas Ekberg Nannskog, Kenneth Jansson, Leif Boregren and Henry Leerentveld.

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<sup>1</sup> \*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNCSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



## II About the TO REGOS project

The **overall project objective** was to contribute to the employability and labour market mobility of young people by increasing the quality and the relevance of VET education in the SEE region.

The **specific project objectives** were to:

- ▶ Develop regional framework for the development of regionally based occupational standards
- ▶ Develop five regionally based occupational standards
- ▶ Develop qualification standards based on five occupational standards
- ▶ Strengthen existing connections between education and business sector
- ▶ Explore the possibility of developing regionally based qualification standards.

The project was implemented between March 2019 and May 2021 with the extension until August 2021. It was coordinated by the [Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe - ERI SEE Secretariat](#) and local partner [Western Balkans Chambers 6 Investment Forum - WB6 CIF Secretariat](#). At the national level it was coordinated by the VET agencies (SEEVET Net members) and chambers of commerce/trade (members of the WB CIF) from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The project was funded by the [Austrian Development Agency](#) with funds of Austrian Development Cooperation.

The total of 12 national contact points from each economy, one coming from VET agency (national contact point for education) and one coming from business sector (national contact point for business) worked on coordinating project activities at national and regional level. Their work has been made possible with the full support of their hierarchies as well as their colleagues, OS and QS experts.

### TO REGOS Project budget:

ADA Contribution: 459000 EUR  
ERI SEE Co-funding: 104816 EUR  
Total: 563816 EUR

*“The project has contributed to the improvement of regional cooperation which I consider to be its greatest and the most important success. Chambers of commerce and VET centers cooperated on a common task by establishing a regional model of occupational standards and qualification standards. The project pointed out the importance of developing regionally harmonized standards and we believe that we will continue in that direction.”*

**Nataša Janevska, Economic Chamber of Macedonia, MK**



The full list of partner institutions and people who worked hard on producing project outputs is provided in the section X Institutions and people behind the initiative.

*"I absolutely believe that such projects are a benefit for education and the economy, and that it is very important to find a way to promote such projects in the region."*

**Sandra Brkanović, Center for Vocational Education, ME**

*"Regional cooperation establishes synergy, harmonises and approximates attitudes in certain areas.*

*In this (TO REGOS, AN) case, the main benefits of regional cooperation relate to:*

- *the opportunity to learn about each other and from each other through joint work*
- *getting to know and better understanding the VET system of the participating countries*
- *synchronization of the process of planning and development of VET qualifications*
- *harmonization of educational policies"*

**Dušan Sarajlić, Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education, BA**

*"Regional cooperation is important because of the creation of unique preconditions for education with the aim of improving the common market."*

**Dražena Bubonjić, Bosnia and Herzegovina team**

*"The TO REGOS project is one of the most ambitious VET projects I have ever encountered. Having 6 economies streamlining their VET education, and (mostly) agreeing is something unique. My hope is that other regions can follow the good example."*

**Niklas Nannskog, external expert for social sustainability and gender equity**



*"Regional cooperation is very important due to the mobility of the workforce. It is very important to know and harmonize competencies in relation to certain occupations and to raise the overall quality of the workforce."*

**Chedomir Dimovski, Center for Vocational Education and Training MK**

## III Project results

After two years of jointly working on the project, it can be concluded that the project **successfully reached all of its objectives!** This section will provide the outline of the main project outputs as well as the download links where applicable. It will also reflect on the results of the project survey that was implemented among the project partners.

### 3.1 Regional framework for the development of regionally based occupational standards

The project started with six national frameworks, similar but at the same time, very much different. Five out of six economies had occupational standards embedded in their systems. The sixth, Serbia, was in the process of defining national methodology at the same time when the TO REGOS project was working on defining regional methodology. Other five economies had defined national methodologies, templates for occupational standards, developmental procedures and practices that had to be taken into account and equally respected within the project.

With the assistance of the occupational standard experts, the TO REGOS project consortium analysed existing national methodologies and, based on the analysis, developed joint methodological framework for developing regionally based occupational standards. This is one of the main **innovative aspects** of the project. A Methodology for the Development of Regionally Based Occupational Standards is available [in English](#) with translations in [Albanian](#), [Serbian](#), [Macedonian](#). Its utility surpasses the TO REGOS project partners. Other institutions or projects looking at developing joint occupational standards can utilise it and adjust it to its needs. The [TO REGOS project partners](#) remain willing to share experiences and knowledge gained throughout the project.

In the section V Innovation more will be discussed about the innovative aspects of the regional methodology. This section can be closed with the thought of Chedomir Dimovski of the Center for Vocational Education and Training, MK:

*“Harmonized standards at the regional level enable better exchange of people, goods and capital, i.e., better social relations from which everyone benefits.*

*When there are regional standards, experiences and lessons learned can be more easily applied and worked together to improve them in the future.*

*Regional cooperation strengthens cooperation between domestic institutions. It is necessary to continue cooperation with the existing national coordinators for VET and business, and to work on the adoption of other regional qualification standards, especially in promising sectors.*

*Regional occupational standards are important for improving economic cooperation and investment in the countries of the region.*

**Elma Kovačević Bajtal,  
The Foreign Trade Chamber  
of Bosnia and Herzegovina, BA**





*“The most innovative aspect of the TO REGOS project is the aspect of commitment and cooperation within regional harmonization. Although each country had made its national inputs according to its different specifics, it was dominant to see the “big picture” of contributing at the regional level. All participants showed a high level of tolerance and compromise, which was probably crucial in the success of the project.”*



### 3.2 Five regionally based occupational standards

After a year and a half of hard work and after facing the challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic, the TO REGOS project successfully produced 5 regionally agreed (based) occupational standards: one in tourism sector (hotel and restaurant technician) and four in construction sector (dry construction worker, painter, floor layer and tile setter).

All inputs for occupational standards were initially developed at the national level by OS experts and representatives of business sector. Six proposals for each standard were then analysed, evaluated by the experts for social and environmental sustainability and gender equality and compiled into proposal to be discussed at the regional level. After reaching regional consensus and developing 5 regionally based occupational standards, the national teams validated them and, based on them, produced their final national versions, available in all TO REGOS languages.

#### TO REGOS Project OUTPUTS

Are available on the WBA4WBL platform  
<https://wba4wbl.com/project-outputs/>

*“Regionally based occupational standards increase and improve the mobility of workforce, allow for the harmonisation of the documents and increase the regional cooperation.”*

**Mladen Perazić,  
 Chamber of Economy of Montenegro ME**

To reach this objective, 120 national meetings with OS experts and 12 regional meetings were implemented. Most of the meetings took place during the COVID 19 pandemic, either face-to-face (F2F) under strict COVID restrictions or online.

When asked why the regionally based OSs are important, the TO REGOS project partners said the following:

**Table 1: Why are the regionally based OSs important?**

Increasing mobility	<b>29%</b>
Harmonisation of qualifications/programmes and related documents	<b>21%</b>
Increasing employability	<b>14%</b>
Strengthening national markets & their integration into regional markets	<b>14%</b>
Other	<b>21%</b>



These answers bring confidence to future endeavours of this kind. They suggest that economies can achieve much more by intensifying regional cooperation and mobility, unifying procedures and processes and overall building bridges, than on their own, through separate unilateral development.

*“The biggest success of the TO REGOS project is that it shows that different educational systems can successfully “produce” good results.”*

**Ana Stojanović,  
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, RS**

*“As a national project coordinator during the implementation of the TO REGOS project, I have improved the competencies for drafting standards and curricula, I have increased the quality of management and organization of physical and online meetings, cooperation with others, etc.*

*It has also influenced the planning and selection of sectors and the methodology of drafting professional standards.”*

**Ryve Prekorogja,  
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, XK\***



**Regionally based occupational standards are important because:**

*"We have applicable occupational standards and qualification standards both in the home country and in the region which allows a skilled workforce an easier path to work."*

**Dražena Bubonjić, Bosnia and Herzegovina team**

*"They lead to single labour market in the region of Western Balkan*

- Easier mobility for students and workers
- Quality improvement of OS"

**Zoran Jovichevski,  
Center for Vocational  
Education and Training, MK**

*"The Western Balkans market is not large, the economies are connected in many ways, and for certain occupations, they form a single labour market. Tourism and construction are typical representatives. In order for this mobility to be regulated and for qualifications to be formally recognized, but also for the illegal labour market to be reduced and suppressed, it is important that qualification standards are regionally based, similar or at least comparable."*

**Nataša Janevska,  
Economic Chamber of Macedonia, MK**

*"It is important because job descriptions for most occupations do not differ in all of our economies, however, if we develop standards separately, we will describe them differently and it will seem that they are not the same documents. It is important because the occupational standards are the base for development of educational programs, and they need to be harmonized in the region. It is important because of mobility of students and workers. It is important because of better employability."*

**Sandra Brkanović,  
Center for Vocational Education, ME**

*"Facilitate the mobility of the workforce."*

**Diana Xhelili, National Agency for  
Education, Vocational  
Training and Qualifications, AL**

*"They increase the mobility and employment of young people and the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are regionally recognized and needed in the labour market."*

**Gojko Banović, Institute for the  
Improvement of Education, RSc**

*"Adoption of occupational standards at the regional level, definition of parameters for youth education and creating preconditions for a better economy and the future of everyone"*

**Bratislav Radunović Montenegro team**

*"Harmonization of occupational classifications by sector at the regional level; - contribute to the harmonization of the required level of occupation and scope of professional competencies (knowledge, skills...) at the regional level; - synchronization of the approach and process of curriculum development /professional qualifications and national/ national qualifications frameworks and facilitate the referencing process; - creation of preconditions for mobility"*

**Dušan Sarajlić, Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education, BA**

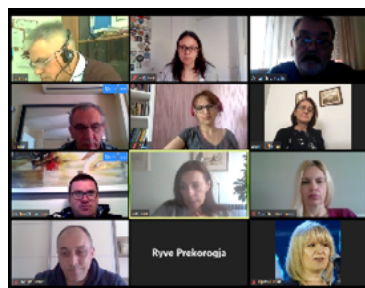


### 3.3 20 national qualification standards

After developing regionally based occupational standards, the next step was moving towards developing national qualification standards and, in the case of Kosovo\* that does not recognise QS, curricula.

Here too, the TO REGOS consortium was faced with different national systems. Five out of six national frameworks are following the path OS → QS → curricula. Kosovo\*, on the other side, goes from developing OSs straight to developing curricula, therefore Kosovo\* moved towards developing 3 curricula instead of developing qualification standards. (It is important to note, that, aside from Kosovo\*, other 5 economies also proceeded to the development of curricula, although outside the frame of the project.)

The more significant difference between economies was the way in which national methodologies define the production of QS in relation to OSs. In the terms of the TO REGOS project this meant that some economies developed one qualification standard based on two or more occupational standards. Consequently, the total of 20 national qualifications standards (and 3 curricula in Kosovo\*) was produced based on 5 regionally based occupational standards and 30 of their national variants.



To achieve this goal, the TO REGOS project partners implemented 67 national meetings with OS experts and education and business representatives.

**Table 2 The number of developed national Qs, curricula and meetings**

Sector	National qualification standards in 5 economies	Curricula in Kosovo*	Meetings
Tourism	5	1	18
Construction	15	2	49

All meetings have been published on the project space:

<https://wba4wbl.com/eventlist/>

### 3.4 Connections between education and business sector

One of the main outputs of the TO REGOS project was strengthening the connection between the education and the business sector at both national and regional level.

At the national level the TO REGOS project partners organised 120 national meetings altogether with the participation of OS and business experts.

At the regional level the project brought together the representatives of education and business sector in over 30 regional meetings, both F2F and online. The cooperation started at the beginning of the project with the [Kick off meeting](#) to that was organised to meet and greet all project participants, NCPs for education and business, partner institutions representatives and to establish communication channels and mutual goals.

*“The biggest success of the TO REGOS project is improving the cooperation between education sector and business sector at the national and regional level by creating tools and communication channels, as well as exchanging good practices and ideas on how to improve this cooperation with other economies participating in the project.”*

**Mladen Perazić,**  
**Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, ME**

Two and a half years later, **ten** project management meetings, **twelve** regional meetings for developing regionally based occupational standards, **three** methodology and feasibility study meetings and **six** national closing conferences were organised.



Strong connections built during these meetings and joint tackling of all of the obstacles (including but not limited to the COVID 19 pandemic) made the connections between the TO REGOS project partners strong and resilient. In the end, the hope for the future is to build upon those connections

*“The biggest success of the TO REGOS project is that it had established a very good cooperation between VET Centers and Chambers of Commerce in the region. Very significant success has been achieved in the development of joint regionally based documents between the 6 economies. Development of a common methodology related to national methodologies.”*

**Sandra Brkanović,**  
**Center for Vocational Education, ME**

during the future project and initiatives.

### 3.5 Future in regionally based qualification standards

The TO REGOS project intended to look beyond developing regionally based occupational standards and to explore options of developing regionally based qualification standards from its earliest days.

#### TO REGOS Project publications

are free and can be downloaded on the WBA4WBL platform:

<https://wba4wbl.com/project-outputs/publications/>

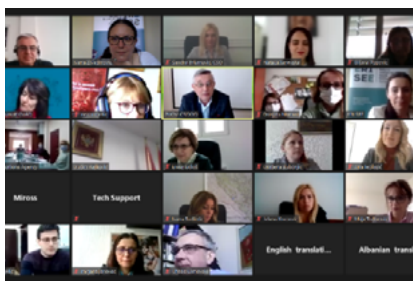
To investigate that possibility in a responsible and sustainable way, the TO REGOS project developed Feasibility Study on Developing Regionally Based Standards of Qualifications. The study was developed by Ana Tecilazić Goršić and Marina Matešić, experts from Croatia with long experience in working in the area of OS and QS development.

The consortium took a point of developing all project outputs, including this study, in an inclusive and democratic way. It was made sure that the study draft circulated among relevant stakeholders and that all interested parties had an opportunity to state their opinions and voice potential concerns.

*“The biggest success of the TO REGOS project is connecting people at the regional level, cooperation and respect regardless of cultural and other differences”*

**Mirjana Lazarević,  
Institute for the Improvement of Education, RS**

Several informal consultations and two regional meetings were implemented prior to publishing the Feasibility Study on Developing Regionally Based Standards of Qualifications. The study concluded that regionally based standards of qualifications can be developed in the Western Balkans.



Building on that conclusion as well as on the positive energy and the desire to move forward, the consortium decided to go one step further and develop the Methodology for the Developing Regionally-based Standards of Qualifications. The methodology is yet to be tested and finalised based on lessons learnt but it does provide quite a solid ground for the next project that is planned to start in 2021. All future endeavours will be published on <https://wba4wbl.com/> and <https://www.erisee.org/> websites.

*“Regional cooperation is important as it enables the exchange of experiences, harmonization of profession and qualification standards, exchange of teaching materials and textbooks (this affects the reduction of costs) as well as mobility.”*

**Ryve Prekorogja, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, XK\***

## IV Quality

The commitment to ensuring the quality of the project outputs started from the beginning of the project. The project was implemented by VET agencies and Chambers of Commerce and their employees with vast experience in developing occupational and qualification standards at the national level. Their knowledge on national policies, legal and institutional frameworks, national methodologies, as well as experience on working with different stakeholders made developing regional methodologies possible.

In parallel, the consortium benefited immensely from the work of the external experts who brought fresh perspective on VET development, environmental and social sustainability, gender equality, skills development. Their work was embedded in all TO REGOS outputs increasing their

*“Due to Covid-19 outbreak most of the activities were done virtually, it was a big challenge for each of us, but at the end we managed to achieve the goal by working virtually through the biggest part of the activities within the project.”*

**Zoran Jovchevski,**  
**Center for Vocational Education and Training, MK**

*“Regional cooperation is very important as we are getting a quality product through it, that is applicable in the entire region (and beyond), which directly affects the progress and standard of the entire economy.”*

**Maja Todorović, Institute for the Improvement of Education, RS**



*“The biggest success of the TO REGOS project is established cooperation between social partners in region for sharing experience and common learning.”*

**Mladen Perazić,**  
**Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, ME**

## V Innovation

The main innovative aspect of the TO REGOS project lies in its pioneer effort to develop the methodology for the regionally based occupational standards, pilot that methodology and improve it throughout the project lifetime. Building on that success the project moved towards exploring the possibilities of developing regionally based qualification standards and developing the proposal for the methodology of their development.

Another innovative element is the participation of experts for social and environmental sustainability and gender equality. Their work was embedded in the methodology from the beginning of the project. They commented on the project outputs, participated in meetings and provided [trainings](#).

The project survey showed that the TO REGOS partners mainly distinguish between the two main innovative aspects:

- (1) Regional methodology for the development of regionally based occupational standards (45% answers) and
- (2) Regional cooperation and joint document development (36% answers).

*“The biggest innovative aspect of the TO REGOS project is the that it is the first institutionalized cooperation of six countries in the region on important national and regional documents for the improvement of vocational education and training”*

**Radenko Bulatović, Montenegro team**

While the regional methodology is indeed something that was never done before, the regional cooperation is not new as such. What the respondents meant is that the TO REGOS project brought the concepts of regional working groups and regional document (in this case meaning occupational standards) development. This result suggests that much more investment into the regional cooperation at the preuniversity level is needed.

*“The innovative aspects are: joint work on methodology, joint work on documents, involvement of external experts in e.g. sustainable development, gender representation, etc.”*

**Sandra Brkanović, Center for Vocational Education, ME**





## VI Cooperation on national and regional level

The project aimed at connecting all relevant stakeholders involved in the development and adoption of standards of occupations and qualifications at the national level – VET agencies and chambers of commerce, qualification agencies, ministries in charge of education and labour, individual regional and international experts, international organisations, related projects.

Over 125 business and education experts participated in the project as members of working groups for developing TO REGOS regionally based occupational and qualification standards.

Existing regional cooperation between VET agencies and chambers of commerce was further strengthened by participating in 32 regional meetings and jointly working on project outputs.

*“Regional cooperation is important for the development of equal opportunities for all 6 economies in the field of education and economy, transfer of know-how and good practices and common effort to make something valuable for our citizens”*

**Zoran Jovchevski,  
Center for Vocational  
Education and Training, MK**

*“The greatest success of the TO REGOS project is that we have achieved cooperation at the level of all countries and created equal criteria.”*

**Dražena Bubonjić, Bosnia and  
Herzegovina team**

The survey results show the strong dedication to the regional cooperation of all TO REGOS project partners. Regardless of what the question was, the respondents chose to talk about the benefits and importance of regional cooperation. When asked to sum up their experience in three words, the word **COOPERATION** appeared in 20%. The next ranked words are learning, innovation, compromise and development with 4% appearance rate each. On the question *What is the*

*biggest success of the TO REGOS project from your perspective?* 57% answers were emphasising regional cooperation and 29% the production of regional methodology. These answers show not only a success of the project to make the existing regional bridges stronger but also the potential and the need for future regional projects that will make the joint projects possible on an even larger scale in the future.

When asked why they find regional cooperation to be important, 29% of the answers pointed towards improving and harmonising education systems, 24 answers emphasised mobility and 15% stronger (labour) market cooperation.

Lastly, 12% answerers stressed the importance of sharing experiences and practices and 9% the better mutual understanding (the rest to 100% is the category *other*).

*“The biggest success of the TO REGOS project is the regional cooperation and consensus of defined occupations and methodologies”*

**Radoje Novović, Montenegro**



## VII Satisfaction, challenges and positive aspects

As one of the last project's steps, the project survey provided the floor for the consortium partners to reflect on the previous years and share their impressions and lessons learnt. It was important to see their overall satisfaction with the project, what were its positive aspects, but also what were the obstacles and challenges.

As the measure of quality of the project, the satisfaction of its key actors must be considered. Therefore, the TO REGOS project partners were asked to assess the different aspects of the project. As it can be seen from the Table 3, the TO REGOS partners are quite satisfied with all listed project aspects.

**Table 3: Satisfaction rated by the project participants**

To what extent are you satisfied with:	Average <sup>2</sup>
1.1 the TO REGOS project overall?	4.8
1.2 cooperation with and between members of your working group	5.0
1.3 cooperation between VET agency and Chamber of Commerce within the project	4.7
1.4 cooperation with the ERI SEE Secretariat within the project	4.9
1.5 overall regional cooperation within the project	4.9
1.6 cooperation between VET agencies within the project	4.8
1.7 cooperation between Chambers of Commerce within the project	4.7



<sup>2</sup> Average grade on a 5-point Likert Scale.

## 7.1 Main Challenges

Hindsight is a gift. Not only does it allow learning from past doings, but it also prevents getting tangled in small, everyday battles that should be suppressed in favour of the big picture: what was accomplished and what the main challenges were that should be taken into account for the future endeavours.

When asked to look back and identify the biggest obstacles during the TO REGOS project implementation, the project partners emphasised two main obstacles. The first obstacle speaks to the challenging aspects of regional cooperation that was embedded in the TO REGOS project core design. The second obstacle speaks to the challenging aspects of global environment that was embedded in everyday lives all over the world. Both were unavoidable. Both obstacles were tackled with knowledge, experience, motivation and a tad bit of luck. In the end, we managed to, quite successfully, overcome them. Lastly, both obstacles will be the part of upcoming joint endeavours, perhaps changed in content or form, but present, nevertheless.

### The biggest challenge was...

*“Building a network for cooperation between project participants. The past two years have shown that professional and motivated people can find a solution to any situation and any problem.”*

**Chedomir Dimovski,  
Center for Vocational  
Education and Training MK**

### The biggest challenge was...

*“Switching from organizing physical meetings to online ones as a result of lack of technical equipment such as personal computer, etc.”*

**Ryve Prekorogja,  
Ministry of Education,  
Science and Technology, XK\***

The first identified obstacle was the development of regional methodology based on six similar but different perspectives. In the end, the common elements were extracted and developed into the regional methodology, strongly motivated by the desire of all participants to reach this project objectives. It should be noted that there was strong investment from all sides: support from the external experts, sufficient funding for the organisation of regional meetings and

willingness of all partners to input time and work. The result, regional methodology and five regionally based occupational standards based on it, is the best evidence of successful cooperation.

The second identified challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic that in many ways hit the entire world. The health, socioeconomic, or even organisational consequences of the pandemic will not be discussed here. What should stay as a lesson learnt is that with knowledge, experience, mutual support, motivation, and teamwork even the most challenging hardships can be overthrown. And the TO REGOS consortium partners did manage to overcome this massive obstacle, by walking together towards the common goal, swiftly changing the way they walked, but walked, nevertheless.

### The biggest challenge was...

*“Similar but different educational systems and methodologies for the development of programme documents and an attempt to find a common language for their interpretation from a professional point of view.”*

**Radenko Bulatović,  
Montenegro team**



### What was the biggest challenge during the TO REGOS project implementation?

*“The biggest challenge was how to reconcile life and work in a pandemic and at the same time meet all set goals, deadlines and have satisfactory outcomes. With the understanding of all actors, project team and ERISSE, adapting techniques and work dynamics to the new situation (ICT, video conferencing...), all expected project outcomes have been realized.*

**Dušan Sarajlić,  
Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and  
Secondary Education, BA**

*“Harmonization of occupation standard with national laws from each WB6 country. Each country has its own regulations so there was a need of adaptation. The common understanding of the need and the willingness to participate helped significantly to find solution for their adaptation with the national legislatives.”*

**Zoran Jovichevski,  
Center for Vocational  
Education and Training, MK**

*“At the very beginning, the biggest challenge was the question - will we be able to harmonize the documents due to certain national differences. However, this was quickly overcome. At the moment, the biggest challenge is to choose from a number of occupations that are attractive to us all for the continuation of the project.*

*Of course, the epidemiological situation moved our work to the online environment, and there was doubt and fear that we would not be able to cooperate in the full sense, not only at the regional but also at the national level. It took a lot of effort to get used to the new way of working.”*

**Nataša Janevska, Economic Chamber of Macedonia, MK**

*The biggest challenge at the beginning was to develop the same regional methodology for OS development. When we had methodology, the biggest challenge was to harmonize national documents to one regional. At the end, the biggest challenge was the situation of Covid 19.*

**Sandra Brkanović, Center for Vocational Education, ME**



## 7.2 Positive aspects

This section provides a space to the survey respondents without extensive analysis or additional comments. The TO REGOS project partners were asked to share their proudest moments when it comes to the TO REGOS project. Their answers are:

*“Results. Cooperation. New partners”*

**Mladen Perazić,  
Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, ME**

*“Common understanding on the issues”*

**Diana Xhelli,  
National Agency for Education,  
Vocational Training and Qualifications, AL**

*“We are the proudest that we have imported and met various experts within national and regional working groups, but also that, in a complicated situation caused by COVID, we have managed to maintain cooperation at a high level.*

**Nataša Janevska,  
Economic Chamber of Macedonia, MK**

*“I am proud of the results we have achieved.”*

**Dražena Bubonjić,  
Bosnia and Herzegovina team**

*“The success for creation of 5 (five) occupational standards and qualification standards which are required for all economies, for a short period of time, even though we faced different national laws.”*

**Zoran Jovichevski,  
Center for Vocational  
Education and Training, MK**

*“There are many things, but I would stress the trust I gained as a national expert at both national and regional level. Acceptance of all things that were conceived, proposed and realized during the project activities gives me the right to be proud of what the Republic of Northern Macedonia has done.”*

**Chedomir Dimovski,  
Center for Vocational  
Education and Training MK**

*“I am proud of the cooperation at the regional level and of each participant in the project”*

**Bratislav Radunović , Montenegro team**

*“I am the most proud of the results of the project that became standards of occupations and qualifications as well as the positive assessments they got from all stakeholders at the national level.”*

**Radenko Bulatović , Montenegro team**

*“I am personally very proud of the fact that we have done 5 regionally based occupational standards and qualification standards. That is a fact that I proudly point out wherever I have the opportunity. I also feel very confident when I present documents, and I am sure that the documents are good, that they are of high quality, and I feel more confident when I point out that we have developed them together. I think this is very important”*

**Sandra Brkanović, Center for Vocational Education, ME**



## VIII TO REGOS publications

### A Methodology for the Development of Regionally Based Occupational Standards: defining guiding principles, steps and methods



Methodology for the Development of Regionally based Occupational Standards (Methodology) was prepared by the ERI SEE Secretariat, based on the inputs received from the members of the WBA4WBL (VET agencies and Chambers of Commerce from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo\*, Montenegro and Serbia), Ms Monika Mott (OeAD Austria), Mr Elido Bandelj, independent consultants: Mr Nino Buić (Croatian Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education Agency) and Ms Maja Jukić, Ms Barbara Wilfinger (Austrian Chamber of Commerce), and Ms Ejvis Gishti (NAVETQ).

It is one of the first, if not the first, guide detailing principles and methods (face-to-face, online and mixed) of developing regionally based occupational standards. It is built on existing national practises in the TO REGOS economies and follows the path that leads from developing proposals at the national levels, harmonising those proposals at the regional level and validating them back at the national levels.

The publication is available in: [English](#) with translations in [Albanian](#), [Serbian](#), [Macedonian](#).



There might be possibility to ship a hard copy of the publications! Feel free to contact the ERI SEE Secretariat @ [office@erisee.org](mailto:office@erisee.org)

## Feasibility Study on Developing Regionally Based Standards of Qualifications



Feasibility Study on Developing Regionally Based Standards of Qualifications authored by Ms Ana Tecilazić and Marina Matešić. The Study looks at possibilities of developing qualification standards at international level, provides conclusions of the comparative analysis of institutional and legislative framework in six TO REGOS economies and gives recommendations and action plan elaborating potential for development of regionally based qualification standards.

The publication is available in [English](#).

## Methodology for the Developing Regionally-based Standards of Qualifications

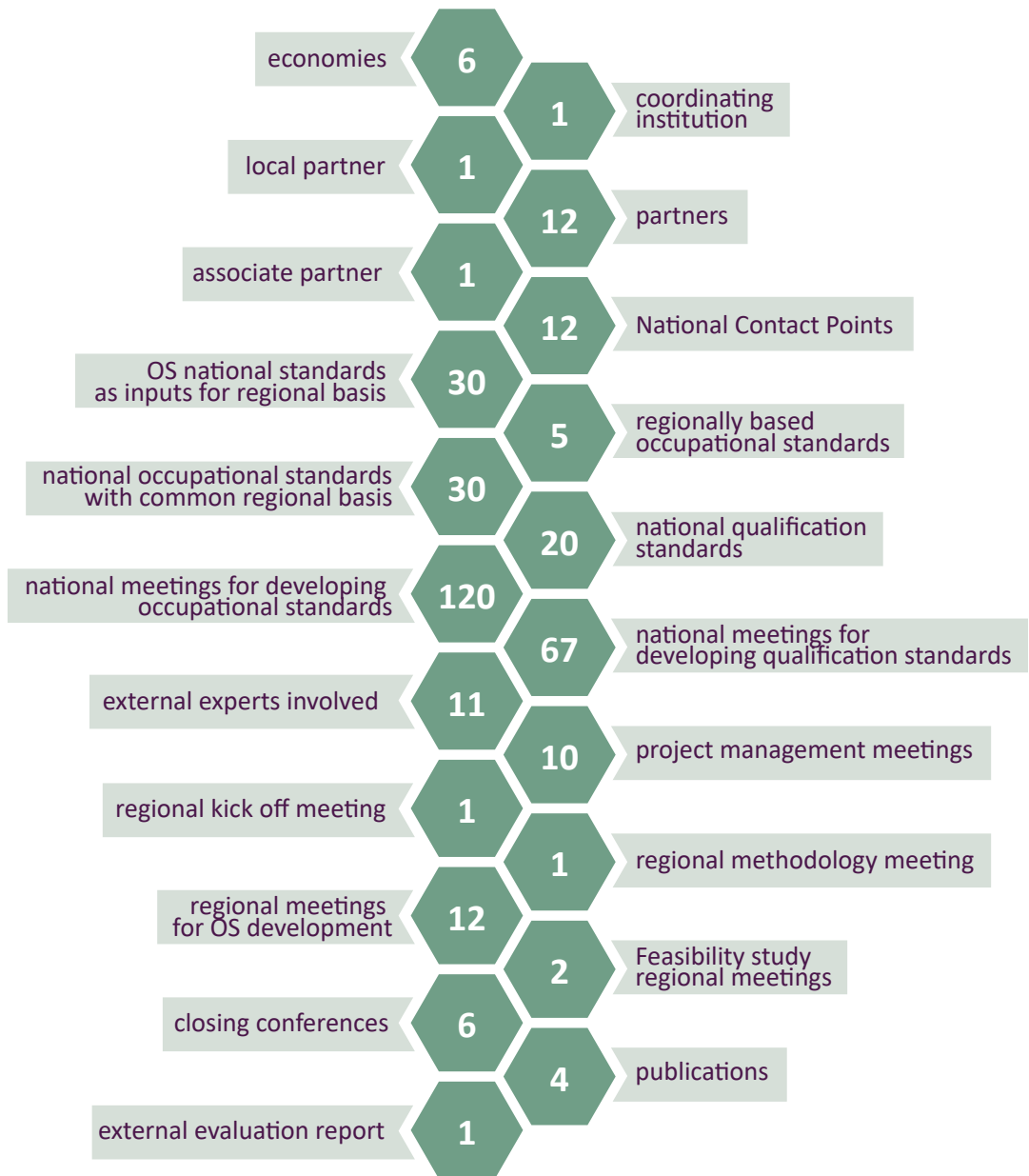


The Methodology for the Developing Regionally-based Standards of Qualifications was developed as a follow-up to the recommendations of the Feasibility Study on Developing Regionally Based Standards of Qualifications.

It relies on the policy and legal frameworks in six TO REGOS economies and their institutional capacities. The Methodology proposes steps through which the development of regionally based qualification standards should go, as well as the template for the regionally based qualification standard with completion guidelines.

The publication is available in [English](#) with translations in [Albanian](#), [Serbian](#), [Macedonian](#)

## IX TO REGOS in Numbers





## X Institutions and people behind the TO REGOS project

### 10.1 Lead partner

#### Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe

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### 10.2 Local partner

#### Western Balkans Chambers 6 Investment Forum Secretariat WB6 CIF

[Visit](#)

### 10.3 Implementing partners

#### Albania

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#### National Agency for Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications

[Visit](#)

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#### Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania

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Project team: Klotilda Binjaku [klotilda.binjaku@uccial.al](mailto:klotilda.binjaku@uccial.al)

#### Bosnia and Herzegovina

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#### Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education

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#### The Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina

[Visit](#)

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## Kosovo\*

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### Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

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### Chamber of Commerce

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## Montenegro

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### Chamber of Economy of Montenegro

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## Republic of North Macedonia

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### Center for Vocational Education and Training

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### Economic Chamber of Macedonia

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## Serbia

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### Institute for the Improvement of Education

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### Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia

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## 10.4 Associate partner

### Serbia

#### Qualifications agency

[Visit](#)

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*“The greatest success of the TO REGOS project is that it is the proof that regional cooperation is possible even when the interests and starting points of the participants on the ways of cooperation are different.*

*In addition to improving the cooperation of institutions from the region, the Project also improved and strengthened the cooperation between the institutions and chambers of commerce of each individual country.”*

**Elma Kovačević Bajtal,  
The Foreign Trade Chamber  
of Bosnia and Herzegovina, BA**

*“The region would benefit a lot from similar projects”*

**Tomor Shehu, Albania team**

*“Every cooperation is important. In the context of this cooperation, it is important that we enable the creation of a workforce with the same competencies and the whole region.”*

**Ridvan Zekjiri,  
Center for Vocational  
Education and Training, MK**

*“The greatest success of the TO REGOS project is the quality of outputs produced...”*

**Maja Todorović, Institute for the  
Improvement of Education, RS**

*“Regional cooperation is important as it allows: the harmonization of methodologies, connecting the economy and connecting schools and students”*

**Ana Stojanović,  
Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry of Serbia, RS**

*“We managed to harmonize educational policies, which was not an easy task, in a way to achieve a unique framework through which the same knowledge and skills are acquired.*

**Gojko Banović, Institute for the  
Improvement of Education, RS**



## XI Future cooperation

The need to cooperate at the regional level cannot be overstated. Economies can only benefit from learning from international cooperation, peer learning, regional connection and mutual support and development. This position was shared by all TO REGOS project partners from the beginning of the project.

The survey results are also unanimous on this point: the region needs to continue collaborating efficiently and effectively. This implies sustainable national support and increased funding for regional activities from all sources.

*“Regional cooperation connects the Western Balkans. It turns differences of opinion and attitudes into common goals”*

**Marijana Lazarević,  
Institute for the Improvement of Education, RS**

Towards jointly set goal of increasing the regional cooperation, a new 3-year ADA funded project is planned to start in 2021. It will have the general objective to contribute to the reduction of youth unemployment in the SEE region through supporting quality developments in education and training systems oriented at social inclusion and labour-market needs, The project will have two lots, one focusing on VET and the other focusing on quality assurance. In the VET lot it will build on the TO REGOS project outputs: existing cooperation between institutions and individuals, developed methodologies and working practices. With strong national teams, support from external experts and overall motivation to work and cooperate together, we are off to a good start!



## XII Project Literature

Tecilazić, A., Matešić M, (2021) Feasibility Study on Developing Regionally Based Standards of Qualifications Belgrade: ERI SEE Secretariat.

Tecilazić, A (2021) Methodology for the Developing Regionally-based Standards of Qualifications Belgrade: ERI SEE Secretariat.

Živadinović I, Šarić, T,. (2021). A Methodology for the Development of Regionally Based Occupational Standards: defining guiding principles, steps and methods, Belgrade: ERI SEE Secretariat.



