

Corporate Unit Evaluation

Central Project Evaluation

KNOWING WHAT WORKS

# Central project evaluation

Youth, Employment and Skills, Kosovo

Project number 2016.2224.0

## Evaluation Report

On behalf of GIZ by Dr Steffen Horn and Majlinda Rizvanoll (FAKT Consult for Management, Training and Technologies)

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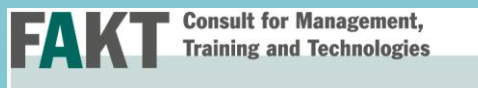
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# Contents

List of figures.....	4
List of photos.....	4
List of tables.....	4
Abbreviations .....	6
The project at a glance .....	8
1 Evaluation objectives and questions.....	9
1.1 Evaluation objectives.....	9
1.2 Evaluation questions .....	9
2 Object of the evaluation .....	10
2.1 Definition of the evaluation object.....	10
2.2 Results model including hypotheses .....	11
3 Evaluability and evaluation process.....	15
3.1 Evaluability: data availability and quality .....	15
3.2 Evaluation process .....	16
4 Assessment according to OECD/DAC criteria.....	19
4.1 Impact and sustainability of predecessor projects.....	19
4.2 Relevance.....	21
4.3 Coherence .....	29
4.4 Effectiveness .....	32
4.5 Impact.....	46
4.6 Efficiency .....	54
4.7 Sustainability .....	60
4.8 Key results and overall rating .....	64
5 Conclusions and recommendations.....	66
5.1 Key findings and factors of success/failure .....	66
5.2 Recommendations.....	68
List of references .....	69
Annex: Evaluation matrix .....	72

## List of figures

Figure 1: Current results model (January 2021), adapted during the inception mission.....	12
Figure 2: Milestones of the evaluation process.....	16

## List of photos

Photo 1: Practical training at CoC Skenderaj (Source/©: GIZ 2020) .....	37
Photo 2: Training of people with disabilities (Source/©: GIZ 2020) .....	40
Photo 3: Practical training, CoC Skenderaj (Source/©: GIZ, 2020) .....	50
Photo 4: Job fair in Mitrovica (Source/©: GIZ 2020) .....	52
Photo 5: Entrepreneurship training (Source/©: GIZ 2020).....	61

## List of tables

Table 1: Knowledge interests by main evaluation stakeholder groups .....	9
Table 2: List of evaluation stakeholders and selected participants .....	17
Table 3: Methodology for predecessor project.....	21
Table 4: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: relevance .....	21
Table 5: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: relevance.....	28
Table 6: Dividers/escalating factors in the project context.....	29
Table 7: Connectors/de-escalating factors in the project context .....	29
Table 8: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: coherence .....	29
Table 9: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: coherence.....	31
Table 10: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness .....	32
Table 11: Assessed and adapted objective indicators for specific modules (outcome level) .....	33
Table 12: Results hypothesis 1 for effectiveness.....	35
Table 13: Results of trainees' survey .....	37
Table 14: Results hypothesis 2 for effectiveness.....	38
Table 15: Results of rating the level of improvement of access to target group-oriented ALMMs.....	39
Table 16: Results hypothesis 3 for effectiveness.....	41
Table 17: Employment situation of sampled beneficiaries by gender (n = 560) .....	42
Table 18: Employment situation of sampled beneficiaries by type of ALMM (n = 560) .....	43
Table 19: Employment situation of sampled beneficiaries by region (n = 560).....	44
Table 20: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness .....	45
Table 21: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: impact .....	46
Table 22: Results hypothesis 1 for impact .....	49
Table 23: Results hypothesis 2 for impact .....	50

Table 24: Results hypothesis 3 for impact .....	52
Table 25: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: impact .....	54
Table 26: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency .....	54
Table 27: Overview of costs .....	56
Table 28: Overview of output achievement .....	56
Table 29: Distribution of costs to outputs .....	57
Table 30: Personnel costs per output .....	57
Table 31: Module (project) objective indicators and achievement ratio .....	59
Table 32: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency .....	59
Table 33: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability .....	60
Table 34: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability .....	63
Table 35: Rating and score scales .....	64
Table 36: Overall rating of OECD/DAC criteria and assessment dimensions .....	65

## Abbreviations

ALMM	Active Labour Market Measure
AVETAE	Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, Kosovo
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CPE	Central project evaluation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DIMAK	Centre for Migration, Training and Career
EARK	Employment Office of the Republic of Kosovo
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
KCC	Kosovo Chamber of Commerce
KCF	Kosovo Challenge Fund
KfW	KfW Development Bank
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Innovation
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCF	Regional Challenge Fund
TC	Technical Cooperation
ToC	Theory of Change
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Work-Based Learning
YEPIK	TC Measure Youth Employment Promotion in Kosovo implemented by GIZ
YES	TC Measure Youth, Employment and Skills in Kosovo implemented by GIZ
YEP	Youth Employment Promotion



## The project at a glance

Kosovo: Youth, Employment and Skills (YES)

Project number	2016.2224.0
Creditor reporting system code(s)	16020 - Employment Promotion
Project objective	The employability of Kosovar youth is improved.
Project term	January 2017 to March 2021, project extension until 31 May 2021
Project value	EUR 15,000,000
Commissioning party	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Innovation (MESTI) Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW)
Implementing partner organisations (in the partner country)	-
Other development organisations involved	-
Target group(s)	<p>Direct target group: MESTI, MLSW, management of the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK)</p> <p>Indirect target group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermediate beneficiaries: management staff and employment officers of local employment offices, management staff and teachers of Vocational Education and Training schools and Vocational Training Centres, in-company trainers of cooperating enterprises.</li> <li>• Final beneficiaries: Youth and young adults aged 15-35 from all ethnic groups in Kosovo.</li> </ul> <p>Other beneficiaries: staff of Youth Centres, enterprises requesting employees or participating in training</p>
Development cooperation (DC) programme	Sustainable Economic Development in Kosovo DC Programme
Implementing organisations of DC programme	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, KfW Development Bank



# 1 Evaluation objectives and questions

This chapter aims to describe the purpose of the evaluation, the standard evaluation criteria, and additional stakeholders' knowledge interests and evaluation questions.

## 1.1 Evaluation objectives

Central project evaluations of projects commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) fulfil three basic functions: they support evidence-based decisions, promote transparency and accountability, and foster organisational learning within the scope of contributing to effective knowledge management. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH structures the planning, implementation and use of evaluations so that the contribution the evaluation process and the evaluation findings make to these basic functions is optimised (GIZ, 2018a).

## 1.2 Evaluation questions

The project is assessed on the basis of standardised evaluation criteria and questions to ensure comparability by GIZ. This is based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD/Development Assistance Committee \(DAC\) evaluation criteria](#) (updated 2020) for international cooperation and the [evaluation criteria for German bilateral cooperation \(in German\)](#): **relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability**.

Specific assessment dimensions and analytical questions have been derived from this framework. These form the basis for all central project evaluations in GIZ and can be found in the **evaluation matrix** (Annex). In addition, contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its principles are taken into account, as are cross-cutting issues such as gender, the environment, conflict sensitivity and human rights. Aspects regarding the quality of implementation are also included in all OECD/DAC criteria.

Table 1: Knowledge interests by main evaluation stakeholder groups

Evaluation stakeholder group	Knowledge interests in evaluation/ additional evaluation questions	Relevant section in this report
BMZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the potentials/opportunities of the project's approach in the follow-on project regarding the improvement of employment-relevant skills in general education, and the transition between lower and upper secondary education?</li> </ul>	Included in the <b>recommendations</b> for the follow-on project, chapter 5
GIZ Evaluation Unit and GIZ Sectoral Department (Fach- und Methodenbereich)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was it possible to successfully reach the target group of returnees? How do the synergies between the project and the German Information Centres for Migration, Training and Career (DIMAK) work?</li> <li>Were the expectations regarding the recognition of qualifications (Output D) realistic?</li> <li>How well were the project components (Youth Employment Promotion (YEP) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) clusters) interlinked?</li> </ul>	Included in the analysis of <b>coherence, relevance, effectiveness</b> criteria, chapters 4.2–4.4
Youth, Employment and Skills project (YES), project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could institutionalised involvement of the private sector be achieved? How can the private sector be increasingly attracted, as a way of strengthening cooperation with VET institutes and training more trainees?</li> <li>In many cases there is overlap between the Kosovar ministries' measures and donors' interventions. How can better synergies be created in the Kosovar system?</li> </ul>	Included in the analysis of <b>effectiveness, impact</b> criteria, chapters 4.4–4.5

Evaluation stakeholder group	Knowledge interests in evaluation/ additional evaluation questions	Relevant section in this report
MESTI, MLSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can the advisory inputs of YES be utilised most effectively to achieve the highest possible rate of successful applications by Kosovar VET institutes to the KfW-funded Regional Challenge Fund (RCF)?</li> </ul>	See <b>effectiveness</b> and <b>sustainability</b> criteria (chapters 4.4, 4.6), <b>recommendations</b>

## 2 Object of the evaluation

This chapter aims to define the evaluation object, including the theory of change, and results hypotheses.

### 2.1 Definition of the evaluation object

**Evaluation object:** The object of the evaluation is the selected Technical Cooperation (TC) module, Youth Employment and Skills, categorised as project number 2016.2224.0. It was a single measure until the end of 2019. Since the beginning of 2020 it has been part of the BMZ Sustainable Economic Development in Kosovo programme.

**Temporal delineation:** The project was implemented from January 2017 until May 2021. As mentioned, the project was originally planned to end by 31 December 2020.

**Financial delimitation:** The project was financed by BMZ and has been implemented by GIZ. The project's total budget was EUR 15,000,000. The evaluation team found that the project's considerable budget resulted in a rather complex project structure. The evaluation therefore analysed to what extent this structure was feasible.

**Geographical delimitation:** The project's activities cover the whole of Kosovo. A special focus is on the pilot regions in Ferizaj/Uroševac, Malisheva/Mališevo, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Gjakova/Đakovica, which are among the most poverty-affected regions in Kosovo. The project office is located in Prishtina (the capital of Kosovo), to enable close work with key partners (MESTI, MLSW, EARK).

**Political and sectoral context and the framework conditions:** Kosovo is a parliamentary republic that declared its independence in 2008. Kosovo's greatest socio-economic challenge remains mass unemployment among its population. A massive loss of confidence in politics is also hampering progress towards a functioning democracy and market economy. Due to the high unemployment rate and the limited efficiency and effectiveness of labour market policies and measures, the country has one of the highest rates of migration in south-east Europe. The latest wave of emigration from Kosovo occurred during the European migrant crisis in 2015 and 2016. Germany and Switzerland were major destinations for Kosovars. The latest migration trends can be explained by the country's socio-economic and political situation. These people mostly migrate for economic reasons, aiming to find employment in their destination country. In Germany, the legal framework requires migrant workers to get their qualification validated by the competent authorities in order to be allowed to work and stay. However, the Kosovar VET system differs from the German one and there are several challenges in getting Kosovar VET degrees recognised in Germany.

VET governance is state-driven. In addition to the Ministry of Finance, the main national actors are MESTI, MLSW and the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports. At sectoral level, social partners and private sector

stakeholders participate in recently set up bodies like the board of the Agency for VET and Adult Education (AVETAE). At regional/local level, municipalities are responsible for the operation of public VET institutes. VET institutes and training firms mainly implement decisions. Although youth unemployment is high in Kosovo (approximately 55% in 2020) and many VET school graduates cannot find decent employment, or even any employment, employers meanwhile complain about the difficulties they face in filling vacancies with skilled employees. Many young job-seekers lack the skills the labour market demands because the VET system is not sufficiently labour market-oriented and does not provide VET trainees with the required practical experience. VET schools face a range of problems in implementing curricula, from the capacities of teachers to absorb and transfer curriculum content, to schools' financial and logistical capacities. Some of these challenges are a result of outdated curricula that do not provide trainees with the skills that companies need; they are also linked to teachers lacking practical experience and skills, and therefore lacking the skills to translate theoretical knowledge into practical work.

**Fragile context:** The project intervenes in a fragile context (FS1 marker). Serious structural disparities exist in Kosovo. The fundamental conflict between the Kosovar central state, on the one hand, and its widespread rejection by the Serbian population (and by the Serbian state) on the other, still has negative effects on the overall situation in the country. Although the agreement between Belgrade and Prishtina as early as August 2015 brought about a rapprochement, implementation has been sluggish even in the recent one-year reference period. Organised crime activities also continue to pose a potential threat to the stability of society as a whole, as do experiences of violence in the past and the lack of economic prospects for large parts of the population. Extensive lawless spaces hinder the strengthening of social cohesion and poverty reduction. These are an expression of the extensive corruption. The project reacts to these problems by including marginalised youth from rural areas and providing young Kosovars with employment and income opportunities through vocational training and/or labour market measures, offering constructive alternatives to an everyday life characterised by hopelessness. The counselling and qualification approaches offered within the framework of the project are basically open to all young people. This means that minorities such as the Roma, Ashkali and Balkan Egyptians, Turks, Bosniaks and Serbs can also participate on an equal footing. The project also offers and implements measures for young people in the northern part of Kosovo. In addition, an exchange of information and experience between the municipalities is organised. These activities intend to contribute to dialogue between ethnic groups from different areas. Vulnerable groups, including returnees, are also addressed as a direct target group and benefit from all offers.

## 2.2 Results model including hypotheses

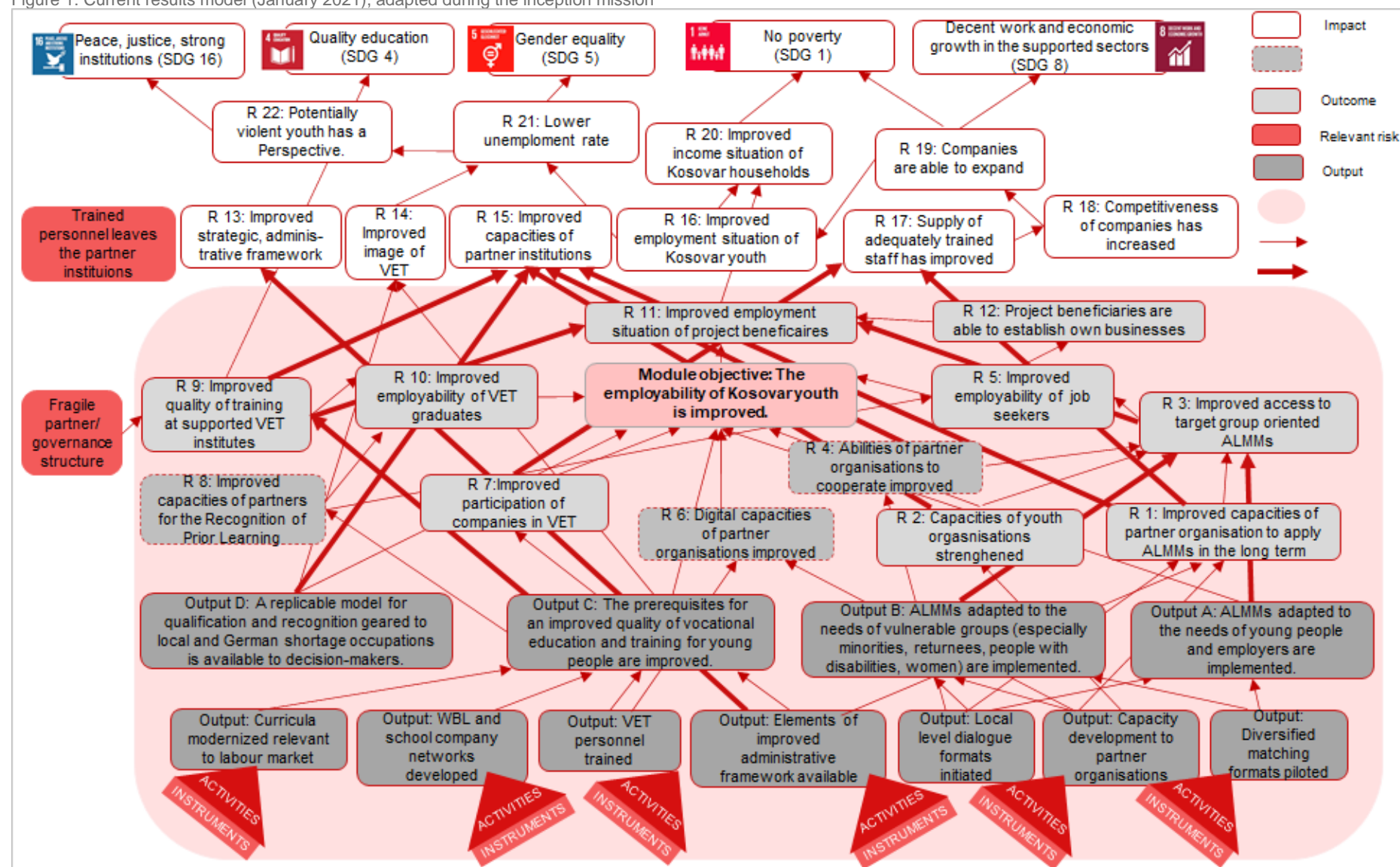
**Theory of Change and the project's results model:** Central project evaluations (CPEs) are generally based on a theory-based approach and a contribution analysis (following Mayne 2012) to generate valid and reliable findings on the project's results.<sup>1</sup> The contribution analysis is the backbone of this evaluation for making credible causal statements on interventions and their observable results. Based on a Theory of Change (ToC), all six OECD/DAC criteria, and selected hypotheses for the contribution analysis as part of the effectiveness and impact criteria, were analysed.

At GIZ, a ToC is visualised in a results model and complemented by a narrative that includes the corresponding hypotheses (see Figure 1 above). A results model is a graphical representation showing the inherent logic of the project, to make it understandable for all stakeholders. It defines the essential results on different levels, hypotheses covering multidimensional causalities, system boundaries, assumptions and risks and external factors of the project. In line with the theory-based approach, the evaluators referred not only to the ToC reflected in the results model, but also to clearly defined terms in the hypotheses that are combined with validated data collection instruments.

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<sup>1</sup> The theory-based approach is in line with current state of the art in the field of evaluation research (see e.g. Stockmann/Meyer, 2014; Döring/Bortz 2016, Mayne 2012).

Figure 1: Current results model (January 2021), adapted during the inception mission



Before the inception mission, the evaluators reviewed the project's results model and agreed with the project team that the model had to be revised to ensure a realistic representation of the project's activities and results and to enhance its usage.

**Overall project structure:** The **project's objective** is to **improve the employability of Kosovar youth**. **Four main outputs** contribute to achieving this objective:

- Output A: Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs) adapted to the needs of young people and employers are implemented.
- Output B: ALMMs adapted to the needs of vulnerable groups (especially minorities, returnees, people with disabilities, women) are implemented.
- Outputs A and B are combined in the project's Youth Employment Promotion (YEP) cluster. The main activities are the piloting of matching formats focused on the needs of a diverse range of target groups, capacity development of the project's partner institutions, and the initiation and facilitation of dialogue formats between public institutions, non-governmental and private sector organisations at local level.
- Output C: The prerequisites for an improved quality of VET for young people are improved.
- Output D: A replicable model for qualification and recognition geared towards local and German shortage occupations is available to decision-makers.
- Outputs C and D are integrated into the project's Vocational Education and Training (VET) cluster. The main activities are the development and piloting of modernised training programmes, the development of cooperation models between VET institutes and enterprises, and capacity development at VET institutions.

The **project's inclusive approach**, which integrates support for disadvantaged target groups and the promotion of gender-sensitive VET and labour market measures with the development of cooperation between the private sector and VET institutions, as well as the promotion of entrepreneurship, aims to improve the employment situation of Kosovar youth and to contribute to the sustainable economic development of a more inclusive society in the country. In particular, the measures in Output D of the project provide the prerequisites for a skilled, orderly, safe and responsible migration of the project's target groups to other European countries.

**The project's role within the stakeholders' structure:** The project's political partners are MESTI and MLSW for steering employment promotion and VET at national (macro) level. Implementing partners are the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports steering at national (macro) level, as well as Civil Society Organisations, EARK, VET schools (under MESTI, including Centres of Competence), Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) (under MLSW) and Youth Centres and municipalities operating at local (micro) and regional (meso) level. The project closely cooperates with these partners, providing technical assistance to improve ALMMs and VET in Kosovo. The detailed stakeholder structure is illustrated in section 3.2 (see also the stakeholder map in Figure 3).

**Target groups of the project:** The project's direct target group is MESTI, MLSW and the management of the EARK. Its intermediate beneficiaries are the management staff and employment officers at local employment offices, management staff and teachers at VET schools and VTCs, in-company trainers of cooperating enterprises. Its final beneficiaries are youth and young adults aged 15 to 35 from all ethnic groups in Kosovo. A special focus is on potential migrants and returnees from Germany and other countries. Returnees are faced with the challenge of having to integrate themselves into the Kosovar labour market, which has low absorption capability, or into education and training programmes with few financial resources. Another focus is the promotion of vulnerable target groups including youth and young adults from rural areas and poor households, people with disabilities, young women and members of ethnic minorities such as Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Turks, Bosnians and Gorani who are discriminated against to varying degrees.

**Outcomes of the project:** Outcomes are changes that occur as a consequence of the use of an intervention's outputs. They correspond to the achievement of the project objective and include both the intermediaries' and target groups' use of the outputs delivered by the project, and the direct benefit (see GIZ 2014a).



At outcome level, Outputs A and B are expected to *improve access to target group-oriented ALMMs* (R3) which is intended to lead to improving the ability of the project's beneficiaries to find employment or to improve their employment situation (*employability*) (R 5). The support for Output C intends to result in *better access to improved training at supported VET institutes* (R 9), *increased participation by companies in VET* (R 7) and *improved capacities of project partners related to Recognition of Prior Learning* (R 8). These results and the project's Output D are expected to lead to the *increased employability of VET graduates*. All outputs of the project aim to strengthen the capacities of the project's partner organisations (R 2), including improved digital capacities (R 6) and the partner's capacities to cooperate with other actors (R 4).

Overall, all outputs and the results mentioned are expected to *improve the employment situation of the project's beneficiaries* (R 11), including their abilities to establish their own business (R 12). Results 11 and 12 are the effect of the beneficiaries' improved ability to find employment or to improve their employment situation (*employability*) (R 5). This therefore places them higher in the hierarchy within the project's sphere of responsibility.

Three causal relations are analysed in depth in the framework of the effectiveness criterion (see Chapter 4.4). They are specified by the three hypotheses identified during the inception mission, analysing the causal links between the project's activities and outputs that lead to the following:

- Hypothesis 1: Due to the support from the project, the quality of training at the 11 supported VET institutes is improved (R 9, see Table 12),
- Hypothesis 1: The support from the project in the area of employment promotion results in the improved access of project beneficiaries to target group-oriented ALMMs (R 3, see Table 14),
- Hypothesis 1: Through increased access to improved training and target-oriented ALMMs, the employment situation of project beneficiaries is improved (R 11, see Table 16).

**Impacts of the project:** Impacts are the higher-level development results achieved by the project (see GIZ 2014a). They correspond to the achievement of the programme objective. Since the beginning of 2020, YES has been part of the Sustainable Economic Development ('NaWi') programme with the following objective: *The employment of the Kosovar population and the sustainable productivity and competitiveness of MSMEs have improved*. The project directly contributes to programme indicators 1 and 3:

- **Programme Indicator 1:** 8,560 persons (including 3,545 women/girls) have access to improved education (especially basic education and VET) and labour market services.
- **Programme Indicator 3:** 7,670 people (including 2,970 women) have newly found employment.

The project's contribution to these indicators is monitored by the results-based M&E system. The final results have been reported in the project's 2021 final report.

At impact level, the project's measures are intended to result in *improved organisational capacities of partner organisations* (R15) and an *improved strategic and administrative framework* (R 13). The improved employment situation of the project's beneficiaries (R 11) is expected to lead to an *improved supply of suitably trained employees for Kosovar companies* (R 17). Due to these improvements, it is expected that *companies can increase their competitiveness* (R 18), *are able to expand* (R 19) and employ an increasing number of Kosovar youth and young adults. This leads to an *improved employment situation of Kosovar youth* (R 16) and an *increased income of Kosovar households* (R 20). Within the evaluation, the extent to which all these results are negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (major external risk) will be analysed.

The most essential impacts are specified by the three hypotheses analysed in depth in the framework of the impact criterion (see Chapter 4.5). They operationalise the causal links between the project's outputs and outcomes, leading to the following results at impact level:

- Hypothesis 1: The policy advice in the area of VET, labour market policy and migration policy results in an improved strategic and administrative framework in Kosovo (R 13, see Table 18),
- Hypothesis 2: The project's capacity development measures result in improved organisational and staff capacities of its partner organisations (MESTI, MLSW, EARK) (R 14, see Table 19),
- Hypothesis 2: The engagement of companies in cooperative training and improved ALMMs results in an improved supply of suitably trained staff for Kosovar companies (R 17, see Table 20).

At a higher aggregated level, these improvements are intended to result in a *lower unemployment rate* and *better prospects for potentially violent youth in Kosovo*. It is expected that the interaction of these results will lead to more decent work and economic growth in the supported economic sectors (SDG 8) as well as an improved quality of education (SDG 4) and peace, justice and stronger institutions (SDG 16).

## 3 Evaluability and evaluation process

This chapter aims to clarify the availability and quality of data and the process of the evaluation.

### 3.1 Evaluability: data availability and quality

This section covers the following aspects:

- availability of essential documents,
- monitoring and baseline data including partner data, and
- secondary data.

#### Availability of essential documents

The project is well documented, with the relevant documents made available to the evaluators. This constituted an important data source for this evaluation comprising the project offer, including the project's results matrix, project progress reports, context, political and gender analyses and the project's capacity development strategy. All relevant project documents were made available and could be used during the evaluation mission. All used documents and sources are integrated into the List of References at the end of this report.

#### Monitoring and baseline data including partner data

The project team monitored the project's progress with the use of 1) an **Excel-based operation plan**, which was updated yearly, and 2) an **Excel-based monitoring plan**. Both plans were used for planning upcoming activities and monitoring the activities and achieved results. Baseline and target values were available, as were sources of verification for all outcome and output indicators. Overall, both plans contain comprehensive data which were made available to the evaluation team in January 2021.

The project additionally **compiled documents** corresponding to the project's objective indicators and output indicators to document achievements (e.g. quarterly progress reports, final report to BMZ). Several of the underlying M&E sheets were updated during the inception mission and shared with the evaluation team. Furthermore, **raw data** that was collected via a tracer study survey (referring to module indicator 2) on the beneficiaries' employment situation, as well as a tracer study report (dated October 2020), was shared with the evaluation team.

Adding to the planning and monitoring of activities and results agreed on with BMZ, it is worthwhile mentioning that the project elaborated an internal monitoring system for **communication to partners and stakeholders** that contains self-set goals and indicators for measuring their progress. An overview of all data and achievements is compiled in the brochure YES for Kosovo (GIZ/YES 2020a). The data collected in this regard provided a valuable source of information for assessing the coherence criterion.

**Statistical raw data from partners** (EARK, MLSW, MESTI) was not made available to the evaluators by the partner institutions and hence was not used for the evaluation either.

**Baseline information:** Based on the feedback received from the project, no external baseline study was conducted before the project began. Surveys began to be conducted in 2019 and rolled out at the end of 2020 to capture the effects of the interventions (see GIZ/YES 20219, GIZ/YES 2020b, GIZ/YES 2020c).

The evaluation team found that the overall quality and scope of data provided was sufficient to conduct the evaluation assignment.

### Secondary data

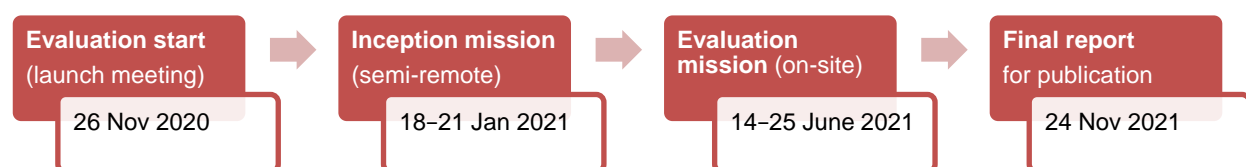
The project relies on national data systems only to a very limited extent (data on the employment situation of project beneficiaries, monitored in the framework of project objective indicator 2, see Table 11), as the project had the opportunity to collect information from the field, e.g. through tracer studies and enterprise surveys. The project supported MLSW and its implementing EARK, advising these two institutions on carrying out a participatory Employment and Labour Market Analysis and how to use labour market information for evidence-based steering of ALMMs. In this evaluation, statistical data from comparable studies that are relevant and trustworthy is used to triangulate findings.

## 3.2 Evaluation process

This section covers the following aspects:

- milestones of the evaluation process,
- involvement of stakeholders,
- selection of interviewees,
- data analysis process,
- roles of international and local evaluators,
- semi-remote evaluation.

Figure 2: Milestones of the evaluation process



### Involvement of stakeholders

The involvement of various stakeholders in the evaluation is central to the central project evaluation. During the inception mission, the evaluation team verified the map of crucial project stakeholders and discussed their involvement in the evaluation. The final decision on who to involve in the evaluation is taken by the evaluators, based on the importance of the stakeholder (key or primary), the value of (additional) information provided, and the feasibility of including interviews or site visits in the evaluation mission schedule. This is intended to maximise the number of stakeholders reached out to during the evaluation mission.



## Selection of interviewees

During interviews with the project team in the inception phase, key stakeholders to be interviewed were identified and the key criteria for selecting interviewees within those target groups were determined:

- (Virtual) accessibility (on-site, internet and/or phone).
- Representativeness of project partners (direct, complementary).
- Representativeness of key target groups (VET trainees, youth job-seekers, vulnerable target groups, VET teachers and trainers, recipient governmental institutions).

Overall, **85 people** were interviewed, including 6 members of the project team, and 3 direct project partners.

Table 2: List of evaluation stakeholders and selected participants

Organisation/company/target group	Overall number of people involved in evaluation (including gender disaggregation)	No. of interview participants	No. of focus group participants	No. of workshop participants	No. of survey participants
<b>Donors</b>	9 (3 male, 6 female)	9	0	0	0
BMZ, KfW, European Union, Swiss Development Cooperation, Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency (LuxDev), Austrian Development Agency					
<b>GIZ</b>	10 (5 male, 5 female)	5 (4 male, 1 female)	5 (1 male, 4 female)	0	0
GIZ project team, GIZ DIMAK, Kosovo, GIZ headquarters Germany					
<b>Partner organisations (direct target group)</b>	3 (2 male, 1 female)	2 (2 male, 1 female)	3	0	0
MESTI, MLSW, EARK					
<b>Other stakeholders (e.g. public actors, other development projects)</b>	20 (18 male, 2 female)	6 (6 male, 2 female)	12 (12 male)		
1 of the larger employment offices selected (Mitrovica), 1 of the smaller employment offices (Vushtrria); 2 VET schools selected considering accessibility, including 1 economic VET school ( <i>Hasan Prishtina</i> , Mitrovica), 1 technical VET school: <i>Bahri Haxha</i> , Vushtrria), 1 Centre of Competence (Skenderaj), 1 VTC (Prishtina), including 8 VET teachers at these 4 VET institutes and 3 so-called Master Trainers; 1 Youth Centre Rahovec, IPC implementing the KfW-funded Regional Challenge Fund (RCF) and the Kosovo Challenge Fund (KCF)					
<b>Civil society and private sector actors</b>	13 (7 male, 6 female)	10 (6 male, 4 female)	3 (1 male, 2 female)		
Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC), 2 companies selected by sectors considering accessibility and availability of interview partners, 4 Non-Governmental Organisations: Medica Gjakova, Down Syndrome Kosova, Bonevet, LINK (deal with minorities, located in the north)					
<b>Universities and think tanks</b>	1 (1 male)	1 (1 male)			
Riinvest (think tank)					
<b>Final beneficiaries/indirect target groups (sum)</b>	29 (16 male, 13 female), of which 19 trainees and 8 vulnerable youth		31 (17 male, 14 female)		19 (12 male, 7 female)
VET trainees at VET schools and VTC	19 (12 male, 7 female)		19 (12 male, 7 female)		19 (12 male, 7 female)

Organisation/company/target group	Overall number of people involved in evaluation (including gender disaggregation)	No. of interview participants	No. of focus group participants	No. of workshop participants	No. of survey participants
Beneficiaries having already completed a training/employment promotion measure (job-seekers, VET graduates, returnees)	12 (5 male, 7 female)		12 (5 male, 7 female)		
Note: f = female; m = male					

### Semi-remote evaluation

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the data collection process within the evaluation mission in June 2021. Data was collected by the local evaluator or virtually in the team of the two evaluators. The international evaluator therefore worked remotely in close coordination with the local consultant and ensured data quality control and triangulation. Cooperation and quality assurance within the evaluation team was based on close exchanges between the international and national evaluator to constantly reflect on findings and share learning experiences. Moreover, the international evaluator participated virtually in approximately 50% of the interviews and focus group discussions (via Microsoft Teams). The evaluation team constantly reassessed and considered the evolving pandemic situation and was in close contact with the project team and the evaluation unit to adapt quickly if necessary and take final decisions on the evaluation design.

### Data analysis process

For efficient data management and analysis, the evaluators compiled all qualitative findings from the documents and interviews using Microsoft Word and Excel structured by data source/interviewee (including categorisation of stakeholders, a category system for the evaluation questions, date and codes (use of code book)). The first step was to take field notes during the actual interview using the on-site paper and pencil technique to identify first insights and recommendations as the interview progressed, and to add to these notes once the interview is over, i.e. at the end of each day while memories are still fresh. Interviews have not been recorded. The category system for the evaluation questions as per the evaluation matrix was used to analyse different data sources. With this system, information from several data sources regarding a certain evaluation dimension was retrieved, contrasted and findings were summarised. Quantitative monitoring data was analysed descriptively. Triangulation between the international and local evaluators was organised by documenting actual facts from the interviews, rather than interpretations, and by daily feedback loops between the two evaluators. Due to the semi-remote evaluation mission, continuous feedback calls between the two evaluators were organised online.

### Roles of international and local evaluators

The evaluation team consists of Dr Steffen Horn (international expert) and Majlinda Rizvanolli (regional expert). Tasks were divided as follows:

Dr Steffen Horn:

- Develop evaluation design and instruments,
- Technical expert for TVET and employment promotion in general,
- Focal point for GIZ and the project team; implementation of the remote inception and (remote) evaluation missions in Kosovo, including implementation of virtual interviews with the project team and stakeholders,
- Data collection and analysis, presentations and reporting.

Majlinda Rizvanolli:

- Technical and regional expert for VET, labour market and employment promotion in Kosovo,

- Desk review of documents, especially those in the Albanian and Serbian languages,
- Carry out data collection in Kosovo during the evaluation mission under the remote guidance of Dr Horn (due to travel restrictions), participation in local briefings and workshops,
- Contributions to presentations and reporting.

### **Context and conflict sensitivity within the evaluation process**

Until 2019 Kosovo was classified as a 'red' country with a high potential for escalation. Since 2019 it has been classified as 'yellow' with 'increased' potential. Within the integrated context analysis, the project is categorised with the marker FS 1, which means that the context is characterised by fragility, conflict and violence (GIZ 2016a). One of the main factors of fragility in Kosovo is the fundamental conflict between the Kosovar central state, on the one hand, and its widespread rejection by Serbian population groups living in the north (and by the Serbian state) on the other, which has still negative effects on the overall situation in the country. Organised crime also continues to pose a potential threat to overall social stability, as do the experiences of violence in the past and the lack of economic prospects for large sections of the population. Strengthening social cohesion and reducing poverty is significantly hindered by the existence of extensive lawless spaces, which are an expression of the extensive corruption. The project reacts to these problems by including marginalised youth from rural areas and providing young Kosovars with employment and income opportunities through vocational training and/or labour market measures and thus constructive alternatives to an everyday life characterised by hopelessness. The advice and qualification approaches offered within the framework of the project are basically open to all young people. This means that minorities such as Roma, Ashkali, Balkan Egyptians, Turks, Bosniaks and Serbs can also participate on an equal footing. The project also offers and implement measures for young people in the northern part of Kosovo. In addition, an exchange of information and experience between the municipalities is organised. These activities intend to promote dialogue between ethnic groups from different areas. Vulnerable groups, including returnees, are also addressed as a direct target group and benefit from all offers. The evaluation team applied a do-no-harm approach. Therefore, interviewees were selected in close cooperation with the project team considering the conflict factors referred to above.

## **4 Assessment according to OECD/DAC criteria**

This chapter analyses and assesses the project Youth, Employment and Skills, Kosovo along with the six OECD/DAC relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability criteria. A score of a maximum of 100 points is given to each dimension, adding up to a total grade for the project. The specific evaluation questions within the assessment dimensions can be found in the evaluation in the Annex.

### **4.1 Impact and sustainability of predecessor projects**

This section analyses and assesses the impact and sustainability of the predecessor projects: Support for Centres of Competence (CoCs) in the Context of VET Reforms in Kosovo (2014–2016) and Youth Employment Promotion in Kosovo (YEPIK, 2015–2017).

#### **Summarising assessment of predecessor projects**

Analysis of the impact and sustainability of predecessor projects shows a heterogeneous picture: on one hand, the project Support for CoCs in the Context of VET Reforms focused on setting up and building the capacities of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE). Due to the limited willingness of the agency to cooperate with this project and because cooperation ceased, the project's capacity

development strategy was only implemented to a very limited extent. The direct effects at project objective level and the indirect and developmental impacts were not achieved. On the other hand, the YEPIK project established good pilot models in the field of youth employment promotion on which the YES project could build.

### Analysis and assessment of the Support for CoCs in the Context of VET Reforms in Kosovo project

The project's objective, which was to improve demand-oriented education and training at CoCs and selected VET institutes measured by two project objective indicators<sup>2</sup>, was not achieved. Furthermore, it was not possible to achieve a broad impact, i.e. an improvement in governance and demand-oriented steering of the VET sector through improved capacities of AVETAE. The unwillingness of the agency to cooperate with the project and the withdrawal of AVETAE from cooperation were identified as the main causes. Therefore, the capacity development strategy could only be implemented to a very limited extent. The sustainability of the structures, processes and organisational elements at AVETAE developed by the project was also assessed as very low. The sustainability of the project's results was also assessed as negligible for the measures intended to improve the demand orientation of VET, such as the development of a modified core curriculum and the calculation model for budgeting VET institutes. For example, the budgeting and financing of VET institutes are currently being worked on by other projects such as the EU-funded ALLLED 2. There was consensus on these findings between the project documents analysed and the stakeholders interviewed (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_project team). This statement from one interviewee can be used to represent the statements of all stakeholders interviewed on this topic: *'To my knowledge, there is nothing to report regarding the sustainability of the project'* (Int\_1\_project partner).

Based on these findings, the evaluators rate the sustainability and impact of the project as **negligible**.

### Analysis and assessment of the YEPIK project

The objective of the YEPIK project, with its rather limited scope of EUR 1,000,000, was to enable young graduates from employment-promoting non-formal training, orientation and placement measures in selected pilot regions to join the labour market. The target values of the four project objective indicators<sup>3</sup> were achieved by the project. The pilot character of the project, and the mixture of dialogue and networking formats with concrete practical experiences of YEP at local level were taken up by the YES project and could be further utilised. The stakeholders interviewed confirmed that YEPIK **achieved sustainability and impacts** in the following aspects (Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_civil society actors):

- Dialogue formats and ALMMs piloted by YEPIK continued and resulted in an **improved institutional setting** at local level in the project's pilot regions (Ferizaj/Uroševac, Vushtri/Vučitrn, Gjakova/Đakovica). The proactive role of the three pilot municipalities, which emerged from strong competition between the municipalities, resulted in the continuation of the pilot measures by YES after the YEPIK project's duration, as well as expansion to the Malisheva/Mališevo region.
- **Technical and methodological knowledge** transferred by YEPIK was compiled (e.g. in the form of manuals) and **used** by other organisations (e.g. NGOs supported by YES, such as Medika Gjakova, BONEVET).
- **Demand from private sector actors** (companies and business associations) to cooperate in the implementation of further training offers and other ALMMs, to align them to the needs of local companies and regionally relevant sectors **increased** considerably.
- At the national level, YEPIK resulted in initiatives by MESTI to **improve the interlinkage of**

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<sup>2</sup> Indicator 1: The school management of four of the six CoCs or VET institutes with which cooperation takes place confirm that the school situation has improved through the AVETAE. The target value of this indicator could not be achieved. Indicator 2: 150 out of 200 participants in further training courses for the business community rate the usability of the learning content for their work as high. The target values of this indicator were also not achieved.

<sup>3</sup> Indicator 1: 70% of the 300 young graduates (50% of whom female) rate the newly offered active labour market policy measures (including guidance and placement) and non-formal education as beneficial for increasing their individual employment prospects. Indicator 2: of the 500 participants in the newly offered non-formal education measures, 30% participate (50% of whom female) in a further active labour market policy measure within three months after the end of the measure to increase their employment chances. Indicator 3: of the 200 participants in the newly offered active labour market policy measures, 10% found (self-)employment within three months of completing the measure, of whom 30% are female. Indicator 4: 60% of the private sector representatives involved in the funded local dialogue formats confirm the relevance of the newly developed non-formal VET, guidance and labour market placement measure. The target values of all four indicators were achieved.

**employment promotion with VET**, seeing itself as a key actor at the interface between youth and employment promotion. This initiative was followed up and intensified by YES, resulting in labour market-oriented education and training courses and an improved transition from VET to the labour market.

Based on these findings, the evaluators rate the impacts and sustainability of YEPIK as **high**.

### Methodology for assessing predecessor project

Table 3: Methodology for predecessor project

Assessment dimension: predecessor project	Basis for Assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality, limitations
<b>Impact and sustainability of the project Support for Centres of Competence in the Context of VET Reforms in Kosovo</b>	Long-term results specified in the project results matrix (level of module objective): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved situation of supported CoCs (budget, personnel, relevance of training programmes).</li> <li>Training at CoCs according to the MESTI standards integrated into school development plans.</li> </ul>	<b>Evaluation design:</b> Retrospective, mixed-method evaluation design (see evaluation matrix in the Annex)  <b>Empirical methods:</b> Document analysis of project documents (final report, results-based M&E system), triangulated by semi-structured interviews with the project team, GIZ (Sectoral Department)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only a limited number of relevant interviewees with sound knowledge/experiences with the project and its results were available.</li> </ul>
<b>Impacts and sustainability of the YEPIK project</b>	Long-term results specified in the project results matrix (level of module objective): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-term improvements of supported ALMMs.</li> <li>Long-term effects of the piloted cooperation mechanisms between actors in the employment and youth sector and enterprises in the supported pilot regions.</li> </ul>	<b>Evaluation design:</b> Retrospective, mixed-method evaluation design (see evaluation matrix in the Annex)  <b>Empirical methods:</b> Document analysis of project documents, triangulated with semi-structured interviews with the project team, GIZ (Sectoral Department), relevant stakeholders of the supported municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only a limited number of relevant interviewees with sound knowledge/experiences with the project and its results were available.</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Relevance

This section analyses and assesses the relevance of the project Youth, Employment and Skills, Kosovo. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see Annex).

### Summarising assessment and rating of relevance

Table 4: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: relevance

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
<b>Relevance</b>	Alignment with policies and priorities	30 out of 30 points
	Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	22 out of 30 points
	Appropriateness of the design*	20 out of 20 points
	Adaptability – response to change	19 out of 20 points
<b>Relevance total score and rating</b>		Score: <b>91 out of 100 points</b> Rating: <b>Level 2: successful</b>

Analysis of the project's relevance revealed that its objectives and priorities corresponded to the respective BMZ strategy and position papers and was fully aligned with the key strategies defined by the Kosovo Government. The project is highly relevant to the 2030 Agenda, with direct contributions to SDGs 4, 8 and 16 and a cross-cutting contribution to SDG 1 and 5. The evaluator's team also found that activities and interventions were, overall, well aligned with the needs of heterogeneous target groups and partners. The project's two main components, the *VET cluster* and *YEP cluster* were well designed and interlinked, which helped the project team to deal with the rather complex partner structure and provided the basis for straightforward implementation of activities. One of the overall strengths of the project was how it matched VET with employment promotion based on practice-oriented approaches. This resulted in high effectiveness, particularly regarding the employment rate achieved for the project's final beneficiaries. The project concept also successfully addressed the core needs of the immediate target groups, i.e. VET teachers and trainers, companies and important private sector stakeholders such as the KCC. All main activities were coordinated with the project's steering committee, which comprised relevant government actors and private sector representatives, to ensure alignment of the project activities with the partners' needs and priorities. Support for EARK to improve ALMMs, and support for VET institutes, was based on sound needs assessments.

**In total, the relevance of the project is rated as Level 2: successful, with 91 out of 100 points.**

### **Analysis and assessment of relevance**

This section analyses and assesses the *relevance* of the YES project. The *relevance* criterion covers the following dimensions: 1) the alignment of the project concept with relevant policies, priorities, and strategic frameworks, 2) the extent to which the project concept matches the needs of the target groups, 3) the relevance of the project design and results logic, and 4) the adaptability of the project's design and activities to changes in its environment. The relevance criterion was mainly analysed using project documents and data, together with strategic documents and data from stakeholders. The findings of the document analysis were triangulated with interviews of relevant stakeholders, such as MESTI, MLSW, EARK, KCC, donor organisations, VET institutes, NGOs and others. The analysis followed the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex).

#### **Relevance – Dimension 1: Alignment with policies and priorities**

The first dimension of the relevance criterion analyses to what extent the project's objective and intended results at outcome and impact level (see results model, Figure 1, Chapter 2.2) are in line with political priorities, relevant national and international strategic reference frameworks as well as relevant strategies of German development cooperation published by BMZ.

The project objectives and results are fully aligned with the strategic reference frameworks and strategy documents of Germany, particularly BMZ's country strategy of bilateral development cooperation (see BMZ, 2017). In particular, the project's orientation corresponds to the focus on *sustainable economic development*, which is one of the three priority areas of German-Kosovar cooperation (see *ibid.*). Both goals in this priority area, the improvement of 1) the employability of the Kosovar labour force, and 2) the productivity, competitiveness and innovative capacities of MSMEs, fully correspond to the project's objective and results. Moreover, the project's outputs and results are in line with the aim of supporting returnees' integration in Kosovo. In addition to BMZ, the latter is also one of the aims of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and some of the Federal Länder. This strong alignment with the priorities of German development cooperation was confirmed by interviewed representatives from donor agencies (Int\_1\_German donor agency, Int\_2\_German donor agency, Int\_3\_German donor agency Int\_1\_DIMAK). The evaluators therefore assess the relevance for German development cooperation as **very high**.

The evaluation team found that the project was very well aligned with Kosovo's sector strategies for education and youth employment promotion which are specified primarily in four key documents: Firstly, the Kosovo



*Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021*, adopted in July 2016 (see MESTI, 2017), particularly in the areas of strengthening cooperation between schools and enterprises, lifelong learning and mobility (see *ibid.*, p. 27). In addition, the project corresponds to the *Sector Strategy* of MLSW 2018–2022 (see. MLSW, 2017a) and MLSW's *Action Plan for Increasing Youth Employment 2018–2020*, adopted in Dec 2017 (see MLSW, 2017b). Furthermore, the project is fully aligned with the 2013 *National Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo*, which has been revised with support from the project in 2018 (see Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2017 *National Strategy for Sustainable Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo 2018–2020*). This strategy is implemented based on the latest Regulation No. 22/2020 on Reintegration of Repatriated Persons.

In terms of alignment with the *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan*, stakeholders interviewed reported that, according to representatives of the new government, the evolution of VET in Kosovo towards dualisation, modelled on the German, Austrian or Swiss Dual VET approach, and with increased private sector involvement, will be given even higher priority by the new government elected in February 2021 (Int\_1\_German donor agency, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters).

Overall, the alignment with national policies and priorities was not only verified by international donor organisations (Int\_1\_German donor agency, Int\_2\_German donor agency, Int\_3\_German donor agency, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters) and the GIZ team, but also confirmed by the Kosovo Government's partners (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner) and private sector representatives (Int\_1\_private sector actors). The evaluators therefore assess the relevance as **very high**.

Relevance dimension 1 – Alignment with policies and priorities – scores **30 out of 30 points**.

## **Relevance – Dimension 2: Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders**

For analysis of the extent to which the project is aligned with the needs and capacities of its beneficiaries and stakeholders, its main target groups were first distinguished to ensure an overall assessment. These include, for the respective activity field:

- **Public partners:** This group of partners comprises the direct target group of the project – MLSW and EARK for Outputs A and B and MESTI and MLSW for Output C and D. These partners at central level were supported in building internal capacities for better steering of the two sectors (VET and employment promotion) to implement target group-oriented ALMMs as well as high-quality and labour market-relevant VET. At regional/local level, the project's partners consist of employment offices, Youth Centres and local governments for Outputs A and B, and VET schools, CoCs and VTCs for Outputs C and D. Under Output A and B, EARK and the employment offices were supported in improving the quality of their employment services and achieving higher standards in the implementation and monitoring of ALMMs. Local governments and youth centres were enabled to implement Local Stakeholder Meetings, including collaboration with NOGs, as a mechanism through which regular cooperation between local stakeholders for youth employment promotion is facilitated. In the framework of Output C, VET schools, CoCs and VTCs were enabled to provide labour market-oriented training programmes tailored to the needs of young people, job-seekers and employers through capacity development for school management and teaching staff. Under Output D, MESTI and the National Qualification Authority were advised regarding the recognition and validation of Kosovar qualifications by bringing them closer to EU/German standards.

A special focus of the project was supporting the social and economic reintegration of returnees. At a national level, the project contributed to the development of the Ministry of Internal Affairs *National Strategy for Sustainable Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo 2018–2020*. Supported by the YES project in the framework of a financing contract, the ministry set up and implemented a self-employment scheme, which provided 690 returnees with entrepreneurship training, support for developing business plans and financial support. Start-up grants of €3,000 and mentorship were provided to help 410 returnees develop their business plans. Besides the support for the 690 returnees through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, almost 300 returnees have additionally been supported by the project with training measures and a self-employment scheme. In total, 982 returnees were supported by the project for their integration into the local labour market.

- **Private sector partners:** In the framework of Outputs A and B, companies were involved in the implementation of internship schemes, wage subsidy schemes and on-the-job training schemes. Under Output C and D, the participation of private sector representatives, such as the KCC and sector associations, but also companies, participated in the project's capacity development measures aimed at improving stronger private sector involvement in VET, particularly increasing the quality and quantity of WBL.
- **Civil society:** The involvement of NGOs played a major role, particularly in the implementation of Outputs A and B. Guided by the *leave no one behind* principle, in cooperation with EARK and Civil Society Organisations the project supported women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, people with disabilities and minorities, by providing labour market-oriented vocational training, entrepreneurship training and internships.

**Public partners:** Referring to the capacity development measures under Output A and B, the majority of this target group confirmed the alignment with their institutional needs. It was positively highlighted that:

- The partners' capacities and the appropriateness of the support measures were systematically analysed, e.g. by the in-depth evaluation of EARK-implemented ALMMs (see GIZ 2019) (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders). Based on these sound analyses, the capacity development measures for EARK (central level), employment offices, youth centres and municipalities were rated as very relevant (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_5\_stakeholders). Civil society stakeholders also confirmed these positive assessments (FGD\_1\_civil society actors, Int\_3\_civil society actors).
- In contrast to a financing contract implemented with MESTI (see next page), the project implemented various sets of activities (e.g. internship schemes, on-the-job training, wage subsidies, entrepreneurship schemes) in the framework of a financing contract with MLSW. The implementation of this contract was rated as successful by the majority of stakeholders interviewed when referring to this topic (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters). The assignment of an international long-term consultant who supported the ministry in the contract's administration was rated as a strong factor that supported the success of this implementation.

Two aspects were rated critically:

- Regarding the training of EARK staff and municipality staff on Employment and Labour Market Analyses, one stakeholder rated the training as only averagely useful and explained that EARK and the municipalities do not have appropriate capacities (in terms of organisational structure and a minimum number of personnel) to make use of the training outcomes. It was explained that EARK did/does not even have a section for statistics/labour market data analyses (Int\_1\_think tank).
- The promotion of returnees through the financing contract with the Ministry for Internal Affairs referred to above resulted in accounting difficulties. According to several interviewees, an external audit and an additionally requested legal expert's report led to claims for repayment by Germany (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters). The audit of the accounting documents of the Ministry for Internal Affairs for business start-up support for returnees revealed considerable deficiencies in the documentation of payments, the monitoring of the final beneficiaries



(returnees), as well as indications of possible misuse of funds. The information given by MIA regarding the conformity of their documentation with national law were refuted by a corresponding legal expert's report. There is a considerable risk that MIA will nevertheless question the legality of the recoveries or will not be able to service the recoveries for budgetary reasons. If the repayment has to be demanded in court, this results primarily in political (such as a lawsuit against the Kosovo Ministry of the Interior) and reputational risks. Because of these reasons, the appropriateness of the financing agreement as a support instrument for the ministry is rated as low when referring to the ministries' accounting capacities.

In the framework of Outputs C and D, most of the interviewed stakeholders expressed a highly positive response and confirmed alignment with their institutional needs. It was positively highlighted that:

- Capacity development measures were systematically planned and matched with the needs of the partner institution, e.g. improving digital literacy, supporting the development of a digitalisation strategy for MESTI, developing three qualification programmes for teachers that form part of Continuous Professional Development and career development after completion of the MESTI internal accreditation process at central/steering level as well as teacher training activities and advisory support to school management at VET institute level (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, FGD\_1\_stakeholders, FGD\_3\_stakeholders, Int\_2\_stakeholders, FGD\_4\_stakeholders, Int\_4\_stakeholders, FGD\_1\_project team).

One (rather important) aspect was rated critically by many stakeholders interviewed:

- MESTI was supported in the framework of a financing contract to build its capacities in the areas of developing the core curricula, establishing an office for cooperation with the private sector, revision of financing and the purchase of equipment for VET schools. The implementation of activities in the framework of this financing agreement was rated as very unsuccessful by several interviewees. Weak capacities at MESTI's management and administrative levels were reported as the main causes. As a consequence, most of the funds were returned by MESTI and the financing contract was considered to be an inappropriate instrument because MESTI's capacities were overestimated. (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team.)

**Private sector and civil society actors:** Referring to capacity development and other support measures under Output A and B, all stakeholders interviewed reported high levels of satisfaction and confirmed alignment with their institutional needs. In particular, the interviewed NGOs responded very positively and explained that the very sound analysis of beneficiaries' (vulnerable groups including people with disabilities, women, minorities) special needs made the support measures very appropriate to the needs of these target groups (Int\_1\_civil society actors, FGD\_1\_civil society actors, Int\_2\_civil society actors, Int\_3\_civil society actors). (The evaluators have of course taken into account that the fact that these NGOs rely, to a very large extent, on funding from international donor organisations may somewhat bias their statements. However, the explanations and reasoning given by the NGOs interviewed provided many detailed facts and are considered plausible by the evaluators.)

Relevance dimension 2 – Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders – scores **22 out of 30 points**.

### **Relevance – Dimension 3: Appropriateness of the design**

The basis for assessing the appropriateness of the design is the revised results model (see results model, Figure 1, Chapter 2.2) as well as interviews that were conducted with the GIZ project teams, the GIZ Sectoral Department and project partners (Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner). The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex).

With an overall volume of EUR 15,000,000 and two direct partners (MESTI, MSLW), the overall design of the project was rated as thematically and organisationally complex. However, the project's two main components, the VET cluster and YEP cluster, were highly interlinked (e.g. in the area of the school-to-work transition of VET graduates) and well designed, which provided the basis for straightforward implementation of activities.

Looking specifically at the project's two clusters, the following conclusions can be drawn:

**YEP Cluster:** YES worked, under Output A and B, on improving the relevance and effectiveness of ALMMs in general (Output A), but also specifically on aligning the ALMMs with the needs of women and vulnerable groups (especially minorities, disabled people, returnees) (Output B). Applying a multi-layer approach that combines support from MLSW and EARK at central and steering level, with support from institutions at regional and local level such as municipalities, youth centres, employment offices, VET institutes and NGOs, which were enabled to establish or improve cooperation aimed at youth employment promotion and to provide ALMMs that are aligned with the specific needs of their target groups. The project's activities appeared to be very relevant to achieving the project objective. According to the stakeholder interviews and project documents, the project's support was mostly adequately designed and the capacities of EARK, including employment offices, youth centres, municipalities and NGOs, could be increased to implement job fairs, internship schemes, mentorship programmes, wage subsidies, self-employment schemes and vocational training courses in a target group-oriented way (Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner). As such, the project delivered a holistic set of support measures that are in line with the current state of the art in the field of employment promotion and Active Labour Market Policy to their key partners and the underlying results hypotheses are therefore considered plausible.

**VET Cluster:** Under Output C and D, YES implemented activities that concentrated on improving the labour market relevance and quality of VET. In the VET Cluster, a multi-level approach was also applied. Under this approach, the improvement of the regulatory framework in VET, such as support for the development of administrative regulations for the implementation of WBL and the accreditation of two training providers for the training of in-company instructors at Workplace Instructor level as an important step towards consolidating the in-company instructor qualification, was combined with the support of 11 pilot VET institutes and partner companies. The support of the pilot VET institutes and their partner companies comprised the development of labour market-oriented training programmes and improving the quantity and quality of WBL, as well as the skills of teaching and training staff, piloting cooperation models between VET schools and companies in a local VET employment network to provide WBL to VET students, promoting the school-to-work transition of VET students, and improving legal labour mobility by aligning Kosovar qualifications with European/German standards (Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner).

Overall, based on the stakeholder interviews, the project's intervention approach is regarded as fully appropriate. As a result, the underlying hypotheses are considered mostly plausible.

The system boundary was, from the evaluators' point of view, well chosen and plausible. The combination of employment promotion with support to improve VET is regarded as highly useful as the supply and demand sides are both the focus of the support. On one hand, this approach caused somewhat unavoidable complexity and challenges during implementation, but very good results could have been achieved, which are reflected in the very good achievement rates of all project success indicators (see also the effectiveness criterion).

Relevance dimension 3 – Appropriateness of the design – scores **20 out of 20 points**.

#### Relevance – Dimension 4: Adaptability – response to change

Besides the usual challenges in implementing projects, such as staffing and maintaining sound and reliable relationships with project partners and coordination with the donor community, the YES projects reacted to major changes in its environment, with the consequences of the 2015 refugee crisis and the integration of a high number of returnees, frequent changes of government during the project, and the COVID-19 crisis among the most important.

As a result of the refugee crisis in 2015, there was a large wave of returnees to Kosovo that was particularly strong in 2016 and 2017. After 2015 more than 7,500 migrants returned soon after leaving Kosovo, often facilitated through the repatriation agreements Kosovo set up with EU countries. The YES project reacted to this challenge by supporting the social and economic reintegration of returnees. A task force for the reintegration of returnees was established at a national level to harmonise the approaches and measures taken by GIZ projects that are designed to support returnees, such as the German Information Centre for Migration, Vocational Training and Careers (DIMAK) and the URA reintegration project ('Ura', the Albanian word for 'bridge'). Several activities were implemented jointly with DIMAK and URA. As a major activity, the YES project supported the Kosovar Ministry of Internal Affairs in the framework of the above-mentioned financial contract to set up and implement a self-employment scheme, which supported 690 returnees with entrepreneurship training, support in developing business plans and financial support. Start-up grants and mentorship were provided to help 410 returnees develop their business plans. The above-mentioned accounting difficulties resulted in political and reputational risks. However, in the context of this challenging situation, the majority of stakeholders interviewed rated the project's steering performance and adaptability to this situation as very good when referring to this topic (Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_1\_DIMAK, Int\_1\_German donor agency).

Another field that requires joint and coordinated activities is the implementation of the KfW-funded Regional Challenge Fund (RCF) and the Kosovo Challenge Fund (KCF), which was set up in 2019. The YES project reacted to the challenge funds' start of operation by providing advisory support to the 11 pilot VET institutes that participate in the project. As a result, 4 out of the 11 VET institutes passed the first application round of the RCF. This was rated as a positive result by the stakeholders interviewed regarding this topic, considering the rather difficult context situation in Kosovo compared to other Balkan countries (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_1\_other donor project, Int\_2\_other donor project). A representative of another donor project supporting the VET sector in Kosovo pointed out that *'We did not have the opportunity to provide such advisory support to the 20 VET institutes we support. Unfortunately, our project design is not so flexible. Therefore, our schools are in a less comfortable position'* (Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO) (see also effectiveness).

The frequent changes of government and changing leadership roles from the government partners' side, which required adapting project activities to the priorities of the new leadership and ensuring continuity, were another major challenge of the project. In addition, a generally weak strategic orientation across Kosovar ministries and subordinated authorities was reported, as well as partially unstructured procedures at the strategic level. The interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the project itself has taken the initiative to mitigate these weaknesses and to coordinate with other donors, as well as continuously with the Kosovar stakeholders of the project, to ensure the systematicity and coherence of the activities (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters).

The project also reacted to the COVID-19 outbreak by expanding activities in the area of digitisation, resulting in improved digital capacities at VET institutes, EARK and employment offices.

Based on the above-mentioned assessments of the interviewees and arguments, the evaluators rate the project's ability to react to these changes as **very high**.

Relevance dimension 4 – Adaptability – response to change – scores **19 out of 20 points**.

### Methodology for assessing relevance

Table 5: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: relevance

Relevance: assessment dimensions	Basis for Assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
<b>Alignment with policies and priorities</b>	<p>BMZ country strategy for Kosovo Dec 2017</p> <p>BMZ sectoral strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Berufsbildung fördern – Zukunft gestalten. Perspektiven der beruflichen Bildung in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (2017).</li> <li>• Wirtschaft – Chancen für nachhaltige Entwicklung der Privatwirtschaft als Partner in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.</li> </ul> <p>Kosovo national strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MLSW (2017): Sector Strategy 2018–2022,</li> <li>• MLSW (2017): Action Plan for Increasing Youth Employment,</li> <li>• MEST (2016): Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021,</li> <li>• Kosovo Economic Reform Programmes 2017,</li> <li>• National Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo 2013 etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation design:</b></p> <p>The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</p> <p><b>Empirical methods:</b></p> <p>Document review and criteria-led analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant limitations</li> </ul>
<b>Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders</b>	<p><b>Direct target group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff of the MESTI, MLSW, management of EARK</li> <li>• Subsidiary institutions under MLSW: EARK and local employment offices</li> <li>• Management of VET school and</li> </ul> <p><b>Indirect target group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermediate beneficiaries: management staff, employment officers of local employment offices, management staff, teachers at VET institutes, in-company trainers of cooperating enterprises.</li> <li>• Final beneficiaries: Youth and young adults aged 15–35 from all ethnic groups in Kosovo.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation design:</b></p> <p>The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</p> <p><b>Empirical methods:</b></p> <p>Document analysis (assessment of MESTI, gender analysis), triangulated by interviews and focus group discussions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant limitations</li> </ul>
<b>Appropriateness of the design*</b>	<p>Results model (including results hypotheses)</p> <p>Capacity Development Strategy</p>	<p><b>Evaluation design:</b></p> <p>The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</p> <p><b>Empirical methods:</b></p> <p>Document analysis, triangulated by interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant limitations</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptability – response to change</b>	<p>Three modification offers from 2017, 2018 and 2018</p>	<p><b>Evaluation design:</b></p> <p>The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</p> <p><b>Empirical methods:</b></p> <p>Document analysis, Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant limitations</li> </ul>

\* The project design encompasses the project's objective and ToC (GIZ results model, graphic illustration and narrative results hypotheses) with outputs, activities, instruments and results hypotheses as well as the implementation strategy (e.g. methodological approach, capacity development strategy, results hypotheses).

## Conflict sensitivity in the project design

The project considered the fragile context in Kosovo, which is characterised by fragile governance and conflicts between different ethnic groups, mainly caused by the overarching conflict between the Kosovar central state and its widespread rejection by the Serbian population groups living in the north, as well as violence and organised crime also caused by limited economic prospects for large sections of the population (as outlined in Chapter 2.1). The project reacted to this situation with the measures listed in Tables 6 and 7:

Table 6: Dividers/escalating factors in the project context

Which dividers/escalating factors were identified in the project context?	Addressed by the project? (yes/no)	If addressed, how is it considered by the project design?
Fundamental conflict between the Albanian majority and Serbian population groups in the north.	Yes	Inclusion of marginalised youth from rural areas and the north, conflict-mitigating approaches in youth promotion
Organised crime, criminal networks and underground organisations and related violence.	Only indirectly	Employment promotion and training of Kosovar youth to open up prospects in the legal economy
Weak capacities of governmental institutions.	Yes	Capacity development of partner organisations

De-escalating factors/connectors were identified in the project's Peace and Conflict Strategy and addressed as shown in Table 7:

Table 7: Connectors/de-escalating factors in the project context

Which de-escalating factors/connectors were identified in the project context?	Addressed by the project? (yes/no)	If addressed, how is it considered by the project design?
Better employment opportunities provide potentially violent youth with prospects.	Yes	Whole project approach, particularly the support of marginalised youth from rural areas and the north
Cooperation and dialogue at local level.	Yes	Strengthen the capacities and cooperation of municipalities
Vital NGO landscape.	Yes	The project works with NGOs such as Medica Gjakova, Downs Syndrome Kosova, LINK

## 4.3 Coherence

This section analyses and assesses the coherence of the Youth, Employment and Skills, Kosovo project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see Annex).

### Summarising assessment and rating of coherence

Table 8: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: coherence

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
<b>Coherence</b>	Internal Coherence	43 out of 50 points
	External Coherence	48 out of 50 points
<b>Overall score and rating</b>		Score: <b>91 out of 100 points</b> Rating: <b>Level 2: successful</b>

The project performs a pioneering role within the landscape of projects supporting the VET system in Kosovo towards a stronger employment orientation and improved cooperation of VET institutes with enterprises. Internal coherence was fostered by the joint Sustainable Economic Development DC programme. Moreover, the systematic and coherent link between promoting the demand orientation and diversity of ALMMs and supporting VET towards greater labour market relevance is rated as strongly conducive to achieving the objective of improving the employment situation of Kosovar youth. Challenges were identified in adequately responding to the consequences of the refugee crisis in 2015.

Regarding external coherence, the evaluation team concluded that the project fits very well into the overall donor and VET and employment promotion landscape in Kosovo, not least due to the donor communities' and project team's own initiatives and efforts to align with the ecosystem in Kosovo. The project proactively sought contacts and exchanges with other donors and actors in the sector and reacted accordingly.

**In total, the coherence of the project is rated as Level 2: successful, with 91 out of 100 points.**

### **Analysis and assessment of coherence**

The coherence criterion comprises two dimensions: firstly, internal coherence, which primarily analyses the extent to which the design and implementation of the project fit with the instruments and other initiatives of German development cooperation and relevant (inter)national norms and standards, and secondly external coherence, which looks specifically at the complementarity and coordination of the project with other donors and the joint use of structures and common systems. The coherence criterion was mainly assessed through interviews with relevant stakeholders and the project team, as well as reviews of relevant documents.

#### **Coherence – Dimension 1: Internal Coherence**

**Coherence within the German development cooperation programme:** The project is part of the Sustainable Economic Development development cooperation (DC) programme. The coherence of the project's activities is reflected in the design of the programme, since its planning stage (see Modification Offer, 2019). The **high coherence** of the project within this development cooperation programme was not only confirmed by the interviewed stakeholders (Int\_1\_German donor agency, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_project partner), but also reflected in the high achievement rates of programme indicators 1 and 3<sup>4</sup>, to which the project directly contributes. In particular, the good interlinkage and **high coherence with the KfW-funded RCF and KCF** was highlighted (Int\_1\_project partner).

**Reintegration of returnees:** The refugee crisis of 2015 resulted in very high pressure on German organisations to react. A task force for the reintegration of returnees was established at national level to harmonise the approaches and measures taken by GIZ projects that are designed to support returnees, such as the URA and DIMAK reintegration project. Several activities were jointly implemented with DIMAK and URA. In addition, the YES project supported the Kosovar Ministry of Internal Affairs in the framework of a financial contract to set up and implement a self-employment scheme, which supported returnees with entrepreneurship training and start-up support (see relevance criterion). The above-mentioned accounting difficulties resulted in **political and reputational risks**: *'Integrating the promotion of returnees and classic development cooperation is in principle very challenging. In our case, this was politically extremely sensitive – on the German but also the Kosovar side. The Kosovar Ministry of the Interior had promised several hundred people the chance to start their own businesses. But there were not enough funds to do so. At the same time, there were special funds on the German side and very strong pressure to act.'* (Int\_1\_project team). Overall, the high pressure to react, particularly in 2016 and 2017, combined with funding through several different budget lines of different German donor institutions (BMZ, BAMF), and strong pressure for the outflow of funds, resulted in a number of activities

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<sup>4</sup> Programme Indicator 1: 8,560 persons (including 3,545 women) have access to improved education (especially basic education and vocational education and training) and labour market services. This indicator was (over-)achieved (achieved value: 9,715 persons, including 4,737 women). Programme Indicator 3: 7,670 persons (including 2,970 women) have newly found employment. This indicator was also (over)achieved (achieved value: 13,886 persons, including 4,009 women).



which were partly perceived as uncoordinated (Int\_1\_German donor agency, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_1\_project team). This problem was reportedly addressed by a BMZ mission to Kosovo in 2019, and based on stakeholder statements the problem was resolved after that (Int\_1\_German donor agency, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_DIMAK). Besides this challenge, the internal coherence was described as well coordinated and coherent by the stakeholders interviewed (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_German donor agency, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_DIMAK).

Coherence dimension 1 – Internal Coherence – scores **43 out of 50 points**.

## Coherence – Dimension 2: External Coherence

Regarding external coherence, overall the project successfully coordinated and cooperated with other donor agencies.

In the area of **VET**, other donor agencies acknowledged the project's pioneering role in supporting the VET system towards improved employer participation through the introduction of dual elements in VET (Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO). The project established a very successful collaboration with the *Enhancing Youth Employment* project implemented by Helvetas on behalf of Swiss Development Cooperation. The joint development of administrative guidelines for the countrywide implementation of WBL is a concrete result of this collaboration. A rather weak strategic orientation and weak steering capacities on the part of Kosovo partners were compensated for through continuous donor coordination and dialogue, to which the project actively contributed. Overall, other donor agencies confirmed a very high level of coherence between their projects and the YES project (Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO).

In the area of **employment promotion**, only a few other donors were active before and during implementation of the project, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Finnish Government and the British Government. The intervention approach of YES was confirmed as **well aligned and well coordinated**, particularly with UNDP's intervention approach, which supported EARK through co-financing to implement ALMMs such as a wage subsidy scheme and self-employment scheme (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO).

Based on these findings, the evaluators rate the project's external coherence as **very high**.

Coherence dimension 2 – External Coherence – scores **48 out of 50 points**.

## Methodology for assessing coherence

Table 9: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: coherence

Coherence: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Internal coherence	Financial Cooperation project KCF  TC module <i>Creating employment through export promotion</i>	<b>Evaluation design:</b> • The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)  <b>Empirical methods:</b>	• No expected limitations

Coherence: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured Interviews</li> <li>• Qualitative content analysis of answers<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>External coherence</b>	Interventions of other donors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU/ETF,</li> <li>• SDC,</li> <li>• LuxDev,</li> <li>• Austrian Development Agency</li> </ul>	<b>Evaluation design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</li> </ul> <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No expected limitations</li> </ul>

## 4.4 Effectiveness

This section analyses and assesses the effectiveness of the Youth, Employment and Skills, Kosovo project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see Annex).

### Summarising assessment and rating of effectiveness

Table 10: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Achievement of the (intended) objectives	30 out of 30 points
	Contribution to the achievement of objectives	26 out of 30 points
	Quality of implementation	20 out of 20 points
	Unintended results	17 out of 20 points
<b>Overall score and rating</b>		<b>Score: 93 out of 100 points</b> <b>Rating: Level 1: highly successful</b>

The evaluators' assessment found that all project indicators were fully achieved or overachieved by the end of the project. Given the difficult labour market conditions for youth in Kosovo, especially the very low labour market participation of women, the very high overachievement of project objective indicator 2 in particular is rated as very successful. The project was very well planned, adjusted well to changes in its context and was well implemented in a target-oriented manner. The analysis of three hypotheses through contribution analyses allowed for a more detailed examination of selected activities and corresponding pathways of change in the fields of VET and employment promotion. Activities to improve the quality and labour market relevance of VET (mainly Output C, hypothesis 1), particularly at the 11 institutes, through teacher and management training, the piloting of modernised training courses based on updated labour market-oriented curricula, and activities to improve private sector participation in VET, such as the development of WBL, achieved significant results towards improving the quality of training. Specific capacity development support to EARK based on a detailed needs assessment, combined with support to civil society actors (NGOs) and local governments resulted in significantly increased access by the project's target groups, including women and vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities etc., to demand-oriented ALMMs (Outputs A, B, hypothesis 2). As an overarching result of all project outputs (hypothesis 3), many more beneficiaries found employment after the end of the project than expected (achievement ratio: 175%), which can be explained by the project's adequate support measures and the fact that EARK's capacities and performance developed better than expected. The

<sup>5</sup> Following Mayring, 2015, several techniques will be applied, such as frequency analysis and typification/categorisation, to translate spoken language into technical terms etc.



intended positive direct results of the project were of course negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has reportedly affected the field of VET more than the area of employment promotion, as the planned establishment and expansion of WBL in the companies was significantly delayed and reduced by the pandemic. The quality of implementation was also assessed as very positive, and key success factors included the embeddedness of the project team in the government's key partner institutions and the project's close alignment with partner strategies and ongoing processes. A range of positive results, which were not necessarily planned beforehand but emerged during project implementation, could be identified during the evaluation, such as improved Recognition of Prior Learning capacities, improved digital capacities of partner organisations, as well as improved abilities of partners to cooperate.

**In total, the effectiveness of the project is rated as Level 1: highly successful, with 93 out of 100 points.**

### Analysis and assessment of effectiveness

For the *effectiveness* criterion, the evaluation analysed the extent to which the project achieved its desired objectives, measured by the module objective indicators (evaluation dimension 1) and the degree to which the project activities and instruments have contributed to achieving its direct results (evaluation dimension 2), based on a contribution analysis, for which three key causal relations were selected to be analysed in depth. Additionally, the assessment of effectiveness also covered the quality of implementation (evaluation dimension 3) and unintended results (evaluation dimension 4).

#### Effectiveness – Dimension 1: Achievement of the (intended) objectives

This section provides an overview of the achievement of the project objective 'the employability of Kosovar youth is improved', measured by the project objective indicators in the results matrix. The analysis of the indicators' achievement ratio required a comparison of the current status with the target values of the outcome indicators. As a precondition for the analysis, the indicators were assessed according to what extent they meet SMART criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely). The evaluation basis for assessing this dimension was the project's internal monitoring data and final report to BMZ, which was complemented by qualitative statements collected through interviews and discussions with project team members and key stakeholders to confirm the results shown in the table below.

Table 11: Assessed and adapted objective indicators for specific modules (outcome level)

Project's objective indicator according to the last Modification Offer (source: results matrix, monitoring plan of the project)	Assessment according to SMART* criteria	Specified objective indicator
1. The number of young <sup>6</sup> participants, including returnees, in the municipalities supported by the programme who have completed a target group-specific labour market policy measure <sup>7</sup> increases by an average of 45% per year (of whom 40% are women). Base value (2017): 550 Target value (2021): 6,062 Current value (31.05.2021): 8,409 (50% women) Achievement (31.05.2021, end of project): 100% (139%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific: yes</li> <li>• Measurable: yes</li> <li>• Achievable: yes</li> <li>• Relevant: yes</li> <li>• Time-bound: yes</li> </ul>	No adaptation necessary.

<sup>6</sup> According to the project's definition, the category 'young' comprised ages from 15 to 35. Reportedly, the project did not use the international definition of youth (15–24) to reach a wider range of target groups.

<sup>7</sup> The term target group-specific labour market policy measure comprises internship schemes, on-the-job training schemes, self-employment schemes and wage subsidy schemes.

Project's objective indicator according to the last Modification Offer (source: results matrix, monitoring plan of the project)	Assessment according to SMART* criteria	Specified objective indicator
2. 40% of the youth (of whom 40% are women and 10% are returnees) who participated in the supported labour market policy measures are in waged employment or self-employed, or in a further labour market integration measure within 6 months of the end of the measure. Base value (2017): 0 Target value (2021): 2,425 Current value (31.05.2021): 4,236 (57% women, 12% returnees) Achievement (31.05.2021): 100% (175%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific: partially (three different items in one indicator: waged employment, self-employed, further labour market integration measure)</li> <li>• Measurable: partially (see reason above)</li> <li>• Achievable: yes</li> <li>• Relevant: yes</li> <li>• Time-bound: yes</li> </ul>	No adaptation necessary.
3. 75% of the 80 surveyed companies that provide practical work experience (internships, on-the-job training) as part of 3-year training at VET institutes confirm that the skills of the trainees acquired as part of the training supported by the project meet their requirements. Base value (2017): 0 Target value (2021): 60 (75% of 80 surveyed companies) Current value (31.05.2021): 58 (78% of 74 companies) Achievement: 97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific: yes</li> <li>• Measurable: yes</li> <li>• Achievable: yes</li> <li>• Relevant: yes</li> <li>• Time-bound: yes</li> </ul>	No adaptation necessary.
* SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound		

As shown in the table above, project objective indicators 1 and 3 were assessed as SMART, with minor limitations only identified for indicator 2. The achievement ratios for indicators 1 and 2 are 100% or more. Indicator 3 was also almost fully achieved. Due to the achievement rate of 97% for indicator 3, but the significant overachievement of indicators 1 and 2, the evaluators conclude that the project objective indicators were fully achieved by the end of the project.

Effectiveness dimension 1 – Achievement of the (intended) objectives – scores **30 out of 30 points**.

### Effectiveness – Dimension 2: Contribution to the achievement of objectives

In this section, the results hypotheses chosen for the contribution analysis are analysed to illustrate in what way outputs contributed to project outcomes. The hypotheses were selected together with the project team during the inception phase based on 1) their significance within the overall project design and implementation reflected in the results model, 2) relevance for the project team and its main stakeholders, and 3) based on the feasibility of assessing and evaluating the links within the available time and resources of the evaluation. Following Mayne (2012), a theory-based approach was applied, in which the validated results model, including risks and assumptions, guided the analysis. The achievement of the intended results (Dimension 1) and their contributing factors (Dimension 2) of the effectiveness criterion are closely interlinked, and were therefore considered jointly in this section to illustrate the project's pathways of change to the outcome level. Evidence for the underlying hypotheses was collected through a mixed-method approach based on analysis of detailed documents and data from the project's results-oriented M&E system, interviews with project stakeholders and the project team, as well as a survey combined with focus group discussion conducted by the evaluators with the final beneficiaries (VET trainees and job-seekers supported by target group-oriented ALMMs). In the following, findings are compiled in a contribution story which identifies plausible explanations for either confirming or rejecting the chosen hypotheses. The contribution analysis begins with Output C under the VET Cluster (hypothesis 1) and then moves to the YEP Cluster (Outputs A and B, hypothesis 2). In a third step, the overarching employment effects on the project's beneficiaries are analysed (hypothesis 3).

## VET Cluster

Table 12: Results hypothesis 1 for effectiveness

<b>Hypothesis 1 (activity – output – outcome)</b>	Due to the project's support (including the modernisation of training courses towards labour market needs and development of WBL, capacity development at VET schools and VTCs, promotion of training in cooperation with enterprises and youth organisations), the quality of training at the 11 pilot VET institutes and their partner companies (expressed as the quality of teaching and learning, quality of learning environment, and relevance of training confirmed by enterprises and trainees <sup>8</sup> ) is improved.
<b>Main assumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involved management, departments, teachers at VET institutes are interested in the advisory services offered by the project,</li> <li>The project is capable of adequately providing such services,</li> <li>Companies are willing to cooperate with supported VET institutes,</li> </ul> The services cited above helped to improve training at supported VET institutes.
<b>Risks/unintended results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained personnel leave the supported pilot training institutions.</li> <li>Companies are reluctant to cooperate with the supported pilot training institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative explanation</b>	The employability of trainees can be improved by practical training within workshops at VET institutes without WBL at companies.
<b>Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed</b>	Confirmed.

The first hypothesis analyses pathways of change resulting from activities organised mainly under Output C to develop institutional capacities at the 11 supported pilot VET institutes.<sup>9</sup> Key activities mainly comprised:

- Capacity development for VET institutes, including training teachers on the revised core curricula, advisory support for school management and partially upgrading and reorganising workshops,
- Support for the further development of selected occupational standards and profiles as well as labour market-oriented curricula, and training examination staff to analyse and adapt qualifications,
- Establishment and expansion of cooperation models between supported VET institutes and neighbouring companies, with the participation of local governments to better link the different learning venues in cooperative VET. Based on MoUs between the 11 schools and 85 enterprises, these enterprises were actively involved in developing the curricula and planning the lessons. 475 vocational school students were able to be placed in WBL at the partner companies until pandemic measures began in March 2020, while 329 continued the in-company learning phase until June 2020.
- Development of a Kosovar standard for *In-company Instructors*, comprising three qualification levels (Level 1: *Workplace Instructor*, Level 2: *In-company Trainer*, Level 3: *Master Trainer*). This was done in close collaboration with chambers of commerce, industry associations and participating individual companies.
- Contribution to the development of administrative regulations for WBL together with the SDC-funded *Enhancing Youth Employment* project, which was adopted with project support.

All interviewed partners and stakeholders, as well as the interviewed and surveyed beneficiaries of the project, were asked to firstly confirm to what extent the quality of training (expressed as the **quality of teaching and learning, quality of learning environment, and relevance of training confirmed by enterprises and trainees**) had been improved, and secondly what were the contributing factors for this improvement.

<sup>8</sup> This specification is in line with the common quality models used in general education and TVET (e.g. Niedersächsisches Landesinstitut für schulische Qualitätsentwicklung Inspektion, 2013, Sächsisches Bildungsinstitut, 2008)

<sup>9</sup> These 11 pilot schools comprise one CoC (Qendra e Kompetencës Skenderaj / Srbica) and several VET schools (Hasan Prishtina – Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Arkitekt Sinani – Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Faik Konica – Ferizaj/Uroševac, Mehmet Isai – Gjilan/Gnjilane, Abdyl Ramaj – Suharekë/Suva Reka, Adem Gllavica – Lipjan/Lipljan, Bahri Haxha – Vushtrri/Vucitrn, Fehmi Lladrovci – Glogoc/Glogovac, Pjetër Bogdani – Ferizaj/Uroševac, Tafil Kasumaj – Deçan/Deçani). In addition, the following VTCs are supported by the project: Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Peja/Pec, Prizren, Gjakovë/Djakovica, Prishtinë/Prishtina

**Quality of teaching and learning:** The interviewed partners, the management of four selected VET institutes as well as eight VET teachers working at these four institutes and three so-called Master Trainers confirmed that the training of teaching staff significantly improved teaching and learning in the VET institutes (FGD\_1\_ stakeholders, FGD\_3\_ stakeholders, FGD\_4\_ stakeholders, Int\_2\_ stakeholders, Int\_3\_ stakeholders, Int\_4\_ stakeholders Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO). It was explained that the development of occupational standards and labour market-oriented curricula also contributed significantly to the improvement of teaching and learning at the supported VET institutes. However, **the training of teaching personnel was identified as the most significant factor** in improving teaching and learning in the VET schools and their partner companies (FGD\_1\_ stakeholders, FGD\_2\_ stakeholders, FGD\_3\_ stakeholders, FGD\_4\_ stakeholders, Int\_2\_ stakeholders, Int\_3\_ stakeholders, Int\_4\_ stakeholders, Int\_1\_ private sector actors). This result reflects the current state of research in educational science, which identifies the skills of teaching staff and adequate teacher action in classrooms and workshops as the essential factor for high-quality training (see, for example, Hattie, 2009 and 2012, Helmke, 2021).

**Quality of learning environment:** Another three core aspects that significantly improved relate to the quality of the learning environment: First of all, **improved cooperation between the public VET institutes and the private sector**, particularly companies that will be involved in VET planning, delivery and assessment, as well as improved **on-the-job training** were confirmed by the stakeholders interviewed (Int\_1\_ private sector actors, Int\_2\_ private sector actors, Int\_3\_ private sector actors Int\_4\_ private sector actors, FGD\_1\_ stakeholders, FGD\_2\_ stakeholders, FGD\_3\_ stakeholders, FGD\_4\_ stakeholders, Int\_2\_ stakeholders, Int\_3\_ stakeholders, Int\_4\_ stakeholders Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO). Increased social acceptance of generally binding training and examination standards was also confirmed by these stakeholders. The project's activities and outputs concentrated on these factors by establishing cooperation models between supported VET institutes and neighbouring companies, developing WBL and further training of 230 workplace instructors, 64 in-company trainers and 42 master trainers. With the development of a Kosovar standard for in-company trainers, the contribution to the development of administrative regulations for WBL and the training of examination staff to analyse and adapt qualifications, the regulatory framework was improved to enable the promotion of private sector participation in VET and the implementation of WBL in the medium and long term. These results correspond to the current state of the art in VET-related research (see, e.g. Euler, 2013, Euler, 2015, Dehnhostel, 2007) and are reflected in the priorities of German development cooperation in the field of promoting VET worldwide (see BMZ 2017b). An alternative explanation for improving the employability of VET trainees without WBL support in the partner companies and the promotion of cooperation models, i.e. skills development within a purely school-based approach, was discussed among the stakeholders interviewed. The majority of stakeholders interviewed highlighted the advantages of a cooperative training approach, mainly because of the 'real workplace experiences' of trainees during WBL and the higher potential for the training companies to retain a share of trainees they have trained in the companies, which significantly improves the employment opportunities of VET trainees (Int\_1\_project partner, FGD\_3\_ stakeholders).

As an additional important result of the project, the evaluators rate the advisory support for the 11 pilot institutes for applying to the KfW-funded RCF and the KCF. Of the 11 pilot schools, 4 passed the first application round for the RCF, which was rated as a positive result by the stakeholders interviewed regarding this topic, considering the rather difficult context situation in Kosovo compared to other Balkan countries (Int\_1\_other donor project, Int\_2\_other donor project).

**Quality and relevance of training confirmed by enterprises and trainees:** The statements of **companies** interviewed during the evaluation confirmed the picture. They reported that they were able to train trainees based on their specific needs. Both companies interviewed confirmed that they have retained at least a share of their trainees after training at their company. This reflects experiences in countries with well-established dual systems, where training companies employ a high proportion of their trainees after the training (see BIBB, 2021, p. 263ff.). This corresponds to the findings obtained within the project's results-based monitoring system.



58 (78%) out of 74 surveyed companies that provide WBL (internships, on-the-job training, etc.) as part of the three-year vocational education at VET institutes supported by the project confirmed that the trainees' skills met their requirements (see Table 11, project objective indicator 3).

Photo 1: Practical training at CoC Skenderaj (Source/©: GIZ 2020)



19 **trainees** (12 male, 7 female)<sup>10</sup> trained at the four VET institutes visited during the evaluation mission (see Table 2, page 15) were surveyed, combined with focus group discussions to gain more insights into the quality of training at the VET institutes supported by the project. The survey results are summarised in the following table:

Table 13: Results of trainees' survey

Assessment criteria	Questions	Number of answers by trainees					
		Very much	Much	Average	Not much	Not at all	No answer
Employment relevance of training	1. What do you think: Did the course prepare you for the work in your (future) company?	5	4	7	-	1	2
	2. Did the course improve your employment chances?	5	4	7	-	1	2
Overall quality of training	3. Would you recommend the course to friends and/or relatives? <sup>11</sup>	18	-	-	1	-	-
Skills of teaching staff	4. Are you satisfied with the supervision by the trainers?	11	5	1	-	-	2
	5. Are the trainers competent?	11	5	3	-	-	-
WBL	6. Are you satisfied with the training in the company (work-based learning)?	8	4	4	1	-	2

<sup>10</sup> Only 19 trainees could be surveyed because the four VET institutes visited during the evaluation were holding exams, in line with the academic calendar. In the four VET institutes visited, only 19 trainees who had been trained in training courses supported by the project were present for their exams.

<sup>11</sup> In the evaluation of educational programmes, loyalty (measured by the question of whether a person would recommend the programme to others) is used as a valid criterion for educational success (cf. Gibson/Rankin, 2015).

Overall, the findings of this survey paint a positive picture. The majority of trainees are very satisfied with their training (question 3) and also very satisfied or satisfied with the skills of their teachers/trainers and their supervision (questions 4 and 5). This confirms a strong contribution of the project's activities to high-quality development of VET; in particular, it confirms the important factor mentioned above of improving the skills of teaching staff. The trainees' answers regarding their employment chances after their training, as well as their satisfaction with WBL, paint a more heterogeneous picture: seven trainees are trained at the Skenderaj CoC. Six out of these seven trainees rated their satisfaction with WBL as *very high*, and one of them as *high*. These results correlate strongly with their ratings of employment chances: In question 1, four trainees rated these as *very much* and three out of the seven as *much*. In question 2, four trainees also rated these as *very much* and three out of the seven as *much*. This can be explained by the fact the CoC went far in establishing cooperation structures with enterprises and in developing WBL training places at their partner companies. Furthermore, the CoC has received considerable support (also from other donors) in the past to update its VET programmes and upgrade its workshops. On the other hand, the VET school in Mitrovica, at which 10 trainees were interviewed, reported that there was only limited improvement in establishing WBL and improving training at the institute. This was mainly due to the disadvantaged environment of the school, in which only smaller-scale companies operate that have been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is reflected in the rather negative results of the trainees' ratings (7 out of 10 interviewed trainees rated questions 1 and 2, which refer to the improvement of their employment chances, as *average*, while 1 rated both questions as *not at all*). For the trainees interviewed from the VET school in Mitrovica, the answers to questions 1 and 2 also correlate with question 6 on WBL (4 out of 10 rated this *average*, 1 rated it *not much*, 2 did not answer, only 1 rated it *much*).

**Overall hindering factors:** The **weak capacities of the Kosovar VET system**, in particular, the weak involvement of the business sector in the VET system, and in comparison to other Balkan countries only a few initial movements in the direction of a change towards dualisation. These factors, combined with the limited practical skills of VET teaching personnel and centralised inadequate financing, and the weak capacities of Kosovar companies, which are mostly small-scale family businesses, were reported as the biggest limitations on the results of the project's activities and outputs (Int\_1\_ private sector actors, Int\_2\_ private sector actors, Int\_3\_ private sector actors Int\_4\_ private sector actors, FGD\_1\_ stakeholders, FGD\_2\_ stakeholders, FGD\_3\_ stakeholders, Int\_2\_ stakeholders, Int\_3\_ stakeholders, Int\_4\_ stakeholders Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO). The **COVID-19 pandemic** was reportedly the strongest factor, hindering the achievement of more positive results to improve the quality of training. In particular, the establishment of WBL was severely hindered, as the shutdown hit many smaller companies very hard, with the result that they either trained only very few or no trainees at all within the framework of WBL. Based on this analysis, the evaluators conclude that the project activities and outputs contributed to an improved quality of training at the 11 pilot training institutions, which **confirms hypothesis 1**.

## YEP Cluster

Table 14: Results hypothesis 2 for effectiveness

<b>Hypothesis 2 (activity – output – outcome)</b>	The project's support in the area of employment promotion (including the promotion of sector-specific internship schemes, on-the-job training, job fairs, wage subsidies, self-employment schemes based on the specific needs of different target groups) results in improved access to target group-oriented ALMMs.
<b>Main assumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involved management and departments of employment offices and EARK are willing to implement new target group-oriented ALMMs introduced by the project,</li> <li>The project is capable of providing adequate support,</li> <li>Companies are willing to cooperate in the context of these modernised ALMMs.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks/unintended results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The improved ALMMs are not in demand by the target groups.</li> <li>Weak capacities of the Kosovar Employment Agency minimise the improvement of ALMMs.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative explanation</b>	-

Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed	Confirmed
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The second hypothesis refers to pathways of change resulting from activities organised under Outputs A and B to improve youth access to demand-oriented ALMMs. Key activities mainly comprised:

- Internship schemes and on-the-job training (e.g. in the IT, gastronomy, wood processing, metal processing and textile sectors).
- Entrepreneurship training, including the award of best business ideas with financial support. For selected grantees, the project facilitated a mentorship programme for businessmen or businesswomen.
- Wage Subsidy Scheme.
- Local stakeholder meetings for employment promotion, which resulted in joint activities such as job fairs at local level organised in cooperation with municipalities' local employment offices and local NGOs.
- Non-formal education and training: soft skills training (strengthening youth employability through improving communication skills, self-motivation, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving etc.), implemented in close cooperation with youth centres, civil society (NGOs).
- Soft skills training combined with job fairs, careers fairs, and internship placements for unemployed youth from ethnic minorities in northern Kosovo, were implemented in cooperation with NGOs and local businesses.
- Promotion of self-employment and mentorship programmes for returnees.

These support measures of the project resulted in an increased number of youths, including returnees, participating in target group-oriented ALMMs in the municipalities supported by the project, from 550 per year in 2017 to 8,409 as at 31.05.2021.40% of these young people are women (see Table 10, module indicator 1). This increase achieved by the project is significantly higher than the planned increase (planned target value of 6,062).

In the framework of hypothesis 2, this evaluation analyses the most important factors for this overachievement. Interviewed partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project were firstly asked to confirm to what extent the ALMMs supported by the project have been improved, and that they meet the target groups' demand, and secondly what factors contributed to this improvement. To gain an overall picture, the seven interviewed stakeholders, comprising the management of EARK, one employment office (Mitrovica), three NGOs and one youth centre (Rahovec) were asked to rate the improvement in access to target group-oriented ALMMs on a 5-level-Likert-scale in the first step. The results of these ratings are shown in the table below:

Table 15: Results of rating the level of improvement of access to target group-oriented ALMMs

Question	Number of answers by trainees				
	Very much	Much	Average	Not much	Not at all
From your point of view, to what extent has overall access to target group-oriented ALMMs improved due to the support from the project?	2	5	-	-	-

The table above shows an overall confirmation by the stakeholders interviewed (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_5\_stakeholders, Int\_1\_civil society actors, Int\_2\_civil society actors, Int\_3\_civil society actors). In the second step, the interviewees were asked to explain their rating based on examples. An NGO which supports disabled target groups reported that 'The manuals developed with the support of the project improved the capabilities of the VTC trainers on how to work with specific people. Instructions were given within the manual on how to work with people with disabilities.' (Int\_1\_civil society actors).

In addition, it was reported that the ALMMs could be implemented much more efficiently (*Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders*) because the efficiency of internal procedures within EARK was substantially improved due to the support of the project (*Int\_1\_stakeholders*). The data from the project's results-based monitoring system confirm these statements. In a survey in which 4,750 project beneficiaries (youth, including returnees), were asked about the usefulness of the supported ALMMs in terms of improving their employment opportunities on a five-point scale, the mean value of all responses was 4.6 (see YES: final project report).<sup>12</sup>

Photo 2: Training of people with disabilities (Source/©: GIZ 2020)



The 10 beneficiaries interviewed (four beneficiaries with disabilities [one male, three female], four vulnerable beneficiaries [two male, two female]) also confirmed this result. They reported that *'I now run a company in the village Gjonaj. My entrepreneurship training was very useful and fits my situation. We have developed a business plan. We worked on sewing masks and bags. We learned useful things and we could buy tools. This has helped me a lot.'* (FGD\_2\_target group). Other beneficiaries pointed out that *'We participated in-career orientation training. They are very satisfied with the training and especially with the trainer. Through the training, we managed to get an overview of job opportunities and career pathways. It also improved our self-confidence and focus on our activities'* (four beneficiaries, FGD\_6\_target group).

The following most important contributing factors to this improved access to ALMMs identified and/or confirmed by the stakeholders interviewed mainly refer to support from the project:

- The ability of EARK to address a significantly increased number of target groups through support from the YES project in the framework of the financing contract, reflected in the interviewee statement: *'We supported a larger number of beneficiaries because we had budget support from the YES project'* (*Int\_2\_project partner*). This factor was confirmed by other stakeholders (*Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_5\_stakeholders*) as well as the project team (*FGD\_2\_project team*) and the GIZ Sectoral Department (*Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters*).

<sup>12</sup> The Output indicator A2 (4,750 participants (young people), including returnees, rated the benefit of the labour market measures in terms of improving their employment opportunities on a five-point scale with an average of 3.5) was significantly overachieved.



- The NGOs interviewed rated the same factor as most important: The ability of NGOs to address a larger number of trainees through financing contracts (Int\_1\_ civil society actors, Int\_3\_ civil society actors).
- An additional factor that was rated as highly important was the improvement of EARK's capacities and performance due to the projects' support. This factor was rated as the most important explanation for the overachievement of module indicator 1, reflected in the statement: *'I see the reason for the over fulfilment of indicator 1 in the fact that we underestimated the improvement of EARK's performance. EARK is a fairly young institution<sup>13</sup> that we have supported through the financing contract. Our capacity development support for EARK has had a very positive effect. We would not have thought beforehand that we would exceed the indicator despite such events as the Coronavirus pandemic'* (Int\_1\_project team). In addition to the project teams' interpretation, the main partners and stakeholders confirmed this statement (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_ stakeholders, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team).
- As the most important contextual factor, the COVID-19 pandemic was rated as a very strong hindering factor which negatively affected the results of the project (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_ stakeholders, Int\_1\_project team). It was assumed that the overachievement of the indicator would have been even higher without the pandemic.
- The willingness of companies to participate in the framework of demand-oriented ALMMs (particularly in internship schemes and wage subsidy schemes) was mentioned as a positive and supporting factor. It was rated as a strong influencing factor (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_1\_ private sector actors, Int\_1\_ stakeholders, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_1\_project team, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_ civil society actors).
- Other contextual factors such as the general economic trend (without taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic) and the governance and ethnic situation were rated as less important and not having considerable influence on the access by project beneficiaries to needs-oriented ALMMs (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_1\_ private sector actors, Int\_1\_ stakeholders, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_1\_project team, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_ civil society actors, Int\_3\_ civil society actors).

Based on this analysis, the evaluators conclude that the project's activities and outputs contributed to improved access to target group-oriented ALMMs, which **confirms hypothesis 2**.

### Employment Effects of the VET Cluster and the YEP Cluster

Table 16: Results hypothesis 3 for effectiveness

<b>Hypothesis 3 (activity – output – outcome)</b>	Through the increased access to improved training at the 11 pilot training institutions and the improved access to target group-oriented ALMMs, the employment situation of project beneficiaries is improved.
<b>Main assumption</b>	The beneficiaries of the project are willing and able to find employment even in a difficult labour market situation.
<b>Risks/unintended results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A difficult labour market situation that makes it very difficult for the beneficiaries to find a job.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative explanation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different regional labour market demand influences the beneficiaries' employment situation. Age and gender influence the beneficiaries' employment situation.</li> <li>• The beneficiaries' educational background influences their employment situation.</li> </ul>
<b>Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed</b>	Confirmed

The third hypothesis refers to pathways of change resulting from improved quality of training at the 11 pilot training institutions (a result that is analysed by hypothesis 1), improved access to target group-oriented ALMMs through partner companies (result analysed by hypothesis 2), and an improved employment situation

<sup>13</sup> EARK was established in 2015.

of project beneficiaries (see results model, Figure 1, Chapter 2.2). It is one level higher than the two results of hypotheses 1 and 2 but also measures achievement of the project objective.<sup>14</sup>

According to common models and experiences<sup>15</sup> evaluating employment effects in employment promotion and VET, the following criteria are essential influencing factors on the employment situation of supported people:

- Demographic characteristics of beneficiaries: Gender,<sup>16</sup>
- Type of support measure (ALMMs)/quality of VET (focus of hypothesis 3),
- Local labour market situation: Region, locality of beneficiaries.

The results of a tracer study conducted by the project as part of the results-based M&E system (referring to project objective indicator 2) were used as the primary data source to analyse hypothesis 3. Within this tracer study, 560 beneficiaries (62.4% female, 37.5% male) were sampled by randomised sampling (see GIZ/YES 2020b, GIZ/YES 2021: Database tracer studies). In addition, stakeholder interviewees were used to triangulate the tracer study results. Since the tracer studies focused on the employment effects of ALMMs, the stakeholder interviews had much higher relevance in the analysis of the quality of VET as an important factor for employment.

**Employment situation of beneficiaries:** As shown in Table 11, 4,236 (50.4%) out of 8,409 young beneficiaries who participated in ALMMs are employed (in waged employment or self-employed) or in a further ALMM within six months of the end of the measure. Since the monitoring data referring to indicator 2 do not exactly identify the share of employed beneficiaries, the results of a tracer study of beneficiaries supported by target group-oriented ALMMs were analysed in depth. Of a sample of 560 beneficiaries analysed within the tracer studies, **37% of the beneficiaries are employed** (of which 8% are self-employed) and 31.8% attend further training. **Only 23.2% of beneficiaries are unemployed/not participating in the labour market for six months, which is significantly lower than the youth unemployment quota of 55%** (cf. *ibid.*).<sup>17</sup> The following information on contributing factors to the beneficiaries' employment situation refers to the 560 beneficiaries sampled within the tracer studies.

**Demographic characteristics of beneficiaries:** The analysis of the sampled beneficiaries identified that 40.5% of all male beneficiaries are employed, while the employment quota of female beneficiaries is slightly lower, at 34.9%. No differences were identified in the type of employment (wage employment, self-employment).

Table 17: Employment situation of sampled beneficiaries by gender (n = 560)

Employment situation per gender	Employed	Employed: Self-employed	Further training	Unemployed
Male	40.5%	8.1%	34.3%	17.1%
Female	34.9%	8%	30.3%	26.9%

Table 17 shows that only 8% (female) and 8.1% (male) of the employed beneficiaries are self-employed, while the majority are in waged employment (92% female, 91.9% male). The share of male beneficiaries who attend further training (which potentially improves future employment prospects) is slightly higher than the share of

<sup>14</sup> The term *employability* is not measurable as such. It refers to different aspects relevant to an individual's ability to gain employment and income. In scientific debate, *employment-relevant competences* and the *employment situation or trend of a person* are the most common measures to empirically analyse employability (see, for example, Harvey 2001, Roesler 2020). As skills assessments or even tests have to be carried out in a very elaborate way, and were therefore only part of the project's results-oriented M&E system in a very simplified way (see Table 11, indicator 3), the aspects *quality of training*, *access to demand-oriented ALMMs* and the *employment trend of the project beneficiaries* were chosen to operationalise employability in the framework of this evaluation and to analyse the project's contribution to the achievement of the project objective.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Krempkow/Pastohr, 2006, RWI 2019, RWI 2016

<sup>16</sup> The most common demographic characteristics identified as contributing factors to the employment situation of a person are gender and age (cf. Krempkow/Pastohr 2006, RWI 2019, RWI 2016). Since the project focuses on youth employment promotion, which narrows down the age scope, the analysis concentrates on gender only.

<sup>17</sup> As the data referring to the total number of 8,409 beneficiaries supported by ALMMs was provided to the project by EARK, it is not entirely clear what proportion of beneficiaries who are not counted as employed or in another labour market integration measure within six months of the end of the measure (49.6% of all beneficiaries supported by ALMMs) are in further training or unemployed. Even assuming that only a small proportion of them are in further education, the unemployment rate would still be well below the national rate of approximately 55% (cf. GIZ/YES 2020b).

female beneficiaries. On the other hand, the share of female beneficiaries who are unemployed/not participating in the labour market for 6 months is visibly higher than the share of males. Although the differences are not that high, the labour market participation of male beneficiaries is higher than that of female beneficiaries. The evaluators therefore conclude that **gender is a significant factor** in the employment situation of the beneficiaries.

**Type of support measure (ALMMs):** The comparison of employment quotas by different types of measures paints a heterogeneous picture, as shown in the table below.

Table 18: Employment situation of sampled beneficiaries by type of ALMM (n = 560)

Type of ALMM	Waged employment	Self-employed	Further training	Unemployed
Entrepreneurship schemes	24.1%	65.5%	6.9%	3.4%
Internship schemes	49.1%	3.1%	20.1%	27.7%
Non-formal education	31.7%	2.4%	48.8%	17.1%
Non-formal training	27.3%	6%	41.2%	25.5%
On-the-job training	50%	0	35.7%	14.3%
Wage subsidy scheme	50%	10%	16.7%	23.3%

*Wage subsidies*, the *on-the-job training scheme*, the *internship schemes* and the *entrepreneurship scheme* achieved the highest employment quotas, which corresponds with comparable studies (see e.g. GIZ/YES 2019, RWI 2019). The most important advantage of the *wage subsidy scheme*, the *on-the-job training scheme* and the *internship schemes* is the direct placement of the beneficiaries at the employer (see GIZ/YES 2019, Int\_2\_project partner). This is, at the same time, the most critical bottleneck, since a reasonable number of employers willing to participate in these ALMMs needs to be acquired (*Int\_2\_project partner*, *Int\_1\_stakeholders*). Consequentially, the numbers of beneficiaries who participated in these schemes is considerably lower than the number of participants in non-formal education and non-formal training. Regarding the *entrepreneurship scheme*, it is no surprise that 65.5% of all employed beneficiaries established their own business (self-employed). The high employment quota of this scheme makes it very interesting as an effective ALMM. However, the survival rate of the businesses established needs to be taken into account. A comparative study that analysed the ALMMs of EARK in 2019 found that, out of 19 businesses established in 2016 and 2017, only 12 were still operating in 2019, the year of the survey (see GIZ/YES 2019, p. 110). Overall, it can be summarised that **ALMMs which achieve a direct placement of the beneficiaries at an employer** can be rated as **most effective** regarding employment creation, but the acquisition of employers willing and able to participate in these ALMMs is a critical challenge.

**Quality of VET:** In addition to the comparison of ALMMs, the quality of VET as a contributing factor to the employment situation of the project beneficiaries is analysed. In the absence of tracer studies analysing the employment situation of VET graduates, 19 trainees (12 male, 7 female, see previous chapter, p. 33) who were trained at the project's pilot institutions at the time of the evaluation were asked about their perception of the extent to which VET has improved their employment chances. As summarised in Table 13 on page 33, the answers of the trainees indicate a strong correlation with their ratings on the quality of WBL and their rating regarding their employment chances after their training – trainees who perceived a high quality of WBL also rated their employment chances as high. This indicates that **high-quality VET, particularly VET with strong employer participation is a contributing factor** to the beneficiaries' employment situation. With regard to the informative potential of the results, it must be mentioned that the number of trainees surveyed is, of course, limited and therefore only representative to a limited extent. However, these findings correspond to analyses about the employment-related results of VET with high employer participation, such as Dual VET (see e.g. Euler, 2013).

Local labour market situation: Comparison of the tracer study results regarding regions identified visible differences in the employment situation of the 560 sampled beneficiaries:

Table 19: Employment situation of sampled beneficiaries by region (n = 560)

Employment situation per region	Waged employment	Self-employed	Further training	Unemployed
Ferizaj	48.3%	4.6%	21.8%	25.3%
Gjakova	14.3%	14.3%	26%	45.4%
Gjilan	36.7%	8.2%	24.5%	30.6%
Mitrovica	35.9%	10.7%	41.7%	11.7%
Peja	44%	4%	32%	20%
Prishtina	50.8%	7.7%	13.8%	27.7%
Prizren	34.1%	6.2%	45.7%	14.4%
All regions	37%	8%	31.8%	23.2%

Table 19 illustrates that, when compared to other parts of the country, project beneficiaries living in urban centres with economic development such as Prishtina, Ferizaj, with vibrant economic development of small and medium-sized enterprises, and Peja with its formerly state-owned but now privatised and still operating industry, achieve higher employment quotas than beneficiaries living in rural areas. Particularly in Gjakova, a vulnerable area in terms of economic development and infrastructure, the employment quota of the beneficiaries is significantly lower than average. Moreover, Table 19 shows a correlation between a low overall employment quota and a higher share of self-employment, as job-seekers use this opportunity in absence of other attractive employment opportunities. Surprisingly, Mitrovica achieved middling employment rates despite being a rather economically vulnerable and politically unstable area. Overall, the tracer study results confirm that the **local labour market situation of the region** the project beneficiaries live in **contributes significantly** to their employment situation.

Based on this analysis, which identified that only 23.2% of the 560 beneficiaries analysed by the tracer study were unemployed or not participating in the labour market for 6 months (compared to a national youth unemployment quota of 55%), the evaluators conclude that the improved training at the 11 pilot training institutions and the improved access to target group-oriented ALMMs contributed to improving the beneficiaries' employment situation. However, the rather low employment quota – just 37% – of the beneficiaries analysed by the tracer study limits these results. Therefore, the evaluators rate **hypothesis 3 as partially confirmed**.

Effectiveness dimension 2 – Contribution to the achievement of objectives – scores **26 out of 30 points**.

### Effectiveness – Dimension 3: Quality of implementation

Within this dimension, the quality of implementation as regards the team set-up, leadership and collaboration within the team, work culture and collaboration with partners is assessed. Regarding the team set-up, it became clear during the evaluation interviews that all required skills profiles were covered in the project team. Clear profile descriptions existed, work was split between team members in a reasonable way and team members reported that they always had a person to turn to if they encountered a challenge (Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team). Communication within the team was, furthermore, ensured through weekly team meetings i.e. stand-ups multiple times a week during COVID-19-induced remote work (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team). Regarding partner collaboration, several measures have been carried out by the project, such as the establishment of a regular office at MESTI which was used by project staff to continuously advise the ministry based on planned activities, but also on an ad hoc basis. Moreover, a steering committee was set up (that comprised MESTI, MLSW, EARK and GIZ) that held regular meetings and had to sign off core activities. The project also held biweekly meetings with MESTI, ERAK and MLSW at operational level (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters). This close collaboration was rated very positively by the project partners (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner). It was highlighted that *'the advisory support of the YES project was very comprehensive and useful'* (Int\_1\_project partner), and that *'the cooperation with the YES project had a high impact on our staff, it visibly*

*improved our capacities'* (Int\_2\_project partner). On the other hand, the project team reported that the very high fluctuation of staff at the partner ministries caused a lot of challenges which were mitigated by close collaboration with the project partners (Int\_1\_project team, FGD\_2\_project team). The evaluators therefore conclude a **very high** quality of implementation.

Effectiveness dimension 3 – Quality of implementation – scores **20 out of 20 points**.

#### **Effectiveness – Dimension 4: Unintended results**

A range of positive results, which were not necessarily planned beforehand but emerged during project implementation, could be identified during the evaluation. The most important results are outlined below.

**Improved Recognition of Prior Learning capacities:** The development of capacities for Recognition of Prior Learning in the area of welding was not planned but emerged during the project's implementation. The development of these capacities was rated as very useful to improving the employment chances of people with informally acquired competences (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team).

**Improved digital capacities of partner organisations:** The adjustment of project activities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a stronger focus on digitalisation. In the area of VET, the capacities of the supported VET institutes were strengthened through the implementation of several training courses on teaching and learning methods that included blended learning, the development of a manual on digital learning, and training courses for quality inspectors of the VET institutes. Furthermore, the project supported the setting up of an online platform for VET teachers to continue their exchanges even during the pandemic-induced lockdowns. These platforms are reported as being well used, which resulted in the implementation of several online courses using this platform (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team). The set-up of this platform and the implementation of the online courses was rated as very beneficial (FGD\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_2\_stakeholders, FGD\_3\_stakeholders, FGD\_4\_stakeholders, Int\_4\_stakeholders). In total, 100 VET teachers were trained through e-learning courses. In the area of employment promotion, the project supported the implementation of digital job fairs and digital job applicant training. The stakeholders interviewed reported that this prevented a decline in job placements during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is reflected in the high achievement rates of the project objective indicators 1 and 2 platforms (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team).

Effectiveness dimension 4 – Unintended results – scores **17 out of 20 points**.

#### **Methodology for assessing effectiveness**

Table 20: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness

<b>Effectiveness: assessment dimensions</b>	<b>Basis for assessment</b>	<b>Evaluation design and empirical methods</b>	<b>Data quality and limitations</b>
<b>Achievement of the (intended) objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results-based monitoring system,</li> <li>Perception of key partners, perception of project team member.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation design:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</li> </ul> <p><b>Empirical methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of monitoring data, analysis of progress and endline reports, interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant limitations</li> </ul>

Effectiveness: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
<b>Contribution to the achievement of objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hypothesis 1</li> <li>• Hypothesis 2</li> <li>• Hypothesis 3</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation design:</b> Contribution analysis</p> <p><b>Empirical methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hypothesis 1: Analysis of relevant project documents and monitoring data, triangulation with interviews of management staff, VET teachers, trainees of 1 CoC, 2 VET schools, 1 VTC (the planned criteria-based lesson observations based on a standardised questionnaire (see Kappher/Schlake, 2018) could not be carried out because examinations were held during the evaluation mission), interviews with companies, KCC, other donor organisations.</li> <li>• Hypothesis 2: Analysis of relevant project documents and monitoring data, triangulated by interviews with key partners and selected beneficiaries.</li> <li>• Hypothesis 3: Quantitative analysis of monitoring results (tracer study results), triangulated with interviews of key partners and selected beneficiaries.</li> </ul> <p>All hypotheses: Validation workshop and verification with recent findings of scientific debate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant limitations</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of implementation</b>	<p>Capacity works elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results-based monitoring system</li> <li>• Capacity development strategy</li> <li>• Plan of operations stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluation design:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</li> </ul> <p><b>Empirical methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analysis.</li> <li>• Interviews with project team and relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant limitations</li> </ul>
<b>Unintended results</b>	Involvement of all relevant stakeholders	<p><b>Evaluation design:</b> Most Significant Change</p> <p><b>Empirical methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group discussion and interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anecdotal evidence</li> </ul>
* SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound			

## 4.5 Impact

This section analyses and assesses the impact of the Youth, Employment and Skills, Kosovo project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see Annex).

### Summarising assessment and rating of impact

Table 21: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: impact

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
<b>Impact</b>	Higher-level (intended) development changes/results	25 out of 30 points
	Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes	34 out of 40 points
	Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes	24 out of 30 points
<b>Impact score and rating</b>		Score: <b>83 out of 100 points</b>
		Rating: <b>Level 2: successful</b>



The project contributed to the achievement of overarching results towards SDG 4 and SDG 8 on quality education, decent work and economic growth. In VET, the project contributed to improvements in the regulatory framework, through its involvement in developing regulatory guidelines for WBL, the development of qualification standards for in-company trainers and the accreditation of two institutions for the training of workplace trainers, as well as the accreditation of modernised training courses at the National Qualification Authority. In the area of employment promotion, the project's capacity development measures substantially contributed to improved capacities at EARK, at central management level and the local level of public employment offices, as well as to an improved institutional set-up and effective cooperation models at local level in the supported pilot regions. It also improved private sector involvement in the implementation of ALMMs. Employer representatives confirmed the improved supply of adequately trained workers as an overarching result of the project, which is fully in line with the objectives of the DC Programme Sustainable Economic Development in Kosovo.

**In total, the impact of the project is rated as Level 2: successful, with 83 out of 100 points.**

### **Analysis and assessment of impact**

The evaluation team followed a similar methodological basis as for assessing the effectiveness criteria and implemented a contribution analysis to assess impact. The achieved impacts of the project (Dimension 1) and contributions to the impact level (Dimension 2) were analysed during the evaluation. As a basis, the situation before GIZ engagement in the project's intervention area was established through recall questions during interviews and discussions and compared with the actual situation and expected impacts. Dimensions 1 and 2 of the impact criterion are closely interlinked and were therefore considered jointly, as the contribution analyses in the second dimensions specifically illustrate the project's pathways of change from outcome to impact level.

#### **Impact – Dimension 1: Higher-level (intended) development changes/results**

Due to the synergetic linkage between VET and employment promotion in the project design at impact level, essential results comprise contributions to an improved *quality of education* (SDG 4) as well as to *decent work and economic growth* in the supported sectors (SDG 8), to provide the basis for *peace, justice, strong institutions* (SDG 16) (see results model, Figure 1, Chapter 2.2). Ultimately, this is intended to lead to overall *sustainable economic growth* (SDG 9) and to the reduction of *poverty* (SDG 1). Several contributions could be empirically observed during the evaluation (evidence-based contributions), whereas for other intended impacts only a potential for contributions is seen for the future (plausible contributions). They will be illustrated in the following.

### **Improved VET in Kosovo**

First of all, interviews have shown that the project substantially contributed to an improved regulatory framework necessary for effective and coherent governance of the VET system. In particular, the administrative regulations for the nationwide implementation of WBL and the standards for in-company trainers developed by the project were seen by the interviewees as having substantial potential to significantly improve the employment and practice orientation in the Kosovar VET system. The **significantly better-organised roll-out of WBL in the country** was rated as the most important impact of the project in this regard. One interviewee highlighted that *'Projects come and go. Currently, we have projects from LUXDEV, ALLED2<sup>18</sup>, the EYE<sup>19</sup> project, and GIZ in the VET sector. The major change in the sector has been made by GIZ and the EYE project because they worked with the companies much more intensively than LUXDEV and ALLED2 are doing'* (Int\_1\_project partner). Secondly, it was confirmed by the stakeholders interviewed that **framework conditions for EU alignment in the area of VET** have been **slightly improved** by establishing a

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<sup>18</sup> This acronym refers to the project *Aligning Education and Training with Labour Market Needs – ALLED Phase II*, which is funded by the European Union, co-funded by Austrian Development Cooperation and implemented by the Austrian Development Agency.

<sup>19</sup> The acronym refers to the *Enhancement of Youth Employment* project implemented by Swiss Development Cooperation.



transnational steering body (comprising Chamber of Crafts Dortmund, the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, MESTI, the National Qualification Authority and others) and formulating a model to promote the recognition of Kosovar initial qualifications in the construction sectors between Kosovo and Germany. This model was presented to Kosovar and German partners from ministries, subordinated authorities, chambers, business associations and research institutes in February 2021. The high potential was confirmed for **raising the standard of qualification in the Kosovar construction sector**, and promoting formalised and well-organised **labour mobility** between Kosovo and Germany, which contributes not only to improved **quality of education (SDG 4)** but which also has a high potential to contribute to **decent employment and economic growth** in the construction sector (**SDG 4**) (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_1\_private sector actors). *Thirdly, the stakeholder interviews confirmed that the improved roll-out of WBL and higher quality training in the 11 supported pilot centres resulted in an improved image of VET* (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_1\_private sector actors).

### Improved capacities of partner institutions

The interviews revealed that a substantial improvement in capacities was not only achieved at selected pilot VET institutes, employment offices and NGOs, but also in the direct partners of the project, at MESTI, MLSW and EARK. As confirmed by many stakeholder interviews (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project team), the most significant improvements in capacity were achieved at EARK, substantially contributing to **strong institutions and good governance (SDG 16)**. This was confirmed by EARK, highlighting that the efficiency of internal procedures was substantially improved due to the support from the project: *'With the support of YES we could improve the organisation of our info sessions and application process, we could also improve the efficiency of our internal procedures. Moreover, we could strengthen our partnerships with other local institutions'* (Int\_1\_stakeholders).

### Improved supply of adequately trained staff

Analysed evaluation reports (see GIZ/YES 2019, GIZ/YES 2020c) and stakeholder interviews with companies and the KCC found that the project outcome, the increased employability of project beneficiaries, resulted in an **improved supply of adequately trained workers**. This improvement was reportedly rated as conducive to the business development of Kosovar companies, despite the overall difficult economic situation that companies face in Kosovo (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_private sector actors, Int\_2\_private sector actors). KCC confirmed that *'The participation of our companies in practical training creates opportunities for the trainees. This increases their chances of gaining work experience and finding employment. The majority of companies that are involved in Work-Based Learning employ the best-performing trainees after the training. I therefore strongly recommend continuing the development of Work-Based Learning in future. It is a great improvement for the companies in Kosovo'* (Int\_1\_private sector actors). The involvement of enterprises in the implementation of needs-oriented ALMMs, which was much higher than expected and contributed to a significant overachievement of employment-related project objective indicators 1 and 2, confirms these statements. It was further confirmed by the private sector interviewees that the improved supply of adequately trained staff contributes to **decent employment and economic growth** in the supported sectors (**SDG 4**) (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_private sector actors).

### Other overarching development results

In particular, the employment-related results of the project gained in the framework of Outputs A and B contributed substantially to **gender equality (SDG 5)**, specifically enhancing the share of female employment. Overall, it was confirmed in the interviews with partners and stakeholders that the achievement of the above impacts contributed to economic growth and **poverty reduction (SDG 1)** in Kosovo (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_private sector actors, Int\_1\_civil society actors, FGD\_1\_civil society actors, Int\_3\_civil society actors, FGD\_4\_target group).

Based on these findings, the evaluation team assessed the contributions at impact level as satisfactory within the given time and scope defined by the project design and context.

Impact dimension 1 – Higher-level (intended) development changes/results – scores **25 out of 30 points**.

### Impact – Dimension 2: Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes

To understand (potential) contributions to overarching results, similar to the effectiveness criterion, a contribution analysis was applied. Key data sources were interviews with the direct project partners, donor representatives and representatives of other DC projects, supported institutions such as VET institutes and one public employment office, NGOs, private sector representatives and GIZ management and team. In addition, evaluation reports (see e.g. GIZ/YES 2019, 2020a, 2020b), providing further overview data and in-depth information, were taken as an additional valuable source of information to assess the potential to achieve impacts. Three hypotheses from the results model were analysed in detail to explain causal relationships between projects outcomes and impacts.

### Regulatory framework for VET in Kosovo

Table 22: Results hypothesis 1 for impact

<b>Results Hypothesis 1 (outcome – impact)</b>	The policy advice in the area of VET, labour market policy and migration policy results in an improved strategic and administrative framework in Kosovo.
<b>Main assumption</b>	The partner institutions of the project are able to apply the advisory inputs of the project.
<b>Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministries are not able to apply and implement the developed strategies and models.</li> <li>• Trained personnel leave the supported governing institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative explanation</b>	The strategic and administrative framework in Kosovo can be improved by a comprehensive advisory system updating VET law, several administrative regulations and framework curricula and standards (following a purely system reform project approach).
<b>Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed</b>	Confirmed.

To analyse the contribution of this hypothesis, the evaluation team assessed to what extent the following project results contributed to the improved strategic and administrative framework for VET in Kosovo:

- Development of administrative regulations for WBL implementation.
- Establishment and piloting of WBL at the partner companies of 11 piloted VET institutes (475 VET students worked and learned at 86 companies in the framework of WBL).
- Development and accreditation of a three-level qualification standard for in-company trainers (on the levels: workplace instructor, in-company trainer and master trainer).
- Development and accreditation of a three-level in-company instructor training programme.

Successful accreditation by the National Qualification Authority of training courses developed (e.g. welding).

It was highlighted by the stakeholders interviewed that the above results of the project had an impact on the entire VET system because the project *‘worked with the companies much more intensively’* (*Int\_1\_project partner*) and in a structured way, applying a bottom-up approach, which combines a multi-layer capacity development strategy. More specifically, while primarily working with institutions at the local level such as VET institutes, companies, KCC, as well as employment offices and youth centres, regulatory framework requirements, such as the administrative regulations for WBL implementation, the three-level qualification standard for in-company trainers accredited by the National Qualification Authority was developed in a very focused way, flanked by capacity development measures at MESTI, the political partner institution. This **intervention approach, which focuses the efforts of the project on selected topics** – in this case the development of WBL – was rated as a much more effective approach, which **contributed substantially** to

impacts in the area of WBL, than a broad system advisory approach (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_1\_private sector actors, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, FGD\_3\_stakeholders, Int\_2\_German donor agency, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project team). One interviewee pointed out that *‘The legal framework for VET in Kosovo is fairly advanced and clear, with no major historical burdens causing ambiguity. In my view, there are fewer difficulties in this area due to the coordination between the donors. The challenge is to enable Kosovar partners to implement the existing legal framework. This requires well-functioning examples, which the YES project has demonstrated in the area of work-based learning’* (Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters). On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reduced the project’s impact, especially in the area of piloting WBL (Int\_1\_project partner, FGD\_2\_project team).

Based on these findings, the evaluation team concludes that the hypothesis is **confirmed**.

Photo 3: Practical training, CoC Skenderaj (Source/©: GIZ, 2020)



### Improved organisational and staff capacities of partner organisations

Table 23: Results hypothesis 2 for impact

<b>Results Hypothesis 2 (outcome – impact)</b>	The capacity development measures of the project (including development of the capacities of EARK and MESTI through the financing contracts and the promotion of digital capacities of partners, etc.) results in improved organisational and staff capacities of its partner organisations (MESTI, MLSW, EARK).
<b>Main assumption</b>	The staff of these partner institutions who have been advised by the project do not leave the institution after the end of the project. The partner institutions of the project are able to apply the capacity development measures provided by the project.
<b>Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacities of partner organisations are very low, meaning improvements are negligible.</li> <li>• Trained personnel leave the supported partner organisations.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative explanation</b>	-
<b>Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed</b>	Partly confirmed

For the analysis of hypothesis 2, the evaluation team assessed to what extent the following efforts of the project contributed to improved organisational and staff capacities of partner organisations:

- Capacity development of MLSW implemented in the framework of the financing contract with MLSW, technical assistance to improve the efficiency of administrative procedures.
- Capacity development of EARK, mainly implemented in the framework of the financing contract with MLSW, including technical assistance to improve the efficiency of organisational procedures, training of EARK personal at management level and staff at public employment offices, training of multipliers to advise public employment offices in the longer term.
- Capacity development of MESTI to improve its steering of the VET sector through the financing contract,
- Training of multipliers in the area of VET (master trainers).

The interviewees confirmed that the **capacity development measures for EARK substantially contributed** to improved capacities at EARK, at central management level and the local level of public employment offices. In particular, the advisory support at central management level and the advice on efficiently implementing the supported ALMMs (job fairs, internship schemes, on-the-job training, wage subsidies, entrepreneurship schemes, etc.) in the framework of the financing contract with MLSW were rated as very beneficial (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters).

The **capacity development support to MESTI was rated as heterogeneous**. It was emphasised that the presence of and close cooperation with the project team through the operation of a project office at MESTI and carrying out ad hoc consultancy contributed to improved capacities at MESTI (Int\_2\_project partner). However, the financing contract with MESTI (see also relevance) was rated as very unsuccessful by several interviewees (Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team): '*the financing contract was a disaster*' (FGD\_1\_project team). Weak capacities at MESTI's management and administrative levels were reported as the main causes. As a consequence, most of the funds were given back by MESTI and it was concluded that capacities at MESTI were overestimated, and that the financing contract was an inappropriate instrument. Furthermore, one stakeholder pointed out that the training of EARK staff and municipality staff on Employment and Labour Market Analyses only contributed to a limited extent to improving capacities, and explained that EARK and the municipalities do not have appropriate organisational prerequisites (minimum number of personnel and/or a section for statistics working with labour market data) to make use of the training outcomes (Int\_1\_think tank). Regarding the project's capacity development measures for all three partners, the project team pointed out that the high staff fluctuation, due to frequently changing governments, severely limited the achievement of positive results (Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project team).

Based on these findings, the evaluation team concludes that the *hypothesis* is **partly confirmed**.



Photo 4: Job fair in Mitrovica (Source/©: GIZ 2020)



Table 24: Results hypothesis 3 for impact

<b>Results Hypothesis 3 (outcome – impact)</b>	The engagement of companies in cooperative training and improved ALMMs results in an improved supply of adequately trained staff for Kosovar companies.
<b>Main assumption</b>	The economic situation in Kosovo allows companies to hire new staff in case they are searching for adequately trained employees.
<b>Risks</b>	Due to the difficult labour market situation, companies are reluctant to cooperate with the project, with EARK or the supported pilot training institutions.
<b>Alternative explanation</b>	An improved supply of adequately trained staff for Kosovar companies can be achieved by relying on advertisements and personal contacts.
<b>Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed</b>	Confirmed.

In addition to the analysis of project documents, KCC and three companies were asked to what extent improved ALMMs and elements of cooperative training have improved the supply of adequately trained workers for Kosovar companies. 74 companies surveyed in the framework of the results-based M&E system confirmed that they hire new staff mainly through job advertisements (30 out of 74 companies) and recommendations from friends and colleagues (29 out of 74 companies); only 3 out of 74 companies confirmed that they hire new workers through cooperation with the employment offices of VET institutes (see GIZ/YES 2020c, p. 6). Moreover, most of the interviewed companies reported that most job-seekers recruited through the employment offices, and VET graduates in general, have only limited workplace-relevant skills (see *ibid.*, p. 7f.). The vast majority of the 74 companies that participated in collaborations with employment offices or VET institutes in the framework of internship schemes through support from the project confirmed that:

- Workplace-relevant skills of the interns substantially improved (60 out of 74 companies).
- They are satisfied (36 out of 74 companies) or very satisfied (27 out of 74 companies) with the cooperation with VET institutes or employment offices (see *ibid.*, p. 11ff.).

In addition to this survey, KCC and the three companies interviewed by the evaluators confirmed that the **majority of companies** cooperating with the supported pilot VET institutes **retain the best-performing**

**trainees** that they train at their companies in the framework of WBL (Int\_1\_ private sector actors, Int\_2\_ private sector actors, Int\_3\_ private sector actors, Int\_4\_ private sector actors). This leads to the conclusion that participating in the implementation of demand-oriented ALMMs and collaborations with VET institutes, particularly the implementation of WBL, became an additional possibility for companies in Kosovo for recruiting adequately trained workers. However, all private sector stakeholders interviewed pointed out that the majority of companies are small- and medium-sized, and are in many cases family businesses. For small companies, their limited capacities are a major obstacle to joining collaboration with VET institutes. This obstacle has had a much stronger influence recently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, besides these limiting factors, the project's substantial contribution to an improved supply of adequately trained staff for Kosovar companies, through their engagement in cooperative training and improved ALMMs, was confirmed by the private sector stakeholders (Int\_1\_ private sector actors, Int\_2\_ private sector actors, Int\_3\_ private sector actors, Int\_4\_ private sector actors).

Based on these findings, the evaluation team concludes that the hypothesis is **confirmed**.

Impact dimension 2 – contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes – scores **34 out of 40 points**.

### **Impact – Dimension 3: Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes**

In terms of impacts, the evaluation team identified that the project contributed to several unintended effects not accounted for in the original project design:

- Despite weak capacities on the partner side, the project has contributed considerably to sharpening the strategic orientation and implementation of the Kosovar objectives in the supported sectors. This was often achieved through **close coordination within the donor community** (Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO).
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts towards **digitalisation** have been greatly increased in 2020 and 2021. As described in Chapter 4.4. in more detail, the project developed a manual on digital learning for VET teachers and set up a platform for digital learning. It is expected that these results will create longer-term results at impact level (Int\_1\_project partner, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project team).
- In addition, an NGO which supports disabled target groups reported that a manual developed with the support of the project on catering for disabled people within training processes in VET was adopted by the government and now constitutes obligatory regulations and guidelines for all public VTCs under the authority of EARK: *'The manuals developed with the support of the project improved the capabilities of the VTC trainers on how to work with specific people. [...] Now we think the VTCs are much better prepared to work with disabled trainees in an appropriate way. This will have broad benefits for people with disabilities'* (Int\_1\_civil society actors).
- Employment promotion measures often result in **substitution effects**, which mean that a participant of a project or measure will be employed by a company that would have otherwise employed another person (see Kluve/Stöterau, 2014). In the framework of an in-depth analysis of appropriate ALMMs for Kosovo (see GIZ/YES 2019) the problem was analysed and appropriate mitigation measures were identified. Based on this analysis, the **monitoring and inspection capacities of EARK have been improved** to enable EARK and the employment offices at local level to follow up on this risk and take preventive actions with employers to minimise deadweight losses and substitution effects.
- The proactive and straightforward implementation of the YES project, in close coordination with other projects such as DIMAK, URA and CETEP, enhanced the **presence and visibility of German development cooperation** in Kosovo. Partners and German and Kosovar political entities proactively approached the project, not only in the fields of VET, employment promotion and reintegration of returnees (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_1\_DIMAK).

Impact dimension 3 – Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes – scores **24 out of 30 points**.

### Methodology for assessing impact

Table 25: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: impact

Impact: assessment dimensions	Basis for Assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality limitations
Higher-level (intended) development changes/results	Programme objective indicators  Further impact on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased competitiveness of companies,</li> <li>Improved employment situation of Kosovar youth,</li> <li>Improved image of VET,</li> <li>SDG 8, SDG 4, SDG 16.</li> </ul>	<b>Evaluation design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The analysis follows the analytical questions in the evaluation matrix (see Annex).</li> <li>Most Significant Change.</li> </ul> <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (MESTI, MLSW, EARK, VET institutes, employment offices, etc., see Table 2, Section 3.2).</li> </ul> Document analysis, particularly monitoring documents of the DC programme	Findings of the document analysis will be triangulated with statements of different stakeholders interviewed in relation to the same topics
Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hypothesis 1</li> <li>Hypothesis 2</li> <li>Hypothesis 3</li> </ul>	<b>Evaluation design:</b> Contribution analysis  <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hypothesis 1 and 2: Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (MESTI, MLSW, EARK, KCC, other development partners, project team),</li> <li>Hypothesis 3: Semi-structured interviews with KCC, enterprises, EARK, employment offices, project team).</li> </ul> All hypotheses: Validation workshop	Anecdotal evidence, to avoid biased triangulation of different stakeholders interviewed in relation to the same topics, is applied
Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivation, ownership by project partners.</li> <li>Digital capacities of partner organisations.</li> <li>Other capacities of partner organisations improved as a result of the project's support.</li> </ul>	<b>Evaluation design:</b> Most Significant Change  <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion with MEST, MLSW, EARK, VET institutes, KCC enterprises, other development partners (see Table 3)</li> </ul>	Anecdotal evidence, to avoid biased triangulation of stakeholders interviewed on the same topics, is applied

## 4.6 Efficiency

This section analyses and assesses the efficiency of the Youth, Employment and Skills, Kosovo project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see Annex).

### Summarising assessment and rating of efficiency

Table 26: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
<b>Efficiency</b>	Production efficiency (Resources/Outputs)	62 out of 70 points
	Allocation efficiency (Resources/Outcome)	25 out of 30 points
<b>Efficiency score and rating</b>		Score: <b>87 out of 100 points</b>  Rating: <b>Level 2: successful</b>



The evaluators rated the project's production efficiency as somewhat successful. In retrospect, the cost allocation across Outputs A to D appeared plausible, with most resources invested in Output A, which created direct employment effects for the project beneficiaries (see the previous chapter, hypothesis 3). For Output D, which received only 8% of the project budget, the contribution to the project objective is also somewhat low and very indirect (see also impact). The high achievement of indicators' target values at output level across all outputs and qualitative success factors, such as project management and considerable partner contributions, confirm the project's production efficiency. The implementation of activities via financing contracts with MESTI and the Ministry of Internal Affairs was challenging, and this negatively affected the project's production and allocation efficiency. Due to the large scope of the CPEs, which allow in-depth analyses only to a limited extent, the question of whether the outcomes could have been maximised with the same amount of resources can only be answered in this evaluation to a certain degree: On one hand, the outcomes of the project clearly exceeded the planned values, particularly in the area of employment creation for its beneficiaries (achievement rate of module indicator 3: 175%). On the other hand, interviewed stakeholders rated the financing contract with MESTI as inappropriate and the contract with the Ministry of Internal Affairs as challenging, for political and organisational reasons, which leads to the conclusion that other instruments would probably have been more appropriate and outcomes could have been maximised with the same resources. However, other instruments could probably have maximised the project's outcomes, potentially with the same amount of resources. It was reported that political considerations, the capacity development of ministries and the sustainability perspective led to the decision to use these instruments. On the other hand, the financing contract with MLSW resulted in very high achievement rates for output indicators relating to Outputs A and B, as well as project objective indicators 1 and 2 relating to the employment benefits of the project's beneficiaries. Well-designed and well-interlinked project components, which provided the basis for the straightforward implementation of activities and high-quality implementation, led to a high level of outcomes, coherence with other projects (in particular the KfW-funded KCF and RCF) and outreach.

**In total, the efficiency of the project is rated as Level 2: successful, with 87 out of 100 points.**

### **Analysis and assessment of efficiency**

Under the efficiency criterion, it is analysed whether the project's use of resources was appropriate with regard to the achievement of both the outputs and the outcome (project objective). Combining and comparing information on project costs and results, the extent to which the level of resourcing (e.g. funding, expertise) led to satisfactory results was analysed. This procedure provides more insights than analysing costs and results separately. Focusing purely on results would limit the use of data in strategic decision-making, while focusing purely on costs could distract from the recommendations that aim to ensure quality in the results. Two types of efficiency are analysed separately: production and allocation efficiency. Production efficiency analyses the transformation of inputs into outputs, allocation efficiency focuses on the transformation of inputs into results at outcome level. This includes analysis of the extent to which even more results at output level could have been achieved with the same overall use of funds. The analysis does not therefore focus on investigating how costs could have been saved, but rather on how existing resources could have been used better to achieve the project's results. Following GIZ's guidelines, this evaluation applied the 'follow-the-money' approach as a standard method for analysing the project's production efficiency. The evaluation team used an Excel tool developed by the GIZ Corporate Unit Evaluation to standardise the project's efficiency analysis. Based on this Excel tool, data were analysed that have been made available by the project.

## Efficiency – Dimension 1: Production efficiency

The following assessments are based on information extracted from the GIZ ‘Kosten-Obligo (costs and commitments) report’ and further discussions with the project team and project management using the ‘follow-the-money’ approach (Palenberg, 2011, p. 46). The costs and commitments of the project are presented in the figure below.

Table 27: Overview of costs

Module objective	The employability of Kosovar youth is improved
BMZ costs	€12,761,246.72
Co-financing	€0.00
Partner contribution	€1,102,750.00
Total costs	€13,863,996.72
Residual	€1,964,846.54

As the project was commissioned before the ‘Joint Procedural Reform’ (*‘Gemeinsamen Verfahrensreform’*, GVR), the project data did not allow for a comprehensive budget–actual comparison. Consequently, deviations between actual and planned budgets could not be analysed by the evaluation team.

**Maximum principle and reallocation of funds:** Indicator achievements at output level are very high and satisfactory. All output indicators were achieved according to the project’s monitoring data:

Table 28: Overview of output achievement

	Indicator	Target Value	Actual Value	Achievement in %
Output A	A1: 10 adapted labour market measures (training-on-the-job, internships, job fairs, etc.) were implemented countrywide.	10	13	130%
	A2: 4,750 participants (youth), including returnees, rate the benefit of the labour market measures as relevant to improving their employment chances on a five-point scale with an average of 3.5.	3.5	4.6	100%
	A3: 123 out of 350 companies confirm that the labour market measures that have been newly implemented meet the skills development needs of their workforce.	123 out of 350	1,527 out of 2,095	>100%
	A 4: Five innovative approaches in the field of youth development and YEP were supported financially and technically in their implementation.	5	5	100%
Output B	B 1: 750 members of vulnerable groups (especially minorities, returnees, women) have participated in an integration measure (e.g. internships, training for self-employment and start-up and business start-ups, VET, follow-up qualification).	750	5,146 (982 returnees, 4,164 women)	686%
	B 2: 100 members of relevant stakeholders (e.g. teachers, trainers, public employment offices) are trained in catering for vulnerable groups (especially minorities, returnees, women).	100	93	93%
	B 3: Three formats for improved cooperation between local and central actors in the field of reintegration have been carried out (e.g. on the preparation of qualification profiles of returnees, agreement on resource allocation, round tables on reintegration, joint development of the reintegration strategy).	3	3	100%
Output C	C.1: 10 VET institutes have agreed on concrete measures for the introduction/expansion of dual elements with local companies.	10	13	130%
	C.2: 70 out of 100 in-company and school-based training personnel provide examples that they apply the knowledge and skills acquired in ‘Training the Trainers’ courses in their everyday work.	70	79	110%
	C.3: Three innovative approaches in the field of VET were financially and technically supported in their implementation.	3	3	100%
Output D	D.1: A transnational body with representatives from the government and private sector has presented a replicable model for the recognition of qualifications to German and Kosovar decision-makers.	1	1	100%
	D.2: Within a final workshop, two recommendations for possible institutionalisation of improved recognition of a Kosovar qualification for	2	2	100%

a German reference occupation were jointly formulated by decision-makers from Germany and Kosovo.

The table shows that in multiple cases output indicators were even overachieved. The significant overachievement of indicators A1, A3 and B1 is explained by the fact that the performance of EARK improved much more than planned, and more companies than expected were acquired to participate in ALMMs (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team). Based on the achievement of output indicators, the evaluation team assessed the costs allocated to each output. The GIZ efficiency tool maps project costs to outputs, and this is displayed in absolute values and percentages in the table below.

Table 29: Distribution of costs to outputs

Distribution of costs to outputs	Output A	Output B	Output C	Output D
<b>Costs including commitment (Obligo)</b>	€4,604,314.08	€3,261,131.44	€3,808,781.75	€1,087,019.45
<b>Co-financing</b>	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
<b>Partner inputs</b>	€720,647.13	€330,825.00	€51,500.08	€0.00
<b>Total costs</b>	€5,324,712.42	€3,593,33.04	€3,858,490.58	€1,087,682.88
<b>Total costs in %</b>	38%	26%	28%	8%

Table 29 illustrates that the distribution of costs between the three Outputs A to C is fairly balanced, with Output A being about 10 percentage points higher than Outputs B and C. The divergence between these three outputs, i.e. the higher share of costs under Output A, is primarily explained by the cost implications of the financing contract with MLSW to finance ALMMs implemented by EARK, as well as capacity development measures for EARK. It needs to be pointed out that the partner contribution of more than EUR 700,000 contributed to the higher share of costs relating to Output A. On the other hand, Output C had the highest share of seconded staff (GIZ field staff member), national personnel and head office staff (see Table 30), but a very high share of the financing contract with MESTI (total volume of approximately EUR 700,000) had to be paid back. In addition, the Excel tool enables an analysis of how much was spent on human resources for each output, as shown in the table below.

Table 30: Personnel costs per output

Experts and volunteers	Output A	Output B	Output C	Output D
Seconded staff (PMA/AMA)	29%	24%	33%	15%
National personnel (NP)	28%	23%	33%	16%
Head Office staff (IMA/PMI)	33%	20%	35%	13%
Development workers (EH/DW) and volunteers (V)	-	-	-	-
Integrated experts (IF/IE)	-	-	-	-

Besides the retrospective analysis of cost allocations, questions on the efficiency of the project were posed to the project team and partners to understand qualitative factors supporting or impeding the project's production efficiency. The following conclusions could be made:

**General project management** contributed to a high efficiency, e.g. reactivity and good planning, openness and dialogue. In the evaluation mission, all interviewed partners confirmed a smooth relationship and good bilateral collaboration with GIZ (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_3\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO).

**Overarching administrative costs** amounted to 6.9% of the overall budget. As they are below 10%, they are considered low according to GIZ guidelines (GIZ, 2019, Efficiency Tool Manual).

**Financing contracts:** The analysis of financing contracts revealed a heterogeneous picture. The contract with MESTI was rated as inappropriate within and outside the GIZ team, while the contract with the Ministry of Internal Affairs was rated as problematic for political and organisational reasons. However, other instruments which could probably have maximised the project's outcomes with similar resources, such as outsourcing services to third-party consultancies, were not possible due to political reasons and the capacity development and sustainability perspective (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team). On the other hand, the financing contract with MLSW resulted in a significant improvement of EARK's capacities and very high achievement rates of output indicators relating to outputs A and B, as well as project objective indicators 1 and 2 relating to employment benefits of the project's beneficiaries. The contract with MLSW was therefore rated as successful (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner).

**Partner contributions:** In particular, the financing contract with MLSW relating to Output A and B included a considerable partner contribution of EUR 1,051,250.00, which was rated as very conducive to reaching a high level of production efficiency (Int\_1\_project team, FGD\_1\_project team). In-kind partner contributions, such as the provision of office space by the project's government partners without further cost implications, reduced the overheads of YES. Further in-kind contributions were provided for workshops and meetings on an ad hoc basis.

**Outsourcing implementation components to a third-party organisation:** Overall, the project had positive experiences in outsourcing services to third-party organisations. Due to GIZ internal regulations on commissioning 25% of costs to third-party consultancies, the project passed several activities to international consultants. The stakeholders and the project team cited very successful collaborations, in particular those with NGOs under Output B (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_5\_stakeholders). The high achievement rates of Output B correlate with these positive statements.

The evaluation team rated the project's production efficiency as **successful**. Considering the large project budget and the variety of project objective areas, the project found appropriate ways to allocate costs, which led to efficient and professional project management. Challenges in the collaboration with MESTI and the Ministry of Internal Affairs negatively affected production efficiency.

Efficiency dimension 1 – Production efficiency – scores **62 out of 70 points**.

#### **Efficiency – Dimension 2: Allocation efficiency**

Referring to the allocation efficiency, the evaluation team assessed to what extent the project's use of resources was appropriate to achieving its objective based on the Excel tool analysis. Since allocation efficiency describes the transformation of inputs into outcomes, evidence identified provides indications on how the outcomes could have been maximised. At project objective level, all indicators have been achieved or even overachieved (shown in the table in brackets). The following results were described in more detail in Chapter 4.4:

Table 31: Module (project) objective indicators and achievement ratio

Indicator	M 1: The number of young participants, including returnees, in the supported programme municipalities who have completed a target group-specific labour market policy measure increases by an average of 45% per year (of which 40% are women).	M 2: 40% of the youth (of whom 40% are women and 10% are returnees) who participated in the supported labour market policy measures are in waged employment or self-employed, or in a further labour market integration measure within 6 months of the end of the measure.	3. 75% of the 80 surveyed companies that provide practical work experience (internships, on-the-job training) as part of 3-year training at VET institutes confirm that the skills of the trainees acquired as part of the training supported by the project meet their requirements.
Achievement ratio	100% (139%)	100% (175%)	100%

Through a holistic approach of including a broad range of government and non-government stakeholders, indicators 1 and 2 were successfully achieved. Given the very high achievement rates, the allocation efficiency appears to be very satisfactory. The third indicator, which hints towards the introduction of the dual element in VET and the improvement of trainees' practical and employment-relevant skills, is also linked to the allocation efficiency. Since dual elements in the VET system of Kosovo are highly underdeveloped, the achievement of the indicator was rated as successful (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_1\_project team, Int\_1\_project partner, FGD\_3\_stakeholders, FGD\_4\_stakeholders). As outlined in chapter 4.3 (coherence), synergies with other projects and transition points supporting the scaling up of project results were identified and, in various areas, exploited, which led to an enhanced allocation efficiency. Efforts towards scaling up the results of Outputs A and B were reported as successful, due to the improvement of EARK's capacities. Referring to Outputs C and D, particularly the support for the 11 pilot institutes to apply to the KfW-funded RCF and KCF, but also the collaboration with the SDC-funded Enhancing Youth Employment project in developing administrative regulations governing the implementation of WBL as an obligatory element of VET in Kosovo were rated as highly conducive to scaling up VET-related results (Int\_1\_project partner, FGD\_3\_stakeholders, FGD\_4\_stakeholders, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters). The evaluators therefore rated the project's allocation efficiency as **successful**.

Efficiency dimension 2 – Allocation efficiency – **scores 25 out of 30 points**.

### Methodology for assessing efficiency

Table 32: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency

Efficiency: assessment dimensions	Basis for Assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
<b>Production efficiency</b> (Input/Outputs)	Transformation of inputs into outputs based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIZ efficiency tool.</li> <li>• 'Kostenträger-Obligo' report of the project.</li> <li>• Comparison of planned budget figures with actual figures.</li> </ul> Results matrix, progress reports, results-based monitoring system.	<b>Evaluation design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex).</li> <li>• Follow-the-money approach.</li> </ul> <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview with project management and project team.</li> <li>• Document analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions regarding the project's efficiency will be integrated into interviews and discussions to strengthen the evidence of secondary data</li> </ul>
<b>Allocation efficiency</b> (Input/Outcome)	Transformation of inputs to outcome based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIZ efficiency tool.</li> <li>• 'Kostenträger-Obligo' report of the project.</li> <li>• Comparison of planned budget figures with actual figures.</li> </ul> Results matrix, progress reports, results-based monitoring system.	<b>Evaluation design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex).</li> <li>• Follow-the-money approach.</li> </ul> <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with project management and project team.</li> <li>• Document analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions regarding the project's efficiency will be integrated into interviews and discussions to strengthen the evidence of secondary data</li> </ul>

## 4.7 Sustainability

This section analyses and assesses the sustainability of the Youth, Employment and Skills, Kosovo project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GLZ project evaluation matrix (see Annex).

### Summarising assessment and rating of sustainability

Table 33. Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Sustainability	Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	14 out of 20 points
	Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities	25 out of 30 points
	Durability of results over time	40 out of 50 points
Sustainability score and rating		Score: <b>79 out of 100 points</b>  Rating: <b>Level 3: moderately successful</b>

Regarding the capacities of stakeholders to sustain project results over time, and the project's contribution to strengthening these capacities, the evaluators found that in the area of VET, ownership was fostered with project partner MESTI to develop the VET system in Kosovo towards dualisation modelled on the German, Austrian or Swiss Dual VET approach. This orientation will reportedly be given even higher priority by the new government elected in February 2021. Applying a multi-layer approach, capacities within the VET system were strengthened at individual level through the training of trainers and the training of VET institutes' management, as well as at institutional level through the development of qualification standards for in-company trainers and administrative regulations for the countrywide roll-out of WBL. VET institutes supported by the project were advised to successfully apply for the KfW-funded RCF and KCF to further develop the dualisation of VET and to sustain the projects' efforts over time. In the area of employment promotion, the project also followed a multi-layer approach and created the prerequisite for sustainable project results through the capacity development of EARK at central management level and of public employment offices at local level. The developed capacities of the project's public and civil society partners are expected to enable them to sustain project results over time. It will be important to build on these results during the Fit for Jobs follow-on project to further strengthen the project's sustainability.

In total, the sustainability of the project is rated as **Level 3: moderately successful, with 79 out of 100 points**.

### Analysis and assessment of sustainability

#### Sustainability – Dimension 1: Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders

The first dimension analyses the extent to which the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project have the institutional, human and financial capacities, as well as the willingness to sustain the results of the project over time. In this chapter, the analysis will also be split between the two clusters of the project.

**Employment promotion:** Ownership by the public partners has been high from the very beginning of the project period, evidenced by high partner contribution in the framework of the financing contract with MLSW, EARK's motivation and ability to cooperate (see also relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency criteria) and the willingness of the Kosovar government to continue the cooperation, which results in the Fit for Jobs follow-on project. Public partners interviewed expressed interest in further developing this sector and its strategic importance for the stability and economic development of the country (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner). In addition, the interviewed NGOs confirmed the very high importance of the sector and their high ownership in continuing to work with their specific target groups. The (capacity development) support of the



project was rated as a substantial enabling factor for continuing this work after the end of the project (FGD\_1\_ civil society actors, Int\_1\_ civil society actors, Int\_2\_ civil society actors, Int\_3\_ civil society actors).

Beneficiaries interviewed who participated in the entrepreneurship scheme and established their businesses confirmed the high potential that their businesses will sustain over time after the end of the project

(FGD\_2\_target group) (see also effectiveness).

Photo 5: Entrepreneurship training (Source/©: GIZ 2020)



**VET:** Based on the long-standing partnership with German development cooperation in the field of VET, ownership has been fostered with MESTI as the most important governing institution in the Kosovar VET system, particularly on increasing private sector participation and the introduction of dual elements in VET (Int\_1\_project partner, FGD\_2\_project team). Interviewed stakeholders reported that, according to representatives of the new government, the development of VET in Kosovo towards dualisation modelled on the German, Austrian or Swiss Dual VET approach, will be given even higher priority by the new government elected in February 2021 (Int\_1\_German donor agency, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_2\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_4\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_1\_GIZ headquarters). Another very important step in sustaining the efforts of the project and leveraging the elements of dual VET, particularly the pilot cooperation models between VET institutes and enterprises and the implementation of WBL, introduced by the project at its 11 pilot VET institutes, is the implementation of the KfW-funded RCF and KCF. The importance of these two challenge funds was highlighted by MESTI in particular (Int\_1\_project partner). Regarding training quality at the 11 pilot VET institutes and their partner companies, it was expressed by the stakeholders interviewed that through the administrative regulations developed for WBL implementation and the developed and accredited qualification standard for in-company trainers, the prerequisites for a sustainable establishment of WBL and collaborations have been created (see next section for more details). Therefore, the sustainability of the capacity improvements at VET institute and enterprise level was mostly rated high (FGD\_1\_ stakeholders, FGD\_3\_ stakeholders, FGD\_4\_ stakeholders, Int\_1\_ private sector actors, Int\_3\_ private sector actors). Critically, it was noted that KCC claims to be the leading actor in the private sector. This is generally very useful, but as KCC is very dependent on funds from foreign donors, this position is rather unstable in the long term (Int\_1\_project team, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters).

Sustainability dimension 1 – Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders – scores **14 out of 20 points**.

### **Sustainability – Dimension 2: Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities**

The second sustainability dimension assesses the extent to which the project has contributed to the above capacities of stakeholders to sustain positive results over time.

**Employment promotion:** The YES project contributed significantly to the sustainability of the results in employment promotion through capacity development of EARK at central management level and of management and operational staff at public employment offices (see also effectiveness and impact criteria). Moreover, the project developed the prerequisites for a sustainable operation of the improved ALMMs through:

- Training management personnel at EARK and MLSW,
- Developing operational manuals for efficient implementation of ALMMs, for quality assurance and efficient organisation of administrative procedures,
- Training advisors (multipliers) for public employment offices,
- Establishing cooperation models at local level in which public employment offices, VET institutes, NGOs and municipalities participate.

Moreover, capacities at NGOs were developed to enable them to raise funds after the project has ended.

**VET:** As with the area of employment promotion, a multi-layer approach was applied in the area of VET to sustainably improve capacities at steering level as well as at implementation level. The project contributed to supporting sustainable capacities at MESTI through regular advisory support organised through a permanent office at the ministry. The 11 pilot institutes were supported by the capacity development of the management and trainers. The sustainable integration of elements of demand-oriented and Dual VET was achieved through:

- Development of an administrative regulation to implement WBL countrywide (in cooperation with the SDF-funded Enhancement of Youth Employment project),
- Development of a training label ('*Ausbildungssiegel*') together with KCC to promote VET and WBL, particularly among companies in Kosovo, and implementation of an image campaign modelled on the We Train initiative of the German skilled crafts sector supports companies that participate in cooperative training,
- Development of qualification standards for in-company trainers, and the accreditation of two training providers for the training of in-company trainers,
- The three qualification programmes developed for teachers are, after completing MESTI's internal accreditation process, part of teachers' career development (Continuous Professional Development),
- Advisory support to the 11 pilot VET to prepare them for a successful application to the KfW-funded RCF, KCF.
- 

Sustainability dimension 2 – Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities – scores **25 out of 30 points**.

### **Sustainability – Dimension 3: Durability of results over time**

The core questions when looking at the durability of results over time focus on the area of employment promotion on the ability of EARK and its partners at local level to implement demand-oriented ALMMs after the end of the project, as well as the durability of the project's efforts to support VET towards improved quality and dualisation.

It was confirmed by the stakeholders interviewed that, through the strong involvement of companies, KCC, associations, EARK, employment offices, local administrations, VET institutes and ministries as responsible partners of VET, the durability of results over time could be achieved (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_other donor/agency/IO, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_5\_stakeholders, Int\_1\_private sector actors, Int\_1\_civil society actors).

**Employment promotion:** Through the project's advisory support, capacities were strengthened, especially among EARK and MLSW personnel, to sustain the provision of demand-oriented ALMMs after the end of the project. It was confirmed that the three Local Stakeholder Meetings initiated by the project to promote dialogue between local actors relevant to training and employment strengthened cooperation between these actors and contributed to the sustainable establishment of ALMMs at local level (Int\_2\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_5\_stakeholders, FGD\_1\_civil society actors, Int\_1\_civil society actors).

**VET:** It was confirmed by the stakeholders interviewed that, through the capacity development measures summarised in the previous section, central prerequisites have been established to sustain the results of the project after its end, particularly the increased demand orientation and dualisation of VET (Int\_1\_project partner, actor, Int\_1\_private sector actors, Int\_2\_private sector actors, FGD\_3\_stakeholders, Int\_4\_stakeholders). The support of the 11 pilot VET institutes during the application process for the RCF and KCF was highlighted as very conducive to sustaining the project's results over time (Int\_1\_project partner). Critical mention was made of the fact the master trainers trained by the project must be assigned and paid by the companies for their training services after completion of the project. It was questioned whether the companies have the willingness and ability to do this (Int\_2\_stakeholders, Int\_3\_stakeholders, Int\_3\_stakeholders).

**Capacities of partners, COVID-19:** The weak capacities of the project's partner institutions and the COVID-19 pandemic were highlighted as the most important factors which negatively affect the durability of the project's results after its end (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_3\_project partner, Int\_2\_GIZ headquarters, FGD\_2\_project team, Int\_1\_project team).

Sustainability dimension 3 – Durability of results over time – scores **40 out of 50 points**.

### Methodology for assessing sustainability

Table 34: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability

Sustainability: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
<b>Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders</b>	As capacity building is a crucial part of the indicators, this dimension is assessed against the project's indicators: ALMMs: A1, A3, A4, B3, Improved VET: C1, C 2, C3	<b>Evaluation design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</li> </ul> <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis, analysis of results-based monitoring triangulated with semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (MESTI, MLSW, EARK, development partners, KCC etc. see Table 2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant limitation</li> <li>Triangulation of stakeholder interviews with document analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities</b>	See above, In addition, Hypothesis 5 is used for the analysis of this criterion	<b>Evaluation design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</li> </ul> <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis, analysis of results-based monitoring triangulated with semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anecdotal evidence</li> <li>Triangulation of stakeholder interviews with document analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Durability of results over time</b>	See above	<b>Evaluation design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see Annex)</li> </ul> <b>Empirical methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders</li> <li>Validation workshop with the project team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anecdotal evidence</li> <li>Triangulation of stakeholder interviews and document analysis</li> </ul>

## 4.8 Key results and overall rating

Overall, the evaluation team rate the YES project as **successful**. Despite tackling a wide range of challenges in employment promotion and VET in Kosovo, and reacting to the refugee crisis by reintegrating returnees at the same time, the project was able to produce concrete results not only at outcome but also at impact level by the end of the project period. Quantifiable employment effects on project beneficiaries stand out in this regard.

The project's results were further anchored in the national policy frameworks in a systematic and focused way, aligning with the priorities of the Kosovar government. Ownership of the public and private stakeholders was thus observed in key activities such as the establishment of cooperation of VET institutes with companies and WBL, the development of demand-oriented ALMMs for Kosovar youth and vulnerable target groups, as well as the capacity development of EARK. Processes that contributed to successful implementation were institutionalised within or with close coordination from relevant stakeholders in each sector. The project also sought partnerships with other donor agencies to maximise results while some significant synergies were achieved with the German Financial Cooperation. Table 36 on the following page summarises the final ratings provided for each of the OECD-DAC criteria.

Table 35: Rating and score scales

100-point scale (score)	6-level scale (rating)
92–100	Level 1: highly successful
81–91	Level 2: successful
67–80	Level 3: moderately successful
50–66	Level 4: moderately unsuccessful
30–49	Level 5: unsuccessful
0–29	Level 6: highly unsuccessful
<u>Overall rating:</u> The criteria of effectiveness, impact and sustainability are knock-out criteria: If one of the criteria is rated at level 4 or lower, the overall rating cannot go beyond level 4 although the mean score may be higher.	

Table 36: Overall rating of OECD/DAC criteria and assessment dimensions

Evaluation criteria	Dimension	Max	Score	Total (max.100)	Rating
<b>Relevance</b>	Alignment with policies and priorities	30	30	<b>91</b>	Level 2: successful
	Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	30	22		
	Appropriateness of the design*	20	20		
	Adaptability – response to change	20	19		
<b>Coherence</b>	Internal Coherence	50	43	<b>91</b>	Level 2: successful
	External Coherence	50	48		
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Achievement of the (intended) objectives	30	30	<b>93</b>	Level 1: highly successful
	Contribution to achievement of objectives	30	26		
	Quality of implementation	20	20		
	Unintended results	20	17		
<b>Impact</b>	Higher-level (intended) development changes/results	30	25	<b>83</b>	Level 2: successful
	Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes	40	34		
	Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes	30	24		
<b>Efficiency</b>	Production efficiency	70	62	<b>87</b>	Level 2: successful
	Allocation efficiency	30	25		
<b>Sustainability</b>	Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	20	14	<b>79</b>	Level 3: moderately successful
	Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities	30	25		
	Durability of results over time	50	40		
<b>Mean score and overall rating</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>87</b>		<b>Level 2: successful *</b>

# 5 Conclusions and recommendations

## 5.1 Key findings and factors of success/failure

To facilitate learning based on the findings of this evaluation, this section summarises key success factors and the most important challenges (hindering factors) of the project. Efforts and positive achievements in the key success factors (which sometimes overlap) have the potential to leverage current achievements, mitigate current or future risks, or be applied to other similar projects.

### Success factors

**Alignment with Kosovar government priorities and needs of target groups:** The interventions of the project were overall well aligned with the priorities and strategies of the Kosovar government as well as with the needs of the heterogeneous target groups and partners. Support to EARK for improving ALMMs, as well as support to VET institutes, was based on a sound needs assessments. Based on these assessments, the project concept successfully addressed the core needs of the immediate target groups, i.e. employment offices and youth centres, VET teachers and trainers, companies and other important private sector stakeholders such as the KCC.

**Coherence of project design:** One of the overall strengths of the project was how it matched its support for VET with employment promotion based on bottom-up and practice-oriented approaches. This resulted in high effectiveness, particularly regarding the employment rate achieved for the project's final beneficiaries. The project's two main components, the VET cluster and YEP cluster, were well designed and interlinked, which helped the project team to deal with the rather complex partner structure and provided the basis for straightforward implementation of activities. All main activities were coordinated with the project's steering committee, which comprised relevant government actors and private sector representatives to ensure alignment of the project activities with the partners' needs and priorities.

**Proactive project management and stakeholder engagement:** Within its rather complex partner structure and the multi-donor set-up, the project took on a very proactive and coordinating role. The project fits very well into the overall donor and VET and employment promotion landscape in Kosovo, not least due to the donor communities' and project team's own initiatives and efforts to align with the ecosystem in Kosovo. The project proactively sought contacts and exchanges with other donors and actors in the sector and reacted in turn. Another field that required joint and coordinated activities is the implementation of the KfW-funded RCF and KC, which was set up in 2019. The YES project reacted to the challenge funds' start of operation by providing advisory support to the 11 pilot VET institutes participating in the project.

**High level of effectiveness:** Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the project achieved a high level of direct results. All project objective indicators were fully achieved or overachieved by the end of the project. Given the difficult labour market conditions for youth in Kosovo, especially the very low labour market participation of women, the very high overachievement of project objective indicator 2 (achievement ratio: 175%), which measures the employment rate of project beneficiaries, is rated as very successful.

### Important challenges

**Political and institutional context in Kosovo:** Weak capacities of the project's partner institutions were a major challenge during project implementation. A very high fluctuation of staff at the partner ministries, due to frequent changes in the government, caused a lot of difficulties which were mitigated by close collaboration



with the project stakeholders. While this offered a good way of dealing with these external changes, it carries the risk of jeopardising sustainability due to the limited steering capacities of the partner ministries.

**Variable success of financing contracts with partner ministries:** The success of financing contracts with partner ministries varied significantly. Cases of poor performance resulted in political and reputational risks and the project had to invest in mitigation measures to limit these risks.

**Challenging labour market situation and COVID-19:** The economic and labour market situation in Kosovo, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, was mentioned as another crucial challenge which negatively affected the project's results, particularly in the area of VET, as the planned establishment and expansion of WBL in the companies was significantly delayed and diminished by the pandemic-induced lockdown. The project reacted to this challenge by increasing its efforts in the field of digitalising VET. Due to these measures, it was possible to maintain the effectiveness at a high level despite COVID-19.

## Findings regarding 2030 Agenda

### Universality, shared responsibility and accountability

The project has made efforts to share responsibility with different donors. Significant coordination was achieved with German Technical and Financial Cooperation, particularly in the field of further developing VET in Kosovo towards increased dualisation. The project achieved joint activities and mutual benefits with other donors, e.g. the SDC-funded Enhancing Youth Employment project. The project further implemented many activities embedded in the structures of public partners, which resulted in continuous efforts to increase synergies and to anchor initiatives into partner structures such as the piloted demand-oriented ALMMs. The administrative regulations developed for WBL and the qualification standards for in-company trainers are integrated into the regulatory framework of the Kosovar partners and can also be used by other donor projects such as the KfW-funded RCF and KCF.

Based on this implementation progress, the project made significant contributions to an improved quality of education (SDG 4) as well as to decent work (SDG 8). The project also indirectly contributed to overall sustainable economic growth (SDG 4) and poverty alleviation (SDG1) to provide the basis for peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16).

### Inclusiveness/leave no one behind

With regard to the central promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind, the evaluation team found that the inclusion of the most vulnerable population was a major focus of project activities. It was mainly covered by the project's Output B, promoting employment for vulnerable youth. The high achievement rates of Output indicators B1 to B3 show that vulnerable target groups were adequately addressed by the project. This is illustrated, for example, by the 5,146 people (including 982 returnees) belonging to vulnerable target groups that have participated in a labour market integration measure.

## Findings regarding follow-on project

The evaluation team found that a follow-on project called Fit for Jobs, which started in June 2021, directly builds on the achievements of the YES project. Using the same formulation for its project objective as the YES project – 'the employability of Kosovar youth is improved' – the follow-on project intends to further develop VET towards dualisation and responsiveness to labour market needs, and continues to match the development of VET with employment promotion. In addition, it slightly expanded its scope, aimed at improving the job-readiness of students in general education, which is sensible given that PISA results in 2015 and 2018<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See. <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?plotter=h5&primaryCountry=XKO&treshold=10&topic=PI>, [10.08.2021].

identified a rather weak level of basic competences (reading writing, mathematics, etc.) in students in general education, and given that stakeholder interviews confirmed limited career choices and planning skills of this target group (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders, Int\_5\_stakeholders).

It certainly makes sense to find suitable ways of ensuring the durability and sustainability of the YES project's core results, primarily the further development of VET towards dualisation and responsiveness to the labour market, as well as the implementation of demand-oriented ALMMs by EARK and its partners at local level over time.

## 5.2 Recommendations

### **Recommendations for similar project interventions and the design of new projects (addressed to GIZ–FMB and the project partners in Kosovo – MESTI, MLSW, EARK):**

- As it is a confirmed priority of the Kosovar government, it is recommended that work on the regulatory framework continues, to strengthen the prerequisites for the long-term improvement of VET quality towards a dual/cooperative training approach with high employer participation and responsiveness to employers' needs. This is expected to considerably increase the impacts and sustainability of the YES project.
- As part of a strategy to strengthen a dual/cooperative training approach, it is recommended that KCC is supported in taking a stronger role in coordinating the implementation of WBL, or at least acting as an intermediate organisation when approaching sector associations to perform this role. The coordination of WBL will include the coordination of in-company trainers (keeping an accessible register, if companies are willing to establish WBL and to train in-company trainers).
- As was confirmed by various stakeholders in this evaluation, improved capacities of EARK are an essential factor in reducing (youth) unemployment in the country, and it is therefore recommended that project activities aiming at strengthening EARK's capacities continue. Besides improving human capacities at EARK and the local employment offices, the development of cooperation models including local employment offices and other stakeholders at municipality level, such as NGOs and Youth Centres, was confirmed as a promising strategy for EARK's capacity development.

### **Recommendations on general project implementation and the Fit for Jobs follow-on project (addressed to the project team of Fit for Jobs and the project partners in Kosovo – MESTI, MLSW, EARK):**

- To further develop the quality of VET towards dualisation and responsiveness to the labour market needs, it is recommended that the capacities of businesses to actively participate in VET planning delivery and assessment are developed further. This should also include incentivising cooperation between VET institutes and companies to provide high-quality VET programmes. It is therefore recommended that support for VET institutes continues in the further application process for the KfW-funded RCF and KCF. Moreover, it is recommended that improvements in the regulatory framework of VET and VET governance continue to be supported.
- Regarding the new focus of the Fit for Jobs project – the improvement of the job-readiness of students in general education – it is recommended that a holistic approach to strengthening employment-relevant skills is adopted, i.e. the project should not only focus on career guidance and the development of skills for career choices, as suggested by stakeholders interviewed (Int\_1\_project partner, Int\_1\_stakeholders). In the context of supporting measures for an improved transition from school to VET and work, it is recommended that a comprehensive concept of job-readiness is followed (see German Federal Employment Agency, 2009) that also includes strengthening basic competences (mathematics, reading, writing), because significant weaknesses have been identified by PISA 2015 and 2018 (see the previous section).
- In the field of employment promotion, it is recommended that the capacity development support for EARK continues, since it is quite a newly established institution with high potential for promoting (youth employment). This will contribute substantially to the durability of the YES project's results over time.

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## Annex: Evaluation matrix

<b>OECD-DAC Criterion Relevance - Is the intervention doing the right things? (max. 100 points)</b> The 'relevance' criterion focuses on the intervention's design. It refers to the extent to which the objectives and design of a development intervention are consistent with the (global, country and institution-specific) requirements, needs, priorities and policies of beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups, organisations and development partners). It also identifies the ability of the intervention's design to adapt to a change in circumstances. "Relevance" is assessed in relation to 1) the <b>time of the intervention design</b> <sup>1</sup> and 2) from <b>today's perspective</b> <sup>2</sup> .								
Assessment dimensions	Filter - Project Type	Evaluation questions	Clarifications	Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators	Evaluation Design and empirical methods	Data sources	Data Quality and limitations	Data Quality Assessment (weak, moderate, good, strong)
<b>Alignment with policies and priorities</b>	Standard	To what extent are the intervention's objectives aligned with the (global, regional and country specific) policies and priorities of the BMZ and of the beneficiaries and stakeholders and other (development) partners? To what extent do they take account of the relevant political and institutional environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation at BMZ country strategies and BMZ sector concepts</li> <li>• Strategic reference framework for the project (e.g. national strategies including the national implementation strategy for Agenda 2030, regional and international strategies, sectoral and cross-sectoral change strategies, in bilateral projects especially partner strategies, internal analytical framework e.g. safeguards and gender<sup>4</sup>)</li> <li>• Orientation of the project design at the (national) objectives of Agenda 2030</li> <li>• Project contribution to certain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</li> <li>• Explanation of a hierarchy of the different policies, priorities (especially in case of contradictions)</li> </ul>	List of strategic reference frameworks (see data sources)	Document identification according to snowball principle; document analysis	Länderstrategie zur bilateralen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit mit Kosovo Dec 2017 UNESCO Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2016-2021 Kosovar Strategies: MLSW (2017): Sector Strategy 2018-2022; MLSW (2017): Action Plan for Increasing Youth Employment; MEST (2016): Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021; National Strategy for Reintegration of Repatriated Persons in Kosovo 2013 Kosovo Economic Reform Programmes 2017; etc	good (many Kosovar strategies not updated)	good
	and Fragility	To what extent was the (conflict) context of the project adequately analysed and considered for the project concept?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key documents: (Integrated) Peace and Conflict Assessment (I)PCA, Safeguard Conflict and Context Sensitivity documents</li> </ul>	Depth/appropriateness of the context/conflict analysis within the PCA of the project	Document analysis, interviews	PCA, interviews with project team	good	good
<b>Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders</b>	Standard	To what extent are the intervention's objectives aligned with the development needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders involved (individuals, groups and organisations)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also: consideration of stakeholders such as civil society and private sector in the design of the measure</li> </ul>	Comparison of needs and capacities identified (needs and capacities of EARK/employment offices, VET and private sector institutions: management, employment officers, teachers/trainers and in-company instructors of companies, and VET students and graduates) with module objectives and	Interviews, document analysis	Interviews with project beneficiaries (EARK, employment offices VET institutions and companies: management, employment officers, teachers/trainers and in-company instructors of companies, and VET students), Document analysis of project documents (CD strategy, module proposal etc.)	strong	strong



				strategy (esp. CD strategy)				
	and Fragility	How were de-escalating factors/ connectors <sup>5</sup> as well as escalating factors/ dividers <sup>6</sup> in the project context identified and considered for the project concept (please list the factors)? <sup>7</sup>	• e.g. see column I and II of the (Integrated) Peace and Conflict Assessment	Multidimensional conflict factors - Albanian vs. Serbian population - Other ethnic conflicts - Internal social (fragmentation of society, weak institutions as a consequences of corruption/organised crime)	Document analysis; interviews	PCA, interviews with project team	strong	strong
	and Fragility	To what extent were potential (security) risks for (GIZ) staff, partners, target groups/final beneficiaries identified and considered?		Strategy of project management to avoid security risks for (GIZ) staff, partners, target groups/final beneficiaries	Interviews	PCA, interviews with project management	good	good
	Standard	To what extent are the intervention's objectives geared to the needs and capacities of particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations)? With respect to groups, a differentiation can be made by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc. ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaching particularly disadvantaged groups (in terms of Leave No One Behind, LNOB)</li> <li>• Consideration of potential for human rights and gender aspects</li> <li>• Consideration of identified risks</li> </ul>	Analysis of module objective/programme indicators	Document analysis	Module proposal (MV)	strong	strong
<b>Appropriateness of the design<sup>3</sup></b>	Standard	To what extent is the intervention's design appropriate and realistic (in terms of technical, organisational and financial aspects)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realistic project goal from today's perspective and in view of the available resources (time, finances, partner capacities)</li> <li>• Consideration of potential changes in the framework conditions</li> <li>• Dealing with the complexity of framework conditions and strategic reference frameworks and with possible overloading</li> <li>• Strategic focusing</li> </ul>	Analysis of module objective/programme indicators, results model, CD strategy, Operational Plans, Efficiency Tool Comparison current status and goals	Document analysis; interviews	Module proposal, results matrix, project's original and updated results model; Interviews with project staff, FMB	strong	strong

	Standard	To what extent is the intervention's design sufficiently precise and plausible (in terms of the verifiability and traceability of the system of objectives and the underlying assumptions)?	<p>Assessment of the (current) results model and results hypotheses (Theory of Change, ToC) of the actual project logic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequacy of activities, instruments and outputs in relation to the project objective to be achieved</li> <li>• Plausibility of the underlying results hypotheses</li> <li>• Clear definition and plausibility of the selected system boundary (sphere of responsibility)</li> <li>• Appropriate consideration of potential influences of other donors/ organisations outside the project's sphere of responsibility</li> <li>• completeness and plausibility of assumptions and risks for the project results</li> <li>• How well is co-financing (if any) integrated into the overall concept of the project and what added value could be generated for the ToC/project design?</li> </ul>	Analysis of module objective/programme indicators, results model (ToC), CD strategy	Document analysis; interviews	Project's original and updated results model; Interviews with project staff, FMB, BMZ	good	good
	Standard	To what extent is the intervention's design based on a holistic approach to sustainable development (interaction of the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the interactions (synergies/trade-offs) of the intervention with other sectors in the project design - also with regard to the sustainability dimensions in terms of Agenda 2030 (economic, ecological and social development)</li> </ul>	Analysis of module objective/programme indicators, results model, CD strategy	Document analysis; interviews	Module proposal, results matrix, project's original and updated results model;	good	good
<b>Adaptability – response to change</b>	Standard	To what extent has the intervention responded to changes in the environment over time (risks and potentials)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaction to changes during project including change offers (e.g. local, national, international, sectoral changes, including state-of-the-art sectoral know-how)</li> </ul>					

### OECD-DAC Criterion Coherence - How well does the intervention fit? (max. 100 points)

This criterion refers to the intervention's compatibility with other interventions in a country, sector or institution as well as with international norms and standards. **Internal coherence** addresses the synergies and division of tasks between the intervention and other interventions of German development cooperation and also the intervention's consistency with the relevant international norms and standards to which German development cooperation adheres. **External coherence** considers the intervention's complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with the interventions of other partners, donors and international organisations. The "coherence" criterion relates both to the intervention's design as well as to the results it achieves.

Assessment dimensions	Filter - Project Type	Evaluation questions	Clarifications	Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators	Evaluation Design and empirical methods	Data sources	Data Quality and limitations	Data Quality Assessment (weak, moderate, good, strong)
<b>Internal coherence</b>	Standard	Within German development cooperation, to what extent is the intervention designed and implemented (in a sector, country, region or globally) in a complementary manner, based on the division of tasks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also analysis of whether the project takes the necessary steps to fully realise synergies within</li> </ul>	Assessment to what extent -the project fit into the 'NaWi' programme logic, - the YES activities are complementary to the activities of other GIZ projects	Interviews, discussions, document analysis	Interviews, discussions with project team, FMB, LMI, KfW, BMZ Documents: Module proposals CETEP, other ongoing modules of the 'NA-	strong	strong

			German development cooperation	- there is coherence between Technical Cooperation and Financial Cooperation (particularly RCF/KCF)		WI' programme, project documents of RCF/KCF (funded by KfW)		
	Standard	To what extent are the instruments of German development cooperation (Technical and Financial Cooperation) meaningfully interlinked within the intervention (in terms of both design and implementation)? Are synergies leveraged?	• if applicable, also take into account projects of different German ressorts/ministries	Assessment to what extent are instruments meaningful interlinked: - within the 'NaWi' programme logic, - with other GIZ projects - between Technical Cooperation and Financial Cooperation	Interviews, discussions, document analysis	Interviews, discussions with project team, FMB, LMI, KfW, BMZ Documents: Module proposals CETEP, other ongoing modules of the 'NA-WI' programme, project documents of RCF/KCF (funded by KfW)	strong	strong
	Standard	To what extent is the intervention consistent with international and national norms and standards to which German development cooperation is committed (e.g. human rights)?		Consistency of YES with relevant international and national norms and standards	Interviews, discussions, document analysis	Interviews, discussions with project team, FMB, LMI, BMZ	strong	strong
External coherence	Standard	To what extent does the intervention complement and support the partner's own efforts (principle of subsidiarity)?		Complementary of project activities with partner efforts in the field of employment promotion and VET	Interviews, discussions, document analysis	Interviews, discussions with project team and key partners, particularly MESTI, MSLW, EARK	good	good
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention's design and implementation been coordinated with other donors' activities?	• Also: To what extent could synergies be achieved through co-financing (where available) with other bilateral and multilateral donors and organizations and how did co-financing contribute to improved donor coordination?	Coordination of project activities with interventions of EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency	Interviews, discussions, document analysis	Interviews, discussions with project team and EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency, Documents: project documents of EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency	strong	strong
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention's design been designed to use existing systems and structures (of partners/other donors/international organisations) for implementing its activities? To what extent are these systems and structures used?	• Also analysis of whether the project is taking the necessary steps to fully realise synergies with interventions of other donors at the impact level	Effectiveness, efficiency of the two parts of the project (YEP cluster and VET cluster), synergies between the two parts, joint outcomes and impacts, Use of structures/synergies with activities implemented by EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency	Interviews, discussions, document analysis	Interviews, discussions with project team and EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency, Documents: project documents of EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency	strong	strong
	Standard	To what extent are common systems (together with partners/other donors/international organisations) used for M&E, learning and accountability?		Structure of M&E, learning and accountability instruments/systems of YES Coordination of M&E, learning and accountability instruments/systems with interventions implemented by EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency .	Interviews, discussions, document analysis	Interviews, discussions with project team and EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency, Documents: project documents of EU, ETF, SDC, LuxDev, Austrain Development Agency	strong	strong

## OECD-DAC Criterion Effectiveness - Is the intervention achieving its objectives? (max. 100 points)

'Effectiveness' refers to the extent to which the intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives (at outcome level), including any differential results across beneficiary and stakeholder groups. It examines the achievement of objectives in terms of the direct, short-term and medium term results.

Assessment dimension	Filter - Project Type	Evaluation questions	Clarifications	Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators	Evaluation Design and empirical methods	Data sources	Data Quality and limitations	Data Quality Assessment (weak, moderate, good, strong)
<b>Achievement of the (intended) objectives<sup>1</sup></b>	Standard	To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is the intervention expected to achieve, the (intended) objectives as originally planned (or as modified to cater for changes in the environment)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment based on the project objective indicators (agreed with BMZ)</li> <li>Check whether more specific or additional indicators are needed to adequately reflect the project objective</li> </ul>	Project objective indicators (agreed with BMZ) and useful/needed alternatives	Document analysis, interviews	Document analysis: Module proposal, results matrix Interviews with project management, FMB	strong	strong
	and Fragility	For projects with FS1 or FS2 markers: To what extent was the project able to strengthen de-escalating factors/connectors? <sup>2, 4</sup>		Project strategy to strengthen de-escalating factors/connectors	Document analysis, interviews	Document analysis: Module proposal, Peace and Conflict Analysis (PCA) Interviews with project management, FMB	strong	strong
<b>Contribution to achievement of objectives</b>	Standard	To what extent have the intervention's outputs been delivered as originally planned (or as modified to cater for changes in the environment)?		Achievement rate / adjustment of project outputs	Document analysis, interviews	Document analysis: Module proposal, change offers, results matrix, Interviews with project management, FMB	strong	strong
	Standard	To what extent have the delivered outputs and increased capacities been used and equal access (e.g. in terms of physical, non-discriminatory and affordable access) guaranteed?		Achieved outputs and developed capacities	Document analysis, interviews	Document analysis: Module proposal, results matrix, Interviews with project management, partner ministries, management of EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, youth centre	good	good
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to the achievement of objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment based on the activities, Technical Cooperation-instruments and outputs of the project (contribution-analysis as focus of this assessment dimension and minimum standard, see annotated reports)</li> <li>What would have happened without the project? (usually qualitative reflection)</li> </ul>	Improved improved quality of training at the pilot training institutes (see hypothesis 1) Improved application of new knowledge by TVET professionals in TVET institutions and companies (see hypotheses 2 and 3) Improved legal and strategic framework (see hypothesis 4)	Design: Contribution analysis of 3 hypotheses Methodology: see chapter 4.4 in the Inception Report Interviews, document analysis	Hypothesis 1: Interviews with management staff, teachers, trainees of 3 VET schools and 1 VTC, as well as companies, criteria-based lesson observations to evaluation teaching and learning processes (based on a standardised questionnaire, see Kappher/Schlake 2018, 3 - 4 lesson per each institute are planned to be observed (each 45 min) comprising 2 lessons of trained VET teachers and trainers and 1 -2 lessons of untrained teachers and trainers (control group), sum of observed lessons: 12 – 15) Hypothesis 2: Quantitative analysis of monitoring results (referring to module indicator 2)	strong	strong

					triangulated by interviews with key partners and selected beneficiaries Hypothesis 3: Quantitative contribution analysis using monitoring data (tracer study results), descriptive quantitative analysis, if data quality sufficient significance tests (t-test) foreseen triangulated by interviews		
Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to the achievement of objectives at the level of the intended beneficiaries?		TVET students: Satisfaction with improved training	Focus group interviews	Focus group interviews with 40 VET students of 4 visited VET institutes	good	good
Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to the achievement of objectives at the level of particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable groups of beneficiaries and stakeholders? (These may be broken down by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc.)?		vulnerable target groups incl. youth and young adults from rural areas and poor households, people with disabilities, young women, and members of ethnic minorities: Satisfaction with improved ALMMs or training	Focus group interviews, document analysis	Document analysis of monitoring data and reports, focus group interviews with x VET students belonging to vulnerable groups	Moderate (limited to interviewees, small sample due to limited time frame)	moderate
Standard	<i>Which internal factors (technical, organisational or financial) were decisive for achievement/non-achievement of the intervention's intended objectives?</i>	• Internal factors = within the project's sphere of responsibility / system boundary. The project is implemented jointly by GIZ and the official partner(s).	Internal factors influencing the achievement/non-achievement of project objectives	Explorative interviews, MSCT	Explorative interviews with project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, youth centre, KCC, companies	good	good
Standard	<i>Which external factors were decisive for achievement/non-achievement of the intervention's intended objectives (taking into account the anticipated risks)?</i>	• External factors = outside the project's sphere of responsibility / system boundary. The project is implemented jointly by GIZ and the official partner(s).	External factors influencing the achievement/non-achievement of project objectives	Explorative interviews, MSCT	Explorative interviews with project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, youth centre, KCC, companies	Good	good

	Quality of implementation	Standard	<p>What assessment can be made of the quality of steering and implementation of the intervention in terms of the achievement of objectives?</p> <p>What assessment can be made of the quality of steering and implementation of, and participation in, the intervention by the partner/executing agency?</p>	<p>Capacity Works considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Results-oriented monitoring (RoM / WoM)</b> is established and used, e.g. for evidence-based decisions, risk management. Data are disaggregated by gender and marginalised groups. Unintended positive and negative results are monitored. Conflict-sensitive monitoring and explicit risk safety monitoring are particularly important for projects in fragile contexts.</li> <li>- A bindingly communicated <b>strategy</b> agreed with the partners is pursued</li> <li>- Involvement and <b>cooperation</b> of all relevant actors (including partners, civil society, private sector)</li> <li>- <b>Steering</b>: decisions influencing the project's results are made in time and evidence-informed. Decision processes are transparent.</li> <li>- <b>Processes</b>: Relevant change processes are anchored in the cooperation system; project-internal processes are established and regularly reflected and optimised.</li> <li>- <b>Learning and innovation</b>: There is a learning and innovation-friendly work culture that promotes the exchange of experience; learning processes are established; context-specific adjustments are possible</li> </ul>	<p>Quality/appropriateness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RoM/WoM,</li> <li>- Strategy,</li> <li>- Cooperation,</li> <li>- Steering model,</li> <li>- Processes,</li> <li>- Learning and innovation of project</li> </ul>	Document analysis, interviews	Document analysis: RoM/WoM, available capacity works documents Interviews with project management, FMB	strong	strong
	Unintended results	Standard	To what extent can unintended positive/negative direct results (social, economic, environmental and among vulnerable beneficiary groups) be observed/anticipated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus is on the outcome level, but for the analysis the unintended effects can also be included on the output level</li> </ul>	Unintended results identified	Explorative interviews, MSCT	Explorative interviews with project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, you centre, KCC, companies	good	good
		and Fragility	To what extent was the project able to ensure that escalating factors/ dividers <sup>3</sup> have not been strengthened (indirectly) by the project <sup>4</sup> ? Has the project unintentionally (indirectly) supported violent or 'dividing' actors?		Escalating factors/dividers, unintentional (indirect) support of violent or 'dividing' actors identified, management strategy of project	Explorative interviews	Explorative interviews with project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, you centre, KCC, companies	good	good
		Standard	What potential benefits/risks arise from the positive/negative unintended results? What assessment can be made of them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• also check whether the risks were already mentioned and monitored in the design phase</li> </ul>	Potential risks/benefits identified, conclusions	Explorative interviews	Explorative interviews with project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, you centre, KCC, companies	good	good
		and Fragility	To what extent have risks and unintended-negative results in the context of conflict, fragility and violence <sup>5</sup> been monitored (context/conflict-sensitive		Risks and unintended-negative results in the context of conflict, fragility and violence identified, conclusions	Explorative interviews, MSCT	Explorative interviews with project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, you centre, KCC, companies	good	good



		monitoring) in a systematic way?						
	Standard	How has the intervention responded to the potential benefits/risks of the positive/negative unintended results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check if positive results at the outcome level have been monitored and set in value</li> </ul>	Response / risk mitigation strategy of the project	Explorative interviews	Explorative interviews with project management	good	good

### OECD-DAC Criterion Efficiency - How well are resources being used? (max. 100 points)

This criterion describes the extent to which the intervention delivers results in an economic and timely way (relationship between input and output, outcome and impact level).

The evaluation dimension **"production efficiency"** refers to the appropriateness of the relationship between inputs and outputs. The evaluation dimension **"allocation efficiency"** refers to the appropriateness of the relationship between the inputs and the results achieved (project/development objective; outcome/impact level) by the intervention. The "efficiency" criterion relates both to the intervention's design and implementation and to the results it achieves.

Assessment dimension s	Filter - Project Type	Evaluation questions	Clarifications	Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators	Evaluation Design and empirical methods	Data sources	Data Quality and limitations	Data Quality Assessment (weak, moderate, good, strong)
<b>Production efficiency</b>	Standard	<i>How are the intervention's inputs (financial, human and material resources) distributed (e.g. by instruments, sectors, sub-interventions, taking into account the cost contributions of partners/executing agencies/other beneficiaries and stakeholders, etc.)?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of the data: Costs per output, type of costs, agreed and provided partner contributions</li> <li>• Description of the deviations between original planned costs and actual costs (with comprehensible justification, changes are certainly desirable for increased efficiency)</li> </ul>	Costs per output, type of costs, agreed and provided partner contributions Deviations between original planned costs and actual costs (with comprehensible justification, changes are certainly desirable for increased efficiency)	Design: Follow-the-Money Approach Instruments: Efficiency Tool, Vorlage zu den Personalinstrumenten Date collection method: Interviews	Interviews with project management, Kosten-Obbligo-Report, Efficiency Tool	good	good
	Standard	To what extent have the intervention's inputs (financial, human and material resources) been used economically in relation to the outputs delivered (products, investment goods and services)? If possible, refer to data from other evaluations in a region or sector, for instance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of 'Efficiency tool' including instructions and use of the follow-the-money approach as evaluation design (may be combined with other high-quality approaches)</li> <li>• Output level: Analysis of approaches and activities as well as TC instruments (personnel instruments, financing, materials and equipment)<sup>1</sup> compared to possible alternatives with a focus on the minimum principle (use of comparative data if available)</li> <li>• The project is oriented on internal or external benchmarks in order to achieve its effects economically</li> <li>• Regular reflection of the resources used by the project with focus on economically use of resources and cost risks</li> <li>• The overarching costs of the project are in an appropriate proportion to the costs of the outputs</li> </ul>	Output level: Approaches and activities as well as TC instruments (personnel instruments, financing, materials and equipment) <sup>1</sup> compared to possible alternatives with a focus on the minimum principle (use of comparative data if available) Internal or external benchmarks of the project in order to achieve its effects economically Resources used by the project with focus on economically use of resources and cost risks Overarching costs of the project and proportion to the costs of the outputs	Design: Follow-the-Money Approach Instruments: Efficiency Tool, Vorlage zu den Personalinstrumenten Date collection method: Interviews	Interviews with project management, Kosten-Obbligo-Report, Efficiency Tool	good	good

	Standard	<p>To what extent could the intervention's outputs (products, investment goods and services) have been increased through the alternative use of inputs (financial, human and material resources)? If possible, refer to data from other evaluations of a region or sector, for instance. (If applicable, this question adds a complementary perspective*)</p> <p>* This case is always applicable in the technical cooperation (TC), please answer the question bindingly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of 'Efficiency tool' including instructions and use of the follow-the-money approach as evaluation design (may be combined with other high-quality approaches)</li> <li>• Output level: Analysis of approaches and activities as well as TC instruments (personnel instruments, financing, materials and equipment)<sup>1</sup> compared to possible alternatives with focus on output maximization (use of comparative data if available)</li> <li>• Analysis of alternative options for allocating resources and shifts between outputs for output maximisation</li> <li>• saved resources can and should be used to maximise outputs</li> <li>• Reflection of the resources during the design phase and regularly during the implementation of the project with focus on output maximisation (with comprehensible justification, changes are certainly desirable for increased efficiency)</li> <li>• 'imaximising outputs' means with the same resources, under the same conditions and with the same or better quality</li> </ul>	<p>Output level: Approaches and activities as well as TC instruments (personnel instruments, financing, materials and equipment)<sup>1</sup> compared to possible alternatives with focus on output maximization (use of comparative data if available)</p> <p>Possible alternative options for allocating resources and shifts between outputs for output maximisation</p>	<p>Design: Follow-the-Money Approach</p> <p>Instruments: Efficiency Tool, Vorlage zu den Personalinstrumenten</p> <p>Date collection method: Interviews</p>	<p>Interviews with project management, Kosten-Obli-Report, Efficiency Tool</p>	good	good
	Standard	<p>Were the outputs (products, investment goods and services) produced on time and within the planned time frame?</p>		<p>Target and actual values referring to all outputs</p>	<p>Design: Follow-the-Money Approach</p> <p>Instruments: Efficiency Tool, Vorlage zu den Personalinstrumenten</p> <p>Date collection method: Interviews</p>	<p>Interviews with project management, Results matrix, Efficiency Tool</p>	good	good
	Standard	<p><i>By what other means and at what cost could the results achieved (higher-level project objective) have been attained?</i></p>		<p>Other possible means and costs to achieve project's results</p>	<p>Design: Follow-the-Money Approach</p> <p>Instruments: Efficiency Tool, Vorlage zu den Personalinstrumenten</p> <p>Date collection method: Interviews</p>	<p>Explorative interviews with project management, Efficiency Tool</p>	good	good
	Standard	<p>To what extent – compared with alternative designs for the intervention – could the results have been attained more cost-effectively?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome level: Analysis of approaches and activities as well as TC-instruments in comparison to possible alternatives with focus on minimum principle (use of comparative data if available)</li> <li>• Regular reflection in the project of the input-outcome relation and alternatives as well as cost risks</li> <li>• The partner contributions are proportionate to the costs for the outcome of the project</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome level: Approaches, activities, TC-instruments in comparison to possible alternatives with focus on minimum principle (comparative data used if available)</p> <p>Regular reflection in the project of the input-outcome relation and alternatives as well as cost risks</p> <p>Ratio of partner contribution to the costs for the outcome of the project</p>	<p>Design: Follow-the-Money Approach</p> <p>Instruments: Efficiency Tool, Vorlage zu den Personalinstrumenten</p> <p>Date collection method: Interviews</p>	<p>Interviews with project management, Module proposal, Kosten-Obli-report, Efficiency Tool</p>	good	good

	Standard	<p>To what extent – compared with alternative designs for the intervention – could the positive results have been increased using the existing resources? (If applicable, this question adds a complementary perspective")</p> <p>* This case is always applicable in the technical cooperation (TC), please answer the question bindingly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome level: Analysis of applied approaches and activities as well as TC-instruments compared to possible alternatives with focus on maximizing the outcome (real comparison if available)</li> <li>• The project manages its resources between the outputs in such a way that the maximum effects in terms of the module objective are achieved</li> <li>• Regular reflection in the project of the input-outcome relation and alternatives</li> <li>• Reflection and realization of possibilities for scaling-up</li> <li>• If additional funds (e.g. co-financing) have been raised: Effects on input-outcome ratio (e.g. via economies of scale) and the ratio of administrative costs to total costs</li> <li>• Losses in efficiency due to insufficient coordination and complementarity within German DC are sufficiently avoided</li> </ul>	<p>Outcome level: Approaches, activities, TC-instruments in comparison to possible alternatives with focus on maximizing the outcome (real comparison if available)</p> <p>Management of resources by project management regarding the achievement of maximum effects in terms of the module objective, possibilities for scaling-up and the avoidance of losses in efficiency due to insufficient coordination and complementarity within German DC</p>	<p>Design: Follow-the-Money Approach</p> <p>Instruments: Efficiency Tool, Vorlage zu den Personalinstrumenten</p> <p>Date collection method: Interviews</p>	<p>Interviews with project management, FMB/other GIZ projects, Module proposal, Kosten-Obligo-Report, Efficiency Tool</p>	good	good
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### OECD-DAC Criterion Sustainability - Will the benefits last? (max. 100 points)

The 'sustainability' criterion relates to continued long-term benefits (at the outcome and impact level) or the probability of continued long-term benefits – taking into account observed or foreseeable risks – over time, particularly after assistance has ended.

Assessment dimensions	Filter - Project Type	Evaluation questions	Clarifications	Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators	Evaluation Design and empirical methods	Data sources	Data Quality and limitations	Data Quality Assessment (weak, moderate, good, strong)
<b>Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders</b>	Standard	To what extent do the beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations, partners and executing agencies) have the institutional, human and financial resources as well as the willingness (ownership) required to sustain the positive results of the intervention over time (once assistance has drawn to a close)?	• Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) projects primarily address final beneficiaries, whose resilience to crises and recurring shocks is to be strengthened. The focus for TDA projects is thus often on the resilience of final beneficiaries and/or at least the continuity of the measure (see explanation in dimension 3) (clarification in the inception phase of the evaluation).	Analysis of beneficiaries' and stakeholders' resources and willingness (ownership) to sustain the positive results of the intervention over time after the end of project: institutional and staff capacities, financial resources etc	Interviews	Interviews with project management, and project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, youth center, KCC, companies, NGOs	good	good
	Standard	To what extent do the beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations, partners and executing agencies) have the resilience to overcome future risks that could jeopardise the intervention's results?		Analysis of beneficiaries' and stakeholders' capacities/resilience to overcome future risks that could jeopardise the intervention's results	Interviews	Interviews with project management, and project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, youth centre, KCC, companies, NGOs	good	good

<b>Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities</b>	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to the beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations, partners and executing agencies) having the institutional, human and financial resources as well as the willingness (ownership) required to sustain the intervention's positive results over time and to limit the impact of any negative results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the preparation and documentation of learning experiences</li> <li>• Description of the anchoring of contents, approaches, methods and concepts in the partner system</li> <li>• Reference to exit strategy of the project</li> <li>• If there is a follow-on project, check to what extent the results of the evaluated project are taken up; the anchoring of the effects in the partner's organisation should be pursued independently of a follow-on project, since sustainability should be achieved even without donor funds</li> <li>• Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) projects primarily address final beneficiaries, whose resilience to crises and recurring shocks is to be strengthened. The focus for TDA projects is thus often on the resilience of final beneficiaries and/or at least the continuity of the measure (see explanation in dimension 3) (clarification in the inception phase of the evaluation).</li> </ul>	Capacity development measures of the project, Anchoring approaches/methods/concepts, particularly strategic, legal frame work, managment strategies/instruments in VET institutions etc. Extent the results of YES are taken up by partner organisation and the follow-on project "Fit for Jobs"	Interviews, document analysis	Interviews with project management, and project team, MESTI, MSLW, EARK/employment offices, VET institutes, youut centre, KCC, companies, NGOs Analysis of capacity development strategy, monitoring documents, module proposal of follow on project "Fit for Jobs"	good	good
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to strengthening the resilience of the beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations, partners and executing agencies)?		Capacity development measures of the project, Anchoring approaches/methods/concepts, particularly strategic, legal frame work, managment strategies/instruments in EARK/employment offices and VET institutions etc.	Interviews, document analysis	Interviews with selected beneficairees, managment and teachers of EARK/employment offices and VET institutions, project team, Analysis of capacity development strategy, monitoring documents,	Moderate (limited to interviews, small sample due to limited time frame)	moderate
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to strengthening the resilience of particularly disadvantaged groups? (These may be broken down by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc.)		Capacity development/support measures of the project disadvantaged groups	Interviews, document analysis	Interviews with selected vulnerable beneficairees	Moderate (limited to interviews, small sample due to limited time frame)	moderate
	Standard	<i>How stable is the context in which the intervention operates?</i>		Analysis of project context, perception of partners and GIZ team, particulalry the current capacities of partner organisations	Interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis	Interviews with representatives of partner organisations, other donor organisations, etc Analysis of further documents about the context identified by snowball principle	good	good
	Standard	<i>To what extent is the durability of the intervention's positive results influenced by the context?</i>	• Consideration of risks and potentials for the long-term stability of the results and description of the reaction of the project to these	Analysis of project context, perception of partners and GIZ team regarding the durability of	Interviews, focus group discussions,	Interviews with key partners	good	good

				the intervention's positive results	document analysis				
	Standard	To what extent can the positive (and any negative) results of the intervention be deemed durable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of the extent to which continued use of the results by partners and beneficiaries can be foreseen</li> <li>• Reference to conditions and their influence on the durability, longevity and resilience of the effects (outcome and impact)</li> <li>• In the case of projects in the field of Transitional Development Assistance (TDA), at least the continuity of the measure must be examined: To what extent will services or results be continued in future projects (of GIZ or other donors/organizations) or their sustainability ensured? (Clarification in the inception phase)</li> </ul>	Analysis of project context, perception of partners and GIZ team, regarding extent can the positive (and any negative) results of the intervention be deemed durable.	Interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis	Interviews with key partners	good	good	



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