

MID-TERM EVALUATION

KSV/801

European Union Support to Vocational
Education and Training,
Professional Requalification and Occupation

PROJECT SUMMARY DATA

Country	Kosovo
Long project title	European Union Support to Vocational Education and Training, Professional Requalification and Occupation
Short project title	ESVET PRO
LuxDev Code	KSV/801
Version of the Report	March 2023

RATING OF THE PROJECT BY THE EVALUATION MISSION

Global rating (Effectiveness)	3 On a scale of 1 (excellent results, significantly better than expected) to 6 (the project was unsuccessful, or the situation has deteriorated on balance)
Rating using other evaluation criteria	Relevance: 2 Efficiency: 3 Coherence: 3 Sustainability: 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim here is to present the mid-term evaluation report of the KSV/801 project on behalf of the European Union and the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology. The findings, conclusions and recommendations in the report are based on interviews, a field survey, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and the review of documents. The field mission in Kosovo was organised from 14 November 2022 to 18 November 2022. During the mission, interviews were held with the project staff and key beneficiaries and stakeholders. Moreover, a field survey was conducted in the three Vocational Education and Training schools of the project.

According to the terms of reference, the objective of the mid-term evaluation is: to analyse the results and the specific objective reached at the time of the evaluation, compared to what had been anticipated in the technical and financial document; analyse the results achieved in terms of capacity development; analyse the management and monitoring of the project; analyse the project using the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability while taking into account cross-cutting aspects. Finally, the mid-term report presents the lessons learnt and provides recommendations for the continuation of the project.

The overall objective of the KSV/801 project is to contribute to the development of a quality-based, inclusive and accountable education and training system in Kosovo, in line with the best international practices. The specific objective is to improve the quality and the labour market relevance of education and training programmes to facilitate transition from school to work of Vocational Education and Training students and to enhance the employability of Vocational Education and Training graduates. The project is working with three Vocational Education and Training schools, 'Adem Gllavica' (Lipjan), 'Feriz Guri dhe Vëllezërit Çaka' school (Kaçanik), and 'Lutfi Musiqi' school (Vushtrri) in selected regions of Kosovo.

The project is implemented through activities under three results:

Result 1: Planning and provision of vocational education is responsive to the needs of learners and employers in selected vocational schools;

Result 2: A graduate tracking system is in place in the field of Vocational Education and Training to ensure consistent evidence on graduate employability and skills relevance to labour market needs;

Result 3: Arrangements and provision of recognition of prior learning in Kosovo are in place and operational in the most needed economic sectors/occupations as a form of employment enhancement and lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners.

Regarding **Result 1** (Planning and provision of vocational education is responsive to the needs of learners and employers in selected vocational schools), the project has supported the relevant schools with the following components:

- provision of equipment;
- development/update of qualification sets for selected profiles;
- development of digital tools for teaching, learning and the assessment process;
- implementation of a new costing mechanism and a financial monitoring tool;
- capacity development of school management and administrative staff in the field of financial planning and management;
- identification of priority needs for teacher capacity development in priority modules;
- promotion of linkage with the private sector.

The project has organised individual training sessions to promote the capacity development of the management staff in charge of financial management. These activities have allowed for a more transparent and accurate overview of the current financial resources in order to ensure realistic planning and increase budget performance at school level. Another priority has been teacher capacity development in the supported profiles and curricula in three profiles: water, sewage installation, heating, and air-conditioning installer, metalworker, and electrical installer. The project has developed the new curricula and has been aligned with the national curriculum framework and the needs of the market. It should be stated that the process of developing qualification sets requires an interaction with teachers and partners from the market in order to become more practical and better aligned with the levels of Vocational Education and Training, of the teacher training offered, as well as the need for new equipment in the workshops.

Regarding **Result 2** (Graduate tracking system is in place in the field of Vocational Education and Training to ensure consistent evidence on graduate employability and skills relevance to labour market needs), the project has conducted the first pilot experience and tested the system covering all Vocational Education and Training schools in Kosovo. It should be noted that the tracking system will reach the full target group of respondents only in September 2023 after the current age cohort in Vocational Education and Training schools, centres of competence and Vocational Training Centres (at national level) have been trained on the tracking system to report on their progress in education or employment after graduation.

Regarding **Result 3** (Arrangements and provision of recognition of prior learning at Kosovo level are in place and operational in the most needed economic sectors/occupations as a form of employment enhancement and lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners), at present there are at least 150 candidates enrolled in recognition of prior learning processes. As the recognition of prior learning component is new in Kosovo, the project first created all the tools before continuing with the enrolment process. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, National Qualification Agency and Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, the project has provided support and successfully created all these tools, including digital systems, manuals (guidelines) training of relevant staff etc. In cooperation with the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, the enrolment of candidates has started.

The evaluation scores are based on the findings of the mid-term mission. The global score has been assessed with a score of 3 (Expected results but there is scope for improvement), in particular due to the delay in implementing activities caused by COVID-19, changes in government and their staffing.

The relevance of the project has achieved a score of 2 (Above average results, performance in certain areas better than expected). The relevance of the three result areas and the activities implemented in the project are well supported and confirmed by the beneficiaries and stakeholders. It should be noted that many of the activities are still in progress.

The score for effectiveness has been assessed as 3 (Expected results but there is scope for improvement). The implementation of the activities under the three results has been effective confirmed also by the survey conducted in the three schools. However, the business model is currently on hold due to changes in the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation cabinet. Nevertheless, the Business Model Approach has successfully improved communication and optimised cooperation between the private sector and the Vocational Education and Training schools in the three focus regions.

The score for the efficiency of the project has been assessed as 3. The project started at the beginning of 2020, at the time of the outbreak of COVID-19. As a result, the pandemic restrictions impacted the project's implementation. In addition, the changes of government have affected the project efficiency. There has been a turnover in high positions at all levels of education due to the different appointments made by the new government. Donor coordination by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation has been lacking. As a result, the project was forced to put some activities on hold to be implemented later.

The score for the coherence of the project has been assessed as 3. The weak capacity of the Government of Kosovo/Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation to coordinate the donor-funded projects (for example GIZ, SwissConsult, ADA, European Union, Swiss Development, LuxDev, USAID) has been observed during the mission. The donors have regular exchanges and meetings, but do not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Government of Kosovo. The project has been affected by the fact that the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation has not adopted a clear Vocational Education and Training policy, strategy, and action plan on how Vocational Education and Training schools should organise their cooperation with businesses.

The sustainability of the project has been assessed with a score of 3. Sustainability is ensured by the commitment and engagement of the key partners and beneficiaries (the Government of Kosovo/Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, National Qualification Agency, Vocational Education and Training schools, Vocational Training Centres and the private sector) in the project and its activities. The project has helped with Vocational Education and Training system reform and provided institutional support. The project is implemented by aligning with the existing Government of Kosovo policies in Vocational Education and Training. The project has actively provided support on the development of national strategic plans and policy documents. The support included the review of the 2017-2021 Kosovo Education Strategic Plan and the development of the new 2022-2026 Kosovo Education Strategic Plan which was finalised and endorsed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation in September 2022. In addition, the project has continued to provide expertise in the development of the Vocational Education and Training curricula framework initiated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation and is still under development.

To summarise the conclusions and recommendations, the project is well on track to implement and achieve the activities under each of the results towards the final part of implementation. Due to the challenges of COVID-19 and the changes of government and administration staff, however, the realisation of several indicators has been left to the final year. While it is likely that the project will achieve its targets, the recommendation is to make a strong effort to accelerate progress to achieve the targets and make an impact with the project on Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo.

The project has succeeded in supporting the capacities of the Government of Kosovo, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, the National Qualification Agency and the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo and in introducing the recognition of prior learning system into Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo. It is recommended to continue building the capacities to make the recognition of prior learning system sustainable in Kosovo to the benefit of government institutions and learners (e.g., unemployed, returnees, Vocational Education and Training graduates, lifelong learners). The project has also been successful in introducing a new system of tracking system in Kosovo Vocational Education and Training. The benefits of the recognition of prior learning system are well acknowledged by the Government of Kosovo, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation and other central institutions. It is recommended to start actively training and getting the students in Vocational Education and Training schools today to commit to the tracking system as part of their lifelong learning in the future.

The project has also faced some challenges. The business model approach has not been as successful as planned. The mission survey, however, positively encourages any approaches of Vocational Education and Training school-business cooperation. It is recommended to continue advocating the Vocational Education and Training school-business cooperation both at central and local levels. Businesses in sectors needing a skilled labour force and the Government of Kosovo/Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation need to continue to work together to support Vocational Education and Training school-business partnerships in the three locations of the project.

It is recommended that the project should continue organising strategic planning meetings with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation to plan activities over the remaining period of the project. It is also recommended that the project carry on regular Project Steering Committee meetings to continue engaging the key stakeholders and beneficiaries in finalising the project and sustaining its outcomes.