Concept note for the EQAVET Peer Review

Topic

Quality assurance mechanisms to monitor VET graduates' transition to employment and the mechanism for forecasting skills and qualifications**.**

Name and contact information of the host country institution

National Centre for TVET Development

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Date and venue of the peer review meeting

25 -26 April 2023, Bucharest

Information about the selected quality assurance measures

1. The mechanism to monitor VET graduates' transition to employment

The employment rate of VET graduates is the most important indicator of the VET system's ability to respond to the needs of the labour market. This can be measured in terms of employment in different economic sectors and in relation to different qualifications achieved in vocational education and training. It is also possible to measure the match between the learning outcomes from VET and the needs of employers in the various economic sectors.

In 2013, the methodology for monitoring the transition of VET graduates (six months and twelve months after graduation) was approved with a ministerial order. The methodology uses:

- field surveys based on face-to-face questionnaires. This collects data on the socio-economic characteristics of the graduates and their families, the methods and tools they use use to search for a job, the degree of relevance of their VET qualification to the requirements of the job they hold, the quality of their job (e.g. net income, working hours, type of contract), the degree of satisfaction of the graduates regarding their job;

- measures to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the data. The methodology was piloted with the support of funds available from the European Social Fund (ESF) in some regions of Romania. However there was no national pilot of the methodology to ensure the comparability of information and allow the aggregation of data at the national level.

Starting from December 2021, the ReConect project is being implemented at the national level. This project involves the main institutions with national responsibility for employment, and education and training. As part of this project an integrated mechanism is being developed to

monitor the transition of graduates from technical and vocational education and training, higher education, and continuing education and training programmes. For VET graduates, this mechanism includes two parallel components:

Administrative monitoring

This is the quantitative component of the monitoring mechanism. It is mainly used to determine the number of initial VET graduates (EQF levels 3-5) gaining employment. This component of the monitoring system uses a computer application (API – Application Programming Interface) to interrogate multiple databases with relevant information on graduates and their subsequent destination. These databases cover:

- graduates from the pre-university education system (SIIIR - Integrated Information System of Pre-University Education in Romania);

- higher education graduates (RMU - the platform that integrates the management of data on students from public and private universities in Romania);

- graduates of continuous education and training programes (the egister of graduates of continuous education and training);

- the unemployed (Databases on the unemployed);

- employees (REVISAL - the national employee record register);

- graduates who carry out economic activities independently as employers or self-employed (the Trade Register).

The administrative component of the monitoring system aims to identify the speed of transition of graduates to the labour market, the characteristics of their first job after graduation, the occupational status of graduates, the sectors and occupations in which they work, their salary level, their participation in active measures for finding employment, as well as post-graduation participation in vocational education and training.

Monitoring through surveys

This is the qualitative component of the monitoring system. It is used mainly to determine what influences graduates' transition from school to work. It covers topics such as:

- graduates' satisfaction with their education and training programme e.g. what were tthe reasons for choosing their school, satisfaction with this school, the quality of the learning experience in the school and in the work-based practice in partner companies, the graduates' views on the level of skills they acquired at school. And where there is dissatisfaction, the reasons for the dissatisfaction;

- graduates' plans to continue their studies e.g. what are the graduates' current situations and future intentions regarding continuing their studies, the reasons why some graduates do not continue their studies and do not intend to,

- participation in the labour market;

- occupational status at the time of the survey;

- the graduates' assessment of the usefulness of their education/ training programme for finding a job. If the programme did not help them, why was this the case;

- graduates' satisfaction with their current job or self-employment;

- what attracted them to their job/ self-employed activity;

- the graduates' assessment of the suitability of their job to the level of qualification they obtained at graduation (vertical fit and suitability to the field of training/ qualification and the horizontal fit in terms of the level of the work). And where there is a mismatch in the suitability of employment, the reasons why;

- active behaviour to look for a job during the last four weeks at the time of the survey and the availability to start work as soon as possible (in the next two weeks);

The surveys are completed online using a dedicated software application. The results from these questionnaires are used to generate reports based on the results of the investigation. Various alternative methods for contacting graduates and distributing the questionnaires are also used to increase the response rate (telephone, e-mail, face-to-face, etc.).

Alongside the graduate monitoring mechanism there is a process to investigate the degree of employer satisfaction with the graduates they hired. This has been developed as part of the mechanism for anticipating the need for qualifications and competences in the labour market.

2. **Mechanism for anticipating the labour market's need for qualifications and skills**

Since December 2021 the ReConect project has been implemented at the national level. This involves the main institutions with national responsibility in the areas of employment and education and training. The mechanism is being developed to anticipate the need for qualifications and skills in the labour market in the short term, medium and long term. The mechanism is based on two components:

- anticipation of the need for qualifications and skills in the labour market in the short term through surveys among the economic operators who are partners to VET schools;

- anticipation of the need for qualifications and skills in the labour market in the medium and long term.

The anticipation of the need for qualifications and skills in the labour market in the short term through surveys among the economic operators who are partners to VET schools aims to:

Anticipate the need for qualifications in the next 12 months at the county, regional and national level, through:

a) Determination of trends resulting from:

- an analysis of the dynamics of personnel entering and leaving employment during the previous year. This uses the CAEN system (the national classification of economic activities), education levels) and the COR occupational codes in Romania;

- an analysis of the distribution of vacant jobs at the time of the investigation. This is based on CAEN system, education levels, and COR occupations;

- the reasons why companies register job vacancies;

- an analysis of the structure of personnel aged 60 and over using the CAEN system, education levels, COR occupations. This is an indicator for estimating the replacement demand;

- an analysis of the dynamics of the recruitment of graduates during the year preceding the investigation (the number of graduates that companies wanted to hire/the number of graduates that companies actually hired/ and the number of graduates who left the companies). The dynamics are analysed according to the level of graduates' qualifications;

- the reasons why companies failed to hire the number of graduates they wanted;

- the reasons why employed graduates left the companies.

b) Estimations by the companies of the number of employees they will need over the next 12 months. This is based on CAEN system, education levels, and VET qualifications.

Anticipate the need for skills during the next 12 months at the county, regional and national level, through:

- determining the employers' degree of satisfaction regarding the level of training of graduates;

- assessing (in those companies which are investigated) the level of competences possessed by the employed graduates, according to the competences as described in the SPP (vocational training standard);

- assessing (in those companies which are investigated) the competences that VET graduates must develop as a priority to contribute to a greater extent to the development of a competitive and sustainable economy. This is based on the competences described in the SPP(vocational training standard);

- analysing proposals from companies for the introduction of new qualifications in VET and the estimation of the number of personnel they will need with this qualification in the next 1-3 years.

This mechanism includes detailed methodologies and agreed instruments, including a computer application for distributing questionnaires and preparing thematic reports from the responses of the companies to the questionnaires.

B. anticipation of the need for qualifications and skills in the labour market in the medium and long term, based on a forecasting model of the evolution of the demand for labour

The assessment of the forecasted demand for labour demand is based on those who are employed. The analysis covers the national and regional level and is based on economic activities, occupational groups and education level.

At the moment the available data series is relatively small. This means there is a limited number of econometric techniques that can used to forecast the employed population at the level of economic sectors. However, by using the experience from previous similar activities, we will use a VECM-type model (Vector Error Correction Model). This represents a feasible option that can lead to robust estimations and forecasts with a high degree of confidence in each of the main economic sectors..

In order to use econometric models to explain the evolution of the employed population at the sector level we have considered the following explanatory factors using data from 1996-2020. This data was collected by the National Institute of Statistics (TEMPO on-line):

- the number of hours worked weekly by those who are employed population;
- the average monthly labour cost per employee;
- the gross value added (GVA);
- data to show the index of technological progress

In order to estimate the total demand for labour at any moment, it is necessary that the employment forecast estimates the demand arising from the need to replace the labour force for reasons such as: retirement, migration, change of occupation etc. Based on the number of people employed it is possible to estimate the net change in employment (as the difference between the level of employment from one year to another) which can be positive or negative. However the employment opportunities are not limited to this replacement demand as we also have to consider the creation of new jobs and employment opportunities arising from retirement, migration, job changes etc.

The estimations are completed for each major occupational group and at the level of each economic sector.

Key evaluation questions for the peer reviewers

1. How can we increase the efficiency, relevance and quality of the tools and methodologies used to track professional transition and to anticipate skills and training needs? What experiences are there in terms of monitoring the employment of VET graduates and anticipating the need for qualifications and competences in your country?
2. From your experience, what could be the main challenges/obstacles in our development of a system for monitoring the employment of VET graduates and for anticipating the needs of employers? How could these be overcome/reduced?
3. Is the data collected through our system sufficient? How could we strengthen data validation to ensure the information is correct and reliable?
4. Do you have any protocol regarding students' GDPR? How/When do you collect their consent to the processing of his/ her personal data for one or more specific purposes?

Aims and purposes of the peer review for the host country

The mechanisms currently being piloted for monitoring the employment of VET graduates and for anticipating the needs of the labour market in the short, medium and long term bring a series of benefits to the VET system. It helps with the strategic planning through the early adoption of measures and actions necessary for a better connection between the demands of the labour market and the supply of VET - both quantitatively, as planning the offer by qualifications and territorial distribution, and qualitatively, as adapting the curriculum and its implementation methods at national, regional and local (county and school level).

On the other hand, the complexity and scope of the mechanisms being piloted, bring a series of challenges regarding the available resources (human, financial, informational, time, etc.), the involvement of multiple institutional actors with responsibilities for the implementation of the mechanisms, the involvement graduates and companies, etc. All of these challenges influence our ability to obtain reliable results.

In this context, the results of the peer review should help to increase the efficiency and relevance of the two mechanisms as well as to identify examples of good practice in relation to the strengths and weaknesses fof other systems.

The participation of key actors e.g. experts involved in monitoring the employment of graduates from VET and experts in anticipating the labour market's needs for qualifications and competences will be part of the peer review.

The expected result of this international peer review is to provide critical and constructive feed-back on the mechanisms on the employment of VET graduates and our system for anticipating the labour market's needs for qualifications and skills.

Other national stakeholders to be involved in the peer review

Name of the national stakeholder	Institution	Email
Speranța PÂRCIOG	National Research Institute for labour and Social Protection	
Silvia VLASCEANU	National Association of electricity producers	
Ciprian FARTUSNIC	Education Research Unit, National Center for Education Policy and Evaluation	
Florența BĂDICI	TRENCADIS	tbc
	CLDPS	
	VET schools	
Sebastian Nicolae	VET graduate, student of University	
	VET graduates	

Peer reviewers

Name of the peer	Institution, Country	Email
	Italy	
	Finland	
	Latvia	
	Malta	
	Slovakia	

Overview of the main steps in the peer review

Key step	Date
Selection of peers	February 2023
Development of the peer review concept	20 February 2023
Production of the host country's Self-assessment Report-SAR	20 March 2023
The first work meeting, with peers	28 march 2023
The second work meeting, with peers and host	4 April 2023
Peer Review Meeting	25-26 April 2023
Peer feedback	May 2023
Analysis of peer review results and process	June 2023
Developing an Action Plan, implementation of change process	July 2023 – July 2024

External experts

National external expert: Dr. **Ciprian FARTUSNIC -** Senior Researcher, Education Research Unit, National Center for Education Policy and Evaluation.

Expert nominated by the EQAVET Secretary: **Monika AUZINGER.**

Annexes