

GUIDANCE NOTE 7

Implementing an efficient and effective VET delivery cycle

Topic overview

The development and formulation of effective vocational education and training (VET) policies is a difficult task (see Guidance Notes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), but successful implementation of these VET policies can be even more difficult. One of the major goals of a reformed VET system is to produce graduates who show work readiness and employability. To move towards this overall goal, it is necessary to **strengthen the internal efficiency of operations as well as external effectiveness** at the VET provider level. Both dimensions constitute the VET performance matrix (see Figure GN7.1), comprising four basic performance models reflecting different performance levels. For the analysis of VET provider performance, two central questions need to be applied.

- How do key factors of the VET delivery cycle affect the internal efficiency of operations?
- How do key factors of the VET delivery cycle affect external effectiveness??

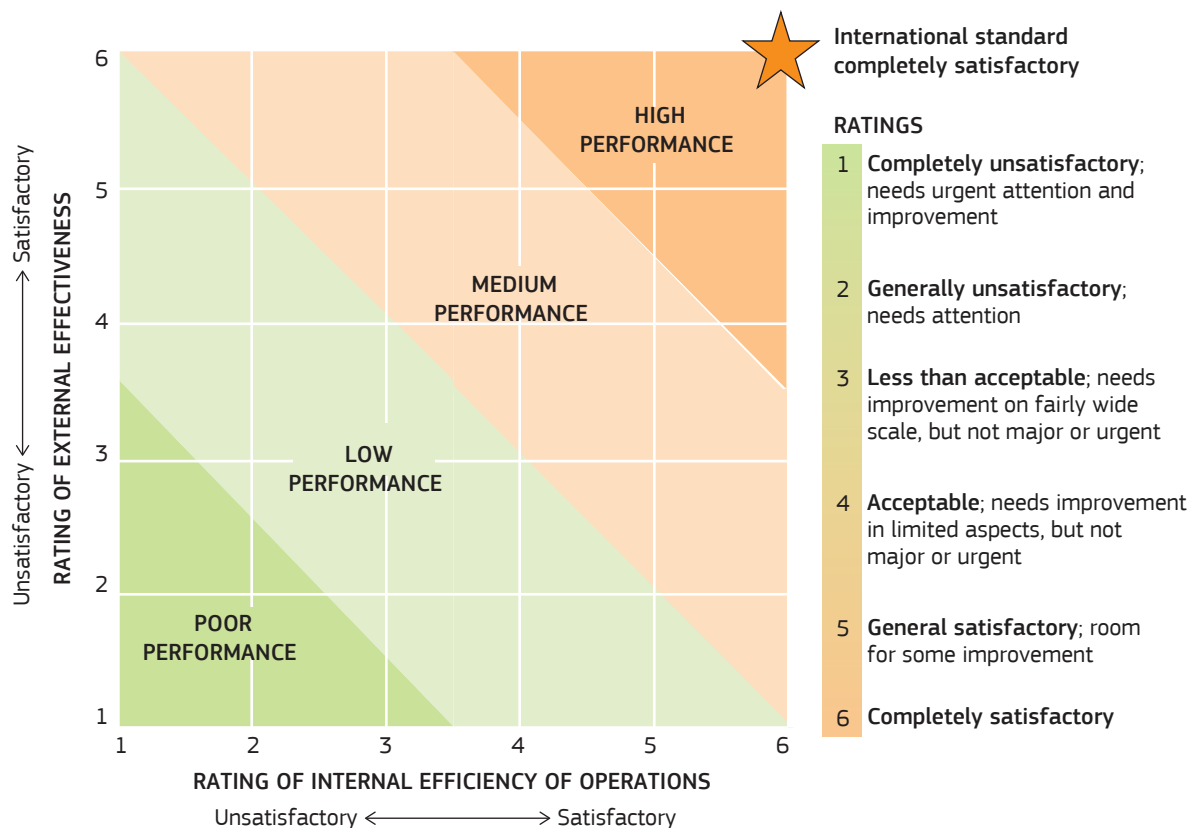
The VET performance matrix can be used as a conceptual framework to visualise the four basic performance models of VET providers.

Diagnosing the **internal efficiency** of VET provider operations — and, in particular, identifying inefficiencies and their causes — requires both qualitative and quantitative analysis. An assessment format is needed for systematically recording subjective judgements on the following five key benchmarks:

- quality and **content of VET programmes** and short-term courses;

SUMMARY OF KEY ASPECTS

- The aim of internal efficiency is to show the state of operational health of a VET provider with respect to each key factor so that deficiencies can be identified and the scope and nature of remedial action determined.
- External effectiveness measures how well VET providers are meeting labour market demands and, consequently, contributing to increase employment.
- VET providers can achieve a high internal efficiency but have low external effectiveness. This happens, e.g. when a VET provider spends its resources efficiently teaching the wrong thing in terms of graduates' employment needs.
- To enable the assessment of key benchmarks, a suitable instrument must be designed to collect the necessary information covering the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the VET delivery cycle.
- Based on the results of the VET provider performance matrix, the analysis allows selection of options to obtain a best-fit option leading to the recommended overall project intervention strategy.
- After planning implementation, a project overview plan should be detailed to include operational planning. As described here, a project overview plan is a harmonised and comprehensive document that identifies all the key options, necessary decisions and activities for implementing the long-term intervention strategy.

FIGURE GN7.1 Basic VET performance matrix

Source: ETF and GIZ Albania, 2014.

- selection and **admission of learners**;
- staffing and **staffing development**;
- condition of **facilities and equipment**;
- **organisation and management** in VET provider operations.

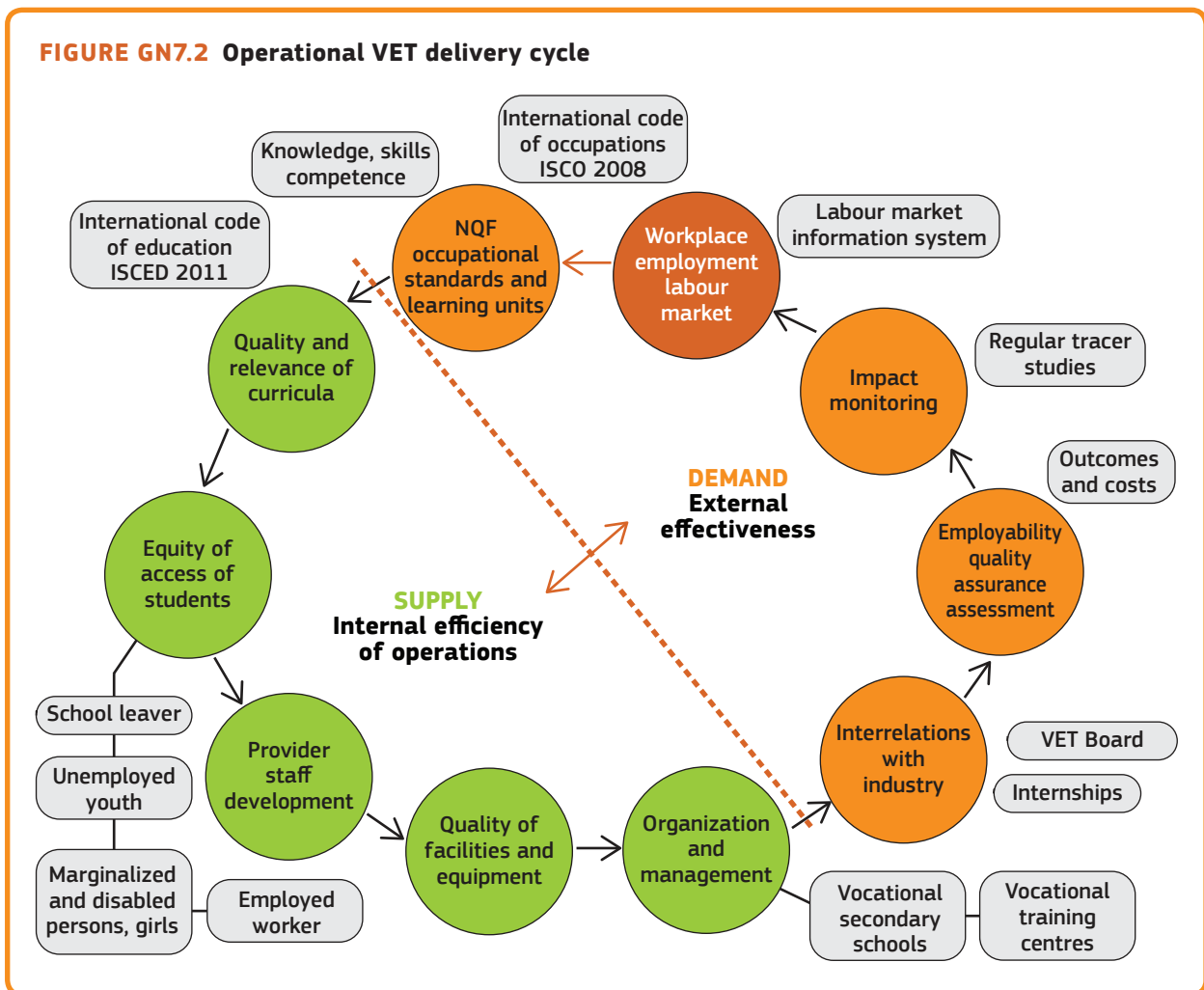
External effectiveness measures how well VET providers are meeting labour market demands and, consequently, contributing to increase employment. It calls for information on these five key benchmarks:

- formal **links and interrelationships** with local industry;
- employability and **work readiness**;
- training **costs and outputs** in order to establish

the basis for an assessment of VET provider fulfilment of its purpose;

- **training in a real-life work environment** and work exposure of vocational teachers and instructors;
- linkages with **occupational standards**.

The 10 listed key benchmarks constitute the **operational VET delivery cycle** (see Figure GN7.2) and describe the quality level of the provision of efficient and effective services rendered by the VET provider. The level of performance delivered by the provider is visualised using the VET performance matrix and subsequently assigned to one of the four basic performance models after successful assessment of all 10 key benchmarks. The aim is to show the state of operational health of the VET provider with respect to each benchmark so that deficiencies can be identified and

FIGURE GN7.2 Operational VET delivery cycle

the **scope and nature of remedial action** determined for a planned VET delivery project; this might be a single project intervention or part of a broader sector project.

Paradoxically, a VET provider can achieve a **high internal efficiency but show low external effectiveness**. This happens, for example, when a VET provider spends its resources efficiently teaching the wrong thing in terms of graduates' employment needs. Or a VET provider can turn out far too many expensively trained graduates of certain types and too few of other types relative to labour market needs and employment opportunities. The first set of graduates may have been well trained, but if too few jobs are available in that field, the investment in their training is likely to produce few benefits.

Procedure

The procedure presented here is a model of project implementation for a post-secondary VET delivery cycle.

STEP 1: Define the form and content of a VET delivery project

Information has to be collected to enable **assessment of the key benchmarks** covering internal efficiency and external effectiveness. The assessment is based on a six-point rating scale, with values ranging from 1 for completely unsatisfactory to 6 for completely satisfactory performance. The two major results of the summative assessment are then used for positioning VET providers in the VET provider performance matrix (see Figure GN7.1). The analysis allows discussion of

options to obtain a best-fit option that leads to the recommended model for post-secondary VET programmes (see Box GN7.1).

STEP 2: Ranking of economic sectors for project implementation

Comparative assessment of 12 economic sectors can be done in order to prepare recommendations and conclusions for decision making at the stakeholder level. The following three criteria are used during the ranking process and contextualised to the project at hand.

- **Responding to an urgent labour market demand.** To what extent is the future post-secondary VET programme able to rectify the skills needs of the enterprises based in the given economic sector?

BOX GN7.1 Options for post-secondary VET programmes — example

- **Model 1.** Post-secondary VET programmes with a strong focus on **academic** knowledge would be the domain of professional colleges at universities. Typical post-secondary VET programmes are here offered for health associate professionals as well as business and administration associate professionals, to name a few.
- **Model 2.** Post-secondary VET programmes with a **mixed** ratio of knowledge and practical workplace-based skills would be the domain for cooperation between professional colleges at universities and workplaces at companies and/or vocational education schools and vocational training centres. Typical post-secondary VET programmes are here offered for information and communications technicians as well as science associate professionals, to name a few.
- **Model 3.** Post-secondary VET programmes with a strong focus on **vocational** basic skills as a precondition for post-secondary VET programmes would be the domain of multifunctional VET centres. Typical post-secondary VET programmes are here offered for engineering and mechanics technicians, to name a few.

- **Reducing a systemic VET deficit.** To what extent will the identified post-secondary VET programmes show an exemplary and systemic impact for overall VET provision?
- **Contributing to the introduction of new innovative technologies.** To what extent is the identified post-secondary VET programme contributing to the introduction of new technologies?

The ranking of the 12 economic sectors shows mixed results, as shown in Table GN7.1.

STEP 3: Plan the project implementation

The implementation process of an efficient and effective post-secondary VET delivery cycle has to be based on an integrated work package (result areas) to improve the relevance and quality of post-secondary VET programmes. This should target the following.

- **Regulatory framework.** Clarification of responsibilities and development of regulations in close cooperation with experts from the higher education and VET sector.
- **Vocational standard development.** Generation of professional competency-based standards in close cooperation with field experts from enterprises for four post-secondary VET programmes.
- **Curriculum development and teaching materials.** Design and implementation of competency-based, demand-responsive curricula for four post-secondary VET programmes.
- **Industrial attachments or dual-form post-secondary VET programmes.** Develop and implement practical internships, industrial attachment or dual-form post-secondary VET programmes to promote students' hands-on experience in and exposure to a relevant work environment.
- **Quality assurance and assessment.** Design and implement competency-based training process assessments and summative assessments of learners in order to meet industry standards.

TABLE GN7.1 Comparative ranking of economic sectors — example

ECONOMIC SECTOR	CRITERIA 1: LABOUR MARKET DEMAND	CRITERIA 2: SYSTEMIC VET DEFICIT	CRITERIA 3: NEW INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES	RANKING
Agri-food processing	+++	++	+++	1
Agri-technology and production	++	+	+++	5
Agri-management	+	+	+	12
Renewable energies, energy consumption and saving	++	+	+++	6
Environmental technology (green skills)	+	+	+++	9
Textile and leather design and production	+++	++	+++	2
Mechatronics fitter	++	+	+++	7
Landscaping & gardening	+++	++	+	8
Construction electronics	++	+	++	10
Automotive mechatronics	+++	++	+++	3
Vocational practice instructor	+++	+++	+	4
Health and safety management	++	++	+	11

■ **Infrastructure**, furniture, equipment and materials. Infrastructure rehabilitation and construction, provision of furniture, equipment and materials (including consumables).

■ **Training of vocational teachers and instructors**. Design and delivery of training to upgrade existing trainers and train new teachers and instructors on technical; pedagogical; information and communications technology; communication; and foreign language skills as per the new competency-based curricula.

■ **Outcomes-based financing scheme**. Clarification of responsibilities and development of regulations in close cooperation with the government and representatives of the private sector.

STEP 4: Develop a project overview plan

After planning implementation, a project overview plan should be outlined in more detail. A project overview

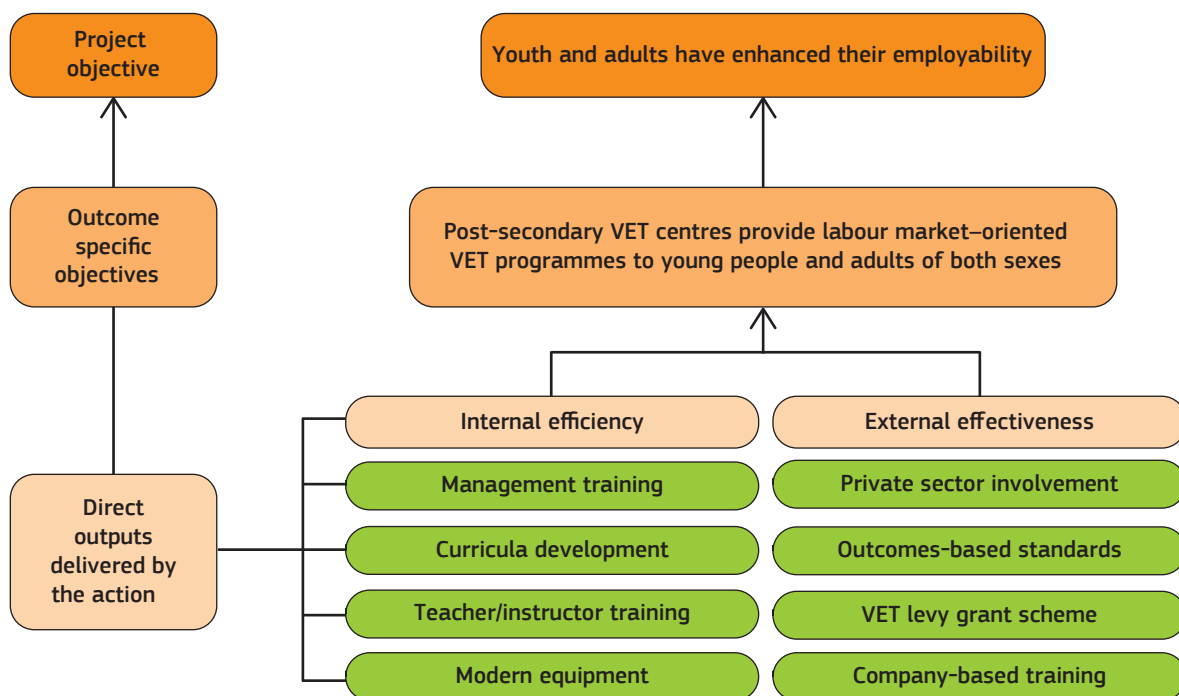
plan is a harmonised and comprehensive document that **identifies all key options, necessary decisions and activities** for implementing the intervention strategy. The plan visualises and combines several levels. How detailed a given project overview plan will be depends on the purpose and time frame of the VET delivery cycle project in question (see Figure GN7.3). It should include the following elements:

■ **intervention strategy** as well as overall and specific objectives;

■ **expected results** of the VET project;

■ **critical aspects** for project success, risks and alternative plans;

■ **indicators** to measure achievement of overall and specific objectives.

FIGURE GN7.3 Intervention strategy for a VET delivery cycle project – example

References and further reading

Eichhorst W., Rodríguez-Planas N., Schmidl R. and Zimmermann K., 2012. 'A Roadmap to Vocational Education and Training Systems Around the World'. Discussion Paper No. 71 10. Institute for the Study of Labour, Bonn.

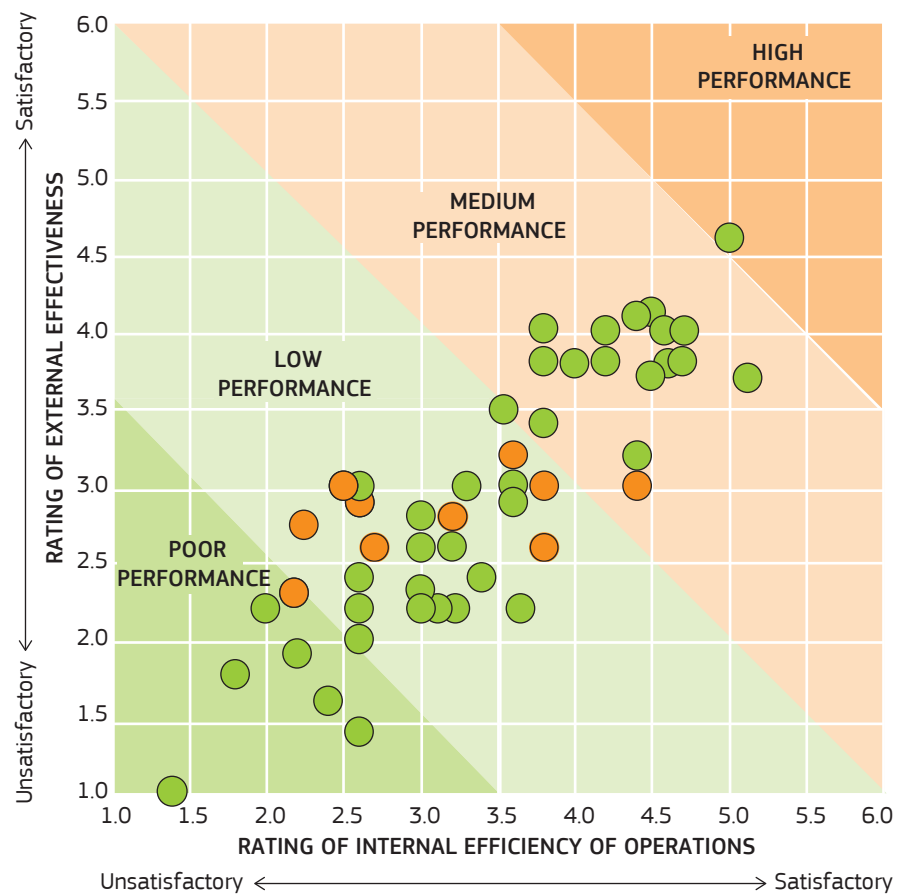
ETF (European Training Foundation), 2014. 'Making better vocational qualifications: Vocational qualifications system reforms in ETF partner countries'. Working paper. ETF, Turin.

ETF and GIZ Albania (European Training Foundation and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit Albania), 2014. 'Baseline Survey of Public VET Providers in Albania'. Tirana.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), 2012. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012. Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work*. UNESCO, Paris.

Case study: Performance survey of Albania's public VET providers

CONTEXT	The Albanian Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, with the assistance of the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), undertook a baseline survey of all public VET providers. The survey covered 52 public VET providers, including 42 vocational secondary schools and 10 vocational training centres. The baseline study was implemented across all 12 regions of Albania. The objectives set for this baseline study were to provide comprehensive background information about the performance of all public VET providers, to enable planning of their future development as well as to build competence in the fields of methodology, planning and implementation of assessing VET provider performance and conducting future evaluations in the VET sector.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	The performance survey shows that the VET curriculum is not producing graduates with the essential knowledge, skills and occupational competence for entry to training-relevant positions in the workplace. In most cases, this is due to a neglect of practical skills training, which hardly occurs in most of the VET providers visited. As a rule, practice classes are limited to demonstrations with scant and outdated equipment. Current VET legislation is characterised by scattered and overlapping responsibilities for VET programmes among central and local-level institutions with regard to funding, human resources, building maintenance, scholarships and accountability.
ACTIONS TAKEN	A methodology was developed to assess or benchmark VET providers, in line with the following dimensions derived from the VET delivery cycle: internal efficiency of operations and external effectiveness. Each dimension was described by a set of key factors. Research instruments — basic information sheets and a field questionnaire — were designed to gather the necessary information to enable assessment of the key factors covering qualitative as well as quantitative aspects. A criteria-based assessment rating structure allowed application of the same assessment standards to all VET providers. The two results of the summative assessment were used to position and visualise each VET provider in the VET provider performance matrix (see Figure GN7.4). All 52 public VET providers were asked to fill in information sheets prior to the field visits. Three research teams, consisting of one national expert and two officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth or the National Agency for VET and Qualifications, were formed to undertake one-day visits to all public VET providers. The research teams documented their findings and observations from interviews with key staff and assigned benchmarks using the assessment instruments.

FIGURE GN7.4 Performance matrix of all public VET providers in Albania

Source: Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, ETF and GIZ, 2014.

Note: ● = formal vocational secondary schools; ● = informal vocational training centres.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The majority (50 %) of all public VET providers were correlated with the low-performance level. This cluster is characterised by a generally unsatisfactory performance level to a less than acceptable performance level and **indicates an urgent need for major improvement on a fairly wide scale**.
- The current VET curriculum is not fully aligned with labour market needs and **over-emphasises academic** as well as vocational theory subjects, which goes hand in hand with neglect of practical training. Most VET providers rarely offer regular practical skills training lessons. Curriculum hours earmarked for practical instruction are reduced to demonstrations.
- The quality and quantity of managerial and teaching staff are a major concern within the VET system. Especially for public VET providers, it is very difficult to attract and retain an adequate number of VET teachers and instructors, due to the **unattractive working conditions in the VET system**. Lack of pedagogical and didactic competences is seen as a major impediment in the sector and needs urgent attention. A significant proportion of the teaching and management staff needs to upgrade their skills and to gain more senior teaching and management experience.

Source: ETF and GIZ Albania, 2014.