

ERI SEE
EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE
OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE



SEEVET- Net WORK PROGRAMME 2012

Contents:

SEEVET-Net WORK PROGRAMME 2012	3
INTRODUCTION	3
BACKGROUND	4
WORK PROGRAMME 2012 SUMMARY	7
SEEVET-Net WORK PROGRAMME 2012	8
OUTLINE OF SEEVET-Net SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES for 2012	8
ENVISAGED TIMELINE FOR THE SEEVET-Net ACTIVITIES IN 2012	15
Annex 1 - 3 joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge	16
Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET	
Development of National Qualifications Frameworks	
Evidence Based Policy Making in Education	

SEEVET - Net WORK PROGRAMME 2012

INTRODUCTION

The Ministers responsible for Education and Higher Education have in the Memorandum of Understanding signed in June 2010 in Brdo, Slovenia reiterated that human capital development is the key priority for the South Eastern Europe region for finding innovative ways to back the economic growth, sustainable development, competitiveness and for safeguarding equitable and inclusive societies. Furthermore, the Ministers have affirmed their commitment to strengthen and broaden cooperation in the framework of ERI SEE that is will:

- Support sustainable education reforms on national levels through regional and international cooperation;
- Act as an interface to developments in relevant EU, European and international initiatives in education and to adjust ERI SEE's current thematic areas to the changed cooperation context both in South Eastern Europe and the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020");
- Support capacity building for increased use of the European cooperation instruments.

The MoU represents commitment to the implementation of the EU recommendations in the area of vocational education and training, as laid down in Europe 2020, as well as to the strategic objectives set in Education & Training 2020. Other relevant European and international processes and initiatives, including the Copenhagen process, will be also adhered to.

The Regional Cooperation Council (2008) acting within the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEEC) identified fostering and building human capital as a priority area for economic and social development of SEE and for increased regional cooperation.

The Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERISEE), as regional platform for dialogue and cooperation is supporting national efforts in reforming education sector through capacity building and harmonization with EU related instruments and developments. In its Work Programme for 2011 ERI SEE has identified the development of mutual policy learning practices through enhanced institutional cooperation in Vocational Education and Training in South East Europe as one of its objectives and in accordance to this and ERI SEE has supported the development and establishment of the network of VET Centres in South East Europe.

Through signing the cooperation agreement between VET Centres in South East Europe, SEEVET-Net is established and the work programme regarding SEEVET-Net activities in 2012 is developed and presented in this document.

The SEEVET-Net Work programme 2012 is composed in such a way to offer following information:

- Information on background containing overview of SEEVET-Net establishment activities, overall objective, instruments and methods of cooperation, and specific objectives for 2012.
- Work Programme 2012 Summary containing a brief overview of SEEVET-Net specific objectives, expected outcomes and brief description of the activities which will be conducted in order to reach the established objectives.
- SEEVET-Net Work Programme 2012 presented through an outline of SEEVET-Net specific objectives for 2012 combined with detailed description of the particular activities which will be conducted in order to achieve the established objective. This chapter is concluded with proposal of the activities identified as priorities in 2013.
- Envisaged timeline for the SEEVET-Net activities in 2012.

BACKGROUND

The visions of the SEE countries' economies as competitive, knowledge-based market economies, with environment attractive to investors and young educational generation and with numerous employment and development opportunities, has determined strategic and operative objectives of all national strategies in SEE countries.

SEE countries have identified VET development as an important factor for economic and social development and in all these countries the main objectives of the VET reforms are: orientation of education towards strengthening link with the world of labour; development of readiness for vocational improvement and harmonisation of SEE countries systems with EU standards, as well as the diversification of the institutional forms and models, programmes and methods of work; development of syllabuses and curriculum reforms regarding the provision of functional literacy; and implementation of Lifelong Learning principles.

In order to fulfil the potential of their VET systems, countries in SEE are undergoing fundamental changes, as a result of numerous international, regional and national initiatives.

In its Work Programme for 2011 ERI SEE has identified the development of mutual policy learning practices through enhanced institutional cooperation in Vocational Education and Training in South East Europe as one of its objectives and ERI SEE has supported the development of the SEEVET-Net in the past 3 years. Activities related to this objective started with joint meetings/conferences of the representatives of SEEVET institutions. Conferences/meetings were as follows:

- The first conference of VET agencies and similar institutions of SEE, under the patronage of the ERISSEE Secretariat, ETF and Twinning Project CARDS of CE was held from 25th to 26th September 2008 in Tirana, Albania. The aim of this conference was to initiate the process of establishing the Regional Network of VET Institutions in SEE.
- During 17-18 December 2008 in Ankara, Turkey, a conference on "Implementation strategies for national qualifications frameworks in South East Europe" was held, under the patronage of ETF, Turkish Vocational Qualifications Authority and ERISSEE Secretariat. One of the objectives of the conference was to further strengthen the networking between VET Institutions in SEE.
- The next meeting of the VET institutions in SEECP region was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the period from 10th to 11th December 2009. The meeting was focused on developing aspects relevant for strengthening the work of the VET institutions and to establish a platform for updates on the recent European and, in particular, SEE developments relevant for VET institutions.
- On 28th October 2010, in Woerden, the Netherlands, another meeting of the VET Institutions in SEECP region was held. The meeting contributed to sustainable dialogue of the VET Institutions in SEECP region. One of the outcomes was the defining of a flagship theme for 2011: Quality Assurance and Enhancement in VET.

All the mentioned activities resulted in final establishment of institutional network of VET centres – SEEVET-Net through signing of a cooperation agreement between VET Centres in South East Europe. The SEEVET-Net was formed in order to foster a greater relationship between SEE VET institutions and to promote regional co-operation of the National VET institutions acting in the SEECP region. The leading idea behind the network is to share information about good practices,

to agree on coherent ways of action regarding the arrangements of exchange co-operation and to share experience on strategic VET issues.

The overall SEEVET – Net objective is to support implementation of policies in the VET sector contributing to human capital development in a lifelong learning perspective, through policy learning in the context of the objectives related to the EU accession and the “Education and Training 2020” and follow-ups.

Key areas for mutual learning and joint actions are:

- Collection and dissemination of comparable information on VET in South East Europe region;
- National Qualifications Frameworks, with particular focus in VET;
- Quality assurance and improvement in VET;
- VET as part of Lifelong Learning and (including formal, non-formal and in-formal education);
- Social partnership enhancement in the VET sector.

Cooperation instruments for policy learning and sharing of knowledge and experience between the members of the VET network activities are:

- Peer learning;
- Exchange of information and experience and good practice sharing;
- Capacity building for effective roles and responsibilities of the VET institutions.

The foreseen working method of the SEEVET – Net are:

- Face to face and virtual communication;
- Thematic web forum;
- E-newsletters.

In order to accomplish the set objective, members of the SEEVET-Net identified more specific topics, in accordance with key areas for mutual learning and joint actions, and related activities which are described in this Work Programme. In order to make this plan more operational, specific objectives are identified and specific activities are described within each objective. While activities planned for 2012 are described in detail, the activities planned for 2012 are mentioned in general terms to provide a more strategic, long-term outlook to the SEEVET-Net work programme.

SEEVET - Net specific objectives for 2012 are:

- Enhancement of mutual policy learning in Vocational Education and Training through the exchange of experience on social partnership among EU member states and countries in South East Europe.
- Development of widely visible mutual data base in which VET systems of the SEE countries will be presented, overview of the main national IVET and CVET strategies and presentation of the institutions dealing with VET issues including description of their tasks and responsibilities.
- Exchange of information on VET reform processes progress on regular basis.

- Capacity building of the SEEVET-Net Institutions representatives for effective roles and responsibilities in order to contribute in their full capacity to policy evaluation and policy advising.
- Continuation of the established cooperation with 3 joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge.

During the 4th Meeting of the SEEVET-Net, held in July 2011 in Moldova, a Work Programme 2012, focusing on capacity building and mutual policy learning, was developed and adopted.

WORK PROGRAMME 2012 SUMMARY

SEEVET - Net specific objectives for 2012 are the following:

- Enhancement of mutual policy learning in Vocational Education and Training through exchange of experience on social partnership among EU member states and countries in South East Europe.
- Development of widely visible mutual data base in which VET systems of the SEE countries will be presented together with overview of the main national IVET and CVET strategies and presentation of the institutions dealing with VET issues including description of their tasks and responsibilities.
- Exchange of information on VET reform processes progress on regular basis.
- Capacity building of the SEEVET-Net Institutions representatives for effective roles and responsibilities in order to contribute in their full capacity to policy evaluation and policy advising.
- Continuation of the established cooperation with 3 joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Clusters of Knowledge: Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET initiated and coordinated by Romania, National Qualification Framework initiated and coordinated by Croatia and Evidence-Based Policy Making initiated and coordinated by Serbia.

The envisaged specific objectives will result in the following **outputs**:

- Experience on social partnership models and best practice examples among EU member states and countries in South East Europe exchanged.
- Development of the mutual data base on SEE countries VET systems initiated, and framework for its development created. Visibility of the data base is ensured.
- Exchange of information on VET reform processes progress is on going on regular basis.
- SEEVET-Net Institutions representatives increase their capacities for effective roles and responsibilities in policy evaluation and policy advising.
- Exchange of experience and cooperation with 3 joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge are continued.

The specific objectives and outputs are to be achieved through the following **activities**:

- 5th meeting of SEEVET-Net together with representatives of the relevant EU institutions focusing on social partnership models and best practice examples presentation and exchange of experiences regarding the social partnership issues.
- Creation of the framework and outline for development of the mutual data base on SEE countries VET systems including creation of the SEEVET –Net subpage on the official ERISSEE web page in order to make the data base visible.
- Creation and development of the newsletter dedicated to the presentation of the VET reform processes progress in SEE countries.
- Training of the SEEVET-Net Institutions representatives in graduate tracer studies in order to increase their capacities to conduct such studies and to fully contribute in the evidence based policy evaluation and advising processes.
- Experience exchanged and cooperation with 3 joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Clusters of Knowledge are continued.

SEEVET-Net WORK PROGRAMME 2012

The SEEVET-Net Work Programme for 2012 is set in order to support implementation of policies in the VET sector contributing to human capital development in a lifelong learning perspective, through policy learning in the context of the objectives related to the EU accession and the “Education and Training 2020” and follow-ups.

The importance of the regional cooperation in education is recognised as a valuable instrument in addressing common challenges in South Eastern Europe. Through discussion and exchange of information between representatives of the SEEVET-Net the following **SEEVET-Net specific objectives for 2012 were identified:**

- Enhancement of mutual policy learning in Vocational Education and Training through exchange of experience on social partnership among EU member states and countries in South East Europe.
- Development of widely visible mutual data base in which VET systems of the SEE countries will be presented, overview of the main national IVET and CVET strategies and presentation of the institutions dealing with VET issues including description of their tasks and responsibilities.
- Exchange of information on VET reform processes progress on regular basis.
- Capacity building of the SEE VET Institutions representatives for effective roles and responsibilities in order to contribute in their full capacity to policy evaluation and policy advising.
- Continuation of the established cooperation with 3 joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Clusters of Knowledge.

OUTLINE OF SEEVET-Net SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES for 2012

1. Enhancement of mutual policy learning in Vocational Education and Training through exchange of experience on social partnership among EU member states and countries in South East Europe.

Development of vocational education and training and related social partnership forms in VET take place in all countries in the SEE region and social partnership mechanisms are almost always part of national development programmes for VET. At the same time, vocational education and training plays an increasing role as an infrastructural factor in the possibilities of enterprises to remain successfully competitive on the market. In most SEE countries during the last decades only those enterprises able to manage and develop their human resources survive. Enterprises need to adjust their skills base (on permanent basis) and secure that their personnel is able to introduce and maintain new technological opportunities and to find new ways to communicate and collaborate on the market in efficient and effective manners. Therefore, it is logical that the economically most advanced of countries have already well functioning social partnerships and considerable investments in VET.

On the other hand, in the open EU market, public indirect and direct support to agents of the economy (enterprises) are tightly regulated and mostly prohibited. One of the exceptions is support to training, especially bearing in mind that EU has a very ambitious investment and development programme for human resources where the estimate is that in a maximum 10 years perspective close to 10% of the entire workforce is expected to be engaged in full time training at

any moment. This opportunity for support to the economy is used by public authorities in the region and in EU as extensively as possible. Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, and Greece have successfully implemented significant investment programmes for national as well as regional VET and employment programmes, and the same countries find ways to channel support to running costs for training activities providing new skills needed in enterprises.

Activity

Having in mind the described situation, the 5th meeting of SEEVET-Net will focus on social partnership models and best practice examples presentation and exchange of experiences regarding the social partnership issues.

This event will be organised as two days meeting where the first day would be focused on presentation of the well functioning social partnership models in the EU countries (i.e. Slovenia, Hungary, Portugal) and the well-functioning social partnership models in the SEE countries (i.e. Croatia). During the second day, brief overview of the situation and initiatives regarding the social partnership in other participating countries will be presented, and discussion on social partnership topics will be organised. The representatives of relevant EU institutions will be invited to take an active role in the meeting. The final discussion will be structured around the following topics:

- What are the common characteristics of the successful social partnership models?
- What are the common challenges for the establishment of successful social partnership models?
- Establishment, roles and responsibilities of sector committees
- Application possibilities of the presented successful social partnership models or their adaptation in the SEE countries

This meeting will be an opportunity for continuation of dialogue between EU member states and SEE countries in the field of VET. Furthermore, it will provide a good follow up of the study visit and Workshop on exchange of good practices (with focus on quality assurance and cooperation with social partners in VET) which will be held in November 2011 in Austria within VET CoK (see objective number 5).

2. Development of widely visible mutual data base in which the SEE countries VET systems, overview of the main national IVET and CVET strategies and presentation of the institutions dealing with VET issues including description of their tasks and responsibilities will be presented.

Information about VET systems organization and structure, overview of institutions dealing with VET issues, main strategic and legislation documents, overview of the main reform activities, list and short description of donor projects, students, teachers, financial resources allocated to VET education and main reform results of each country is vital for understanding context and direction of the VET reform processes in SEE region. In the same time, such information are important for relevant policy formulation, planning and implementation, and for monitoring and evaluation. For this reason, collection and analysis of data on VET systems plays a fundamental role in policymaking. Over the past two decades, many countries have made demonstrable progress in obtaining such data through different thematic surveys and administrative registers. Yet, much remains to be done to analyze and utilize the data collected in a way that fosters sound, evidence-based policymaking.

Bearing in mind that collection and dissemination of comparable information on the VET sector in South Eastern Europe region is identified as one of the key areas for mutual learning and joint actions in the Cooperation Agreement, activities regarding the development of mutual data base in which SEE countries VET systems will be presented are to take place within SEEVET-Net Work Programme for 2012.

Activity

In the first phase of the data base creation and development (planned for 2012) joint outline of the data base will be developed by ERI SEE Agency/Secretariat. Draft outline structure will be commented by SEEVET-Net Institutions and after justification and adoption of the data base structure, content development activities will be organised in each participating country. The activity will be coordinated by ERI SEE Agency/Secretariat in cooperation with the contact point person from each SEEVET-Net Institution. In this phase data base will contain the following information:

- Information about VET systems organization and structure;
- Overview of institutions dealing with VET issues;
- Main strategic and legislation documents;
- Overview of the main reform activities including list and short description of donor projects;
- Main reform results.

Parallel to this activity, the SEEVET–Net subpage on the official ERISSEE web page will be developed and overview of the SEE countries VET systems will be published there to make the data base visible.

For the second phase of the data base development (during 2013) it is planned to add additional information/data regarding the students, teachers, enrolment, educational offer and labour market needs, as same as data regarding the financial resources allocated to VET education.

After that phase it will be possible to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis which will provide a full overview of the current status of VET in SEE countries, as well as share information on similarities and differences, joint challenges and successes with an aim to assist in avoiding and duplicating mistakes, and to capitalise successes. Also, it will be possible to draw conclusions and recommendations in order to support partner countries in evidence-based policymaking.

3. Exchange of the information on the VET reform processes progress on regular basis.

Regardless of various attempts VET reforms are still not high on the political agenda in many SEE countries. This means that it is needed to conduct activities designed to generate public recognition and support by actively securing broad consensus and social commitment among civil society for VET reform as one of the key factors for economy development.

Activity

Support to rising public awareness regarding the VET reform process in SEE countries can be provided through a development of a newsletter.

The representatives of the SEEVET-Net Institutions will decide on the outline and design of the future newsletter and will be assigned to develop its content. The newsletter will be developed, published and disseminated via e-mails to relevant stakeholders and international organizations and institutions and will be visible to general public through the ERISSEE website. It is planned that 2 newsletters will be developed during 2012.

4. Capacity building of the SEEVET-Net Institutions representatives for effective roles and responsibilities in order to contribute in their full capacity to policy evaluation and policy advising.

VET systems reform processes are still ongoing in all of the SEE countries. In order to support these processes, at this stage, it is important to identify main challenges, constraints, as well as good practice and opportunities, and to support countries' evidence-based policy making, and to provide a valuable opportunity for SEE countries to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the current VET policies. In the same time, policy makers and decision makers involved in the reform of VET in SEE countries need to know if the various adjustments and reforms programmes/projects are realistic, achievable and sustainable over time, which necessitates some type of monitoring and evaluation as means of informing VET policy.

From the other hand, SEE countries VET Institutions' regular duties do not include implementing empirical surveys, but their representatives have a professional background in VET field and most of them are familiar with the general principles and procedures of such surveys. Also, VET institutions in SEE countries have no adequately trained human resources to follow activities which would lead to the evidence based evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of VET policies, and later, evidence based policy advising.

Having in mind all of the above mentioned, one of the main activities within SEEVET-Net Work Programme for 2012 is to train SEEVET-Net Institutions representatives in graduate tracer studies methodologies in order to increase their capacities to conduct this type of studies and to fully contribute in the evidence based policy evaluation and advising.

Activity

It is planned to organise 2 days training for selected representatives of SEEVET-Net Institutions who would be, in the future, in charge for development and implementation of graduate tracer studies. It is decided that graduate tracer study would be initial topic for training having in mind that such studies are form of empirical study which can provide valuable information for evaluating the results of the reform processes, but also provide information on education and training of a specific school/institution. Collected information may be used for further development of the institution in the context of quality assurance. On the policy level, collected information could indicate possible deficits in reform processes and could serve as a basis for future planning activities. Therefore information on the professional success (career, status, income) of the graduates are needed as well as information on the relevance of knowledge and skills (relationship between knowledge and skills and work requirements, area of employment, professional position).

Training programme will contain the following activities:

1st day

- Presentation of the SEEVET-Net Institutions experience in conducting empirical researches;
- Plenary discussion on advantages of evidence based policy evaluation and advising;
- Plenary discussion on role of national networks of stakeholders in the policy cycle under the leadership of national institutions;

2nd Day

- Introduction in graduate tracer studies (general principles, values of graduate tracer studies, specific tasks and problems of such surveys etc.) by expert experienced in this topic (to be identified in cooperation with ETF)
- Presentation and training in different methodological procedures
- Presentation and training in concept and instrument development including:
 - ✓ Definition of survey objectives (selection of themes to be investigated)
 - ✓ Survey design (selection of graduates to be included; strategies for tracing the graduates)
 - ✓ Technical concept for carrying out the survey
 - ✓ Formulation of questions and of response items
 - ✓ Formatting of questionnaires
 - ✓ Pre-test of questionnaires;
- Presentation and training in data collection including:
 - ✓ Training of survey team
 - ✓ Distribution and collection of questionnaires
 - ✓ Assurance of high participation (reminder actions);
- Presentations of principal criteria, applicable in all countries, for analysing, evaluating and interpreting survey results
- Conclusions on possibilities for SEE countries Institutions to conduct different types of surveys and possibilities to be involved actively in evidence based policy evaluation and advising

The expected outcome of this training is to provide the participants with skills that will enable them to carry out such surveys independently (without an external consultant or agency) or, at least, to manage the implementation of a graduate tracer study. Also, by conducting this training national authorities will be encouraged to take a leading role in driving the assessment process.

5. Continuation of the established cooperation with 3 Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Clusters of Knowledge

1. Regarding to the VET CoK initiated and coordinated by Romania, during May 2011 in Bucharest, representatives of Ministries for Education, Science and Research and other institutions involved in VET from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia, as well as representatives of the European Training Foundation (ETF), the Centre for Education Policy acting as the Interim Secretariat of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE), and KulturKontakt Austria (KKA), gathered for a kick off meeting on the Cluster of Knowledge (CoK) *Modernizing VET system - improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET.*

The main goal of the Kick off meeting was to agree upon the cluster's objectives and timeline and to decide on cluster's outputs. Romania, as cluster's leading country, organised sessions for introducing the participants to the Romanian practices in VET.

Inputs and discussions on policy dialogue and peer learning confirmed the interest of the participating countries in finding ways for enhanced cooperation through the development of the CoK on Modernizing VET system, on a number of common topics, in order to facilitate the exchange of information on different policy options and to help the advancement of the reforms of the national VET systems.

The key output of the Cluster will be a *Compendium of Good Practices in Improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET* which will facilitate creation of knowledge, support to policy development, and inputs for policy in action and policy evaluation. Synergy with the SEEVET-Net will be ensured with an aim to develop a more structured framework for the Compendium.

The study visit in Austria (focussed on quality assurance and cooperation with social partners in VET) will be organised as the first next activity within the VET CoK and the SEEVET-Net members are invited to participate.

2. The kick-off meeting of the CoK Evidence Based Policy Making in Education was held within the regional conference "Turning Research into Practice – Learning from PISA" on June 16-17, 2011 in Belgrade, Serbia.

The conference gathered the representatives of the ministries in charge of education and science in the regional countries, the representatives of research units, as well as the representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations. In addition to the local participants from Serbia, the conference gathered the participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia, as well as the experts from the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, European Training Foundation (ETF), KulturKontakt Austria, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital (TFBHC) and Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE).

The objectives of the kick-off meeting were to:

- present the regional Cluster of Knowledge: Evidence Based Policy Making and other regional clusters of knowledge
- present regional projects in the field of evidence-based policy making
- identify regional priorities and financing opportunities
- agree on the agenda of the cluster and further steps

The conference was successfully organized by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration/Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, the Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital (TFBHC), KulturKontakt Austria and the Centre for Education Policy/ERI SEE Interim Agency.

Synergy with the SEEVET-Net will be ensured through participation of the representatives of SEE countries VET institutions in all activities organised within this CoK.

Other activities, planned for 2012, are described in the clusters Terms of References (Annex 1 of this document).

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Topics identified as important and to be covered within activities planned in 2013 are as follows:

- **Development of CVET** - Close cooperation between the economic, education and labour market sectors is a central prerequisite for the successful integration in a European area of education systems and labour markets and in line with joint efforts for making Europe the most competitive knowledge based economy, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. In that sense various reforms of IVET have taken place, but issues on CVET remain. The adult vocational training can contribute to employment of adult generation, and thereby make this approach the pivotal point around which the two areas (employment, economy) should close up, not only in the strategic way, but also by giving high quality information (e.g. about labour market needs), that can feed into the planning and running operations of the training/retraining system.
- **National Qualifications Frameworks** - For the SEE Countries it is by all means important to make great efforts to maintain the continuity and acceleration of activities concerning the establishment or improvements of National Qualification Frameworks, since in future it will not only be the basis, but also be the condition for the mobility of workforce within the European framework. It is the strategic interest. More experienced countries can provide the support for the development of modern, relevant and flexible vocational education and adult education system, responsive to the labour market needs.
- **Curricula development** - Designing new curricula, syllabuses and teaching methods in education is one of the strategic priorities in all SEE countries, since it enables the introduction of various programme forms depending on the labour market needs and the needs of the local self-government and school itself. Different approaches and methodologies in curricula development should be presented in order to make SEEVET-Net representatives familiar with variety of the models and to facilitate curricula development in the countries which are in the process of curricula modernisation.

ENVISAGED TIMELINE FOR THE SEEVET-Net ACTIVITIES IN 2012

ACTIVITIES	MONTH AND PLACE
5th meeting of SEEVET-Net together with representatives of the relevant EU institutions focusing on social partnership models and best practice examples presentation and exchange of experiences regarding the social partnership issues.	May, Montenegro
Creation of the framework and outline for development of the mutual data base on SEE countries VET systems including creation of the SEEVET –Net subpage on the official ERISSEE web page in order to make data base visible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January – Development of the data-base outline • February/August – filling in the data-base by relevant content • August/September – creation of the SEEVET-Net subpage on the ERISSEE web page • October - Publishing data-base on the SEEVET-Net subpage on the ERISSEE web page
Training of the SEEVET-Net Institutions representatives in graduate tracer studies methodologies in order to increase their capacities to conduct such a studies and to fully contribute in the evidence based policy evaluation and advising.	October, (place to be identified)
Creation and development of the newsletter dedicated to the presentation of the VET reform processes progress in SEE countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February – development of the outline and design • March/ June - development of the 1st newsletter content • July – Publishing of the 1st newsletter • August/ November - development of the 2nd newsletter content • December – Publishing of the 2nd newsletter
Within cooperation with Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge: Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET initiated and coordinated by Romania, SEEVET-Net participants will contribute in the development of the VET best practice Compendium.	From April to October, Romania
Within cooperation with Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge: Development of National Qualifications Frameworks initiated and coordinated by Croatia, SEEVET-Net participants will attend the conference on Croatian referencing and self-certification process.	27-28 October 2011, Split, Croatia
Within cooperation with Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge: Evidence Based Policy Making in Education initiated and coordinated by Serbia, SEEVET-Net participants will attend the conference on Monitoring education – data, indicators and challenges in education statistics.	November/December 2011, Belgrade

Annex 1

Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge: Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET

Leading country: Romania

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<p>Rationale</p> <p>Vocational education and training has a crucial role in promoting a knowledge based and competitive society and in responding to the chances and challenges of globalisation. The platform developed under the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) has a major contribution in fostering regional cooperation and in supporting policy developments in specific VET areas and has lead to an increased ownership of relevant VET actors in the region. Current developments underline ERISSEE commitment to the European strategic objectives laid down in the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in VET, in the strategic framework “Education and Training 2020” and in the key flagship initiatives that embrace education and training (Youth on the Move and The Agenda New Skills and Jobs).</p> <p>The Senior Official and Expert Workshop on Clusters of Knowledge, organised on the 14 – 15th of December in Sarajevo, confirmed the necessity of enhanced dialogue among EU Member States and South East European partner countries in the field of education and training. Participants agreed that introduction of clusters of knowledge on topics of common interest will support the exchange of information on different policy options and will help the advancement of the reforms of the national VET systems.</p> <p>The cluster <i>Modernizing VET system - improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET</i> is envisaging to organize a number of expert meetings to foster mutual learning on topics of common interest (e.g. quality assurance and matching VET supply with labour market demand) and to develop specific tools to support the development of a quality culture at school level and the improvement of VET attractiveness and relevance (e.g. Compendia of good practices on the topics).</p>
<p>Overall objective</p> <p>The cluster <i>Modernizing the VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET</i> aims to support the regional cooperation in VET in accordance with the diversified needs of the countries for mutual learning, regional exchange of experience and good practice and for encompassing the specific phases of national reforms in VET.</p> <p>The overall objective is consistent with the 2008-2010 mission statement and objectives, and specific objectives and ERISSEE work programme for 2011: “Development of mutual policy learning practices through enhanced institutional cooperation in Vocational Education and Training in South East Europe”, “Further support to country initiatives in the domain of mutual policy learning and cooperation in the field of education in general”, and “Initiating regional exchange of policies and practices in the area of equity and access to education, a measure of particularly relevance for reducing the percentage of early school leavers, as suggested by</p>

EU2020 education benchmarks”.

The establishment of the knowledge cluster **“Modernizing the VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET”** is one of the envisaged specific outputs of the ERI SEE work programme for 2011 “To establish 3 knowledge clusters initiated and coordinated by countries: VET (Romania), NQF (Croatia) and Evidence-Based Policy Making (Serbia).

The cluster intends to base its activities on the established institutional network of VET Centres in SEE and to develop regional policy and practice exchange in the area of ensuring equitable and quality VET.

Specific objectives

- knowledge transfer on the national policies on:
 - quality assurance
 - social partnership in VET
 - matching VET supply with labour market demand
- developing mutual policy learning practices and strengthening the exchange of information and good practice among the countries represented at the cluster
- supporting intra-country and inter-country co-operation on VET at regional level
- formulation of recommendations for future ERI SEE support to regional cooperation in VET

Key outputs

The key outputs of the Cluster include:

- a Compendium of Good Practices in developing quality assurance mechanisms at VET providers’ level
- a Compendium of Good Practices in social partnership in VET
- thematic reports, with key policy conclusions summaries on themes identified as of particular interest:
 - quality assurance
 - matching VET supply with labour market demand.

Participants

The cluster is organized by the Romanian Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports (MoERY) and the Romanian National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (NCTVETD).

After the Senior Official and Expert Workshop on Clusters of Knowledge, organised on the 14 – 15th of December in Sarajevo the following countries expressed their intention to participate in the “Modernizing VET system” cluster:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatia
- Moldova
- Montenegro

Obs.: in order to ensure synergies with the South Eastern Europe Regional VET Network (SEEVET-Net) of the ERI SEE, the cluster is open to representatives of SEE VET centres. Furthermore, the cluster is open to participation of other interested countries and organizations supporting the development of VET in the region (e.g. ETF).

Specific activities

The specific objectives and key outputs are to be achieved through the following activities:

- Kickoff meeting to share national experiences, to agree upon the cluster’s objectives, outputs and timeline and to decide on further national activities contents and on cluster’s outputs (e.g. compendia of good practices on quality assurance and social partnership in VET)
- 2 Workshops for mutual learning and exchange of good practices in:
 - improving quality in VET and developing a quality culture at VET providers’ level
 - social partnership in VET

- matching VET supply with labour market demand

Development of a Compendium of Good Practices in developing quality assurance mechanisms at VET providers' level in participating countries and a Compendium of Good Practices in social partnership in VET.

Relevant examples will be selected at national level by each participating country; Romania will collect the examples and will collate the information.

- Meeting to identify priorities for further development of VET policy in region, adapted to national needs and to draw recommendations for future cooperation

Between the common meetings, specific outputs development activities will be organised in each participating country.

ENVISAGED TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	DATE AND PLACE
Kickoff meeting to agree upon the cluster's objectives and timeline and to decide on cluster's outputs (e.g. compendia of good practices on quality assurance and social partnership in VET)	30-31st of May 2011, Bucharest, ROMANIA
Study visit in Austria on the topic of quality assurance and social partnership Starting the development of Compendium of Good Practices in Improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET	24-25 November 2011, Austria
Workshop on development of: Compendium of Good Practices in Improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET Meeting for concluding on good practices included in the compendium	April 2012, ROMANIA
Meeting for concluding on cluster's outputs and for identifying priorities for further development of VET policy in region, adapted to national needs - recommendations for further cooperation	September – October 2012, ROMANIA

Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge: Development of National Qualifications Frameworks

Leading country: Croatia

Contact person

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Composition:

Countries: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania (5); Int'l org's/institutions: support offered either through eligible funding sources or available expertise by EC (DG ENL), ETF, OECD.

Purpose and/or outcome

International cooperation focused at several specific segments of national qualifications frameworks development:

- cooperation on self-certification process (quality assurance assessment)
- comparability of qualifications: reaching agreement on mutual recognition of old qualifications/diplomas in the region
- recognition of prior learning - RPL (validation of informal and nonformal learning).

The outcome is heightened understanding, enhanced expertise and identified partnerships that will contribute to better design and implementation of several segments of the above outlined EQF-NQF process.

Reference to Task Force Action Plan (2009-2010) and Task Force related documents

Zagreb Plan of Action 2009-2010: Action line 35 – Regional Cooperation and Common Areas of Interest – Assisting in the organisation of clusters of knowledge (CoKs) fostering the creation of mechanisms for sustainable cooperation and dialogue. These clusters should sustain cooperation based on shared common topics of interest.

Minutes and Conclusions of the Meeting of Senior Officials from the Istanbul MoU Region: it has been announced that the meeting “The Western Balkans: Overcoming the Economic Crisis” (Brussels, December 2009) will stress importance of regional cooperation in building human capital, noting that “lifelong learning strategies need to be put into practice” and that “an important aspect of lifelong learning is the development of qualification frameworks”.

Conclusions, International Conference on Fostering and Building Human Capital for Sustainable Knowledge Societies in SEE: It has been concluded that the “TF should consider organizing knowledge clusters to sustain cooperation based on shared common topics of interest” and the Bucharest Conference stressed the importance of and provided an overview “regarding efforts on creating possibilities for future oriented knowledge management, supporting lifelong learning, the development of competencies and qualifications frameworks.”

Specific tasks

To enhance expertise and quality in the implementation of specific segments of EQF-NQF activities through a set of regional meetings and workshops, specifically:

- expanding understanding and expertise related to the requirements and implementation of self-certification process
- removing obstacles regional mobility through reaching an agreement on mutual recognition of old qualifications in the Western Balkans (this strand of activity is focused mostly on WB countries with the

same legacy of old diplomas, whereas other strands are envisaged for other interested SEE countries).
- expanding expertise and forging partnerships in the process of developing national RPL models.

ENVISAGED TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	DATE AND PLACE
International Conference on Croatian referencing and self-certification process	27-28 October 2011, Split, Croatia
Seminar/workshop on comparability of qualifications	Date to be identified
Workshop on Recognition on prior learning	Date to be identified

Joint TFBHC and ERI SEE Cluster of Knowledge: Evidence Based Policy Making in Education

Leading country: Serbia

Contact person (including contact details):

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Composition

The Evidence-based Policy Making Cluster is open for cooperation to all countries in the region and partner organizations.

Purpose and/or outcome

The Cluster aims, in cooperation with the countries in the region and partner organizations, to advance the mechanisms of regional cooperation in the fields conducive to the achievement of the following objectives: enhanced communication and cooperation between the research community and policy-makers; the identification of mechanisms for a better utilization of research findings by decision-makers; advanced research practice in education policy creation; mapping and launch of analyses relevant for education policy development; a more efficient utilization of EU mechanisms and funds for enhancing evidence-based policy making in education. Clusters should play an important role in harmonizing regional initiatives with the new frameworks set by the ET 2020, EU 2020 and VET initiatives (Youth on the Move and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs) and more effective planning of IPA funds for achieving the objectives set in the EU 2020 strategy. The Evidence-based Policy Making Cluster is open for cooperation to all countries in the region and partner organizations.

Reference to Task Force Action Plan (2009-2010) and Task Force related documents:

The launch of this Cluster was initiated at the TFBHC Regional Workshop for Senior Officials and Experts on Cooperation around Clusters of Knowledge held in Sarajevo in December 2010, as well as the 14th Meeting of ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative body held in Belgrade in March 2011.

As a strategic priority, Evidence Based Policy Making is included in following documents:

1. ERI SEE 2010 Work Programme 2010: Establishment of Clusters of Knowledge in two thematic areas relevant for SEE cooperation in education and training - "ERI SEE developed activities under the three action lines: sustained the networking of the SEE VET agencies and institutions (Action line 1); in cooperation with KulturKontakt Austria and the OECD co-organised the regional workshop "Evidence Based Policy Making" (Action line 2); organised cooperation, peer-learning and exchange of good practice under the four ERI SEE thematic areas for regional cooperation, and was involved in the initiation of CKs for enabling sustained cooperation based on shared common topics of interest (Action line 3). " (page 18)
Source: http://www.erisee.org/node/downloads/ERI_SEE_Work_Programme_2010_za_web.pdf

2. ERI SEE WORK PROGRAMME 2011 – The knowledge triangle: education, research and innovation, with the following topics: change management; higher education development, the Bologna process and the role of the universities in the process of forward thinking; learning regions and **evidence-based policy making**. (page 5)

3. RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013: Building Human Capital – ERI SEE

“There is an obvious need to modernize education systems in the region, with an emphasis on further involvement of democratization and reconciliation elements in teaching methodologies. Areas that are insufficiently developed and need to be approached in a coherent manner include life-long learning, **evidence-based policy making**, societal debate on education policy, stakeholder participation in decision-making, education institutions’ autonomy as well as professional administration.” (page 15)

Source: <http://www.taskforcehumancapital.info/fileadmin/documents/RCCStrategyandWorkProgramme2011-13- finalwith annexes.pdf>

Specific tasks

- Promote evidence-based policy making in education within the region
- Identify priorities for further development of evidence based policy making in the region, adapted to national needs
- Develop regional projects/initiatives with the purpose to foster evidence-based policy making at regional level (develop mechanisms for regional cooperation in better use of evidence in policy and practice, build capacity for implementation of different techniques and tools for progressive policy-making among policy makers, public servants and researchers in WBC, strengthening of the institutional capacities for monitoring of educational policies and other priorities)
- Use EU mechanisms and funds for enhancement of evidence based policy making

ENVISAGED TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	DATE AND PLACE
Conference on Monitoring education – data, indicators and challenges in education statistics.	November/December 2011, Belgrade