ReferNet Partnership Forum, Warsaw, Poland, 11-12 June 2025

Background document

Purpose of the meeting

The Educational Research Institute - National Research Institute, home of the ReferNet Poland team will welcome their colleagues and partners to the 2025 partnership forum organised jointly with Cedefop.

In this forum, ReferNet members will have the opportunity to discuss issues related to vocational education and training (VET), skills and qualifications, improve their knowledge by sharing information on recent developments in national policies and systems while at the same time hear and learn about the VET system of Poland. The second of this year's partnership forum will take place on 11 and 12 June in Warsaw, Poland, during the period of the Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The purpose of this background document is to assist in contextualizing the thematic sessions and raise a number of questions that could lead the discussions to take place. Participants are invited to actively contribute to all the Thematic sessions:

- ReferNet Thematic session A – Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training: Systems, Tools, and Evolving Practices
- ReferNet Thematic session B – Evolving VET Pathways: Strategies for Reform, Recognition, and Reward
- ReferNet Thematic session C – Beyond Compliance: Approaches to Evaluating Pedagogical Quality in VET Programmes

We would like to warmly thank the Educational Research Institute - National Research Institute, and the national ReferNet Poland team for hosting the event.

Take part in the discussions #ReferNet

ReferNet Thematic session A – Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training: Systems, Tools, and Evolving Practices

Context & Rationale

This session will focus on quality assurance in vocational education and training (VET), with particular attention to continuous vocational education and training (CVET) and the role of institutions in supporting effective evaluation, leadership, and adaptation in a changing policy environment.

The Czech presentation will provide insights into an integrated approach to quality improvement, combining external evaluation mechanisms, practical tools for providers, and institutional cooperation to support school leadership. Italy will contribute with an overview of quality assurance in CVET, presenting both regulatory frameworks and implementation practices that support continuous training across different sectors. Finally, Cedefop will offer a European-level perspective on its new project on how quality is ensured in a rapidly evolving CVET landscape, marked by diverse learning pathways, digital transformation, and changing learner profiles.

The session will allow for reflection on how quality assurance systems can remain robust yet adaptable, ensuring relevance, equity, and excellence in both IVET and CVET contexts.

Contributors

- Martina Kaňáková, National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic (NPI CR)
- Roberto Angotti & Concetta Fonzo, National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies (INAPP)
- Anthie Kyriakopoulou, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)

ReferNet Thematic session B – Evolving VET Pathways: Strategies for Reform, Recognition, and Reward

Context & Rationale

This session will explore how countries are placing vocational education and training (VET) at the core of their skills strategies through structural reform, enhanced recognition, and improved learner incentives.

This session will examine recent policy developments and strategic reforms that are reinforcing the role of vocational education and training (VET) within national education and skills systems. Through a series of country case studies, the session will highlight different approaches to enhancing the relevance, recognition, and attractiveness of VET.

The Norwegian case will present how higher VET has been positioned as a central element of the national education strategy, moving beyond the traditional view of vocational pathways as a secondary choice. Slovenia will share insights into its competence-driven VET reform, with a focus on the alignment of qualifications and curricula to labour market requirements. Germany will contribute with a perspective on apprenticeship remuneration, showcasing how the 2024 increase in apprentice pay supports learner engagement and strengthens the overall appeal of vocational training.

Through these national cases, the session will shed light on how targeted policy measures and systemic innovation are reshaping the landscape of vocational learning across Europe.

Contributors

- Margareth Haukås, Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills - (HK-dir)
- Darko Mali, National Institute for Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Slovenia (CPI)
- Adrienne Huismann, Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training - (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung), (BIBB)

ReferNet Thematic session C – Beyond Compliance: Approaches to Evaluating Pedagogical Quality in VET Programmes

Context & Rationale

In many European countries, national quality assurance systems in VET (such as Qualiopi in France) have succeeded in promoting organisational conformity to quality standards. However, these systems often place greater emphasis on formal compliance and provider-level procedures than on the pedagogical quality of the training courses themselves.

This interactive workshop will explore the limits of process-driven quality assurance mechanisms and open the discussion on complementary or alternative approaches to assessing pedagogical effectiveness in VET. Starting from the French experience, participants will be invited to reflect on:

- How pedagogical quality is (or is not) addressed in national quality frameworks;
- Methodologies or indicators that could help evaluate the educational value of training;
- Examples of innovative practices, audits, or peer-review mechanisms;
- The potential trade-offs between regulatory control, provider autonomy, and learner-centred quality.

Interactive workshop

The session is proposed as an Interactive workshop aiming to facilitate peer exchange, compare practices, and identify ideas for further policy and research work.

Moderator

Vincent Joseph, Centre Inffo