



Annex I

Specifications for ReferNet work plan 2013

REFERNET WORK PLAN 2013

ReferNet's annual work plan for 2013 ⁽¹⁾ will be the object of a specific grant agreement based on the framework partnership agreement concluded between Cedefop and the partner.

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

1. Reporting on national VET systems and policy developments
 - 1.1. Policy reporting
 - 1.2. VET in Europe – Country report / Spotlight / Short Description of VET in EU Presidency countries
 - 1.3. Thematic reporting – Articles
 - 1.4. National news on VET
 - 1.5. Bibliographic references
2. Raising the visibility of VET and online dissemination
 - 2.1. National ReferNet website
 - 2.2. Visibility actions

⁽¹⁾ Start date of the annual work plan: January 2013 – end date: December 2013.

1. REPORTING ON NATIONAL VET SYSTEMS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

1.1. Policy background

Europe 2020 ⁽²⁾ considers investment in education and training a prerequisite for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. VET has a role to play in achieving (nearly) all of Europe's 2020 headline targets, in particular specific education and training benchmarks to reduce early school-leaving to less than 10 % and to increase the share of 30-34 year-olds with a higher education degree or equivalent to 40 %. While in some flagship initiatives VET's role is more distinct than in others, it contributes to all of them.

The *Education and Training 2020 framework* (ET 2020) ⁽³⁾ supports Europe 2020. It focuses European cooperation on the following objectives which apply to all types and levels of education and training:

- (a) make lifelong learning and mobility for learning and working a reality;
- (b) improve quality and efficiency of education and training;
- (c) promote equity and social cohesion; and
- (d) foster creativity and innovation.

Based on these overall objectives, the Bruges communiqué and the related Council conclusions ⁽⁴⁾ define strategic objectives for European cooperation in VET between 2011 and 2020. They also set out short-term deliverables (national measures and actions and support at EU-level) for the period 2011-14. Firm evidence, thorough analysis and policy learning opportunities support European cooperation in VET.

The Bruges Communiqué entrusts Cedefop with reporting on progress towards the strategic objectives and the short-term deliverables. This acknowledges Cedefop's contribution in reporting on European cooperation in VET over the period 2002-08 ⁽⁵⁾, to which ReferNet contributed substantially.

⁽²⁾ European Commission (2011). *Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm [cited 25.5.2012] and *Europe 2020: a new European strategy for jobs and growth: European Council Presidency Conclusion 25-26 March 2010*. Available from Internet: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st00/st00007.en10.pdf> [cited 25.5.2012].

⁽³⁾ Council of the European Union (2009). Council conclusions of 12 May on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020"). *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 119, 28.5.2009, p. 2-10. Available from Internet: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:0010:en:PDF> [cited 25.5.2012].

⁽⁴⁾ Council of the European Union (2010). Conclusions on Priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training for the period 2011-2020, Brussels, 18 and 19 November 2010. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 324, 1.12.2010, p.5-15. Available from Internet: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:324:0005:0015:EN:PDF> [cited 25.5.2012].

⁽⁵⁾ See Cedefop's four reports on European VET policy published in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010. The Bruges communiqué reflects the findings of the 2010 report.

Cedefop's next report on European VET policy, which is due in mid-2014, will feed into the European Commission's report on the achievements of ET 2020.

To ensure consistent implementation of Europe 2020 in the different policy areas, the Council of the European Union has endorsed a new economic governance process, called the 'European semester' ⁽⁶⁾. It helps identify the main challenges facing the EU and provide strategic advice on policies. This strategic advice goes beyond economy, finance and employment to include education and training (see 2011 and 2012 recommendations), Assessing challenges, developing 'recommendations' for countries' national reform programmes and following them up annually, leads to an increased need for systematic country-specific information and analysis. The European Commission has asked Cedefop's support in this exercise.

All the above policy processes require consistent follow-up based on continuous monitoring and thematic stock-taking at different points in time. They may also entail responding to ad-hoc requests to ongoing projects. As the Bruges Communiqué is aligned to ET 2020 and the overall Europe 2020 strategy, Cedefop aims to create synergy among existing reporting projects.

1.2. Purpose of activity

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

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

ReferNet national partners are well placed to inform on VET systems in their specific context and on relevant policy developments. ReferNet national partners have first-hand information from different stakeholders. They can also pool knowledge and experience from policy-making, implementation, evaluation and research at central, regional, local and sectoral levels.

Therefore, Cedefop will require ReferNet national partners to:

- (a) report on VET policy in their country and on how the specific VET-related objectives of Europe 2020's strategy are being met at national level;

⁽⁶⁾ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/14>
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/chart_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

- (b) provide up-to-date information on VET systems and developments in their country.

Expected deliverables, working methods and other arrangements for the activities are listed below.

1.3. Deliverables in 2013

All deliverables should be provided in English.

All publications and public documents consulted and/or cited while preparing Deliverables 1 to 4 shall be catalogued under Deliverable 5 (Bibliographic references).

Deliverable 1: VET policy reporting

Background/Aim

In 2013 ReferNet will be asked to revise the information they provided in 2012 in response to a questionnaire designed by Cedefop. ReferNet partners reported on national policy measures and actions that countries have agreed to carry out by 2014 (short-term deliverables). This input informed detailed country-fiches, cross-country overviews of developments by deliverable and Cedefop's synthesis of progress in implementing the Bruges Communiqué (intermediary review; see ReferNet Work Plan 2012). This input helps building the evidence base for the fully-fledged VET policy report in 2014 and informs the Commission's work in the context of the 'European semester' (see above). Cedefop also draws on ReferNet's other activities (thematic reporting, information on VET systems), its own work and other sources.

Even though no report is due in 2013, the reinforced governance at EU level requires continuous monitoring of policy developments. This means keeping the information on progress by country and by short-term deliverable up-to-date.

Methods

ReferNet partners will amend or complement the information provided in 2012 and respond to a few new or revised questions to reflect the state-of-play in their countries. New questions will focus on short-term deliverables that have not been covered in the 2012 questionnaire and for which information cannot be obtained using other sources.

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

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

Cedefop may also seek feedback on its own analysis of progress ⁽⁷⁾ and ask ReferNet to validate the information.

Steps/Deadlines

Cedefop will provide ReferNet national partners with the revised questionnaire for the 2013 policy reporting exercise in January.

The ReferNet national partners will provide the required information in April 2013.

Deliverable 2: Reporting on national VET systems

In 2012, Cedefop introduced a new approach for reporting on national VET systems. According to the new approach, the VET in Europe – Country report (2a) has become country-driven and more concise to better fit the specificities of the national VET systems and to form a more suitable basis for the Short Description of VET in the EU Presidency countries (2c). VET in Europe – Spotlights (2b) were introduced as a new deliverable to summarise key features of the national VET systems.

In 2013 ReferNet will be asked to update the information provided in 2012 in VET in Europe – Country reports and Spotlights. The Presidency countries will also deliver the Short Description of VET.

Deliverable 2a: VET in Europe – Country report

Background/Aim

Country reports are brief but comprehensive descriptions of the national VET systems. They provide readers with an overview of the system and insights into its national characteristics, developments and challenges. Country reports are based on a common structure provided by Cedefop, but the content is country-driven, i.e. the writers deliver the information they consider most relevant in order to provide a coherent description of their VET systems. Country reports do not have comparative aims.

Methods

The ReferNet national partner will ensure that the report is up-to-date, relevant, reliable, complete and correct. It will be published under the name of its author by Cedefop. Cedefop may request revisions to further improve the report's clarity, readability and responsiveness to the requirements set out in the guidelines. Such feedback will be given based on the agreed quality criteria.

There is no fixed reference year for the 2013 Country report. The work will consist in updating and improving as necessary the report of the previous year. Cedefop in cooperation with ReferNet partners may update the guidelines, including the structure and the quality criteria, based on lessons learnt from the 2012 reporting exercise.

⁽⁷⁾ Cedefop's analysis will also draw on other ReferNet activities, Cedefop's own work and other EU and international sources.

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

The national partner shall submit the VET in Europe – Country report electronically, in Word format.

Steps/Deadlines

Cedefop may provide to ReferNet revised guidelines, including the structure and quality criteria, at the end of May 2013.

ReferNet national partners will provide the required information by 1 November 2013.

Deliverable 2b: VET in Europe – Spotlight

Background/Aim

Spotlights summarise key features, challenges and developments within the national VET systems. The main aim of Spotlight is to concisely present the national VET system within a limited number of pages (leaflet), to accommodate readers who need a brief, legible introduction to VET in a specific country. For the Presidency countries, Spotlights will be also published in hard-copy in four languages (English, French, German and the national language(s)) to be disseminated during Presidency events.

Methods

The ReferNet national partner will ensure that Spotlight highlights key features, developments and challenges of the national VET system. The partner will work in close cooperation with Cedefop and draw on the content of the Country report delivered and the feedback received to identify and select the key challenges and main issues at stake at national level and present them in a very concise, relevant and clear way.

A template for Spotlights was developed and made available to ReferNet in September 2012. Cedefop, in co-operation with ReferNet, may update the template based on lessons learnt from the 2012 reporting exercise.

The national partner shall submit VET in Europe – Spotlight electronically, in Word format.

Steps/Deadlines

Each national partner will update the VET in Europe – Spotlight by December 2013. For Presidency countries the submission date will be agreed bilaterally between Cedefop and the ReferNet national partner.

In case Cedefop updates the template, this new version will be made available by end of May.

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

Deliverable 2c: Short Description of VET in EU Presidency countries

Background/Aim

To raise VET visibility in the two countries holding the EU Presidency in 2013 (Ireland and Lithuania), VET in Europe – Country reports will be used as a basis for hard-copy publications – called Short Descriptions – published in English and in the national language(s).

National Short Descriptions and Spotlights (see deliverable 2b) will be distributed during Presidency conferences and events.

Methods

The structure of the Short Description is essentially the same as the VET in Europe – Country report. Cedefop will edit the document and create additional entries (Foreword, Abstract), and be in charge of the translation and publication process. A close cooperation between the author and the Cedefop project manager is expected. Being an important visibility tool both for VET at national level and for the cooperation between Cedefop and the national partner institution, a particular effort will be made to produce an attractive high-level publication.

Steps/Deadlines

To be agreed with the project manager. The Short Description should be ready before the country stages the Presidency.

Deliverable 3: Thematic reporting

As part of the revision of the VET in Europe – Country report, Cedefop introduced a reporting activity on VET-specific issues of European relevance. It was proposed that the output should take the form of short articles (5-10 pages) having comparative aims, with a scope and structure defined by Cedefop. These articles would tackle specific issues selected for their actuality and European policy relevance.

Deliverable 3a: Article on early leavers from VET

Background/Aim

This activity will feed into

- Cedefop's own research work and its contribution to the work of the European Commission's thematic working group on early leaving from education and training;
- Cedefop's contribution to the discussions of the Directors General for VET and the Advisory Committee for VET ('snapshot') during the Lithuanian Presidency (autumn 2013).

Its aim is to help improve the evidence base on early leaving from VET, understand its reasons and demonstrate how VET can contribute to achieving one of Europe's headline targets.

Reducing early leaving from education and training to less than 10 % ⁽⁸⁾ from around 15 %, is one of the main objectives of Europe's 2020 strategy and one of its headline targets. To achieve this objective, Member States have agreed to establish national targets that take account of their situations in 2010 and of national contexts. Progress is monitored annually within the different reporting exercises on education and training and through the 'European semester'.

In 2011, the Council of the European Union endorsed specific recommendations on policies to reduce early leaving from education and training ⁽⁹⁾ inviting the Member States to put comprehensive strategies in place by the end of 2012. To support implementation of this Council Recommendation, the European Commission has set up a thematic working group within its ET 2020 work programme. Within this group, to which Cedefop contributes, a set of activities focuses specifically on VET.

VET is considered to make an important contribution to helping young people remain in or re-enter education and training. At the same time evidence from some European countries suggests that the rates of young people leaving VET are higher than those leaving from general education. Specific short-term deliverables of the Bruges Communiqué focus on preventive and remedial measures and on monitoring improvement. Early leaving from VET was also one of the themes ReferNet members suggested at the regional meetings in 2012 when discussing potential themes for the newly introduced articles.

Methods

ReferNet will supply information based on guidelines provided by Cedefop. Guidelines, nature of the input required and relevant methods will be communicated in due course.

Cedefop will ensure complementarity with the Policy reporting questionnaire.

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

Steps/deadlines

Guidelines will be available in April 2013.

⁽⁸⁾ EU documents refer to the share of young people (18-24 years old) with at most a lower secondary education that are not in further education and training. It includes all forms of leaving education and training before completing upper secondary education or training (ISCED 3), i.e. those that never started such a programme and those that did not successfully complete it; in statistical terms those that have attained at most ISCED 2 and ISCED 3c short.

⁽⁹⁾ Council of the European Union (2011). Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving. Official Journal of the European Union, C191, 1/7/2011, p. 1-6. Available from Internet: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:191:0001:0006:EN:PDF> [cited on 25.5.2012].

ReferNet will deliver its input by June 2013.

Deliverable 3b: Article (topic still to be decided depending upon EU policy agenda)

Background/Aim

Depending upon needs and to accompany the policy process better, the topic of the second article will be defined at a later stage. It will be agreed in close cooperation between Cedefop and ReferNet partners. The length of the article will not exceed 10 pages.

Methods

ReferNet will supply information based on guidelines provided by Cedefop. Guidelines, nature of the input required and relevant methods will be communicated by June.

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

Steps/Deadlines

Guidelines will be available in June 2013.

ReferNet will deliver its input in November 2013.

Deliverable 4: National news on VET

Background/Aim

To inform on the latest national developments on VET and related labour market issues, ReferNet provides short news items. In 2013 National news will be also used to supply information on measures taken as a response to possible VET-related recommendations provided to a country within the European semester. This deliverable will consequently serve two purposes: informing on national VET developments via Cedefop's newsletter and website, and contributing to the follow-up of the European semester recommendations.

News items may also be used in Cedefop's contributions to biennial meetings of Directors-General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVT) and the Advisory Committee for Vocational Education and Training (ACVT).

ReferNet will be presented with and will validate the template for reporting on the European semester recommendations during the Plenary in October 2012.

Some ReferNet partners have not received European semester recommendations on VET. For these countries, the activity remains unchanged in 2013.

Methods

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

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

In Cedefop newsletter and on Cedefop website, news items will be published under the ReferNet partner's name. Cedefop may request content revisions and additionally proceed to some editing and reserves the right to decide whether to publish.

Where a ReferNet partner's news item is used for Cedefop's contribution to DGVT and ACVT meetings, Cedefop may request clarification and/or further information or revision. Cedefop may also seek feedback on its draft, in particular ask ReferNet to validate the information included.

ReferNet countries that have received European semester VET-related recommendations will submit information on measures taken in accordance with a template provided by Cedefop.

ReferNet countries that haven't received such recommendations will use the existing guidelines on National news for 2013.

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

Steps/Deadlines

To meet the deadlines of the European semester calendar, countries receiving VET-related recommendation(s) should submit news items a) before the end of January and b) before the end of September 2013.

ReferNet partners not receiving VET recommendations will submit at least two news items (partners are welcome to submit more) focusing on topics that reflect the European VET policy agenda, in particular the Bruges Communiqué, and EU Presidency country priorities. Partners should ensure they deliver one recent news item each semester (one during the winter/spring period and one during the summer/autumn period).

Deliverable 5: Bibliographic references

Background/Aim

As stated in Article 2(2) of Cedefop's founding Regulation ⁽¹⁰⁾, one of the main tasks of the Centre shall be (...) "to compile selected documentation relating in particular to the present situation, the latest developments and research in the relevant fields, and to matters of vocational training structure".

⁽¹⁰⁾ Council of the European Union (1975). Council Regulation No 337/75 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. *Official Journal of the European Union* L 39, 13.2.1975, p. 1-3. Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/eurodoc/2004/0223_en.pdf [cited 25.5.2012].

ReferNet partners will contribute to the task of gathering evidence on VET policy developments by identifying recent documents published in the field of VET.

ReferNet partners will provide bibliographic references of the main publications and documents used in the context of reporting activities (see Deliverables 1 to 4). All recent references cited in the bibliography of each national report will be submitted as a minimum.

All references will be made accessible through Cedefop's bibliographic database (VET-Bib), making the most representative national documents visible online.

VET-Bib marketing activities will be closely linked to the ReferNet recommendations developed in 2012 by the ReferNet working group on visibility (see Deliverable 7) and ReferNet partners are encouraged to support actively the promotion of VET-Bib at national level by making potential users aware of its existence and reminding users and potential users about its relevance.

Methods

ReferNet national partners shall submit bibliographic references through the dedicated application (VET bibliographic input tool) available on ReferNet extranet, following selection, cataloguing and indexing guidelines and instructions provided by Cedefop.

Cedefop will provide a plan, guidelines and support for marketing VET-Bib at national level. Advice and support can consist of style guidelines, web banner, promotional flyers, web programming code samples, etc.

Steps/Deadlines

Bibliographic references may be delivered at the convenience of each ReferNet partner. It is however recommended to submit references regularly to guarantee consistent and steady dissemination through Cedefop products, which are the VET-Bib bibliographic database, the monthly newsletter VET-Alert, Cedefop's newsletter, Cedefop's online bibliographies, etc.

2. RAISING THE VISIBILITY OF VET AND ONLINE DISSEMINATION

2.1. Background

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

2.2. Purpose of activity

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

2.3. Deliverables in 2013

Deliverable 6: National ReferNet website

Background/Aim

A national ReferNet website in the national language and also, if the ReferNet national partner so wishes, in English will be regularly maintained and updated. The ReferNet website aims to disseminate information and raise visibility of VET and Cedefop's work nationally.

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

Methods

The national ReferNet website can be autonomously hosted on its own domain or a dedicated section in the ReferNet national partner's parent organization's website. Cedefop provides guidelines to prepare the national ReferNet website as well as technical advice and support for its setup and maintenance. Advice and support can take the form of style guidelines, website libraries, web programming code samples, discussions for optimum solutions. Cedefop looks for solutions that have minimum maintenance effort and cost, for example exchange of content (news, events, publications) via automated RSS feeds.

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

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

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

Steps/Deadlines

Continuous activity.

Deliverable 7: Visibility actions

Background/Aim

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

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

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

Methods

The national visibility strategy will rely on existing channels such as the ReferNet national website. It can also include the dissemination and/or production of papers, flyers, newsletters, web banners, videos, etc. and the organisation of – and participation to – public events involving relevant stakeholders.

Cedefop will provide recommendations on designing and implementing visibility actions by January 2013.

ReferNet national partners will submit a list of visibility actions carried out in 2013 at national level, including details on the audience targeted, the channels used, possibly the outcomes of the action, etc.

Steps/Deadlines

Continuous activity.

A detailed list of actions (see above) carried out will be delivered by the ReferNet partner as an attachment to the Final Implementation Report on 2013 action.

BUDGET AVAILABLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFERNET 2013 WORK PLAN

The total available budget for the 2013 ReferNet work plan in all eligible countries is EUR 955.000.

The total available budget for the 2013 work plan is distributed as follows ⁽¹¹⁾:

	Maximum grant amount
<u>Country group 1: Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia and Iceland</u>	EUR 23.615
<u>Country group 2: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Sweden and Norway</u>	EUR 33.625
<u>Country group 3: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom</u>	EUR 43.620

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

⁽¹¹⁾ The allocated amount may not under any circumstances exceed the amounts indicated in this table.

TIMETABLE

Start date of the annual work plan: January 2013

End date of the annual work plan: December 2013

Duration of the annual work plan: 12 months

Activity	Deadline/Frequency
1. Policy reporting	April 2013
2a. VET in Europe – Country report	1 st November 2013
2b. VET in Europe – Spotlight	December 2013
2c. Short Description of VET in the EU Presidency countries	To be agreed with Cedefop project manager
3a. Article on early leavers from VET	June 2013
3b. Article (topic still to be decided)	November 2013
4. National news on VET	At least one item each semester. Specific deadlines for ‘countries with VET-related recommendation(s)’: end January and end September
5. Bibliographic references	Linked to reporting activities
6. Maintaining and updating a national ReferNet website	Continuous
7. Visibility actions	Continuous. Detailed list of actions to be delivered attached to the Final Implementation Report on 2013 action.