

ETF FORUM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING - PEER VISIT TO MOLDOVA

CHISINAU, MOLDOVA, MAY 16-18, 2023



Quality Assurance Forum

The contents of this paper reflect the views of the peer visit participants and do not necessarily represent the views of the ETF or the EU institutions.

SUMMARY

The meeting of the ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ETF QA Forum) in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, May 16 – 18, 2023 focussed on the external evaluation methodology, evaluation standards for VET programs and institutions in the Republic of Moldova.

The ETF QA Forum, established in 2017, is a multi-national collaborative initiative composed of a network of national-level institutions with a VET quality assurance mandate in ETF partner countries in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, the South-Eastern Europe regions and Turkey and the Eastern partnership. ETF Forum members collaborate to improve quality assurance in VET by pooling knowledge and know-how, monitoring, and reporting on national developments in quality assurance, engaging in joint projects, including Peer Visits, and developing and disseminating good examples of policy and practice.

The ETF Forum's Peer Visit methodology foresees peer assessment of, and feedback on, the effectiveness of quality assurance related to a selected VET policy area. The Moldovan peer visit looked at the external evaluation methodology, evaluation standards for VET programs and institutions in the Republic of Moldova.

The meeting in Moldova included the participation of twenty representatives of the main national level stakeholders' institutions. The peer visit was organised as a hybrid event. The face-to-face meeting in Chisinau was preceded by an online meeting held on 10/05/2023. The peer visit in Chisinau was

hosted by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research.

During the first 2 days, the peers had a chance to meet and discuss with VET school managers, experts of the Profile committee in VET, evaluation experts, employers and learners to get better understanding of their roles within the evaluation process.

The host institution was reassured of being 'on the right track'. Peer feedback concluded that the Moldovan approach to the external evaluation methodology, evaluation standards for VET programs and institutions are very well developed, transparent and comprehensive including participation of a wide range of stakeholders, clear procedures and roles of actors involved.

Ideas for reflection/improvement included considerations related to a training and certification programs for external evaluators to ensure relevant knowledge, skills, and expertise in emerging sectors; flexibility of the methodology in considering specific contexts (regional disparities, rural-urban inequalities), a mechanism for a regular review of assessment standards to correspond to evolving needs and trends in VET sector, and wider dissemination of best practices.

Forum members suggested some improvements on the peer visit process, including: dedicating time to thematic deepening on the specificities of the host country quality assurance system, attention to internal assessment documents on learning processes and on impact of teaching methods on learning outcomes; and follow-up of the peer feedback by the host country by organising online briefings.

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the 3-day peer visit of the ETF Forum for quality assurance in vocational education and training (ETF QA Forum) in the Republic of Moldova, and an insight on the quality assurance of vocational programmes in the Republic of Moldova and other ETF QA Forum member countries. It opens up an important area of quality assurance – that of external evaluation of VET programmes and institutions. The report offers timely points for reflection on the role and contribution of quality assurance to lifelong learning.

Beyond the thematic focus, the report offers a comprehensive overview of the methodology systematically used by the ETF QA Forum – that of peer visits. Although the Peer visit methodology was specifically developed for the ETF QA Forum, it can be used outside of the context of the Forum. It can inspire other professionals working in the field of education, training and employment to apply it for active and effective peer learning. This report simply provides a ‘taste’ of the experience. The report follows three phases of the four-phases approach of the ETF Forum’s Peer Visit methodology: Preparation, Implementation, Reflection and Feedback.



Photo: ETF Quality Assurance Forum members, ETF and Mr Andrei Chiciuc, President of the ANACEC on 18 May 2023 in Chisinau

BACKGROUND

On 16-18 May 2023 members of the ETF QA Forum convened in Chisinau, Moldova, upon invitation of the Moldovan member of the ETF QA Forum - National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) represented by Mr Andrei Chiciuc, President of the ANACEC, Ms Elena Petrov, Vice-President, and Ms Stela Guvir - Head of Public Relations and International Cooperation

Office, and the National Contact Person for Moldova in the ETF QA Forum. ANCEC hosted a specific type of peer learning event – Peer visit.



Photos: Mr Andrei Chiciuc, President of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC), Ms Elena Petrov, Vice-President, Mr Ivan Volnetiri, Head of VET and continuous training evaluation department, Ms Stela Guvir, National contact person for Moldova in ETF QA Forum

A Peer Visit is a form of external feedback from visiting peers that aims to support the host country in its quality assurance development efforts. ANACEC requested external peers from other Forum member countries to provide input on the methodology and guidelines for the external evaluation, especially in terms of aligning them to the EQAVET framework and in the light of the best practices in the field of external evaluation of VET programs and institutions from Forum members.

One of the core activities of the members ETF QA Forum is collaborating to develop solutions to common challenges. It is in this context that the Forum has adopted Peer visit as its core working method.

Peer Visits serve as catalysts for:

- Engagement of national stakeholders in an international review of VET quality assurance measures.
- Receiving of external, critical but supportive observation and feedback on quality assurance measures.
- Supporting the host country in self- reflection and self-assessment of its own quality assurance in VET approaches and measures.

- Gathering evidence with inputs from external peers for the effective reform of VET quality assurance.

The ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in VET [Peer Visit Guidance and Training Manual](#) - Working Paper was developed by ARQA-VET (Österreichische Referenzstelle für Qualität in der Berufsbildung) in collaboration with the ETF quality assurance team. The Manual provides guidance and a training concept for the implementation of Peer Visits as well as a 'toolbox' of instruments.

THE PEER VISIT – PHASE ONE, PREPARATION

- [ZOOMING IN ON THE MOLDOVAN REQUEST FOR PEER FEEDBACK](#)
- [MOLDOVA SWOT ANALYSIS](#)
- [SELF-REFLECTIONS BY PEERS ON NATIONAL PRACTICES](#)

In the preparatory phase, the Peer Visit is planned and organised by the host institution with relevant stakeholders. Peers must be informed and prepared for their role and their tasks.

Peer visit methodology – PHASE 1 - PREPARATION

Value for involved actors:

Hosts

- Stimulating a national level reflection on a selected policy area with involvement of wide circle of national stakeholders,
- Increasing international trust and transparency towards the national system

Visiting peers:

- Supporting analytical and critical thinking capacities vis a vis own country and international developments in quality assurance of VET
- Stimulating a self-reflection on own country arrangements in the selected policy area

In February 2023, ANACEC of Moldova responded to the call for proposals of the ETF QA Forum, by submitting a proposal to host a peer visit. ANACEC proposed to focus it on the external evaluation methodology, evaluation standards for VET programs and institutions in the Republic of Moldova.

ETF QA Forum members from other countries were invited to get an in-depth familiarisation with the Moldovan system and provide their constructive peer feedback. In order to present the Moldovan system to peers, ANACEC prepared a set of information and supporting documents. This set included an analytical National Context Report (specifically drafted by ANACEC for the peer visit), a SWOT analysis and a number of regulatory documents (nationally approved laws, procedures, and state programmes).

Policy area at the centre of the peer visit: external evaluation methodology, evaluation standards for VET programs and institutions

Background:

Quality assurance in education in the Republic of Moldova is provided for by the [Education Code](#).

Quality management in VET is ensured:

- at the national level - by the Ministry of Education and Research, relevant ministries and ANACEC;
- at the institutional level - by the respective structures for quality assurance in education.

Thus, the external evaluation of quality in VET is carried out by ANACEC, as well as by other competent structures.

The external evaluation of quality in VET is carried out on the basis of national reference standards, accreditation standards and the methodology developed by ANACEC and approved by the Government.

Therefore, ANACEC conducts the external evaluation process based on the [Methodology of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and professional continuous training study programmes and institutions from the Republic of Moldova](#)

While the Methodology describes the entire procedure of external evaluation, the drafting of the self-evaluation report and external evaluation report, based on each accreditation standard, criterion and performance indicator is described in the:

1. [Guidelines for the external evaluation of VET programs](#)
2. [Guidelines for the external evaluation of VET institutions](#)

The Guidelines also include a section / column with the evaluation standards, that are approved by the Governing Board of ANACEC, and are used as a benchmark for the self-evaluation and external evaluation process, based on which the external evaluation results and the decisions (authorisation of provisional operation, accreditation, re-accreditation) are made. These evaluation standards are developed based on the national and European requirements for quality assurance in VET. As these requirements may change, the evaluation standards may also change, and amendments can be made more easily (by decision of the Governing Board of ANACEC).

Special assessment questions for the peers in outline:

Evaluation and providing comprehensive and expert feedback on the **effectiveness** of the external evaluation procedure described by the Methodology of external evaluation.

Evaluation and providing comprehensive and expert feedback on **the applicability and relevance** of the evaluation standards (included in the Guidelines, last column) in line with the EQAVET indicators, regarding the external evaluation of:

- VET programs
- VET institutions

Context for the Peer Visit:

Since its approval in 2016, the external evaluation methodology has been amended and supplemented twice - in 2018 and 2022. Considering the results of the external evaluation activities, following the general findings and the recommendations formulated by the parties involved in this process, as well as the changes made in the external evaluation methodology, the Guidelines for the external evaluation were updated. The changes made in the mentioned Guidelines concern the reference documents, the evaluation standards, the points awarded and the weight per performance indicators. Thus, while ANACEC is constantly in contact with its national stakeholders (MER, VET institutions, pupils/students, parents, graduates, labour market representatives etc.) during its external QA procedures, the external (international) input on the methodology and guidelines for the external evaluation would be much appreciated, especially in terms of aligning them to the EQAVET indicators and in the light of the best practices through the feedback provided by peers.

Rationale for the Peer Visit:

Receive individual comprehensive feedback on:

- the effectiveness of the external evaluation methodology,

- the applicability and relevance of the evaluation standards for VET programs and VET institutions, for their further improvement and alignment to the EQAVET indicators and to the best practices identified in both national and European contexts.

ANACEC would also like to learn about best practices in the field of external evaluation of VET programs and institutions from Forum members

In order to present its system to external peers, it is crucial that the hosting country selects and engages relevant national stakeholders in the peer visit from the very beginning. These stakeholders should be engaged in the joint national reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the selected quality assurance measure (national SWOT analysis), in the definition of the questions to the external peers, and, finally, they should also benefit from the peer feedback. Such consistent engagement of relevant stakeholders allows to properly follow up on the feedback from external peers and their recommendations.

ANACEC shared the following nationally prepared SWOT of the quality assurance in VET measure:

<p>Strengths (internal)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ANACEC – nationally and internationally recognized institution. 2. One methodology of external evaluation applied for VET, higher education and continuous training, but different, education level specific standards applied. 3. The efforts of VET institutions to continuously improve the functionality of VET professional training programs, to consolidate the teaching-learning-assessment process, the technical-material base, etc. following the external evaluation based on the recommendations for improvement received. 4. Granting places for Admission to the authorized for provisional operation/accredited programs. 5. Conducting the external evaluation by independent expert evaluators (co-opted and paid by ANACEC). 6. Motivating evaluated institutions/expert evaluators by awarding recognition diplomas, the quality crystal for the best experts, institutions, programs. 7. Clear criteria for the selection and recruitment of expert evaluators. 8. Comprehensive training of expert evaluators. 9. Consistent follow-up procedure. 	<p>Weaknesses (internal)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Agency is not totally independent (being subordinated to the MER), so in the Methodology for external evaluation of study programs/educational institutions, interventions (changes are made) contrary to the Agency's vision, although the Education Code mentions the Agency's prerogatives. 2. The MER, contrary to the provisions of the methodology of external evaluation, sometimes grants budgetary places to institutions for programs that were not authorized for provisional operation. 3. Small number of employees (due to unattractive salary) in the VET Department of ANACEC. 4. The difficulty of identifying expert evaluators in some VET fields, including due to the unattractive payment.
<p>Opportunities (external)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dissemination of good practices of VET institutions, also by including the representatives of VET institutions as expert evaluators in the evaluation process. 2. Strengthening the relations between the educational institution and the business institutions by involving expert evaluators in the external evaluation process from the real sector. 3. External evaluation of a number of study programs from the same field of training (in terms of the costs incurred by the VET institution). 	<p>Threats (external)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The risk of diminishing or even losing interest of VET institutions for the external evaluation of the programs, due to the allocation by the MER of budgetary places for non-authorized / non-accredited programs. 2. The risk of non-compliance with the terms of conducting external evaluations (small number of ANACEC staff).

Visiting peers

Peers (representing ETF QA Forum member institutions) from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Israel, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine and Türkiye have taken part in the peer visit.

The main preparatory task for the visiting peers was to read the National Context Report, seek clarifications and further information, and consider the special assessment questions presented by the host institution for review and feedback.



Photo: opening session of the peer visit on 16th May 2023

Additionally, visiting peers conducted research and self-reflections on the state of play of the external quality assurance of VET programs and institutions. Their self-reflections addressed the following questions:

Questions on the QA measure for individual feedback:

1. To what extent is the external evaluation procedure described by the Methodology of external evaluation effective for the VET external QA process? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
2. How effective is the external evaluation of separate study programs/group of study programs by field of professional training vs. institutional evaluation?
3. Is the decision-making process applied and the final decisions made (authorization / non-authorization for provisional operation, accreditation/non-accreditation) conducive to achieving the overall objective of the external evaluation process of continuous improvement of quality in VET?
4. Are the evaluation standards (included in the Guidelines) achievable, applicable and relevant for the VET sector?
5. Are the evaluation standards (included in the Guidelines) in line with the EQAVET indicators, regarding the external evaluation of VET programs and VET institutions?

Questions to the peers about their contexts (if applicable):

1. Do you perform separate study programme, group of study programs by field of professional training and/or institutional external evaluations? To what extent are they different and is this effective for ensuring the continuous improvement of quality in VET?

2. How is the institutional external evaluation conducted in your country (please elaborate on the process and the evaluation/quality standards applied)?
3. How is the selection and training of expert evaluators done in your contexts?
4. What is your follow-up procedure and how is it carried out?
5. How do you ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit?
6. Please, elaborate on the decision-making process and final decisions made as a result of an external evaluation procedure in your context.
7. In the case of re-accreditation, do you apply a different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions, different standards? Please elaborate on this.

All self-reflection notes were transmitted to the Moldovan QA Forum members and are annexed to this report.



Photos from left to right: Mr Kakhaber Eradze, NCP Georgia, Ms Ketevan Tsikhiseli, alternate NCP Georgia, Ms Elena Petrov, alternate NCP Moldova

Synthesis of visiting peers' notes on quality assurance of VET programs and institutions in their countries

In Moldova, the quality management in VET is ensured at the national level by the Ministry of Education and Research, relevant ministries and the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research; and at the institutional level by the respective quality assurance structures in education. Quality evaluation in VET includes evaluation of professional training programs; and evaluation of institutions that offer professional training programs. There are 2 successive stages of external quality evaluation of study programmes/educational institutions: authorisation of provisional operation; and accreditation/re-accreditation.

The Forum member countries have national specificities as regards procedures, often differentiating between public and private institutions, authorisation standards, certification of evaluation experts.

Concerning the **external evaluation of study programmes (separately or by group) and institutions**, countries have different practices.

in Georgia there are 4 institutional authorisation standards and one programme-related meaning that each program is assessed separately against the program standard. Institutions are authorised if assessment for all 4 institutional standards are satisfactory and at least one TVET program is also assessed positively. Still, the approach is flexible as different programs can perform differently withing even one institution.

In Palestine, both group and separate study programs are evaluated to ensure quality of the provided programmes with the labour market needs.

In Tunisia, the same institutional external evaluation is applied to all study programs with exception of health care where authorisation by the Ministry of Health is required before starting a training session.

In Türkiye, procedures of VET school evaluation are defined by the Ministry of National Education and include both a yearly self-evaluation and every 5 years, an external evaluation based on 4 phases: pre-evaluation visit, on-site external evaluation, post-evaluation report and post-evaluation support.

Regarding how the institutional external evaluation is conducted as an overall practice, self-assessment is the basis for the evaluation procedure.

In Georgia, the 14-steps' process clearly defines how to conduct external evaluation, including the oral hearing by the VET Council.

In Israel, the external evaluation is divided into 2 categories: site visits and external national examinations following a pre-established procedure.

In Montenegro, the external evaluation involves assessment of all segments of the school's life and work affecting process of learning and learning outcomes. Besides, the schools carry out also self-assessment.

In Palestine also the evaluation is done in 2 steps: self-evaluation and external evaluation.

In Tunisia, the institutional external evaluation foresees analysis of certain requirements (infrastructure, equipment, trainers, assessment modalities, labour market needs assessment), then audit visit by expert and finally, judgement by a national committee based on the expert report. In case of public training institutions, there is no audit visit, and the decision is made based on the analysis of relevance and quality of the training.

In Türkiye, the Quality Assurance Directive of the VET Institutions of 2019 defines the procedure and the responsibilities of each actor in detail.

Viewing how the selection and training of expert evaluators is done, in Georgia, the selection of internal and external quality assurance experts follows several stages from application documents, test, training and certification (valid for 5 years). These TVET QA specialists can act as QA managers, heads/personnel of QA units of colleges or become evaluation experts. Their work is assessed by NCEQE, Authorisation Council, TVET college after each administrative case.

In Israel, the selection is done by the national superintendent based on academic background, teaching experience and participation in in-service training.

In Montenegro, the selected evaluators have to undergo a training and then will be included to a database of external evaluators.

In Palestine, the government employees and VET institution trainers are designated for the evaluation.

In Tunisia, the expert evaluators are selected from a list of experienced public trainers or professionals in the requested field. No specific training is provided.

In Türkiye, the external evaluation teams are determined and assigned by the General Directorate and include chief evaluators and evaluators trained to conduct external evaluations.

Regarding the follow-up procedure and how is it carried out, in Palestine, the follow up is done by district directorate of the responsible stakeholder and carried out by scheduled site visit to follow up the recommendations with the team of experts.

In Tunisia, the follow up procedure is stipulated by the law according to which every 5 years the institution has to submit a new demand. During these 5 years, the Ministry carries out audit visits. In Türkiye, duties of all institutions are clearly defined as also the specific timeframe to execute duties.

On how do ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit, in Georgia there are several mechanisms in place allowing flexibility both for the school and for the expert. All visits are accompanied by NCEQE representative as observer.

In Israel, the school visits are done by the national superintendent and his/her team of teacher leaders informally on a regular basis. An official site visit is implemented only for the purpose of special appreciation or as a final act of closing a department in a school.

In Montenegro, the institution survey (among students, teachers and parents) and visit plan are the basis for the site visit. The procedure foresees compliance with the house rules of the institution and Code of Ethics.

In Tunisia, it is the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training to organise and conduct the site visits (logistics, selection of evaluators, time of visit).

In Türkiye, the 3 phases of external evaluation (document analysis; school visits; inspection of VET school activities, premises, documents) are subject to specific performance indicators with a final score and judgement assigned to each indicator. Data is received instantly and monitored through the

online portal. Additionally, a mutual survey is conducted both for the evaluated institutions and for the evaluators.

On the decision-making process and how final decisions are made as a result of external evaluation procedure, in Georgia, it is the VET Council (appointed by the Prime Minister) to take the final decision by following a detailed procedure.

In Israel, the decision-making is based on combined data collected from the examination results, teacher leaders' reports and meetings of national superintendent.

In Montenegro, the final evaluation report is considered at all levels, incl. Parents' Council and informing the competent Ministry.

In Palestine, the report by the expert team has to be discussed and approved by the Committee of Accreditation and Quality Assurance.

In Tunisia, the final decisions are made by the National Committee based on the expert report.

In Türkiye, while the Provincial Education Directorate controls the tasks, the evaluation and final decision for approval of the self-assessment report and the action plan are in the hands of MoNE DG VET.

On the case of re-accreditation, and if different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions is in place, different standards are applied, in Georgia, no different procedures or standards are applied yet and it is work in progress.

In Israel, for reopening or opening of a school department, the superintendent of the Ministry of Education will examine 4 main criteria to base the decision.

In Palestine and in Tunisia, the re-accreditation is done similarly to the initial accreditation process.



Photo from left to the right: Mr Hugues Moussy, ETF, Mr Hamid En-Nouissar, NCP Morocco, Mr Ahmad M.A. Al Othman, NCP Palestine, Mr Kadir Eren Gülsoy, NCP Türkiye, Ms Anahit Terteryan, alternate NCP Armenia

THE PEER VISIT – PHASE TWO, IMPLEMENTATION

In this phase, the Peer Visit takes place. The host institution presents its VET system-level quality assurance approach with emphasis on the selected quality assurance measure for the Peer Visit. Peers visit the host institution and relevant institutions, listen to presentations and other forms of inputs, observe, and gain a deeper understanding.

Peer visit methodology – PHASE 2 - IMPLEMENTATION

Value for involved actors:

Hosts

- Obtaining an external view on national practices and procedures
- Developing capacities to present, appraise and support the sense of ownership of the national system and procedures vis a vis external peers,
- Developing a self-awareness on the importance of own role as a stakeholder in the implementation of the national system,
- Supporting the motivation of national stakeholders to collaborate and commit to the improvement of current practices and procedures.

Visiting peers:

- In-depth familiarisation with practices and procedures implemented by peer organisations in other countries
- Supporting the development of important communication competences and techniques: active and effective listening, observing and questioning
- Establishing working relationships with practitioners from peer organisations at international level

The Peer Visit started with an introductory online session led by the Moldovan hosting institution - National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) and its President, Mr Andrei Chiciuc, Vice-President, Ms Elena Petrov, Head of Public Relations and International Cooperation Office and National Contact Point, Ms Stela Guvir.



Photo: Mr Andrei Chiciuc, President of ANACEC, Ms Elena Petrov, Vice-President of ANACEC, Ms Galina Rusu, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova

Introduction into the context - Vocational Education and Training system in Moldova

The Moldovan VET system includes all educational institutions that offer programs of:

- a) professional training of skilled workers, foremen, technicians and other categories of specialists in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework, with the Nomenclature of professional training fields and trades/professions, with the Nomenclature of professional training fields, specialties and qualifications, approved by the Government, as well as with ISCED levels 3, 4 and 5;
- b) retraining of workers and specialists in various fields of professional training

- c) strengthening the professional skills of qualified workers, in accordance with the requirements of the economy and the labour market.

VET institutions are established, reorganized, and liquidated by the Government at the initiative of the founder.

The general organization of VET is regulated by the Education Code and by the framework regulation approved by the Ministry of Education and Research. Vocational training in VET institutions is organized based on the standards and the Curriculum in VET.

In VET, for certain trades/professions dual education can be applied, under the conditions established by the Ministry of Education and Research through coordination with other relevant central bodies and interested economic agents. Dual education takes place, in parallel, in VET institutions and in a company or other economic units.

VET can also take place in penitentiary institutions, through the organization of vocational schools or vocational training programs assigned to secondary VET institutions operating in their vicinity, with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Justice.

The duration and structure of the study year in VET is regulated by the educational framework plan approved by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Admission to VET institutions is based on secondary or high school studies. People who have obtained high school certificates or their equivalent can be admitted to VET institutions only for secondary and post-secondary VET programs.

VET is financed:

- a) from the state budget;
- b) from the study fees paid by the natural and legal persons interested;
- c) from other legally established sources.

VET institutions can charge candidates registration fees for the organization and realization of admission, in the amount established by the Government.

The plan for admission to VET with funding from the state budget is established by the Government.

The professional training of people with special educational requirements is carried out, according to the Nomenclature of professional training fields and trades/professions and the Nomenclature of professional training fields, specialties, and qualifications, in trade classes in special education institutions and within VET.

There are three types of VET professional training programs:

- a) secondary VET programs (ISCED level 3);
- b) post-secondary VET programs (ISCED level 4);
- c) non-tertiary post-secondary VET programs (ISCED level 5).

VET programs are carried out in public and private VET institutions (VET schools, colleges, and centers of excellence¹), authorized for provisional operation or accredited, in partnership with enterprises and organizations appropriate to the training profile.

VET is also organized in residential institutions - for orphaned children or those left without parental care, in special education institutions, in penitentiary institutions and in medical institutions. Secondary VET is organized as full-time education. Post-secondary and non-tertiary post-secondary VET are organized as full-time or part-time education.

¹ A centre of excellence is a VET institution, with increased potential, having attributions both in the field of organizing combined vocational training programs and in the field of developing the capacities of the VET system.

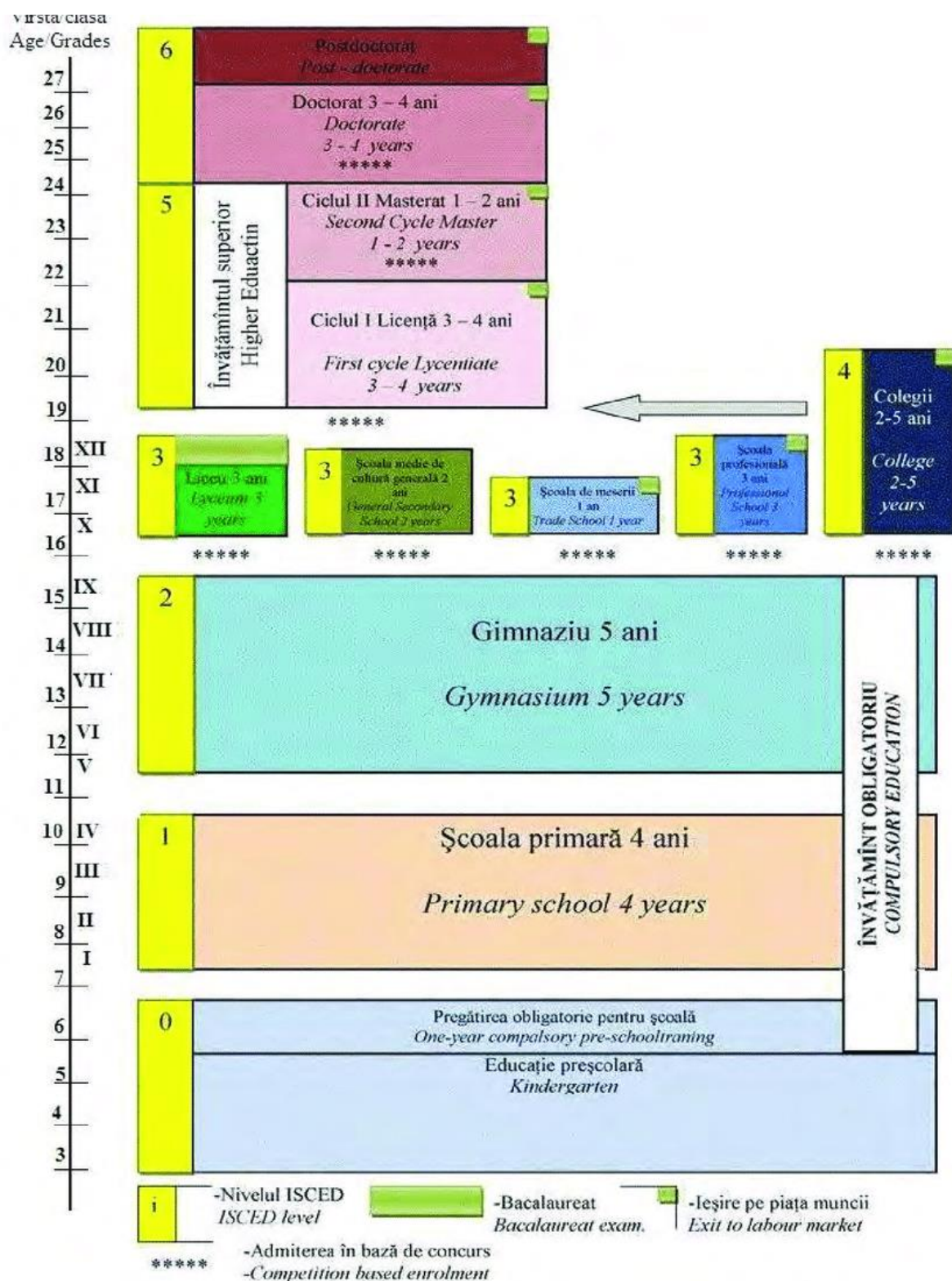


Chart 1: Moldovan Education System

Quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training in Moldova

Quality in education is perceived as a set of characteristics of a study program and its providers, through which the expectations of the beneficiaries are satisfied in relation to the quality standards.

Quality management in VET in the Republic of Moldova is ensured:

- at the national level - by the Ministry of Education and Research, relevant ministries and the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research;
- at the institutional level - by the respective quality assurance structures in education.

Quality evaluation in VET is carried out based on national reference standards, accreditation standards and the methodology developed by ANACEC and approved by the Government.

Quality evaluation in VET aims at:

- a) institutional capacity;
- b) educational efficiency, including school results;
- c) the quality of professional training programs;
- d) institutional quality management;
- e) the concordance between the internal evaluation and the real situation

Quality evaluation in VET includes:

- a) evaluation of professional training programs;
- b) evaluation of institutions that offer professional training programs.

The internal evaluation of quality in VET is carried out by institutional quality assurance structures, based on national reference and accreditation standards, as well as based on institutional regulations. The external evaluation of quality in VET is carried out by ANACEC, as well as by other competent structures.

The national QA system in VET involves the completion of two successive stages of external quality evaluation of study programmes/educational institutions with different purposes, in terms of the rights granted to the institutions:

- 1) authorisation of provisional operation
- 2) accreditation/re-accreditation

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Code, ANACEC elaborates the methodology of external evaluation and criteria that are approved by the Government and applies them within the external evaluations of the quality of study programmes and of institutions providing educational services.

So far, based on this methodology of external evaluation (approved by Government Decision no. 616 of 18.05.2016), a total of 531 external evaluations were conducted by ANACEC in the field of VET.



Photos from left to the right: Mr Hamid En-Nouissar, NCP Morocco, Ms Ketevan Tsikhiseli, alternate NCP Georgia, Mr Slavko Karan, NCP Bosnia and Herzegovina



Photos from left to the right: Mr Ruben Topchyan, NCP Armenia, Mr Ivan Marković, alternate NCP Montenegro, Dr Yaron Doppelt, NCP Israel

Focus of the peer visit – external evaluation methodology, evaluation standards for VET programs and institutions

The Methodology of external evaluation and the Guidelines for external evaluation are the basic documents on which the Agency bases its external quality assurance activities.

1. “Evaluation of the effectiveness of the external evaluation procedure described by the Methodology of external evaluation”

ANACEC conducts the external evaluation process based on the Methodology of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and professional continuous training study programmes and institutions from the Republic of Moldova approved by Government Decision no. 616/2016, with subsequent amendments.

The Methodology regulates the conceptual, normative and procedural framework of external quality evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation of vocational education and training, higher education and continuous training study programmes and institutions of all types and forms of organization of education, by levels and cycles, in line with the Education Code and the

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-2011), as well as for state quality control in education and research.

The purpose of the Methodology is to establish, regulate and monitor how study programmes and educational institutions correspond to the quality level defined by national educational standards. This Methodology focuses on the following objectives:

- 1) to ensure the educational/academic community, beneficiaries, employers, and the general public in general that the study programme and the educational institution meet the minimum quality level, in relation to national reference standards and national and international best practices;
- 2) to assist educational institutions in developing an efficient management and a true quality culture, as well as to demonstrate their status by actual and relevant evidence and documents;
- 3) to stimulate the involvement of educational institutions in the continuous promotion of the quality of the educational process, research, innovation, artistic creation demonstrated through relevant results correlated with the requirements of the labour market;
- 4) to support educational institutions in the process of creating conditions for academic mobility and mutual recognition of study documents;
- 5) to promote cooperation between educational institutions in the conduct, monitoring and comparison of the educational process quality;
- 6) to identify, make public, and not accept any attempt of operation of a study programme or educational institution that does not meet the minimum quality standards.

Under this methodology, ANACEC performs the following types of external evaluation of VET study programmes and VET institutions for the purpose of:

- 1) Authorization of provisional operation;
- 2) Accreditation / re-accreditation.

The external evaluation process for the authorization of provisional operation is initiated and performed when initiating a study program or establishing an institution.

The authorization of provisional operation represents the act of establishment of the institution/initiation of the study programme and grants the right:

- to carry out the educational process, and
- to organize admission to studies.

The external evaluation process for the accreditation / re-accreditation is initiated and performed upon expiry of the authorization of provisional operation / periodically, once every five years.

The accreditation/reaccreditation grants the right:

- to carry out the educational process;
- to organize admission to studies;
- to organize the final examination, and
- to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognized by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Both VET study programmes and VET institutions are subject to external evaluation for the authorization of provisional operation and accreditation/re-accreditation based on the Methodology of external evaluation. Completing the external evaluation process for the authorization of provisional operation is mandatory before starting to operate, for any legal person, public or private, interested in offering study programmes in VET. Given that the authorization of provisional operation of study programmes expires after the first batch of graduates, VET institutions have to apply for external evaluation for accreditation.

In addition, the law establishes that study programmes and accredited VET institutions are subject to periodic external evaluation, with a view to re-accreditation, at least once every 5 years.

The external quality evaluation procedure is initiated at the request of the VET institution/founder/MER and includes a series of stages. The process diagram, presented below, for external quality evaluation

for the authorization of provisional operation/accreditation/reaccreditation of the study programme from its initiation to its completion shows all the stages of the process, their consecutiveness, the regulatory deadlines established for each and the responsible structures/subdivisions.

Process:

1. Initiation of the evaluation procedure by the educational institution/consortium/partnership/subsidiary/founder/ MER.

2. Internal quality evaluation (self-evaluation) and the development of the self-evaluation report, a reflective document through which the institution reviews/analyses its own activities, considering how the evaluation standards are met, highlighting the identified strengths and the areas where further development is needed.

3. External quality evaluation:

- a) submission of the application and the external evaluation dossier on paper and in electronic format, completed according to annex no. 1 of the Methodology, to the Department of vocational education and training, and continuous training evaluation (VET and CTE Department);
- b) examination of the application and the components of the external evaluation dossier. Returning it to the educational institution in the event of detection of non-compliance with the rigors of completion or elaboration of the self-evaluation report. Formulation of requests to complete the dossier as appropriate.
- c) approval by the Governing Board of the decision to initiate or reject the initiation of the external evaluation procedure;
- d) establishment of the external evaluation panel of at least 3 members, selected from the Agency's Register of evaluators;
- e) informing the evaluated educational institution, within up to 5 working days from the date of appointment of the external evaluation panel, regarding its composition;
- f) presentation by the educational institution, within up to 5 working days from the date of the information, of the opinion regarding the composition of the external evaluation panel;
- g) the analysis of the external evaluation dossier and the self-evaluation report by the external evaluation panel and the prior establishment of the level of achievement of the accreditation standards, evaluation standards and mandatory minimum evaluation standards set out in the Guidelines for external quality evaluation;
- h) elaboration and coordination of the visit agenda with the educational institution and the chairperson of the external evaluation panel;
- i) carrying out the external evaluation visit to the institution and completing the „Site visit record sheet.”

The visit to the institution allows the members of the external evaluation panel to carry out the following activities:

- to examine the documents related to the activity of the educational institution and its subdivisions;
- to interview, at the choice of experts, representatives of employees, students/graduates of the educational institution, as well as employers;
- to access information related to the teaching activity, the teaching and administrative staff, the technical-material base, and the financial activity of the educational institution;
- to attend classes;
- to examine the internal quality assurance system;
- to obtain other information related to the activity of the educational institution.

The results of the visit are recorded in the Site visit record sheet, which is signed by all external evaluation panel members, a copy being kept at the evaluated institution.

j) drafting, within up to 15 working days from the last visit to the institution, the external evaluation report containing the recommendation regarding the result of the external evaluation of the study programme/VET institution (authorization/non-authorization of provisional operation; accreditation/non-accreditation), as well as a series of quality improvement proposals. The recommendations are justified based on the data collected during the evaluation visit, as well as

those resulting from the analysis of the documents made available by the institution subject to external evaluation;

k) sending the external evaluation report to the educational institution subject to the external evaluation procedure, which, within 3 working days of receiving the Report, can make comments and provide additional evidence, if necessary;

l) analysis of the comments made by the educational institution, within up to 5 working days; finalizing the external evaluation report by the external evaluation panel;

m) examining and validating the results of the external evaluation by the Profile Committee in VET and submitting the proposed decisions, accompanied by minutes, to the Governing Board;

n) examination of the evaluation results and decision-making by the Governing Board, which is based on the proposal presented by the external evaluation panel, validated by the Profile Committee in VET, the comments made by the VET institution, as well as additional materials presented at the request of the Governing Board;

o) examination of possible appeals: as a result of the examination of the appeal, the Appeals Committee prepares a report that also includes the Report of Appeal Examination, which are subsequently examined in the Governing Board meeting (see the Regulation on the Settlement of petitions submitted to ANACEC).

4. Sending the Governing Board decision to the MER.

5. Publication of the Governing Board decision⁴ and the external evaluation report⁵ on the ANACEC website.

6. Granting of the authorization of provisional operation/accreditation/reaccreditation by MER.

7. Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the external evaluation (follow-up) (see the Post-evaluation monitoring procedure).



Photos from left to the right: Mr Ruben Topchyan, NCP Armenia, Ms Anahit Terteryan, alternate NCP Armenia, Mr Ivan Markovic, alternate NCP Montenegro, Mr Hamid En-Nouissar, NCP Morocco

Selection and training of experts

In carrying out external evaluation activities, ANACEC involves various categories of experts that it selects from its own Register of expert evaluators (following the application and training process), thus ensuring the realization of an external evaluation process in a professional, objective, and independent manner. The process of recruitment and selection of expert evaluators is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Methodology for the selection of expert evaluators and the criteria related to the professional and scientific skills of the candidate. In the process of recruiting and co-opting expert evaluators, the Agency ensures that the recruited experts have recognized professional skills, meet the competence standard for the external evaluator, and have successfully completed the training stage carried out by the VET and CTE Department.

Members of the external evaluation panel must be independent, not represent the interests of the organization they belong to or of other third parties, comply with the Code of Professional Ethics, confirm the lack of conflicts of interest by signing the Declaration on their own responsibility on the lack of conflicts of interest and must keep information confidential.

The training of expert evaluators is a mandatory component of the external quality evaluation process, with the aim of developing and ensuring the necessary skills of experts to promote the objectivity and

consistency of the Agency's decisions. The training of expert evaluators is carried out through initiation/benchmark sessions, special/thematic training sessions and training courses. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the training approach, the training activities are focused on training/strengthening the evaluation skills of experts and are interactive. Thus, all types of training carried out by the Agency, suppose participants' familiarization with various topics such as: regulatory framework provisions, rights and obligations of evaluators, rules of ethical conduct, the use of external evaluation tools (Site visit record sheet, Guidelines for External Evaluation), the external evaluation report, as well as the full capitalization on their professional and evaluation experience.

Follow-up procedure

A mandatory element in the external evaluation process is the post-evaluation monitoring (follow-up) in order to establish the level of implementation of the recommendations and mandatory improvement areas, specified in the external evaluation report as a result of the findings made during the evaluation. The Post-evaluation monitoring procedure describes the steps that educational institutions undertake in the post-evaluation period to improve the quality of study programmes/institutional quality. On the VET dimension, the post-evaluation monitoring procedure is applied by VET and CTE Department.

Accordingly, educational institutions initiate and carry out, at the end of the external evaluation process, corrective/preventive actions to eliminate the non-conformities detected in the external evaluation process or to prevent possible future non-conformities. The educational institutions develop, within up to 6 months, from the approval of the decisions by the Governing Board, Corrective Action Plans based on the mandatory improvement areas and the recommendations formulated by the external evaluation panel members, with the indication of those responsible and the deadlines. Corrective and preventive measures are designed and implemented by educational institutions during the validity of the decision on the authorization of provisional operation or accreditation of the study programmes/educational institution. Afterwards, the educational institution prepares a Report on the implementation of the corrective measures plan, which is presented to the specialized department of the Agency. Based on the Reports on the implementation of the corrective measures plan, VET and CTE Department formulates preliminary conclusions regarding the progress/results of the educational institution's implementation of the improvement areas/recommendations proposed by the external evaluation panel.

Deepening the understanding of evaluation process: clarifications from involved actors

A series of panel discussions were held to provide a comprehensive picture on the implementation of the quality assurance measure, and to get an insight from the implementors of the process and from its final beneficiaries. Panel discussions were facilitated by the Coordinator of the ETF Forum for QA in VET, the ETF Senior specialist, Mr Mounir Baati, Head of Systems Performance and Assessment Unit, Mr Hugues Moussy and Junior Specialist, Ms Nadezda Solodjankina.



Zooming in – site visit in the Centre of Excellence in Construction and panel discussion with school managers

In the panel discussion on the role and experience of school managers in the evaluation process the following panellists shared their experience:

ȚURCAN Lucia, director of the Public Institution „Center of Excellence in Construction”
GORDELENCO Pavel, deputy director of the Public Institution „College of Engineering”, Strășeni
PETRUȘAN Ludmila, director of the Public Institution Vocational School from the town of Hincesti
RAEȚCHI Alexandra, the Public Institution „Center for Excellence in Textile Industry”
CROITOR Angela, director of the Private Institution „College of Integrated Studies” of the University of European Political and Economic Studies "Constantin Stere"



Zooming in – site visit in the Centre of excellence in medicine and pharmacy “Raisa Pacalo” and panel discussion with evaluation experts and with experts of the Profile Committee in VET



In the panel discussion on the role and experience of evaluation experts the following panellists shared their experience:

Nastasenco Veaceslav, Lîsîi Aliona, Cazac Viorică, Chetrean Lucia and Bubulici Vadim.



Photo: evaluation experts

In the panel discussion on the role and experience of the Profile Committee in VET the following panellists shared their experience:

Paladi Gabriel, Irovan Marcela, Spinei Larisa, Danița Tatiana and Moraru Emilia.



Photo: Profile Committee in VET experts

Zooming in – site visit in the Center of Excellence in Energy and Electronics and in the Center of Excellence in Informatics and Information Technologies, and respective panel discussions with employers and learners

In the panel discussion on the role and experience of employers and learners in the evaluation process the following panellists shared their experience:

Employers: GULKO Anna, ZAGORNÎI Cristian, MALIC Lucia, BEZALIUC Alexei, CUNUP Ruslan, ARION Nadejda, GAUGAȘ Sergiu, CARAPORSTOL Ion

Learners: GAȚAPUC Carmelita, DIMOV Mihaela, ORLOVA Ecaterina, LUNGU Ion, MALANCA Ion, PANCU Vladimir, GHIMCIUC Ioan, IURAȘCU Elena, URSACHI Vasile, CEALÎCU Gabriel, BRÎNZĂ Ion, SÎLI Nicolae, CHIȚANU Maria-Ema, PUTREGAI Constantin, SLIVCA Virginia, SĂRBU Laura, RUSU Ruslan, IORGA Renata



Photo: Employers' representatives at the Centre of Excellence in Energy and Electronics



Photo: Students at the Centre of Excellence in Energy and Electronics

The peers received clarifications on the following issues:

Profile Committee in VET: on the role, experts, and the procedures followed by the Committee.

Evaluation experts: how are they selected and prepared to become evaluation expert, are they certified, how are they appointed, is their work regulated, do they have quality standards, what is their role in different phases of the external evaluation process; what challenges they face in the evaluation process.

Evaluation process: what phases, procedures, standards, tools, internal and external QA measures are being used to obtain the right to implement VET programs. What actors are involved, at what stage and which criteria they follow, how is the process monitored and what QA standards applied. What type of challenges and demands are present. What is the role of the ANACEC?

Evaluation report: how is the report drafted, what does it include, is it shared with the schools before submitting it to the Profile Committee in VET for the final decision.



Photos from left to the right: Mr Kakhaber Eradze, NCP Georgia, Mr Kadir Eren Gülsoy, NCP Türkiye, Mr Ahmad M.A. Al Othman, NCP Palestine



Photos from left to the right: Mr Hamid En-Nouissar, NCP Morocco, Ms Anahit Terteryan, alternate NCP Armenia, Mr Vladislav Koprivica, NCP Montenegro

THE PEER VISIT – PHASE THREE, FEEDBACK

In phase 3, peers give feedback to the host institution during a moderated final feedback session of the Peer Visit. They can give feedback as single persons or as a group of peers. This approach of individual feedback was implemented for the first time. The peers provided both written and oral feedback.

Peer visit methodology – PHASE 3 – PEER FEEDBACK

Value for involved actors:

Hosts

- Getting elaborate external peer assessment on specific national practices and procedures

Visiting peers:

- Being exposed to a multitude of peer comments and analytical reflections on specific policy areas
- Being part of an international expert group and actively participating in discussions on specific policy areas

Reflection and preparing the Individual and Country Peer Feedback

The peers identified strengths and areas for improvement in a balanced way and based on facts and evidence, taking into consideration how best to give reflective, constructive and motivating feedback to the host institution.



Photos from left to the right: Mr Sinisa Gataric, alternate NCP Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Ivan Markovic, alternate NCP Montenegro, Mr Hamid En-Nouissar, NCP Morocco

Following the peer visit methodology, peers' feedback discussions and final feedback delivery focused on 2 issues:

- Strengths of the external evaluation QA measure
- Shortcomings and ideas for improvement of the QA measure

Key points from peers' feedback were the following.

Strengths of Moldovan QA measures related to external evaluation methodology:

Procedure and steps clearly defined and roles distributed among parties participating in the external QA process; separate evaluation of programs and institutions; measurement of indicators on the basis of weight coefficients; diversity of evaluator profiles; the presence of representatives from the business sector, universities, and teachers; the standards cover all key areas of work processes in institutions; EQAVET indicators are recognized through the standards described in the Methodology; evaluation standards include some very important EQAVET indicators, such as employment of graduates.

Ideas for improvement related to the external evaluation process:

Consider:

- accrediting a group of programs as it is more cost-effective and enables the system to have holistic review of the different programs in the same sector.
- designing an action plan based on the recommendations received in the evaluation report.
- clustering the evaluation results, especially in case of evaluation of institutions, on 4 levels: very successful, successful, satisfactory, unsatisfactory.
- introducing pre-evaluation phase including questionnaires to identify problems to focus on during the evaluation.
- improving the evaluation of study programs for better communication between the labour market and educational institutions in the process of developing the curriculum through occupational standards and qualification standards, as well as continuous revision of the program after a certain time.
- taking into consideration how to provide Profile Committee members with a better insight into the evaluation process of the institution and program.
- describing the indicators more in detail to help the evaluators to measure the standards more precisely and reliably.
- Collecting of data on how many students found a job after graduation, and how satisfied employers are with their competencies.



Photos from left to the right: Mr Mounir Baati, ETF; Mr Hamid En-Nouissar, NCP Morocco; Dr Yaron Doppelt, NCP Israel; Ms Nadezda Solodjankina, ETF

THE PEER VISIT – PHASE FOUR, FOLLOW-UP

In the last phase of the Peer Visit procedure, the focus is on the usage of peer feedback as a source for improvements in the host country. The host institution is advised to analyse and reflect on the peer feedback and disseminate it, as appropriate, to relevant stakeholders. As an important additional learning outcome, peer visitors are also encouraged to think about if and how they might adapt/transfer good practice observed during the Peer Visit in their own countries.

Peer visit methodology – PHASE 4 – FOLLOW UP

Value for involved actors:

Hosts

- Possibility to engage in a national level discussion on the obtained peer feedback and devise a nationally shared plan to implement improvements in a specific policy area

Visiting peers:

- Possibility to disseminate the good practices observed and discussed among the national stakeholders.
- Possibility to transfer good practices in own country



Photos from left to the right: Mr Hamid En-Nouissar, NCP Morocco, Mr Ahmad M.A. Al Othman, NCP Palestine, Mr Sinisa Gataric, alternate NCP Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Ivan Markovic, alternate NCP Montenegro, Mr Vladislav Koprivica, NCP Montenegro, Mr Slavko Karan, NCP Bosnia and Herzegovina



Photos from left to the right: Mr Ruben Topchyan, NCP Armenia, Ms Anahit Terteryan, alternate NCP Armenia, Ms Ketevan Tsikhiseli, alternate NCP Georgia, Mr Kakhaber Eradze, NCP Georgia

In this respect, the ETF methodology for peer visit recommends a series of guidelines on this follow up phase, such as discussing the feedback with a circle of relevant stakeholders, decision on the utilisation of the feedback, setting up of an action plan and devising responsibilities for implementation.

In the National Context Report, ANACEC states to provide feedback to the peers on the use of the peer feedback and/or for improvement (follow-up) by:

- Analysing the individual and joint feedback and recommendations received from the peers and discuss them within the agency;
- including relevant recommendations in the workplan of the agency and the specialized department;
- informing the stakeholders on the feedback received by publishing the report on its website and disseminating it via emails and social networking sites;
- using the recommendations as a basis for formulating next amendments to the methodology of external evaluation to be considered by MER when submitting it for Government approval;
- if applicable and relevant for the national context, amendments to the evaluation standards will be proposed for discussion with stakeholders and approval by the Governing Board of the Agency.

The peer visit concluded with a feedback and reflection session between the Forum members' representatives. All have expressed strong positive impressions and firm willingness to continue the application of peer visit methodology for peer exchange. They particularly noted that the peer visit approach allows to pursue active learning and in-depth analysis of the quality assurance measure. A series of improvements/proposals were suggested for the future peer visits, both related to the process and actors involved: dedicating time to thematic deepening on the specificities of the host country quality assurance system, attention to internal assessment documents on learning processes, impact of teaching methods on learning outcomes; during the peer visit ensure discussions with all

actors involved in the evaluation process, especially with students; and follow-up of the peer feedback by the host country by organising online briefings (after 6 months).

Finally, ANACEC thanked all the participating peers for their professionalism and expertise brought to continuous improvement of quality assurance in education by awarding them a medal of degree II “Promoter of the quality culture in education and research”.



Photo: Ms Stela Guvir, NCP Moldova, Mr Andrei Chiciuc, President of ANACEC, Mr Kadir Eren Gülsoy, NCP Türkiye

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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EMPLOYERS: GULKO Anna, ZAGORNÎI Cristian, MALIC Lucia, BEZALIUC Alexei, CUNUP Ruslan, ARION Nadejda, GAUGAȘ Sergiu, CARAPORSTOL Ion

LEARNERS: GAȚAPUC Carmelita, DIMOV Mihaela, ORLOVA Ecaterina, LUNGU Ion, MALANCA Ion, PANCU Vladimir, GHIMCIUC Ioan, IURAȘCU Elena, URSACHI Vasile, CEALÎCU Gabriel, BRÎNZĂ Ion, ȘÎLI Nicolae, CHIȚANU Maria-Ema, PUTREGAI Constantin, SLIVCA Virginia, SĂRBU Laura, RUSU Ruslan, IORGA Renata

Annexes

Georgia

1. **Do you perform separate study programme, group of study programs by field of professional training and/or institutional external evaluations? To what extent are they different and is this effective for ensuring the continuous improvement of quality in VET?**

External QA mechanism in Georgia is known as authorization. Authorization is mandatory according to the law. There are 5 authorization standards. 4 of them are institutional and one is program-related. This means each program is assessed separately against program standard. Institution is authorized if assessment for all 4 institutional standards are satisfactory and at least one TVET program is also assessed positively.

Institutional standards are related to whole institution despite what program is implemented by the institution. These are:

1. College's mission and strategic development;
3. Vocational Educational students and their support;
4. Human resources (EXCEPT OF PROGRAM INSTRUCTORS, WHICH IS COVERED BY THE 2-ND, PROGRAM STANDARD);
5. Material, Information and financial resources. (EXCEPT OF PROGRAM RELATED RESOURCES, WHICH IS COVERED BY THE 2-ND, PROGRAM STANDARD);

Program standard, 2-nd, has components, that cover program-related issues, such as:

- 2.1. program planning and elaboration;
- 2.2. Resources for program implementation (instructors, workshops and partner companies, learning materials, both paper-based and digital, program budget and sustainability, access of students with special educational needs)
- 2.3. Program evaluation and development
- 2.4. Organization of teaching/learning process and student assessment;

Each standard and its component has sub-components and pre-defined assessment criteria.

Having in mind, that, even within one institution, different programs can perform differently, this approach is flexible. If institution is refused in authorization of one or more programs, they can remain institutionally authorized if it has at least one program, that matches 2-nd, program standard.

2. **How is the institutional external evaluation conducted in your country (please elaborate on the process and the evaluation/quality standards applied)?**

The process of Authorization is comprised of the following stages, which is administered by the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE/ referred as the Center):

- 1) Submission of authorization application by the institution (once in every 6 years);
- 2) Recognition of educational institution as an applicant for Authorization;
- 3) Creation of authorization experts' group;

- 4) Preliminary review of authorization self-assessment report and corresponding documents by the authorization experts' panel, and creating agenda for the site-visit;
- 5) Conducting an authorization site-visit;
- 6) Elaboration of the draft evaluation report against authorization standards (each program is assessed separately) and submission to the Center;
- 7) Introducing draft evaluation report to the institution;
- 8) Submission of evidence-based position of the educational institution on the evaluation report to the Center;
- 9) Development of the final version of the evaluation report by the group of experts, and submission to the Center;
- 10) Introducing the final evaluation report to the educational institution;
- 11) Submission of the authorization application, evaluation report, and evidence-based position of the educational institutions to the members of the Authorization Council;
- 12) Conducting the Oral Hearing on authorization issue and making the decision regarding the authorization by the relevant Authorization Council; Each program is judged separately;
- 13) Publishing the substantiated decision on the web-site (with stating each program authorized);
- 14) Entering info into EMIS database (Education Management Information System)

3. How is the selection and training of expert evaluators done in your contexts?

Having in mind, that specialists used for external QA as well as for internal QA need to have similar knowledge, skills and competencies, the center annually announces the call for TVET specialist certification process. Certification process has several stages:

- 1) Submission of resume, motivation letter and relevant documents, which has to prove existence of appropriate education (minimum BA in Education Management, Management and other fields where principles of QA is taught);
- 2) Successful applicants, that match call requirements go through testing, when necessary knowledge of basic legislation is checked (TVET law, Law on Education Quality, Administrative law, Labour law). No question about TVET QA standards and other TVET specific bylaws.
- 3) Successful applicants have 1 months intensive training in TVET Authorization standards and other related bylaws, as well as different techniques, such as gathering evidences, report-writing, interviewing process, disputes and presentation skills;
- 4) Applicants are given case studies from real authorization cases. They have to write report and make presentation about findings, conclusions and recommendations for the institution, before special commission.
- 5) successful applicants are awarded certificates and become certifies TVET QA Specialists for 5 years period. In order to remain certified, they are obliged to undergo professional development trainings and workshops offered by the center within 5 years period.

Certified TVET QA Specialists can be employed by TVET Schools (referred as TVET Colleges in Georgia) as QA managers or heads/personnel of QA units of colleges, or/and become Authorization Experts. In this case they have to declare about their conflict of interests with TVET Colleges, if they are employed by these institutions or have provided consultation or other trainings to the college staff within last 3 years period.

Only Authorization Experts can perform external evaluation for Authorization purposes. They are assisted by Subject Experts for particular program evaluation purposes. Subject Experts do not go through certification process, but are selected based on their education and working experience in the field of assessment. They are also trained before authorization of a TVET College or their program starts. There are cases when Authorization expert and Subject Expert is the same person, if they fulfil both requirements.

Work of external evaluators (Authorization Experts and Subject Experts) is also assessed by: NCEQE staff, Authorization Council, TVET College after each administrative case. Based on assessment results they can undergo additional trainings or can be excluded from experts corps. (Luckily most of them remain in the experts corps).

4. What is your follow-up procedure and how is it carried out?

Not clear. If the question addresses experts, I think I covered it under 3.

5. How do you ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit?

In order to ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit, there are several mechanisms;

- 1) School has right to request expert replacement with proper justification before the process starts (reasons are stated in the Administrative Law, and can be conflict of interests, no appropriate experience with an expert etc). This cases not exceed 2% of total administrative processes annually.
- 2) Site visit is stressful for colleges therefore we try to keep its duration as short as possible. In most of the cases it takes 2 working days, also can be less or more, depending on case.
- 3) site visit days are discussed with school and can be shifted;
- 4). Experts, based on desk study, elaborate site visit agenda, with clear timing and activities, that college can prepare for it; Order of agenda activities can be changed based on college request. Final agenda is communicated with college;
- 5). All costs related to site visit, including transportation, hotel (if needed) and experts meal is covered by NCEQE.
- 6) All visits are accompanied by NCEQE representative. They do not participate in any activities and do not play role in report writing, but they observe experts works (they assess experts at the end), make sure all activities in the agenda are taken and remind experts if they have forgotten any, and interfere in case of any conflicts and resolve organisational issues.

6. Please, elaborate on the decision-making process and final decisions made as a result of an external evaluation procedure in your context.

The final decision on institutional or program authorization as well as any case when expert report is generated (such as monitoring, increase of quota, change in location) is made by the Authorization Council, which is neutral from NCEQE, Ministry of Education and Science or other legal entities, and is appointed and act directly under the Prime-minister. NCEQE sends all materials of administrative processing to the council members at least 7 working days in prior of oral hearing. Oral hearing day is publicly announced on NCEQE web site and any interested person can take a part in it. Authorization Experts team and College gets special invitation in addition. Oral hearing starts with experts presentation when they present info about best cases as well as findings and mismatches with

standards requirements, also recommendations for further improvement. Then word is given to college representatives. Council can ask additional questions to both sides. NCEQE representatives attend, but do not participate in discussions unless council requests some explanations regarding legal acts from NCEQE Lawyers (this happens rarely). If council can not make final decision and needs some more info or facts to be studied, they postpone the oral hearing and address NCEQE to conduct further study on particular issue. In most cases decision is made on the same day. Average time for each case discussion can vary from 90 minutes to 4-5 hours. Council takes whole responsibility on its decision, which can be appealed in appeal council or the court. In case of positive decision, council can also request monitoring from NCEQE and sets exact time (date or time period) as well as the topic/subject for monitoring. Council decision enters into the force at the moment of publishing council decision on center's web site (not later than 10 days after making decision at the oral hearing). All materials of administrative process (such as application, expert reports, college correspondence during the process and other related evidences) are also published together with the Council decision and publicly available without time limits to any interested parties, with precondition that all personal data (names of persons, and other personal info) is hidden.

7. In the case of re-accreditation, do you apply a different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions, different standards? Please elaborate on this.

No, we do not apply different procedures or standards in the case of re-authorization. Actually, this approach was advised during last peer visit in December last year and we are still working on it. At the moment no practice to share.

Israel

1. Do you perform separate study programme, group of study programs by field of professional training and/or institutional external evaluations? To what extent are they different and is this effective for ensuring the continuous improvement of quality in VET?

I am not sure about a study. Israel Ministry of Education (MOE) is not doing a research study about quality assurance of VET or on VET itself. Research is done independently by research university and may or may not be connected to Israel MOE. Having said that, my answer to question 2 might elaborate on the effectiveness of the Israel quality assurance of VET system.

I oversee 400 teachers in 200 schools across the country. In these schools around 10,000 pupils (10th - 12th grades - 15-18 years old) and additional 2000 students (13th-14th grades - 18-20 years old) who study mechanical engineering, mechatronics, robotics, CAD-CAM, and engineering maintenance study under my supervision.

In Israel MEO each technology department (e.g.: Software Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Biotechnology Engineering, Industrial and management Engineering) has a national superintendent and team of teacher leaders who work in the field as guides.

2. How is the institutional external evaluation conducted in your country (please elaborate on the process and the evaluation/quality standards applied)?

External evaluation is divided into 2 categories: Site visits and external national examinations.

- a) Site visit: The national superintendent, in the Israel MEO, of a learning subject has a team of teacher leaders who visit schools regularly. The purpose of the visits is to guide teachers, but also to provide information from inspectional perspective.
- b) External national examinations:
 - 1) National superintendent roles: In charge of the development team and authorizes who will be the members of the development teams and of the external assessors. In addition, the national superintendent receives data analyses of the results of each examination for each school.
 - 2) Developing an external Examination: At the end of each year students take external national examinations. The examinations are developed in a centre for assessment of technological subjects which are taught in technological colleges and high schools. The assessment centre assigns, according to the national superintendent's recommendation, to each examination up to 5 members who has at least an engineering academic diploma. These experts are not teaching the subjects which are in the external examination. The development team write the external examination according to the national curriculum of each technological subjects. Each examination includes 9 open questions. The students are required to solve 5 of 9 questions to get the maximum grade. The students have 4 hours to complete solving the examination. Each member of the developing team writes 2-3 questions. They meet in the assessment centre up to 5 times to evaluate the quality of the questions and shape it until the examination is ready. Each examination is then assessed by a linguistic editor who verifies the language accuracy. In the final stage a teacher who was not involved in the composition of the examination comes to the assessment center and has 4 hours to solve the examination. The solution for each question is compared to the solution suggested by the examination team. Then the final examination and solution sheet is checked by the national superintendent and signed. A formal solution assessment scale is produced based on the final solution.
 - 3) Notebooks' Checking procedure: After the students finish the examinations which are done on the same date in the same hours across all schools the students' notebooks are sent to a Centre for external examinations. The notebooks are scanned and distributed to teacher leaders who teach

these subjects but not in the school which the notebooks came from. All the assessors, for each subject, meet to get familiar with the assessment scale that was developed by the examination's development team. Each notebook is assessed according to the scale which was developed. Each notebook is assessed by two different assessors. An average grade is calculated to each question and if it is close enough then the final grade for each notebook is the total average grade (0-100). If there is a gap of more than 10% among the two independent assessors, the notebook is distributed to a third senior assessors to determine the final grade.

- 4) Examination results - data analyses: After the above process is completed all the grades of each question and of each notebook are checked for internal validity of the examination. For each school an average, standard deviation and passing percentages (above 55 is a passing grade) are calculated. In addition, each notebook grade is compared to the school internal final grade for each subject. If the gap between the internal grade and the external examination grade is not higher than 20% the final grade for each student will be calculated as the mean score of the internal school grade and external examination grade.

All these data are sent to the national superintendent who decides which actions to implement. A special appreciation to excellent schools, a special guidance to schools that are in a failure status. If a failure is repeated for more than two years, the national superintendent can close the technological department that was failed.

- 5) Laboratories and project-based learning evaluation: The national superintendent is also responsible to assign for each school for each learning subjects an external evaluator who preform external oral examinations: Labs and projects. The internal school grades and external evaluator's grades are sent in real time to the department of national examination in the MOE. These two types of external evaluation are very important. We believe that technology educations in its best effectiveness is an active learning process. It engages students in laboratory hands-on learning, teamwork, project-based learning. In the two decades we have been continuously improving these learning processes. We developed a students and teacher guide we named: Engineering, System, Iterative, Spiral design based-learning and formative assessment scale (unfortunately I have it only in Hebrew) which is aligned with final oral examination's criteria. For further information about what we have done during the last two decades I recommend that you read the chapter I wrote in this book (I can send you the file of this chapter if you want):

Doppelt, Y., & Barak, M. (2021). Design-based learning in electronics and mechatronics: Exploring the application in schools. In I. Henze, & M. J. D. Vries (Eds.), Design-Based

- 6) Grades from projects and labs' evaluations: The data collected also for these two oral evaluations, like what is performed in the written external assessment. Students' grades, both internal school grades and external evaluator's grades, for each project, and for each lab, for every student, and for every school, is analysed. The national superintendent receives each year the data: internal and external grades, mean score and standard deviation for each school (school level and also up to students' grades), difference between internal and external, percentage of passing grades.

3. How is the selection and training of expert evaluators done in your contexts?

In addition to what is described in the previous section. Teacher leaders are the core of the guidance process, development of the external examination, and assessment of the external examinations. But they are also involved in teacher in-service training. They are also involved in learning materials development.

Another aspect of the role of the national superintendent team is to design the in-service teacher training and learning materials' development. Teachers who are involved in these aspects of creating

a community of teachers who learn from each other and improve their teaching methods and the learning environment of technological classroom are a crucial part of Israel technology education system.

All these aspects of teaching, learning and evaluation are under the responsibility of the national superintendent and his/her leading team. Teachers are not born to become teacher leaders. The national superintendent selects them after they proved:

- Formal academic education and diplomas,
- Teaching experience above 5 years
- On going participation in in-service training for at least 5 years
- A preferred, but not required is being a leader of teacher professional development.

4. What is your follow-up procedure and how is it carried out?

The follow-up procedures are: Creating rich learning opportunities for teacher to become teacher leaders, to get involved in developing learning materials, to design and implement new teach workshops, become part of the external development and assessors' teams, become supervisors.

5. How do you ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit?

School visits are done by the national superintendent and his/her team of teacher leaders informally on a regular basis. Each school is being visited by one of the team members at least three times each year.

The national superintendent assign to each school a guide (instructor, supervisor, teacher leader). During meetings (informal site visits) the guide can:

- Interview teachers and students
- Access information related to the teaching activity, learning materials, internal examination, labs, and project-based learning.
- Attend classes.
- Examine the internal quality assurance system.
- Participate or initiated teacher meetings or even trying to preform school-based in-service training.

An official site visit will be implemented only for the purpose of special appreciation or as a final act, which is rarely occurs, of closing a department in a school.

6. Please, elaborate on the decision-making process and final decisions made as a result of an external evaluation procedure in your context.

As mentioned earlier the final decision in case of continuous failures in the external evaluations is a complex combination of the data collected from the examinations' results, teacher leaders' reports from school visits, and meetings the national superintendent is doing in schools. Important data obtain also regrading percentages of diplomas school succeed in providing to the student at the end of high school and at the end of the technological college. Low percentages could cause a decision of closing a department in school (In the last 12 years we did not close any department in any school because of lower grades or lower percentages of diplomas).

7. In the case of re-accreditation, do you apply a different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions, different standards? Please elaborate on this.

If a school want to reopen or open a technological department there are several aspects the superintendent examine:

- Who are the teachers who will teach? What is their formal education?
- What labs the school provides for the active hands-on learning of technological subjects?
- How many students are going to study in each year in the technological department at school.
- A teacher leader is assigned to guide continuously the teachers in the new department.

(D) Special assessment questions for Forum peers

1. To what extent is the external evaluation procedure described by the Methodology of external evaluation effective for the VET external QA process? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

In my opinion and according to the documents I read and my experience, the external evaluation procedure described by the Methodology of external evaluation is very impressive and should extremely benefit the quality assurance of VET in any country and particularly in Moldova. The strength of the methodology is its comprehensive nature, deep assessment of all the aspects involved in VET. The weakness, from my perspective (a person who works for the MOE and in charge of teacher leaders who get paid to do guidance, learning material development, teacher training and external evaluation and assessment), is enormous time needed to implement this methodology in 200 schools across Israel (Just in my department - probably 2000 schools in all VET education in Israel). Because time is equal to government money, I do not see how I can implement this wide methodology in Israel.

2. How effective is the external evaluation of separate study programs/group of study programs by field of professional training vs. institutional evaluation?

The fact that Moldova has VET schools record the employment and professional development of the graduates of the professional training program is also impressive. In Israel no institute is following the graduates in order to learn if they are employed and in what profession. An engineer can work as a bus driver, and no one will know that this engineer is not working in his/her profession.

Is the decision-making process applied and the final decisions made (authorization / non-authorization for provisional operation, accreditation/non-accreditation) conducive to achieving the overall objective of the external evaluation process of continuous improvement of quality in VET?

It is difficult to fully understand what really Moldova's experts of VET quality assurance are implementing from the methodology which is described in the documents. Nevertheless, even if 50% of this methodology is implemented, I can admire the process and wish we had similar possibilities in Israel to follow up and perform such intensive, comprehensive, wide, and deep quality assurance of VET.

3. Are the evaluation standards (included in the Guidelines) achievable, applicable and relevant for the VET sector?

According to the Annex no. 4 (in this link) this is the most useful insights. If these tables are implemented in the process of quality assurance of Moldova's VET than of course the evaluation standards are applicable and relevant for the VET and for other sectors.

4. Are the evaluation standards (included in the Guidelines) in line with the EQAVET indicators, regarding the external evaluation of VET programs and VET institutions?

In my opinion - yes! To some extent I even find your standards more applicable.

Montenegro

- 1. Do you perform separate study programme, group of study programs by field of professional training and/or institutional external evaluations? To what extent are they different and is this effective for ensuring the continuous improvement of quality in VET?**

Not applicable

- 2. How is the institutional external evaluation conducted in your country (please elaborate on the process and the evaluation/quality standards applied)?**

Determining the quality of educational work in institutions is done according to this Methodology for determining the quality of educational work in institutions, which defines:

- Key areas (according to the specifics of institutions),
- Requirements of standards and indicators (according to the specifics of institutions),
- quality assessment method and
- procedures for determining quality.

The evaluation system, which involves external evaluation, contributes to improving the quality of schoolwork, as it involves assessing all segments of the school's life and work that affect process of learning and learning outcomes. In the reform sense, the quality assurance process follows the trends of the reform process in EU countries, where this process is the focus of attention because it is implemented within defined quality areas in accordance with the adopted standards. The evaluation shows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and focuses its activities on areas where quality improvement is needed. As part of the school's (external) evaluation, it is useful to use the results obtained in the self-evaluation process to more effectively plan school visits and target specific areas of external evaluation. This data is a source for structuring conversations with different participants in the educational process for more effective communication. Using self-evaluation reports, (external) evaluators evaluate the quality and can significantly contribute to its further improvement. The data thus obtained make it possible to redefine the School Development Plan, which contains methods and procedures for achieving short - and long-term goals, as well as monitoring and evaluating its implementation.

- 3. How is the selection and training of expert evaluators done in your contexts?**

First, the criteria for who can be an external evaluator are defined, and then the invitation is published. All those who meet the condition undergo training and enter the database of external evaluators, from which collaborators are later selected to carry out external evaluation.

- 4. What is your follow-up procedure and how is it carried out?**

Evaluation procedures encompass:

- Preparations for the visit to the institution,
- Conducting the visit to the institution,
- Writing report, and
- Post-evaluation activities.

- 5. How do you ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit?**

Institution survey and visit plan

Team leader (with one team member), after agreeing with the director of the institution, conducts the survey among the students, teachers and parents. The survey is done electronically or on paper, depending on the institution's capabilities.

The team leader communicates the survey results to the team members.

The team leader draws up a plan for a visit to the institution, including a schedule for observing classes. The school observes a plan for observing classes, at the beginning of the evaluation.

At the beginning of the visit, the team leader presents the members of the supervisor's team to the director and the institution's expert team and informs them of the team members' assignment schedules, the classes set for observing classes, and the visit plan. The meeting will, as appropriate, coordinate the plan for the visit to the institution and discuss other practical issues relevant to the course of the evaluation (manner of observing teaching and communicating feedback, information on absenteeism and reasons for absenteeism, discussions with students, parents and other interested parties. and the like).

The team of supervisors, jointly or in groups, inspects the facility's premises, together with a representative of the institution, depending on the teaching schedule and visit plan.

The team of supervisors works in a separate room where appropriate documentation has been prepared previously.

Compliance with the house rules of the institution and the Code of Ethics

The members of the team of educational supervisors adhere to the Code of Ethics and the established rules of the institution (prohibiting the consumption of nicotine, alcohol, use of a mobile phone, communication method, etc.). In all procedures and discussions, members of the supervisor team show respect for the institution and the individuals within it. The team leader oversees the Code of Ethics and house rules and informs the head.

Team action

The members of the team of supervisors work harmoniously and prepared, as a team (professional relationship), with mutual trust. During the evaluation, team members do not discuss each other's professional issues with the institution's team. At consultative meetings, supervisory team members should seek to reach consensus on all issues related to the main findings and recommendations. The team leader fosters a climate of consensus and trust, and it is the responsibility of all team members to constructively respect individual opinions and respect the conclusions reached by agreement, based on data.

The manager and team members of the supervisor are responsible in situations where there is a mismatch and disagreement when conducting the evaluation:

- inaccuracies or uncertainties regarding data and data sources,
- when findings reveal personal perceptions and attitudes of supervisors that are not substantiated by data (eg it is not clear why something is claimed ...).

6. Please, elaborate on the decision-making process and final decisions made as a result of an external evaluation procedure in your context.

Following submission of the final evaluation report:

- consideration of reports in the institution at all levels (expert and administrative bodies of the institution, and the Parents Council),
- development of a Plan for improving the quality of educational work after evaluation (hereinafter: the action plan) and its evaluation,

- implementation of the action plan and monitoring of the effects of evaluation - up to quality improvement,
- carrying out a control evaluation for the quality areas that were the subject of the institution's action plan, and above all for those institutions that were rated as 'not satisfactory' and 'satisfactory',
- informing the competent Ministry.

7. In the case of re-accreditation, do you apply a different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions, different standards? Please elaborate on this.

Not applicable

Palestine

- 1. Do you perform separate study programme, group of study programs by field of professional training and/or institutional external evaluations? To what extent are they different and is this effective for ensuring the continuous improvement of quality in VET?**

We perform group evaluations for the study programmes if the programmes are linked to each other in the case of the relativity of the profession and if the same program is provided at different skill level, but in the case of different programmes by the relativity a separate evaluation is done for each program. The group and separate evaluation for the study programmes is done in this way to assure the quality of the provided programmes in the institution and it's up to date with the evolution of the labour market needs and the skill provided reflect the reality of these program subjects.

- 2. How is the institutional external evaluation conducted in your country (please elaborate on the process and the evaluation/quality standards applied)?**

The evaluation is done at two steps the first one is done through self-evaluation by the institution and it considers the foundation for the later external evaluation, and the external evaluation is done by an expert team that is formed to study and evaluate the institute, the expert team has a maximum of three months to write the evaluation report showing the point of strength, weakness and what is needed to be modified or cancel to assure the quality of the provided training and education.

- 3. How is the selection and training of expert evaluators done in your contexts?**

Unfortunately, it's mostly done by government employees who had been employed for this task which you can sometime doubt their accumulated experience and their follow up to the real labour market evolution and needs. And other members mostly are trainers from VET institutions and academics from universities and colleges and they are mostly selected by their resume showing the field of experience, with minor contribution by employers which we consider a weak point in the evaluation teams.

- 4. What is your follow-up procedure and how is it carried out?**

The follow-up is done by districts directorate of the responsible stockholders and carried out by scheduled site visit to follow-up with the team of expert recommendation if it is modified or not.

- 5. How do you ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit?**

The team of experts conduct site visit in this visit a series of interviews is conducted and technical review for labs, workshops and classrooms is done to measure the provided competencies for the trainer, to ensure the field is done according to the regulation a pre-visit meeting is done to make it assure that the expert team is aware of the duty they are involved in, and ensure the accuracy of the data and the information a meeting is conducted after the visit between the expert team and the internal evaluation team to discuss the first draft of the evaluation report.

- 6. Please, elaborate on the decision-making process and final decisions made as a result of an external evaluation procedure in your context.**

The expert team has three months after the field visit to write a final report which will be represented to the committee of Accreditation and quality assurance to take the final which will be discussed to approve it formally and after that this report cannot be changed and modified.

- 7. In the case of re-accreditation, do you apply a different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions, different standards? Please elaborate on this.**

If the re-accreditation is needed due to the end of the validity time period for the programmes this re-accreditation is done as same as the any new accreditation process, and in the case of it has been stopped due to different note on the quality provided education and training below the regulation if this note is fixed in given period of time the accreditation is kept if not the institution should start new process with the involved stockholders.

Tunisia

- 1. Do you perform separate study programme, group of study programs by field of professional training and/or institutional external evaluations? To what extent are they different and is this effective for ensuring the continuous improvement of quality in VET?**

There is a same institutional external evaluation applied to all study programs. However, some specific procedures are added within the evaluation process of study programs in the fields of health care. For the specialities in this field, an authorisation should be provided by the ministry of health before starting the training session.

- 2. How is the institutional external evaluation conducted in your country (please elaborate on the process and the evaluation/quality standards applied)?**

The institutional external evaluation called "diploma homologation" (accreditation) is stipulated by law. The process includes analysis of some requirements items (training infrastructure, equipment, trainers, trainees' assessment modalities, labour market needs assessment) then audit visit by expert and finally judgement by a national committee based on the expert report. In our context, we have the particularity that for public training institutions, there is no audit visit, we are limited to the analysis of the demand to judge the relevance and quality of the training.

- 3. How is the selection and training of expert evaluators done in your contexts?**

In our context, expert evaluators are selected from a list of experimented public trainers or professionals in the requested field. There is no specific training provided to them to accomplish their audit mission.

- 4. What is your follow-up procedure and how is it carried out?**

The follow-up procedure is also stipulated by law. It means, after a period of 5 years the training institution should submit a new demand of homologation and then the institutional external evaluation would be carried out again. Nevertheless, in this period of 5 years, the ministry carries out as frequent as possible audit visits to the institution to observe its work according to its file of homologation (accreditation).

- 5. How do you ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit?**

The ministry of employment and vocational training is responsible of the organization and conduct of the site visit in terms of logistics, selection of expert evaluators and time of visit.

- 6. Please, elaborate on the decision-making process and final decisions made as a result of an external evaluation procedure in your context.**

As said in the answer number 2, the decision-making process and final decisions are made by a national committee based on the expert report. The latter committee is composed by different stakeholders of the VET system such as social partners, representatives of private VET sector and public VET sectors (agriculture, health, tourism and defence).

- 7. In the case of re-accreditation, do you apply a different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions, different standards? Please elaborate on this.**

The re-accreditation or the conduct of homologation is applied as said in the answer number 4 after a period of 5 years and pursues the same steps as the initial study of the demand.

Türkiye

1. Do you perform separate study programme, group of study programs by field of professional training and/or institutional external evaluations? To what extent are they different and is this effective for ensuring the continuous improvement of quality in VET?

MoNE responsible for defining guidelines, mechanisms, procedures for VET school evaluation comprising of self-assessment and external evaluation tools; identifying training needs of external evaluators and designing capacity building programmes.

VET schools are subject to a fully and general external evaluation at least once every five years. External evaluations based on four phases: pre-evaluation visit, on-site external evaluation lasting between two or three days, post-evaluation report, post-evaluation support.

The external evaluations lead to the formulation of recommendations and advice for improving the performance of VET schools.

Within the framework of QA and the efforts to define strategies for monitoring and evaluation Education and VET system, MoNE has undertaken a substantial reform with the establishment of internal and external school assessment procedures.

In 2019 MoNE enacted the Quality Assurance Directive of the Vocational and Technical Education Institutions, dated 09/05/2019 and numbered 9214498;

The QA model comprises:

- A yearly self-assessment carried out by each educational institution with the aim to develop an annual strategic action plan documenting policies, strategies and roadmap for improvement and implementing activities;
- External evaluation performed by an evaluation team on average of at least once of every 5 years in order to provide an external perspective to validate or challenge the institutions' own findings;
- Feedback: the external evaluation report is shared with the education institutions by the General Directorate.

2. How is the institutional external evaluation conducted in your country (please elaborate on the process and the evaluation/quality standards applied)?

The external assessment is the second components of the Quality Assurance System Directive set by MoNE. The main characteristics can be summarised as follows:

Conducted on every 5 years, it is based on a guide where goal, scope, objectives and implementation procedures have been defined. Specifically, the external assessment is intended to "*...guide the determination of the current and potential situations of educational institutions and the establishment of a quality assurance system...*"

The educational institutions to be evaluated externally and the dates of external evaluation are determined by the General Directorate and communicated to the relevant Provincial Education Directorate and necessary announcements are made to the educational institutions.

General Directorate (Headquarters). MoNE has the responsibility of:

- selecting and appointing the external evaluation team;
- defining the evaluation plan;
- managing the formal communication with the Provincial Education Directorates);
- giving feedback to the education institutions on the results of the external evaluation

Provincial Education Directorates is in charge of coordinating the external evaluation at schools level; supporting the assessment teams in terms of transportation and accommodation, if necessary.

Education Institutions is in charge of:

- making arrangement for the logistics in order to facilitate the external evaluation (availability of computer, internet, consumable, printer);

- providing all the requested documents (self-assessment report and action plan, evidences and other document deemed necessary);
- arranging the site visits in the field/group/department/units of the educational institution

Areas/indicators to be used for external assessment purposes:

- 1) Educational Institution Management.
- 2) Human Resources Management
- 3) Education-Training
- 4) Partnership and Resources
- 5) Facility and Equipment

The quality monitoring tools, which include VET schools self-assessment and external evaluation are currently in the process of revision.

3. How is the selection and training of expert evaluators done in your contexts?

The external evaluators teams consist of

- personnel or sector representatives who have been trained to conduct external evaluations and assigned by the General Directorate;
- lead evaluators and evaluators

Industry representatives may be included in the evaluation team.

Main tasks refer to the evaluation of evidences mentioned in the self-assessment and action plan report; site visits, interviews with the education institution team; drafting objectives and unambiguous conclusions; filling in the final external assessment report and keeping the results confidentially.

The External evaluation team are determined and assigned by the General Directorate. The team consists of chief evaluators and evaluators are who personnel or sector representatives, trained to conduct external evaluations.

Chief evaluators are determined from among the principals, assistant principals and teachers working in educational institutions affiliated to the General Directorate.

Approvals of the relevant authorities and assignment letters of the personnel who will serve as evaluators are sent to the Provincial National Education Directorates and announced to the institutions and evaluators.

4. What is your follow-up procedure and how is it carried out?

The duties of all institutions, including follow-up procedures, are clearly defined.

Evaluation team: carry out by the external evaluators and prepare the external report to be submitted to DG VET.

Educational institutions: plan, prepare, implement self-assessment processes at school level; draft the self-assessment report and the action plan to be sent to the provincial directorate of national education for checking; implement the action plan;

Provincial Education Directorates: the main tasks include checking the conformity of the self-evaluation reports and action plans prepared by the educational institutions according to the MoNE DG VET template.

General Directorate: Main duties refer to: the definition of the processes and criteria for quality assurance; the support and guide to educational institutions for the implementation of self-evaluation processes; training of evaluators; ensure cooperation and coordination with the relevant Ministry units and other institutions and organizations in the establishment and operation of the quality assurance system.

The external evaluation draft report is shared with the educational institution within 10 days from the completion of the external evaluation by the evaluation team, and the report is finalized by taking the opinions of the educational institution on the draft report; it will be sent then to the General Directorate.

The opinions received from the educational institution regarding the report are evaluated within 5 days.

After making the final checks of the external evaluation reports, the evaluators team leader gives final approval forwards the report to the General Directorate. After the approval process, the report cannot be withdrawn, and no editing can be done on the report.

The external evaluation report cannot be shared with any person or institution other than the General Directorate.

5. How do you ensure the efficient organization and conduct of the site visit?

Three are the main phases of the external evaluation:

1. document analysis,
2. schools visits which may include interviews, classroom observation,
3. inspection of VET schools activities, premises and documents)

Methods and process, which reflect the PDCA cycle (plan, implementation, evaluation, and review) coherent with the self-assessment process carried out by the VET schools.

For each phase of the cycle, external assessment conducted on performance indicators with a final score and judgment assigned to each indicator and to each focus question.

Instant data is received and monitored through the online portal. In addition, a mutual survey will be conducted both for the evaluated institutions and for the evaluators.

6. Please, elaborate on the decision-making process and final decisions made as a result of an external evaluation procedure in your context.

The implementation of the schools self-assessment and external evaluation is under the aegis of MoNE DG VET.

Provincial Education Directorate has controlling tasks, whereas the evaluation and final decision for approval of the self-assessment report and the action plan are in the hands of MoNE DG VET.

7. In the case of re-accreditation, do you apply a different procedure of external evaluation of VET study programs and/or institutions, different standards? Please elaborate on this.

N/A

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