Annex I

Specifications for the 2017 ReferNet work plan

REFERNET WORK PLAN 2017

ReferNet's annual work plan for 2017 (¹) will be the object of a specific grant agreement based on the framework partnership agreement concluded between Cedefop and the partner.

General and specific conditions are available in the framework partnership agreement.

A. Reporting on national VET systems and policy developments

Deliverable type 1: Reporting on VET and VET-related policy

Deliverable type 2: Reporting on national VET systems

Deliverable type 3: Ad-hoc thematic and other support

B. Raising the visibility of VET

Deliverable type 4: Visibility actions

(¹) Start date of the annual work plan: January 2017 – end date: December 2017.

1. POLICY BACKGROUND

The current European Commission's agenda for jobs, growth, fairness and democratic change includes a specific investment package (²) to stimulate job creation and increase competitiveness – not least through education and training. Already Europe 2020 (³) considered investment in education and training a prerequisite to help create the necessary conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

VET's excellence and inclusion dimensions are important building blocks in the EU's effort to realise the current European Commission's agenda and advance towards the Europe 2020 goals, in particular the benchmarks to reduce early school-leaving to less than 10 % and to increase the share of 30-34 year-olds with a higher education degree or equivalent to 40 %. While in some flagship initiatives VET's role is more distinct than in others, it contributes to all of them.

To support Member States in addressing the current challenges, the European Commission has launched a series of initiatives. Its communication on *Rethinking education and training* (⁴) focuses on the need to enable people to acquire the skills needed on the labour market. It complements the employment package *Towards a job-rich recovery* (⁵), which emphasises the need to invest in and validate people's skills (⁶).

Given high youth unemployment rates in several countries, the youth opportunities initiative and the communication *Moving youth into employment* (⁷) aim at combining education and training and employment policies to address this challenge (⁸). In 2013, Member States were advised to establish youth guarantees (⁹) and involve young people in shaping the design of policies that affect them (¹⁰). Apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning are a main pillar of the youth guarantee. A specific European alliance – launched mid-2013 and reinforced in 2015 – aims at supporting partnerships

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(²) European Commission, *An Investment plan for Europe*. Communication http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2014:903:FIN [accessed 15.10.2015].

(³) European Commission (2011), *Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, Available from Internet at: http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm, and *Europe 2020: a new European strategy for jobs and growth: European Council Presidency Conclusions 25-26 March 2010* http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/113591.pdf

(⁴) European Commission, *Rethinking education: investing in skills for better socioeconomic outcomes*, and accompanying staff working documents, in particular *Vocational education and training for better skills, growth and jobs*. SWD(2012) 375 final. Available from Internet: http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0669:FIN:EN:PDF

(⁵) European Commission, *Towards a job-rich recover*y. COM(2012) 173 final. Available from Internet: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0173:FIN:EN:PDF

(⁶) See also Council of the European Union (2012), Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 398/01, 22.12.2012, pp. 1-5. Available from Internet: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF

(⁷) European Commission, *Moving youth into employment*, COM(2012) 727 final, and accompanying staff working document SWD(2012) 406 final. Available from Internet: http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0727:FIN:EN:PDF; http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SWD:2012:0406:FIN:EN:PDF

(⁸) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1006

(⁹) Council of the European Union, Recommendation on establishing a youth guarantee. Common guidelines, 7123/13, Brussels, 3 April 2013, Available from Internet at: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%207123%202013%20INIT

(¹⁰) Council of the European Union*, Maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy,* Conclusions, 9094/13, Available from Internet at: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%209094%202013%20INIT

between countries and different education and labour market actors to develop or strengthen apprenticeships in their specific country contexts ([11]).

Despite some positive developments, Europe is still far from achieving the ET2020 target on adult participation in learning. Only around a fifth of low-skilled adults take part in non-formal job-related learning. Even in countries that have a long tradition in investing in vocational training or other types of adult learning as part of their active labour market policies, there seems to be a backward trend ([12]). Long-term unemployment and high numbers of young people on the dole remain a major concern.

Long-term unemployed require individualised support tailored to their needs and potential. Therefore, the European Commission has proposed measures that are similar to the youth guarantee: assessing the situation of each registered long-term unemployed within 18 months; based on skills audit and guidance, personalised job integration agreements should offer them a plan for returning to work.

The policy framework focuses on the interdependence between employment, economic, social, education and development policies ([13]). Getting people (back) into work and promoting equality and inclusion is the main thread of current EU policies. A wide range of policy documents reflect this: from the five Presidents' report, which calls for 'a stronger focus on employment and social performance' ([14]), to the employment guidelines and the (draft) joint report on implementing the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020) ([15]). In recent years, the impact of the crisis and the need to steer Europe back to the road of recovery have drawn more attention to addressing the pressing economic and employment challenges.

Thus, presenting the draft ET2020 report, Commissioner Thyssen underlined the need to reach out to the most disadvantaged. The ET2020 report ([16]) identifies the need to '*recalibrate the policy focus'* and stresses the role of education and training in promoting

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([11]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/alliance/eafa-declaration_en.pdf, and Council of the European Union, *Declaration on European alliance for apprenticeships*, Luxembourg, 15.10.2013, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/139011.pdf .

([12]) European Commission, European social policy network, *Social investment in Europe, A study of national policies 2015,* Available from Internet at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?advSearchKey=ESPNSocInv&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en&search.x=15&search.y=8 [accessed 07.09.2015]

([13]) Council of the European Union, *Conclusions towards a job-rich recovery and giving a better chance to Europe's youth.* 5.10.2012. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st14/st14426.en12.pdf [accessed 07.09.2015].

([14]) European Commission, Juncker, J.C. et al, *Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union* Available from Internet at: http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/economic-monetary-union/index_en.htm [accessed 17.10.2015]

([15]) European Council, *Conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* (ET2020),12.5.2009 (C 119), Available from Internet at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:ef0016 [accessed 17.10.2015].

([16]) European Commission (2015), *Draft joint report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training* (ET2020), New priorities for European cooperation in education and training, Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/documents/et-2020-draft-joint-report-408-2015_en.pdf [accessed 17.10.2015].

equity and in imparting fundamental values. This reflects the Education Ministers' declaration to support the values at the heart of the EU in response to the terrorist attack in France in early 2015 ([17]).

Hence, ET2020 pays particular attention to promoting inclusive education and active citizenship besides increasing youth employability. These aspects have gained in importance with the unprecedented large number of newly arrived migrants in the EU since summer 2015. Cedefop will in the period 2017-2020 attach special attention to improving the understanding of the role of VET-related policies and successful strategies for the integration of migrants and refugees. Building on Cedefop work on validation, guidance and other potentially relevant areas such as work-based learning, Cedefop will launch a new study which will be designed taking into account outcomes from the Cedefop-OECD experts forum organised in October 2016, and the results of the survey carried out through ReferNet. Since VET-related skill development strategies may be part of a common European solution for the relocation of refugees, Cedefop is working on developing new models and tools to enhance cooperation among Member States to develop more effective policy for relocation and resettlement of refugees, as well as their labour market integration. How European VET systems can support and integrate the newly arrived migrants is among the issues being discussed by Directors General for VET. The ET2020 joint report defines six priority areas for the period 2015-20 on:

- Relevant and high-quality skills and competences, focusing on results, for employability, innovation and active citizenship;
- Inclusive education, equality, non-discrimination and promotion of civic competences;
- Open and innovative education and training, including by fully embracing the digital era;
- Strong support for educators;
- Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications to facilitate learning and labour mobility;
- Sustainable investment, performance and efficiency of education and training systems.

Accomplishing the deliverables that Ministers agreed for VET and the renewed European adult learning agenda are seen as essential to achieve the first of these new priorities until 2020. Although not explicitly referred to, they are also key to attaining the others.

On 20 June 2016 the European Commission launched the New Skills Agenda for Europe to boost human capital, employability and competitiveness, adopted on 10 June 2016. The actions of the New Skills Agenda focus on improving the quality and relevance of skills formation, making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable, as well as improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices. The Commission invites Members States, social partners, the industry and other stakeholders to work together to: (a) improve the quality and relevance of skills formation, (b) make skills more visible and comparable and (c) improve skills intelligence and information for

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([17]) Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/964-education-ministers-release-declaration-to-tackle-intolerance-discrimination-and-radicalisation, and Council of the European Union, 3388th Council meeting Education, Youth, Culture and Sport, Outcome, Brussels, 18 and 19 May 2015 8965/15, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/topics/education-training [accessed 17.10.2015].

better career choices. The Commission proposes 10 actions to be taken forward over the next two years.

Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship have been ET2020 and Bruges communiqué ([18]) objectives from the outset. The Bruges Communiqué's strategic objectives for European cooperation in VET until 2020 combined a longer-term vision for VET with sets of specific policies or measures to be delivered in the short to medium term. The longer-term objectives include attractiveness, excellence and quality of initial and continuing VET. They also comprise improved cooperation between stakeholders, monitoring, use of EU and national tools, and flexible access to learning that promotes mobility, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

Replacing the deliverables agreed for the period 2011-14, the Riga conclusions ([19]) set out five medium-term deliverables (MTDs) until 2020. They promote:

- all forms of work-based learning for young people and adults;
- quality assurance mechanisms in line with the EQAVET recommendation and feedback loops to IVET and CVET;
- access to VET and qualifications for all through flexible systems, guidance and validation of non-formally and informally acquired skills;
- key competences in both IVET and CVET;
- VET teacher and trainer development.

Transversal areas and principles to support the work on these deliverables include:

- partnerships with social partners and other stakeholders,
- efficient funding,
- promoting excellence and innovation,
- using the learning outcomes approach,
- using EU tools and principles.

The Bruges Communiqué and Riga Conclusions entrust Cedefop with reporting on progress towards the MTDs and strategic objectives. This acknowledges Cedefop's contribution in reporting on European cooperation in VET over the periods 2002-10 ([20]) and 2011-14 ([21]) to which ReferNet contributed substantially. The evidence provided in these reports informed the discussions on future deliverables and working methods in VET. For the period up to 2020, two reports are foreseen: an interim report in 2017 and a final report in 2020.

To ensure consistent implementation of Europe 2020 in the different policy areas, the Council of the European Union endorsed an economic governance process. The so-called 'European semester' ([22]) process helps identify the main challenges that the EU and its Member States face and provides strategic policy advice. This advice goes beyond

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[18] http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom_en.pdf

[19] http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/2015-riga-conclusions_en.pdf

[20] See Cedefop's four reports on European VET policy published in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010. The Bruges communiqué reflects the findings of the 2010 report.

[21] Cedefop, *Trends in VET policy in Europe 2010-12*, Progress towards the Bruges Communiqué, Working paper nr 16, Luxembourg, Publications office of the EU, 2012. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6116_en.pdf. and
Cedefop (2015), *Stronger VET for better lives: Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies 2010-14*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, Cedefop Reference series; No 98. Available from Internet: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3067

[22] http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/index_en.htm

economy, finance and employment to include education and training. The specific recommendations 2016-17 include a wide range of VET related issues for more than 20 countries.

The need for country-specific information and analysis will persist to inform Cedefop's own work and that of its partners. As Cedefop is increasingly supporting Member States directly, this will also contribute to enriching its country-specific expertise. Outcomes of Cedefop's work will help improve the evidence base to inform policy making more comprehensively, for instance the European Commission's work on the European semester.

The Commission's current working groups focus on workplace learning of adults and trainers, in-company trainers (for work-based learning, apprenticeships), digital skills and competences, schools and modernising higher education.

Cedefop also supported countries' cooperation on apprenticeships and in 2015-16 engaged in further in-depth thematic country reviews (TCRs) of Greece, Italy and Slovenia, following the 2014 pilot in Lithuania and Malta. In the 2017-2018 period, Cedefop will carry out two more TCRs on apprenticeships in Croatia and Cyprus. In 2017, Cedefop will pilot "flash" TCRs on apprenticeships in Sweden and Belgium.

Cedefop's different strands of activities at the interface between VET and the labour market and its policy learning forums informed the Commission's new 'skills agenda' .

The Maltese Presidency in 2017 will focus on access to VET and the Skills Guarantee for low skilled adults. A European alliance for apprenticeships conference will be organised and there will also be a focus on digital education As Estonia only learned in summer that their Presidency will be earlier there is still no available information on the priorities.

All these policy processes and exercises have increased the need to respond flexibly to different types of information requests, often at short notice. They also require reinforced cooperation between education and training and employment and different stakeholders, in particular the social partners, at EU and country level. For Cedefop and its ReferNet this also meant already in 2016 tapping the expertise of social partners and including their views in monitoring and reporting activities.

2.   PURPOSE OF THE 2017 ACTION

Wide ranging expertise is required to capture VET's role as an interface between education, employment, economic and social policies. To support evidence-based decision-making in VET, research findings, key documents and statistical data need to underpin analyses.

Analysis and understanding of policy developments and achievements within and across countries requires thorough information on how VET works. Information on VET's role, purpose, outcomes, governance, structure and delivery provides the necessary context. But VET varies considerably between Member States. To understand countries' starting points and the progress they have made, VET needs to be considered in its specific socio-economic context.

ReferNet national partners are well placed to inform on VET systems and VET-related issues in their specific context and on relevant policy developments. ReferNet national

partners have first-hand factual information from different stakeholders, including social partners. They can also pool knowledge and experience from policy-making, implementation, evaluation and research at national, regional, local and sectoral levels.

ReferNet is also expected to help raising the visibility of Cedefop, its products and more generally VET issues at national level. The ReferNet national partner acts as multiplier and dissemination channel in the country, targeting various audiences.

ReferNet national partners' online presence, through national ReferNet websites, can help improving visibility and dissemination. ReferNet websites also support exchanges of information with Cedefop and other national ReferNet websites.

Therefore, Cedefop will require ReferNet national partners to:

(a) report on VET policy and the way VET-related objectives of Europe's 2020 strategy and other European VET and related policy priorities are being addressed in their countries;

(b) provide up-to-date information on VET systems and the way VET is developing in their country;

(c) deliver thematic and other support to complement the information on VET systems and/or address topical information needs; and

(d) carry out visibility actions, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website, social media activities and participation in events.

3. DELIVERABLES

A. Reporting on national VET systems and policy developments	
Deliverable type 1: Reporting on VET and VET-related policy	
Deliverable 1a	VET policy reporting
Deliverable 1b	National news on VET
Deliverable type 2: Reporting on national VET systems	
Deliverable 2a	Spotlight on VET
Deliverable 2b	VET in [Presidency country] − Short description (hard-copy publication based on the VET in Europe country report)
Deliverable type 3: Ad-hoc thematic and other support	
Deliverable 3a	Survey on international mobility of IVET learners
Deliverable 3b	Ad hoc thematic support – Article or other request
Deliverable 3c	Ad hoc thematic support – Article or other request
B. Raising the visibility of VET	
Deliverable type 4: Visibility actions	
Deliverable 4a	Visibility actions, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website, social media activities and participation in events

All deliverables shall be provided in English. They shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at EU level before submission.

Peer review among ReferNet partners is strongly encouraged and, when indicated in the Work plan, shall be mandatory for certain deliverables.

All deliverables type 1-3 shall be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Deliverable type 1:   Reporting on VET and VET-related policy

Deliverable 1a   VET policy reporting

Background/Aim

In 2017, ReferNet will be asked to provide updated information on five medium-term deliverables (MTDs) and transversal principles set in Riga Conclusions. ReferNet will provide factual data on national policy measures and actions in response to a questionnaire designed by Cedefop.

ReferNet's input will focus on countries' priorities in terms of MTDs and in the ways to address them..

This input informs country fiches, cross-country overviews of developments by deliverable as well as Cedefop's analysis and reports on progress in implementing the Bruges Communiqué and Riga Conclusions. It also informs the Commission's work in the context of the European semester (see above). To complement this evidence base, Cedefop also draws on its own work, ReferNet's other activities (thematic reporting, information on VET systems), and further EU and international sources.

The input by ReferNet will also provide data for Cedefop's interim report which will focus on progress in achieving the MTDs.

Methods

Cedefop will provide ReferNet partners with questionnaires that will reflect national priorities. In 2016, Cedefop asked DGVTs of the participating countries to indicate the MTDs they decide to prioritise nationally for the coming years and the policy options linked to these.

While reporting will focus on policy priorities indicated by the DGVTs to the extent possible, ReferNet will also be asked to report on all five Riga MTDs and transversal areas,.

Building on the information provided in the 2016 exercise, questionnaires will be tailored to each country and include questions:
   a) on developments in all the MTDs with emphasis on country priorities and selected policy options addressing them;
   b) general issues and trends relevant to each of the five Riga MTDs to provide the contextual information needed to interpret the findings.

. Key points are to ensure, for each initiative reported on, that:

• it is clear whether the action is planned or whether it has taken place and whether transversal areas and principles of the Riga conclusions (partnerships, funding, innovation, use of learning outcomes) have been applied;
• the degree of implementation/scope/coverage ([23]) is clear (e.g. pilot, regional measure, national measure);

([23]) Complemented with information on funding or changes in it in relative terms where possible. Absolute funding amounts give little insight on the importance of policy measures.

- information is available on the ways in which the new measure changes the arrangements previously in place;
- some assessment of results can be made (in relative terms).

Part of the information will need to be collected and/or processed in a structured way to make outcome evaluation possible.

Next to standardised information, understanding VET policy developments also requires information based on 'open' questions. These allow explaining comprehensive strategies which combine several policy options or address more than one deliverable. ReferNet's responses to these questions will be the basis for short national policy reviews that feed into the reports in 2017 and 2020. These reviews could also be disseminated at national level.

Reporting should draw on a wide range of sources, including policy papers, legislation, evaluation reports, research and policy analysis as well as case studies. This also requires broad cooperation with various national stakeholders, to mobilise their expertise to prepare and validate the responses.

The information should be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Cedefop may also seek feedback on its own analysis of progress at country level and ask ReferNet as well as DGVT/ACVT to validate the information.

Steps/Deadlines

The questionnaire will be deployed end of November 2016 with a deadline to deliver the information end of February 2017. These timing arrangements are needed to enable discussion on initial findings with ACVTs and DGVTs and to provide information to support the Commission's work on the European Semester in October.

As previously, Cedefop will provide assistance and feedback throughout the process and ask for clarification/complementary information when analysing the input.

Deliverable 1b   National news on VET

ReferNet provides short news items to inform on the latest national developments on VET and related labour market issues as well as other topics that are linked to or influence VET (e.g. employment policies linked to training, active ageing, enterprise policies, guidance and counselling, validation). These news items should focus on topics that reflect the European VET policy agenda, in particular the Bruges Communiqué, Riga Conclusions, EU Presidency country priorities as well as country specific recommendations in the relevant areas. Cedefop may provide ReferNet with guiding themes for the news, e.g. Presidency priorities or topical issues like the role of VET in integrating newly arrived migrants or themes that Cedefop is expected to contribute to.

This deliverable will be used to report on national VET developments via Cedefop's newsletter, website and magazine and contribute to other Cedefop work where relevant (e.g. country fiches, thematic studies, contributions to the biennial DGVT and ACVT meetings). News items may also be used as a basis to propose presentation of country examples at these and other EU-level events.

Methods

ReferNet is responsible for the relevance, reliability, completeness and correctness of the news items.

ReferNet shall submit news items electronically, as Word documents and based on guidelines by Cedefop. Considering the specificities of web readability, news items should not exceed 500 words but complementary information can be added as an attachment or as links to related websites. Visual material (graphs, logos, photos, etc.) can also be included.

News items will be published under the ReferNet partner's name. Cedefop reserves the right to decide whether to publish.

Cedefop may request clarification and/or further information or revision. Cedefop may also seek feedback on news items edited for publication or information prepared by Cedefop based on them.

Information should be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Steps/Deadlines

ReferNet partners should submit news items as soon as national/regional developments in VET policies or systems take place and not less than four news items per year. Cedefop may also announce to ReferNet partners a specific theme for the news expected. A news template will be provided by Cedefop

Deadlines: March, June, September and December.

Deliverable type 2:   Reporting on national VET systems

In 2017, the Work plan will not include any update of the previous VET in Europe country reports. The next update is planned for 2018.

On the basis of the 2016 version of their VET in Europe country report, the Presidency countries will prepare a version to be published in hard copy (see Deliverable 2b).

Deliverable 2a: Spotlight on VET

Background/Aim

Spotlights summarise key features, challenges and developments within the national VET systems. The main aim of a *Spotlight* is to present a country's VET system in a clear and concise manner within a limited number of pages (leaflet). It addresses readers who need a brief, accessible introduction to VET in a specific country and the broader public.

For the Presidency countries, Spotlights will also be published in hard copy and disseminated during Presidency events. Cedefop may organise the translation of *Spotlight* into the official language of the Presidency country.

Methods

The work will consist of updating the *Spotlight* of the previous year.

Based on lessons learnt from the previous exercises, Cedefop, in co-operation with ReferNet, may update the template for the 2017 round.

The ReferNet national partner will ensure that *Spotlight* highlights key features, developments, challenges and policy responses of the national VET system. The partner will work in close cooperation with Cedefop based on the content of the previously published *Spotlight*. The system chart should be based on the 2016/most recent version and be in line with the unified approach developed by Cedefop in cooperation with ReferNet. The national partner shall submit *Spotlight* electronically, in Word format and using 'track changes'.

Updated information should be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Cedefop will provide feedback to the ReferNet partner to ensure information is presented in a concise and clear manner.

For the hard-copy versions of the Presidency countries' Spotlights, Cedefop will take care of the publication process. Cedefop may organise the translation of the hard-copy publication into the official language(s) of the Presidency country. Printing will be done on demand.

Steps/Deadlines

Each national partner will update *Spotlight* by one of the four deadlines indicated below or on their own initiative. This gives national partners more flexibility to take account of reforms/changes in their VET systems/VET-related policies in their yearly updates than a single submission date per year. The submission date will be agreed bilaterally between Cedefop and the ReferNet national partner by mid-February.

Deadlines: March, June, September and/or December.

Deliverable 2b: VET in [Presidency country] − Short description (hard-copy publication based on VET in [country X])

Background/Aim

To raise VET visibility in the two countries holding the EU Presidency, their (updated) country reports (see 2016 Work plan) will be used to publish hard copies in English and, if Cedefop and the partner wish so, in the official language(s) of the Presidency. The publication should be available from the first day of the Presidency. This implies that it is prepared during the semester before and that work in 2017 will focus on:

1. VET in Estonia, in the first semester
2. VET in Bulgaria, in the second semester.

These hard-copy publications will be distributed together with Spotlights (see deliverable 2a above) during Presidency conferences and events.

Methods

On the basis of the 2016 VET in Europe country report and in cooperation with Cedefop, the Presidency country will prepare a(n) (updated) version to be published in hard copy. Cedefop will further edit the document, add other parts (foreword, abstract), and be in charge of the publication process. Cedefop may organise translation of the hard-copy publication into the official language of the Presidency country. Printing will be done on demand.

Close cooperation between the author(s) and Cedefop is expected. A particular effort will be made to produce an attractive high-level publication, as it is an important visibility tool both for VET at national level and for cooperation between Cedefop and the national partner institution.

Steps/Deadlines

To be agreed with the Cedefop expert in charge. The publication needs to be prepared in the preceding semester and should be ready for the start of the Presidency.

Deliverable type 3:   Ad-hoc thematic and other support

Deliverable 3a   Survey on international mobility of IVET learners

Background/Aim

IVET learning mobility is seen as a catalyst in internationalising VET, and as a driver of more mobility in the European labour market. Consequently, over the last decade, mobility for learning and work has been a central feature in the development of European tools – ECVET, EQAVET and Europass. The Bruges Communiqué (2010) stresses the need to substantially increase transnational VET mobility. It called on Member States to take appropriate measures, including by addressing legal and administrative obstacles (one of the deliverables for the period 2011-14 was dedicated to this issue). In 2011, the Council Recommendation 'Youth on Move – promoting the learning mobility of young people' called for developing a methodological framework (referred to as 'Mobility Scoreboard') to monitor progress in promoting learning mobility by the Member States. At the same time, the Council conclusions of 2011 defined a European benchmark: at least 6% of 18-34 year olds with an initial vocational education and training qualification should have undertaken an IVET-related study or training period abroad.

Following these developments, and given the availability of more funding for mobility through Erasmus+, the Mobility Scoreboard is a necessary next step to help increase learning mobility in Europe. The aim of the Scoreboard is to survey the conditions for learning mobility in the 10 key action areas ('thematic areas') identified in the 'Youth on the Move' Recommendation, and to monitor the progress and support for learning mobility in the Member States. The Scoreboard is thus a new tool to help policy-makers identify obstacles to the mobility of IVET learners and weaknesses in mobility-related policies and practices. In conjunction with other Commission initiatives, the Scoreboard is intended to contribute to the design of new policy initiatives aimed to facilitate learning mobility.

Methods

In 2017, ReferNet will carry out a data provision work for the IVET-Mobility Scoreboard project. The general topic of this work will be the international mobility of IVET learners.

The survey will comprise three strands:

Strand A: Finalising the responses to Part 2 of 2016 Survey

Part 2 of the 2016 Mobility Survey dealt with the thematic areas of Portability, Disadvantaged learners and Multipliers. A first batch of responses were delivered to Cedefop in November 2016. After checking these responses, Cedefop will ask for revision early March 2017. ReferNet partners will have until end of April 2017 to:

(a) revise their responses following Cedefop's request;
(b) have their revised responses validated by their National Representatives;
(c) provide Cedefop with the revised and validated responses.

Strand B: Questionnaire on various aspects of IVET mobility (thematic areas derived from the Council Recommendation 'Youth on the Move')

Based on the first complete version of the scoreboard that will be published in August 2017, Cedefop will identify a set of complementary information that will be necessary to improve the quality of the scoreboard. A new questionnaire targeted at collecting this complementary information will be set up and provided to ReferNet early September 2017. ReferNet partners will have until 15 November 2017 to submit their responses to Cedefop.

The questionnaire will follow the same methodological approach as the one used in 2016 (see Annex 1). ReferNet partners will receive the MS Word file of the questionnaire before completing the survey online. Guidelines and assistance will be provided as necessary.

Strand C: Reviewing and updating the 2016 country information presented in the scoreboard

The country information to be reviewed and updated is the one published in the scoreboard in August 2017. ReferNet partners will download their country fiches from the online platform and update them as necessary. They will have until 15 November to send their updated fiches to Cedefop.

Steps/Deadlines

The deadlines to complete the whole data provision work will be as follows:

- Strand A
    - 1st March 2017: ReferNet receives the requests for revision
    - 28 April 2017: deadline for sending to Cedefop the revised and validated data
- Strand B
    - 1st September 2017: ReferNet receives the 2017 Questionnaire
    - 15 November 2017: deadline for delivering responses to Cedefop
- Strand C (update of country fiches): delivery of updated fiches to Cedefop by 15 November 2017.

**Deliverable 3b   Ad hoc thematic support
                        Article or other request**

To respond to topical information needs, this activity aims to address VET-specific issues of European relevance nationally or at EU level. The activity may not be the same for all partners. Requests will be driven by Cedefop's work on VET and related issues in the countries and the required format(s) for information collection and analysis.

Background/Aim

The activity could take the form of ([24]):

([24]) All activities will imply approximately the same workload.

- articles,
- surveys,
- organising meetings,
- mobilising stakeholders, or
- any other format having comparative or analytical aims. The activity will tackle a specific issue selected for its actuality and European policy relevance, for instance the Presidencies' semester themes to support the Copenhagen process or ad-hoc requests on thematic information on issues that are high on the EU agenda. It may also focus on in-depth reviews involving one or more countries.

This activity is planned to feed into:

- Cedefop's contribution to the discussions of the Directors General for VET and the Advisory Committee for VET during the Estonian and Bulgarian Presidencies,

- other policy forums, as needed,

- Cedefop's own research work and its contribution to the work of the European Commission and its thematic working groups or similar activities.

Methods

ReferNet will conduct the activity in accordance with guidelines provided by Cedefop. Whenever possible, Cedefop will involve ReferNet in defining them. However, type and degree of involvement will depend on the given parameters.

In case the activity involves delivering an article or a survey, information should be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivering it to Cedefop.

Steps/deadlines

ReferNet will be informed about the theme and the format of the activity as soon as they have been defined.

**Deliverable 3c   Ad hoc thematic support
                        Article or other request**

To respond to topical information needs, this activity aims to address VET-specific issues of European relevance nationally or at EU level. The activity may not be the same for all partners. Requests will be driven by Cedefop's work on VET and related issues in the countries and the required format(s) for information collection and analysis.

Background/Aim

The activity could take the form of ([25]):

([25]) All activities will imply approximately the same workload.

- articles,
- surveys,
- organising meetings,
- mobilising stakeholders, or
- any other format having comparative or analytical aims. The activity will tackle a specific issue selected for its actuality and European policy relevance, for instance the Presidencies' semester themes to support the Copenhagen process or ad-hoc requests on thematic information on issues that are high on the EU agenda. It may also focus on in-depth reviews involving one or more countries.

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- Cedefop's contribution to the discussions of the Directors General for VET and the Advisory Committee for VET during the Estonian and Bulgarian Presidencies,

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Methods

ReferNet will conduct the activity in accordance with guidelines provided by Cedefop. Whenever possible, Cedefop will involve ReferNet in defining them. However, type and degree of involvement will depend on the given parameters.

In case the activity involves delivering an article or a survey, information should be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivering it to Cedefop.

Steps/deadlines

ReferNet will be informed about the theme and the format of the activity as soon as they have been defined.

B. Raising the visibility of VET

Deliverable type 4: Visibility actions

Deliverable 4a **Visibility actions, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website, social media activities and participation in events**

Background/Aim

Cedefop intends to increase the visibility of Cedefop/ReferNet products by making potential users aware of the quality, reliability and relevance of the information and analysis they provide.

ReferNet partners are encouraged to support actively the promotion of all deliverables and activities of the network and contribute to raise the visibility of Cedefop and ReferNet at national level.

This visibility strategy is based on recommendations developed in 2012 by the ReferNet working group on visibility and agreed by Cedefop after consultation with ReferNet partners.

A **national ReferNet website** in the national language plus English, if the national ReferNet partner wishes to do so, will be regularly maintained and updated to raise visibility of VET and Cedefop's activities in the member states. Partners act as multipliers and dissemination channels in the countries, targeting various audiences.

Other types of online presence are also recommended, for example participation in **social media**, blogging online, discussions in VET forums.

It can also include the dissemination and/or production of papers, flyers, newsletters, web banners, videos, etc. and the organisation of – and participation in – **public events** involving relevant stakeholders.

Methods

The national ReferNet website can be autonomously hosted on its own domain or a dedicated section in the ReferNet national partner's parent organization's website. Cedefop will provide a new set of guidelines to prepare the national ReferNet website describing all content types featured in Cedefop's web portal. Partners are encouraged to use SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) techniques to optimise their visibility online. Cedefop looks for solutions that have minimum maintenance effort and cost, such as exchange of content, news, events and publications via automated RSS feeds.

The collaboration between ReferNet members will be both encouraged and facilitated by providing virtual collaboration spaces.

Reporting of the web statistics will allow Cedefop and the partners to evaluate the impact of the various efforts.

Cedefop will periodically review the national websites and report on their status and progress.

National ReferNet social media accounts are encouraged to follow/like Cedefop's social media accounts, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and retweet/share/view Cedefop's posts to enhance visibility, including by translating them in the national language. ReferNet partners should use Hashtag #refernet to connect with users and engage conversations with partners. Cross-promotion of all partners' activities will also be encouraged.

ReferNet national partners will submit a list of visibility actions carried out in 2016 at national level, including details on the audience targeted, the channels used, possibly the outcomes of the action, etc.

A survey on all visibility actions (see above) carried out at national level will be filled in by the ReferNet partner as an attachment to the Final Implementation Report on the 2017 action.

Steps/Deadlines

Continuous activity.

The total available budget for ReferNet work plan 2017 in all eligible countries ([26]) is approximately EUR 980.000.

The total available budget for ReferNet work plan 2017 is distributed as follows ([27]):

Country groups	Maximum grant amount
Country group 1: Croatia**,** Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia and Iceland	**EUR 23 615**
Country group 2: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Sweden and Norway	**EUR 33 625**
Country group 3: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom	**EUR 43 620**

See also the call for proposals full text, general, specific and financial conditions of the framework partnership agreement. Cedefop reserves the right not to award the total budget available.

([26])   EU-28, Iceland and Norway

([27])   The allocated amount may not under any circumstances exceed the amounts indicated in the table.

Start date of the annual work plan: January 2017

End date of the annual work plan: December 2017

Duration of the annual work plan: 12 months

Activity	(Approx.) deadline/Frequency
1. Reporting on VET and VET-related policy	
1a. VET policy reporting	End February 2017
1b. National news on VET	March, June, September and December, or more frequently on own initiative
2. Reporting on VET systems	
[2a. VET in [country X] report]	[No update in 2017]
2a. Spotlight on VET	March, June, September and/or December, on own initiative

Delivery date to be agreed with Cedefop expert by mid-February |
2b. VET in [Presidency country] (hard-copy publication based on VET in [country X])	To be agreed with Cedefop expert (Estonia and Bulgaria)
3. Ad-hoc thematic and other support	
3a. Survey on international mobility of IVET learners	• reiteration of 2016 Survey in March/April; • 2017 Mobility Survey: complementary data (depending on the Commission's requests). Guidelines in September, delivery by 15/11) • Update of existing country information by 15/11
3b. Ad hoc thematic support – Article or other request	Theme still open
3c. Ad hoc thematic support – Article or other request	Theme still open
4. Visibility actions	
4a. Visibility actions, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website, social media activities and participation in events	Continuous