

AGENDA

ETF Skills Lab Network of Experts Regional Webinar

PERCEPTION AND IMAGE OF VET IN THE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION: AN OPPORTUNITY OR AN OBSTACLE TO EXCELLENCE IN TRAINING?

9 June 2026, 10.00 – 12.00 CET

BACKGROUND

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) play a key role in human capital development, youth employability, and economic competitiveness. However, the low social perception and image of TVET remain a major challenge, particularly in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region (SEMED), where TVET is often viewed as a second-choice pathway compared to general or academic education.

Despite differences between national systems, TVET is considered a mainstream and valued educational choice within the EU, and high-quality and inclusive VET are central to achieving the EU's social and economic objectives. As the EU agency working on VET, Cedefop provides comprehensive, up-to-date information on VET systems across Europe and reports progress on VET by EU Member states via concrete policy indicator dashboards. In 2023, 49.1% of all upper secondary students in the EU were enrolled in vocational programmes (Eurostat, 2025). This means that nearly one out of two students chooses a vocational pathway. Considering the twin transition (digital and green), the challenges and opportunities facing the European VET system in the coming years have been a primary focus of Cedefop's work¹.

The participation rates in VET are also high in many ETF partner countries, particularly in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, but also in Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asian countries. In contrast, participation rates in VET across several SEMED countries remain significantly lower, usually between 12% and 14%, and sometimes could reach the lowest 3%. Despite reforms and investments, VET systems in the region continue to face low attractiveness among young people. Persistent negative perceptions—often associating VET with academic failure or limited career prospects - undermine social recognition, enrolment, and the pursuit of quality and excellence in training.

Among the factors that make VET attractive are high quality education and training, investment in infrastructure and teaching staff, accessibility and availability of VET across the regions, diversified courses with several popular choices for students, high employability after VET graduation, creating easy pathways for students to move between VET and other educational streams, investing in higher levels of VET at post-secondary and university level (ISCED 5 education in polytechnics).

¹ Cedefop produces concise descriptions of national VET systems for all EU Member States: [VET systems in Europe | CEDEFOP](#), as well as [Key insights | CEDEFOP](#). See [Future of VET | CEDEFOP](#).

In this webinar, we will discuss the perception and image of TVET in the SEMED region², the underlying reasons for unattractiveness, the main success factors to make TVET an attractive option, national experiences aimed at improving TVET attractiveness, as well as the link between social perception, quality, and excellence in VET systems.

Time	Agenda Item	Speaker
10.00-10.05	Opening, rules of engagement, overview of agenda	Facilitator Najib Hamouti, Skills Lab Network regional facilitator
	Welcome, ETF introduction to the topic	Cristiana Burzio, Coordinator, ETF Skills Lab Network of Experts
10.05-10.40	Insights from ETF Torino Process: main features of the lifelong learning (LLL) system in the SEMED region Q&A 10'	Mihaylo Milovanovitch, Team leader for monitoring and systems performance, ETF
10.40-11.15	Morocco Cities of Trade and Skills and Trade and other initiatives Q&A 10'	Prof. Mohammed Bouguidou, Expert Lifelong Learning, Employability, Migration, University Mohammed V
11.15-11.40	Egypt: the example of the Applied Technology Schools (ATS) Q&A 10'	Abdelaziz Jaouani, Senior Human Capital Development Expert - Lifelong Learning Policies, ETF
11.40-11.55	Discussion with the audience	Facilitator Najib Hamouti, Skills Lab Network regional facilitator
11.55-12.00	Conclusions and wrap up	Cristiana Burzio, ETF

² See ETF Torino Process Reports for the SEMED region: [Tunisia](#); [Palestine](#); [Algeria](#); [Egypt](#); [Lebanon](#); [Jordan](#); [Morocco](#)