

DELMVET

DEVELOPING AN EFFICIENT LOCALLY MANAGED MODEL OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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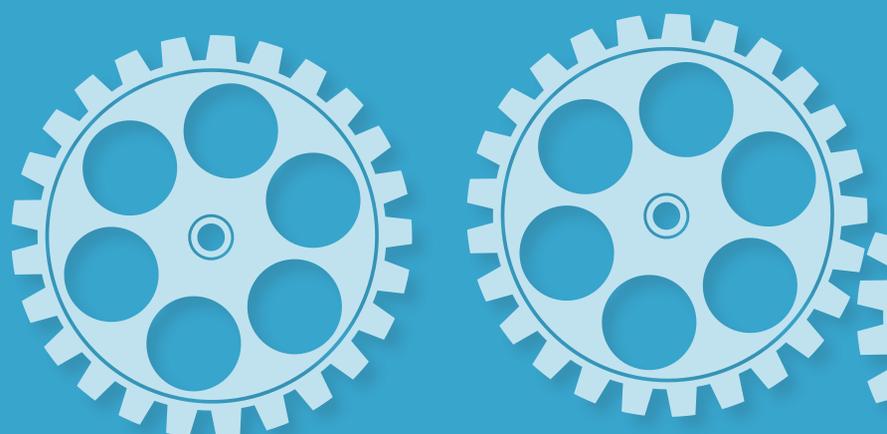


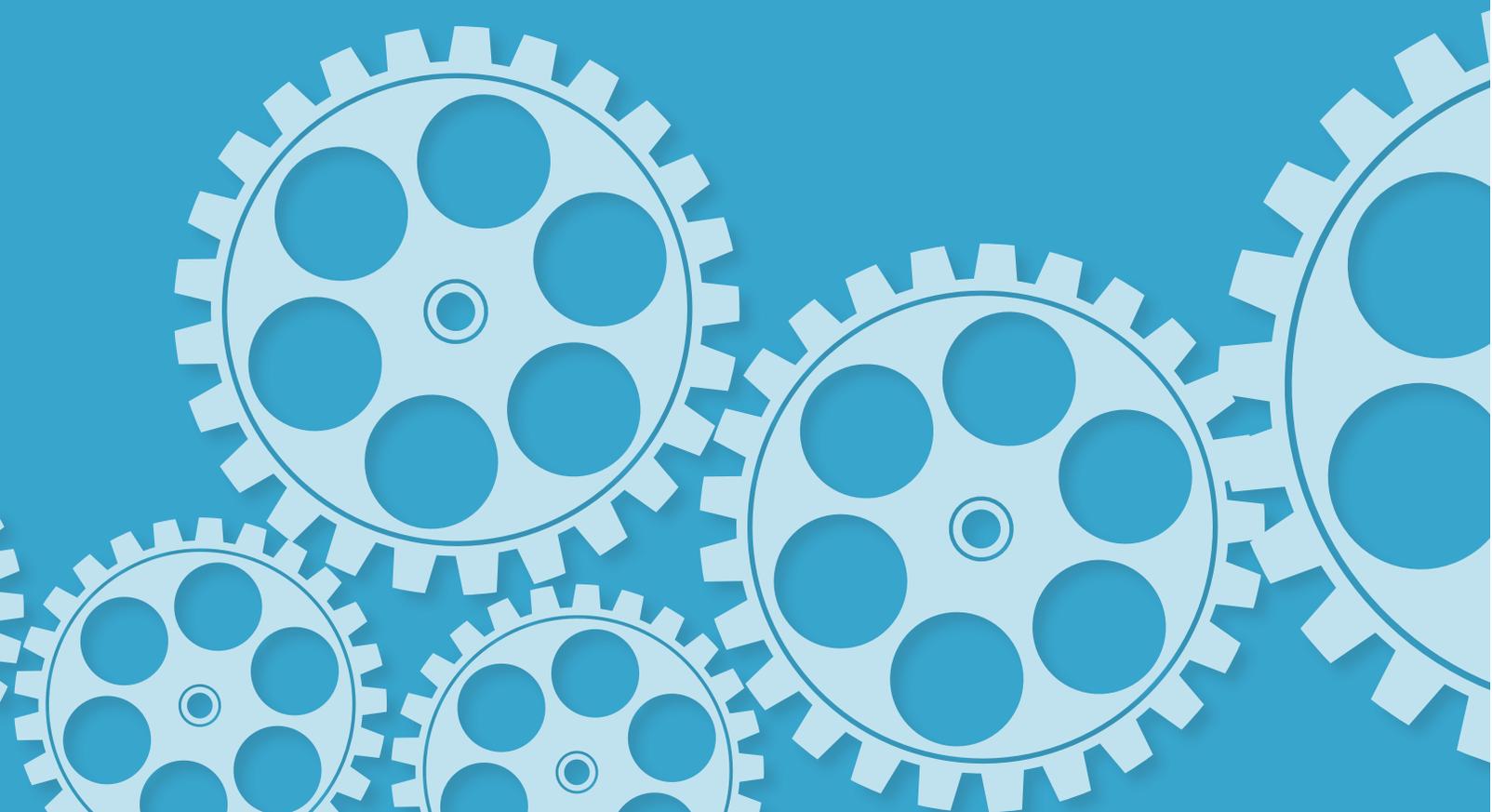
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

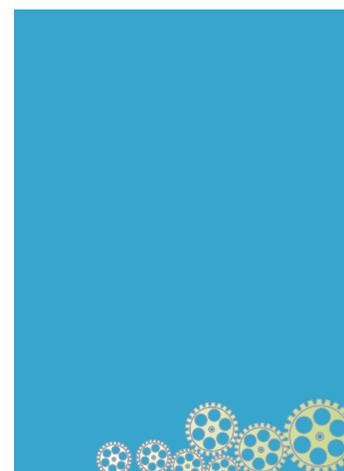
The present publication contains contributions from different Italian and Albanian organizations working in the field of vocational education and training. Its main goal is to provide the basis for a serious and articulated proposal for the establishment of a Locally Managed VET system in the Adriatic Ionian Macro Region.

The opening chapters are intended to offer a synthetic picture of the Italian VET system, with a specific focus on the Marche Region, as a partner of the Project DELMVET, now at its final stages. The contents of the studies reflect the European approach underlying this publication, giving particular attention to crucial issues as the certification of competences anywhere acquired, the referencing process to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and to the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), the definition of criteria and minimum standards to ensure quality in the provision of education and vocational training services, the accreditation procedures for institutions and professionals working in the field of vocational education and training, etc..

In order to promote the transfer of tools and approaches successfully tested in European Countries with a longer experience in the field of VET, this publication proposes a detailed investigation of the process that, in Italy, has led to a progressive homogenization of the Regional contexts within the national regulatory framework, with a review of the main policies and a careful description of the results achieved so far and of the challenges still to be faced. The study is completed by the description of some useful tool in use in the Italian VET system and in the Marche Region.

Specifically, the second chapter outlines the reasons and contents of an instrument, the Education and Training Portfolio of the citizen (*Libretto formativo del cittadino*), which aims to become a key tool in the promotion of the mobility of citizens and workers both across Italian Regions and in a transnational dimension. The fourth chapter is devoted to the presentation of a model for higher technical education and training, with a description of relevant experiences already carried out in the Marche Region, in order to promote the transparency of results and their future applicability in other contexts. Finally, the fifth chapter offers a review of the policy framework in the Marche Region, with a summary of the guidelines set out by the competent Regional Authority for the management and provision of a qualified and effective training offer.

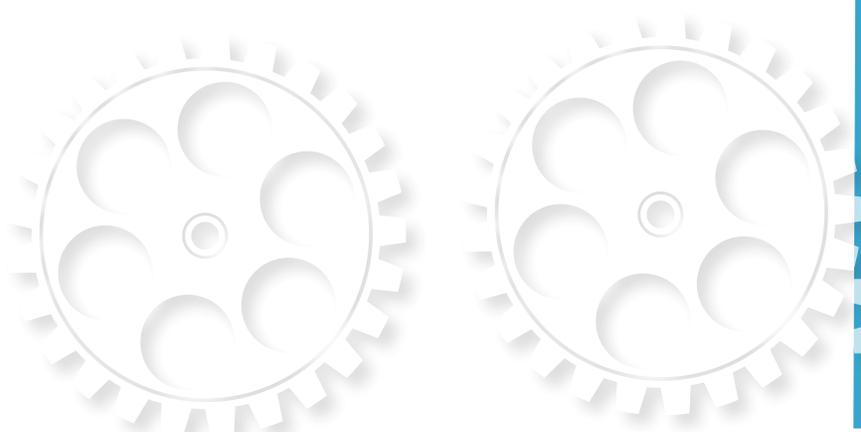
At the end of this survey on the Italian vocational training system, the sixth chapter is dedicated to the European Union's strategy *Europe 2020*, aiming at creating the conditions for a smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive growth. The strategy establishes five key objectives to be achieved by the end of the decade, covering the field of employment, education, research and innovation, social inclusion and poverty reduction, climate change and sustainable energy, and providing the framework through which the



European authorities and Member States will mutually reinforce their efforts to support the European priorities.

Based on these premises, the last chapters of this publication are finally intended to assess the feasibility of a locally managed VET system in Albania and, specifically, in the Durres Region. The two contributions illustrate in detail the historical process that has led to the current Albanian VET system, with its strengths and weaknesses, and offer a clear and documented proposal to be implemented in the Durres Region through the involvement of national and local authorities and in close cooperation with other relevant stakeholders (third parties, enterprises, national and international donors, etc..).

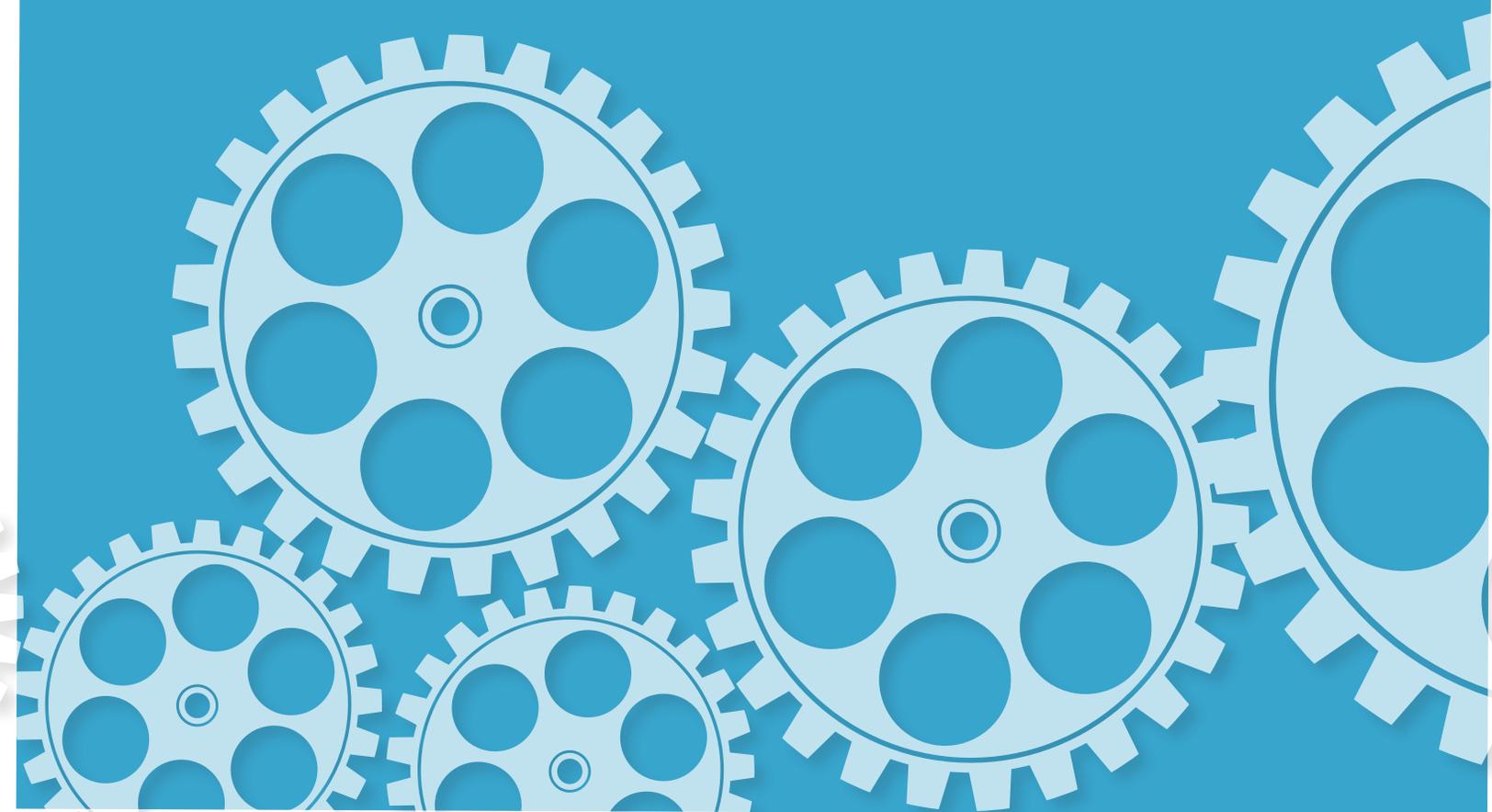
This publication is the latest step of a journey begun two years ago with the launch of the Project DELMVET – Developing an Efficient Locally Managed Model of Vocational Education and Training, funded by the IPA - Adriatic Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007 – 2013. In order to have a comprehensive picture of the framework of activities carried out within the DELMVET Project, we therefore recommend reading the other two manuals published within the project, entitled *Toward a Cross Border Network VET in the Adriatic Ionian Macro Region* and *VET and local labour market needs in the Adriatic Ionian Macro Region*.

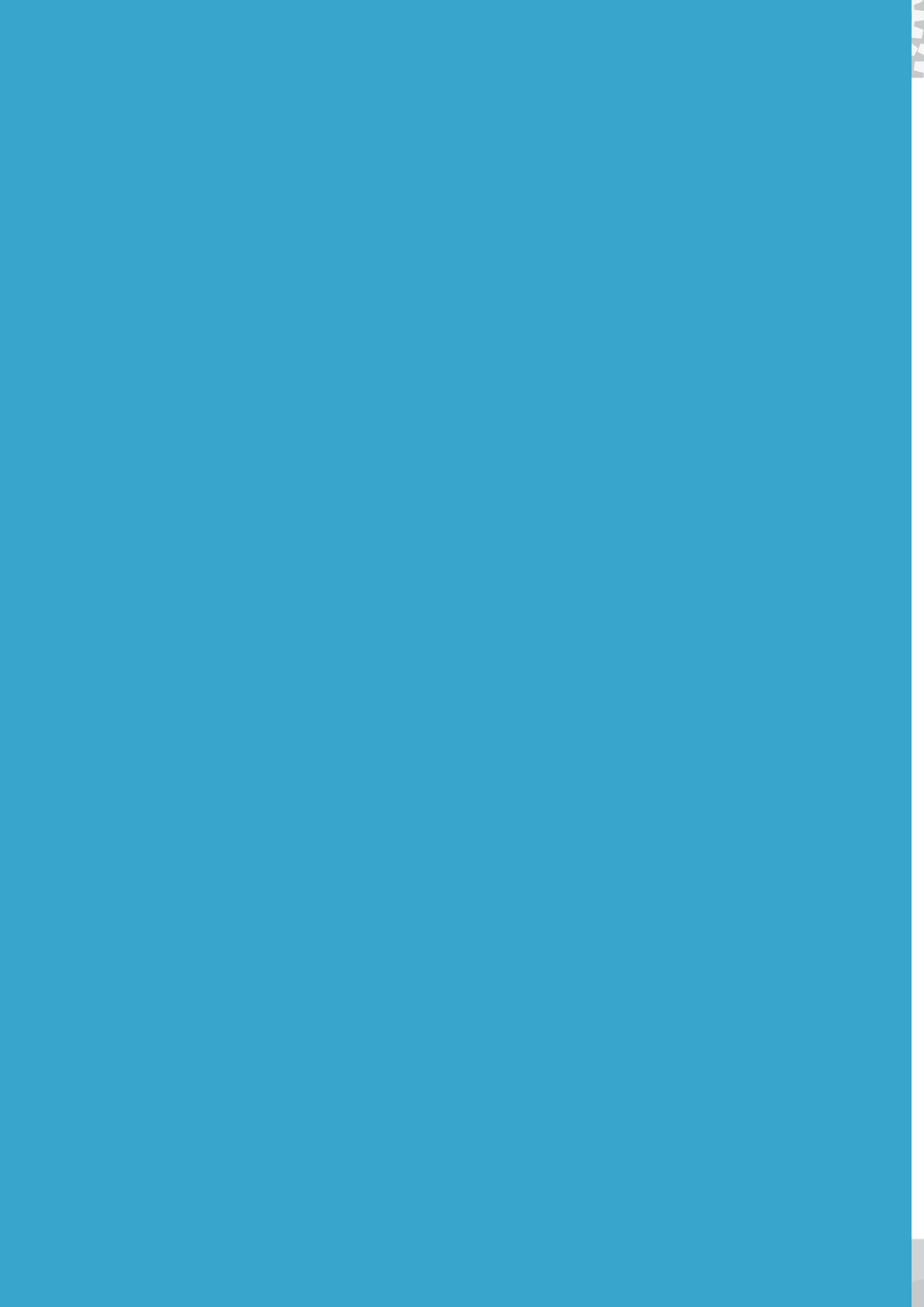


I.

THE ITALIAN CONTEXT
IN THE LIGHT
OF THE EUROPEAN
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE CERTIFICATION
OF PROFESSIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS

COOSS Marche Onlus,
Italy





1.1 Italian legislative framework

The Italian Constitutional Law no. 3/2001 gives exclusive competence in the definition of general rules in the field of education to the State, through the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR). According to the constitutional framework, Regions have exclusive competence in vocational education and training while the training offer is mainly realized through the devolution and delegation of functions and responsibilities to Provinces and accredited training institutions. In the meantime, the State is in charge of defining the essential levels of services ensuring citizens' civil and social rights across the national territory.

The Italian context is characterized by a plurality of measures aimed at the definition of criteria for the certification of learning outcomes and the recognition/validation of competences anywhere acquired in terms of credits specifically referred to different levels and types of education (IFTS, compulsory education, higher school education, graduate education) while the first main legislative act regarding the certification of competences within the system of vocational training is the Ministerial Decree no. 7/2001.

The Decree was designed in order to ensure the transparency of learning paths and the validation of competences, giving a clear definition of *certifiable competence* and describing a set of minimum standards, in order to guarantee the minimum basis for the certification over the national territory. The law allowed the recording, in the education and training portfolio of the citizen¹, of the competences acquired:

- at the end of a vocational training course generally aimed to the acquisition of a qualification;
- as result of a partial training course attendance;
- as result of a course not leading to the acquisition of a qualification;
- as result of a work experience or a self-training.

Regions were given the responsibility over the certification process and the recognition of credits, within the national policy framework designed for vocational education and training.

Moreover, the Legislative Decree no. 276/2003 (implementation of the Law no. 30/2003 and integration of the State-Regions Agreement of 2000 and the DM no. 174/2001) provided:

the description of the background of the education and training portfolio of the citizen, result of a close collaboration between the MLSP and the MIUR, upon agreement with the Unified Conference State-Regions and the social partners;
the definition of the objectives and contents of the education and training

¹ For more information on the Education and training portfolio of the citizen (*Libretto Formativo del cittadino*) see the following chapter of this publication.

portfolio, conceived as personal document for the recording of “the competences acquired during training in apprenticeship, training in placement contracts, specialist training and continuous training performed throughout the working life and carried out by accredited subjects from the Regions, as well as the competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning contexts according to the European Union Recommendations in lifelong learning, provided that are recognized and certified”.

Following what was stated by the art. no. 2, subparagraph i), of the above described Legislative Decree, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy therefore sat up a specific working group with the task of:

- identifying the constituent elements of a proposal for the training booklet, intended as an instrument for the transparency of competences, whose elaboration was intended to be made taking into account:
 - a. the limitations and constraints currently constituted by the incomplete state of the harmonization process at national level on minimum standards, recognition and certification of skills;
 - b. the EU indications on transparency of qualifications (in particular the Decision of the 12/15/2004 “Unified EU Framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences – Europass);
 - c. what had been already developed in specific contexts in terms of transparency of competences (in particular compared to Regional experiences).
- delineating and defining in detail a format for the portfolio, planning a first testing phase in the Regions and Autonomous Provinces.

1.2 The European Qualification Framework and ECVET

The establishment of European Qualifications Framework (EQF) dates back to 2008. The EQF was created with the specific purpose of allowing a clear comparison of professional qualifications across EU Member States, on the basis of three main considerations:

- a. Complexity of knowledge (knowledge)
- b. Complexity of technical skills (skills)
- c. Levels of ability concerning the performance of tasks (competences)

On the basis of the principles set out above, the existing qualifications have been therefore classified in eight levels, each one corresponding to a specific type and moment of education.

With the establishment of the ECVET System in 2009², the learning is structured in 'learning units', each one conceived as coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences that can be assessed and validated allowing the recognition of credits able to be accumulated in order to form a qualification. The recognition of learning outcomes using a credit system is intended to allow the comparison of the skills acquired by people through the analysis of two main elements:

- a. Contents of the learning units;
- b. The study-time required for the acquisition of each learning unit.

In Italy, the EU's Recommendations have been adopted despite the permanence of several problems related to the complexity and heterogeneity of the national VET system. In order to depict a comprehensive picture of the Italian situation, two tables are presented hereby, regarding the national structure regulating the field of vocational education and training.

1.3 The Italian education and VET system

The Italian education system has been regulated by national laws progressively aiming at the definition of a unified organizational structure concerning the processes for the acquisition of competences, the validation and certification of skills and the attribution of credits.

² ECVET, acronym of European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training

Education and initial VET

Obligation / optional	Education Level		Type of Institution	
Optional	Preschool		----	
Obligation	Primary School		----	
Obligation	Secondary School	1° degree	Ex Middle school	
<p>The compulsory training is completed by remaining within the education system for 10 years (5+3+2).</p> <p>The right-duty to education (<i>diritto/dovere all'istruzione</i>) is completed with other 2 years - achievement of a vocational qualification or an apprenticeship contract (from 15 years) leading to a qualification (3 years) or a professional diploma (4 years)</p>		2° degree	Lyceum and Technical School	
		2° degree	IP- Training School	
		2° degree	leFP – Instruction Education and Vocational Education	
Optional	Higher Education	1° course	University: the first three years of study	
		2° course	University: the next two years of study	
		3° course	Doctorates, master, specialization course	
			AFAM-High Artistic and Musical Education	
			IFTS(1) – Higher Education and Technical Training ¹	
		ITS (2) – Technical Higher Education ²		

1 IFTS, acronym of the italian Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore

	Length of courses	Age of students	Verification of the competences	Typology of the Certified competences	Certification
	3 years	3-5 y.			-----
	5 years	6-10 y.			-----
	3 years	11-13 y.	State Exam	The basic skills required by the European Recommendation of 12/18/2006: languages, mathematics, science, historical-social area. Also key competences: learning to learn, plan, communicate, collaborate, etc.)	Primary School Diploma
	5 years	14-18 a.	State Exam		Diploma SS
	2 + 3 + 1 year	14-18 y.	State Exam		Diploma SS
	3 o 4 years	14-16 y.	Regional Exam	Certified competences are: a) Basic skills: (language, scientific, mathematical, technological, historical-social, economic); b) Technical-Professional: safety, quality, health and the environment c) Technical-Professional: related to the professional figure	Professional Qualification(3 years) Professional Degree (4 years)
	3 years	19 -22 y.	State Exams	To achieve the degree are required 180 credits accumulated during the exams to which are added an internship and a thesis discussion	Degree
	2 years	23 -24 y.	State Exams	For the degree are required 120 credits accumulated with the exams and the discussion of a research thesis	Master Degree
	1,2 e 3 years	24 – 26 y.	Doctoral theses and discussion		Specialist Degree
	3 + 2 +1			Structured as the University System	
	800 hours	_____	Regional Exam	The certificate issued is linked to the Regional qualifications system. Training courses are designed in unit of competency and relate to the following areas: agriculture, industry, crafts, tourism, public and private transport services public of social interest, insurance and financial services.	Certificate of specialisation
	2000 hours	_____		National reference Repertoire (DPCM 25 January 2008) concerning technological areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies for the quality of life, new technologies for Made in Italy, innovative technologies for tourism, information and communication technology	High School Technical Degree

- IFTS courses are designed by Regions and run by networks of: Universities, Institutes for Secondary Education, Training Institutions and Agencies.
- ITS are designed at national level and run by network of: Foundation's, training agencies, companies, scientific department and Local Authorities.

The bodies in charge of the training offer are schools and VET institutions recognized by the Ministry of Education, in order to ensure the homogenization to the various sectors of the education system.

On the field of further and continuing VET, the Italian contexts hasn't reach yet that harmonization that characterizes the initial VET system thanks to the central role of the Ministry of Education, University and research, coordinating the various components of the system also through Regional and Provincial scholastic offices.

According to the national legislation, further and continuing VET courses are designed in order to respond to the specific socioeconomic and training needs of each Region and Autonomous Province.

Over the last years, each Region has therefore drawn up its own "Repertoire of Qualifications", whose validity is generally limited to the local level despite existing and ongoing interregional cooperation projects.

The VET offer is designed in order to responds to two main needs:

contributing to the professional development of individual and inclusion of workers/citizens into the labour market, particularly referring to vulnerable and weak groups;

providing workers with opportunities for the acquisition and upgrading of specific professional skills and competences, in line with labour market needs and economic changes.

The different types of vocational training courses are classified in the table below:

Type of Training	Type of Courses	Classification	Length of courses	Verification of professional competences	Certified competences	Certification
POST-DIPLOMA	Accessible after earning Primary School Diploma	First Level Qualification	400 – 1000 hours	Regional Exam		Certificate of professional qualification
POST-QUALIFICATION	Accessible after earning Professional Qualification or ISS Diploma	Second Level Qualification	400 – 1000 hours	Regional Exam		Certificate of professional qualification
POST-GRADUATE	Accessible after earning a degree	Postgraduate	300 – 800 hours	Regional Exam		Certificate of specialisation
PERMANENT VOCATIONAL TRAINING	Accessible to all	Updating Course	36 – 100 hours	Verification tests by the Training Agency	<i>*Certification individual skills (Acc. Stato Regioni 19/04/2012)</i>	Certificate of Attendance

The definition of the vocational training offer in the field of further and continuing VET is under the responsibility of Regions. Training courses are financed with public funding (e.g. ESF) through open calls for proposals and managed by accredited training providers.

For training intervention addressing workers/employees of specific enterprises, funding opportunities are offered also by inter-professional funds (e.g. Fondartigianato, Foncoop, Fondimpresa, etc..)

1.4 The certification of competences in Italy

The State-Regions Agreement of 19/04/2012, in accordance with the main EU recommendations in the field of the certification of competences, defines the competence as “the minimum certifiable element” of a learning process, describing it following specific guidelines herein summarized:

- a. the person is at the centre of the certification process, aimed at recognizing the skills acquired by individuals in a Lifelong Learning perspective, with a view of facilitating the integration of citizen into the labour market, increasing the mobility of learners and workers and the flexibility of training paths and improving the competitiveness of human resources and enterprises;
- b. certification is a public act and its public nature is guaranteed by the competent Public Authorities (State, Region, Provinces), in accordance with the specific regulating system;
- c. the national certification system is defined in accordance to minimum standards of services valid throughout the national territory in accordance with the principles of accessibility, confidentiality, transparency, objectivity and traceability³.

Considering that activities, experiences, courses and procedures for the acquisition of professional competences are not taken into considerations during the certification process, the key concepts of the State-Regions Agreement are summarized as follows:

- The object of certification is the competence;
- Aggregates of competences related to parts of a professional profile/qualification may also be certified and accumulated in view of composing entire profiles/qualifications;
- Certified competences can be capitalized to attain degrees and qualifications, given that the figures/profiles they refer to are already described in terms of competences;

³ The Agreement of 19/04/2012 defines also the basic terms to be used in accordance to the terminology adopted at European level: 1) Competence: proven ability to use learning outcomes (knowledge, skills/ability) in a work or study situations, both in professional and personal life; 2) Validation of competences: the confirmation, by a competent body, of the skills acquired by a person in formal, non-formal or informal contexts on the basis of pre-established criteria and standards. Validation is generally followed by certification; 3) Certification of competences: the entire process of issuing a certificate, a diploma or a title formally attesting, after assessment and validation by a Public Authority against a predefined standard, that a set of competences has been acquired by an individual; 4) Formal learning: learning that occurs in an organized, structured and explicitly designated learning environment (intentional from the learner's perspective) and normally leading to a certification; 5) Non-formal learning: learning occurred in an organized and planned framework of activities not especially designed as learning environment. It is intentional from the learner's perspective and its outcomes may be validated and certified; 6) Informal learning: learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. In most of cases, informal learning is not intentional from the learner's perspective, but it might be recognized, assessed and validated with a view of acquiring a certification.

- To certify a competence or aggregates of competences a standard reference is needed;
- Certified competences can be referred to existing Regional and/or national Repertoires publicly recognized and accessible electronically;
- The mutual readability and transferability of different Repertoires of qualifications requires the shared adoption of the following descriptors:
 - description/denomination (object, context, figure/profile description);
 - level (EQF);
 - reference to other national systems (ATECO, NUP);
 - working process/areas of activity;
 - competences (minimum elements of competence, structured in ability/skills and knowledge).
- Certification is a public act distinct from other forms of validation not recognized by the Public Authority (even if carried out according to standard procedures and methods). The public character of certification is assured by the Public Authority (State, Autonomous Provinces, Regions), also when activities are managed through accredited private companies.

On the basis of these premises, on the 19 of April 2012 the State-Regions Conference approved a further Agreement establishing a national system of certification for the apprenticeship. The acceptance of the EQF principles is made clear by several important references:

- the terminology in use in the Agreement, corresponding to the one proposed at EU level (definitions of learning outcomes, types of formal, non-formal and informal learning, the concepts of validation, assessment and recognition of prior learning, etc..);
- the definition of the competence as the minimum elements of certification that can be accumulated and aggregated in view of forming entire figures/profiles through the reference to national and/Regional Repertoires and in compliance with the EQF level and the principle of learning outcomes;
- the certification process requires the identification, assessment and certification of skills from formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The Agreement on apprenticeship is of particular importance both for the progressive adaptation of the Italian system to the EU framework and for the internal development of the apprenticeship system, where the certification of learning outcomes had been a weakness over the past years. The law on Apprenticeship is equally important to define general policies on the certification of competences, considering the following three categories of apprenticeship courses:

- a. *apprenticeship for the achievement of a qualification and/or a professional diploma*, addressed to young people between 15 and 25 years. If aimed at the achievement of a professional qualification (in accordance with Law no. 53/2003) its duration cannot exceed three years. If aimed at the acquisition of a professional degree, its duration is four-year.

- b. *professional apprenticeship or craft contract*, addressed to young people between 18 and 29 years old. Collective agreements define the duration of the contract (which must not last for more than three years), the contents of the training, the methodology to be used, the equipment needed, etc... As result of the training, it is possible for the learner to obtain a Regional qualification, a competence certification or a recognition of the qualification for working purposes;
- c. *apprenticeship for higher education and research*, addressed to people between 18 and 29 years old engaged in all sectors, both public and/or private. It is aimed at obtaining higher educational qualifications (secondary education, certification IFTS/ITS and university degrees, including a doctorate), the acquisition of professional experience in research as well as the traineeship for access to the professions.

At national level, the latest step towards the establishment of a national system for the certification of competences is the Legislative Decree No. 13/2013, defining the general norms and the basic levels of performance for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and the definition of minimum standards of service within the national certification system.

The Decree follows and specifies the art. 4 of the Law no. 92/2012, both requiring the identification of guidelines for the definition of indicators, thresholds and methods for monitoring, evaluating and verifying the compliance with the minimum standards levels of service across the national system and the definition of criteria for the implementation of a national Repertoire of qualifications to be used as referencing framework, in a European perspective.

Minimum standards of process: a) clear identification of competences, including the non-formal and informal learning; b) evaluation, verification of competences through appropriate tests; c), attestation, through the release of validation documents or standardised certificates.

Minimum standards of attestation: a) the validation documents and the certificates issued must contain the following data: personal data; the data of the public body or the qualified authority with the indication of the normative references to authorization or accreditation; the acquired competences with the denomination and the repertoire and the qualifications of reference. The qualifications are described in accordance with the EQF: EQF level, reference to ATECO code (economic areas) and to CP ISTAT (classification of professional units)

Minimum Standard of system: adoption of one or more repertoires linked to qualifications related to the respective areas; information measures, professional staff involved and evaluation methodology; functionality of an information system in a single reporting structure.

The chapter III of the legislation institutes the National Repertoire of the Education Profiles, Training and Professional Qualifications. The Repertoire is conceived as unitary framework for skills certification in a view of a gradual standardisation of the essential elements for the recognition of credits in a European perspective. The national repertoire, affirms the law, consists of all the repertoires of:

- Education and training profiles, including professional qualification;
- Apprenticeship profiles (Decree no. 167/2011).

The constitution of the Repertoire has to follow the minimum standards set out below:

- Involvement of a qualified public body;
- Identification of qualifications and relevant skills as included in the Repertoire;
- referencing to ATECO and CP ISTAT system;
- Reference to the EQF.
- The Repertoire is accessible online.

In some European Countries the EU directives have found fertile ground and the classifications stated by EQF and ECVET are reflected in National Repertoires though the detailed description of competences, knowledge and skills. In Italy, in the absence of a comprehensive regulatory national framework, European recommendations have been implemented in some Italian Regions though experimental projects differentiated from territory to territory.

1.5 VET in the Marche Region

The situation in the Marche Region is here illustrated following a chronological order, with the aim of reconstructing the main stages that have led to the designing and implementation of the current training system.

A first step towards the regulation of the VET system has been done with the Regional Decree no. 62/2001 setting up the Regional Device for the accreditation of training centres (DAFORM) and the resolution no. 2164/2001 including national provisions contained in the Ministerial Decree 166/2001 on the accreditation of training agencies. The regulation affirm that training activities financed with public funds have to be run by accredited bodies in order to ensure quality, transparency and traceability of training activities and learning processes, then extended to authorized initiatives under the law no. 16/1990.

The need of ensuring quality to the VET system was pursued also by the Regional Decree 1071/2005, including the provisions of the Ministerial Decree no. 174/2001 and requiring the accreditation of VET professional and the possession of minimum professional requirements, traduced in “minimum standards of

professional skills” certifiable by the Regional Authority. The certification of competences is done through the examination of the CV of the VET professional working for accredited providers. Both education, training and work experiences in VET related fields are considered during the evaluation. The competences that can be certified are nine, related to different functions that human resources can assume in the delivery of training services. The table of the next page summarizes the macro-typologies of training courses provided in the Marche Region and the related procedures for the certification of competences.

MACRO TYPOLOGY OF TRAINING	SPECIFIC TYPE OF TRAINING	CERTIFICATION ACQUIRED	SUBJECT IN CHARGE OF THE ASSESSEMENT	SUBJECT AUTHORISED TO ISSUE THE CERTIFICATE
Initial Training	Compulsory training	Certificate of qualification	Commission composed of Regional/Provincial representatives, institution/school representatives, social partners and professional associations, representative of the Local Office of the Ministry of Labour and representative of the Local Office of the Ministry of Education	Regional Administration Provincial Administration
Post-secondary Training	Post-diploma training	Certificate of qualification	Commission composed of Regional/Provincial representatives, institution/school representatives, social partners and professional associations, representative of the Local Office of the Ministry of Labour and representative of the local Office of the Ministry of Education	Regional Administration Provincial Administration
	IFTS	Certification of Superior Technical Specialization	FP Body School Region Social Partners Trade Associations	Regional Administration MIUR
	Apprenticeship	Certificate of Attendance	FP Body	FP Body

	Post-diploma Courses	Certificate of specialisation	Region FP Body Social Partners MIUR Ministry of Labour	Regional Administration
Adult Training	Post-graduate Training	Certificate of qualification	Commission composed of Regional/Provincial representatives, institution/school representatives, social partners and professional associations, representative of the Local Office of the Ministry of Labour and representative of the Local Office of the Ministry of Education	Regional Administration Provincial Administration
	Post-graduate Courses	Certificate of specialisation	Regional representatives institution/school representatives	Regional Administration
	Continuing Education for adults	Personal Certificate	Region Social Partners Trade Associations FP Body School	Regional Administration
		Certificate of Attendance	Only on request the Territorial Centres issue ECDL and PEL certificates or others recognized at European level for foreign languages, and CILS - certificate recognized at national level for the Italian language for foreigners. A working group of Region USR IRRE Marche has established the minimum standards for foreign languages, Italian language 2 and digital literacy.	The Certification is administered by schools of Permanent Territorial Centres and by the high schools that offer evening courses for adult aimed at secondary school diploma of second degree

One of the fundamental documents adopted by the Regione Marche is the “Repertoire of Regional Qualifications” which is updated periodically in line with training agencies’ requests and the modifications resulting from new regulations disciplining the economic sector or establishing new professional profiles⁴.

The Repertoire contains references to the most relevant professional profiles, distinguished by sectors (education, primary, secondary, tertiary), sub sectors (e.g. crop production, construction, services, etc.) and areas (e.g.: arboreal crops, masonry and carpentry, building maintenance/repair), indicating the type and duration of the course (qualification, specialization, updating course, etc.).

The Repertoire of the Regional Qualifications constitutes the framework of reference for accredited VET providers operating in the Region. It represents the first document to take into consideration in the planning phase, if training activities are expected to be recognized by the Public Regional Authority. The Repertoire of Qualifications is the only official document useful to define the professional profile and the related training path. The “Repertoire of the Regional Qualifications” is an instrument for those agencies working in the field of vocational training and allows the provision of formal certifications. It includes several mandatory indications referring to various types of eligible and formally recognisable courses from the Regione Marche. The training offer is classified in *qualification, specialization and upgrading courses*.

The process of achieving a qualification is designed in order to allow individuals to improve their professional levels. In basic training, the learning process is defined on the basis of predetermined qualifications standards which might be related to different professional profiles, allowing learners to achieve competences referred to different segments of the economy and therefore promoting their mobility across sectors or sub-sectors. At the end of the process, after appropriate examination and evaluation, the certificate of qualification is issued⁵.

In VET courses aimed at the upgrading of skill, knowledge and ability related to a technologically advanced sector and therefore requiring a specific training, such interventions can be configured as specialization courses destined to:

- Qualified trainees with at least 4 months of work experience in the sector (documented);

4 For example one may cite: 1) the professional profile “Social Educator” was removed from the Repertoire of the Marche Regione because of a specific national regulation disciplining the figure at central level; 2) the professional profile “Home Help and tutelary services” and similar (OSA, OTA), removed by legal provisions to give uniformity to the healthcare sector through the establishment of the figure of Socio-Sanitary Operator 3) the professional profile “Family Assistant” established in order to give value to the activities carried out by care givers.

5 See art. 14 Law no. 845/78

- Graduates that have specific educational qualification in the sector of the specialization;
- Workers with an experience of at least three years in the sector of specialization (documented);

Short training courses aimed at the upgrading of specific competences and abilities in a given professional sectors and destined to people/workers with professional-technical background on the field of interest, can be conceived as upgrading and/or vocational integration courses. They normally address: a) people with at least a basic qualification or a two years working experience in the specific sector considered (if I° level); b) people with a qualification of II level, a specialization or a three-year working experience in the sector concerned by the intervention (if II° level).

Duration of Vocational Courses

- a. Qualification courses can be activated for a maximum period of two years. Their duration cannot be less than 400 hours and more than 2400 hours. The qualification (with its “certificated”) is obtained though a final exam, as determined by the law.
- b. Specialization courses can be activated for a maximum period of one year. Their total duration cannot be less than 300 hours and more than 800 hours. The specialization (with its “certificated”) is obtained though a final exam, as determined by the law.
- c. Upgrading and/or vocational integration courses can be activated in a single cycle. Their duration cannot less than 36 hours and not more than 100 hours. At the end of the course a certificate of attendance is released.

With the Regional Decree no. 1465 of 2006, the Regione Marche signed an agreement with the Tuscany Region in order to implement a specific inter-Regional project on certification of competences, on the basis of the previous recognition of some similarities able to simplify the process of establishing a uniform system for the certification of competences.

Taking into account the current debate and the national situation, the Marche Region has launched his own system of professional standards, training and certification that, in compliance with the national system, it is able to respond to the socio-economic specificities of the local territories. One of the main steps of this process is represented by the Regional Decree no. 1656/2010, establishing a Regional system for the recognition and certification of competences with the purpose of making a further step forward the achievement of the goals set out in the EU Recommendations. The Decree defines some important issues for the

implementation of a Regional VET system:

- a. Regional Repertoire of professional standards: the professional profiles are described in aggregated Units of Competences. Professional standards describe the performance, the minimum standards to recognize, validate and certify the competencies regardless of the context of learning (formal, non-formal and informal). The professional profiles contained in the Repertoire will be defined by adopting standard descriptors already in use in other Regional contexts, promoting the transparency of qualification across the national system.
- b. Minimum standards for the identification of learning outcomes: the contents of any formal training course must be referred to the competences described in the Regional Repertoire of professional standards, which represents the main reference to plan the Regional training offer. The Repertoire contains the specific parameters, the minimum requirements and the standard procedures to be followed in order to properly manage training courses and issue the final certificate attesting the acquisition of learning outcomes, also taking into account of the principles defined by the ECVET system (recognition of credits).
- c. Standards for testing and evaluating the competences acquired in any learning context. The process consists of two main steps:
 - I. Testing the competences acquired in the formal learning paths;
 - II. Recognition and validation of learning acquired in non-formal and informal contexts also for the purposes of the recognition of course credits or to pass tests for the verification and evaluation in terms of certifiable skills.
- d. Furthermore, the procedure for designing and conducting assessment tests will be defined with regard to formal, non-formal and informal learning processes. Procedural standards of attestation, defining the criteria to attest the acquisition of learning outcomes and the procedures for the certification of competences (excluding schools and universities)

TABLE A

Hypothesis for the organization of the descriptors in the Repertoire of Qualification, structured in units of competences and professional profiles

Brief description of the activity

Organizational Context

Level of complexity

Referencing (ATECO 2007 e CP ISTAT)

List of units of competencies associated with the profile

Descriptors of each unit of competence

Expected performance

Knowledge

Ability

Criteria for evaluation

Criteria for the recognition and validation

TABLE B

Illustrative proposal of typology of training standards

Minimum workload:

n. overall teaching hours divided into the classroom, fad, internships, etc..

Professional resources involved in the formation and in professional characteristics

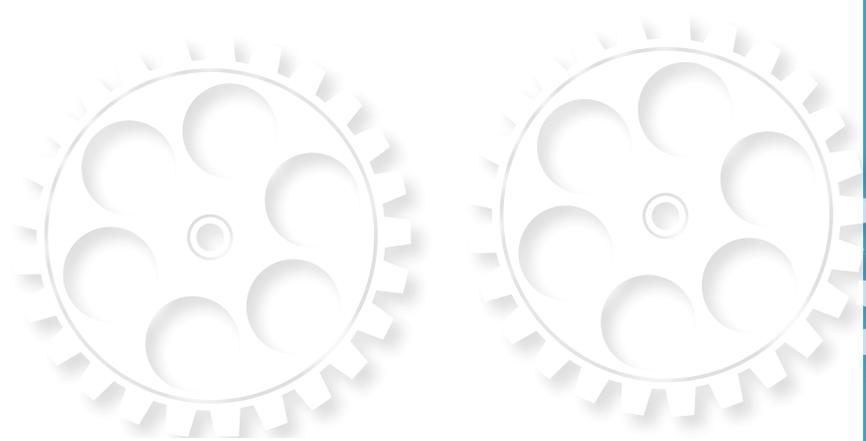
Evaluation procedures for each unit of training

Accompanying measures to support users

Obtainable certificates with reference to the EQF levels

EQF Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competences	Correspondence to the Italian System	Correspondence to the Marche Region System
I	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Ability to work or study under direct supervision in a structured context	Exit from the cycle of primary and secondary school (second level)	
II	Basic factual knowledge on a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and solve everyday problems using simple rules and tools	Ability to work or study under supervision with a certain degree of autonomy	Compulsory education (10 years)	Right/duty to education; Apprenticeship Vocational training with a duration of x hours x (sum of certifications of individual competences)
III	Knowledge on facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	Take responsibility of tasks until completion in a field of work or study Ability to adapt the behaviour to specific circumstances and problem solving abilities	Completed right-duty education (12 years)	Beneficiaries of employment and social inclusion policies: vocational training with duration of x hours (sum of certifications of individual competences)
IV	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Self-management abilities within a set of guidelines in work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but subject to change Ability to supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities	Exit from the ISS cycle	Completed post diploma path with minimum duration of hours and/or the sum of the certifications of individual competences sum of the certifications of individual competences Specific five-year educational path
V	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study, with a full awareness of the limits of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Management and supervision abilities in contexts of work or study subject to unpredictable changes. Ability to review and develop new strategies and performances	Exit from Post-Diploma Courses (IFTS)	IFTS and/or sum of certifications of individual competences constitutes the profile

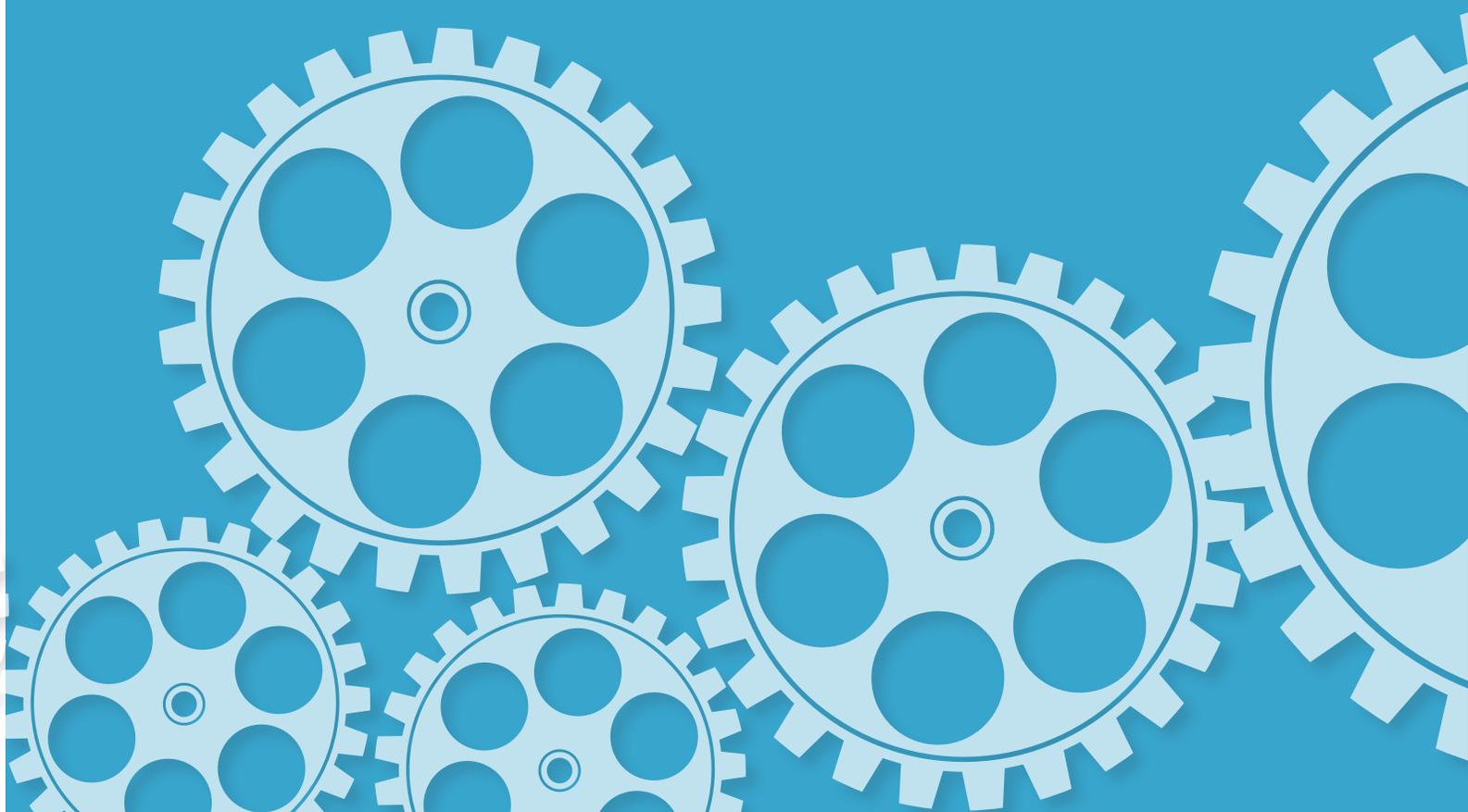
EQF Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competences	Correspondence to the Italian System	Correspondence to the Marche Region System
VI	Advanced knowledge in a field of work or study, involving critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	<p>Ability to manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision making in unpredictable work or study contexts</p> <p>Responsibility for managing the professional development of individuals and groups</p>	Degree or Equivalent	
VII	<p>Highly specialised knowledge in a field of work or study, conceived as the basis for original thinking and/or research</p> <p>Critical awareness and knowledge of specific issues in a field and of the links between different fields</p>	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	<p>Ability to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches</p> <p>Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of the team</p>	Master's Degree or Equivalent	
VIII	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation skills required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practices	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas and/or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts (including research)	Doctorate or Equivalent	



II.

THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PORTFOLIO OF THE CITIZEN IN ITALY AND IN THE MARCHE REGION

Regional Authority of Marche,
Italy



2.1 The education and training portfolio of the citizen: what is it?

The education and training portfolio of the citizen (*Libretto formativo del cittadino*) is a personal document (either in electronic and/or paper format) containing and explicitly specifying the competences acquired by citizens through vocational education and training experiences, job experiences and/or other formal, non formal and informal experiences that have been certified through assessment and certification procedures executed by accredited training providers. Self-certified competences or competences supported by proofs can be also included in the portfolio.

This instrument has been created in order to satisfy the training and professional needs of citizens (in particular citizens in a personal and/or professional transitional moment), VET operators and other institutions, companies and businesses enterprises. By recording and illustrating the individual's learning achievements, it aims at making citizens aware of the personal and professional knowledge, competences and skills they have acquired through formal, non-formal and informal experiences, in a lifelong learning perspective.

The portfolio provides evidences on the outcomes and results of occurred learning processes (referring to personal, vocational, educational and/or professional experiences), promoting and supporting citizens' integration in the VET system and in the labour market. At the same time, it provides citizens with clear information on both their formal and informal learning CV, supporting them in accessing the world of work by highlighting the competences they have gained and their professional potential. It also represents a useful device for companies and businesses enterprises helping them in individuating the citizens' professional profile and facilitating their integration into the labour market.

Since the education and training portfolio of the citizen valorises the procedures of certification and recognition of competences, it also promotes the readability of learning contents through different qualification systems and guarantees a high grade of transparency, supporting the geographical and professional mobility of learners and workers and allowing the personalization of vocational education and training activities.

The education and training portfolio is not a compulsory document: citizens who would like to have it, must ask for it. In fact, citizens are responsible for its management and upgrading, in line with the dispositions established by the relevant legislation (*see below*).

The education and training portfolio of the citizen can be issued by accredited institutions and vocational education and training centres after a citizen's request. Each one of the Italian Regions and autonomous Provinces is therefore asked to identify the competent operators responsible of supporting citizens in filling and upgrading the vocational education and training booklet, at least in the testing phase of the instrument. The skills and competences of the operators providing this service are permanently monitored by the competent public Institution in charge of designing and monitoring the specific procedures for issuing the booklet (Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano).

The Regione Marche, for instance, has delegated CIOF (Public Offices for employment, career guidance, vocational education and training) and accredited vocational education and training centres for issuing the portfolio⁶.

⁶ As explained in the following paragraphs of this publication, the accreditation of vocational education and training centres is a public act through which public administrations of Regions and auto

2.2 European references

The education and training portfolio represents the Italian attempt to adapt the Italian system to the European instrument Europass, created for supporting European citizens, employers and institutions operating in the fields of vocational education and training and labour market policies. Particularly, Europass is aimed at recognizing, validating and allowing the transfer of competences and qualifications throughout the European Union.

- Europass is made up of the following five documents:
- European CV, a document effectively and clearly presenting individuals' skills and qualifications;
- Language passport, a self-assessment tool for language skills and qualifications;
- Europass mobility, a document recording knowledge and skills acquired in another European Country;
- Certificate supplement: a document describing the knowledge and skills acquired by holders of vocational training certificates;
- Diploma supplement: a document describing the knowledge and skills acquired by holders of higher education degrees.

The first two documents described above – Europass CV and Language passport – are freely available and can be completed by European citizens, while the last three documents (Europass mobility, Certificate supplement, Diploma supplement) must be issued by competent education and training authorities.

2.3 Italy: national and Regional legislation

The Agreement State-Regions of the 18th of February 2000 for the identifications of the minimum standards for professional qualifications and the criteria for the accreditation of vocational education and training centres, is the public act through which, in Italy, the education and training portfolio of citizen has become the main document for describing citizens' skills and their professional portfolio.

The attachment B of the Agreement concerns the "Procedures for defining the national system of certification of competences"; particularly, it establishes that also professional competences representing parts a specific set of knowledge and skills, can be certified and subsequently aggregated in order to form a complete professional figure. In order to make the vocational curriculum recognisable and readable, the attachment B also asks Regions and Autonomous Provinces for a rapid adoption of the education and training portfolio of citizens.

The Decree no. 174/2001 of 31st of May 2001 "Certification of the vocational education and

Autonomous Provinces provide private and public companies with the possibility of realizing and managing vocational education and training activities and career guidance services financed with public funding. The accreditation process is closely connected to the need of defining national minimum standards of quality for those companies who would like to realize vocational education and training initiatives. On this respect, the article no. 17 of the law no. 196/97, establishes that vocational education and training activities can be realized by Regions and autonomous Provinces also in agreement with other companies, accomplishing with specific preconditioned requisites.

training system” defines the certification as a process aiming to guarantee transparency of vocational education and training activities by recognising the competences citizens have gained in order to: achieve professional qualifications, accede the vocational education and training system and finally meet the needs of the labour market.

The Decree defines the *competence* as a set of knowledge, abilities and skills referred to one or more professional figures that citizens can acquire attending vocational education and training courses or work experiences and that can be recognized in terms of vocational education credits. Such credits can be conferred through the reference to a national minimum standards framework for the certification of competences and to a Regional system for the certification of competences designed in accordance to the specific socio-economic needs of each Region.

The Legislative Decree no. 174/2001 (article 5) allows the certification of competences in the following cases:

- a. At the end of a vocational education and training course aimed at achieving a professional qualification;
- b. After the partial attendance of a vocational education and training course (including not completed vocational education and training paths or vocational education and training paths that do not issue any professional qualification).
- c. At the end of work experiences or self-learning processes, following the specific request of the person concerned, in order to be access a training course and/or to achieve a professional qualification.

The certifications acquired by citizens can be synthetically described in the education and training portfolio in line with the attachment B of the Agreement State – Regions of 18th of February 2000.

The Legislative Decree no. 276 of the 10th of September 2003 on employment and labour market polices (article 2, paragraph 1, letter i) establishes that the education and training portfolio of the citizen is an instrument allowing the registration of the competences gained through formal, informal and non-formal experiences and recognized by accredited companies and institutions. The article 2, paragraph i, of the law, established a National Technical Group with the aim of identifying the basic elements for designing the format of the education and training portfolio in accordance with the principles of transparency, recognisability and transferability of competences. In order to reach this goal, the Technical Group took into consideration both the national legislative framework and the European guidelines in matter of transparency of professional qualifications, certificates, diplomas (see. Europass) and what had already been developed in other specific contexts (e.g. Regional experiences). Representatives of the Minister of Labour and Social Policies, the Minister of education, University and research, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, the Social Parts and the ISFOL – Italian Institute for vocational education and training of workers (as institution for technical assistance), participated in the technical group.

The Technical Group started its work the 22nd of April 2004 with the aim of:

- defining a shared format for the education and training portfolio of citizen in order to guaranteeing transparency when registering the competences;
- individuating a set of guidelines for VET operators, containing clear instructions on how to use the booklet;
- setting up national testing process addressing potential relevant VET institutions operators;
- defining a strong dissemination campaign.

The final version of the education and training portfolio of the citizen was at least established, at a national level, through the Inter-ministerial Decree of the 10th October 2005 "Authorization of the education and training portfolio of the citizen pursuant to the Legislative Decree no. 276, article 2, paragraph 1, letter l of the 10th of September 2003". The related technical document has been approved with Ministerial Decree the 25th of October 2005.

Concerning the local level, Regione Marche has recently adopted the format of the education and training portfolio of the citizen through the Regional Resolution no. 1786 of the 28th of December 2012 "Authorization of the Format of the education and training portfolio of the citizen in the Marche Region".

The Regional legislation has therefore adopted the national regulation and defined the portfolio of the citizen as an institutional device attesting the competences learners have gained during their personal, educational and professional life. As a matter of fact, this document can ease the guidance processes related to the integration of citizens and workers into the labour market and/or the world of education and vocational education and training. It constitutes a crucial tool for the certification of competences and should be used in accordance with other Regional, national, European instruments such as EQF, ECVET, etc..

Therefore, in accordance with the Inter-ministerial Decree of the 10th of October 2005, the Regional Resolution also stresses the importance of the transferability of the education and training portfolio of citizen to other regions in order to guarantee and promote the mobility of learners and workers.

The attachment A of the Regional Resolution refers to the procedures for the implementation of the education and training portfolio in the Marche Region. The document carefully describes the proper use of this instrument and provides guidelines for a specific testing project phase addressing workers recipients of social security benefits from the Italian redundancy fund, individuating the actors involved and their respective roles, providing them with a framework for managing the operations. Therefore, from June 2012 to December 2013, Marche Region realized an experimental project aiming at testing the education and training portfolio of the citizen with the specific target of beneficiaries outlined in the decree. Among the main outcomes of the projects, the drafting of a set of guidelines detailing the procedures for describing the competences. At the end of the project, around 20.000 booklets were issued in the Region. Finally, in December 2013, a public announcement allowed to delegate to specific designated operators the management of the computerized service used for the implementation of the booklet.

2.4 Summarizing: the role of Regions and Autonomous Provinces

Regions and Autonomous Provinces are responsible for identifying the accredited operators that will be responsible for issuing and upgrading the education and training portfolio of the citizen. They will thus have to define a specific Regional regulation for the accreditations of those institutions, in accordance the national minimum standards defined by the central Government. In doing so, Regions and Autonomous Provinces will therefore ensure the following minimum requisites:

- The staff involved in all the procedures related to the recording of the information contained in the portfolio will be provided of the adequate competences and knowledge to perform the task;
- The process of certification of competences is a voluntary process. Therefore, operators will respect citizens' choices concerning data they want to valorise;
- The education and training portfolio of the citizen focuses on the valorisation of the individuals. Therefore, the possessed competences will be highlighted and clearly described, in order to allow further career guidance activities and support the citizens in the acquisition of full sets of competences;
- All the potential stakeholders will be involved in this process, in order to come up with a final complete picture of the competences possessed by the citizen

2.5 Structure and contents of the education and training portfolio of the citizen

The education and training portfolio of the citizen is made up of two sections:

- The first section contains personal data, vocational education qualifications, certificates, diplomas, degrees, vocational education and professional experiences.
- The second section contains a chart with indicators and parameters for the description of the competences acquired. Such parameters and indicators are grouped as followed: "Type", "Description", "Contest of acquisition", "Period of acquisition", "Proofs". Particularly, the second section distinguishes between the competences that have been certified thanks to formal vocational education paths and competences that have come to light thanks to the person's knowledge but that have not been certified. Thus, section no. two describes two different kind of competences: the official ones and the social ones.

The following documents can be attached as proofs:

- ✓ Vocational education and/or education certificates, degrees, diplomas issued by MIUR (Minister of Education, University and Research) or by Regions;
- ✓ Vocational education and training certificates;
- ✓ Professional documents belonging to the professional sectors;
- ✓ Other documents (self-statements, proofs that are offered by the owner of the booklet)⁷.

⁷ If the documents are not available for any reason, citizens are authorized to produce self-statements. Each Region and autonomous Province is free to decide how to manage such documentation.

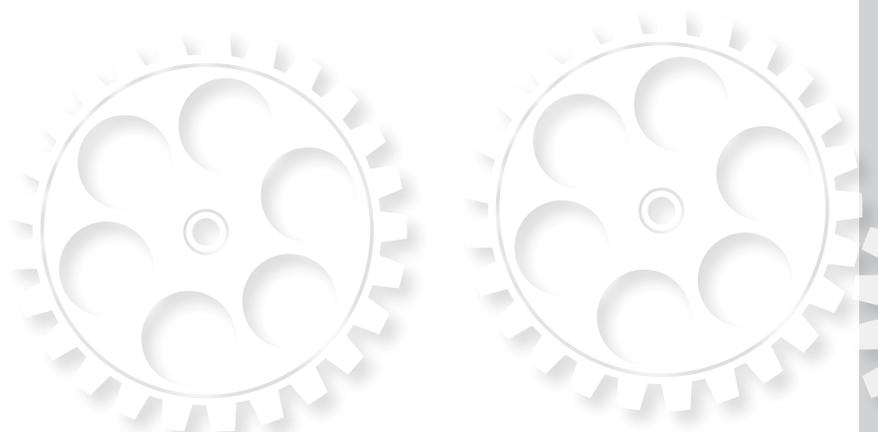
2.6 Process of issuing the education and training portfolio of citizens

STEP 1 – The first step aims to inform the users on the features and function of the portfolio and to analyse citizens' motivation and needs.

STEP 2 – The second step is aimed at retracing any possible relevant experience and the competences acquired. This step includes the analysis of the individual profile, the summary of the education and training courses attended, the professional experiences undertaken and the related learning outcomes. This step thus provides the operators with the information needed to fill up the individual booklet.

STEP 3 – The third step is aimed at supporting the users when documenting experiences and competences through proofs. Its objective is to valorise the information collected by attaching the related documentation. Certificates, degrees, diplomas, self-declarations, etc.. might be attached.

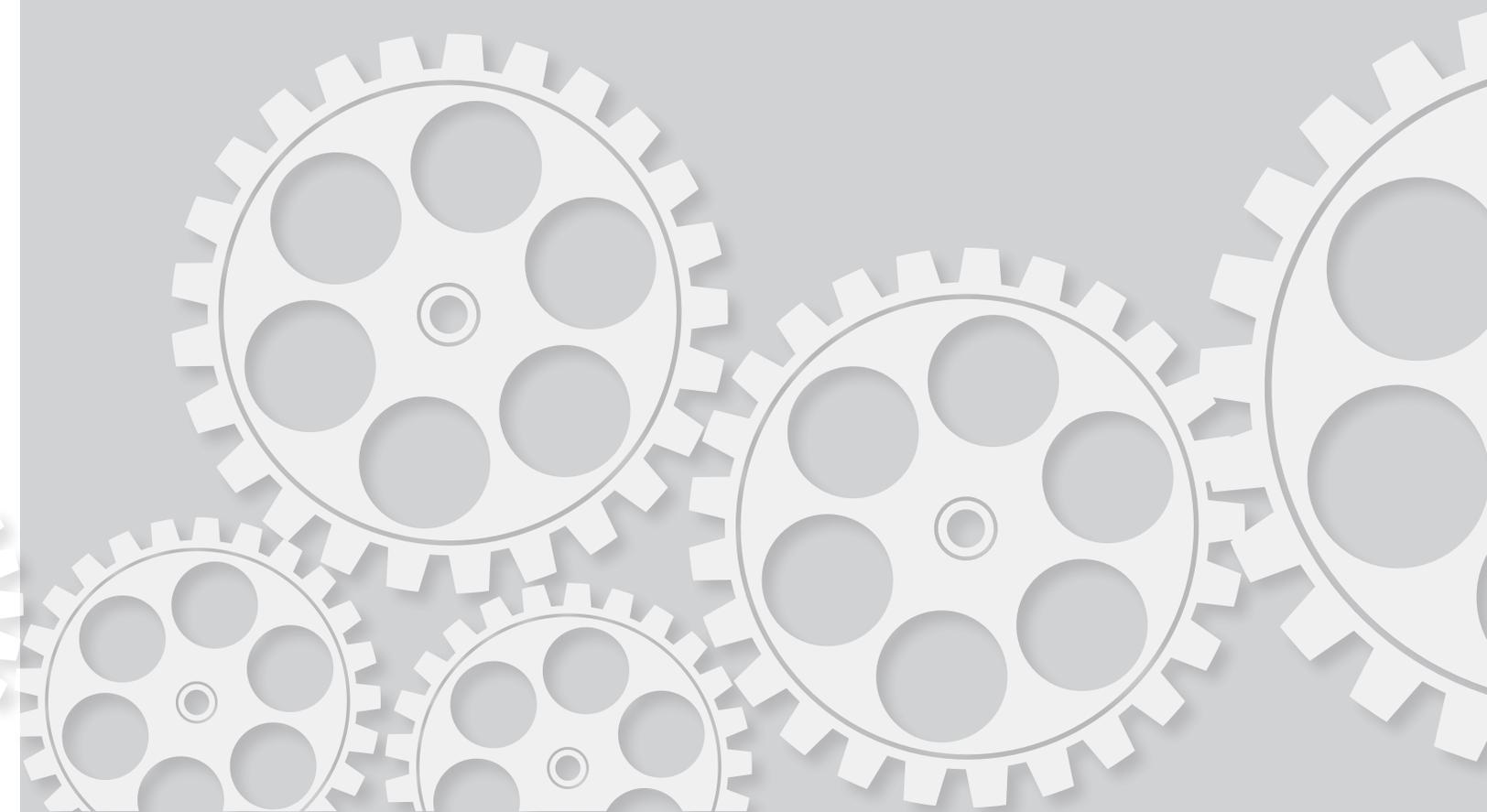
STEP 4 – The final step will be aimed at the final recording of data and related documents. The information collected during the previous steps (vocational education and professional biography, experiences, competences, proofs, etc..) will be able to be subsequently modified and/or upgraded under specific request of the citizen.



ANNEX A⁸

THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PORTFOLIO OF THE CITIZEN

8 The format proposed in the following pages was formally adopted in Italy with Inter-ministerial Decree of the 10th October 2005 and Legislative Decree no. 276, article 2, paragraph 1, letter I of the 10th of September 2003. The format was therefore adopted in the Marche Region with Regional Resolution no. 1786 of the 28th of December 2012 “Authorization of the Format of the education and training portfolio of the citizen in the Marche Region”. The English translation of the format is under the responsibility of the present publication.



2. WORK EXPERIENCES (*)Type of contract

Starting date of the contract ___/___/___

Ending date of the contract ___/___/___

Job description (qualification Italian SIL)_____

Economic sector (Italian statistics coding
syste)_____

Tasks

Employer's name

Employer's address

(*) To be filled in for each working experience

3. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATES / DIPLOMA AND DEGREES (*)

Title of qualification awarded _____

In case of apprenticeship, specify if:

apprenticeship for professional degree

apprenticeship for superior vocational education and research

Awarding date _____

Organisation providing education and training _____

Address of the organisation providing education and training _____

Final mark (parameters) ____/____ cum laude _____

Last attended year (if the course has been left) _____

Year of attendance (if ongoing) _____

Number of exams that have been taken (if the course has been left or if it is ongoing) _____

Work training Lasting _____

Hosting company _____

(*)To be filled in for each educational experience

4. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXPERIENCES (*)

Title of the vocational education and training activity

- If the experience refers to apprenticeship, select between:

apprenticeship for qualification and professional degree

professional training apprenticeship

apprenticeship for superior vocational education and research

- specifying if the experience refers to a starting contract

Organisation providing the training activity

Address of the organisation providing education and training (city, foreign Country) _____

Ended in _____

Lasting (Specifying hours/days/months) _____

Certification, qualification issued by the public organisation

Other certificates _____

Work training Lasting _____

Hosting company _____

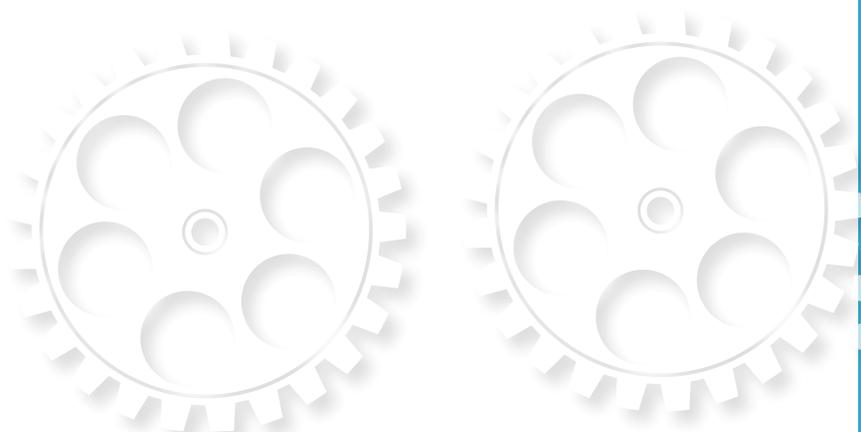
(*)To be filled in for each educational experience

SECTION 2

COMPETENCES GAINED THROUGH LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Type (*)	Description	Context of acquiring (the context in which such competences have been gained)	Period of learning (Year/s in which such competences have been gained)	Documents for proving that such competences have been gained

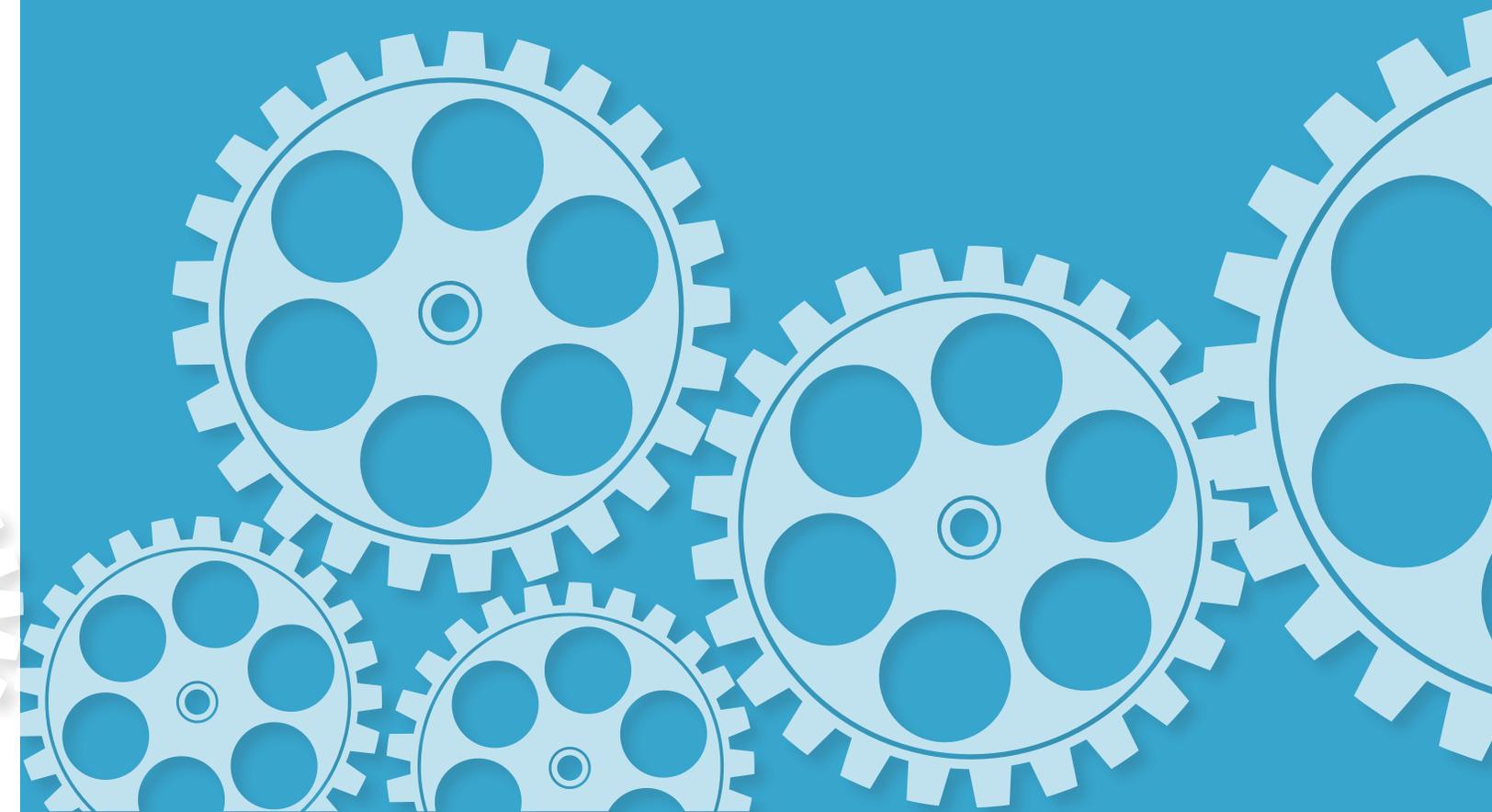
(*) In case of competences acquired through formal learning, it is necessary to specify the kind of competences according to the Agreement State-Regions of the 28th October 2004: basic competences, key competences, technical-professional competences. For the basic competences awarded thanks to vocational education and training activities, it is necessary to refer to the Agreement State-Regions of the 15th of January 2004: Language sector, Technologic sector, Scientific Sector, Historic-socio-economic sector.

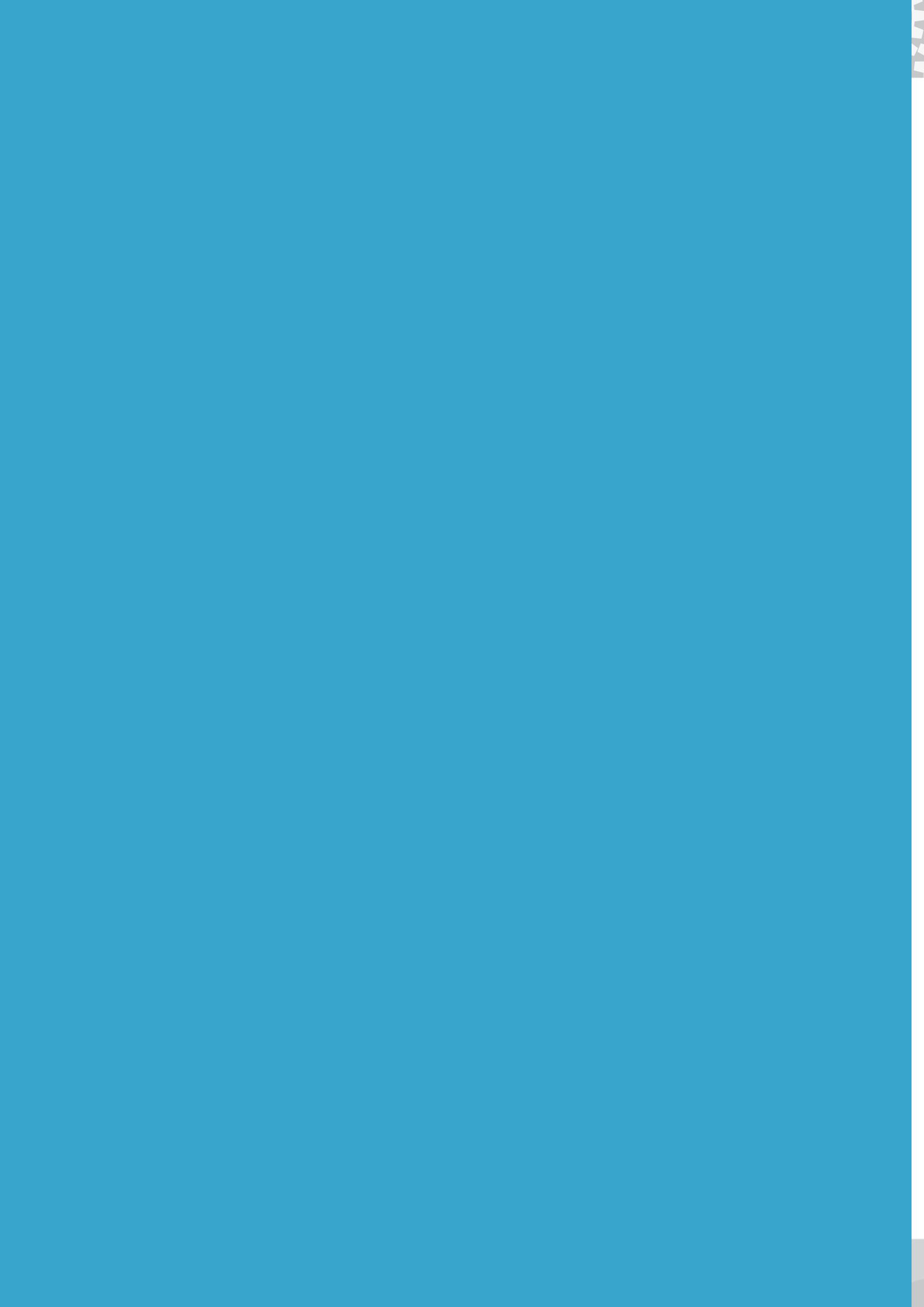


III.

RELEVANT VET LEGISLATION IN ITALY AND IN THE MARCHE REGION

Regional Authority of Marche,
Italy





3.1 Introduction

Over the last decades, the European Union has launched several initiatives on vocational education and training aimed at developing the VET sector by focusing on the cooperation among the Member Countries and the exchange of good practices among relevant stakeholders. The European Union policies consider human capital (the set of knowledge, skills and competences owned by each individual) as the main source of progress, development, competitiveness, social cohesion, quality of life and employment. EU Member Countries have been therefore cooperating in order to define a shared strategy for vocational education and training, while national Ministries have been engaged in a deep analysis of the existing differences among the EU vocational education and training systems, contributing to the creation and development of a European space for vocational education and training.

Regarding Italy, over the last years we have assisted to a progressive decentralization of competences from the national Government to local authorities (Municipalities, Provinces, Regions, and Italian metropolitan cities), education and VET institutions, which have been progressively given a high grade of autonomy.

Briefly summarizing, the Italian central Government is in charge of:

- Ensuring the highest level of homogeneity to the national education system, at the same time respecting the specificities and needs of each local context;
- Guaranteeing and monitoring high quality levels in the provision of education and training services;
- Determining the measures needed to ensure financial and technical equity.

As defined by the article 117 of the Constitution, the regulation focuses on the valorisation of local governments, requiring the cooperation between Government and Regions and between Regions, local authorities and educational institutions, in order to build a coherent and efficient VET sector in compliance both with the specific features of each territory and with the national policy framework.

Vocational education and training institutions, according to the national legislation, are tasked to plan and realize learning activities in order to satisfy the needs and requests of potential learners. On this respect, the latest legislative reforms shortly presented in this chapter are promoting the citizens' right to lifelong learning, guaranteeing equal opportunities for all and contributing to the full development of people's knowledge.

3.2 The Italian VET system: an overview

In compliance with the Reform of the Title no. V of the Italian Constitution, the Italian education and VET system is managed through the close cooperation of different institutions operating at distinct levels: national Government, Regions, local and educational authorities, etc.

In particular, the Reform (*see art. no. 117*) changed the previous normative jurisdiction re-defining the competences of State and Regions in the field of vocational education and training. In fact, it established a more elaborate and comprehensive legislative framework where Regions and Autonomous Provinces were given a higher grade of autonomy concerning matters that, until that time, were of exclusive jurisdiction of the national Government. As consequence of the reforming process, local institutions administer today important functions, among which: the planning the vocational education and training offer, the management of human and financial resources, etc..

The reform of the Constitution designated the central Government (through the Ministry of Education, University and Research and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies) as the responsible authority (with “*exclusive legislative competence*”) for the definition of the general legislative framework for education policies and the individuation of minimum standard levels of services concerning both civil and social rights to be guaranteed throughout the national territory. On the other side, the competences of Regions were redefined as follows:

- In the field of education and initial VET, Regions have the power to detail the national legislation framework in accordance with the general rules and standard levels defined by the central government. Regional and Territorial Scholastic Offices (Italian USR and UST) are locally responsible for the general management and administration of the local system (*see: school autonomy principle*);
- In the field of Vocational Education and Training, regions were given “*absolute legislative power*”, in designing the regulating framework and defining the criteria for the provision of the VET offer, in accordance to the standard levels proposed by the central government.

Another important step in this reforming process is also represented by the emanation of the law no. 53 of 2003, establishing for each individual the right/duty to education (*diritto/dovere all'istruzione*) for a period of 12 years or, at least, until the achievement of a professional qualification within the age of 18. The law, clearly influenced by the process of globalization, led also to important innovations concerning the reduction of public expenses, the improvement of the cost – effectiveness of the interventions and the provision of high-quality VET services guaranteeing a high level of competitiveness to the whole economic system.

As results of the recent reforming process, the Italian education system is today structured as follow:

- Kindergarten (*in Italian: scuola dell'infanzia*): non-compulsory school lasting 3 years.
- First education cycle, organized in 5-years primary school (*in Italian: scuola primaria*) and 3-years lower secondary-school (*in Italian: scuola secondaria di primo grado*);
- Second education cycle (*in Italian: scuola secondaria di secondo grado*) organized in: upper secondary-school lasting 5 years and 3/4-years vocational education courses.
- University and high artistic and musical education, vocational education and training managed by institutes specialized in High Technical Education.

Education is compulsory until the achievement of a professional qualification within the age of 18. After that, pupils can choose whether prosecute their studies or enter the labour market. Within the VET system, huge opportunities are offered by: IFTS (High Technical Education) courses; qualification and post-qualification courses; post-diploma courses; post-degree courses; apprenticeship courses and a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities provided both by public schools and Institutions and accredited private companies.

Regarding the vocational education and training sector, the Italian system can be shortly described as follows:

INITIAL VET, pupils aged between 14 and 19 years (secondary education). This type of training is given in technical, vocational colleges and in art institutes and is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, University and Research:

- Technical colleges. *Main sectors: agricultural, commercial, touristic, surveying, industrial, company experts and correspondents in foreign languages, naval, aeronautic and social activities. Each one may offer several branches and specialisations.*
- Vocational colleges. *Main sectors: agriculture, industry and crafts, services, auxiliary sanitary and the special sector. Each sector offers a number of branches that correspond to the most important areas of professional life. These colleges may also organise evening courses.*
- Arts institutes. *They prepare pupils for work in the artistic production, mainly in the following sectors: printing and engraving, textiles and decorations, jewellery, metals, furniture, ceramics, painting, glass, set design, etc.*

HIGHER TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING – IFTS (post-secondary/non-tertiary education)

Courses designed to provide young people and adults with a more targeted technical and vocational training. Such courses are free of charge and must be set up by a network of relevant stakeholders comprising: High Technical Institutes

(ITS), upper secondary schools, accredited training institution, enterprises, university department or any other body belonging to the technological/scientific research system, local authorities (municipality, Province, extended urban area, etc).

FURTHER AND CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (adult education)

Training activities addressing workers and unemployed people which follow initial training and are distinct from it. This type of training offer is managed by Regions and Autonomous Provinces through accredited public and private institutions and companies and other VET schools and institutions:

Compulsory training: this includes courses provided in the vocational training system and in the context of apprenticeships;

Advanced training: this includes post-compulsory training, advanced technical instruction, high-level training for courses during and after university

Continuing training for workers in temporary or permanent suspension from the job, unemployed people who require training in preparation for employment, and workers who need to update specific competences and skills as required from the labour market

In recent years continuing training has become a fundamental issue in lifelong learning and active labour market policies. The system is funded through resources made available from the State, the Regions, public and private parties and the European Union (mainly through the European Social Fund – ESF). Training activities are implemented by a variety of agencies and institutions, such as: accredited training companies, social partners, public employment centres, territorial centres for adult education, public and private schools, etc.

3.3 The accreditation system in Marche Region

The accreditation of vocational education and training centres is a process through which public administrations of Regions and autonomous Provinces provide private and public companies with the possibility of realizing and managing vocational education and training activities and career guidance services through public funding.

This process is firmly connected to the need of ensuring quality in the provision of VET services, as highlighted at EU level by the European Recommendation on the quality of vocational education and training⁹, describing among other things a list of ten quality indicators that should be used in order to evaluate the education and training services, taking into consideration the specific national regulations. In Italy, the article 17 of the law no. 196/97 allows Regions and autonomous Provinces to realize vocational education and training initiatives in agreement with private companies who have preconditioned requisites. The definition of national minimum standards of quality for those companies is therefore closely related to the establishment of an accreditation system, conceived as a crucial element in the complex set of reforms addressing the whole VET sector (apprenticeship courses, initial VET, further and continuing courses, etc.).

The accreditation system in the Marche Region functions as “inventory/repertoire”: interested companies can select among a given set of indicators those competences that should be certified according to their quality standards. The system has its basis in the specific Regional Regulation defining the rules for the accreditation of training institutions (see DAFORM, the accreditation device for education and VET institutions of the Marche Region¹⁰) and in the Resolution no. 2164 of 18/09/2001, adopting the measures introduced by the Ministerial Decree n. 166 of 25/5/2001. Particularly, the Regione Marche has adopted the national regulation stressing the importance of a quality vocational education and training system in order to satisfy the local training needs and to allow both youths and adults to achieve their personal and professional goals, in order to guarantee the citizenship rights and satisfy the needs of the labour market.

Quality standards at Regional level are defined through a variety of minimum requisites related to legal, infrastructural and management aspects. Summarizing, the accreditation of vocational education and training centres is awarded in compliance with 5 essential criteria:

- Infrastructural and logistical resources
- Economic and financial reliability

9 European Parliament Recommendation and of the Council of 18th June 2009 on establishment of a European framework for guaranteeing high quality standards of Vocational education and training.

10 See: <http://daform.istruzioneformazioneelavoro.marche.it/web/Default.aspx>

- Managerial skills and professional resources
- Efficacy and Efficiency
- Local relationships

Companies fulfilling the requisites and guaranteeing logistic and infrastructural resources can apply for accreditation, conceived as a certification of minimum standard levels in the provision of VET services.

3.4 The accreditation of vocational education and training providers

Autonomous companies aiming to realize vocational education and training initiatives through public funding need to apply for accreditation.

Accreditation is not required for the following entities:

- “Temporary associations” (Italian ATI), being each one of the actors composing the association already accredited;
- Companies hosting internships and work training experiences;
- Companies who train their employees.

Shortly summarizing, in the field of career guidance and VET activities, the accreditation is also requested for the provision of the following services:

- Compulsory education activities, including initiatives related to apprenticeship;
- Higher education, including Higher Technical Education and post-graduate education;
- Further and continuing education, addressing employees, recipients of social security benefits, unemployed people, apprentices having achieved the compulsory education.

Vocational education and training centres can be accredited for the provision of one or more type of services. Each vocational education and training centre asks for accreditation to Marche Region according to a defined process in which companies are asked to fill in different forms and to upload data on the specific online software, by attaching the related documentation.

The evaluation process established by DAFORM is structured in two main steps:

- **PRELIMINARY STEP.** The assessment, in accordance to the defined criteria, takes place before the final accreditation of the company, when the public document hasn't been issued yet.
- **SECOND STEP (in progress).** The assessment of the company takes place also after the accreditation, through a series of consecutive audits.

The first accreditation procedure has a validity of two years.

If a vocational education and training centre already owns a quality certification ISO 9001 for the provision of vocational education and training services, the assessment will incorporate the results of this certification process and the related documentation, evaluating only those aspects and requisites that are not taken into consideration in the ISO 9001 system. The recognition of the quality certification ISO 9001 eases the accreditation procedures and valorises the previous investments on quality of those vocational education and training centres asking for accreditation.

The Regione Marche will communicate to the vocational education centre any noncompliance emerged during the assessment process. If requested, the vocational education centre will have to present a plan through which the noncompliance will be solved in order to accomplish with the criteria for accreditation. If the assessment of the minimum requisites has positive results, the accreditation of the vocational education centre is confirmed by the Regional authority. The accredited centre is thus admitted in a public register indicating the contents and duration of the accreditation. The accreditation has an immediate effect and normally lasts 3 years, except for temporary accreditations. Yearly, accredited training institutions have to self-certificate the maintenance of the minimum standards through the transmission to the Public Authority of interim reports on the state of their activities in the field concerned by the accreditation. In order to ensure that standards are maintained over time, the Regione Marche can carry out unexpected inspections and audits. If the monitoring procedures show a lack in one of the standards, the accreditation is suspended and the VET institution is cancelled from the public register.

The accreditation device DAFORM works through a system of credits whose first aim is to encourage accredited training centres to increase the quality of their services and to work in compliance with the Regional guidelines for the management of vocational education and training activities.

Each accredited centre is given an amount of 30 points that can be cut by the Regional authority in case of detection of noncompliance conditions during one of the assessment and monitoring procedures described above. The number of points to be cut depends on the specific elements of noncompliance. If the amount of credits to be cut exceeds the number of 30, the accreditation is revoked.

As other Italian Regions, the Regione Marche has published specific guidelines (Vademecum) for accredited vocational education and training centres engaged in the management and provision of VET activities. Those guidelines represent for companies interested in being accredited an important instrument for self-assessment in order to further improve their standards in the field of VET.

3.5 The accreditation of human resources

The certification of competences of the professionals and operators working for accredited vocational education and training centres has been introduced in 2005 with the Regional Decree individuating the rules for accreditation of training institutions of the Marche Region.

Summarizing, the certification of competences of VET professionals is aimed at:

- Completing DAFORM with a set of requisites concerning the quality of staff of accredited vocational education and training centres.
- Upgrading the vocational education and training supply in accordance with emerging socioeconomic needs, in order to further promote citizens' lifelong learning rights.
- Valorising the quality of work of VET professionals through public certification of their competences.

The complete list of the certifiable competences in the Marche Region is presented below:

Identification of education and training needs; structured into two units:

- General analysis of educational needs
- Need diagnosis.

Vocational education and training planning; structured into the following units:

- Planning of vocational education and training courses;
- Planning of vocational education and training modules;

Management of the didactic process, structured into three units:

Analysis of individual learning needs;
Support to the learning process;
Evaluation of the learning process.

Planning and development, structured in three units:

- Strategy development;
- Public funding access;
- Promotion of vocational education and training initiatives.

Organisational management, structured in three units:

- Organisational development;
- Health and safety protection;
- Management and coordination.

Management of informational sources, structured in two units:

- Management of information technology resources;
- Process traceability.

Management of economic sources, structured into the following units:

- Economic feasibility;
- Financial statement.

Management of the accreditation and quality system, structured into the following units:

-
- Monitoring and evaluation of vocational education and training services;
- Management of the accreditation procedures and of the internal quality standards.

The certification of competences for the staff of accredited VET companies and organizations is a formal process through which the Regione Marche, after a phase of assessment, certifies the competences owned by VET professionals according to the minimum standard that have been described above.

The following competences can be certified:

Competences acquired through formal learning (referring to education experiences even if not completed);

Competences acquired through non-formal learning (the learning process has taken place through experiences undertaken outside a formal education process, such as work training experiences);

Competences acquired through informal learning (the learning process has occurred during personal and social experiences. In this case, the learning outcomes must be measured in compliance with the formal Regulation).

The certification of competences is conceived as a right. Individuals who want to have their competences certified, must apply for it at the Vocational education and training service of the Regione Marche, specifying the competences that need to be certified and attaching the curriculum vitae and professional portfolio using the format provided by the Regione Marche through its website. All services related to the certification of competences are provided by the Regione Marche without any charge to users. The individual request for certification of competences is processed within 90 days from the date of receiving, except for delays due to a noncompliance in the documents sent. In this case, the Service communicates to the candidate the noncompliance and asks for document integration within a fixed date. If the candidate does not send any further documentation within the established date, the process will be interrupted.

The certification of competences lasts three years. The names of the candidates whose competences have been certified are registered in a public register updated every six months.

Vocational education and training centres must hire human resources whose competences have been certified following the process described above. Experts who do not possess any certification can't be hired for totally more than 240 hours per year.

In line with the national regulation and in accordance to the citizens' right to mobility, the Regione Marche has developed several initiatives aiming at promoting the transferability and recognition of certified competences across both the national territory and different sectors. The Regione Marche therefore allows the partial or total certification of competences that have already been certified by other institutions unless there is a noncompliance with the minimum standards set out by the Regional accreditation device.

The investment in vocational education and socioeconomic development is promoted at national and Regional level through specific policies sustaining the national growth, facing the economic crisis and promoting the well-being, health and safety of citizens and workers. Particular attention has been given on youths (through work training experiences, the provision of specific employment and training benefits, self employment programmes, vocational education and training courses), women (initiatives aimed at promoting the Reconciliation of work and family life), unemployed people and people excluded from labour market and people with physical disabilities. Several initiatives have also been implemented in order to strengthen career guidance and employment services provided at local level by public and private accredited institutions.

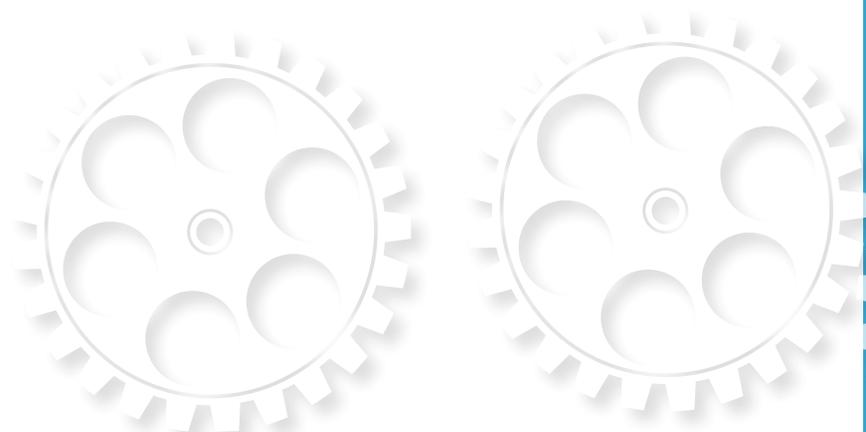
3.6 Conclusions

The overall quality of a VET system relies both on the legislative framework, on the governance structure and on the existence of clear management procedures and standards.

Both centralized and decentralized systems have shown their strengths and weaknesses. In order to increase the quality of the vocational education and training sector, Italy has adopted a model in which the national and Regional level work together, the first one identifying minimum standards and criteria to be accomplished and the second one detailing and adjusting the structure in accordance to local socioeconomic and learning needs.

The adaptation of the national framework to the local features of each Region obviously exposes the VET sector to a variety of solicitations and requests coming from the specific territories. As a result, the sector still appears heterogeneous, with a wide range of initiatives carried out by a wide range of actors, thus requiring further harmonization efforts.

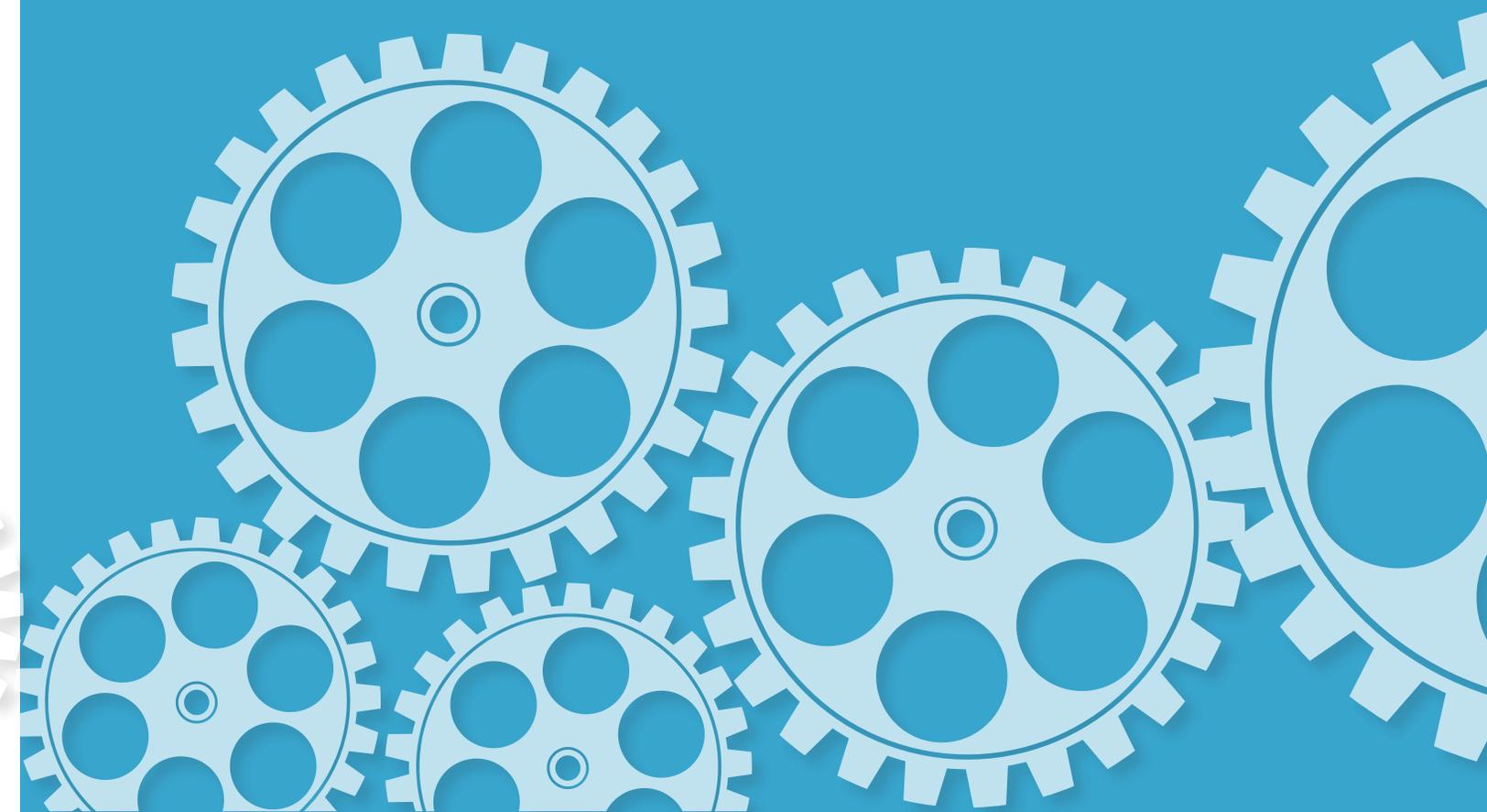
The cooperation among different vocational education and training institutions and companies, each one expressing a specific know how and expertise, is therefore unavoidable in order to provide learners with the competences and skills required by the labour market. The Regione Marche supports this process, actively investing in the cooperation among all the actors locally, nationally and internationally involved in VET and economic and social policies.

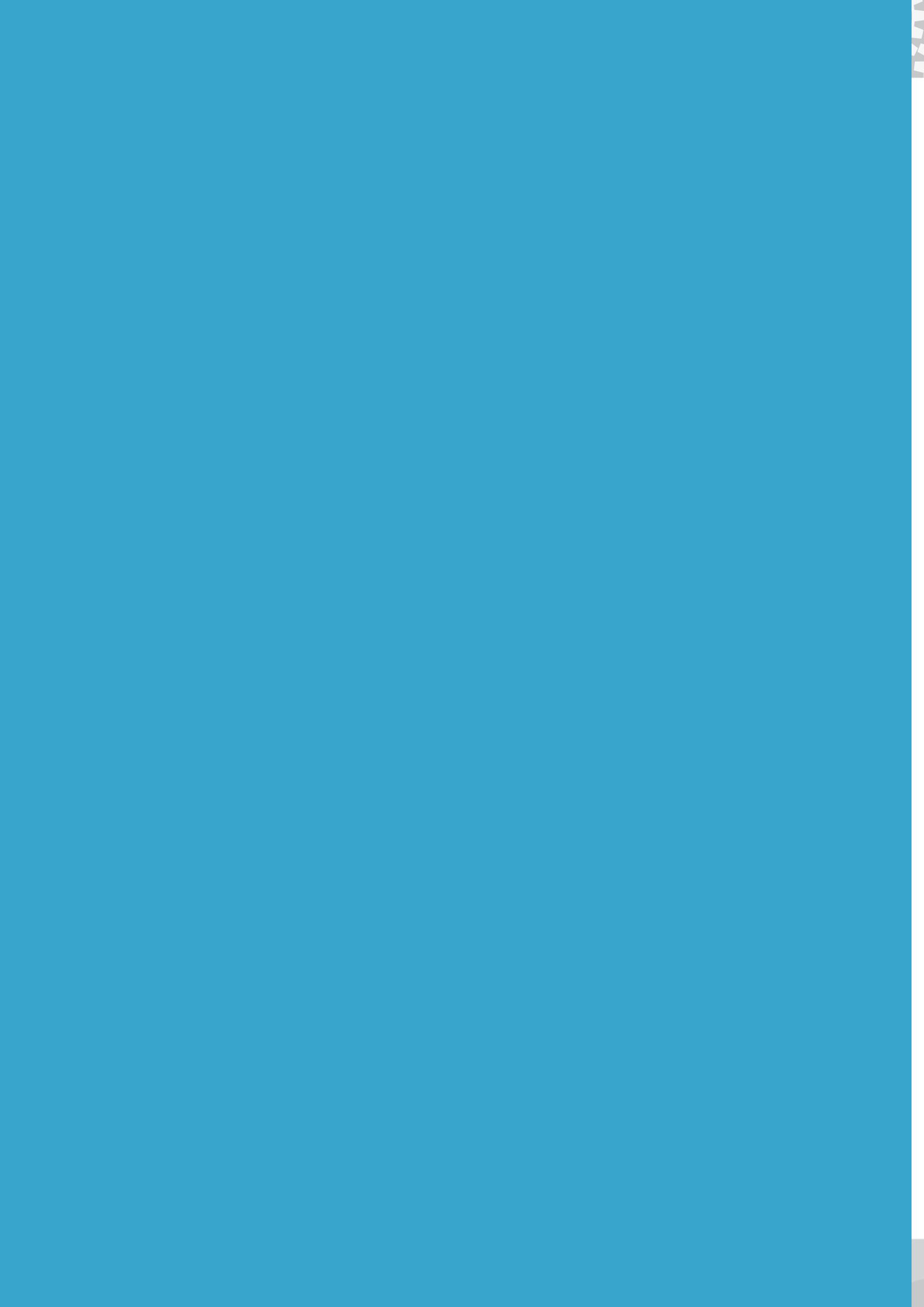


IV.

A PRACTICE OF
POST-SECONDARY
NON ACADEMIC VET
IN MARCHE REGION:
THE HIGHER TECHNICAL
EDUCATION
AND TRAINING

COOSS Marche Onlus,
Italy





4.1 A post-secondary model for VET

In Italy, post-secondary education and training is organised in

1. higher technical education and training;
2. second-level vocational training.

In both cases, the training offer is managed by Regions, which are responsible for the definition and implementation of strategies.

1. The **Higher Technical Education and Training** system (*Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore-IFTS*) was established by a national Law (144/1999); further legislative references are the Inter-ministerial decree (436/2000) and the guidelines for the full reorganisation of the system (2008). Following such a legislative base, Regions plan the institution of the courses, assuring the integration and the cooperation with several institutional actors. The aim of those initiatives is to spread a higher technical and scientific culture, as well as to support the development and the competitiveness of the economic and productive Italian system. One of the main goals is to enable young people and adults to obtain a higher level technical specialisation, together with specific cultural knowledge; according to the Italian economy (and the Italian regions contexts) such a knowledge refers namely to the small and medium enterprises and to those sectors that are more interested by technological innovations and internationalization of markets. Within the Higher Technical Education and Training model, two offers are provided:

- courses implemented by Higher Technical Institutes¹¹, with a duration of 1800/2000 training hours (from 4 to 6 semesters), leading to a higher level technical diploma.
Areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies in life, new technologies for the 'made in Italy', innovative technologies for arts and cultural activities, ICT).
 - courses of higher technical education and training¹², organised by the Regions and implemented by a group of institutional actors, such as upper secondary school institutions, accredited training agencies, experts from the economic and productive sector and universities, according to the standard, the professional profile and the qualification defined by the Region. Courses have a duration of 800/1000 hours (about 2 semesters) and lead to a higher technical specialisation certificate.
2. The Second Level of Initial Vocational Training system consists of VET courses, managed by the Regional Authorities and aimed at providing learners (typically young adults and adults) with specialized training. The curricula include professional skills with a high theoretical, technical, technological and managerial content; an on-the-job training period is compulsory.

11 In Italian: Istruzione Tecnica Superiore, acronym ITS

12 In Italian: Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore, acronym IFTS

Because of their highly technical and specialized contents, those courses are accessed, generally, by unemployed people, looking for a certificate or a vocational qualification allowing them to (re)enter the labour market.

4.2 The Higher Technical Education and Training

Both training pathways within the Higher Technical Education and Training System (provided by ITS and by IFTS) are included into the post-secondary level ISCED 4.

Beneficiaries - learners

The accession and attendance to Higher Technical Education and Training courses (ITS and IFTS courses) allows learners to achieve an upper secondary school certificate.

Namely, IFTS courses are accessible also for learners who:

- have an upper secondary technical qualification (four-year courses);
- are admitted to the fifth year of a lyceum;
- have completed the compulsory education (school education, training courses, working experiences, etc.).

Both initiatives (IFTS courses and the courses offered by ITS) are free of charge. IFTS are financed through the European Social Fund, while the ITS are financed through ministerial, Regional or private funds.

Contents

Contents of the Higher Technical Education and Training offer provided by ITS are pre-defined and belong to six technological areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies in life, new technologies for the 'made in Italy', innovative technologies for arts and cultural activities, ICT.

Contents of the Higher Technical Education and Training offer provided by IFTS courses are planned and defined by the Regions, in the framework of their exclusive competences and in accordance with the VET policy and strategy adopted. Namely, the IFTS initiatives are aimed at meeting the needs of specific productive sectors, individuated through careful investigation and agreed by Regions and/or the State/Regions Conference. Generally, the areas refer to: agriculture, industry and handicraft (manufacturing, ICT, building), trade and tourism, transports, public and private social services, environment, insurance and financial services.

The basic curriculum of study of both pathways refer to common competences such as linguistic, scientific and technological competences, as well as juridical/legal and economic/financial competences, organizational competences, communication competences, technical/ professional competences related to the specific higher technical professional profile.

Providers

ITS courses can be provided by:

- a technical or vocational institution or non-state upper secondary school (Istituti Tecnici Superiori);
- a training institute accredited by the Region for the organisation of this kind of training;
- a firm/enterprise operating in the professional sector related to the course;
- a university department or other body operating in the scientific and technological research area;
- a local authority (Province, municipalities, etc.).
-

IFTS courses are provided by a network of minimum four different of educational providers: school, vocational training provider, university, enterprise or another public or private subject, formally associated in the form of a consortium.

Trainers

The training staff of IFTS/ITS system is composed by at least 50% of experts and senior professionals in the following areas: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies for life, new technologies for 'made in Italy', innovative technologies for arts and cultural activities, ICT.

Consequently, the training of this staff focus on the above mentioned areas while training methods must be able to develop scientific know-how, professional practices and key competences (ICT, languages, management etc.) necessary to act in complex learning contexts.

Results/Certifications

- Courses provided by ITS lead to the attainment of a Diploma of high level technician;
- IFTS courses lead to the attainment of a Certificate of high level technical specialization.

Both of them give access to public competitions.

4.3 A model for Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS)

Title of the training course: Tecnico Superiore per strutture ad alta intensità e complessità assistenziale e socio sanitaria (high technician for highly specialized social and health care centres)

Project proposed and realised by:

- Upper Secondary School (Technical Institute for Social Activities)
- Enterprise (COOSS Marche)
- University (Polytechnic University)
- Training agency (trade union training body)

Beneficiaries: 20 trainees, whose 15 are women:

- Coming from upper secondary school (lyceum, technical institutes, etc) of science, social sciences, pedagogic sciences, etc. – about 12;
- Employees working in the field, with relevant experience in the care sector – about 4;
- Unemployed, with some personal experience in the care sector – about 2;
- Employees of other sectors, with experiences in other sectors – about 2;
- People showing high motivation, attitudes, interest.

Contents	Hours
Sociology	25
Pedagogy	30
Health design and programming	30
Role and competences of the carer/operator	20
Working group in the social and health care	25
Social legislation	20
Services in the Third Sector	15
Professional workshop: self-involvement	25
Social psychology	30
The process of helping individuals and families	30
Community working	20
Group working	20
Development of the Educational Individual project	25
Psychiatry	20
Neuro-physic pathology	20
Disability and rehabilitation	20
Rehabilitation techniques	20
Professional workshop: psycho-motricity	20
Psychology of Rehabilitation	25
Pet Therapy	25
Professional workshop: theatre animation	25
ICT for disability	15
Music Therapy	25
Professional workshop: the role of caregiver	25
Workshop on social policies and health	15
Languages and ICT	60
Laws	25
Health and safety at work	26
Service organisation	25
Communication	30
Orienting	29
Professional workshop: creativity	15
Welfare system in Italy	10
Workshop on Social Sciences	10
Stage	200
Total amount of learning hours	1.200

Staff:

- Didactic coordinator;
- Expert in learning and training processes;
- Training tutor;
- Administrative unit;
- Members of the project committee;
- Individual tutor/mentor;
- Experts in charge of the selection of participants;
- eLearning tutor;
- Project designer;
- Teachers trainer;
- Stage tutor.

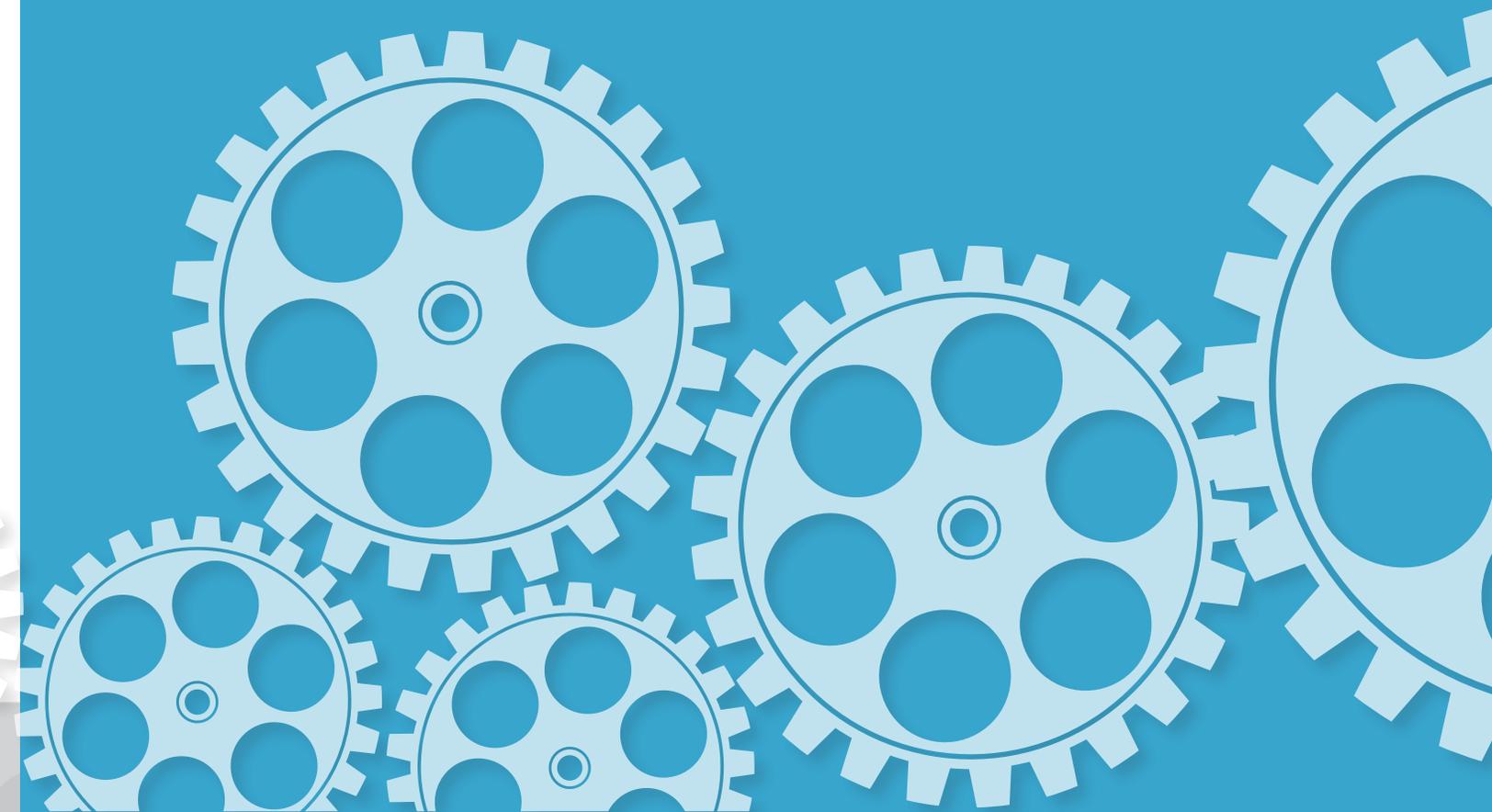
Other activities/services (accompanying measures):

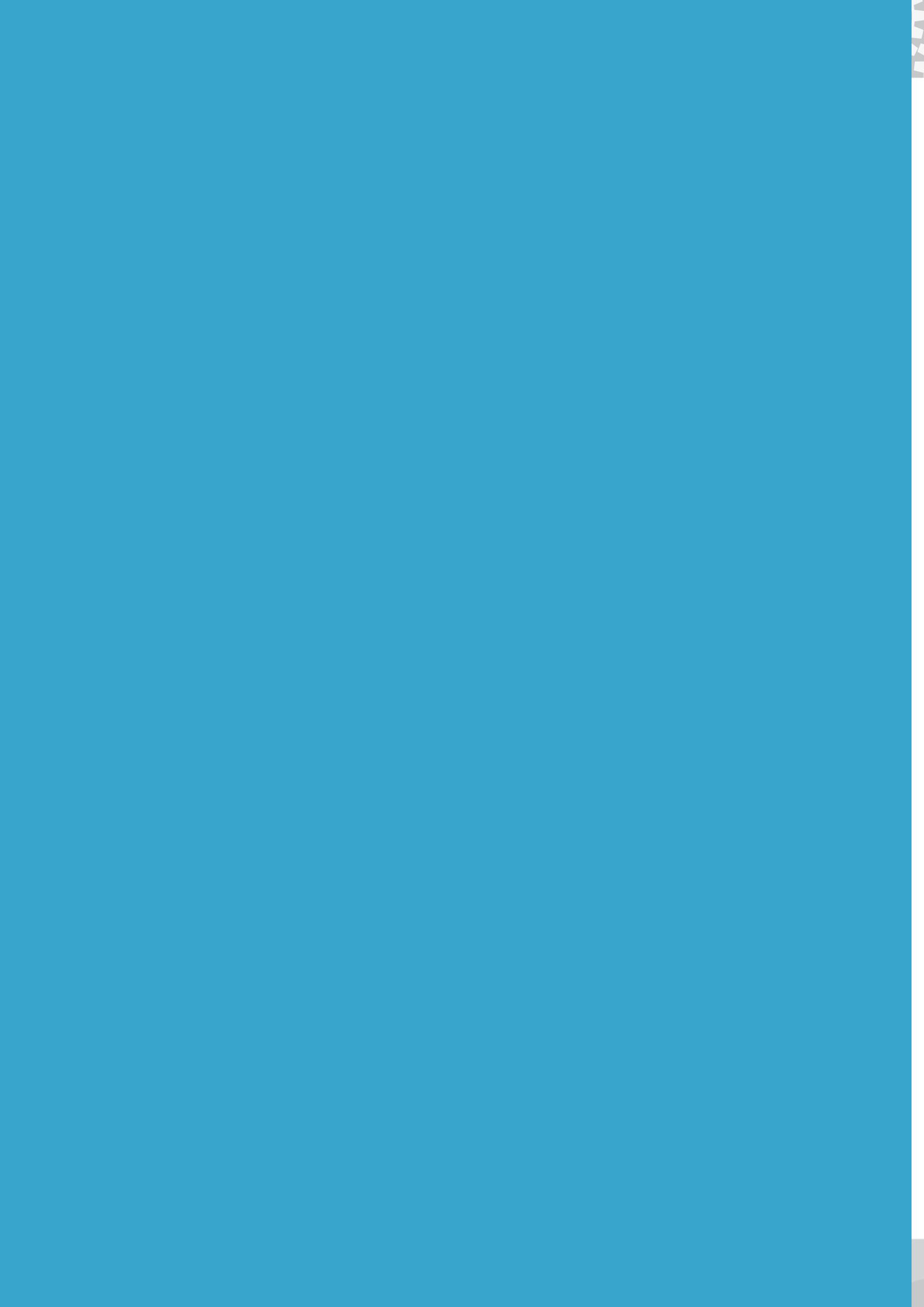
- Information, dissemination and promotion activities;
- Professional Workshops;
- Career guidance/counselling services;
- Flexibility of timetable;
- Accreditation of competences;
- Individual support;
- Work placement and self-employment support.

V.

TOOLS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A LOCALLY MANAGED VET SYSTEM

Regional Authority of Marche,
Italy





5.1 Introduction

The “Vademecum for the management and control of VET activities and active labour market policies realized in the area of European Social Fund” was established in the Marche Region through the Regional Deliberations no. 975/2008, no. 2110/2009 and no. 2110/2012.

The Vademecum was written in cooperation with local public and private accredited VET operators. Actually, it does not refer only to the management of public financed activities but also to VET projects approved and validated by the Public Administration and realized through other funding sources (e.g. students’ fees).

The Vademecum is structured in two sections:

- The first section describes the correct procedures for managing VET courses and activities referring to their *real costs*;
- The second section describes the procedures for managing VET courses and activities referring to a set of predefined *standard costs*.

According to the European court of auditors, in order to promote the simplification and effectiveness of procedures, the *standard costs reporting system* should gradually replace the *real costs reporting system*.

5.2 The Vademecum on real costs reporting procedures

In compliance with the European, Italian and Regional regulation, the Vademecum contains a set of rules for the management and reporting of VET activities and the definition of VET procedures. In fact, it can be considered a “work in progress”, being continuously updated according to the rapid changes affecting the policy and legislative framework and the VET sector.

Rules for submitting project applications

Regional and Provincial administrations’ calls for applications are advertised through the Official Gazette of the Marche Region (BURM¹³) and the Albo Pretorio (for Provincial calls for applications) and via the internet. As for EU calls for applications, Regional and Provincial calls contain specific requirements to be accomplished in order to ask for a grant (objectives, eligible actions and applicants, rules for submitting projects, assessment criteria, financial guidelines, etc..) and other important data concerning the specific VET activity to be funded

13 Acronym of Bollettino Ufficiale Regione Marche

(type of activity, economic sector, number of pupils to be involved, length of the course, etc..).

The applications must be submitted using a specific online system named SIFORM (<http://siform.regione.marche.it>) allowing VET operators to upload data and requested documents. Projects are therefore evaluated by the competent Regional Authority. The results of the evaluation process are communicated to applicant organizations through specific notice boards and the Regional/Provincial's website.

If the project is approved, applicant organizations sign up with the public financing institution a formal grant agreement defining rules and duties concerning the management and provision of the VET activity. According to the specific rules set out in the call for proposal, the VET provider will therefore launch a call for application at Provincial/Regional level inviting future potential candidates to participate in the VET course.

Advertise the activities

VET activities must be advertised in order to inform the highest number of potential trainees and suitable candidates that might be willing to take part in the VET activity. Dissemination tools – brochures, ads, posters, websites, photos, etc.. – are aimed at informing the potential candidates on all the aspects of the application procedures: prerequisites, deadlines, eligibility criteria, selection procedures, possible reimbursements and benefits, type of qualification/certificate issued.

If the minimum number of candidates required is not reached before the deadline for applications, the VET provider can decide to postpone it, under previous authorization from the Public Administration.

Project start up

Financed VET activities must generally start within 90 days from the signature of the grant agreement (see. Paragraph Submitting Projects). However, if the number of participants (due to a convincing reason) is lower than required by the project, it is possible modify the grant agreement and reduce the amount of funding according to the real number of participants.

VET operators must communicate the beginning of the VET activities 10 days in advance and deliver to the Public Administration the following documents:

- a. Lists of the trainees grouped according to their respective classes;
- b. Report on selection procedures;
- c. Lists of trainers and staff involved in the provision of the VET activities (attaching their professional CVs);
- d. Timetable of the activities;
- e. Location/s of the activities;

- f. Certificate of compliance for classrooms and labs to be used, issued by the Italian service for health and public hygiene (Italian ASUR) or other enabled subject. Such certificate must contain information about the maximum number of trainees that a classroom/lab can host. In addition, the legal representative of the VET provided must declare that the locations haven't been modified after the certification;
- g. List of equipment needed: teaching materials, didactical tools, etc...

The Public Administration monitors and controls the effectiveness of procedures also through SIFORM, where the accredited VET operators have to upload all the data and documents required for the launch of training activities. A public functionary is normally tasked to check the correct management of this initial phase also through *unexpected visits and inspections*. If the documentation is complete, the functionary will approve the start up of the course.

The trainees

Non European, European and Italian citizens in possess of the prerequisites set out in the call for applications can apply for participation by the deadline indicated and according to the procedures that will be clearly described in the public announcement.

The prerequisites typically refer to the beneficiaries' age, the employment/unemployment state, the gender, the level of education, the place of residence (inside/outside the Province/region), the nationality, etc...

Not eligible candidates won't be admitted to the VET activity while admitted candidates will sign up with the VET provider a specific learning agreement before the beginning of the VET course. If the age of the admitted candidate is under 18, the learning agreement will be signed by a parent or a legal guardian. The format of the learning agreement is defined in compliance with the Regional Decree no. 196 on privacy policies. VET providers must control that the all documents needed are attached to the learning agreement.

If the number of candidates exceeds the maximum number allowed by the dispositions contained in the call for proposal, the VET provider will launch a selection procedure. The list of potential candidates will be sent to the public administration financing the activities. The selection's costs won't be funded if the number of candidates on the selection day will be lower than required. The selection costs will be covered only if the selection will take place due to a number of candidates higher than allowed. In any case, the selections process and its results will be reported using a specific form and communicated to the public administration and to the candidates.

Summary of selection criteria and procedures

a. Potential beneficiaries:

VET providers must admit to the selection process:

- Eligible candidates owning the prerequisites;
- Eligible candidates having submitted their application according to the conditions of the public announcement.

b. Advertising procedures:

The selection's announcement must:

- Clearly specify the date, location and time of the selections;
- Inform the candidates that, in case of low participation rates, the VET course might not be realized.

c. Selection board: types and roles

The selection board is nominated by the VET provider, unless the VET activity is subject to a particular regulation requiring a specific selection board.

Normally, a selection board is composed by:

- A President;
- Two selectors normally represented by two experts in the field of interest.

d. Selection procedures

The selection board verifies that each candidate owns the requisites to access the selections.

Candidatures are assessed on the basis of:

- Diplomas, degrees, professional qualifications possessed (0-15 points)
- Written/practical exam, aptitude tests, general knowledge tests (0-35 points)
- Interviews, individual's motivation tests, joint analysis of the professional portfolio/CV (0-50 points).

Candidates must reach at least 60 points to enter the course.

The recognition of credits for previous relevant professional/training experiences is foreseen only for specific VET courses. In case of certification of credits, the amount of training hours to be attended will change accordingly.

The public administration can simplify the selection process in case of for VET courses lasting less than 100 hours. In this case, the assessment of CVs, professional portfolio and other documents attesting previous relevant experiences can replace the selection as described above. In both cases, the process must respect the principles of transparency and impartiality.

The selection results must be reported in the selection report; which will be sent to the public administration. Trainees will be given the timetable and the programme of the course and the final exams. The VET provider will inform the trainees that the certification will be issued only for those students attending at least the 75% of the course.

Number of trainees

The usual number of students for a VET course realized through public financing is generally 15, except for higher technical vocational education courses, post-university courses, master programmes that usually allow a maximum number of 20 students. However, specific regulations and dispositions can allow a different number of students.

The minimum number of trainees for a VET activity is usually 8. Nonetheless, in particular cases and due to specific reasons, the public administration can authorize VET activities even with a lower number of trainees (but not less than 5 trainees).

Auditors¹⁴

Auditors are generally accepted in a percentage of the 20% on the maximum number of regular students admitted. They are allowed to assist the lessons in order to provide the highest number of candidates with the possibility of attending the course. The VET agency is responsible for their admission but their attendance is not financed by the public funding.

The number of *Auditors* is not considered within the minimum number of trainees needed to start up the activities.

If a student in a regular position abandons the vet course, the *Auditor* will take his/her place as regular student, therefore receive any possible reimbursements foreseen and avoiding the risk of a reduction of the grant. Otherwise, *Auditors* won't receive any reimbursement even if it is contemplated by the vet activity.

Concerning the grant agreement, it's worth noticing that *Auditors* are considered as regular students only in case of abandonment of other regular students. At the mean time, it's possible for a regular student to become an *Auditor* and therefore not be taken into consideration by the Public Authority in the definition of the amount of the grant.

Auditors must always sign the register of the activities. If the *Auditor* has attended the 75% of the course, he/she will be able to take the final exam and to get the final certificate as the other students.

14 The term Auditor is used here to translate the Italian term "uditore" referring to candidates that, despite owning the requisites for accessing the VET activity and having successfully passed the selection process, are not admitted as regular students because all the available positions have been assigned to students with higher selection's scores.

Budgeting

The budget of a VET course is organized into sections referring to categories of expenditure, allowing both the Public Administration and the VET provider to control and monitor the effective use of financial resources in accordance to what has been defined in the project proposal.

The general structure of the Budget is composed of three parts, in compliance with the international classification: section A – income, section B – direct costs, section C – indirect costs.

The section B is organized into 5 sections:

1. Preparation (B1);
2. Realization (B2);
3. Dissemination (B3);
4. Direction and internal monitoring (B4).
5. Other (B5) - this category includes all the activities that are not reportable using a *student's cost per hour* system and is referred to activities realized through other public funding sources (inter-professional funds, law 236/96).

Section C (indirect costs) is referred to the general expenses generally connected to the realization of the course without being directly connected to the activities set above.

Records of the activities

The VET centre is responsible for the management and control of the register of activities. This document is compulsory and represents the main evidences proving that the VET activity has taken place. Unexpected visits and inspections from the Public Authority will be aimed at controlling and evaluating the VET activities also through the analysis of such registers.

The following documents are, therefore, compulsory:

- School register or VET activity register, in case of VET courses;
- E-registers in case of e-learning activities;
- Work training experiences individual register;
- Both students, teachers and other training professionals involved in the activities (e.g. tutors) are required to regularly sign up the register, in order to prove that the activities has been properly carried out.

Initial, ongoing and final official documentation

VET operators managing funded VET activities must provide all the information requested by the public administration through the signature of the grant agreement. VET operators, therefore are tasked to give evidence of the following aspects of the activities:

- Modifications in the use of financial resources;
- Reimbursement requests/expenses statements by attaching payment documents, receipts, invoices, etc..

- Modifications in the timetable of the activities;
- Detailed information on students (age, gender, school certificates/degrees/diplomas, professional qualifications, nationality, state of employment or unemployment, etc..)
- Detailed information on the attendance rate of each student, as reported in the register of the activities.
- All the data above are communicated to the Public Administration by uploading them on the software SIFORM.

Ongoing and final tests/exams

Trainees normally take ongoing and final learning tests aiming at proving the intermediate and final results of the learning process, according to the expected outcomes described in the project proposal.

The final exam often requires the presence of an examination board, composed by:

- A president nominated by the public administration;
- Two trainers from the VET course nominated by the VET agency.
-

Final exams issuing a recognized professional qualification are organised as follow:

- A practical and/or written exam;
- An oral exam.
- Candidates have to score at least 60 out of 100 for gaining the professional qualification and therefore receiving the certificate of qualification. The results of the exams are officialised and communicated to the Public Administration through a final report.

Dissemination and exploitation of results

The outcomes of VET projects are disseminated in order to inform both citizens and private/public institutions of the results of the activities carried out and guarantee the financial transparency in the use of public economic resources.

The dissemination of activities is also useful to promote the visibility of VET activities in general, supporting the reiteration of the VET project according to the socioeconomic needs of the territory and enhancing the participation of possible new interested learners (multiplier effect).

The project outcomes, the didactic instruments and methodologies can be disseminated mainly through:

- Internet, by creating dedicated web pages or using existing website or social networks;
- Paper based materials, brochures, publications, researches;
- Public events, conferences, workshops, etc..

Final activities

The final documentation including the financial statement of the vet activity must be delivered to the public administration generally within 60 days since the conclusion of last activity.

All the receipts testifying the expenses occurred for the implementation of the course must be delivered to the public administration. The request of reimbursement will be presented through the final financial statement together with the following documentation must:

- Final report of the activity. This document describes the outcomes of the activity and must be written by the legal representative, director or coordinator of the VET provider.
- Legal representative's declaration in compliance with the law 445/2000 article 47 stating that:
 - ✓ All the data contained in the financial statement are true and uploaded on SIFORM;
 - ✓ The VAT, concerning the expenses for the VET activities, has been deduced and/or will be deduced.
 - ✓ The tax breaks for realizing the VET activity have/haven't been used.
 - ✓ The documentation that has been attached to the financial statement is in compliance with the taxes legislation.
- The template of the financial statement completely filled in. Such template must be downloaded and printed through the system SIFORM.
- Summary of the attendance rate of trainees, downloaded and printed through SIFORM.
- Summary of the attendance rate of trainers, downloaded and printed through SIFORM.
- Copy of the registers of the activities.
- Materials that have been produced and used during the provision of the course (tests, didactic materials, etc..).

5.3 The Vademecum on standard costs reporting procedures

The management of VET projects funded by the European Social Fund has always been based on the principle *1 euro funding = 1 euro of expenses* but over the last years this system has shown several critical aspects and VET providers and public administrations have found difficulties in managing it.

In order to handle this situation, the European Social Fund regulation has introduced the possibility of reimbursing the general expenses within the 20% of the direct costs. Marche Region has adopted this principle since the launch of the Regional Operative Plan – ESF 2007/2013. As a result, the simplification of administrative and management procedures has allowed VET providers to re-allocate their human and financial resources toward other relevant activities,

therefore improving the cost effectiveness of their action.

Within the new reporting system, following a *standard costs model*, there is no need to deliver the detailed financial documentation for all the activities undertaken and VET providers are given a higher grade of autonomy in the management and allocation of financial resources, in the framework of the rules set out in the grant agreement. The final reimbursement for the expenses undertaken is released on the basis of the documentation attesting that the VET activity has been realized (e.g. registers of the activities).

Unexpected visits and inspections can be planned by the Public Authority in order to further verify the correct use of financial resources.

The management of VET activities in line with the *standard costs model* is therefore easier and allows a better use of financial resources. Both, real and standard costs models are in compliance with the European regulation 1081/2006.

Inspections from public administrations

Public Administration monitors and controls VET activities managed by accredited VET operators in order to guarantee the achievement of project goals and the compliance with the rules set out in the grant agreement. Monitoring activities might take place at the beginning, during and at the end of the VET activities.

In 2008, the Regione Marche established the Device for the accreditation of training providers. A system of credits was therefore introduced in order to encourage the accredited training centres to increase the quality of their services and to work in compliance with the rules set out in the Vademecum. Each accredited vocational education and training centre is therefore given an amount of 30 points that can decrease in case of non-compliance with the Regional regulation for the provision of VET activities. In fact, according to the Regional Decree no. 947/2008 and no. 987/2009, the Vocational Education and Training Service of the Regione Marche can decide to cut points in case of nonconformity during assessment procedures (ex-ante, ongoing, ex-post audits). Additional points will be conferred in case of compliance with the rules, up to a maximum amount of 40 points.

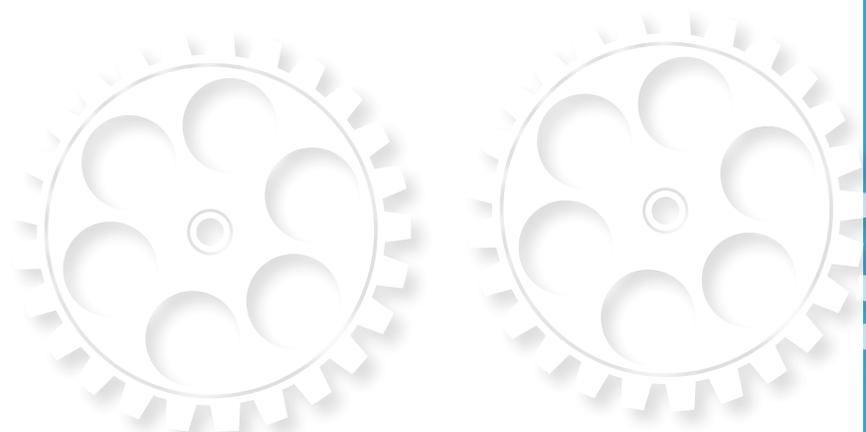
According to the Vademecum, the Public Administration can also decide to cut the amount of financial support in case of non-compliances.

Useful links for learning more:

<http://siform.regione.marche.it>

<http://www.istruzioneformazioneelavoro.marche.it/>

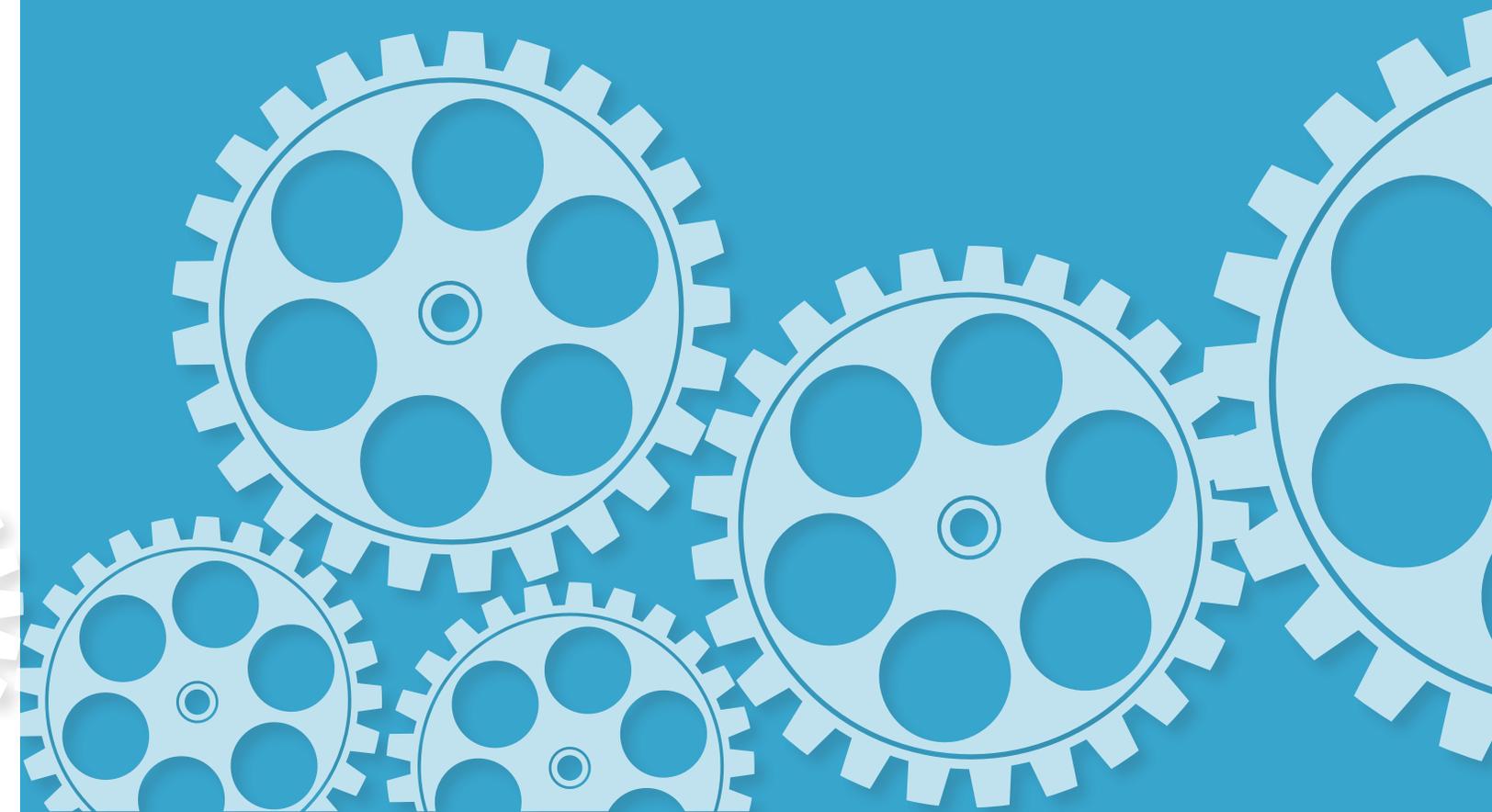
<http://www.marcheformazione.it/>

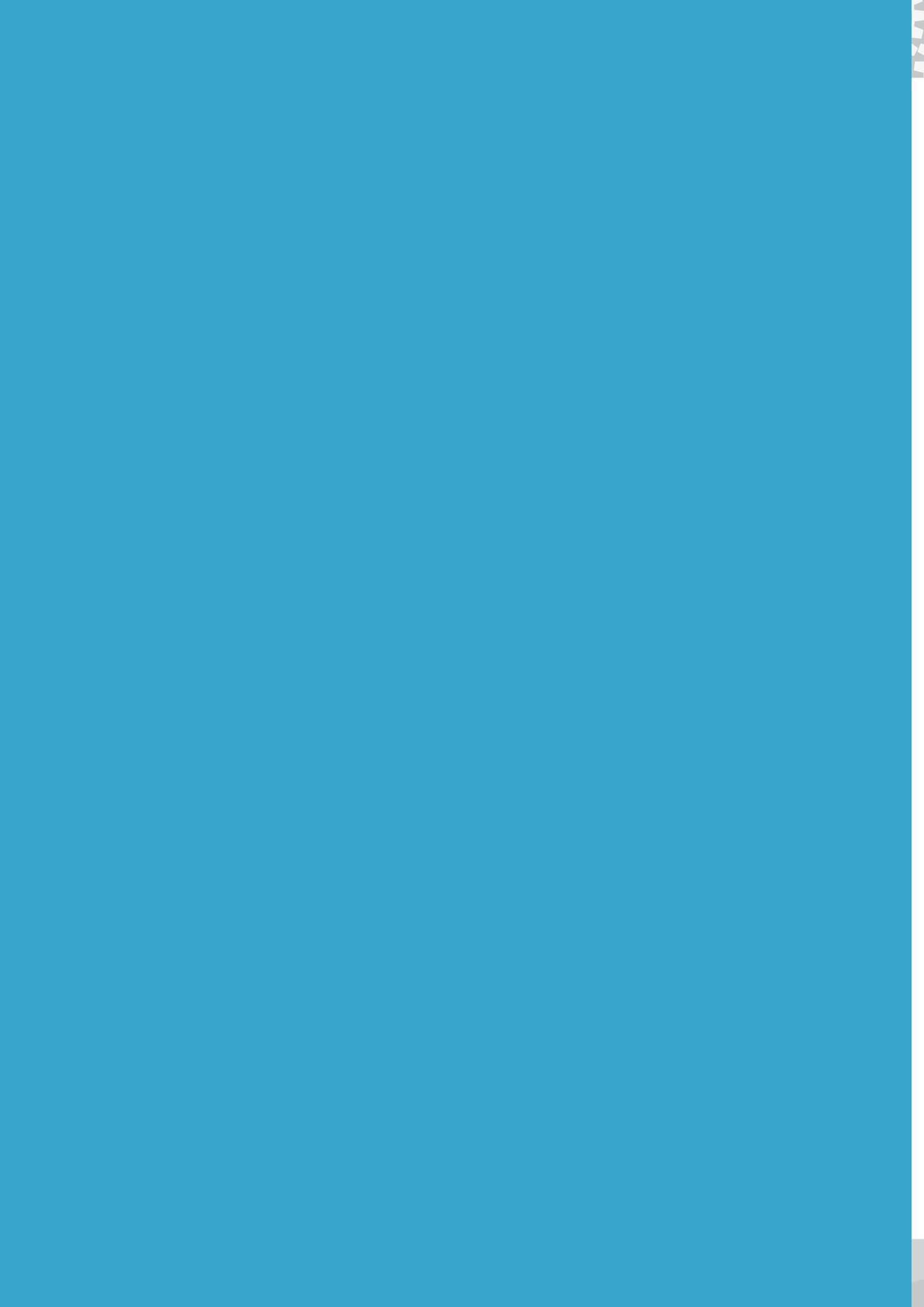


VI.

THE EUROPE 2020
STRATEGY:
PROGRAMMING
PERIOD 2014-2020

Regional Authority of Marche,
Italy





6.1 Introduction

Europe 2020 is the European Union's ten years growth strategy aiming at creating the conditions for a smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive growth. The EU set 5 key-targets to be achieved by the end of the decade. These cover employment; education; research and innovation; social inclusion and poverty reduction; climate change and sustainable energy, providing the framework through which the EU and national authorities will mutually reinforce their efforts to support the Europe 2020 priorities.

The achievement of *quantitative* key-objectives is essential in order to effectively measure the progresses of the Europe 2020 strategy:

- Employment: increase of the employment rate, reaching 75 % (age group between 20-64 years old). For Italy the target is 67-69 %
- Education: reduction of early *dropout* rate below 10 %, for Italy the target is 15 %; increase of university education up to 40 % of the group age 30-34; 26 % is the Italian target.
- Research and Innovation: increase in investment up to 3 % of UE PNL. For Italy the target is 1,53 % .
- Social inclusion and poverty reduction: 20 million people live in poverty and social exclusion. The target for Italy is to reduce it to 2.200.000 people.
- Climate change and sustainable energy: 20-30 % reduction of carbon gas emissions, according to conditions (the benchmark is data measured on 1990). For Italy, the expected reduction is 13 %.
- 20 % increase of renewable resources, estimated to 17 % for Italy.
- Increase of energy efficiency to 20 %. For Italy the target is 27, 90 %.

According with Europe 2020 strategy, the future European growth must be intelligent, sustainable and smart, therefore requiring integrated programming, enhancing local cohesion. Result-based evaluation should be increased and procedures should be simplified.

Eleven thematic objectives were identified within the new programming:

- Research and development;
- Information, communication technology (ICT);
- Competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME);
- Economy based on low emission of carbon gas;
- Adaptability to climate change, prevention and risk management;
- Resource efficiency and environmental conservation;
- Increase of infrastructure efficiency and sustainable transportation;
- Employment and support to workers' mobility;
- Social inclusion and poverty reduction;
- Education, competences and Lifelong Learning;
- Strengthen the efficiency of local and national institutions.

Particular attention is given to the use of financial resources, which should be allocated in an effective and efficient manner. The EU encourages an integrated approach of European public and private resources (Banking System, Private Investors, Inter-professional Funds), in order to increase the quality of the services provided and enhance the impact on policies. As far as social inclusion is concerned, the expenditure should get off passive welfare and be more focused on development creating financial sustainability for future actions. Access to credit should be facilitated.

In line with the focus of this publication, an analysis on the future of the European Social Fund (ESF) is provided in the next paragraph, underling the new priority for vocational education and training.

6.2 The thematic objectives of the European Social Fund and their expected application to Marche Region

The European Union encourages the concentration of investments for social inclusion. The Regional Operative Program focuses on 4 *thematic objectives (T.O.)* which are declined in 18 priority of investment, as follows:

- Employment
 1. Access to employment;
 2. Youth;
 3. Start-up of businesses;
 4. Conciliation;
 5. Adaptability;
 6. Active ageing;
 7. Labor market institutions.

- Social inclusion
 1. Active inclusion;
 2. Marginalized communities;
 3. Antidiscrimination;
 4. Access to services;
 5. Social economy;
 6. Local communities' development.

- Education
 1. Drop out;
 2. Quality of secondary education;
 3. Lifelong learning.

- Institutional Capacity
 1. Public administration institutional capacity;

2. Strengthen of actors/ pacts for sectorial and territorial reforms.

The Marche Region shows a critical context, with a contraction of the competitiveness level of the handcraft firms and a following increase of unemployment rate. This trend is valid also for other sectors of the economy, with general increasing low youth participation into the labour market and high unemployment rates. Therefore, the Regional Poverty Index has increased and the education of adults is low. On average, the aging of Marche population is rising.

The thematic objective “Employment” has its main priorities on the improvement of youth and women employability through their sustainable integration in the labour market. Apprenticeship and work experiences should be further promoted, start-up businesses encouraged and a special focus should be the adaptation of workers and enterprises to the new challenges of labour market thanks to new vocational offers (qualifications, specialization, IFTS, ITS...). Policy-makers will incentivize hiring policy and increase the effectiveness of labour services and institutions.

“Active inclusion” is the first priority of the thematic objective “Social inclusion”, which stresses the need to create jobs also for disadvantaged people, reinforcing their competences through *ad hoc* vocational paths. It is necessary to simplify the accessibility of services and improve their overall quality and performance.

“Education, competences and Lifelong Learning” aims at reducing the scholastic drop out enhancing the access to Lifelong Learning. The quality of vocational education and training will be increased, bearing in mind the importance of internationalization and mobility.

The institutional capacity is the last thematic objective and stresses the importance of services provided via the web (e-governance). The development of this new tool will allow a faster link between citizens, firms and institution, improving effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of services. Public officer will attend refreshing course to increase the competences of Public Administration.

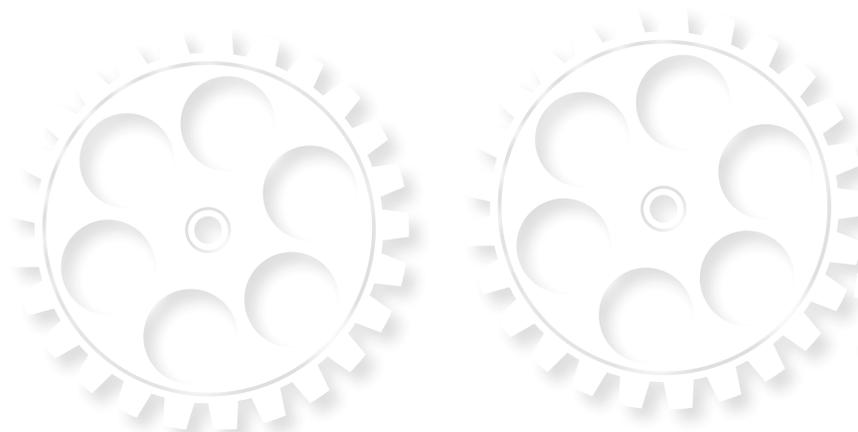
According to the first draft of the Regional Operative Program for the ESF 2014-2020, the financial resources should be distributed as follows:

THEMATIC OBJECTIVE AND PRIORITY OF INVESTMENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Access to employment	41,60 %
Youth	16,60 %
Business start-up	2,00 %
Adaptation of enterprises and workers	3,50 %
Active aging and health	3,00 %
Institution of labor market	6,50 %
Access to services	15,30 %
Promotion of social economy	1,00 %
Scholastic drop out	1,00 %
Improvement of the quality of education	2,00 %
Improvement of the access to permanent education	2,00 %
Institutional capability	2,00 %
Technical assistance	3,50 %
TOTAL	100,00 %

It is important to underline that this is a hypothesis of expenditure, since the process is still on- going. The main milestones to be achieved for the final implementation of the new Programming Period 2014/2020 are the following:

- Transmission of the draft of the Partnership Agreement to the EC (November 2013);
- Approval of EC Regulations (November 2013);
- Approval of the Partnership Agreement by the EC (January 2014);
 - ✓ Presentation of Regional Operative Program to the EC (February 2014);
 - ✓ Negotiation between institutions and social partners (July- December 2013);
- Assessment of Regional Operative Program by the Regional Council, which will be sent to the EC (January/February 2014).
- EC approval of Regional Operative Program (May/June 2014);
- Convocation of the Council of State for the operative launch of Regional Operative Program (e.g. criteria for the project's selection, expected within 30 days from its approval).

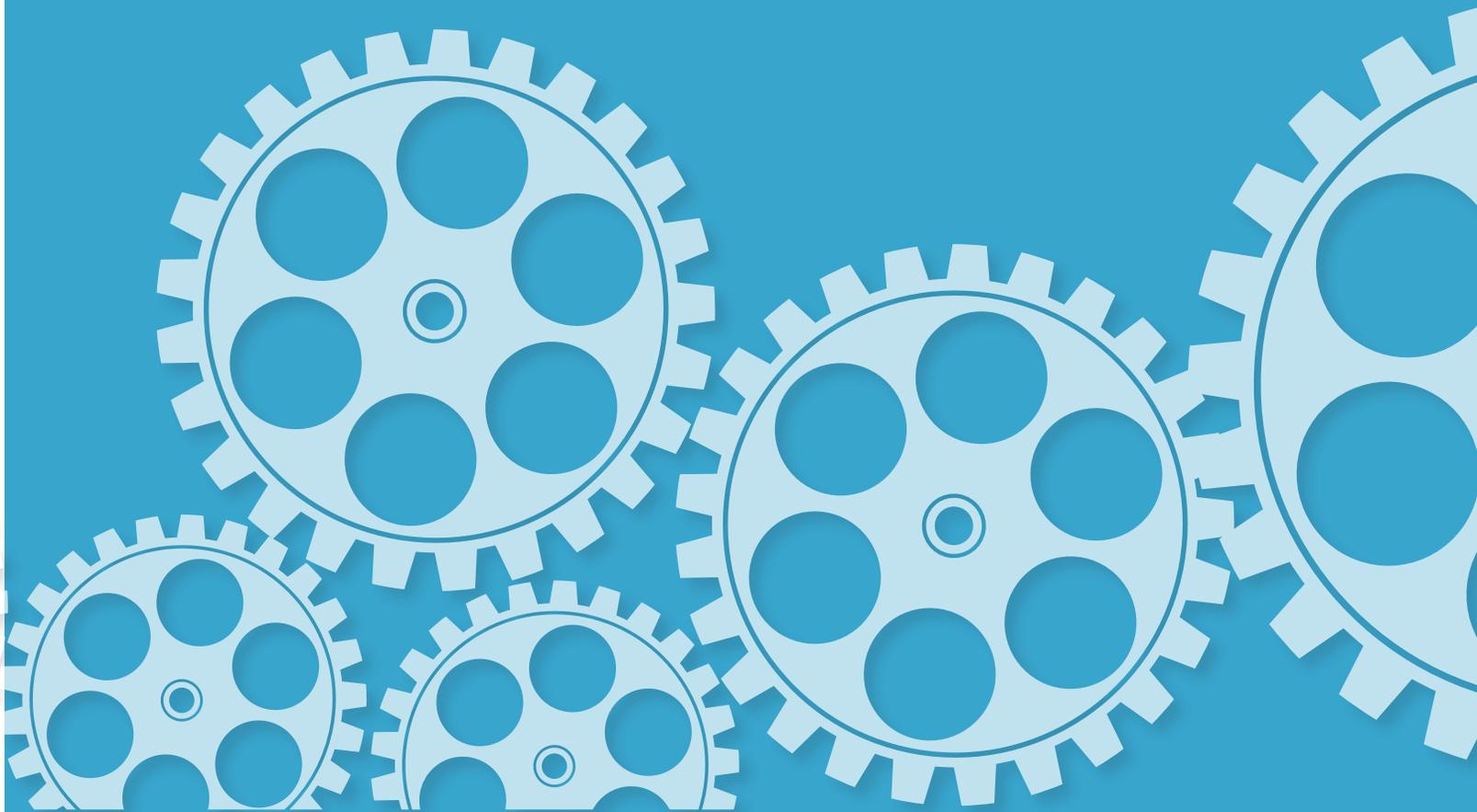
First calls for proposal (September/October 2014)

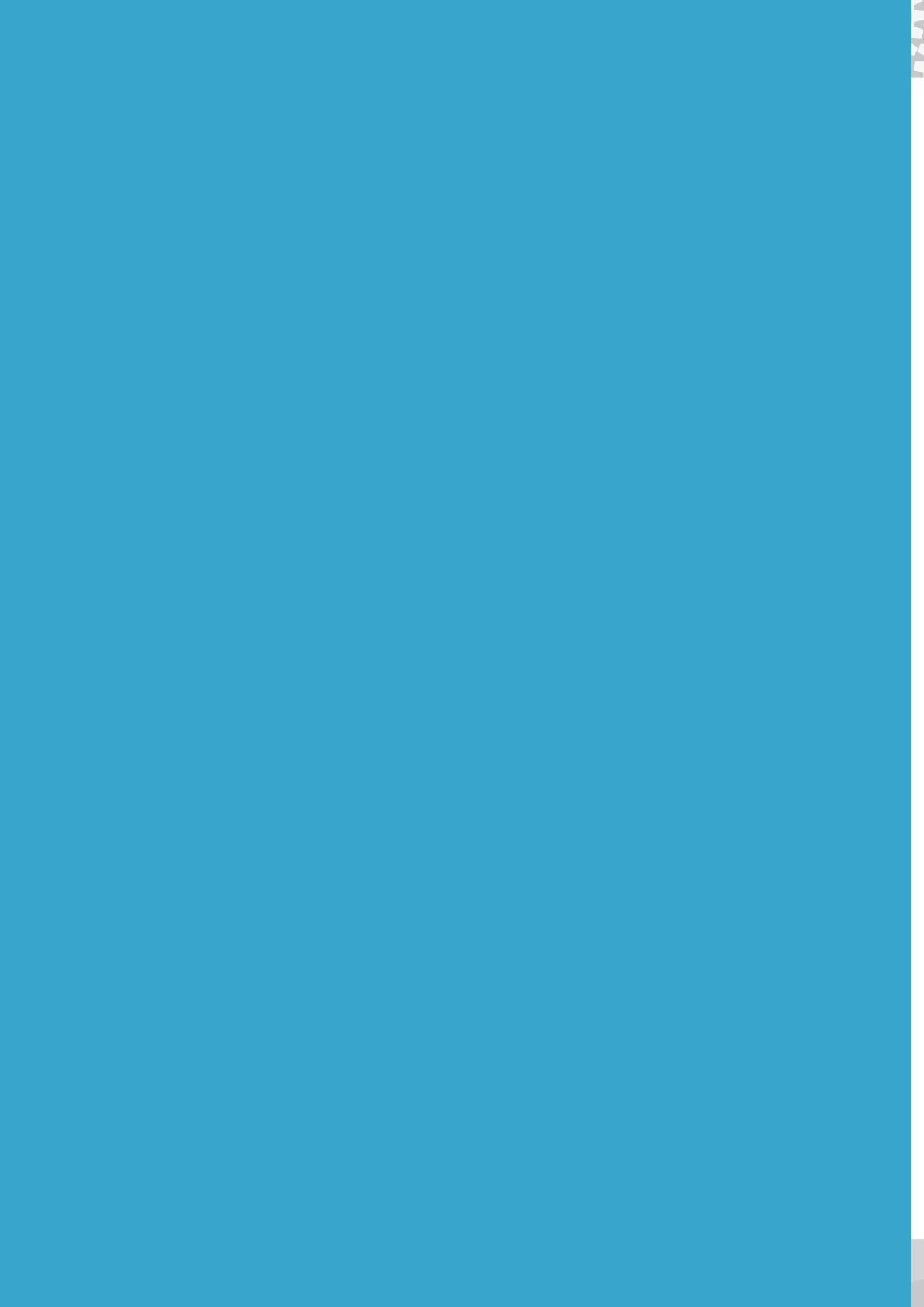


VII.

**FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A
LOCALLY MANAGED VET
SCHEME IN THE DURRES
REGION**

Regional Council of Durres,
Albania





7.1 Introduction: the EU IPA DELMVET Project

This Study represents the second specialized service requested by Regional Council of Durrës for the implementation of the project *DELMVET 283/2009* under the *Adriatic IPA Program* (work-package no. 5: *Establishment of a locally managed VET pilot model*).

7.2 The conventional economic approach of VET

Within this study, vocational education and training is conceived as a *job-related learning process* aimed at improving the productivity of individuals. This perspective obviously includes learning in vocational schools, in training centers or in universities, and also in the workplace, both *on* and *off* the job.

The broad *spectrum* of existing education and/or training activities involve a wide range of education and training technologies, with *school-based pre-employment education* on the one end and *enterprise-based on-the-job training* on the other. Recent developments recommend the overlapping use of different education and training approaches, methodologies and tools, in an integrated lifelong learning useful to policy makers both in designing and evaluating the programmes.

Which one of these learning activities is the most *efficient* referring to each specific profession should be an important question particularly for decision makers in a developing Country like Albania. Tight government budgets and unmet demands for education and training have increased the need to control and improve the efficiency of services. Complete information on the costs related to the provision of education and training services is essential to estimate the economic *feasibility* of whole VET system, as well. In the meantime, detailed information on both the costs and benefits of vocational training programs is needed to evaluate their cost-effectiveness.

In fact, the *conventional economic approach* to the study of vocational education and training is to treat it as a *production process*, with its related *inputs* and *outputs*.

The *inputs* to a VET system include the time spent by trainees and instructors, the tools and materials used, the equipment needed and the facilities where the learning process takes place. Summarizing, the *direct* and *indirect* resources needed for the realization of learning activities constitute the *costs* of a vocational education and training system.

The *outputs* of a VET system include its *effects* on the trainees (the increments in both cognitive and non-cognitive skills that are required in the workplace) and the *benefits* to the trainees, the providers of training and the whole society.

The benefits to a trainee include both *pecuniary benefits* (such as increased earnings, enhanced probability of getting a job and more stable employment) and *non-pecuniary benefits* (such as increased job satisfaction and more occupational options).

The benefits to the *enterprise* providing the training include lower rates of worker turnover, reduced downtime, reduced input costs and increased worker productivity.

The benefits to the *society* include increased economic productivity and higher taxable earnings.

Using the economic approach, a VET system is more *internally efficient* when it produces more desired *effects*, and instead more *externally efficient* when it produces more *benefits*, given the same inputs for both evaluations. An alternative but equivalent way is to relate the outputs of training to the minimum cost of training, given the training technology and input prices required. Within this framework, each vocational education and training system is internally or externally *more efficient* when *less expenditure* is required to produce the *same* level of *effects* or *benefits*.

These approaches towards an efficient VET system should allow the decision makers to establish its financing framework.

7.3 Objectives, expected outcomes and feasibility

Being an integrated part of the DELMVET Project, the present study takes into account the conclusions and recommendations of three prior studies realized within the Work Package:

- Survey on the Labour market in the Durres Region;
- Feasibility study on two post-secondary professional profiles;
- Assessment of VET local institutions in the Durres Region.

These three previous researches proved that a locally-managed proposed scheme has more chances to be feasible, because of the involvement of local stakeholders and more qualified human resources. The studies also contain important suggestions about innovative ways to financing the VET system in the Durres Region

In fact, the present study wants to show that the Durres Region has the capabilities, the knowledge and the financial capacities needed to build up an efficient locally managed VET system, feasible and innovative. The present study will also show that the main challenge to be faced is represented by the implementation of that pilot scheme.

A list of the outcomes that will arise from the implementation of a locally managed system in the Durres Region is provided below:

- Reinforcement of the synergies between the VET system and the labour market;
- Improvement the VET financing system;
- Improvement of the VET infrastructures;
- Transformation of high vocational school “B. Çela” in a multifunctional VET Center, incorporating post-secondary level courses;
- Improvement of the overall quality of the VET system;
- Promotion and improvement of vocational guidance activities among VET institutions;
- Increased attractiveness of the VET system;

The raising of the VET Regional fund up to the 53% higher than the current one for the first implementation phase, the double of it by the end of its implementation.

The new locally managed VET system in the Durres Region Council is therefore expected to become a pattern and a good practice able to be disseminated in other Albanian Regions.

7.4 Current state of VET in the Durres Region

The National Strategy 2013 – 2020 for VET

Albania has a Stabilization and Association Agreement with EU, and its Parliament has approved a comprehensive National Strategy for Development and Integration. Within this framework, the Pre- university Strategy 2005- 2015 and the Employment Strategy 2007 – 2013 launched a fundamental reform process of the vocational education and training system, focused on decentralization, on the promotion of diversification and flexibility and on public-private partnership arrangements.

More specifically, an Albanian Qualifications Framework should be soon introduced while the participation in vocational education at upper secondary level aims to be raised from 20% to 40%. Following the reform of the VET system, the Albanian government through the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MSWY) has drafted the reform of “National Strategy for Vocational Education Training and Life-Long Learning 2013-2020”.

The vision for VET and lifelong learning in Albania for the coming years was

therefore defined as follows: “A comprehensive VET system including a lifelong learning perspective which ensures the inclusion of young people and adults in the labour market and in the Albanian society as a whole”.

Having in mind the existing gaps, the recommendations identified 4 strategic priorities:

- a. Reform the VET institutional system, improving its efficiency and effectiveness.
- b. Increase the attractiveness and access of VET and LLL for the relevant stakeholders.
- c. Address Labour market needs and demands with an adequate VET supply.
- d. Strengthen the capacities of monitoring and evaluation of VET and lifelong learning activities.

In this framework, 11 objectives were established according to the 4 Strategic Priorities.

The strategic priority A is composed by three following objectives:

- a. Improvement of the governance model of VET and lifelong learning.
- b. Rationalization of VET provider’s network.
- c. Development of an adequate financing model for VET.

The National Strategy for VET will be supported by recommendations and studies conducted in the framework of Frame Project 2013 “Skills for the future”. The European Commission has entrusted the ETF to support enlargement Countries¹⁵ in their human resources development (HRD) efforts. The overall objective is to achieve economic development and social cohesion on a medium and long-term perspective with particular reference to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the South East Europe 2020 Strategy¹⁶.

Following these strategic documents, the main goal of the Operational Program – IPA IV is “to improve the welfare and life chances for Albanian citizens in the context of integration into the European Union through increased employment, improved employability, and the development of an inclusive Labour market”. The IPA IV component and the corresponding Operational Program (OP IPAIV) will address the key improvements of VET according to the labour market demand.

On the decentralization of the VET system in Albania

Decentralization and de-concentration of pre-university education system in Albania (particularly regarding the VET system) is a primary objective of the Albanian Government. Since the cooperation between central and local

¹⁵ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo (this designation is without prejudice to position on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence), Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey

¹⁶ National Strategy for Vocational Education Training and Lifelong Learning (2013-2020)

governments is seen as one of the key issues for the development of the VET system, the preparation of the “Feasibility study on locally managed pilot scheme” is based on these premises.

Current competences of local governments include: the possibility of proposing the open or closure of VET courses, the maintenance of schools and the ability to offer vocational training courses which do not require public financing and whose costs are covered by learners fees.

On this respect, the new pilot-scheme model proposed in this study requires the “decentralization of the VET system” as an inalienable component for building an efficient VET system. Decentralization is recommended in several studies conducted by local and foreign institutions, but it was not possible to draft a model for its implementation. All the researchers on VET system in Albania consider its decentralization a great transformation for the coming years. Hence, ETF in the study “Human Resource Development Review in Albania 2010”, recommends: *“Key challenges in education and training remain the decentralization of management responsibilities; a more efficient use and the sharing of resources between schools and VTC-s; the adjustment of education and training offers within the regions in line with Labour market and social demand; the involvement of social partners in the planning and delivery of VET and HE; a systematic teacher training effort, particularly in VET; continuous school rehabilitation and equipment upgrading; the expansion and flexible provision of post-secondary VET and adult learning offers, also at higher levels of qualifications, as well as the development of the AQF in line with EQF orientations”*¹⁷.

In conclusion, it might be assumed that the decentralization of the VET system is a process of reorganization of central government competences toward local institutions involved in the designing, management and provision of VET services. However, the transfer of competences from the central level to local/ Regional institutions is a gradual process and not a goal in itself. Decentralization is never a magic formula that guarantees an absolute success. However, it can be crucial in allowing a process of progressive and advanced development of VET despite some potential risks.

In the framework of decentralization, vocational schools and training centers benefit of a *larger* autonomy, which allows them to make a more flexible use of their resources. Thus, schools and centers could be transformed into vocational training agencies and multifunctional centers able to offer proper services to the labour market.

This Study has been focused to one of several types of decentralization, often referred to as “democratic”: *the transfer of competencies from central Institution to other local elected authorities.*

17 Human Resource Development Review prepared from Evelyn Viertel, Margareta Nikolosvska, Epke Vogel

Donors supporting VET in Albania and in the Durres Region

- The VET system in Albania is highly dependent on donor investments for the realization of activities related to the renovation of the infrastructures, the introduction of innovations in curricula, the provision of specific equipments to schools, etc. Biggest donor investments are the Education Excellence and Equity Project (EEEEP) in general education (US\$75 million) and the EC, Swiss AlbVET and German GTZ projects in VET (total investment: €29 million till 2008).
- The IPA 2008 Strengthening VET project (€8 million, with most of the funds destined to school renovation and equipment provision), which started in 2010, supports the professional development of VET actors, directors and teachers at Regional and school levels. It helps to map the variety of VET programs in Albania and identify existing needs, strengthening the capacities related to the building of an AQF and defining an action plan for the establishment of a national network of VET centers. Finally, the project is supporting the preparation of the technical equipment for the recently developed curricula in the electro-technical and mechanical fields¹⁸.
- Swiss-contact has been active in Albania since 1994. The first project supported the rehabilitation and modernization of programs in a vocational high school in Durres city. A second project started in 2001 and included module development, teacher training and a voucher system to train 30.000 adults at Public Vocational Training Centers. Phase 1 of the AlbVET program (see: www.albvet.al) lasted from January 2007 to June 2009 (CHF 4,435,000) and Phase 2 covered the period July 2009 to June 2011 (CHF 2,600,000). Currently, the project supports 10 vocational schools across Albania in the development of one technical (hydraulic systems fitting) and one non-technical occupational curriculum. Support to curriculum development, instructors' training and the purchasing of equipment and materials is also provided. Under its "Partnership for Learning" component, 4-6 local models for informal apprenticeship systems in crafts areas like bakery, hairdressing and traditional handicrafts are developed, which could serve as an example for school-employer cooperation in the entire Country.¹⁹
- Kulturkontakt Austria has been active in the Country since 1995. The EcoNet²⁰ project supported secondary business education with the introduction of training firms as a new practice-oriented learning method. *Tour.reg* helped to develop curricula, materials, and the training of teachers for a modern and practice-oriented VET in tourism schools. Since January 2010, Kulturkontakt assists secondary business schools in areas such as quality assurance, management, teaching materials, teaching methods, school - business cooperation and gender issues.

18 Human Resource Development Review prepared from Evelyn Viertel, Margareta Nikolosvska, Epke Vogel

19 Ibid.

20 see <http://www.econet-see.com/en/index.html>

- GTZ helped to establish the Professional Academy at Durres University. Dual study programs were designed for bank management, catering/tourism management and SME/construction company management. Private businesses provided the practical part of the training and shared costs.
-
- The ILO project on Assistance to Strengthen the Employment and Training System, which was funded by the Italian Government (€600,000, as well as €200,000 matching contributions), undertook legislative and institutional reviews and came up with recommendations for legal adjustments, as well as modernizing of NES (National Employment Service) structures, functions, workflow and service delivery. It supported the monitoring and evaluation function of the NES by issuing guidelines, training staff and preparing terms of reference for an evaluation, focusing on a net impact assessment. Guidelines have also been issued for the contracting of training providers. A survey has been carried out to identify skill needs among SME-s in Albania, as well.

The actual founders of VET Budget for Durres Region

At the present moment, the main founders of the VET system in the Durres Region are:

- Central Government, through the state budget;
- Local Government, through conditional budget for investment and own budget;
- Donors;
- Student's contributions;
- Other financing systems.
- The following table summarizes the data for the financial year 2012²¹.

(Thousand Lekë)

Nr	School/Institution	Central Government	Local Government
1	Beqir Çela	40,004	0
2	Hysen Çela	24,870	3.000
3	Jan Kukuzeli	18,220	0
4	Berandina Qeraxhia	51,091	8.000
5	Vocational Training Center	14,357	0
6	Dormitories	25,817	-
	Total	162,269	11,000
			173,269

In fact, the budget of vocational schools and the public vocational training center shows that approximately the 76% of the public expenditure is referred to the salaries of employees, the 9% to their social and health insurance, while only 15% is dedicated to capital investment.

The preponderance of personnel costs reflects the Labour-intensive nature of vocational education and training. Up to now, the annual average fund financed with the state budget for the Durres Regional system of VET is 173,269 thousand lekë, while the Durres Municipality has financed approximately 11,000 thousand Lekë. The maximum of the VET system fund for The Durres Region was 185,359 thousand Lekë equivalent to 1,324,000 € versus 18.1 million € funded at national level.

The State Budget for VET for the period 2011 – 2014 was increasing year after year. Hence, in the year 2011, the State Budget for VET was 16 million €. In the year 2014 this budget will be 20.60 million €, with an increase of 21.9 %. However, we may say that the supply of the VET system in the Durres Region is mainly state-driven, without any participation of other local stakeholders. Certainly, this situation *should and could be changed*.

7.5 The proposal for a locally managed VET pilot scheme

Some favorable premises to the implementation of a new scheme

Until now, there hasn't been any proposal for a concrete model of locally managed VET system. Therefore, we might refer to the new locally managed pilot scheme in the Durres Region as an *innovation*. Its implementation will obviously require some time (we might say at least 3 years) in order to cope with initial problems and critical issues likely to arise during the starting phase.

As a matter of fact, the participation of the Durres Regional Council, as a leading partner of the project DELMVET, to the IPA Program 2007 – 2013 was widely supported by 16 local government units of the Durres Region. They all expressed their interest to establish a new VET scheme deepening the decentralization from the national to the Regional level. Their support also as financial contributors (a fund of 20 million Lekë per year) has contributed to the setting up of some favorable conditions leading to the signature of the *Memorandum of Understanding* by the Durres Regional Council and the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). Through the Memorandum, the DRC was entrusted of the creation of a working group, responsible for the project formulation and for the submission of the application. In compliance with the IPA regulation, the Durres Regional Council allocated the amount of 68,000 € from its own budget as co-financing rate of 15% over the total costs of the project. The project was approved also thanks to

the participation of foreign partners from Italy, Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, offering their precious experience and know-how on the field of VET. This initiative found a strong support even from the AlbVET program which is well known for its strong contribution to the development of the VET in Albania. Therefore we can say that, since the initial phases of the DELMVET project, there has been a *political willpower* explicitly expressed in favor of a locally managed VET system in the Durres Region.

Other local stakeholders played an important role in the application phase, as well. The disposal for a financial contribution was tested with two companies: The Authority of Durres Port and the cement factories “Seament” and “Titan Group” operating in Kruja district, together with other three Albanian companies expressed their will to financially contribute to the implementation of the project, in order to improve the competences of their workers through a medium-term VET plan. Once implemented, other companies obviously could benefit and finance the local VET system, combining their qualification “on the job” with an “off the job” training offer provided by vocational schools or training centers.

Apart from its contribution to the formulation of the project, the Durres Chamber of Commerce has also allocated an annual fund supporting VET in the Durres Region. Moreover, the EU and other donors supported the VET sector over the period 2002-2008 with a total grant of approximately € 29 million. The EU provided the largest share with 50%, followed by Switzerland with 22%, Germany 13%, Italy 10%, Austria 4% and the US 1%.²² Because the project is financially supported by IPA Program and involves the international-cooperation at Regional level, it is be able to attract the attention of foreign donors particularly thanks to the decentralization process. This means great possibilities for raising additional funds from donors supporting the implementation of the project during the next three years, too.

Briefly, the establishment of a locally managed VET system in the Durres Region will be carried out by a close collaboration among national and international stakeholders, also contributing to the financing of the new pilot scheme. Furthermore, a specific Board (decision-making body) and a Directorate (executive body) will be entrusted of the management of new proposed VET scheme, thus guaranteeing the cost-effectiveness and the overall efficiency of the system. The decentralization of the system will lead to a better use of economic resources, as well. The new VET pilot scheme will allow high vocational schools and training centers to benefit from a larger autonomy becoming more flexible in the use of financial resources. Once transformed into vocational training agencies and/or multifunctional centers, schools and other VET institutions will be capable to offer effective services to the labour market, according to real socioeconomic needs.

Summarizing, there are favorable premises for a new type of local governance for

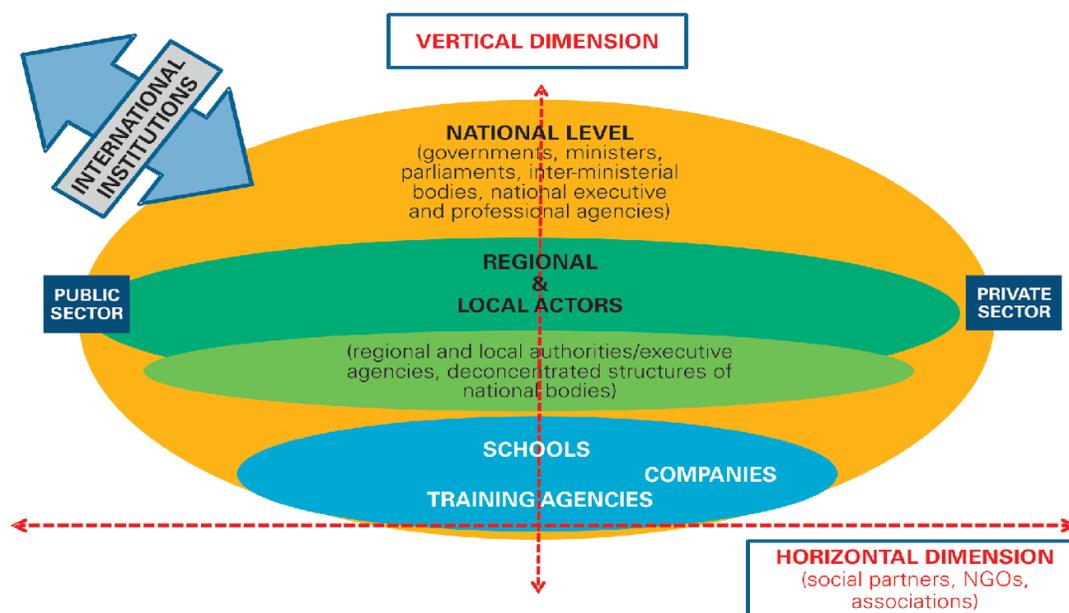
the VET system in the Durres Region based. This new pilot scheme will contribute to the reinforcement of interactions among relevant stakeholders, improving the accountability, transparency, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the policy framework. Furthermore, the scheme will contribute to address future skill demands coming from the economy sector, at the same time enhancing citizens' employability and personal development.

The role of stakeholders

Stakeholders play a crucial role in supporting the VET system at local, Regional and national level. They can be subdivided according to their role and responsibility within the VET system:

- Strategic decision makers, representatives and officers:
 - at different levels of management responsibility;
 - in different ministries;
 - in Regional/local government.
- Social partners:
 - employers and companies, their representative organizations and chambers;
 - representatives of employees' organizations and unions.
- Teachers and trainers:
 - representative organizations and unions;
 - leaders of different kinds of VET provider institutions.
- Non-state or third-sector organizations;
- Civil society including community and religious organizations;
- Stakeholders in the informal economy;
- Others..

Relevant stakeholder should play their roles and responsibilities since the earliest stages of a project, in the deigning and formulation phase, a decision makers or co-decision makers, with consultative role for acts, instructions aimed at implementing specific decisions, as evaluator, founders or co-founders and generally speaking as project partners (a nonspecific term but may be useful). The following two-dimensional diagrams illustrate a general idea of the interaction among the network of stakeholders and actors interested to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of a locally managed VET system.



The new VET pilot scheme for the Durres Region

The establishment of a locally managed pilot scheme for VET, whose core is *decentralization*, aims at creating a new structure capable of integrating all institutions providing a vocational education and/or training offer in the Durres Region. This structure, that we will call the *Durres Regional System of Vocational Education and Training (DRESVET)*, will technically and financially manage the Regional VET system through the creation of two main bodies.

The directive body (the Board) will be composed by national and local stakeholders of the VET system in the Durres Region and will be headed by the Chairman of the Durres Regional Council. The Board will be in charge of approving the Regional development strategy on VET and all financial acts related to it.

The executive body (the Directory, DVET) will be part of the DRC and will be entrusted of the implementation and general management of the decisions of the Board, monitoring the performance of VET Regional institutions.

The status of both bodies will be defined by a decision of the Council of Ministers of Albanian Government. The proposed new structure will include the major VET institutions of the region, respectively the two high vocational schools, “B. Çela” and “H. Çela” and the Vocational Training Centers of Kruja and Kavaja. The reform and consolidation of a Regional VET system require also an inter-communal cooperation between six municipalities, ten communes and the Durres Regional Council, in order to increase the efficient use of local public finances and support inter-communal projects.

The decentralized system, developed in accordance to the EU standards, is expected to become a good practice to be implemented across the other regions of the Country and at national level. The locally managed pilot scheme for VET in the Durres Region will promote the balanced contribution of all local government units. Following the Law n. 8652 dated 31.07.2000 “On the organization and functioning of local government” and the principle of efficiency, the proposal is based on the following assumptions:

- The mission of Regional Council is the implementation of services for the benefit of citizens, as required to second level units of the local government (NUTS 3);
- As a local government unit, the Regional of Council has the right to establish joint institutions with other local government units, following a joint competences model²³;
- Local governments have the right to set up specific administrative structures, economic units and institutions in order to perform their functions;
- Local government units create committees, boards or commissions to perform their functions²⁴;
- The Regional Council is responsible for the development, implementation and management of Regional policies and of their harmonization with state policies²⁵;
- The Regional Council is entrusted by the central government to perform its functions²⁶;

According to these premises, the Regional Council is therefore allowed to manage the VET sector *as a joint or delegated function* in accordance with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and the Ministry of Education and Sports²⁷. In this case, Ministries guarantee to the Regions the financial support needed to perform the functions related to the implementation of a locally managed VET system (function delegated). This process will increase the responsibility of local governments units in using financial resources and improve the overall quality of VET services:

- Local Governments Units exercise property rights²⁸;
- The Regional Council decides the mandatory amount of financial assistance for every commune and municipality²⁹;

23 Article 54, letter h of the Law nr.8652 date 31.07.2000 “On the organization and functioning of local governance”

24 Article 8 of the Law nr.8652 date 31.07.2000 “On the organization and functioning of local governance”

25 Ibid., article 14, paragraph 1

26 Ibid., article 13, paragraph 3

27 Article 12 point 5 of the Law nr.8652 date 31.07.2000 “On the organization and functioning of local governance”

28 Article 8 point II.a of the Law nr.8652 date 31.07.2000 “On the organization and functioning of local governance”

29 Article 54 point b of the Law nr.8652 date 31.07.2000 “On the organization and functioning of local governance”

- The Regional Council takes decisions on matters related to taxes and fees³⁰.

Institutional and legal reforms of local government have given more access to the use of local finances, which are supported by a decentralized legal framework. The most important are: Law n. 8652, dated 31.07.2000 “On the organization and functioning of local government”, Law n. 9632, dated 30.10.2006 “On the local tax system”, Law n. 8744 dated 22.02.2001 “On transfer of immovable state properties to local government units” Law n. 10119, dated 24.09.2009 “On territorial planning”.

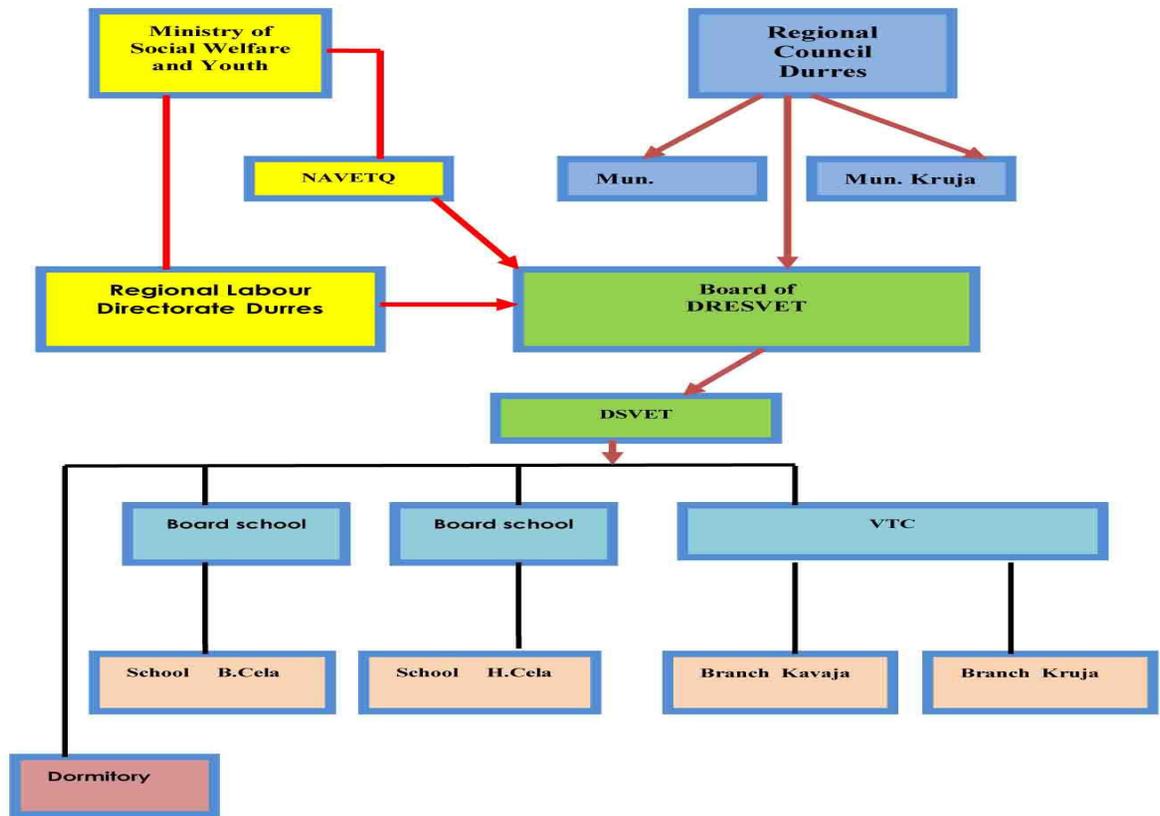
Summarizing, local government units of the Region of Durres are required to:

- Take part in initiatives of inter-communal cooperation;
- Increase the local income by enhancing their responsibilities;
- Strengthen public-private partnerships in order to support the local labour market;
- Setting up adequate structures for the development of the VET system;
- Strengthen and improve the cooperation with the central government;
- Take part in initiatives of cross-border cooperation;
- Promote sustainable economic development;
- Qualify the professionals and experts of the VET system;
- Promote the participation in EU funding programs;
- Cooperate with local, national and international organizations.

The following picture gives an overview of the relationships among all actors and stakeholders involved in the local management of the VET system in the Durres Region, according to the proposal.

30 Article 54 point g of the Law nr.8652 date 31.07.2000 “On the organization and functioning of local governance”

Pilot scheme of DRESVET



7.6 Increasing the financial supply of the VET system in the Durres Region

Guidelines for a VET cost-effective model

The vocational education offer in the Durres Region is provided by the two high vocational schools “B.Çela” and “H. Çela”, while vocational training is provided by the Vocational Training Center (VTC). All these public institutions are situated in Durres, along with two VTC’s branches located in Kavaja and Kruja cities. Vocational education schools differ from training centers since they are required to follow a rigid schedule. This type of education usually lasts from two to four years. The VTC offers different schedules and is likely to accept new trainees at any time of the year. Pupils usually have much shorter training periods. Despite the differences, the amount of financial resources allocated by the central government is similar for these two types of structures.

- The *direct costs* of a VET system can be divided into recurrent and capital costs.

The *recurrent costs* include: *personnel costs* (cost of teachers/instructors, administrators and supporting staff) and *non-personnel costs* (instructional materials, supplies, utilities, maintenance and repairs, as well as scholarships and student welfare). The *capital costs* should include annualized capital inputs such as buildings, equipment, furniture and land.

This *Study* proposes that costs of the VET system should be calculated considering the expenses for local staff (executive directory, schools and centers) and involving them in the formulation of the budget, alleviating the Ministry from this exaggerated burden.

The VET financial plan should also consider the direct private costs related to the students' attendance (the sum of expenditures on tuition/fees, books and materials, transportation, etc). These costs should be considered as an income to be collected and redistributed by the local governance body (Board). Meantime, students' benefits like scholarships and other support measures should be calculated as costs of the VET Regional system.

- The estimation of the costs related to the implementation of a VET system is often carried out to provide information to policy makers. For example, if a firm is concerned about the usefulness of training, it's a good practice to show its cost-effectiveness. If the government is interested in the fiscal implications of developing public vocational schools, then only the public costs of vocational education are relevant. If one is concerned with the social usefulness of VET, therefore both public and private costs are relevant and need to be considered.

The three units of costs commonly used for VET are *cost per student*, *cost per graduate* and *cost per instruction hour*.

- ✓ *Cost per student* is the most widely used unit in planning vocational training, especially vocational education.
- ✓ *Cost per graduate* is relevant for human resources planning. The gap between these two measures reflects the losses and waists in VET. This gap can be quite significant in the Durres Region and decision-makers should find ways to cope with it.
- ✓ *Cost per instruction hour* is often used for training centers that offer a variety of training programs of different durations. The total cost of a program can be estimated by determining the average cost per instruction hour and then multiplying it by the total number of instruction hours of the training program.

- One major issue that decision-makers will have to face out is that vocational schools are more expensive than academic schools, though the respective economic benefits are comparable. The recurrent cost per student, the ratio cost per student/cost per graduate (wastage), the capital cost and instructional costs in vocational schools are much greater than in academic schools.

Studies on rates of utilization of VET inputs may have direct implications for unit costs and efficiency. Increasing these rates could reduce expenditures without affecting the number of students or trainees or, conversely, their number can be increased without incurring additional cost. In either case, unit cost is reduced. Studies on resource utilization present a high potential for raising the efficiency of VET. This approach, could even give the opportunity to rural communes of the Durres Region to increase the number of their students in vocational schools that was very limited until now. Furthermore, a greater utilization of high vocational schools, functioning as multi-centers, creates more chances for employment of youngsters living in rural areas.

- The costs of vocational training have several major determinants:
 - ✓ the infrastructures and the technology needed (including, e.g. class size, use of Laboratories or specific equipments);
 - ✓ teacher costs and their determinants (such as salary schedule and Labour-market conditions);
 - ✓ the length of the training program;
 - ✓ the drop-out rate among students;
 - ✓ the under-exploitation of facilities and equipments;
 - ✓ the scale of the operation.

In order to ensure the cost-effectiveness of a locally managed VET system, central and local governments therefore have different policy options, including: reducing drop-out rates; making complete use of the resources available; taking advantage of scale economies; controlling costs related to training methods, teaching staff and the length of training programs. Obviously, the efforts to reduce the costs of vocational training should always consider the possible negative impact of this reduction on the overall quality of the system and on trainees.

The financing schemes of a VET system

Several recent national and international studies have tried to describe an effective, efficient and sustainable financing model for the VET system. Summarizing, they individuate three main potential donors: the State, the employers and the employees.

- The State finances mainly VET institutions providing basic qualifications and specific interventions addressing unemployed and vulnerable people (trainings on job, lifelong learning, opportunities, etc) through various administrative bodies (ministries, NES, local governments);
- The Employers (public/private companies or institutions) can pay for the provision of VET services institutions for primary qualification or a lesser formal training, through levy-systems;

- The Employees can attend vocational trainings paying a fee in cash or working with a lower salary for the training period. There are also “individual accounts for learning” opened by the employers for their future trainings.

We can also individuate other categories of institutions supporting the above-mentioned schemes:

- Chambers of Commerce;
- Trade Unions (through funds created by annual fee-membership);
- Donors in frameworks of projects and grants;
- Sponsors (through funds created annually fee – membership);
- Public-private co-financings.

It is worthy here to describe also some models of well-defined levy system for financing VET.

Levy systems are based on a levy-tax used for vocational training and applied at 1-2% of the worker-payroll for all companies. The fund management is under the responsibility of social partners who; along with state agencies, set up common funds aiming at increasing competences and employability of workers.

There are three typical models of Levy-system:

1. System of revenue generation (as in Denmark), which are estimated on the basis of the company payroll. The Government uses this money to finance VET initiatives at national level, mainly regarding the basic training of unemployed working-force. This type of funding is normally accompanied by an additional state subvention.
2. System of reimbursement (as in France), which define the minimal contribution of employers for worker’s training, as a percentage of the company payroll. Funds are normally used to finance the training of workers, apprenticeship experiences and other forms of learning on the job.
3. System of grants (as in Sweden), which distribute the contributions from company payroll as grants to businesses or individuals according to their needs and often not to their contributions.

Levy systems have their advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages

- Provision of adequate measures in case of weak engagement of companies in VET;
- Results-oriented use of funds, constant financial flow;
- Applicability to all companies and sectors.

Disadvantages

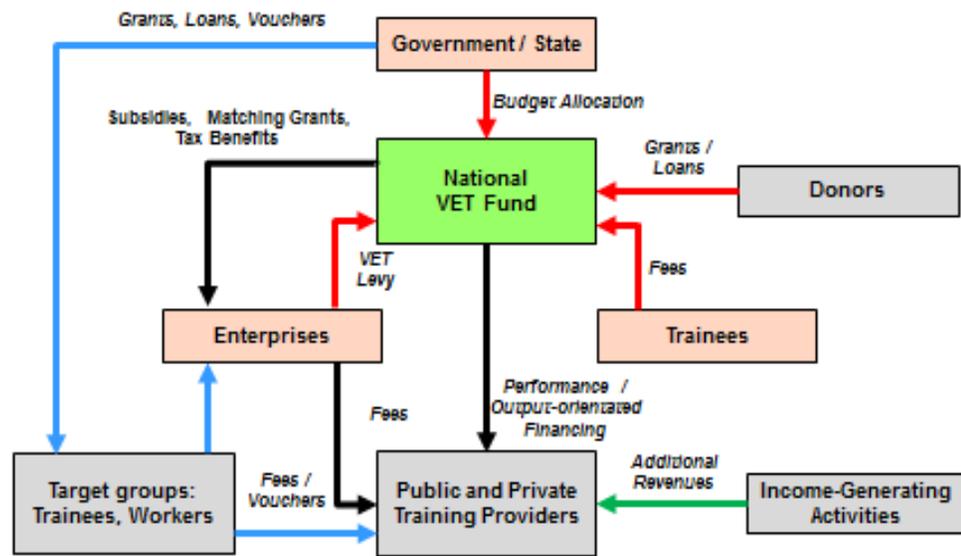
- High informality of SME sector (many of them could be not able or willing to pay)
- Companies see levies as a burden, not as an incentive;
- Only tax-paying enterprises are engaged in the financing system;
- Mistrust in public institutions, low levels of acceptance.

A clear regulation for a result-oriented use of financial resources and/or a combination of levies with payback/refunding mechanisms, are therefore necessary³¹. The scheme proposed by Werner Heitman Senior and reported at the following page summarizes very well the possible VET financing measures.

giz



Common VET Financing Reform Approaches



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24.11.2013 Seite 10

The DRESVET budgeting process

As in any budgeting process we will try to indicate the *resources of funds* supporting the local VET system and the relative *expenditures and investments* needed to realize the system outcomes.

A. The funding sources

a. The State fund

Referring to the year 2012, the State Budget has financed the Vocational Education (VE) at national level with 18.2 million €, instead of the respective 1.22 million € for VE in the Durres Region or 6.67% of total. Meantime, the same budget has financed the Vocational Training (VT) in the Durres Region with 0.102 million €. Therefore, the VET system in the Durres Region for the year 2012 has been totally financed with 1.322 million €. For the year 2014,

31 VET system Financing from Werner Heitmann Senior VET Policy Consultant ,13 June 2012

the State Budget has foreseen to finance the national VE system with 20.6 million €, that means 1.374 million € for VE in the Durres Region. Keeping stable the financing of VT, we can deduce that the whole VET system in the Durres Region should be financed for the year 2014 at least with 1.476 million € by the State Budget.

b. The Durres Regional Council fund

Referring to the item “the contribution of municipalities and communes” in the period 2009-2011, it results the amount of 0.423 €, with an annual average of 0.141 million €. This sum, which has been distributed among the various services of the local government, could have been devoted to the VET system, as a potential way to increase the Regional economic development through a better qualification of the human capital.

c. The Durres Municipality Fund

The budget of Durres Municipality for the period 2009-2011 in thousand Lekë is presented in the following table:

<i>Budget voice</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
Proper income	1 702 896	1 865 618	1 700 011
Unconditional transfer	477 031	404 502	393 205
Total	2 179 927	2 270 120	2 029 216

Simple calculations show that the Durres Municipality realizes an average annual budget of 11.2 million €. The Council of Durres Municipality based on article 31 of the Law 8562, dated 31.10.200, “On the organization and functioning of local govern” could therefore decide to finance DRESVET with 0.35 – 0.40 million € (3-4% of its budget)

d. The Fund of other Municipalities and Communes.

Referring to the year 2011, all these local governs have taken from the State budget grants amounting 0.370 million €, as shown in the following table:

	<i>Local Governments</i>	<i>Amount of funding (in thousand Lekë)</i>
1	Municipalities: Shijak, Sukth, Manez, Fushe Kruje, Kruja	250 981
2	10 Communes	266 307
	Total	517 228

Considering that the great interest of many youngsters to attend vocational education schools or training courses has been without a positive response till now, the Council of respective local government could decide to contribute the

Regional VET fund, for a better access in its institutions. The interviews with their leadership confirm that their total contribution to the fund of DRESVET could reach up to *0.050 million €*.

- e. The international Donors fund
Albania has a good experience on donor's financial support for the development of human resources. To give an example, the Swiss AlbVet and the German GTZ projects, over the period 2009 – 2011, financed and invested 29 million € for the development of VET in Albania. Considering that the Operational Program IPA IV will ask Albania for further develop the VET system improving the analysis of labour market needs and enhancing the autonomy of local DRESVET, a support of **0.250 million €** from international donors would be a realistic prediction.
- f. The business fund
Three companies (two cement factories in Kruja and the Port Company) have expressed their interest in having their workers trained by DRESVET. Other businesses, interested to benefit from two new post-secondary courses opened in framework of DELMVET project, could be added to them. The Durres Chamber of Commerce has decided to contribute with 0.010 million €, as well. It should result a business contribution of **0.050 million €** for year.
- g. Fund from income generated by VET supply
The activities of VET suppliers should bring certain revenues in the account of DRESVET. Since data are not exact, we could list all these potential resources of income, as follows:
- h. Income from fees of trainings courses provided by VTC
Each year nearly 1800 pupils attend the courses provided by VTC. Considering an average fee of 15 € per student and about 1000 fees paid off each year, annually we can calculate totally about 0.015 million €. In the future, additional income might derive from training activities addressed to enterprise workers, also with the participation of the school "B. Çela", functioning as a vocational education multi-center. Based on these premises, we can therefore assume that the future income will be likely to reach the total amount of 0.020 million €.
A summary of what has been explained above is shortly reported in the following table:

Funding resource	Million €	%
<i>State budget</i>	<i>1.476</i>	<i>63.16</i>
<i>The Durres Regional Council</i>	<i>0.141</i>	<i>6.03</i>
<i>Durres Municipality</i>	<i>0.350</i>	<i>14.98</i>
<i>Other local governs</i>	<i>0.050</i>	<i>2.14</i>
<i>International Donors</i>	<i>0.250</i>	<i>10.70</i>
<i>Business</i>	<i>0.050</i>	<i>2.14</i>
<i>Income from VET supply</i>	<i>0.020</i>	<i>0.86</i>
Total VET fund	2.337	100.00

The table shows that there are legal conditions to raise an annual budget of 2.337 million € dedicated to DRESVET, with an increase of nearly 800 thousands Euro (53%) compared to the previous budget. Of course, we can't avoid noticing the major role still played by the State budget. However, it's possible to observe also considerable increase of local stakeholders' contribution.

The realization of such a program, obviously, asks for a strong commitment of all local stakeholders. A well-organized collaboration among them for a period at least of three years would create the favorable condition to double the fund for DRESVET compared to the present one.

B. The expenditures and investments

All the raised funds should be efficiently spent for the best performance of the Regional VET system. The expenditures should cover all operative costs for the implementation of a VET system (including ongoing necessary investment), as established by the Board.

Considering a potential increase of nearly 800 thousands Euro, we can foresee the realization of new VET courses, the renovation of the old dormitory, the substantial increase in the number of scholarships, the realization of training and upgrading courses for teachers and other school staff, etc.. therefore allowing the overall improvement of the system performance.

The principles of effectiveness and efficiency together with the financial guidelines should orient the decision-makers in best allocating the available budget.

7.7 The implementation perspective of the project DELMVET

SWOT Analysis

The proposed pilot scheme for a locally managed VET system should take into careful consideration all the factors able to influence or affect its successful performance. The new institution named DRESVET is a very tough challenge for all the stakeholders involved in the project, and the achievement of a sustainable VET system in the Durres Region requires us to take into account all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis model) that may arise at national and/or Regional level.

The Strengths

- Increased access for students and trainees coming from other municipalities and communes within and outside The Durres Region;
- Flexibility of the system, due to the introduction of new profiles and to the general improvement of the curricula (revised on the basis of a deep labour market needs analysis)
- Increased quality of VET, better adapted to the labour market needs;
- A simplified, unified and independent management of the VET system;
- Active involvement of local stakeholders in VET and socioeconomic relevant issues;
- Promotion and improvement of local-schools quality, with a consistent decrease of the differentiation between national and local ones;
- Increased budget, with funds coming by local government, companies and foreign donors;
- Efficient use of funds, avoiding the fragmentation of costs and the duplication of initiative through a careful investment planning within the Regional system;
- Increasing interest of schools in increase the income coming from its own revenues (student fees);
- Increased motivation of the school and teaching staff to improve the quality and the competitiveness of the VET offer and update their competences and capabilities;
- Continuous training of trainers and teachers aimed at the identification of innovative teaching technologies both inside and outside the Country;
- Increased control on VET providers and increased quality of students' and trainees' competences.
- Finally, the involvement of the schools and training centers in the management of financial resources should be considered as one of the most important goals of the project.

The weaknesses

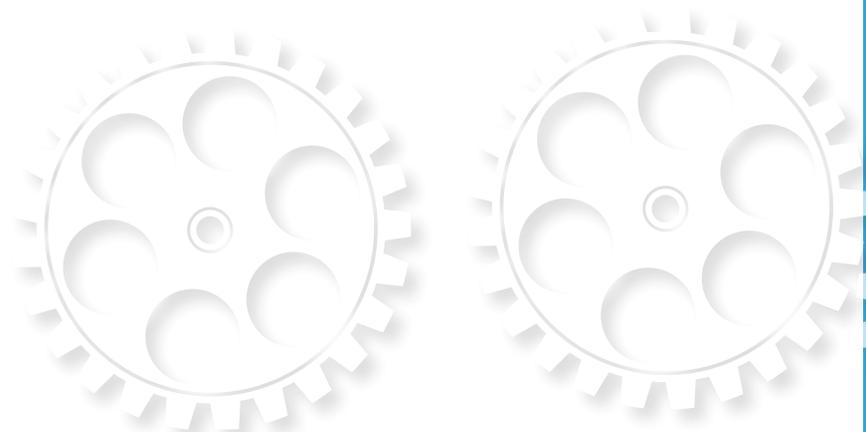
- Reduction of the interest of central institutions (e.g. MSWY and MES) towards VET related issues;
- Lower interest of central government toward the increase of the VET funding from the state budget;
- Lack of a legal and regulatory framework for the new pilot scheme in the Durres Region;
- Increase of the initial expenditure due to salaries of DRESVET employees;
- Lack of experience on the implementation of a similar system at Regional and local level;
- Still low interest of private companies to finance the VET system;
- Low levels of appreciation toward the VET offer compared to the academic education.

The opportunities

- A solution for a unique and harmonized VET system;
- A more efficient and concrete model of decentralization of the VET system;
- Increased responsibility and commitment of local authorities toward Regional development;
- Establishment of a model to be exploited and disseminated in other regions of the Country;
- Increased budget for VET through the contributions of local stakeholders;
- Potential increased support of foreign donors interested in funding VET without the mediation of the central government;
- Interest of actual Government to increase the employment rate through the training of citizens and workers;
- Increased interest of local actors in the development of an efficient VET system in the territory of their municipality, district or region.

The threats

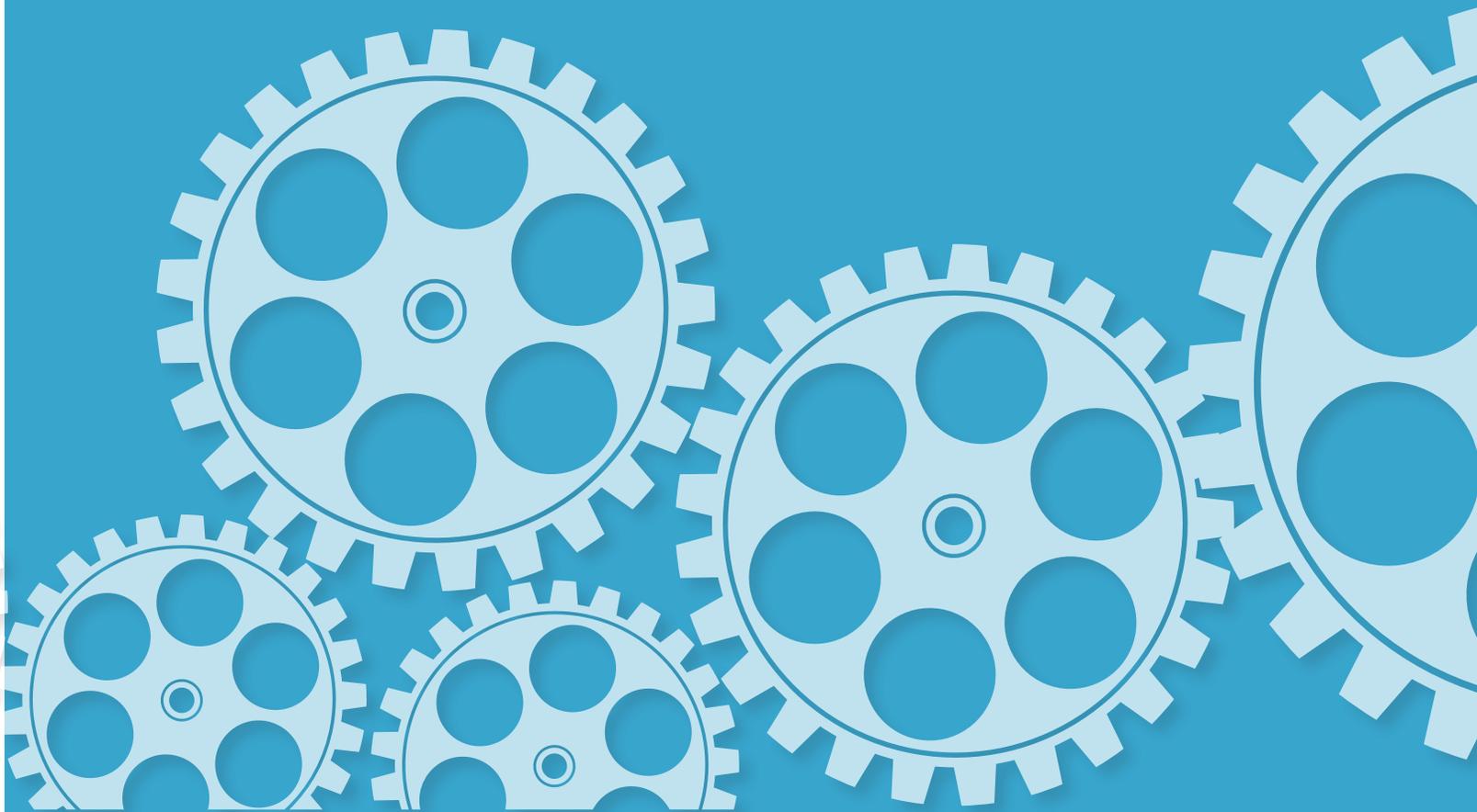
- Lack of serious commitment of local governments and stakeholders in the implementation of the pilot scheme;
- Lack of the capacity required to start up the project and to overcome difficulties arising in the early stages of implementation;
- Possible difficulties arising during the establishment of a unique and unified system;
- Lack of initial cohesion between central and local institutions and between local institutions and other relevant stakeholders that might financially contribute to the implementation of the scheme;
- Political and administrative changes concerning the territorial division of Albania.

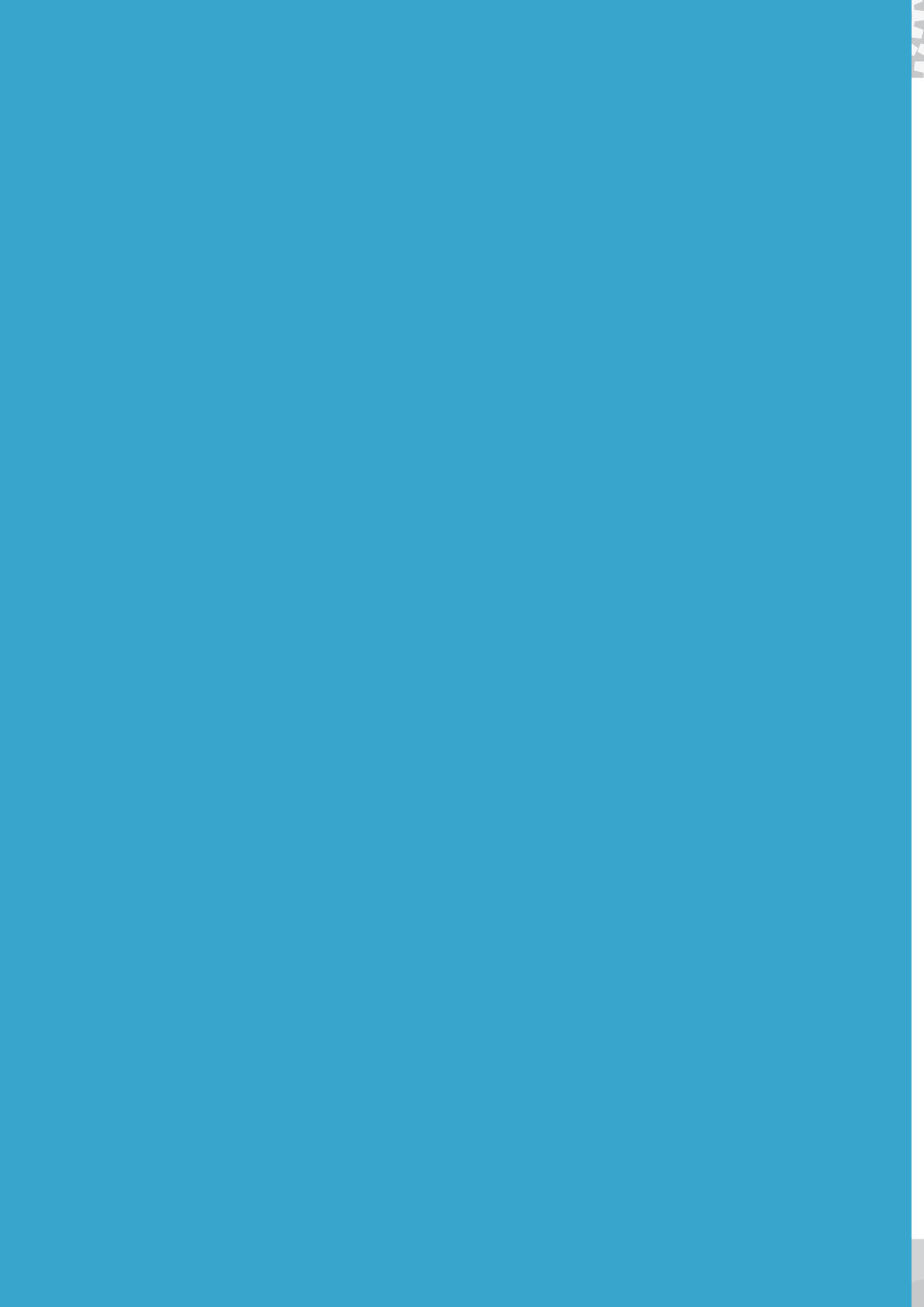


VIII.

PROPOSAL FOR A LOCALLY
MANAGED VET
PILOT SCHEME IN
DURRES REGION

Regional Council of Durres,
Albania





8.1 Introduction

Decentralization could be defined as a process distributing administrative powers, competences or functions from a central authority to a less concentrated area (e.g. decentralization of the national government). It also refers to the dispersion of something from an area of concentration (e.g. to decentralize the nation's industry).

The story of decentralization has known several types of its implementation, whose differences could be described according to the following list³²:

- a. hierarchical/bureaucratic, de-concentration or simply displacement of central powers agents without breaking down the hierarchical links;
- b. authoritative, transfer of competences from central power agents to other nominated authorities;
- c. democratic, transfer of competences from central power agents to other elected authorities;
- d. organic, recognition by the central power of the legal personality, powers and patrimony belonging to a service or a group;
- e. administrative, transfer of administrative power from the central power to local units;
- f. political, transfer of governmental functions from the central power to autonomous local communities allowed to designed their legislative framework;
- g. legal, closely related to federalism.

The establishment of an effective and transparent financial management system should be at the core of any decentralizing reform, designed to transfer development planning and management responsibilities to local units of government. Its process should obviously include *transparency* of allocation, *predictability* of the amounts available to the local institution and local *autonomy* of decision making on resource utilization. The transfer should make possible the local strategic planning a *meaningful exercise* and an opportunity for local communities to take autonomous decisions on the use of limited resources, as well.

Having the intention to build up a locally managed VET system equipped by these basic characteristics, the study recommends a mixture of *democratic* and *administrative* actions. The allocation of resources is based on a transparent formula. In addition, unlike the typical unpredictability of central-to-local transfer mechanisms prevailing in developing Countries, this new proposed decentralization process provides the Durres Regional Council with an up-front indication on the amount of money that should be made available in the next multiyear planning cycle.

³² Good Multilevel Governance for Vocational Education and Training-European Training Foundation, 2013

8.2 Objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives

According to the Terms of References, the main objectives of the project DELMVET are:

To harmonize the VET system supply with local labour market demand

To establish a pilot model of a VET system locally managed

To establish a post-secondary pilot model within the VET system locally managed

Taking into consideration available human and financial resources at local level, in the Durres Region exist some favourable premises to the achievement of the project objectives, synthesized as follows:

- Financial and human resources available to open two new courses of post-secondary vocational education in the school “B. Çela”, in response to labour market demand. This pilot model will create the bases to implement other post-secondary courses integrated within the Regional VET system (with their curricula respecting standards of Albanian Qualification Framework);
- It is possible to manage the VET system of the Durres Region by a public-private partnership of relevant stakeholders;
- It is possible to raise a fund dedicated to finance VET system of the Durres Region 50% greater than expected;
- The proposed management model for the Regional VET system (unifying the vocational education and training,) complies with the model proposed by the actual Central Government.

Expected Outcomes

The favourable premises described above demonstrate that is practically feasible to start testing the pilot model of a locally managed VET system in the Durres Region.

The outcomes of this study could be presented as follows:

A draft-decision of Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania entitled “On approval of the pilot project for the decentralization of the VET system in the Durres Region”

A draft of the Status of the Board of the VET system in the Durres Region

A draft of the Status of the Directorate of the VET system in the Durres Region

The preparation of the legal and regulatory framework for the implementation of the new model is finalized by these three documents.

8.3 Current state of VET management

Overview of the current state in national level

The National Strategy of the Vocational Education and Training System (2013-2020), the Employment Strategy (2007-2013), the Law on the National Qualifications Framework (2010) and the Law on Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Albania, amended (2011) aim at converting the VET system in a fundamental tool for the sustainable development of the economy, strengthening social cohesion and implementing efficient policies for the welfare and life chances of Albanian citizens through growth and expansion of employment.

The legislation in force aims to develop a VET system based on the labour market needs, through the institutional cooperation with representatives of the business world.

However, the attractiveness of the VET offer, especially referring to vocational schools, is still low and the influence of the representatives of employers and employees in VET system is still weak. The offer, usually, does not reflect the labour market and the social/individual demands.

The VET system is still highly centralized, while lifelong learning is not yet conceived as an integral part of this system. Moreover, the available infrastructure of public vocational schools is still poor, except for those schools where international projects have been implemented.

The government program “The Alliance for the European Albania” suggests a “thorough reorientation of vocational education/training to the needs of the labour market”, a reorganization of the system from “a combination of theoretical learning with practical work”, an increase of courses and vocational education schools “in rural areas” and the improvement of the social dialogue “with the syndicates to restore the three-party culture between state, employers and employees”.

With the transfer of the responsibility on vocational education to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MoSWY), the division between vocational education and training is already overcome and further integration opportunities have significantly increased. In the meantime, new challenges have arisen, as the need of a new comprehensive law on the VET system in Albania.

The studies regarding post-secondary VET programs have underlined a concentration in the trade services sector, the construction sector as well as the transportation, storing and communication sector. This shows an unbalanced training offer and a fragmented mismatch between labour market demand and supply. In fact, these programs had been only initiatives of universities (with Durres University as a frontrunner), without the involvement of local governments.

Overview of the current state in local level

According to the current legislation, education and vocational training are common delegated functions between the central and local level. The basic units of local government exercise the right of ownership on public vocational schools, while the opening and closure of the public schools/ vocational training centres is done in cooperation with the MoSWY.

However, apart from the three-party participation in the National Council of VET, there are no initiatives at the moment concerning the collaboration between business and vocational education institutions, beyond projects financed by specific donors. A tentative of financial decentralization has already appeared but it is still insufficient, being limited to vocational public school dormitories.

As proved by the literature and on the basis of well-known experiences in developed Countries, rapid changes in the fields of technology and economy, uncertainty of the labour market and its changing requirements can be faced successfully also by creating more decision-making space to the two levels of local government. In the framework of decentralization, the Law of 2002 on VET (amended in 2011) allows a certain autonomy to the vocational education schools in the fields of curricula designing and management of human and financial resources. It also provides the establishment of advisory boards at public providers, defining their main duties and composition.

8.4 The Proposal for a locally managed VET pilot scheme

The implementation of a pilot model in the Durres Region

The deepening and broadening of the VET system decentralization was undertaken in the Durres Region mainly on the basis of:

- experiences from ongoing cooperation projects with foreign partners in the field of VET;
- successful innovations carried out in the national vocational school “Beqir Çela” that has closely collaborated for a long time with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation – Swisscontact;
- involvement in the DELMVET project, focused on the raising of two “Post-Secondary Education” profiles and emphasizing the decentralizing aspect of the VET system. The labour market in the Durres Region and the institutions involved in the VET system have been studied in this project, aiming also at creating a VET network composed by the main actors of this system in the Countries of the Adriatic Macro-Region.

Key aspects of the pilot scheme

The pilot scheme has been designed in cooperation with beneficiaries and VET providers, business representatives and institutions of the VET system in the Durres Region and is focused on two fundamental reforms: the Financial and the Institutional Reform.

The financial reform

The core of the financial reform is the creation of a VET Fund in the Durres Region.

The Fund is made of:

- a. State Budget allocated for public schools/ vocational training centres in the Durres Region;
- b. Contributions from the Durres Regional Council;
- c. Contributions from the Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- d. Contributions from public schools/vocational training centres with 20% of their income from services to third parties;
- e. Contributions from local, national or foreign projects in the field of VET where the Durres Region is involved.

The contribution from the Durres Regional Council consists of: a) the specific contribution of the Regional Council and b) the respective contributions from the basic units of the local government. According to the current legislation, the Regional Council has the right to decide, for each commune and municipality in its jurisdiction, the specific amount of the contribution to be allocated from the Regional budget.

The pilot scheme is expected to promote changes in the use of the financial resources obtained from the provision of VET services for third parties by public vocational schools. 20 % of this income is given to the VET Fund of the Durres Region, while the rest is expected to remain to the vocational school itself, thus expanding its financial autonomy. The amount of financial support for VET in the Durres Region can also grow by possible additional contributions both by enterprises and by the basic units of local government across the Region, except for those already included in the contribution to the Durres Region Council.

One of the main characteristic of this financial reform is the unification of all existing funds dedicated to VET and their allocation according to the decisions of a specific body, the VET Board, which has been already described in this study and will be further detailed in the next paragraph.

The institutional reform

As described in the previous pages, the VET Board and Directorate of VET are the two new bodies created in the Durres Region in order to face the challenges arisen from the development of the new pilot scheme.

The Board is composed by the Chairman of the Durres Regional Council, a representative of MoSWY, the Mayor of Durres, the Mayor of Kruja, a representative of the National Agency of Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications, the President of Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Director of the Durres Employment Regional Office, the chairmen of the units of local government that have schools or vocational centres and finally the representatives of those enterprises that contribute in funding at least the 1% of the VET Fund of the Durres Region.

The Board conducts its activity in the financial and policy-making field.

In the field of policy-making, the Board determines the priorities for the development of the VET system and approves VET Regional Development Strategy.

In the financial field, the Board approves the draft-budget of the VET system, allocating funds for vocational school/training centres and working on cooperation projects with national or international partners for the development of the VET system.

According to the Draft-Decision of the Council of Ministers, during the analysis of the draft- budget, the Board is obliged to call for consultation: two chairmen of the communes of the Region with the highest number of residents, three representatives of local enterprises, two representatives of trade unions with the highest number of members, the director of the public vocational school/ private vocational school with the highest number of pupils, the responsible of the public/private VET centres with the highest number of trainees and one NGO representative that has in its statute the VET system development.

This board represents business interests, local community, service providers and beneficiaries of the VET system and its judgment is requested for the approval of an effective and efficient budget.

The VET Fund of the Durres Region finances the Directorate of VET, which depends directly from the Board and can be described as its executive body. Its main functions are:

- To prepare documents to be presented to the Board for approval and execute the tasks assigned by the Board in the policy-making and financial field, as explained below:
 - a. Preparing the draft of the VET Regional Development Strategy in collaboration with the main providers and beneficiaries of the VET services;
 - b. Preparing the draft-budget of Durres Regional Fund;

- c. Implementing the decisions of the Board concerning financial aspects;
 - d. Coordinating collaborations with national/international partners for VET development projects.
- To conduct studies on the development of the VET system in Durres Region, as:
 -
 - a. Labour market needs and demand;
 - b. Situation and needs of VET schools/vocational centres according to short and medium term requirements of the labour market;
 - c. Employment/self-employment rate of young graduates from VET schools/vocational centres.
 - To support the development of VET schools/vocational centres by:
 -
 - a. Encouraging enterprises to contribute in improving the quality of VET services and cooperating in the realization of VET activities;
 - b. Organizing training courses for teachers/school instructors;
 - c. Promoting the development of VET networks, composed by directors, teachers and school instructors;
 - d. Monitoring the performance of schools /vocational centres;
 - e. Disseminating the successful experiences of schools/vocational centres and enterprises;
 - f. Organizing counselling activities and career guidance for potential beneficiaries of the VET system.

The collaboration with MoSWY

The scheme presented here is based on the current legislation and the Government Program. It is aimed at maintaining and strengthening the collaboration with the MoSWY.

A representative from the MoSWY and a representative the National Agency for Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications participate to the Board. Together, they play an important role in the formulation of government policies, verifying their compliance with the scheme and identifying the key aspects that might become integral part of the legislation or be implemented within a short time.

At local level, the collaboration with MoSWY is reinforced by the joint management of public vocational schools/training centres. If they are financed entirely from the State Budget or by the State Budget and The Durres Region VET Fund, the MoSWY establishes their opening and closure after consultation or through specific proposal of the VET Board. If they are financed entirely by the Durres Regional VET Fund, their opening and closure is defined through decision of the VET Board after consultation with MoSWY.

Also the authorization of private vocational schools/training centres is done by the National Centre in collaboration with the VET Board, bringing a new dimension of decentralization.

In piloting, all procedures currently performed by this Ministry will be conducted by the Directorate of VET of the Durres Region.

Key advantages of the pilot scheme

- While local educational units have the entire ownership of public VET centres, funds allocated for them will be deposited in a common fund, conceived as unique financial fund and whose use is administered through the VET Board. This is in fact the core aspect of the innovation, enabling the VET system development through a more effective and efficient use of the financial resources through the coordination among the three levels (central and local), avoiding the current overlapping of tasks.
- The special involvement of the Regional Council in the developments of the VET system leads directly to an increase of the financial resources for VET, an opportunity that today has almost been absent;
- Good knowledge of the business sector and the participation of enterprises in consultations and decision-making together with the involvement of the Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Board, creates major opportunities for the business sector to contribute to the development of the VET system in the Region, where they have made little contribution up to now.
- For all the above reasons, it is expected to have a gradual and considerable increase of the fund foreseen for the development of VET at Regional level. A further improvement of the infrastructure of schools/vocational centres is also expected.
- The unification of financial resources through the management of the Board and the Directorate of VET, increases the awareness and responsibility of the local level for a good performance of the VET system.
- The involvement of three parties, representatives of the state, employers and employees, in decision or consultation processes on policy and administrative issues at Regional level will allow a transparent use of funds, a better planning and management of the local VET system and also an improvement of the accountability of decision-makers, which have been weak up to now;
- Good knowledge of local labour market needs, social needs and individual needs, will allow the opening of new schools/branches/profiles/specialties in schools or vocational centres. The close collaboration between enterprises and VET providers will improve the attractiveness of the VET sector among new potential users and learners.

- Decentralization promotes school autonomy. As permanent function, the Directorate of VET offers qualified support to VET schools and training centres. Such assistance is not institutionalized up to now at local level, despite the existing education and training needs. In particular, the VET Board and the Directorate of VET, through the participation of local enterprises, will support vocational schools in developing new practices in the business sector.

8.5 The legal framework proposal for the pilot scheme

The establishment of DRESVET

The establishment of the pilot model of a locally managed VET system is one of main objectives of the project DELMVET. Involving two high vocational schools and one training centre with two branches, the scheme obviously needs the support of a legal framework for its constitution and implementation.

Considering the Albanian law on the VET system of 2002 (amended in 2011) and similar decentralization practices carried out in the Country, the explanations presented hereafter is aimed at illustrating how some specific articles among those proposed, might resolve some relevant issues on VET.

The first draft-proposal (Annex A) is intended as an explicit expression of the Minister of MoSWY, the Durres Mayor and the Chairman of the Durres Regional Council as common willpower to build up a decentralized VET system for the Durres Region.

The three first articles jointly compose the Durres Regional System of Vocational Education and Training, properly locally managed. The acronym proposed herein is DRESVET. Actually, this system include the two high vocational schools “B. Çela” and “H. Çela” and also the Vocational Training Centre with branches in Kruja e Kavaja.

The article 4 clarifies who has the competence to allocate a new investment, intending that all of them (buildings or equipment) are in the DRESVET domain.

The articles 5-7 concern the approval of DRESVET along with National Accreditation Centre for the activity of private vocational schools or centres.

In the articles 8-9 is highlighted the new role of local government units guided by the Regional Council in raising the Fund of DRESVET.

The articles 10-12 demonstrate the will of DRESVET to use the money only for the improvement of the VET system performance.

The establishment of DRESVET Board

Two bodies will guide the piloting phase of DRESVET: the Board (the directive body) and the Directorate (the executive body).

The articles 1-2 set the collaboration of the Board with Central Government. The article 3 defines the Board competencies on all development of Regional VET system and its financial aspects. It also avoids an excessive participation of VET stakeholders in budget processing. The article 4 clarifies the interrelation between two bodies, accentuating the decision-makers role of the Board. The article 4 ensures that the Board will be composed by the main stakeholders and financial contributors of DRESVET. The article 5 makes possible a larger involvement of all interested part in Regional VET issues.

The establishment of DRESVET Directorate

The DRESVET Directorate will be an executive body charged to implement all decisions of the Board. The article 1 defines this Directorate as a new part of the administrative structure of the Durres Regional Council. The article 2 shows that this Directorate performs in collaboration with respective organs of Central Government and also with all local or foreign VET stakeholders. The article 3 charges this Directorate with labour market surveys, as well. The articles 4-5 highlight the collaboration with and the support to all Regional VET providers.

ANNEX A

Draft decision on the decentralization of the VET system in the Durres Region (as proposed)

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
DRAFT OF THE DECISION

No. _____, date _____

“FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE PILOT PROJECT FOR THE DECENTRALISATION OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM IN THE DURRES REGION”

Based on the Article 100 of the Constitution, and on the Law No. 8652, date 31.07.2000, “For the organization and operation of the local government”, with the proposal of the Minister of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MoSWY), the Regional Council of Durres and Council of Durres Municipality, the Council of Ministers

DECIDED:

1. The approval of the pilot project for the decentralisation of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system in the Durres Region.
2. The approval of the status of the VET Board of the Durres Region, as attached to this Decision.
3. The approval of the status of the Directorate of VET (DVET) of the Durres Region, as attached to this Decision.
4. When the public school/vocational training centre or its branch, profile and speciality:

- a. are entirely financed by the State Budget or by the State Budget and the Durres Region Fund for VET, their opening and closing is done by order of the MoSWY Minister and after consultation or by proposal of the VET Board;
 - b. are entirely financed by the Durres Region Fund for VET, their opening and closing is done with decision of the VET Board after consultation with MoSWY.
5. Authorizations of private schools/vocational training centres, in creation in the Durres Region, is done through the National Authorizing Centre in collaboration with its VET Board.
 6. Suspension and revocation of private schools/vocational training centres, that operate in the Durres Region, is done by the National Licensing Directorate, with its VET Board proposal.
 7. Opening and closing of public schools/vocational training centres is made in compliance with the criteria defined in the relative decision of the Council of Ministers.
 8. Durres Region Fund for VET is composed from these voices:
 - a. Allocation from the State Budget;
 - b. Contribution from Durres Regional Council that consists of:
 - ✓ specific contribution from the Regional Council;
 - ✓ contributions by the basic units of the local government.
 - c. Contribution from the Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
 - d. Contribution from public schools/vocational training centres with 20% of their income from services to third parties;
 - e. Contributions from local, national or foreign projects for the development of the VET system where the Durres Region is involved;
 - f. Possible additional contributions from the basic units of local government of Durres Region;
 - g. Possible contributions from enterprises, managed in accordance to the contract signed by their representatives and the Chairman of the Board.
 9. The Durres Regional Council sets the fees of the financial contributions of the basic units of local government foreseen in letter b) of point 8 of this Decision.
 10. The VET Fund of the Durres Region is used for these scopes:
 - a. Provision of adequate equipment to public schools/vocational training centres;
Construction and renovation of public schools/vocational training centres of VET;
 - b. Enlargement of the facilities of public schools /vocational training centres, for the opening of new branches/profiles/specialties and increase of the capacities for more pupils/trainees of an existing branch/profile/ specialty;

- c. Maintenance of VET public schools/vocational training centres;
- d. Operation of DVET in the Durres Region;
- e. Training of teachers/ instructors of VET public schools/ centres.

11. VET Fund of Durres Region is used also for:

- a. pupils/trainees from families in need;
- b. pupils/trainees with excellent results;
- c. public VET providers with successful achievements.

The funding criteria for the letters a), b) and c) of this point are defined and publicly confirmed by the VET Board of the Durres Region.

12. The financial activity of public VET providers operating in the Durres Region is subject to audit by the relative organs of the MoSWY and by the Durres Regional Council.

13. The duration of the pilot project will be 3 years from the date of its commencement.

The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, the Durres Regional Council and the Durres Municipality are charged for the implementation of this Decision. This Decision enters into force after its publication in the Official Gazette.

**PRIME MINISTER
EDI RAMA**

ANNEX B

Draft on the status of the DRESVET Board (as proposed)

STATUS OF THE BOARD OF THE VET SYSTEM IN THE DURRES REGION

Article 1

1. The VET Board of the Durres Region, hereinafter called “the Board”, has the responsibility of the VET system development in the Durres Region, in collaboration with MoSWY.
2. The Board sets the priorities and develops the VET system in Durres Region, in accordance with the National and Regional Development Strategy for VET, legislation in force, MoSWY policies and short and medium term needs of the Labour market.

Article 2

The Board:

1. Approves VET Regional Development Strategy;
2. Approves the amount of funding for public VET providers from the VET Fund of the Durres Region;
3. Approves the allocation of funds from private legitimate sources to the VET Fund of the Durres Region;
4. Approves cooperation projects with national or international partners for the development of the VET system in the Durres Region;
5. Approves the draft-budget of the VET system in the Durres Region.

In the analysis of the draft-budget participate without the right to vote and without receiving any compensation:

- two chairmen of the communes of the Region with the highest number of residents;
- three representatives of the local business;
- two representatives of trade unions with the highest number of members;
- the director of the public vocational school/private vocational school with the highest number of pupils;
- responsible of the public/private centre with the highest number of trainees;
- one NGO representative that has in its status the VET system development

Article 3

The Board:

Determines the structure and organisational chart of DVET;
Approves the internal regulation of the Board and DVET, with proposal of DVET;
Approves the annual plan of DVET;
Monitors and evaluates the activity of DVET;
Appoints and dismisses the director of DVET;
Orders studies to DVET for development aspects of the VET system in the Durres Region.

Article 4

1. The Board is composed of:
2.
 - a. The Chairman of the Durres Regional Council;
 - b. A representative of MoSWY;
 - c. The Mayor of Durres;
 - d. The Mayor of Krujë;
 - e. A representative of the National Agency of Vocational Education/Training and Qualifications (NAVETQ);
 - f. The President of the Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
 - g. The Director of the Durres Regional Employment Office;
 - h. Chairmen of units of local government that have VET providers;
 - i. Representatives of businesses that have contributed in the Fund for VET of Durres Region with at least 1% of this Fund. The payment of Board members is determined according to the legislation in force.

Article 5

1. The chairman of the Board is the Chairman of the Durres Regional Council.
2. The Chairman of the Board has the right to invite to the Board meetings representatives of the business sector, VET providers/users and members of the civil society.

The invited persons do not participate in the decisions of the Board and are not paid.

ANNEX C

Draft on the status of the DRESVET Directorate (as it is proposed)

THE STATUS OF THE DRESVET DIRECTORATE

Article 1

The DRESVET Directorate will be an integral part of the administrative structure of the Durres Regional Council.

Article 2

The DRESVET Directorate:

1. Collaborates for the development of the VET system with MoSWY, the NAVETQ, the Durres Chamber of Commerce and Industry, trade unions and other central and local bodies of the VET system;
2. Prepares the draft of the Regional Development Strategy of the VET system in collaboration with the providers and beneficiaries of the VET supply;
3. Prepares the draft-budget of the Fund for VET of the Durres Region;
4. Implements the decisions of the VET Board on financial aspects of the VET system;
5. Coordinates collaborations with national/international partners for projects for the development of a VET system in the Durres Region.

Article 3

The DRESVET Directorate conducts periodical studies on:

1. Labour market needs for VET system supply;
2. Situation and needs of public VET providers for an effective and efficient provision of services according to the short and medium term requirements of the labour market;
3. Employment/self-employment of graduates from public VET providers operating in the Durres Region.

Article 4

The DRESVET Directorate:

1. Performs authorization, suspension and revocation procedures concerning private VET providers, in collaboration with the National Authorization Centre;
2. Promote the participation of the business sector in the improvement of the overall quality of the VET system, collaborating in the development of innovative training practices;
3. Organizes courses for the training of teachers/instructors of public VET providers;
4. Support the creation of VET networks, composed by heads of schools, teachers, instructors and staff of VET organizations;
5. Monitors the performance of Regional VET providers;
6. Supports the development of VET providers;
7. Disseminate the successful experiences of VET providers and enterprises;
8. Organizes counselling and career guidance activities for potential beneficiaries of the VET system.

Article 5

The DRESVET Directorate collaborates for the realization of its duties with representatives of the business sector, VET providers/users and members/organizations of the civil society.

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF DURRES, ALBANIA

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ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTION OF LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

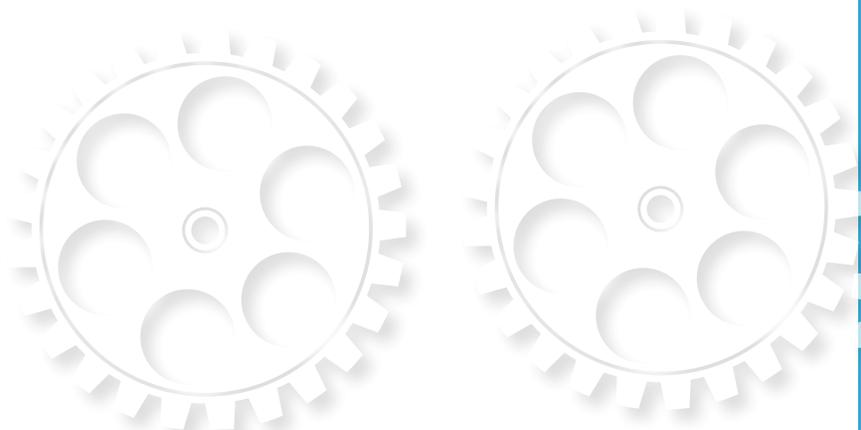


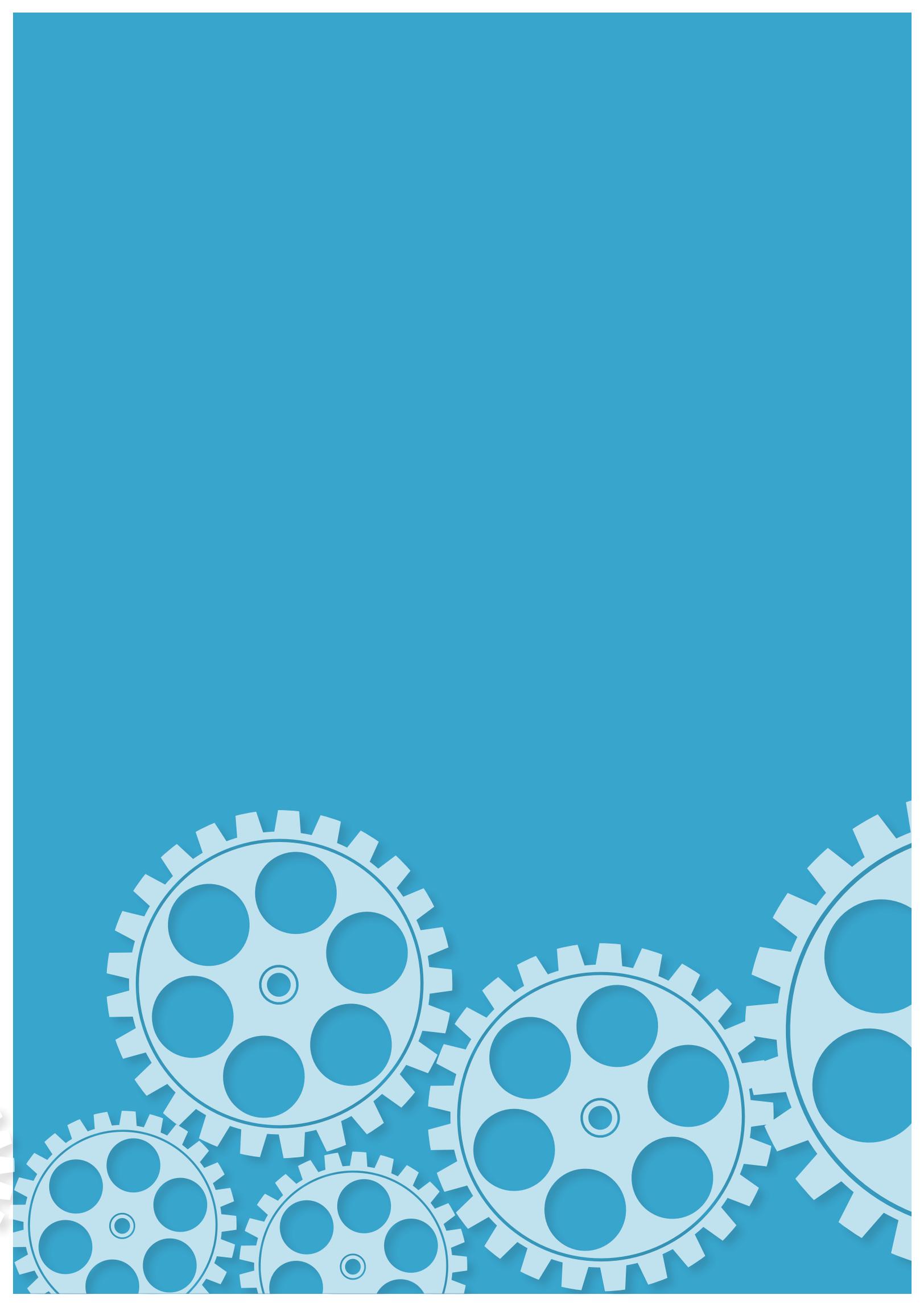
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