The shift to learning outcomes; rhetoric or reality?

Research Tools and Methodology
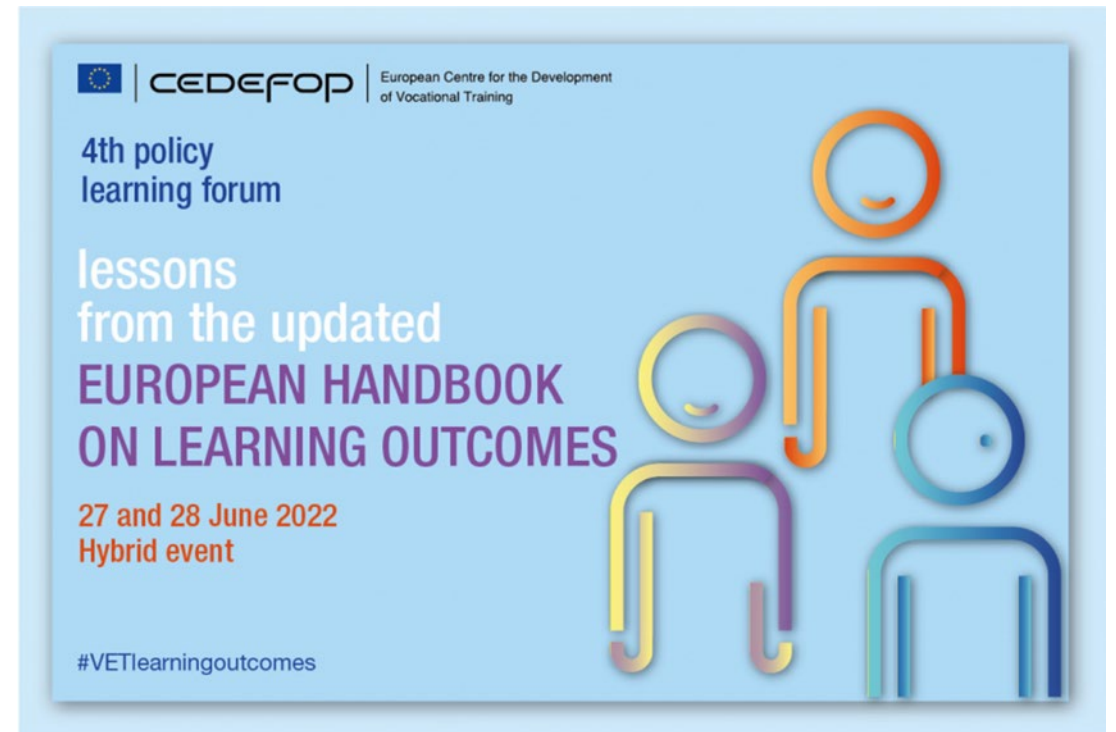
Study objective and approach

The shift to learning outcomes; rhetoric or reality?

The study aims to map and analyse the transformation of **intended learning outcomes** into **achieved** learning outcomes.

- The research focuses on **initial vocational education and training,** in **schools** and **apprenticeships**,

- It seeks to map and better understand the **features** and **factors** influencing the transformation of intentions into **teaching, learning and assessment.**

Overall objective and 5 strands of the study

The study aims to map and analyse the transformation
of **intended** learning outcomes **into achieved** learning outcomes**.**

The study consists of five strands.

Strand 1: Examines how learning outcomes impact **pedagogical theory and tools**.

Strand 2: Investigates how outcome-based curricula affect teaching practices in **school-based programmes**.

Strand 3: Studies the impact of outcome-based curricula on **in-company training** within apprenticeship programmes.

Strand 4: Analyses how learning outcomes influence **assessment methods**.

Strand 5: Synthesises findings from the previous strands to provide guidance for stakeholders and policymakers on **future challenges and opportunities**.

Analytical Framework
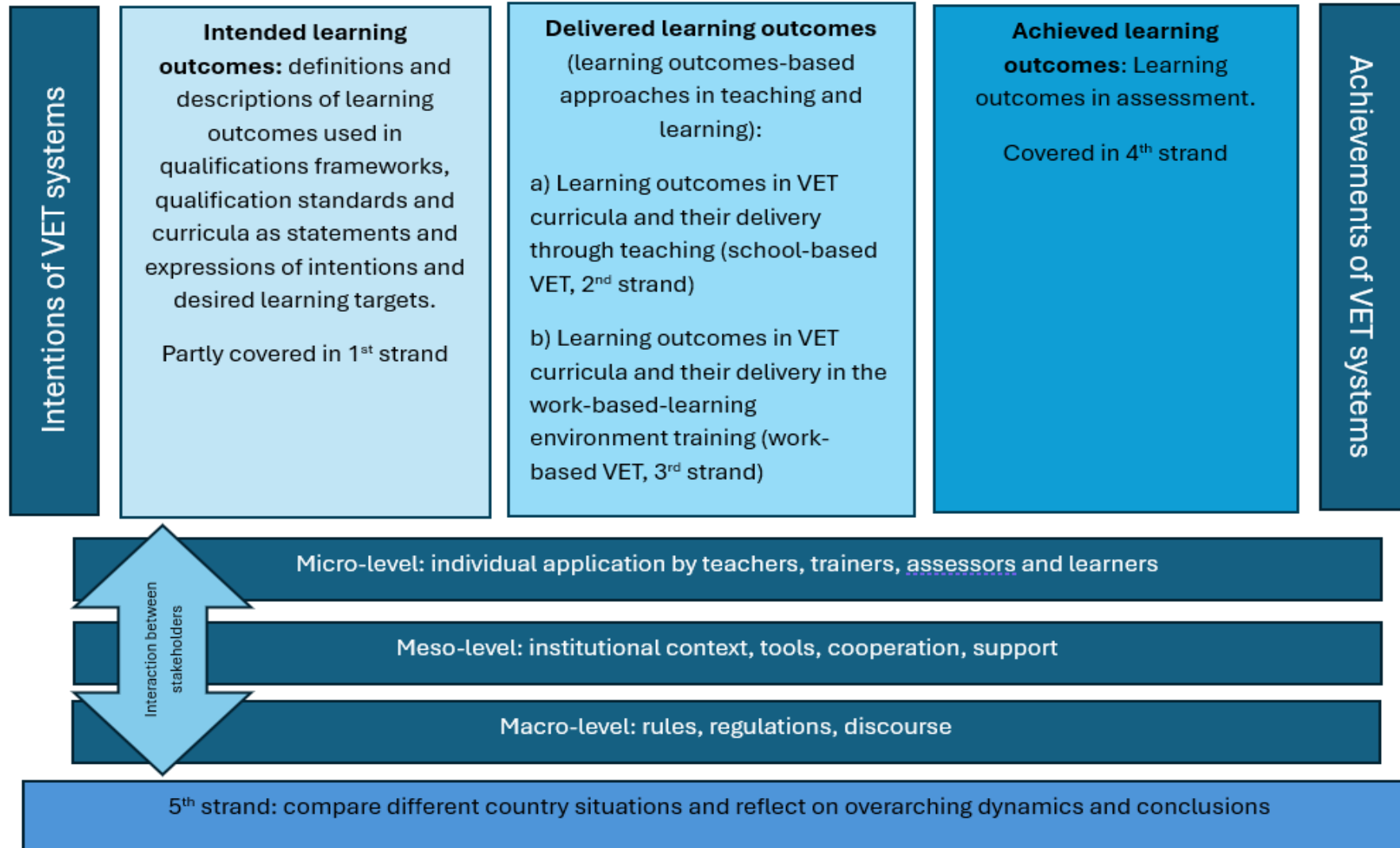
Overarching Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of the study consists of **three main perspectives**.

The first perspective maps the logical steps from intended to delivered and then to achieved learning outcomes and what a learning outcomes approach practically implies.

The second perspective maps levels (macro, meso, micro) at which actions are (or may be) taken to implement the learning outcomes approach.

The third perspective looks at the stakeholders involved at different levels and the change processes involved in developing/adopting approaches based on learning outcomes in VET.

Overarching Analytical Framework

Intentions of VET systems

Intended learning outcomes: definitions and descriptions of learning outcomes used in qualifications frameworks, qualification standards and curricula as statements and expressions of intentions and desired learning targets.

Partly covered in 1st strand

Delivered learning outcomes (learning outcomes-based approaches in teaching and learning):

a) Learning outcomes in VET curricula and their delivery through teaching (school-based VET, 2nd strand)

b) Learning outcomes in VET curricula and their delivery in the work-based-learning environment training (work-based VET, 3rd strand)

Achieved learning outcomes: Learning outcomes in assessment.

Covered in 4th strand

Achievements of VET systems

Interaction between stakeholders

Micro-level: individual application by teachers, trainers, assessors and learners

Meso-level: institutional context, tools, cooperation, support

Macro-level: rules, regulations, discourse

5th strand: compare different country situations and reflect on overarching dynamics and conclusions

THE SHIFT TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

Potential factors of influence

MICRO

- Awareness

- Perceived usefulness

- Ownership

- Professional identity

- Learner preparedness and motivation

- ...

MESO

- Guidance and support

- Availability of resources

- Teacher collaboration

- Impact of the learning context

- Collaboration between VET providers and labour market stakeholders

- Administrative workload

- ...

MACRO

- Definition of learning outcomes at national/regional level

- System and/or institution alignment

- Competing perspectives and interests

- Ideology and disciplinary dogma

- Pedagogical methodologies and techniques

- ...

'Heatmap' of how learning outcomes are used to get from intended to achieved learning outcomes

	Intended learning outcomes: Learning outcomes in VET teacher and trainer preparation (as proxy of how intentions in using learning outcomes are expressed in national VET systems)	Delivered learning outcomes a: Learning outcomes in VET curricula and their delivery through teaching in school-based learning environments	Delivered learning outcomes b: Learning outcomes in VET curricula and their delivery in work-based environments	Achieved learning outcomes: Learning outcomes in assessment
Macro-level factors: rules, regulations, discourse	Policies are in place using learning outcomes	Recommendation on learner-centred pedagogies are in place.	Guidelines for work-based learning use learning outcomes	Assessment guidelines use learning outcomes
Meso-level factors: institutional context, tools, instructions, cooperation, support	Textbooks refer to learning outcomes Programmes are generally described in terms of learning outcomes	Schools still structure the delivery in terms of courses described in terms of input factors. Still teacher-centred approaches to VET delivery are in place.	Work-based learning environments use learning outcomes-based tools (checklists whether LOs are shown by the learner)	Examinations still focus on task completion, duration of training and knowledge components
Micro-level factors: individual application by teachers, trainers, assessors, and learners	Teachers still think in terms of input factors	Teachers still work with input-factors (number of assignments, tasks completed)	Trainers are trained to use learning outcomes	Assessors do pay attention to whether learners have achieved the learning outcomes and use skills demonstrations

Methodology

Geographical Scope

The research builds on 10 in-depth case studies covering **Bulgaria, Finland, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal**, and **Slovenia**.

Case studies prepared by national experts are analysed and **synthesised into comparative reports** for each work assignment.

Methodological tools used in the implementation of the project

Case studies

Desk research

Site visits to VET providers

Focus groups, lesson observations

03

04

01

02

Interviews

Cross-cutting survey

Scoping interviews with key VET stakeholders at national level

Methods

Methods used in each WA vary and intersect:

- **Desk research (all WAs)**: legal acts, policy and programming documents that define the rules for designing VET curricula in 10 countries (for both school-based and work-based learning).

- **Scoping interviews (WA1-4)**: to explore macro-level arrangements and views of authorities and social partners towards learning outcomes.

- **Visits to VET providers** (**WA2, 3 and 4**) in 10 countries to explore how learning outcomes are used in initial VET at provider (meso-) and teaching/training (micro-) levels. Visits include observation of teaching/training, interviews with school/company management, focus group or interviews with teachers/in-company trainers, and interviews with learners/apprentices.

- **Cross-cutting survey (WA2, 3 and 4):** targeted teachers, trainers (in schools and in companies), school principals, and school VET curriculum coordinators. To understand the level of awareness of the learning outcomes approach among VET professionals as well as its perceived usefulness and practical application.

The study in numbers

64 scoping interviews with key national stakeholders

850 respondents of cross-cutting survey in 10 studied countries

2-3 school visits per country in WA2. WA3 and WA4 site visits are ongoing now, with the same target of school visits

Thank You