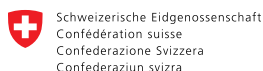


# SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE PUBLIC VET PROVIDERS

REPORT ON THE PROCESS AND RESULTS  
SEPTEMBER 2019





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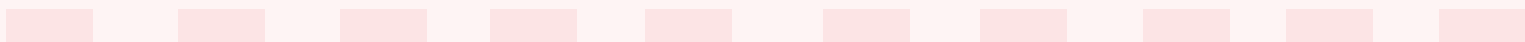
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# ACRONYMS

AQF	Albanian Qualifications Framework
MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
NAES	National Agency of Employment and Skills
NAVETQ	National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualifications
SD4E	Skills Development for Employment
VET	Vocational Education and Training
QA	Quality Assurance
SD4E	Skills Development for Employment Programme
ToT	Trainer of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme





# BACKGROUND

## VET

system in Albania is largely a school-based system with little and very limited participation of the private sector in the design and delivery of training programmes. In VET system, the NAVETOQ has developed a coherent policy cycle of internal processes for the development and maintenance of vocational qualifications<sup>1</sup> which supports the relevance of the qualifications for the labour market. On the political backdrop, many efforts have been made in the last 5-6 years to shift the focus towards VET and the results are beginning to appear, mentioning here the activism to improve the legal framework and the qualification framework, improvement of the learning process by emphasizing the importance of the work-based learning, increasing the attendance of vocational schools, promoting VET through promotional and competitive activities etc.

Also, a good attempt was the business participation on school boards, which aimed to increase the contribution of the private sector and make its' participation in VET more active

and effective, filling the existing gap between the vocational education and the labour market, and increasing the quality too. However, the effectiveness and quality in VET requires more time and commitment so that the required standards are met.

On the perspective of political and technical efforts to improve the quality in VET, the Swiss funded project Skills Development for Employment (SD4E) that is being implemented by UNDP Albania has supported the Albanian government in its' efforts to achieve the goal of the National Strategy, "Quality jobs and skills opportunities for all Albanian women and men throughout their lifecycle<sup>2</sup>," by improving and enhancing the outcome of the VET offer, thus creating a ground with skilled workforce and better employment opportunities for the young people.

In the new phase of the project, UNDP Albania, aims for a standardized Quality Assurance framework that contributes to the improved image of VET and alignment of the VET delivery with the world of work. The interventions

1. Methodical Guide on Developing Vocational Qualifications Descriptors in Albania (2009), accessible online at: <http://www.akaftp.gov.al/kualifikimet-profesionale/udhezues/>

2. National Strategy for Vocational Education Training and Lifelong Learning (2013-2020) [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/2F2ABAD2B5A1126EC1257B650030CA17\\_TRP%202012%20Albania\\_EN.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/2F2ABAD2B5A1126EC1257B650030CA17_TRP%202012%20Albania_EN.pdf)

*The self-assessment exercise that was implemented recently by 44 public VET providers, shows that they could identify some positive aspects as well as problematic areas in all the five quality dimensions.*

under the outcome 3 of the SD4E project are envisaged in alignment with the priority 2 of the National Employment and Skills Strategy and in close coordination and cooperation with MoFE and NAVETQ. One of the outputs of this component is related to the quality assurance of vocational qualifications under the Albanian Qualification Framework, with a model for accreditation of VET providers.

The SD4E project in close collaboration with NAVETQ and other stakeholders is working to define the desired features and feasibility of the future quality assurance system. The development and piloting of the self-assessment instrument in the previous phase of the SD4E project, have contributed towards increased awareness and the initial stages of creating a common understanding on the desired standards. A set of minimum and accepted standards and criteria, which are part of the self-assessment instrument, has been discussed and in general accepted by all VET providers in Albania, which implemented lately an exercise of self-assessment of the institutions they are managing and leading. These standards and criteria are creating the basis for the quality assurance and

accreditation model in VET, which will serve as a tool to modernize the vocational education landscape and ensure that VET graduates with their knowledge and qualifications are relevant to labour market demand.

Good practices and contemporary experiences show that to achieve the quality in VET, the institutions offering vocational education and training can start by objectively carry out their own self-assessment and identify their strengths and problematic areas. The self-assessment exercise that was implemented recently by 44 public VET providers, shows that they could identify some positive aspects as well as problematic areas in all the five quality dimensions. The results of this exercise will be taken seriously by each of them and will serve to improve those problematic areas in the coming period. In addition, the project will support the development of the accreditation model for VET institutions, where the quality dimensions assessed in the self-assessment will be compared by an external evaluation process. So, the self-assessment process and its' results can be considered as successful when they are matched in most of the quality dimensions with an external evaluation process.

## 01

# Regulatory Framework for Self-Assessment (QA) in the Albanian VET System

## 1.1 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The National Employment and Skills Strategy 2022 has the overall goal to promote quality jobs and skills opportunities for all Albanian women and men through their lifecycle; this is pursued with a number of complementary and interconnected actions that at the same time support labour supply, encourage labour demand, and address high social exclusion. The strategy is composed of four pillars, or stream of actions, that the programme intends to achieve. One of the four strategic priorities (pillar B) of the NESS 2014-2022 focuses on the “Quality Offer of Vocational Education and Training for Youth and Adults” by emphasising actions that aim at improving the quality of provisioning at the providers’ level.

## 1.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Law No.15/2017 as of 16.02.2017 “On Vocational Education and Training”, Chapter V “Quality Assurance” sets the basis for the development of a quality assurance framework in the Albanian VET system, including licensing, self-assessment, inspection and accreditation. The Law No. 10247 as of 04.03.2010 “On the Albanian Qualification Framework” (AQF), with the changes and improvements of 2018 (Law No. 23/2018 as of 10.05.2018), describes the main features of the AQF such as structure, scope, objectives and functions, as well as

arrangements for governance, institutional management, quality assurance and financing. The key focus stipulated in the law, among many others, emphasize the issue of quality assurance in VET. That means that all Vocational Education and Training institutions must meet certain quality standards in terms of human and physical resources, systems and procedures, management, learning process etc. The Quality Assurance must be the cornerstone of every institution offering vocational education and training and very important for increasing the VET image and for producing a qualified workforce for the labour market.

In addition, rules and criteria for institutional and quality development framework, especially for VET providers offering upper secondary programs are stipulated in the legal framework for pre-university education (Law No.69/2012 and respective secondary legislation)<sup>3</sup>. Clear procedures and criteria are set regarding the: 1) the mid-term strategic plan (4 years); 2) the annual work plan and the 3) the scope, implementation and use of the self-assessment of pre-university institutions, including VET schools.

3. The most important bylaw on the functioning of pre-university education is the so called “Dispozita Normative”, which is a comprehensive regulation of all aspects of basic and secondary education, including upper secondary VET.



Finally, the Minister's Instruction No. 16 as of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018, which adopts the Official Self-Assessment Guideline and defines the responsibilities of providers' and institutions at central level, as well as the amended Minister's Instruction No.16/1 as of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 set the first milestone for a comprehensive implementation of the quality assurance framework, including all public VET providers, vocational schools and vocational training centers alike.

### 1.3 INSTITUTIONAL SET UP FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET

#### ***The Ministry of Finance and Economy***

As the highest public institution responsible for VET policies, the Ministry of Finance and Economy is entrusted by law to create the framework for quality assurance in the VET system, including all the different components of this system, such as: licensing, opening and closure of public VET providers, adoption of secondary legislation regarding accreditation, self-assessment, monitoring and inspection. More concretely, the Ministry is responsible to develop the legal basis, to guarantee for necessary human and financial resources, to provide the infrastructure.

In the public sector, the Ministry of Finance and Economy is responsible for approving the opening, organization and closure of public VET providers based on criteria and procedures set by the Council of Ministers. It approves the provision of VET programmes based on national qualifications offered by public VET providers. It adopts the accreditation model, standards and criteria as proposed by NAVETQ. The Ministry cooperates closely with the National Business Centre and gives the initial approval on the licensing of private VET providers. One of the key functions of quality assurance, inspection

resides as well with the Ministry of Finance and Economy.

#### ***The National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualifications (NAVETQ)***

NAVETQ is the institution responsible to create a unified system of vocational qualifications that are recognized nationally and internationally, a system that allows for its participants (learners) to acquire knowledge, skills and competences to cope with challenges of socio-economic development of the country. NAVETQ supports the responsible Ministry to strengthen the EU dimension of the Albanian qualifications system. In the VET sector, NAVETQ has full responsibility and competence to exercise the key functions of AQF. Among other tasks and regarding the enforcement of the AQF law, NAVETQ carries out evaluations of qualifications and compare them with international qualifications, as well as propose changes to the criteria and procedures for ensuring the quality of qualifications included in the AQF etc.

#### ***The National Agency of Employment and Skills (NAES)***

Based on the Article 9 of the VET Law, NAES is responsible for the management of the network of public VET providers. With this mandate, NAES will be responsible for monitoring the day to day activity of VET providers. In addition, NAES agency is entrusted with the maintenance and update of the national registry of certificates, as well as with the tracing of VET learners after graduation.

VET providers should have their own internal quality assurance mechanisms to offer qualitative outcome from their institutions which is relevant and responds to the labour market.

# 02 Self-Assessment Instrument and Methodology

The implementation of the self-assessment process by the public VET providers requires the use of a clear, reliable and scientific methodology that provides information and data that reflect the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities on the professional qualifications that VET providers are offering but highlights the need for improvements in the future.

Spreading the culture of self-assessment is a professional and challenging approach that requires recognition and mastery of the professional and ethical standards of assessment, commitment and responsibility of all persons involved in assessment, teachers / instructors, students / trainees, assessment teams, but also of VET providers' governing authorities and bodies.

Elements of the self-assessment methodology in VET, includes the 5 quality dimensions of VET provider' activity. The instrument designed with the support of SD4E programme, served to guide the implementation of the self-assessment process and explains in detail each area, including the subareas for each of them. It includes areas, subareas, indicators, criteria, assessment rates and standard descriptions.

**The area** implies a fundamental dimension of VET activity and is directly related to all VET

activity. The definition of the fields of activity is based on the legal and sub-legal acts of vocational education and general education. The following main areas of self-assessment are defined as following:

- I. Management and organization**
- II. Relationships and cooperation**
- III. Implemented curricula**
- IV. Teaching and learning**
- V. Assessment**

**The sub-area** is a subdivision with details and elements that best demonstrates and complements the content of a particular field in which VET provider works. For example, if one of the areas is "Relationships and Cooperation" the sub-areas are "Relations with the community and civil society", "Business relations" etc. These sub-areas aim to identify what kind of relationships and which forms of cooperation VET institution has with its partners. They are considered as an opportunity to identify, observe and evaluate in detail what is happening in VET provider, so the sub-areas perform two functions:

- break down the area into organic elements necessary for it;
- Provide realistic knowledge and assessment of the situation within VET provider.

**The Indicator** is a measurable, affirmative sentence that indicates what the area is like and what it should be like. Through indicators we come to appreciate how the VET providers is self-assessed.

Indicators' features are:

- designed for each sub-area and may be one or several;
- are always measurable, which means that they facilitate the self-evaluation process;
- present assertions that specify the area that will be evaluated.

**The criterion** is a breakdown of the indicators. It is expressed in the form of a sentence that states how it is implemented, organized or in what state the target indicator is presented. It collects information and enables VET institution to reach indicators.

**Assessment rates** are the levels used to assess the VET institution through its' areas.

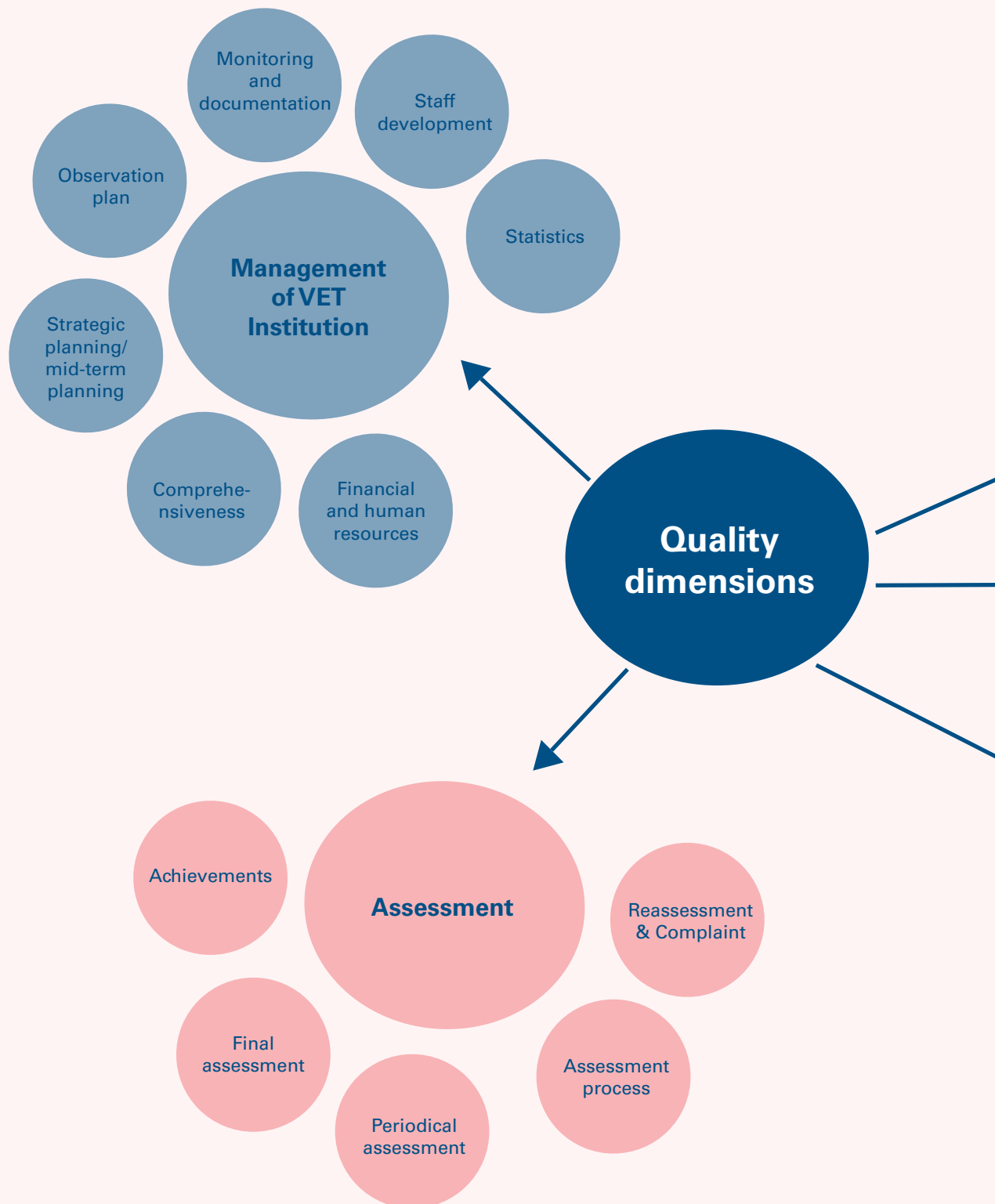
Evaluation is done for each criterion of each indicator of an area. The rating levels are four: very good scoring 1, good for 2, satisfactory for 3 and poor for number 4. The four-rating scale scheme is quite used in VET providers assessments in European countries. Also, this four-rate system enables a realistic assessment and includes all levels that the VET institutions can achieve by indicators.

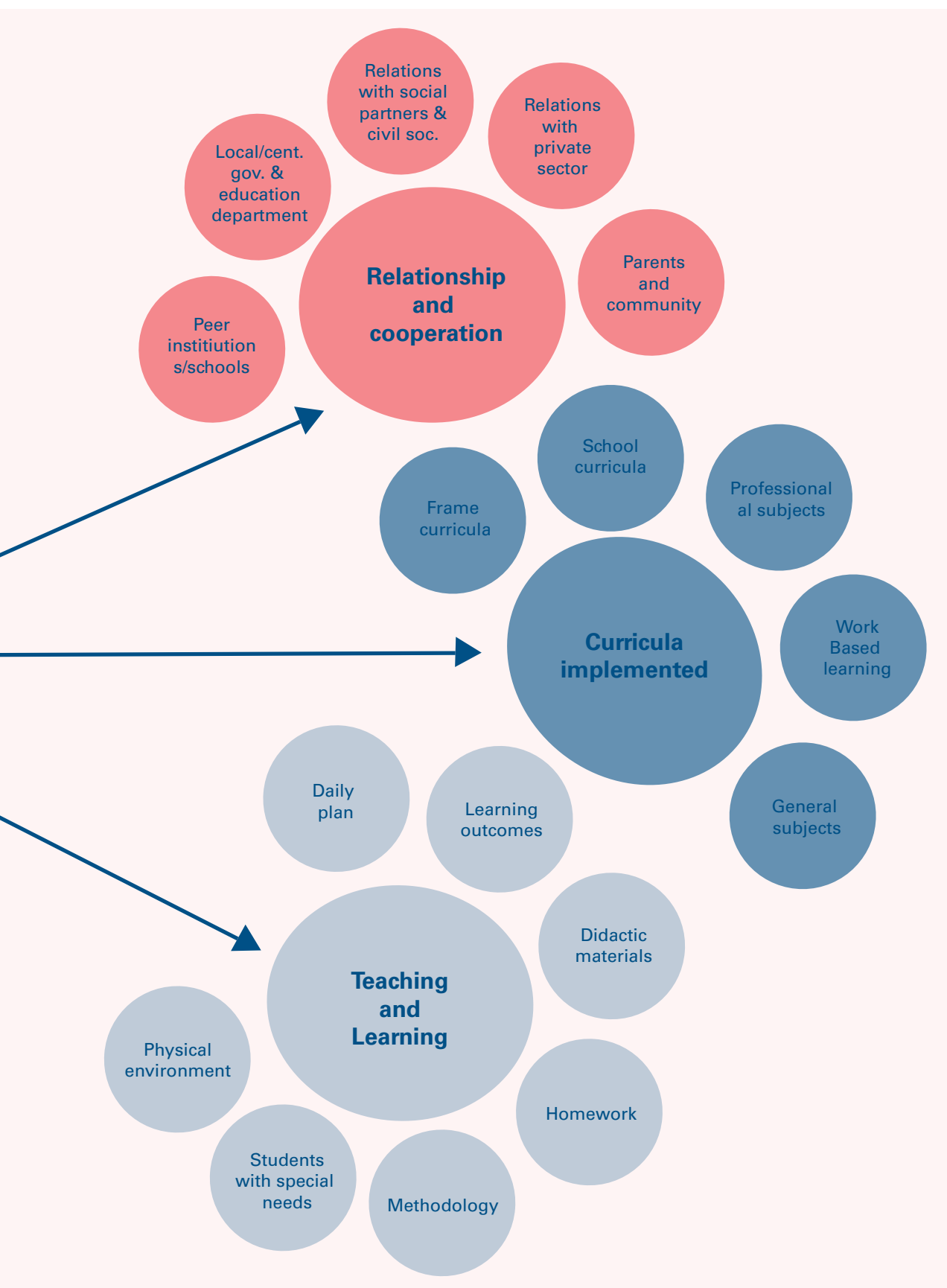
**The standard** is the description of the VET provider's situation for each of the areas, which enables an evaluation according to the assessments rates mentioned above. This assessment is the result of the data processing from the monitoring and evaluation instruments provided to each indicator and criterion, but also of the data provided by the methodology applied during internal evaluation. The final evaluation for a specific area is always based on the weight and importance of the implementation of each indicator and criterion in the VET provider's situation.

**Table 1:** Illustration of self-assessment instrument, including the areas, subarea and indicators

No	Area	Sub-Area	Indicators
I	"Management and organization"	Internal evaluation (self- assessment)	VET provider implements the self- assessment.
II	"Relationships and cooperation"	Relationship and cooperation with the businesses	VET provider communicates with the businesses through the business coordinator (PASO in the past)
III	"Implemented curricula"	School based curricula	Unified professional courses/programs are developed according to the requirements of official documents.
IV	"Teaching and learning"	Development plan of the modules for the professional practice learning	Teacher/instructor compile the modules development plans for professional practice in accordance with the curricular documents and according to particularities of students
V	"Assessment"	Assessment of knowledge	Teacher/instructor has a clear program/plan for students' evaluation.

The self-assessment instrument describes some key quality dimensions for VET providers, which are sketched in the chart below.





## 03

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**Preparation and  
Implementation**PREPARATION STAGE: JUNE –  
SEPTEMBER 2018**

As above mentioned, SD4E program cooperates closely with NAVETQ for quality assurance of vocational qualifications under the Albanian qualification framework and will support NAVETQ in the development of a model for accreditation of VET providers. This started with development and implementation of the Self-Assessment in 44 VET providers, starting from June 2018, including 34 public VET schools and 10 vocational training centers. The support consisted at technical and logistic level of cooperation. Two training levels were planned, one designed for the NAVETQ specialists and representatives from VET institution, another one for the school and training center's staff. The first training module was designed as ToT (Training of Trainers) and was delivered to NAVETQ specialists, who were trained and prepared for monitoring and supporting the implementation of the self-assessment process at the providers' level.

Considering the sustainability of the process, NAVETQ staff not only was trained for supporting the implementation of the self-assessment process at various stages but was put in the leading role of this process. Further,

a tailored training program was designed for VET providers and was conducted by both NAVETQ and the Programme team.

The implementation process of the self-assessment took place in three main stages and was closely monitored by the NAVETQ and SD4E programme teams, who jointly designed the monitoring plan and shared it with the VET Providers beforehand.

**STAGE ONE: OCTOBER-  
DECEMBER 2018**

Following the Minister's instruction No. 16 as of 8th of May 2018 and its revision as of 16th October 2018, NAVETQ responsible staff and the SD4E project designed an accompanying plan to assist the VET providers in this comprehensive effort to capture all quality dimensions within their institutions. The support consisted in dedicated visits and discussions organized with each VET provider for introducing and agreeing on the implementation plans. They were oriented to follow the general plan as indicated by the Ministerial order, including the following:

- Establishment of the self- assessment team by the principal of the institution;

- Approval of the self-assessment team by the teachers' council;
- Development of a self-assessment plan for the 5 dimensions;
- Adoption of the self-assessment plan by the director;
- Conducting self-assessment (filling in questionnaires, observations, information gathering, etc.) for 5 areas and the respective sub-areas as per Self-assessment guideline;
- Data processing and compilation of the self-assessment report for 5 the areas and the respective sub-areas;
- Implementing self-assessment (filling in questionnaires, observations, information gathering, etc.) for the other areas/ dimensions;
- Data processing and report compilation for the remaining areas;
- Preparation of the self-assessment report for the all 5 areas/dimensions;
- Approval of the self-assessment report by the teachers' board / council;
- Submitting the self-assessment report to NAVETO.

## **STAGE TWO: JANUARY - MARCH 2019**

This phase was considered as a mid-term monitoring /support, to evaluate the progress of self-assessment by each VET provider and to see what their concerns and uncertainties are, especially in understanding the perception on the indicators, criteria and evidences, they had to use for the evaluation of specific areas or sub-areas. These visits were necessary because they served to clarify issues related to the clarification of certain criteria throughout the instrument, which were not very clear for all the self- assessment teams, given that this was the first time that such an exercise is done

internally by a team of the VET institution.

During the monitoring visits, issues regarding the indicators vis-a-vis the criteria, which judges the achievement level of a target indicator were explained individually with each VET providers. Also, the evaluation levels and the standards, which must be met by VET institutions in each of the areas to be assessed, were discussed in those visits.

## **STAGE THREE: MARCH - MAY 2019**

Pursuing the stage two of monitoring and support of the self-assessment implementation by the VET providers, it was noticed that a closer support for them was needed. So jointly with NAVETO, a calendar of mentoring for the final stage was designed. All the 44 VET providers were supported through a desk check of all the documents for the evaluation process and for collecting and processing the results. In this stage it was noted also need for supporting and guiding them in the writing of the final report, even though the structure template was introduced during the training and in the previous meetings.

At the end of this stage, it was noted that even though the guideline for self- assessment of VET providers is very detailed and well instructing and despite the fact that they were supported throughout the different stages, this exercise was very challenging for them in general, especially carrying out the self- assessment for the 5 dimensions. However, this is considered as an important first step towards the shaping of the quality assurance system within VET providers, which will continue further. The results and lessons learned from this experience will be discussed further, while SD4E will consider the improvement of the Guideline and its' publication.

# 04 The Overall Results of the Self-Assessment Process

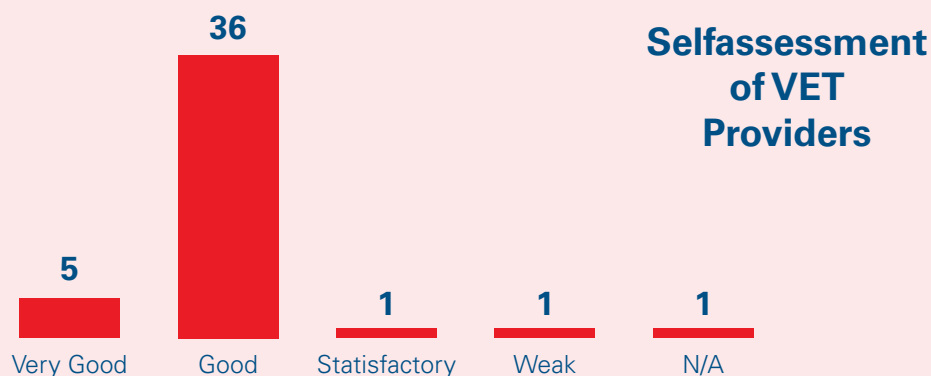
The self- assessment process was finalized by 43 (97.7 %) VET providers out of 44, who submitted the reports to NAVETQ in May 2019. The results of the reports were processed and summarized by NAVETQ specialists, who tried to extract the results while reading hundreds of pages throughout the reports. In their summary they highlighted the positive aspects as well as the areas that need to be improved in the future.

The key findings from the reports, highlights the fact that most of the VET providers in this exercise had the tendency to score high, thus

not being objective on the self- evaluation in each of the 5 areas;

Not all VET providers had the same understanding and thus not following accordingly the steps as initially they were taught and guided; The assignment of the self-assessment team was not done according to the key criteria as advised in the training, such as team work, delegation of tasks amongst teachers, knowledge on the elaboration of data's, ability to draft the concise report etc., hence the difficulty they most claimed, it was related to these issues;

**Graph 1:** The overall self- assessment results





As the self-assessment was done for the previous school year (i.e. 2017-2018) it was difficult to gather all the evidence needed, but it also served to take action on the next round of activities related to self-assessment and create a databank with all documented evidences;

In a scoring scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is considered very good and 4 is weak, from the total of 44 VET providers, 82 % score themselves at the level 2 (good), 11% consider themselves as very good, one VET provider ranked at the satisfactory level and only one VET provider ranked at the weak level. One VET provider (the mobile training Centre) did not succeeded to perform the self-assessment due to changes in staff and reorganization.

#### 4.1 AREA I – MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

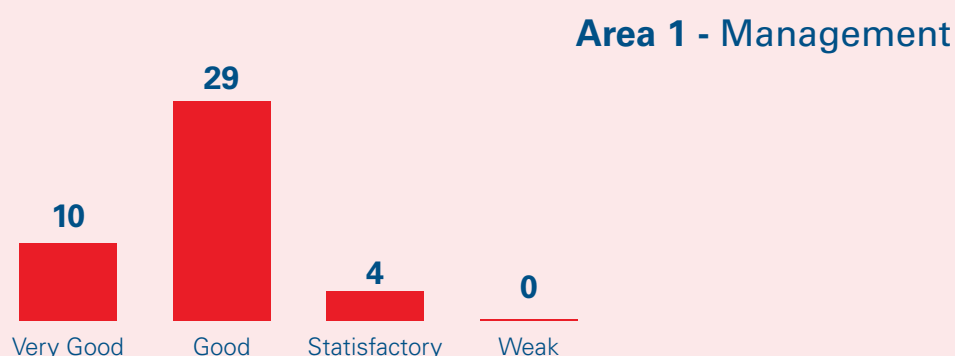
The self-assessment with regards to the first quality dimension “Management of VET Institution,” aimed at identifying whether the VET providers engage and involved their staff in the

various educational processes of the institution and whether they can work as a team. Another intention as per guideline is to evaluate the level of cooperation within the institutions and other actors and groups of interest. In general, the aim is to shed light on the effective and economic use of human and financial resources to achieve the desired outcomes.

The management aspect of VET institutions includes 9 sub-areas which enable the full and comprehensive functioning of management. These sub-areas are:

- Comprehensiveness;
- Mid-term plan of VET providers;
- Annual VET Provider Institution Plan;
- Classroom observation plan;
- Institutional documentation monitoring plan;
- Statistics of VET providers, enrollment and transfer of students;
- Self-assessment / internal evaluation of VET providers;
- Professional development of staff;
- Effectiveness of human and financial resources;

**Graph 2:** The self- assessment results of the Management area



10 out of 44 VET providers scored at the very good level of the self-assessment for the aspects of Management; 29 are scored at good level and 4 are at satisfactory level.

In terms of comprehensiveness and participation of all the operating official bodies within VET providers, such as the Board of VET providers, Council of the teachers, student's government, parents council, disciplinary committee, the Committee of Ethics and Conduct etc. it is noted that, from the formal point of view they have been established, but these bodies are still far from the role they should play in managing VET providers. Also students / trainees, teachers, parents and other stakeholders are not fully involved in the activities of these bodies.

Regarding the development of mid-term plans, there are NO previous experiences in designing and developing a mid-term plan for almost all of VET providers. Even in few cases where VET providers have been supported by specific projects, a strategic planning process has been weak and not in a significant participatory approach. As results even in those few cases the VET providers were not aware of the existence of mid-term plan. Also, there are no previous experiences of involving VET providers in identifying skills gaps according to employers' perceptions and identifying market needs at the local/regional level implying that there is a gap in a formal system for matching the needs of the labor market with the institution's offer. On the other hand, VET providers lack the necessary human capacity to adapt their qualifications to labour market requirements. In these circumstances, it is not difficult to talk about the involvement of teaching staff and interest groups in the mid-term planning process.

Regarding the staff professional development, in most cases there are no internal instruments to assess the needs for training and qualifications that staff needs. Staff qualification is spontaneous or based on MFE Qualifications plan in collaboration with AKAFPK. According to the self-assessment guideline, the professional development of staff requires that the management of VET institutions, plans and implements an annual plan of internal development of the professional staff which should have clear responsibilities and the commitment for the training and qualification of the staff of the institution. Also, the guideline envisages that training needs and training for all staff are identified in time and personnel (teachers and instructors) is encouraged to engage in various forms of training inside and outside the VET institutions.

With regard to the effective use of financial resources, it is well known that the budgeting process for VET providers is input-oriented, meaning that it is provided entirely by state contributions based on a top-down approach. VET providers, according to their reports, have implemented the budget in accordance with the law.

## 4.2 AREA II – RELATIONSHIPS AND COOPERATION

The self-assessment in the field of "Relationships and cooperation," aims at identifying the level of relationships and cooperation between the public institutions of education and vocational training with the central and local government, business, communities and civil society and institutions and other analogue institutions at home and abroad. It was explicitly highlighted the structured participation of social partners

in the main VET activities starting from the qualification description, the opportunity to contribute and intervene in the curricula review, their active involvement in the assessment of the students as while conducting business practices and participating in their final assessment.

The Relationships and Cooperation area of VET institutions includes the 4 sub-areas which are:

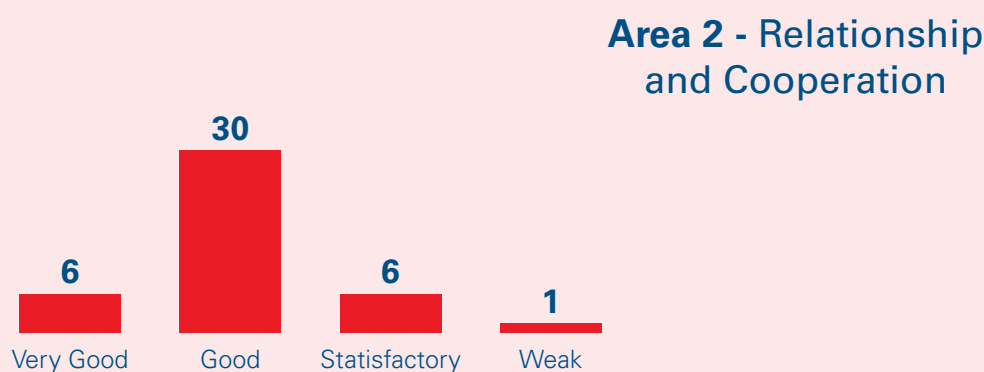
- Relations and collaboration with local/ regional and central government on social and education related issues;
- Relations and cooperation with private sector, which is considered one of the most important forms of cooperation;
- Relations and cooperation with civil society and community require that the VET providers (especially VET schools), cooperates with parents, with the surrounding community to support institutional management processes etc;

Relations and cooperation among VET institutions and other educational institutions.

According to the reports of the VET providers regarding this area, six (6) out of 44 VET providers scored at the very good level in regard to Relationships and Cooperation area, 30 scored at good level and 6 at satisfactory level. One VET provider was self- assessed as the weak. As mentioned above, the subjectivism is considered rather high, especially when it comes to the structured and standards modus operandi with businesses.

A very important element of the work of VET providers is the collaboration with companies and businesses in the region who are working on the educational vocational profiles they provide. The purpose of contacting and cooperating with companies is important not only for organizing practice learning and apprenticeship for their students but also to familiarize and get to know with their products/ services and whether there is a demand for updating or developing new profiles within VET institution. VET providers in general, do not take an active and structured part in identifying labor market needs and analyzing occupational

**Graph 3:** The self- assessment results of the Relationships and Cooperation area



trends and perspectives, hence very little is done for improvement and adaptation of the curricula at school level. On the other hand, business involvement in labor market analysis, their contribution to the design of specific qualifications or new occupational standards or participation in the assessment of the students, especially for the work-based learning part or mentoring part, is lacking.

Also in regard to sub-area of "Relationships and cooperation among VET institutions and other similar educational institutions for the purpose of exchange programs, study visits of staff, drafting materials related to the curricula, or peer exchange on the best practices on the forms of communication and cooperation with the business etc., are lacking behind. The indicator for this sub-area, define that VET provider collaborate with analogue institutions inside and outside the country, meaning that this is a normal activity. Few of the judging criteria for this are as below:

- VET provider identifies and has a complete database of communication with counterpart institutions offering the same qualifications and professional certification, or
- VET provider establish twinning with counterpart institutions within and outside the country etc.,

Most of VET providers does not apply this approach. This because of various reasons, such as lack of independence, lack of previous experiences, lack of confidence but mostly these are not common experiences. There are only few VET providers, who are supported by projects and who such exchange visits or similar activities are planned and carried out being supported technically and logistically by the project.

### 4.3 AREA III – IMPLEMENTED CURRICULA

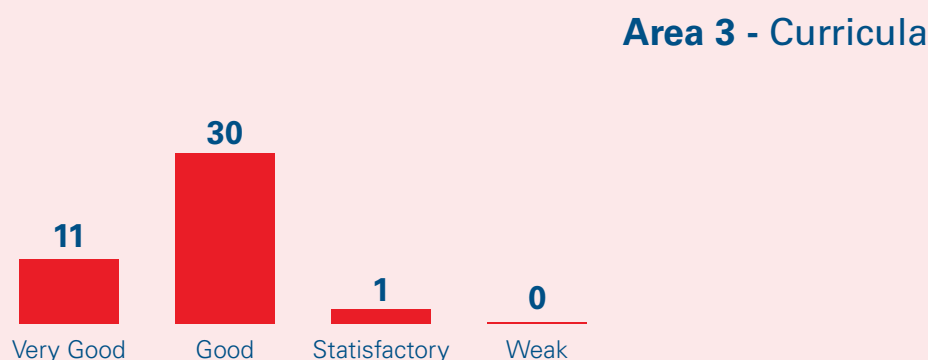
The aim of activities organized by the VET providers in relation to the curricula implemented are to equip students with the knowledge, professional and key competences as well as the right attitude to find a job place in the world of work.

Referring to the Albanian Qualification Framework, level 2-5 of qualifications, the curricula of VET providers is developed by the National VET and Qualifications Agency, the so called frame curricula, while the detailed and developed curricula at the level of VET providers, the so called school curricula is the responsibility of the school and is done in accordance with the qualification requirements. The curricula are organized into three main categories: general theory, professional theory and professional practice.

A good curricula implementation, serves to entail exercising the knowledge that students receives in the schools or training centres, including theory and practice into work. Also good developed and implemented curricula, serves to narrow the gap between supply and demand, in other words between what the school produces vis-à-vis the market requirements.

Not always VET providers does reflect the requirements of the social partners or the businesses into the curricula, despite the fact the in the self- assessment exercise, most of the VET providers consider themselves as good ( 70%) and very good (25%) in this area, while only 5% ranked at the satisfactory level.

Despite the subjective self-assessment report for this area, VET providers are aware of the

**Graph 4:** The self- assessment results of the Curricula implementation area

need for improving and upgrading laboratories and production bases, the need to improve the general learning environments within the school, strengthening collaboration among curricular teams for better planning and for a more coherent learning process. There are also some VET providers who suggest revising the curricula because they are considered outdated and not in line with business requirements.

#### 4.4 AREA IV –TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning are two important processes that enable acquisition of educational programs of the curricula of the vocational and general education by students/ trainees, and meet the requirements of qualifications / guidelines / professional profiles offered by the VET providers. This area is quite complex and delicate to observe, analyse and evaluate. The teaching models used with students and trainees, are numerous and various.

Self-assessment in this field aims at identifying the effectiveness of teaching and learning

processes, processes that enable the acquisition of professional competences in accordance with the qualification requirements as well as the other key competencies needed in order that VET graduates find their place in the world of work upon successful completion of the professional education.

Given that teaching and learning is a broad and very important area of vocational education, the indicators and criteria, that is, descriptors of indicators and assessment levels, are numerous. This serves for the continuous improvement of the educational process by both the teacher and the instructor, based on realistic finding and processing of the teaching and learning situation in the classroom and / or in real work environments.

There are 12 sub-areas and 13 indicators under this area, which need to be carefully evaluated through specific criteria and these includes:

- **The “Daily plan”** – which addresses the daily work of teachers/instructors for every teaching hour and shows how to design a

good plan and how it allows for an effective learning process;

- **The “Learning outcomes”** – addressing ways of presenting objectives/results, activities that have been organised, cooperation between teachers & students etc.
- **“Main principles during teaching hours”** – which envisages what the teacher/instructor have to do in the general education subjects and in the vocational education (courses/professional modules), so that students learn actively and avoid overburden, to enable linking with prior learned concepts or gained skills, both within the course/module, as well as from other courses/modules or previous classes.
- **“Scientific Aspects”** - addressing the scientific training of the teacher/instructor and identifies whether s/he possesses the concepts and is able to solve exercises and scientific situations in the students textbook.
- **“Didactic materials”** - which define the extent of use of planned didactic material resources, adaptability to educational content, ease of use by students / practitioners and teachers, etc.
- **“Physical environment”** - which addresses the creation of appropriate physical conditions in the classroom and practice facilities for teaching and learning process.
- **The “Methodology”** - which is one of the key areas of planning a teaching hour. Teachers identifies ways, steps, procedures, etc., that s/he uses throughout the lesson. This subarea looks at the methods, techniques and teaching strategies used in the classroom and in the practice facilities that enable individual work, teamwork, active involvement or cooperation between teacher-student or

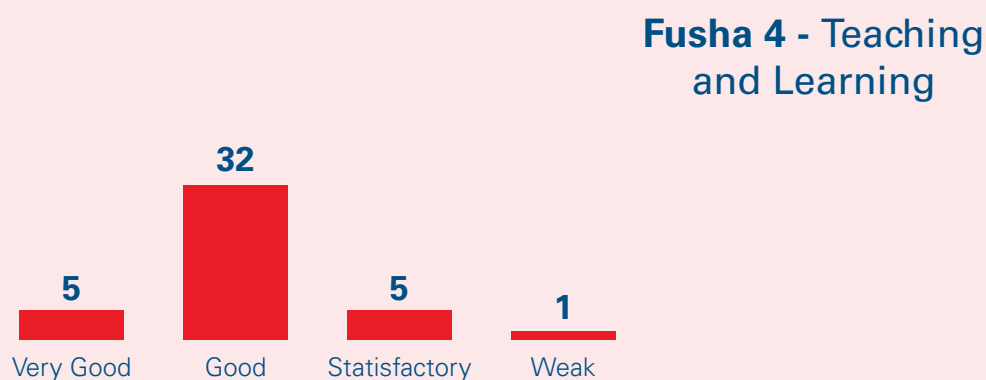
instructor-trainee, but also those related to teaching content that create opportunities for students/ trainees to acquire or develop skills targeted by the learning objectives / outcomes.

- **The “Homework”**, deals with the promotion and continuation of learning at home. The way how the teacher conducts this process (for example the level of difficulty of the homework), are elements that stimulate a fruitful learning.
- **“Revision”** is perceived as an instruments that enable and help the student/ trainee to effectively use revision as an important element of the curricula.
- **“Safe learning environment”** is an element related to the affective nature that enables us to identify atmosphere in the classroom or in the practice learning environment, the emotional situation, the creativity of the students or if there are cases of conflicts present etc.

“Students and trainees with special needs” – it is a sub-area which is essential to the learning process in the VET institutions. This sub-area enables us to analyse elements related to pupils / trainees with specific skills that need to be stimulated, encouraged or facilitated.

Against these indicators, 32 VET providers are self-rated at good level, 5 at very good level (3 of which are VTCs) and 5 at sufficient level. Only one provider (VTC Elbasan) is self-rated at the poor level in this area.

In general, according to the final self-eassessment reports, it results that teachers / instructors use different and various methods to carry out the teaching process, promoting theoretical and practical learning, as well as motivating learners / trainees to engage more

**Graph 5:** The self- assessment results of the Teaching and Learning area

effectively. However the needs for improvement in this area and which are articulated by the self-assessment teams are related to

- Enrichment of teaching materials for professional subjects.
- Continuous training of teachers, especially the young teachers.
- Improvement of the physical environments of learning, especially of the production base with modernization of premises etc;
- Improving collaboration amongst teaching staff.

Regarding the physical conditions, in most of the cases, the physical learning environments are inadequate, non-functional and does not motivate students/trainees. Students/trainees often lacks necessary individual tools for interactive participation in the learning process. Also, the methodology and techniques used in the classess, does not facilitate the individual or team work, nor a significant participation or interaction between teacher - students.

There are very few practices or experiences of VET providers, more specifically of teacher's / instructor's work related to the design and implementation of personalized curricula for students with disabilities and students with special needs. An ongoing process of assessing staff training needs and qualifications will improve this situation significantly.

#### 4.5 AREA V – ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the process of about measuring the progress of student learning. The teachers use the assessment to measure the knowledge and information aquired by students on specific subjects during a school year or in a training course. Assessment in VET, aims at measuring students' knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes according to the standards presented in the qualification specification.

Under this area , there are 6 sub-areas, as listed below that need to be checked according

to the indicators and the criteria defined when it comes to the self- assessment of a VET provider in regard to assessment.

- **Periodical assessment of students/ trainees** – which refers to the continuous assessment and documentation of the teacher in regard to the students learning process and progress;
- **Final assessment** – which is related to the final assessment of student/ trainees at the end of the school year or at the end of the vocational course and it requires the preparation of the tests, calculation of the grades, periodical notes etc.
- **The assessment process** – which is related to the entire process preparation, made transparent to the student and parent, the use of various instruments such as: examinations, tests, verbal questions, true-false questions, multiple-choice questions, combination questions, case studies, lectures, checklists for evaluating the working procedure, lists of assessment criteria on quality of products,

personal interviews,\ etc.

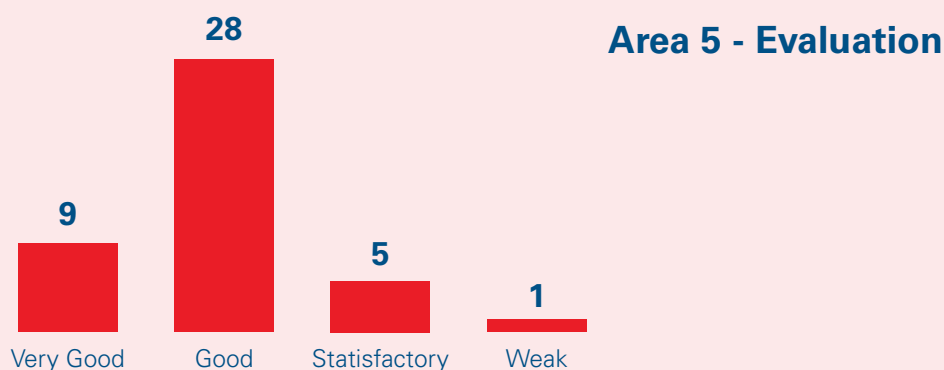
- **Achievements** - which is related to the results of students in the final exams for level I, II and III and the final exams of ( State Matura);  
Re-assessment and  
Complaint.

According to the self- assessment reports from VET providers, this area is scored at good level by 65% of them, 21% of them assessed themselves at very good level and only 11 % of the VET providers scored at satisfactory level. Again one of the VET provider evaluated itself at this area as weak.

There are some very relevant suggestions from the VET providers in regard to assessment, that need to be improved and which are emphasised by the VET providers in the self-assessment reports, such as:

- the participation of business representatives in the final exams / evaluation of the students;

**Graph 6:** The self- assessment results of the Assessment area





- Using contemporary methods for assessing students' knowledge;
- Alignment of the assessment of the knowledge gained in theoretical subjects with the knowledge gained in practice learning;
- Conducting periodic student's / trainee evaluation through using mini tests or even through the project learning approaches and documentation etc.



# 05 Conclusions and Recommendations

## 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The self-assessment process served primarily to all public VET providers to estimate the statusquo and performance of the institution, the functioning of the organisms and modus operandi within their institutions, in relation to quality dimensions, primarily to teaching - learning and qualification of the students. The more objectively the process is carried, the better the lessons learned from this process, the achievements identified as well as the problematic issues for VET providers are absorbed. Indeed all the participating institutions has identified through this process their own positive aspects as well as the areas that need to improve. This is an important and very good outcome for the VET providers. The reports submitted to NAVETQ were analyzed by NAVETQ specialists.

In general, the process was well implemented and in accordance to the ministerial order No.16/1, dt 17.10.2018 for the implementation of the self- assessment process and with the implementation plan suggested by the same order.

The reports received from 43 VET providers are as such a very good outcome. However, the quality of reports needs to be improved. Reports are generally characterized by a

standard language, derived from the language and terminology of the self-assessment instrument, but generally lacking in-depth analysis that would help articulate more specific findings and conclusions. Even though a reporting format was provided along with the practical guide, some VET providers found it difficult to compile it.

The summary reports highlight some positive and negative aspects as follows:

### A. *Positive Aspects*

- The self- assessment process helped the VET providers for understanding the need for standardization of the process and services offered by the institution, aligned with the documentation of processes, formulation of documents and evidences which are used and operated within the institutions;
- Throughout the self-assessment process, VET providers were able to identify their strengths and weaknesses, such as lack of using tools and instruments that institutions use to formalize the entire process and activities conducted by VET institutions. The self-assessment tool included templates and other tools to help them understand that processes should be documented / formalized with relevant

documents, such as forms, questionnaires, agreements, etc. the use of which helps the administration of processes within the institution as well as learners in the learning process. In the case of self-assessment, it also serves to verify and document the criteria as indicated in the instruction guide;

- During the implementation of the self-assessment exercises, VET providers understood the importance of engaging teachers and using resources within the institution to develop the methods and instruments needed in their daily activities and which are important for assessing the dimensions of types. different teaching and institution management (i.e. templates, forms, questionnaires for parents, students, businesses, etc.)
- This exercise served for familiarization with the process and for their readiness for the replication in the future with more objectivity and according to recommendations identified and articulated in the report by VET providers self.

### **B. Areas that need to be improved**

- In general there aren't any instruments to identify training needs for teaching staff among the VET institutions. In addition, there is no evidence on experiences of peer exchanges support, where teachers and institutions can share and learn from good practices among them.
- Team work within the VET institutions is moderate and the approach of delegating and controlling tasks and responsibilities to the other staff of schools/center is weak.
- The majority of VET providers are not

familiar with the need of a strategic plan or a mid-term plan that would help the institutions to plan and follow the vision to improve the quality and the outcome of their institutions. Even for few VET providers who has had support from various projects in the past and who were introduced with the notion of the strategic planning, there is no proper comprehension about it. Strategic planning is an important instrument, which needs to be considered seriously and start to take place by every VET provider through a participatory approach for envisioning a better future for their institution.

- Even though in general VET providers scored high the aspect of the (formal) existence of the official bodies within VET institutions, including the School board, Teacher Council, Student Government, Council of the parents of the VET provider, the Discipline Commission, Ethics and Conduct Committee etc. the efficiency of functions of such bodies need to be qualitatively assessed.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1:** Based on the results of the first comprehensive implementation, support, in form of dedicated training and coaching is to be provided to each VET provider in continuing the implementation of the self-assessment regularly and systematically. Specific training needs to be provided to standardize procedures and improve application of assessment tools in each quality dimension and according to criteria and indicators described in the guideline.

**Recommendation 2:** VET providers need to be supported in the utilization of the self-

assessment's findings as part of their internal quality assurance. VET providers need to be systematically supported to apply all stages of the quality cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act).

**Recommendation 3:** Responsible institutions at central level (MoFE, NAVETQ, NAES) should provide structured support to the VET providers, especially, with regards to:

- improving and upgrading infrastructure, including that for work-based learning
- the implementation of national VET programmes
- formative and summative assessment of VET learners
- implementation of continuous professional development of teaching staff
- capacitation of the management and of the development unit to perform their assigned tasks

**Recommendation 4:** It is recommended that the Self-Assessment Guideline is revised based on the feedback received during the implementation. In the revision process, special attention should be drawn to introduce more specific and measurable indicators related to the vocational aspects, as well as address in a differentiated way the special features of institutions that offer upper secondary VET and of those offering vocational training (adult learning).

**Recommendation 5:** It is recommended that NAVETQ, with the support of the SD4E programme develops a guideline for VET providers how to align internal quality assurance components, such as the self-assessment, with external evaluations of any type (inspection, monitoring and accreditation).







