



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CEDEFOP

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT (CAAR) 2024

June 2025

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CEDEFOP'S MANAGEMENT BOARD ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF CEDEFOP'S CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT (CAAR) 2024

Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training and Article 48 of Cedefop's Decision of 16 July 2019 on the Financial Regulation require the Management Board to send to the Court of Auditors (ECA), the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) of the previous financial year together with its assessment, no later than 1 July.

The Management Board, based on its analysis and assessment of the Executive Director's Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024:

- takes note of Cedefop's report on the **implementation of the annual work programme 2024**, and in particular:
- congratulates and thanks Cedefop's staff and management for their achievements in 2024, fully meeting and often exceeding those planned in the work programme as regards performance, control, audit and assurance in relation to the budget;
- praises the extensive skills intelligence that Cedefop produces and makes available in a one-stop shop on its website on labour market trends and skills needs by occupations, sectors, countries and indicators, in particular:
 - Cedefop's work in further developing **skills intelligence for the green transition** and intensified cooperation with EU bodies and the International Energy Agency; the successful tripartite exchange seminar with Eurofound, the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) aimed at improving social partners' and governments' capacity to engage and act effectively in social dialogue, with a specific focus on green and just transition;
 - the **intensified focus on digitalisation** and its impact on the future of work, including the tracking of labour market trends with a new dashboard, the monitoring of digital skills demand in online job ads, and the new survey on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assess AI's impact on workers and jobs, measure skill gaps, and determine training needed to harness AI's potential;
- welcomes that Cedefop capitalised on the **European Year of Skills**, using its skills intelligence and evidence on vocational education and training (VET) to outline Europe's needs for a skills revolution and draw lessons to help shape long-term policies and actions;
- acknowledges the ongoing **monitoring of VET and skills policy priorities** across Europe;
- acknowledges Cedefop's focus on developing **toolkits** to improve the inclusion and support of **early leavers** from education and training, as well as young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs), as part of its support to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights; notes the significant expansion of the VET toolkit for empowering NEETs and the publication of two new

intervention approaches on mentoring programmes for personalised guidance for NEETs and **targeted support for female NEETs**;

- acknowledges the cooperation with the countries holding the **Presidency of the Council of the EU**: the short descriptions, spotlights and the much-appreciated video animations of the Presidency countries' VET systems; the focus of the seminar with the Hungarian Presidency on 'VET and higher education partnerships' and with the Belgian Presidency on 'first insights from Cedefop's AI skills survey';
- congratulates the Agency on its overall **performance** as attested by its performance measurement system indicators:
 - **53 high-quality events** that attracted 3,400 participants and achieved a 96.5% satisfaction rate;
 - **increasing contributions of Cedefop to the shaping of EU policy** with 215 documents and 113 contributions to international organisations' papers in 2024;
 - 83 virtual and 90 physical contributions to meetings that inform policies;
 - **100% budget implementation rate and 96% establishment plan occupation rate**;
 - **36% increase of website traffic and social media followers**, in particular 37% increase in LinkedIn followers;
 - the Agency's successful efforts to reduce its **environmental impact** with 29% decrease in its electricity consumption from the grid;
- acknowledges the **effective cooperation and strategic alignment with DG Employment Agencies**: the joint event 'Skills, Skills, Skills' organised by Cedefop, Eurofound, EU-OSHA, the ETF and ELA in the European Parliament; the implementation of Cedefop's second Skills and Jobs Survey in several ETF partner countries; the sharing of Cedefop's skillsOVATE data processing and analysis capacities with ELA and the dashboards powered by EURES vacancies;
- acknowledges Cedefop's **active participation in the EU Agencies' network (EUAN)** and continuous search for opportunities to generate **synergies** and share resources in corporate and administrative services **with other Agencies**;
 - notes that Cedefop is leading the EUAN project for developing shared services in the field of HR and in particular staff selection procedures;
 - acknowledges the sharing of legal expertise and confidential counsellor resources with ENISA, as well as the collaboration with ENISA and CERT-EU on cybersecurity;
 - welcomes the efficiency gains achieved through sharing Cedefop's Accountancy service with European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE);
- congratulates Cedefop on the fact that the **European Court of Auditors'** report on the annual accounts for the financial year 2023 is a fully clean bill of health, thus confirming the reliability of the Agency's accounts as well as the regularity and legality of the underlying transactions in all material aspects; is pleased to note that no observations are included and that Cedefop implemented all of ECA's past years recommendations but two and made progress towards implementing the latter;
- acknowledges the **positive report on discharge** in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2023 which appreciates Cedefop's high quality work;
- congratulates Cedefop for the positive outcomes - under all evaluation criteria - of the latest **external evaluation** and the cooperation with the other Agencies in shaping a joint action plan for the cross-agency recommendations;

- appreciates the Agency's continuously improved **communication and transparency vis-à-vis its Executive Board and the Management Board** as well as staff; in particular that Cedefop's management:
 - kept the Executive and Management Boards fully informed and actively involved in shaping the Single Programming Document 2025-27 and the first draft Single Programming Document 2026-28;
 - kept the Executive and Management Boards informed on the implementation of the work programme at every Executive and Management Board meeting;
 - kept the Executive and Management Boards fully informed of audit, control and evaluation activities as well as on progress in implementing the agreed action plans at every meeting;
- congratulates the Agency for the quality and timeliness of its reports on the implementation of the annual work programme and budget and of its programming and reporting documents;
- welcomes the **Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) certification**; notes the Agency's efforts aiming at reducing its environmental footprint by reducing electricity consumption from the grid by 29% and increasing the use of renewable energy sources to 77%;
- welcomes the continued **systematic digitalisation of work processes**;
- takes note of the declaration of assurance of the Executive Director and the information on the Internal Control system's assessment underpinning the declaration; welcomes that suitable controls are in place and work as intended, that no significant weakness has been identified, that risks are being appropriately assessed, monitored and mitigated, and that necessary improvements are implemented when required;
- confirms that the Management Board's analysis of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024 is positive and, in its opinion, provides the necessary assurance for the positive assessment of the results achieved by Cedefop in 2024.

Mario Patuzzi
Chairperson of the Management Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CEDEFOP IN BRIEF

Cedefop is one of the oldest EU's decentralised Agencies. Founded in 1975 and based in Greece since 1995, Cedefop supports the promotion, development and implementation of the Union policy in the fields of VET, skills and qualifications by working together with the European Commission, EU Member States and the social partners ⁽¹⁾.

In line with its vision and values, Cedefop's strategic areas of operation are:

- 1) shaping VET and qualifications: improve transparency, relevance, quality of VET and qualifications by facilitating close interaction between IVET, CVET and general and higher education institutional structures;
- 2) valuing VET and skills: respond to changing needs by promoting quality and inclusive lifelong learning policy, and relevant governance and institutional structures;
- 3) informing VET and skills policies: produce evidence on skill trends and wide-ranging changes in the world of work to inform VET and skills development policies.

The multiannual objectives reflect the Agency's core functions:

- produce innovative and forward-looking research and policy analyses to inspire policy-making and support well-designed policy implementation;
- develop and maintain the knowledge base and the unique blend of expertise at the interface of VET and the labour market to sustain its role as the authoritative source on VET in Europe;
- share skills, VET and policy intelligence, data, information, tools and perspectives and promote policy learning to foster partnerships in European VET and interactivity with our stakeholders;
- focus corporate communication on increasing stakeholder engagement and outreach via social media, a more interactive web portal and online tools, data visualisations, e-publications, audio visuals, webinars and other virtual/hybrid events.

The multiannual objectives guide Cedefop's annual work programmes, ensuring continuity while providing the flexibility needed to adapt swiftly to evolving demands.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and repealing Council Regulation EEC No 337/75. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/what-we-do/cedefop-regulation>

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME - THE YEAR 2024 IN BRIEF

The future of Europe depends on its ability to transform global challenges into opportunities for innovation. From the twin transition to demographic shifts and evolving labour markets, investing in people, strengthening skills, and expanding learning opportunities are crucial to ensuring no one is left behind.

As Europe pursues a greener, more digital, and resilient economy, persistent labour shortages, skills gaps, and mismatches pose significant challenges. These obstacles hinder employment growth in the green economy, slow progress in emerging sectors, and limit access to quality jobs. Skills development is a key policy priority that can either accelerate or constrain Europe's successful and inclusive transformation.

As the EU agency for skills, Cedefop has played a pivotal role in addressing these challenges. Key achievements in 2024 include research and analysis on digitalisation, inclusion, and VET policy. Cedefop launched a new dashboard to track labour market trends, monitored digital skills demand in job postings, and initiated a survey on AI's impact on jobs, skills gaps, and training needs.

Supporting the European Pillar of Social Rights, Cedefop developed toolkits to help early school leavers and young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). Additionally, the Agency built on the momentum of the European Year of Skills, using its skills intelligence and VET insights to shape future policies and actions.

The interconnection between skills, innovation, and economic and social development presents both challenges and opportunities. Skills, or the lack thereof, connect all policy domains. Therefore, getting the skills revolution right, i.e., investing in people and jobs, will create lasting positive effects across Europe's economies and societies.

Cedefop acknowledges the invaluable contributions of its tripartite Management Board, stakeholders, and the wider VET and skills community. Looking ahead, the Agency remains committed to strengthening partnerships and delivering the evidence Europe needs to turn ambitions for skills into real learning and employment opportunities.

WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW: Cedefop performance in 2024

Publications: 413 667 downloads
Social media followers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook 18 040 (+ 2%) ○ LinkedIn 15 325 (+ 37%) ○ X (Twitter) 13 650 (+ 0.5%)
Website traffic: + 36% visits
Take-up (citations) of Cedefop's work in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 215 EU policy documents ○ 113 papers of international organisations ○ 978 academic articles
Contributions to meetings that inform policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 83 virtual ○ 90 physical
53 external events organised in 2024 including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 29 hybrid/physical events ○ 24 virtual events, including five Virtual Get Togethers ○ 3400 external attendees (+25%)
Quality of Cedefop events: 96.5% satisfaction rate
Environmental footprint: Electricity consumption from the grid: -29% Electricity from renewable sources: +77%

Cedefop performance indicators highlight the quality, relevance, and impact of the Agency's contribution in shaping and supporting policies on VET, skills, and qualifications. The frequent citation and reference of Cedefop's research and analysis in numerous EU-level policy documents and reports reflects the strong trust in its expertise. As in previous years, the European Commission made extensive use of Cedefop's findings, representing over half of the 215 EU policy documents that referenced our work, followed by other EU Agencies, the European Parliament, and the EU social partners.

In 2024, Cedefop's work informed several key EU policy documents. Notable examples include the [Council conclusions on promoting evidence-informed policy and practice in education and training to achieve the European Education Area](#) and the [Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone](#).

The European Commission continued to rely heavily on Cedefop's expertise, with several references in the [Draghi report – The Future of European Competitiveness](#), the Commission's [Communication on Labour and Skills Shortages in the EU: An Action Plan](#), and the [2025 Report on the Euro Area](#). Additionally, Cedefop's insights contributed to the [Regulation on Establishing a Framework of Measures for Strengthening Europe's Net-Zero Technology Manufacturing Ecosystem](#).

For several years, stakeholders have the option to download datasets for various projects, including surveys micro datasets. In 2024, Cedefop recorded 726 unique downloads.

Consistent efforts to engage stakeholders through social media campaigns increased the number of Cedefop's followers, especially in [LinkedIn](#), by about 37% compared to 2023, resulting from extensive efforts to distil key insights from Cedefop's publications and online tools to make them more accessible through concise messages and engaging visuals.

KEY CONCLUSIONS ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

Cedefop again reacted to the challenges of the year with agility and effectiveness and managed to achieve 100% execution of commitment appropriation and 98,89% execution of payment appropriations.

External parties monitor and audit Cedefop systematically and rigorously. No irregularities were found.

In the **European Court of Auditors'** opinion, Cedefop's annual accounts for the financial year 2023 ⁽²⁾ are legal and regular in all material respects. The Court did not include any observation for Cedefop. On the annual accounts for the financial year 2024, ECA conducted an onsite audit in October 2024 and a desk review in the weeks 17-31 January 2025. The ECA final report is expected by autumn 2025.

The reports on **discharge** in respect of the implementation of the budget of Cedefop for the financial years 2021 ⁽³⁾ and 2022 ⁽⁴⁾, adopted by the European Parliament respectively on 10 May 2023 and 11 April 2024, praise Cedefop's high quality work on several aspects.

The report on **discharge** in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2023 ⁽⁵⁾, adopted by the European Parliament on 7 May 2025, appreciates Cedefop's high quality work on providing research, analyses and technical advice and expertise in VET, qualifications and skills policies as well as modernisation of apprenticeships with the aim of promoting high-quality training tailored to the needs of individuals and of the labour market, to compile and disseminate research on skills mismatches and labour shortages, and to ensure digital skills are integrated into VET across the Union, as well as Cedefop's involvement in the 2023 European Year of Skills. The European Parliament expresses its satisfaction for the positive ECA's opinion on the Agency's accounts and that the Court had no observations for 2023; commends Cedefop for its exemplary commitment (100%) and payment (98%) appropriations rates successfully demonstrating the optimal use of resources entrusted to Cedefop. The report further notes the corrective action taken regarding the daily subsistence allowances paid to Greek seconded national experts; notes with appreciation the Centre's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030; welcomes the adoption of a climate neutrality strategy and roadmap in 2023 and the efforts to become EMAS certified by 2025.

Following the assessment of the **Internal Control system**, no significant weakness was identified.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications/SAR-AGENCIES-2023>

⁽³⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0148_EN.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0238_EN.pdf





⁽⁵⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-10-2025-0065_EN.pdf

Management therefore has reasonable assurance that suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements implemented.

PART I POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YEAR

1.1 Strategic Area of Operation 1: Shaping VET and qualifications

PERFORMANCE

	164 REFERENCES IN EU POLICY DOCUMENTS	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Staff Working Document: Evaluation of the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning • Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone • European Parliament study Maximising the impact of EU initiatives on skills: Is the EU's skills policy prepared for future labour market shifts? • EESC opinion EU-UK Youth Engagement (own-initiative opinion): Annex: Technical Report
	63 CONTRIBU- TIONS TO MEET- INGS THAT IN- FORM POLICIES AND THEIR IM- PLEMENTATION	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgian Presidency conference on Lifelong Learning • BusinessEurope Education and Training working group • IX Annual Meeting of the Delphi Economic Forum • UNESCO's BILT Bridging Event 'Towards inclusive excellence in TVET'
	30 WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS TO EU POLICY DOCUMENTS	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion papers to the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training on implementing the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration • Joint documents with the Commission for the EQF advisory group, including notes on EQF referencing, international qualifications and comparison with third country qualification frameworks • Contributions to the European Commission Education and Training Monitor • Discussion paper for the DGVT in March on 'Digitalisation of VET: Trends from the implementation of national plans for VET'
	58 729 DOWN- LOADS OF CEDEFOP PUBLICATIONS (published since 2020)	Top 3 publications downloaded (published since 2020): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microcredentials for labour market education and training (3,973) • Briefing note - Are microcredentials becoming a big deal? (3,316) • Microcredentials: striving to combine credibility and agility (3,231)

ANALYSING AND MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARDS EU PRIORITIES IN VET

Monitoring and analysing progress towards European VET priorities, as set out in the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration, is central to Cedefop's mandate. This includes tracking key VET policy developments in EU Member States, Norway and Iceland, as outlined in their [national implementation plans](#) (NIPs). [ReferNet](#), Cedefop's VET expertise network, plays a crucial role in this process.

Cedefop's analysis shows that progress on planned measures advanced in 2023, some NIP-related policies were launched, and others transitioned from design to implementation. Most developments focused on aligning VET and labour market needs, customising individuals' learning pathways, and expanding lifelong learning opportunities.

Some of the common trends captured across European countries, include:

- **curriculum reforms and modernisation:** many countries have updated and introduced new VET programmes incorporating emerging technologies and green and digital skills;
- **expanding work-based learning:** strengthening apprenticeships and other work-based learning forms is seen as crucial for bridging education and employment;
- **flexible and modular learning:** more countries are implementing microcredentials, modular training programmes, and recognition of prior learning to raise learning flexibility;
- **investing in VET infrastructure and advocacy:** governments are modernising VET facilities, promoting VET careers through success stories, and encouraging participation in national and international skills competitions;
- **engaging various stakeholders** – local governments, employers, VET providers, and experts – in shaping VET policies. Efforts have been made to strengthen partnerships, with employers playing a key role in defining work-based learning demands and trade unions advocating for apprentices' rights and training quality;
- **common challenges:** while countries focus on specific priorities and measures, based on their national contexts and challenges, some transversal challenges persist, such as sustaining reform efforts in the context of political change and instability, and planning and availability of funding;
- **continuity of reform:** despite the progress, countries need more time to implement the initiated reforms fully.

In 2024, to complement its analysis, Cedefop conducted a series of national VET stakeholder interviews across the EU-27+ to gather insights into EU priorities for VET in their countries and on specific issues identified through Cedefop's 2022-24 progress analysis.

Stakeholders confirmed the relevance of the commonly agreed priorities, emphasising a need for coordinated policy frameworks and resource allocation, strengthened stakeholder cooperation and partnerships, further development of skills anticipation mechanisms, and professional development for VET teachers and trainers. They also highlighted the importance of digitalisation and the integration of advanced technologies (including AI, augmented and virtual reality) in teaching and learning, aligning with the green and digital transitions, promoting VET benefits, expanding lifelong learning opportunities, improving career guidance and support services, and recognising learning and qualifications from third

countries. These findings were largely confirmed by participants during an online [validation workshop](#).

In 2024, Cedefop presented its analysis outcomes at the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) meetings, focusing on NIP implementation, and contributed to the meeting of Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVt) on the use of AI in VET and digitalisation.

Cedefop's analysis also informed the European Commission's comparative work [Education and Training Monitor 2024](#), and organised a virtual get-together, [VET in action – evidence from implementing EU priorities in national VET plans](#), attended by 180 participants from over 50 countries.

Cedefop released its first biennial national [policy briefs on VET policy developments](#), and, in cooperation with ReferNet, published the [Thematic perspectives](#) series on implementing EU priorities from 2020-23, with a focus on 2023 progress and VET stakeholder involvement. Cedefop also summarised preliminary findings and some practice examples in its briefing note [Moving towards common policy goals and aligned progress reporting](#).

To understand countries' progress towards EU priorities better, Cedefop updated its [VET in Europe online database](#). The database, which incorporates input from ReferNet partners, offers a comprehensive overview of national VET system features, providing insights into the contexts shaping policy developments.

Additionally, [national news on VET](#), prepared in collaboration with ReferNet partners, regularly informed stakeholders across the EU about their latest developments, innovative projects, and successful practices.

Findings from national stakeholder interviews highlight that the modernisation of VET infrastructure and the evolution of learning methods have significantly raised VET's attractiveness. Key trends include:

- providing partial qualifications and modular provision;
- digitalisation of learning: increased adoption of blended and distance learning models;
- better mobility programmes: greater support for cross-border learning experiences;
- stronger progression pathways: easier transitions between VET and higher education;
- better-equipped teachers: continuing professional development for VET teachers and trainers;
- investment in digital infrastructure: development of online learning platforms to improve accessibility.

Stakeholders identify several obstacles to making VET more attractive, including challenges in attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers, teacher ageing and retirement, low employer engagement in providing training opportunities, high costs of advanced technologies, the need for teacher training to use those technologies, and insufficient resources.

Solutions proposed by stakeholders include improving VET teacher working conditions and professional development, making entry requirements to teaching more flexible, and implementing more targeted, systematic communication and promotion campaigns, along with improved lifelong guidance.

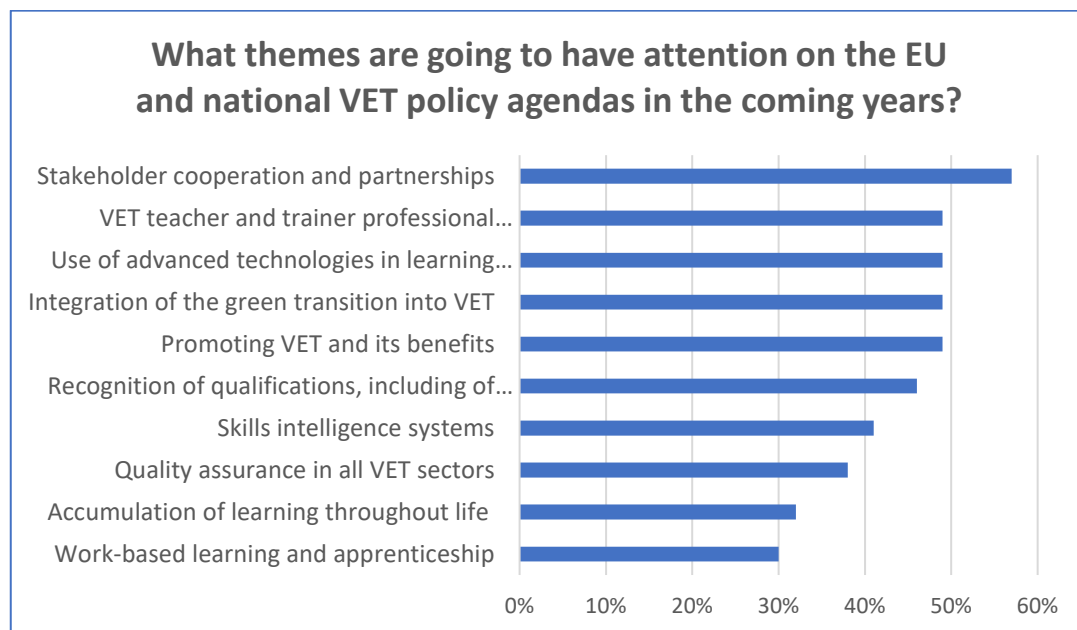






Figure 1: National stakeholder perspectives. Opinions of validation workshop participants, 31 October 2024, on key themes shaping EU and national VET policy agendas in the coming years.

1.2 Strategic Area of Operation 2: Valuing VET and skills

Performance

	73 REFERENCES IN EU POLICY DOCUMENTS	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Parliament Draft report on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an EU talent pool • BusinessEurope position paper on EU action plan on labour and skills shortages • European Commission Study supporting the Europass ex-post evaluation: final report
	27 CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEETINGS THAT INFORM POLICIES AND THEIR IM- PLEMENTATION	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cedefop - EESC rapporteurs exchange of views on the new 'Talent Mobility Package' • Validation of Prior Learning Biennale • European Commission ILA Mutual learning programme: Implementing ILA: What's next?
	9 WRITTEN CON- TRIBUTIONS TO EU POLICY DOC- UMENTS	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Committee - Policy Analysis Group review of ILA implementation • JRC European Digital Skills Certificate (EDSC) Feasibility Study • European Education and Culture Executive Agency Validation of non-formal and informal learning in higher education in Europe: Eurydice report
	35 281 DOWN- LOADS OF CEDEFOP PUBLICATIONS (published since 2020)	Top 3 publications downloaded (published since 2020): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (3,129) • Lifelong guidance for persons with disabilities (2,338) • Empowering adults through upskilling and reskilling pathways (1,682)

Driving inclusion through evidence and action by closing the distance to participation in employment, education, and training

Inclusion and support for early leavers from education and training, as well as young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), lie at the heart of Cedefop's work, fully aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights and Europe's goal of reducing early leavers share from 9.5% to below 9% and the NEET share from 11.2% to 9% by 2030.

Cedefop promotes inclusion by developing tailored interventions and fostering innovative solutions to empower vulnerable and at-risk youth. Through dedicated research, policy recommendations, and stakeholder engagement, Cedefop contributes to creating more inclusive learning and employment pathways across Europe.

Cedefop's research shows that:

almost 1 in 10 young people abandons their studies before qualifying in upper secondary education; early leaving from education and training jeopardises their job and life prospects;

more than 70% of NEETs are at risk of long-term exclusion due to protracted inactivity;

some Member States still lag substantially behind the EU targets, while regional and gender disparities continue to persist. For example, in 2023 NEETs aged 15 to 29 ranged from 4.8% in the Netherlands to 19.3% in Romania.

Through a dedicated knowledge hub, Cedefop supports policymakers and VET practitioners in designing, implementing, and evaluating policies and practices to address the diverse needs of learners at risk, early leavers, and NEETs. This hub includes tailored toolkits, evidence-based policies, practices, and guidelines.

In 2024, Cedefop:

- **significantly expanded the resources of the [VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#)**, which now includes new targeted **guidelines and intervention approaches** for NEETs reintegration into education and training, or the workforce;
- **collected inspiring good practices** across the EU, **focusing on those working directly with young people at risk**, including NEETs living in remote areas, female NEETs, and other groups of NEETs such as migrants, low-skilled individuals, and young people with disabilities;
- **developed and released two new [evaluation tools](#) to monitor policies and practices, along with numerous relevant policy and research studies**. More than **40 new entries** were added to the toolkit, covering active labour market policies, youth transitions, digital inclusion, mental health, and integration pathways. In addition, two new intervention approaches were published:
- [mentoring programmes](#) that provide personalised guidance for NEETs, offering access to new opportunities and networks while helping them overcome barriers to education, training, and employment;
- [targeted support for female NEETs](#) through specialised outreach approaches to re-engage them in employment through VET.

In 2023:



- **a total of 9.6 million young people (aged 15 to 29) in the EU were NEETs, representing 11.2% of this age group. The NEET status is more prevalent among women (12.5% compared to 10.1% for men);**
- **in two EU Member States the proportion of young female NEETs was at least 10 percentage points (pp) higher than the corresponding share for young men. The largest differences were found in Czechia (10.9 pp) and Romania (10.7 pp).**

In 2024, Cedefop continued enriching its [VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) with hundreds of resources for practitioners and policymakers **working with learners at risk and early leavers from education and training**.

- The toolkit includes a total of [20 key intervention approaches](#) for addressing early leaving from VET. These can assist on an array of key topics, ranging from identifying at-risk students and monitoring early leavers to building motivation, supporting professional development for inclusive teaching, fostering community involvement, and promoting digital inclusion and wellbeing for both learners, teachers and trainers.
- The toolkit also offers two [evaluation tools](#), one for policymakers and one for VET practitioners. These tools aim to guide government representatives on *what* strategies need to be implemented, and prompt VET providers and other relevant organisations to reflect on *how* to implement them.
- In addition, more than 20 key policy documents and research studies were made available in 2024 amounting to a total of 192 bibliographical [resources](#), 64 good practices and 51 tools.

20 key intervention approaches to support learners at risk and early leavers



Figure 2 Twenty key intervention approaches to support learners at risk and early leavers

Preparing teachers and trainers to promote inclusion

In 2024, Cedefop placed great emphasis on VET [teachers' continuing professional development](#) and wellbeing. In 2025, Cedefop is set to launch its [European VET teachers survey \(EVTS\)](#), which will provide valuable insights into how VET teachers engage in training to promote inclusion, address violence and bullying, and support students' wellbeing. To support the planning and implementation of the survey, in 2024 Cedefop established the [EVTS stakeholder group](#), comprised of around 100 members representing ministries from the 23 countries joining the survey, as well as European and national members of the EU social partners for education (ETUCE and EFEE).



Figure 3 Different profiles and needs of NEETs





Throughout 2024, Cedefop's work on inclusion was widely disseminated, enriching policy debate and exchange through:

- **involvement in 10 high-impact events**, engaging key stakeholders to address teacher shortages, teachers' participation in continuing professional development, [digital inclusion and wellbeing](#), [inclusive education and training environments](#), [tackling bullying and youth violence](#), [gender-specific challenges of NEETs](#), and [monitoring early leaving from VET across the EU](#);
- **strengthened collaboration with key EU stakeholders**, including the European social partners for education: the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE);
- the continuous expansion of the [European network of ambassadors tackling early leaving from VET](#), which has grown to 102 members from 23 EU Member States and EU-level experts. This initiative fosters [peer learning and disseminates good practices](#) for inclusive educational ecosystems. Interested individuals can apply to [become an ambassador for inclusion in and through VET](#).



1.3 Strategic Area of Operation 3: Informing VET and skills policies

PERFORMANCE

	271 REFERENCES IN EU POLICY DOCUMENTS	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's net-zero technology manufacturing ecosystem and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 • European Commission (Draghi report) - The future of European competitiveness • EESC opinion Labour and skills shortages in transport, energy, infrastructure and the digital sector
	48 CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEETINGS THAT INFORM POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tripartite Exchange Seminar (TES) 2024 • European Sustainable Energy Week • ILO Global Skills Forum
	7 WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS TO EU POLICY DOCUMENTS	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission report on The transition pathway for the EU mobility industrial ecosystem • EESC own-initiative opinion on Pro-worker AI: levers for harnessing the potential and mitigating the risks of AI in connection with employment and labour market policies • EEA's report on Just Sustainability Transitions: from concept to practice
	29 430 DOWNLOADS OF CEDEFOP PUBLICATIONS (published since 2020)	Top 3 publications downloaded (published since 2020): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills in transition: the way to 2035 (3,293) • The green employment and skills transformation (2,042) • Next generation skills intelligence for more learning and better matching (1,802)

The digital transition needs a skills revolution

Rapid digitalisation and technological advancements offer major economic and societal opportunities, which are held back by major skill gaps. Cedefop's data show that 1 in 2 workers have digital upskilling potential and 3 in 5 workers need AI skills. These skill gaps contribute to broader labour shortages, stifling competitiveness, innovation, and inclusion. If left unaddressed, they will continue to hinder growth, worsen workforce shortages, and deepen social exclusion.

Due to its cross-cutting and transformative impact, digitalisation is a core focus of Cedefop's work. In 2024, Cedefop used its [skills forecast framework](#) to assess the effects of digitalisation and digital skills policies on employment and skills through 2035. Achieving the EU's digital

transition goals is expected to drive job growth in sectors such as computer programming, research and development (R&D), and telecommunications. New job opportunities will also emerge in non-market services, including education and training.

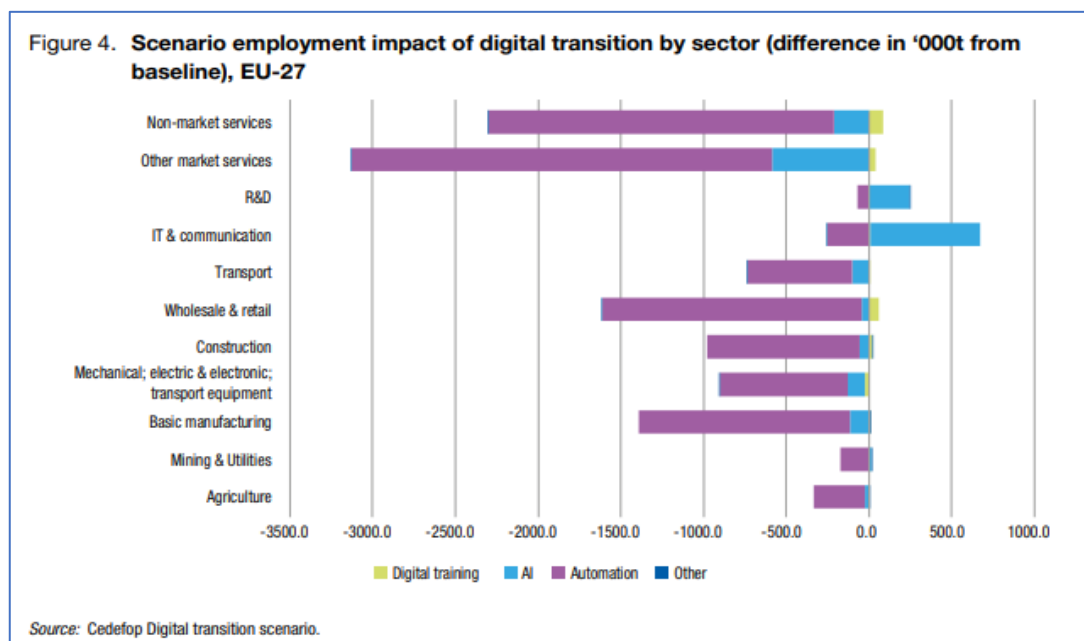


Figure 4 Scenario, employment impact of digital transition by sector, EU-27 (difference in '000t from baseline)

While digital technologies can automate human tasks, leading to job displacement and potential job losses, they also offer opportunities to enhance skilled work and improve overall job quality.

Towards a human-centred digital transition

The productivity-enhancing effect of AI fosters worker versatility and enables engagement in more fulfilling tasks. Cedefop's research suggests that while AI will replace some human tasks and jobs – particularly in the wholesale, retail, and construction sectors – digital transformation is an engine of jobs in information communication technology (ICT) and R&D. By 2035, automation and AI could lead to a modest 5% reduction in employment, though this depends heavily on the pace of automation and AI deployment.

Technological readiness, funding availability, regulatory frameworks, and social partner dynamics all influence this timeline. What is clear is that to navigate the digital transition successfully, significant investment in human capital – through digital skills training, including AI education at all levels – is essential.

Overcoming AI skill gaps

Complementing other efforts to assess the impact of digitalisation and AI, in 2024, Cedefop launched an AI skills survey, gathering insights from employed adults across 11 EU Member States on AI's impact on jobs and tasks. The survey, presented at a Brussels seminar in cooperation with the Belgian Presidency of the European Council, revealed that [42% of workers](#)

[have an AI skill gap, but only 15% receive training in AI technology](#), and that, while AI literacy is still underdeveloped, many basic skills are often lacking.

Cedefop research shows that 6 out of 10 adult workers do not fully understand:

- how machines or computers learn from data using algorithms;
- how they recognise images, text, or other data;
- how to interpret the findings of AI applications and understand their limitations.

In addition, more than half of adult workers do not understand the impact of AI on the world of work and the role that humans play in developing AI systems.

As digital technologies are increasingly adopted across various occupations and sectors, possessing a strong set of digital skills is no longer optional – it is a necessity. Providing opportunities for both young people and adults to develop these skills is crucial for preventing shortages and boosting productivity. In 2024, Cedefop, in collaboration with the OECD, released [Apprenticeships and the digital transition](#), a flagship report on apprenticeships, outlining how they can help cultivate the skills needed for the digital transition and how digital technologies can improve apprenticeship delivery.

Monitoring the real-time acceleration of digitalisation across the labour market

In 2024, Cedefop enriched [SkillsOVATE](#), the online tool providing detailed insights into jobs and skill demands based on online job advertisements in 32 European countries. The tool now features [digital dashboards](#) that track ICT staff recruitment trends and digitalisation patterns in occupations, sectors and regions.

Key findings in 2024 highlight the rapid digitalisation affecting many non-IT roles and the growing demand for a ‘willingness to learn’ as a standout skill in demand across sectors. Two thirds of non-ICT roles now require digital skills, with digital literacy becoming a baseline expectation. Advanced skills in data analysis, graphic design, and animation development are increasingly sought after.

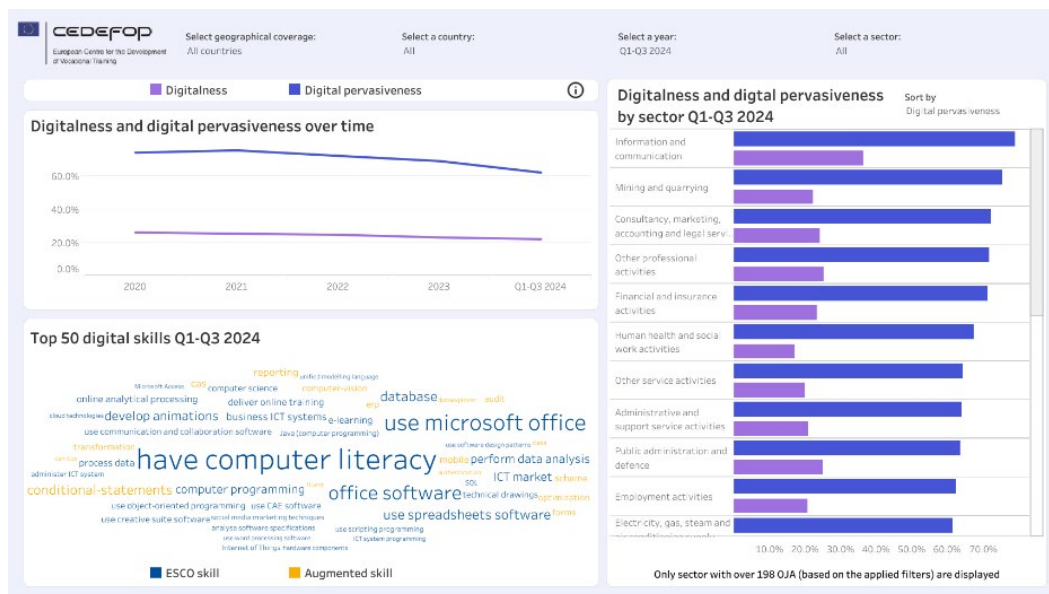


Figure 5 SkillsOVATE digitalisation dashboard

Communication, information and dissemination

In 2024, Cedefop introduced four major web developments: the [2nd Opinion Survey on VET](#); the [VET in Europe database](#); the [Short-term Anticipation System](#) and Access to survey micro-datasets. Additionally, existing online tools underwent significant content updates and functionality improvements. They include: [Skills intelligence](#); [European Skills index](#); [Skills OVATE](#); [NQF database](#); [Key indicators on VET](#); [European VET policy dashboard](#). Users can access all tools from Cedefop's website homepage or directly from a dedicated online tools page. These tools accounts for 28% of the total web traffic. In 2024, Cedefop issued [three press releases](#), [ten electronic newsletters](#), [34 website headlines](#), 203 [Facebook](#), 206 [LinkedIn](#) and 90 [Instagram](#) posts. In June, a new content strategy testing phase started for LinkedIn. The new approach involves distilling key insights from Cedefop's publications and online tools, making them more accessible through concise messages and engaging visuals.

Cedefop engaged in several media activities throughout the year, including an online press event titled '[From the European Year of Skills to a Decade of Skills and Lifelong Learning](#)', [interview with Greek national television channel](#) and a special tribute to Cedefop by way of a [live broadcast from Cedefop premises](#) by Greek TV channel ERT3 on 5 December 2024. Cedefop also produced [17 video clips](#), animations, and interviews, covering various topics such as VET statements, learner stories, and the VET landscape in Belgium and Hungary. Additionally, Cedefop created ten short-form videos ⁽⁶⁾, which were published on its website and shared on social media platforms, including [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#). Furthermore, [two podcasts](#) were produced ⁽⁷⁾.

Alongside key corporate documents, such as the [Single Programming Document 2024-26](#) and the [Annual Report 2023 brochure](#), Cedefop published four [briefing notes](#) and 24 other [publications](#).

Cedefop organised two Brussels Seminars in collaboration with the Presidency countries of the Council of the EU. The first seminar, held in June under the Belgium Presidency, focused on '[Learning for an AI Workplace? First Insights from Cedefop's AI Skills Survey](#)'. The second, organised in November under the Hungarian Presidency, discussed '[VET and Higher Education Partnerships: Towards Excellence and Inclusive Growth](#)'.

As part of the [European Year of Skills](#), Cedefop completed its activities with a series of events and publications. Efforts culminated in a [closing event](#) on 30 April, co-hosted by Cedefop, the European Training Foundation (ETF), and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion (DG EMPL).

In April, Cedefop launched a new internal communication strategy to foster a strong knowledge-sharing culture and ensure staff have the necessary information for their roles. Emphasising the benefits of two-way communication, the strategy promotes regular staff meetings for dialogue and insight and the use of new integrated tools to enhance interactivity, collaboration, best practice sharing, and idea co-creation.

⁽⁶⁾ logomotion/gif

⁽⁷⁾ Episode 24: Skills and careers for young people and Episode 25: Skills shortages in small- and medium-sized enterprises

PART II a) MANAGEMENT

II.1 Management Board

Throughout the year, Cedefop reported on a regular basis to its (Extended) Executive Board and Management Board on risks and internal control issues. Updates on internal control activities, ECA, IAS, discharge and other sources of assurance are a standing agenda item at all meetings.

The Executive Board meetings on 4 March and 2 December 2024 were held virtually. The Extended Executive Board meeting on 27 and 28 June 2024 as well as the Executive Board meeting on 3 October 2024 and the Management Board on 3 and 4 October 2024 were held at Cedefop premises in Thessaloniki.

Key decisions adopted by the Management Board in 2024:

Written Procedure no.	Key Decision
WPR 2024-01	Draft Single Programming Document 2025-27
WPR 2024-03	Adoption of Cedefop's Anti-fraud strategy 2024-2026
WPR 2024-05	Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2023
WPR 2024-06	Opinion of the Management Board on Cedefop's final annual accounts 2023
WPR 2024-07	Amending budget 01/2024
WPR 2024-08	Minutes of the Management Board meeting 2024
WPR 2024-09	Single Programming Document 2025-27 and Cedefop's budget 2025
WP 2024-10	Amending budget 02/2024

Key issues discussed at Executive Board and Management Board meetings included:

Meeting date	Item	Key issue
4 March 2024 (Executive Board meeting)	item 2a	Annual Report 2023
	item 2b	Reporting from the Executive Board to the Management Board
	item 3	Implementation of the Work Programme 2024
	item 4	Budget reinforcement for the refurbishment of the building
	item 5b	Reporting on Internal Control Coordination activities, including discharge 2022
27-28 June 2024 (Extended Executive Board meeting)	item 2	Implementation of the Work Programme and budget 2024
	item 3	Strategy, Portfolio and Financing
	item 5b	Reporting on Internal Control Coordination activities
	item 5c	Transfers of commitment and payment appropriations in 2024
3 October 2024 (Executive Board meeting preceding the Management Board meeting)		Preparation of the Management Board meeting on 3 and 4 October 2024

Meeting date	Item	Key issue
3 and 4 October 2024 (Management Board meeting)	item 3	Implementation of the Work Programme and budget 2024
	item 4	Strategy, portfolio review and financing
	item 5	Revised Single Programming Document 2025-27, including the Opinion of the European Commission
	item 6	Elections of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons of the Management Board and composition of the (extended) Executive Board
	item 7	Final report of the external evaluation of the Agencies falling under the remit of DG EMPL
	item 8	Reporting from the Executive Board to the Management Board
	item 9b	Reporting on Internal Control Coordination activities
	item 9c	HR-related issues
	item 9e	Transfers of commitment and payment appropriations in 2024
	item 9f	Annual report of the Chair of Cedefop's Appeals Committee for the year 2023 and follow up
2 December 2024 (Executive Board meeting)	item 3	Implementation of Work Programme and budget 2024
	item 4	Strategic initiative 'Cedefop@50'-project plan
	item 5	Final Draft Single Programming Document 2025-27
	item 6	First Draft Single Programming Document 2026-28
	item 7b	Reporting on Internal Control Coordination activities
	item 7c	Transfers of commitment and payment appropriations in 2024
	item 8a	Impact of the new Policy documents on Cedefop's work

II.2 Major developments

The EU's VET and skills policy framework has evolved to support digital and green transitions, lifelong learning, and labour market adaptability.

However, the EU faces **multiple threatening challenges**: geopolitical instability, energy crises, climate change, greening, demography, digital transition, Artificial Intelligence, skills gaps and mismatches; all of which contributing to economic and social uncertainty. **Labour and skills shortages** persist across all sectors, requiring stronger investments in VET digitalisation, sustainability, and innovation. The **digital and green transitions** further complicate the VET landscape.

Skills continue to be a key priority for the new European Commission. In her [political guidelines](#) presented on 18 July 2024, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen emphasised the need for bold measures to address labour and skills shortages. The [Union of Skills](#), with a STEM education action plan, a European VET strategy, increased funding, and a skills portability initiative reflect a strong commitment to modernising and enhancing Europe's skills ecosystem in the years ahead.

Cedefop's crucial and growing role

As the EU agency for VET, skills and qualifications, Cedefop plays a pivotal role in addressing EU challenges by way of its research e.g. on digitalisation, inclusion, and VET policy. During the European Year of Skills, Cedefop leveraged its entire arsenal of evidence and intelligence to sketch out what Europe needs to make and shape the skills revolution.

As the next EU policy cycle emerges, Cedefop is relying on its expertise and evidence and, in cooperation with its tripartite Management Board, is prepared to respond to the evolving contexts and emerging challenges that the EU, Member States and social partners may face.

Lacking resources

Cedefop's ability to respond adequately to policy and stakeholder demand very much depends on the Financial Programming which currently poses a **serious additional challenge**. Because Cedefop's budget planning and management is vulnerable to factors which are outside its control, particularly those related to increasing staff costs and high inflation, the annual 2% increase in the European Union budget subsidy to the Agency – to this day considered 'at cruising speed' - puts substantial pressure on the Agency and may lead to significant budgetary shortfalls and negative priorities across all budgetary Titles, particularly Title 3 (Operational Expenditure).

Cedefop's mission is highly relevant and critical to EU's economic and social challenges. This is reflected in its 2019 recast Founding Regulation ⁽⁸⁾, which acknowledges that the Agency's mission and objectives go beyond VET to include skills and qualifications policies. However, the **budget** allocated to the Agency should be reconsidered to better reflect the importance of its mission and the extent of its objectives.

⁽⁸⁾ Council of the European Union. Council Regulation of 10 February 1975 establishing the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) EEC No 337/75, Official Journal of the European Communities, L 39, 13.2.1975 as last amended by Council Regulation EC No 2051/2004. In 2019, the Cedefop founding regulation was replaced by Regulation 2019/128

As highlighted by the European Parliament's independent expert appointed for Cedefop, V. Dimovski, during the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs hearing on 17 March 2025: *'To fulfil its mandate, Cedefop needs adequate human and financial resources – currently lacking'*.

Stakeholder-led strategic initiative

To address these challenges, in October 2024, ahead of the Agency's 50th birthday - of which 30 in Greece - Cedefop proactively launched a new stakeholder-led strategic initiative '**Cedefop@50**' to reinforce its **unique value proposition** as a relevant, leading, and sufficiently resourced partner in its field, as the EU Agency that turns labour-market and skills data as well as policy analysis on VET and qualifications into actionable insights for policymaking.

The outcomes of this initiative are expected to allow Cedefop further reinforcing its ability to bring the stakeholders' perspective centre-stage, focus Cedefop's research and development work on innovating services and tools in a more user-centred way, and open Cedefop to new sources of funding while maintaining its high-quality delivery on the EU subsidy financed work programme.

Positive outcomes of the latest external evaluation

As required by its Founding Regulation, Cedefop undergoes periodic external evaluations, with the most recent one covering the period 2017-22. Conducted by the Commission, the evaluation assessed Cedefop's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and EU added value. The final report, received on 18 April 2024, assessed Cedefop positively under all evaluation criteria. On 27 September, the Commission issued a [Staff Working Document](#) ⁽⁹⁾ accompanied by the [report](#) from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee. Cedefop is working on an action plan to address both agency-specific and cross-agency recommendations. Discussions with other agencies led to a joint action plan for the cross-agency recommendations.

Inter-agency collaboration

In 2024, Cedefop strengthened collaboration with other Agencies on the operational side. It partnered with Eurofound on digitalisation in SMEs. Alongside Eurofound, ETF, and EEA, Cedefop co-organised the Tripartite Exchange Seminar on social dialogue for a just green transition. Based on the Memorandum of understanding between Cedefop and the [European Labour Authority](#), skillsOVATE now presents [analytics of EURES](#) vacancies by way of five EURES-powered interactive dashboards. Additionally, Cedefop and ETF advanced work on a joint report for the Second European Skills and Jobs Survey.

Human Resources

In the course of the year, in line with its strategic priorities, Cedefop further improved and modernised its selection processes. For example, it revamped its career webpage, further increased the transparency and efficiency of the process, finetuned the online application management system and mobilised a tool for live invigilating of written tests. In 2024, 10 newcomers joined the Agency and their smooth integration was ensured by means of a

⁽⁹⁾ SWD(2024) 222 final of 27.09.2024 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52024SC0222>

comprehensive, continuously enriched induction program and the availability of mentoring by an experienced colleague.

Green actions

In 2024, Cedefop prioritised reducing emissions from energy consumption and business travel. It introduced an Environmental Management System, earning EMAS certification in December. Own photovoltaic system saved EUR 52 543 in electricity consumption. Green travel measures cut costs by 48.8% compared to 2019, saving EUR 366 900. These initiatives enhanced sustainability and operational efficiency.

Modernisation and digital transformation

Cedefop advanced its ICT and digitalisation strategy, launching 'PULSE', a budget and payments module integrated with ABAC for improved monitoring. A Data Management and Collaboration working group developed a comprehensive Data Strategy and initiated a central Data Repository. The cloud-based recruitment tool was expanded to streamline trainee intake. In cybersecurity, an IAS audit on IT governance led to improvements, and Cedefop took steps to comply with the new Cybersecurity Regulation 2023/2841.

II.3 Budgetary and Financial management

For another year, Cedefop's careful monitoring of the budget implementation allowed for the proactive reshuffling of activities and the reallocation of funds from budget items where savings were achieved to finance core business activities.

Cedefop reacted to the challenges of the year with agility and effectiveness and managed to achieve 100% execution of commitment appropriation and 98,89% execution of payment appropriations.

Rate and type of implementation of appropriations

In 2024, Cedefop continued to utilise efficiently all its available funding with an overall budget implementation rate of 100%. In particular:

- from a total final Title 1 budget of EUR 13 527 202 commitments to the value of EUR 13 527 202 were raised, representing an execution rate of 100%;
- from a total final Title 2 budget of EUR 2 047 187 commitments to the value of EUR 2 047 187 were raised, representing an execution rate of 100%;
- from a total final Title 3 budget of EUR 4 847 633 commitments to the value of EUR 4 847 633 were raised, representing an execution rate of 100%.

The budget revenue available in 2024 (EUR 21 462 568) included:

- the EU budget contribution of EUR 21 362 022, which comprises the EFTA countries contributions to Cedefop budget;
- a fee for accounting services rendered to EIGE, following conclusion of a Service Level Agreement, for an amount of EUR 60 000; and
- an amount of EUR 40 546 of miscellaneous own revenue and reimbursed amounts.

Indication of commitments for actions that will extend for more than one financial year (major items only)

Title 3 appropriations are differentiated appropriation and multi-annual in nature.

The main contracts ⁽¹⁰⁾ signed in 2024 which gave rise to commitments extending for more than one financial year, which were booked on Title 3 (Operational activities) of the budget, are listed in the table below.

Budget line	Title of commitment	Expires	Amount (committed in 2024)
3240	SC NO 2 EUROPEAN VET TEACHERS SURVEY (EVTS): SUPPORTING TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN VET SCHOOLS	31/12/2027	1 078 900
3240	OF NO 1 MAPPING DIGITAL SKILLS IN INITIAL VET CURRICULA USING NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING (NLP) TECHNIQUES	31/12/2027	405 000
3240	SC NO 1 PRODUCTION OF THE FIRST UPDATES OF THE SKILLS FORECAST AND STAS	31/10/2025	359 950
3340	SC NO 4 ANALYSIS OF 2023-24 DEVELOPMENTS, PREPARING A SYNTHESIS REPORT, AND ADJUSTING THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK TO THE NEW EUROPEAN VET PRIORITIES	29/06/2026	190 150
3240	SC NO 5 - AI IN EU WORKPLACES: SECTORAL FORESIGHT EXERCISE (SKILLS ANALYSIS AND INTELLIGENCE)	31/07/2026	165 000
3340	OF NO 1 EXPLORING THE DIVERSITY OF MICROCREDENTIALS: THE ROLE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RECOGNITION (DEEPENING ON MICROCREDENTIALS)	31/08/2026	163 700
3340	OF NO 2 EXCELLENCE AND INCLUSION CONCEPT EXPLORATION AND INCLUSION IN NATIONAL VET OBJECTIVES	09/03/2026	150 100
3340	OF NO 3 EXPANDING VET AT HIGHER LEVELS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE AND INCLUSION	12/11/2026	149 400

Information on transfers and amending budgets

The budgetary transfers authorised in 2024 by the Executive Director, within the limits defined by Art. 26 of Cedefop's Financial Regulation ⁽¹¹⁾ are summarised below (net effect between Titles):

- Title 1: EUR 38 480
- Title 2: EUR 145 387
- Title 3: EUR -183 867

On 17 October 2024, the Management Board adopted the Amending Budget 01-2024 ⁽¹²⁾ which incorporates the increase in revenues received from the Commission (Income Line 1000 'European Union Contribution') and the respective increase in payment appropriations, for the payment for operational expenditures funded by Title 3, by an amount of EUR 1 000 000.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Only major contracts are shown, with the threshold set at EUR 100 000

⁽¹¹⁾ Management Board Decision RB(2019)1034 adopted on 16 July 2019

⁽¹²⁾ Management Board Decision ref. RB2024-1443253173-36446

On 16 December 2024, the Management Board adopted the Amending Budget 02-2024 ⁽¹³⁾ which incorporates:

- the increase in revenues received from the Commission (Revenue Line 1000 'European Union Contribution') by an amount of EUR 217 343,05, to fund the impact of the 2024 salary indexation, increasing staff costs in Title 1;
- the decrease of own revenues (Revenue Line 2200 'Revenue from and allowances for services rendered against payment') by an amount of EUR 10 000; and
- the increase in Commitment and Payment appropriations for Expenditure Title 1 by an amount of EUR 207 343,05.

The 2024 transfers directed commitment appropriations to Title 1, to finance the positive net effect of the salary indexation 2024, moderated by the decreased weighting coefficient for Greece, and to Title 2 to fund the Cedefop building facelift as well as investments in software and hardware equipment. Transfers were triggered as soon as underspending was identified, to optimise budget usage.

The effect of the amending budget and transfers performed in 2024 is demonstrated in the table below.

2024 Budget (C1) Euro	Initial budget (Commitment Appropriations)	Initial budget (Payment Appropriations)	Amending budget 01/2024 (Payment Appropriations)	Amending budget 02/2024	Transfers (authorised by the ED)	Final budget (Commitment Appropriations)	Final budget (Payment Appropriations)
Title I	13 281 379	13 281 379		207 343	38 480	13 527 202	13 527 202
Title II	1 901 800	1 901 800			145 387	2 047 187	2 047 187
Title III	5 031 500	5 031 500	1 000 000		-183 867	4 847 633	5 847 633
TOTAL	20 214 679	20 214 679	1 000 000	207 343	0	20 422 022	21 422 022

Appropriations carried over to the following financial year

As a common practice, Cedefop promptly informed ECA of the planned carryovers for the financial year 2024 ⁽¹⁴⁾. The appropriations carried over to 2025 to honour commitments made in 2024 are summarised below:

- Title 1 commitments: EUR 273 184 or 2.02% of the final funds for the year on the Title, well within the maximum target ceiling of 10%;
- Title 2 commitments: EUR 771 615 or 37.69% of the final Title 2 funds for the year on the Title. All commitments carried forward correspond to planned activities (unplanned activities representing 0%, versus a target ceiling of 20% over the Title 2 appropriations).

No appropriations were carried over to 2025 by MB decision ('non-automatic' carry overs, provided for in Article 12(2) and (3) of Cedefop FR).

⁽¹³⁾ Management Board Decision ref. RB2024-1443253173-36697

⁽¹⁴⁾ Letter Cedefop Deputy Director of to Mr Joao Pedro Bento, ECA Team Leader, ref. RB2024-1782316900-291

Implementation of appropriations carried forward from the previous financial year

The amounts of commitments carried forward from 2023 and cancelled in 2024 were EUR 27 292 ⁽¹⁵⁾ for Title 1 and EUR 27 399 ⁽¹⁶⁾ for Title 2.

The performance in both Titles is excellent, as the overall rate of cancelled appropriations carried forward remained below the 10% target at 7.0% ⁽¹⁷⁾.

Percentage of procurement procedure types used

17 procurement procedures and 3 calls for proposals (ReferNet Specific Grant Agreements 2025) were processed in 2024.

Type of procedure	2024	
	Number	%
Open	7	35%
Negotiated	8	40%
Reopening of Competition	2	10%
Call for proposals (Grants)	3	15%
Total	20	100%

Procurement Quality Index (PQI)

As of financial year 2023, Cedefop has established the Procurement Quality Index (PQI), a synthetic indicator that measures its overall performance in procurement. The methodology for the calculation of the indicator was inspired by the guidelines of the [European Commission Single Market Scoreboard](#), measuring public procurement performance in Member States. The PQI value for the year 2024 is 5 points ⁽¹⁸⁾, beyond the threshold of 'satisfactory' performance, which is 2 points.

Information on interest charged by suppliers through late payments (> 30 days)

No invoices paid with delay resulted in late interest in 2024. Payments are monitored versus the legal payment time on a weekly basis.

Cost and benefits of controls

Cedefop assesses the cost and benefits of controls on the basis of the indicators of its Internal Control Framework; direct and indirect costs of the Internal Control function; and control results.

Costs

Cedefop applied the same cost calculation methodology as in previous years, adhering to DG BUDG guidelines. The covered functions and activities include financial management, budgeting and accounting, external audits, coordination (including strategic programming

⁽¹⁵⁾ 12.6% of EUR 217 383

⁽¹⁶⁾ 4.9% of EUR 561 631

⁽¹⁷⁾ EUR 54 691 of EUR 779 014

⁽¹⁸⁾ PQI calculation is detailed in section II.7.1 Internal Audit Service (IAS)

and planning), anti-fraud measures, programme management and monitoring, as well as ICT-IT strategy, governance, and operations.

Indirect costs are calculated based on the 2024 annual average full-time equivalent (FTE) costs of Cedefop staff by category, including AD, AST, SNE, CA FG IV, and CA FG I to III. Calculations led to a total internal control cost of EUR 1 210 212 for the year 2024, which includes EUR 21 735 direct costs and EUR 1 188 477 indirect costs. The total cost of internal control accounts for 5.9% of the Agency's 2024 budget (EUR 20 422 022), down from 6% in 2023, reflecting improved efficiency and effectiveness in internal control. The amount is considered reasonable and proportionate to the attained objectives of ensuring legality and regularity while safeguarding efficiency and effectiveness of operations. It is also comparable to the other Agencies under the remit of DG EMPL.

Benefits

As defined in its Internal Control Framework, internal control helps achieve Cedefop's objectives and sustain operational and financial performance whilst respecting rules and regulations. Internal control supports sound decision-making by considering risks in the achievement of objectives and where necessary reducing them to acceptable levels through cost effective controls. Internal control applies to all activities, irrespective of whether they are financial or non-financial.

Cedefop's internal control framework is designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives, including:

- effectiveness and efficiency of operations
- reliability of reporting and safeguarding of assets and information
- prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities
- adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions

To identify internal control strengths and deficiencies, Cedefop uses several tools, including:

- internal assessments
- improvement actions / internal control strengths and weaknesses reported by staff
- analysis of risks reported during the risk assessment exercise
- Cedefop risk register (macro level)
- exceptions and non-compliance registered in the registry of exceptions
- accounting officer's report on the validation of financial management systems.

Cedefop also relies heavily on the work of the European Court of Auditors, and of the Internal Audit Service of the European Commission in ensuring a reasonable balance between the internal cost and the effectiveness of the control environment.

As reported in Part III, the overall assessment of the internal control systems shows that it is effective, all its components are in place and functioning well and for their intended purpose. Its benefits lie principally in the sustained regularity and legality of all transactions and accounts in all material aspects.

A well-designed and effective internal control system helps prevent irregularities before they occur, safeguards the organisation's resources from mismanagement or fraud, and more generally promotes and supports compliance, diligence, and operational integrity by enhancing staff awareness and expertise. The benefits of internal controls extend to ensuring legality and regularity, as they result from interconnected processes involving various departments, such as finance and procurement, which cannot be viewed in isolation.

Summary information on budgetary operations

Cedefop continues to use its funds effectively and efficiently with a budget implementation rate of 100% in 2024. To achieve this exceptionally high figure, Cedefop utilises bespoke systems to constantly track its current and anticipated expenditures to ensure all funds are utilised by the end of the year.

With regard to legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, all costs are subject to audits by both the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and external auditors whose remit specifically include such testing. All Title 3 costs are required to comply with the procurement plan which is an integral part of the annual management plan. Similarly, all costs are signed off by the authorising officer(s) (by delegation) who has (have) a specific remit to ensure regularity.

The internal controls are effective. Prior to validation by the authorising officers (by delegation), expenditure operations are initiated (operational and financial initiation) and verified (operational and financial verification) by designated actors with a view to ensuring legality and regularity, over and above the required 4-eye principle.

External parties monitor and audit Cedefop rigorously. No irregularities were found. The cost of the external audit company which audits Cedefop's annual accounts ⁽¹⁹⁾ – borne by the Agency – is considered reasonably low compared to the work they undertake and the value of the business they audit.

II.4 Delegation and sub-delegation of the powers of budget implementation to Agency's staff

Delegation of the powers of budget implementation are prepared in accordance with Article 11(5)(j) of the Regulation (EU) No 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019, establishing the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) 337/75, as well as Articles 39(1), 41(1), 43(1), 45 and 46 of Cedefop's Financial Regulation.

As Cedefop's Authorising Officer (AO), the Executive Director delegates the powers of budget implementation to the Deputy Director and the Heads of Departments, who are acting as Authorising Officers by Delegation (AOD). The powers delegated include:

- making budgetary and legal commitments as well as carrying out the preliminaries for these commitments;

⁽¹⁹⁾ According to the arrangements for the annual audits under Article 208 (4) and Article 107 of its Financial Regulation, Cedefop contracted an external audit company (Grant Thornton) to audit Cedefop's accounts 2024, based on a DG BUDG framework contract.

- validating and authorising expenditure;
- establishing amounts receivable (including making financial corrections) and issuing recovery orders, waiving recovery and cancelling established amounts receivable;
- taking individual decisions on the award of public procurement contracts, grants or prizes; and
- proposing transfers of appropriations.

The delegation decisions have an unlimited duration but may be revoked by decision of the Executive Director.

No sub-delegation decisions were in place in 2024.

The implementation of delegation decisions is monitored by Cedefop's Finance Service, which is responsible for drafting, amending or repealing a delegation upon instructions received by the Authorising Officer.

By decision of the Executive Director ⁽²⁰⁾, the delegations are transposed in ABAC with access rights granted by the ABAC Local Profile Manager of the Agency to each individual Authorising Officer by Delegation.

In the context of the periodic validation of access rights granted in ABAC, access rights are assessed by a Neutral Verifier, appointed by the Executive Director, to confirm that the financial actors are granted ABAC access rights corresponding to the delegation decisions of the Executive Director (ex-post control). The Neutral Verifier is a staff member assuming no other role in ABAC. The 2024 validation exercise, initiated by DGBUDG on 3 May 2024 ⁽²¹⁾, was completed on 11 June 2024, an action plan was shaped on 14 June 2024, and all ensuing recommendations implemented in September 2024.

II.5 Human Resources Management

In 2024, Cedefop reviewed its HR strategy in place since 2020 and concluded that the three building blocks of the strategy ⁽²²⁾ are well-designed and constitute a sound basis for the HR work and contribution. These building blocks thus remain the main pillars of 'rolling' Cedefop HR strategy.

In 2024, the strategic focus - aligned with organisational needs - was on improving the quality of workforce planning and selection procedures, expanding learning and development initiatives to support staff growth, promoting diversity and inclusion, and enhancing employee engagement and well-being.

The digitalisation of key HR processes continued as a key strategic enabler. Examples include the tailoring of Oleeo application management tool for the trainees' selection and the introduction of an online invigilated (live proctoring) tool for the selection tests, thus ensuring both security and integrity of the written assessment process. Cedefop's career webpage and applicants' guides were revamped to increase the attractiveness of Cedefop as an employer of choice, and the distribution of vacancy notices in the social media was

⁽²⁰⁾ Decision DIR 09/21 of 22 June 2021 - RB(2021)00743

⁽²¹⁾ Ares(2024)3241200

⁽²²⁾ BB1) Talent acquisition and matching; BB2) Talent management; BB3) 3) Staff well-being

broadened. The growing participation of applicants from nearly all EU member states in Cedefop selection procedures highlights the success of these efforts.

At the end of 2024, the occupancy rate of the establishment plan was 96%.

The Learning and Development offer has been enriched with tailored solutions, systematic use and promotion of EU Learn, a comprehensive newcomer's induction and onboarding. Moreover, an in-depth programme on questionnaire design for core business surveys was offered to Cedefop's experts.

As a follow-up action to the last Staff Engagement Survey, a Learning Week for all Cedefop staff was designed through a participative approach. The first Learning week will take place in 2025.

Staff members' health and well-being remains a top priority. The Health and Well-Being Committee, in partnership with HR, delivered a comprehensive programme 'Mind your Body' composed of activities to strengthen staff members' physical and psychological resilience. A joint Health and Wellbeing survey commissioned in 2024 will feed into the 2025 health and well-being programme.

A memorandum of cooperation with ETF promotes knowledge exchange and facilitate resource sharing between the two Agencies, including in the HR area, thus fostering mutual growth.

II.6 Strategy for efficiency gains

Cedefop systematically considers further scope for efficiency gains to inform management decisions on core business, staff and budget. Efficiency gain initiatives are agreed every year in the Single Programming Document and annual work programme. Efficiency gain initiatives agreed for 2024 in Cedefop's Single Programming Document 2024-26 are reported below.

a) continuous collaboration with other Agencies to achieve further efficiency gains through shared services such as inter-agency resource pooling, joint procurements for common services and for other services, as available in the Agencies' catalogue of shared services.

In 2024, Cedefop continued to be an active member of the EU Agencies' network (EUAN) and to share services and enhance synergies with other Agencies. Exploring opportunities for shared services, joint procedures and initiatives is a regular – rolling – activity. Cedefop is a member since 2020 of the EUAN task force on shared services. Cedefop also continues to participate to other EUAN sub-networks. In compliance with the renewed Memorandum of Understanding signed with ENISA in October 2023, resource-sharing opportunities continue to be identified and are taking place between the two Agencies by expanding their capabilities sharing: Confidential counsellors (as of 2022) and legal expertise on Greek law matters (October 2023 until October 2024). Cedefop's ICT team participates regularly to the ENISA and CERT-EU events and exercises where valuable experience is collected on common methods to deal with incidents. As of November 2023, following the signature of a Service Level Agreement between the two Agencies, Cedefop provides accounting services to EIGE. The main benefits include: (a) generating revenue to be invested in Cedefop's core business and help offset the progressive

squeeze of the operational budget (Title 3); (b) further improve Cedefop's good reputation among stakeholders, and in particular the discharge authority, who value all efforts made by Agencies to achieve efficiency gains and share resources; (c) gain experience in capacity sharing and pave the way for shared services in other administrative areas. Cedefop and ETF continue their collaboration and sharing of resources in administrative and cooperative services. Based on a Service Level Agreement, Cedefop uses EUIPO as a disaster recovery site for its ICT systems since 2020.

b) pursuing the reduction of mission costs by at least 65% in comparison with 2019, and implementing a combination of online, hybrid and physical events that is efficient while reducing the overall meetings and missions budget of the Agency by half. On top of further increasing cost savings and efficiency gains to the benefit of core business, this measure witnesses Cedefop's firm commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and minimising its environmental impact.

In 2024, Cedefop achieved a 63.5% reduction of mission costs and a combined missions and meetings costs reduction of 48.8% compared to 2019 figures. At the end of 2024 Cedefop agreed a carbon budget for its missions, disconnecting the monitoring and targets from the financial budget ⁽²³⁾.

c) careful selection of measures that combine carbon reduction objectives with efficiency and costs savings, such as photovoltaic panels to produce, with renewable energy, about a third of the electricity consumption of the Agency.

Cedefop green actions in 2024 targeted its main areas of emissions, i.e. energy and business travel. In the energy sector, which is closely linked to building operations, Cedefop introduced a comprehensive Environmental Management System which achieved EMAS certification in December 2024. 40% of the total electricity consumption was generated by Cedefop's own photovoltaic system, resulting in savings of EUR 52,543.

d) further use of Commission/interagency framework contracts, wherever possible, to reduce administrative overheads.

Cedefop is included as Participating Contracting Authority in 150 Framework Contracts which were in force in 2024. The Framework Contracts were awarded following procurement procedures managed by the European Commission or other EU Agencies, who invited EU Institutions, Bodies and Agencies to join and benefit from the synergies generated in terms of economies of scale in purchasing and of savings in resources engaged in procurement.

e) further invest in ICT and new technologies to achieve modernisation and digital transformation, bearing in mind that investments in automation lead to temporary cost increases.

In 2024, Cedefop progressed significantly in the implementation of its ICT and digitalisation strategy. The highlight of the year was the launching of a budget and payments planning, monitoring and reporting module ('PULSE'), integrated with

⁽²³⁾ to be implemented in 2025

ABAC ⁽²⁴⁾, which replaced, automated and synchronised the existing tools, helping Cedefop fine-tune its budget execution monitoring and payment follow-up. As a data-driven organisation, Cedefop established a Data Management and Collaboration working group to develop a comprehensive Data Strategy, delivered in December 2024, and to create a central Data Repository as an initial step. Additionally, the cloud-based recruitment tool was expanded to facilitate the annual intake of trainees.

In the field of Cybersecurity, Cedefop underwent an audit by IAS on 'IT Governance and Information Security', used as maturity assessment opportunity to further improve and upgrade its cybersecurity protection. Several recommendations were already implemented in 2024. The Cybersecurity regulation 2023/2841 came into effect early 2024, with Cedefop receiving the relevant guidelines from CERT-EU and organising the actions needed for compliance. The Microsoft Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was updated, foreseeing also the move of the e-mail server to the cloud (Exchange Online).

f) participation in selected inter-agency working groups to pool expertise, resources and best practice and, whenever possible, carry out joint projects across agencies (such as joint surveys)

In 2024, Cedefop focused on pooling expertise and capacities with other Agencies where possible. Cedefop teamed up with Eurofound in a project on digitalisation in SMEs. The two Agencies contribute their survey evidence and shared the work of carrying out qualitative interviews in EU Member States. Cedefop was also part of a group of Agencies organising the Tripartite Exchange Seminar (with Eurofound, ETF and EEA). At the seminar and in meetings before and after it, the Agencies bundled their expertise and jointly facilitated working sessions to give seminar participants opportunities to work on social dialogue initiatives focused on just green transition. Cedefop shared its skillsOVATE data processing and analysis capacities with the European Labour Authority and started presenting dashboards powered by EURES vacancies end 2024. With the European Training Foundation, work on a joint report on the Second European Skills and Jobs Survey, which the ETF carried out using Cedefop's methodology in several ETF partner countries, progressed.

g) regularly revisiting HR and budget allocation with a view to securing additional resources for the core business

In 2024, Cedefop consistently monitored the execution of the budget allocated to Title 1 (staff costs). Due to Greece's high inflation rate and the fluctuations in the weighting factor, salary adjustments were necessary. These adjustments were managed effectively without significantly compromising the flexibility to allocate additional resources to the core business. Nonetheless, systematic efforts in the administration and support services to simplify, streamline, and share knowledge and resources with other Agencies led to the establishment of synergies and increasing the efficiency of the Agency.

⁽²⁴⁾ Commission's financial system

In addition, Cedefop carries out systematic reviews of its portfolio of activities and outputs with a view to streamlining and focusing them further. The new approach initiated in 2020 provides a broad idea on the direction of change implied by the thematic corporate priorities. It addresses current activities with an increased focus on clusters of thematic activities, how they are prioritised and synergised through cooperation and shared focus. The clusters are considered in a dynamic perspective combining continuity and consolidation with future investment necessary to deepen and expand expertise in line with evolving priorities, also reflecting Cedefop's relative strengths and needs for capacity building. The systematic workforce planning meetings of the management inform decisions on staff and budget as relevant.

Cedefop's commitment to efficiency gains is translated into its **performance measurement** efforts.

Since 2009, Cedefop's performance measurement system (PMS) enables the Agency to evaluate its impact, efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance. The system, which assesses performance at project, activity, and organisational levels, not only enables performance enhancements but also drives efficiency improvements by aligning activities with strategic objectives and priorities.

II.7 Assessment of audit and ex-post evaluation results during the reporting year

Cedefop's internal auditor is the Internal Audit Service of the European Commission (IAS). The Agency is controlled by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) on a yearly basis. The Agency informs the Discharge Authority on the results of the audits and closely follows up their observations.

In addition to the audits conducted by IAS and ECA, Cedefop has developed several procedures and tools to allow systematic ex-ante and ex-post controls and evaluations and, thus, further ensures that the necessary control layers and actions are in place and implemented. These procedures are outlined in an overarching evaluation policy adopted by the Executive Director in 2019 and amended in 2021 ⁽²⁵⁾.

The Executive Board and Management Board are kept regularly informed of audits, controls and evaluations outcomes as well as on progress in the implementation of the agreed action plans. This is a standing agenda item in all Board meetings.

II.7.1 Internal Audit Service (IAS)

As a follow-up to the audit on Cedefop's core business surveys, which ended in July 2023 and did not result in any critical or very important recommendations, Cedefop drew up an action plan – agreed with the IAS – and is following up on its implementation.

In line with the agreed Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) 2021-23, the IAS conducted an audit on IT governance and IT security management. The IAS submitted its final report on 8 July 2024 ⁽²⁶⁾. The action plan drafted by Cedefop was agreed by the IAS on 4 November 2024 (3). Cedefop is following up on its implementation.

⁽²⁵⁾ Decision DIR 12/2019 of 14 November 2019

⁽²⁶⁾ Ares(2024)4934695-08/07/2024

As announced in its letter of 8 May 2024 ⁽²⁷⁾, the IAS conducted an in-depth risk assessment in preparation of the SIAP 2025-27. On 5 November 2024, the IAS submitted the final SIAP 2025-27 ⁽²⁸⁾ which presents the key risks and topics for future audits. The latter include: (a) ReferNet; (b) Communication and Dissemination Strategies; and (c) Internal Control Framework (as reserve audit topic).

II.7.2 Other sources of assurance

Risk management

Following the request of the Commission for a peer review exercise on risk management in Agencies, as part of the exercise to align implementation of the recast Agency Regulations in line with the 'Common Approach', Cedefop's Internal Control Coordinator participated in the cluster with ETF, EU-OSHA, Eurofound, the ELA and CdT. The results were shared with the parent DGs. The main benefit for the Agencies in the DGEMPL and DGT cluster was the comparison of risk assessment methodologies and a common understanding of what constitutes a critical risk.

The assessment of fraud risks is an integral part of Cedefop's overall annual risk assessment.

Awareness-raising activities on ethics, integrity and internal control

As part of awareness-raising activities on ethics, integrity and internal control issues, Cedefop provides regular mandatory sessions on good governance for newcomers. The sessions, open to all staff members, were revamped in 2020 and the approach reshaped to target Cedefop's specificities more directly, allow interaction with staff members and adapt the concept to virtual formats.

Two awareness raising sessions took place in 2024:

- a) Legal advice and personal data protection and electronic signatures ⁽²⁹⁾;
- b) EMAS-Eco-Management and Audit Scheme ⁽³⁰⁾;

Evaluation and control activities

In compliance with its updated Evaluation Policy, Cedefop conducted evaluation and control activities according to its Annual Management Plan 2024.

Ex-ante evaluations ⁽³¹⁾ are carried out for procurement procedures above 500,000 Euros. A report reviewing progress and lessons learned was prepared by the Head of Finance and Procurement on 15 February 2024. The report concluded that the procurement procedures launched in the period examined were compliant with the requirements of ex-ante evaluation.

⁽²⁷⁾ Ares(2024)3353053-08/05/2024

⁽²⁸⁾ Ares(2024)7853078-05/11/2024

⁽²⁹⁾ Module 12 – 21 March 2024

⁽³⁰⁾ Module 13 – 22 May 2024

⁽³¹⁾ Article 29.2 of Cedefop Financial Regulation adopted by its Management Board on 16 July 2019

Ex-post evaluations ⁽³²⁾ assess the following criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, EU added value of the projects/actions. Evaluation outcomes inform decisions on future activities.

Cedefop carries out ex-post control on a sample of 3 procurements procedures. The final report was received on 20 May 2024. It indicated that the procurement procedures were done according to Cedefop's guidelines and rules. The internal control measures in place proved to be effective in preventing, detecting and correcting possible errors.

Ex-post controls on a sample of three ReferNet Grant payments conducted in 2020 and on a sample of ten Cedefop payments above EUR 10.000 conducted in 2021 and 2022. The final report was received on 31 May 2024. The outcomes indicated that the internal controls are efficient and follow set guidelines.

Ex-post controls on recruitment procedures are conducted to ensure that all reported declarations of interest and confidentiality notes by selection panel members are in place and adequately and consistently assessed. In 2024, Cedefop conducted ex-post controls on selection procedures which took place in 2023. The assessment, finalised in March 2024, showed that recruitment related controls are in place and work effectively. The ICC recommendations from last years' exercise were implemented, showing further improvements in the internal control system.

Ex-post controls on procurement procedures are conducted to ensure that all reported declarations of interest and confidentiality notes by evaluation committee members are in place and adequately and consistently assessed. In 2024, the ICC team carried out an ex-post control on procurement procedures conducted in 2023. The assessment was concluded in May 2024. It showed that the majority of procurement-related controls is in place and work effectively.

Cedefop carries out evaluation and control activities in line with its Evaluation Policy ⁽³³⁾. To this end, Cedefop makes use of interinstitutional framework contracts, namely: (a) FWC BUDG2023-OP-0004 – audits and controls; and (b) ETF2022OP0026. This allows increased efficiency gains through shared services.

II.7.3 European Court of Auditors (ECA)

Annual accounts 2023

On 24 October 2024 the European Court of Auditors published its final report on Cedefop's annual accounts for the financial year 2023 ⁽³⁴⁾.

In the Court's opinion, Cedefop's accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 present fairly, in all material respects, Cedefop's financial position as at 31 December 2023, the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with its Financial Regulation and with accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer. These are based on internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector.

⁽³²⁾ Article 29.3 of Cedefop Financial Regulation

⁽³³⁾ DIR 09/2019

⁽³⁴⁾ https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SAR-AGENCIES-2023/SAR-AGENCIES-2023_EN.pdf

In the Court's opinion, the revenue and payments underlying Cedefop's accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 are legal and regular in all material respects.

The Court did not include any observation.

Follow-up of previous years' observations

Cedefop is making progress on the two remaining open observations, while all other actions related to the Court's observations from previous years are completed and the actions fully implemented.

No.	Year of ECA Observation	The ECA's observation (summary)	Corrective action taken and / or other relevant developments (summary)	Status of ECA observation (Open/Closed)
1	2021	Weaknesses in transition to ABAC: (a) The final dates of implementation for carried-over budgetary commitments were not recorded correctly	(a) A similar situation arose with some budgetary commitments carried forward from 2023 to 2024. Cedefop corrected the final implementation dates where necessary.	Open
2	2022	Between 2017 and 2022, Cedefop paid monthly and daily subsistence allowances to two Greek nationals employed as seconded national experts. Cedefop is located in Greece, and its internal rules do not entitle Greek seconded national experts to these allowances.	Cedefop is amending its internal rules so that any seconded national expert who has to relocate to Thessaloniki will be eligible for allowances. Cedefop did not pay daily subsistence allowances to Greek seconded national experts in 2023.	Open
3	2022	Cedefop did not correctly apply the contribution calculation method set out in the Statement on Cedefop/EFTA cooperation in relation to amendment No 1 to its budget. As a result, Norway's and Iceland's contributions to the 2022 Cedefop budget were higher, and the EU's contribution was lower, than they should have been.	An amendment to Protocol 31, on cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms, entered into force on 1 January 2023. Since 2023, therefore, Cedefop has received Norway's and Iceland's contributions to its budget through the EU budget.	Closed

Annual accounts 2024

On the annual accounts for the financial year 2024, ECA conducted an onsite audit in the week 7 to 11 October 2024 and a desk review in the weeks 17 to 31 January 2025. The ECA final report is expected by autumn 2025.

According to the arrangements for the annual audits under Article 104 of its Financial Regulation and based on a DG BUDG framework contract, Cedefop contracted an external audit company to audit Cedefop's accounts 2024.

II.8a Follow up of recommendations and action plans for audits and evaluations

Following each audit and evaluation, Cedefop draws up an action plan for the implementation of all recommendations. A regular monitoring of actions is carried out by the Internal Control Coordinator. A consolidated action plan, updated at least biannually, is published on Cedefop's intranet, accessible to all staff.

Since 2020, Cedefop uses the 'degrees of implementation' logic. For each action Cedefop indicates its status at the outset and a target date for completion to help track progress - an approach that the Commission considered exemplary and also recommended to others ⁽³⁵⁾. By the end of 2020, a dedicated tool had been designed to support 'degrees of implementation' progress tracking which was deployed in 2021 to track the progress of the external evaluation action plan and more generally of the Agency's consolidated action plan.

II.8b Follow up of recommendations issued following investigations by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

Not applicable

II.9 Follow-up of observations from the Discharge Authority

In accordance with Article 107 of Cedefop's decision on the Financial Regulation of 16 July 2019, Cedefop follows up promptly and systematically on the observations and comments accompanying the discharge decision. The Executive Director takes all appropriate steps to act and reports back to the Discharge Authority on measures taken.

The report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of Cedefop for the financial year 2022 ⁽³⁶⁾, adopted by the European Parliament (EP) on 11 April 2024, praises Cedefop's high quality work on several aspects such as budget and financial management, performance, efficiency and gains, staff policy, prevention and management of conflicts of interest and transparency and internal control. The EP also expressed concerns with regards to the Court's observation that the Centre, in the period 2017-22, paid monthly and daily subsistence allowances to two Greek nationals employed as seconded national experts.

On 13 September 2024, the Executive Director sent his report ⁽³⁷⁾ to the Discharge Authority on measures taken by Cedefop in light of the observations and comments from the Discharge Authority related to the implementation of the budget 2022.

⁽³⁵⁾ DI 1 to DI 5: DI 1 refers to 'problem identified', DI 2 to 'solution conceptualised', DI 3 to 'solution implementation planned in detail', DI 4 to 'solution implemented (go-live date)', and DI 5 to 'solution impact established'

⁽³⁶⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0238_EN.pdf

⁽³⁷⁾ RB2024-403717053-5

By the end of 2024, Cedefop had implemented 6 out of 7 follow-up measures addressing the previous years' observations of the Discharge Authority. The table below reports on the status of the follow-up measure that was still ongoing on 31 December 2024.

Observation / Recommendation	Follow-up measures (status - end 2024)
<p>Staff policy – no. 17</p> <p>Notes with concern from the Court's report the observation that the Centre, in the period 2017-2022, paid monthly and daily subsistence allowances to two Greek nationals employed as seconded national experts; notes in this context that the two seconded national experts were not entitled to those allowances according to the Centre's internal rules, since the Centre is located in Greece, therefore the total associated payments made to the two seconded national experts during that period and amounting to EUR 222 647 (compared to EUR 36 608 in 2022) being deemed irregular; notes, moreover, that when the Centre identified the issue in 2022, it registered the two cases in the registry of non-compliance and exceptions, decided not to claim back the amounts irregularly paid and introduced a three months phasing-out period for the seconded national experts still in place at that time; calls for a strict monitoring and avoidance of such situations in the future;</p>	<p>Cedefop revised its rules governing SNEs. Legal advice on the revised advanced draft is currently being sought. In October 2025, the revised rules will be presented to Cedefop Management Board for adoption. The new rules foresee that, instead of linking the payment of the SNE allowances to the requirement for payment of ex-patriation allowance to staff members, the allowances will be paid to all SNEs regardless of their nationality, provided that they provide evidence that they had to move from a place of origin located more than 150 km from the place of employment to reside in the place of employment. The revision aims to ensure equal treatment to SNEs having to change household, independently of their nationality.</p>

Observations and comments of the Discharge Authority will be duly addressed, and follow-up actions reported, in accordance with Article 107 of Cedefop's Financial Regulation.

II.10 Environment Management: Climate neutrality strategy and roadmap 2030

Cedefop is dedicated to minimising the environmental and climate impact of its operations to support a more sustainable future. In 2022, with the approval of its Management Board, Cedefop committed to achieving climate neutrality by 2030. The goal is to significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and offset any remaining emissions. To reach this target, Cedefop is transforming its operations and re-evaluating its working methods while maintaining its ability to deliver high-quality data and insights on VET, skills, and qualifications in line with its mandate. This commitment extends across all areas, including building management, business travel (missions, meetings), new work approaches, and procurement of goods and services.

In 2023, Cedefop concluded its climate neutrality study and adopted its climate neutrality strategy and roadmap towards 2030. To monitor progress towards set targets, Cedefop redesigned its Environmental Management System which became [EMAS certified](#) in December 2024. To provide more transparency and social accountability, Cedefop endorsed the [Global Sustainability Reporting](#) standard and following a materiality assessment, publishes a sustainability report index as a supplement to this activity report.

Measures implemented in 2024 include:

- adoption of the EUAN charter on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and responsible environmental management;

- closure of premises for three weeks in August to save energy;
- installed photovoltaic panels produced one third of the total electricity consumed;
- guarantees of origin for 100% of the electricity coming from the grid;
- an energy efficiency audit was conducted and identified viable solutions to increase energy efficiency, reduce emissions and move away from fossil fuels;
- participating to the organic waste recycling programme of the local Municipality;
- greening missions principles, including carbon budget and combined missions were agreed;
- continued organisation of events predominantly online and in hybrid mode;
- staff participation in meetings mainly online. The budget for in-person participation (missions) continued to be reduced compared to 2019 levels;
- continued strict no-printing policy and advanced digitisation of further internal procedures and workflows;
- carpooling and Marketplace apps were created in Teams;
- continuing staff involvement, consultation and training and awareness-raising sessions and actions.

As part of its core business, in 2024 Cedefop continued expanding the work on VET and skills in the context of the green transition. Cedefop released a [policy brief](#) that demonstrates the potential of using big data analysis of online job advertisements in the context of green transition. Cedefop enriched its [SkillsOVATE](#) big data labour market information webtool with dedicated dashboards that show how greening is progressing in occupations, regions and sectors. In its efforts to develop and promote skills intelligence for the green transition, Cedefop intensified cooperation with EU bodies and with the [international energy agency](#). Cedefop successfully organised the 2024 tripartite exchange seminar with Eurofound, the European Training Foundation, and the European Environment Agency. The seminar, which aimed at improving the capacity of social partners and governments to engage and act effectively in social dialogue, with a specific focus on green and just transition, was highly appreciated by participants and viewed as a powerful mechanism to further effective social dialogue at national level.

As part of its outreach efforts in the second part of the European Year of skills, Cedefop leveraged many opportunities to introduce the skills perspective in fora where the focus often is on green technology and its implementation. Presentations at EU and international high-level events and engaging in conversations with sectors, VET providers, local players and national authorities contributed to strengthening Cedefop's reputation as a green transition knowledge hub. Cedefop also championed the key contribution of apprenticeship to green transition. A [policy brief that describes how grassroots green apprenticeship initiatives can be upscaled to comprehensive approaches](#), makes a case for better skills intelligence, smarter governance, and multi-stakeholder collaboration at all levels.

Working at the interface of VET and the labour market, Cedefop's work as a whole also directly contributes to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education) and 8 (decent work and economic growth).

II.11 Assessment by Management

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by Cedefop's management that support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives.

These elements are: (a) comprehensive set of processes and documents to plan its annual work programme; (b) comprehensive set of processes to monitor and report on the implementation of its annual work programme and the deployment of its human and financial resources; (c) processes to monitor and report on legality and regularity; (d) internal control framework; and (e) safeguarding of assets.

a) Comprehensive set of processes and documents to plan the annual work programme

- i The Single Programming Document 2024-26 was adopted by the Management Board on 15 December 2023 by written procedure.
- ii The annual work programme 2024 is embedded in the Single Programming Document 2024-26 and includes the risk management plan which results from an in-depth ex-ante assessment of the generic risks and risks by project and by Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB) activity. The work programme also includes a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators within Cedefop's Performance Measurement System (PMS).
- iii Along with the adoption of the annual budget (estimate of revenue and expenditure) a multi-annual staff policy plan (MASPP) sets out the human resources required for the implementation of the work programme. The MASPP forms an integral part of the Single Programming Document and annual work programme.
- iv Finally, the annual management plan (AMP) 2024 comprises detailed planning for the Agency's key deliverables - e.g. conferences, publications, web tools, procurement procedures - outlined in the annual work programme. It also includes evaluation and audit plans, risk assessment and the anti-fraud strategy action plan for the year 2024.

b) Comprehensive set of processes to monitor and report reliably on the implementation of the annual work programme and the deployment of human and financial resources

- i The Executive Director, Deputy Director and Heads of Departments meet on a weekly basis. The aim of these meetings is to monitor developments in operational, administrative and support activities and take strategic decisions on issues related to financial and human resource management, internal controls, outreach activities of management and experts ⁽³⁸⁾ as well as the day-to-day administration of the Agency. Follow-up actions are reviewed on a weekly basis. Since December 2023, outcomes are reported and published to all staff on a dedicated page on the intranet.
- ii The Executive Director, Deputy Director (Internal Control Coordinator), Heads of Departments, Head of Finance and Procurement, Head of Human Resources, coordinators of operational departments, ICT and facilities and the accounting officer meet in Performance Monitoring Meetings (PMM) three times per year, in February, September and November, to discuss systematised reports on financial issues (budget implementation, procurements), human resources developments, and monitoring reports on achievements compared to the planned objectives. In the first meeting of the year, the PMS team and a representative of the Staff Committee are also invited. In the third meeting, budget correspondents participate. Achievements are monitored through the performance indicators and targets set in the annual work programme. In addition, these meetings support

⁽³⁸⁾ e.g. events, publications, briefing notes, web tools

strategic considerations and opinion exchange on policy issues, planning, and other operational and organisational issues.

- iii A budgetary mid-term review is conducted in September to discuss in detail progress on the implementation of the budget and the work programme and to agree on corrective actions as necessary. The budget correspondents assigned to each Department provide regular monitoring of the budget's planned commitments and payments throughout the year.
- iv The Consolidated Annual Activity Report is discussed with the Executive and Management Boards, besides the regular reporting to the Executive Board/Management Board on the implementation of the annual work programme, results of audits and evaluations, budget implementation, transfers of appropriations. Starting with the report on the year 2023, the Annual Report brochure continues to be discussed with the Executive Board but is no longer adopted by the Management Board, as decided by the latter.
- v Executive and Management Board members are systematically informed on key changes that may occur in the implementation of the annual work programme. This is a standing agenda item in all meetings.
- vi As requested under Art. 31.4 of Cedefop's Financial Regulation, the Agency makes available on its [website](#), no later than 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the funds were legally committed, information on the recipients of funds financed from the budget of the Agency, including experts contracted. The published information is easily accessible, transparent and comprehensive.

c) Processes to monitor and report on legality and regularity

As regards legality and regularity of underlying transactions, the objective is to ensure that the estimated annual risk of errors in commitments and payments at the time of the authorisation of the transactions is less than 2%. No deviations were recorded in 2024.

As foreseen in the Commission's Anti-Fraud Strategy and in the action plan of the Inter Institutional Working Group's roadmap, Cedefop's Management Board adopted its updated Anti-Fraud Strategy on 26 March 2024, which repealed the second version from 2019.

Following the IAS audit on HR management and ethics, new guidelines on reporting potential conflicts of interests in selection and recruitment processes were adopted on 29 March 2019. Rules on the prevention and management of conflicts of interests for Management Board members, independent experts, seconded national experts and other staff not employed by Cedefop were adopted by Cedefop's Management Board on 2 October 2019.

Internal procedures on reporting irregularities/whistleblowing, including the legal framework, basic principles and steps to be followed by staff members, already in place since 2008, were revised and complemented with Cedefop's guidelines on whistleblowing in 2019 ⁽³⁹⁾, based on the Commission's Guidelines and in compliance with the requirements set out in Art. 22c of the Staff Regulations.

d) Internal control framework

⁽³⁹⁾ DGE/37/2019 of 9 April 2019

Internal Control standards are in place in Cedefop since 2009. The Agency revised its Internal Control Framework in 2019 to align it to the European Commission's own revised Framework, basing it on the highest international standards set by the COSO framework ⁽⁴⁰⁾. Shifting from a compliance-based to a principle-based approach, Cedefop's revised Internal Control Framework, adopted by the Management Board on 9 January 2019, is structured around five components: control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, monitoring activities. Each component consists of several principles, 17 in total. Cedefop uses indicators to assess the effectiveness of the internal control framework. The indicators are an integral part of Cedefop's Internal Control Framework and are reviewed on an annual basis.

e) Safeguarding of assets

With regard to safeguarding of assets, regular controls and checks are in place, which are in line with the Commission's control structures. They are tested and proved to be sound. Procedures and recordkeeping concerned with the safeguarding of assets and reliability of financial records are designed to provide assurance that:

- i transactions are executed in compliance with management's authorisation;
- ii transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of financial statements in conformity with the Agency's Financial Regulation and to maintain accountability for assets;
- iii access to assets is restricted through the hierarchical structure of verifications and in line with the Financial Regulation;
- iv the recorded value of assets is compared with existing asset checks e.g. inventory controls and bank reconciliations at reasonable intervals.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) - Framework for internal control against which organisations measure the effectiveness of their systems of internal control

PART II b) EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS

As required by Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing Cedefop and by the Financial Regulation, Cedefop is subject to periodic external evaluations which are carried out by the Commission.

The last external evaluation of the four Agencies under the remit of DGEMPL started in October 2022 and covered the period 2017-22. It assessed Cedefop individually as well as in a cross-cutting perspective vis-à-vis the other Agencies as regards their effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and relevance.

Cedefop received the final evaluation report on 18 April 2024. The outcomes point to a positive picture for Cedefop under all evaluation criteria. On 27 September 2024, the Commission issued a [Staff Working Document](#) (SWD) ⁽⁴¹⁾ accompanied by the [report](#) from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽⁴²⁾. The main conclusions of the evaluation were presented by the Commission at the Management Board Meeting on 3-4 October 2024. 14 lessons-learned ⁽⁴³⁾ concern all Agencies ⁽⁴⁴⁾. Four agency-specific recommendations are addressed to Cedefop ⁽⁴⁵⁾. A draft action plan setting out measures to implement Cedefop-specific as well as cross-agency lessons-learned was discussed at the Executive Board meeting on 27 March 2025. A revised version, endorsed by the Management Board, will be formally transmitted to the Commission mid-May 2025. In relation to cross-agency recommendations, the four Agencies came up with a joint action plan ⁽⁴⁶⁾. Whereas the joint action plan shows how Agencies will work together in responding to cross-agencies recommendations, each Agency also addresses each cross-cutting recommendations in the same way as the agency-specific ones.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Commission Staff Working Document – Evaluation of EU Agencies: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA (SWD (2024) 222 final)

⁽⁴²⁾ COM/2024/414 final

⁽⁴³⁾ also referred to as Recommendations

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Recommendations 1 to 14 (SWD (2024) 222 final)

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Recommendations 20 to 23 (SWD (2024) 222 final)

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Recommendations 8 and 14

PART III ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

III.1 Effectiveness of the Internal Control systems

The methodology applied for the assessment of Cedefop's Internal Control Framework is compliant with the Implementation Guide of the European Commission (2018 updated version of Ares(2017)3293999-30/06/2017).

The assessment of the Internal Control Framework is founded both on ongoing continuous monitoring and on specific periodical assessments and was carried out at three levels:

- the principles - based on the analysis of the detected strengths and deficiencies;
- the components - based on an analysis of the results at principle level;
- the internal control framework as a whole - based on an analysis of the results at component level. See section III.2.

The conclusion, based on professional judgement, also assesses whether the components are operating well together in an integrated manner.

Cedefop updated its policy on reporting of exceptions, non-compliance events and notes to the file on 5 November 2020 ⁽⁴⁷⁾ in line with the Commission's guidelines and Cedefop's Internal Control Framework adopted by its Management Board on 9 January 2019.

Deficiencies identified in the context of the ongoing monitoring activities and actions are registered in a 'Deficiencies Registry'. Appropriate mitigating actions addressed the identified issues.

In 2024, Cedefop registered 46 non-compliance events, exception requests and notes for the file ⁽⁴⁸⁾ linked to contract and financial management and legal issues. Recommendations issued by the ICC were largely implemented and are being followed up to help avoid reoccurrence.

III.2 Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems

The goal of the annual internal control assessment is to provide reasonable assurance that Cedefop's internal control principles are functioning, deficiencies are communicated and corrected in a timely manner, with serious matters reported and followed up as appropriate.

The assessment of the overall Internal Control Framework shows that it is effective, all its components are in place and functioning well and for their intended purpose.

The overall assessment was performed by the ICC, using the tool provided by DG BUDG to Agencies' Internal Control Coordinators. DG BUDG and the IAS delivered a specific training session to ICC teams of EU Agencies on the annual assessment of the internal control system.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Decision DIR 07/2020 - RB(2020)01239

⁽⁴⁸⁾ 57 in 2022 down to 35 in 2023 and up to 44 in 2024

The assessment tool comprises:

- a a registry of deficiencies populated from different internal sources: register of non-compliance events and exception requests, recommendations from IAS, ECA, OLAF and ICC, deficiencies reported spontaneously by staff, the action plan of Cedefop's Anti-Fraud Strategy, Cedefop internal control indicators, notes to the file;
- b an assessment of each principle with regards to the related deficiencies, ranked from 1 to 4 (1= None, 2=Moderate, 3=Major, 4=Critical);
- c an assessment of each component with regards to the related principles, also ranked from 1 to 4;
- d overall assessment of the internal control system (see table below).

Overall (Specific) Assessment of Internal Control System		
To be done globally at Directorate-General level. In addition this assessment can be done for one part of the organisational structure (Delegation, Representation, Directorate, Function, etc.)		
Internal control Component	Present and functioning (Category 1/2/3/4)	Explanation/Conclusion
CONTROL ENVIRONMENT	Category 1. The component is present and functioning well	The Management has set properly the tone at the top with respect to the importance of internal control, including expected standards of conduct.
RISK ASSESSMENT	Category 1. The component is present and functioning well	Overall risks are properly mitigated
CONTROL ACTIVITIES	Category 2. The component is present and functioning but some improvements are needed	Control activities are well in place and functioning.
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	Category 1. The component is present and functioning well	External communication is well organised and functions well. Internal communication can be improved
MONITORING ACTIVITIES	Category 1. The component is present and functioning well	Continuous assessments provide timely information on any deficiencies. Findings are assessed and deficiencies are communicated and corrected in a timely manner.
OVERALL ASSESSMENT (1/2/3 or 4). Are all components operating together in an integrated manner? Assess globally the combination of the assessments of the internal control components.	Category 1. The internal control system is present and functioning well, only minor improvements needed	
Is the overall internal control system effective? Category 1. Minor- Yes Category 2. Moderate- Yes Category 3. Major- Partially Category 4. Critical- No	Yes	
Comment	The assessment of the internal control framework concludes that the organisation is able to deliver its objectives. The key component 'Control environment' is present and functioning well.	

III.3 Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control

RB2025-403717053-17



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

DEPUTY DIRECTOR – INTERNAL CONTROL COORDINATOR

STATEMENT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND INTERNAL CONTROL COORDINATOR, MS MARA BRUGIA, TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MR JUERGEN SIEBEL

I, Mara Brugia,

in my capacity as Deputy Director and authorising officer by delegation,

declare that in accordance with my responsibilities as authorising officer by delegation and as Deputy Director, I have reported to the Executive Director my assessment, advice and recommendations on the issues under my responsibility.

I declare that on the basis of my managing and monitoring operations, I have reasonable assurance that the underlying actions have been legal and regular and that the information that I have provided has been accurate and complete.

In my capacity as Internal Control Coordinator in charge of risk management and internal control, I also declare that in accordance with Cedefop's Internal Control Framework, I have reported my assessment, advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in Cedefop to the Executive Director.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024 and its annexes, to the best of my knowledge, is accurate, reliable and complete.

Thessaloniki, 21 May 2025

Digitally signed by:

MARA BRUGIA

Date: 2025-05-20 07:09:02 UTC

Mara Brugia
Deputy Director and Internal Control Coordinator

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Tel. +30 2310490111 | Fax +30 2310490049 | E-mail: info@cedefop.europa.eu | www.cedefop.europa.eu
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PART IV MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

IV.1 Review of the elements supporting assurance

Cedefop's Internal Control Framework is established under the direct supervision of the management. Given Cedefop's size, a flat hierarchical structure has been adopted. Heads of Departments delegate various functions such as staff assessment of contract agents or contract implementation to Heads of Service and project managers/experts.

Heads of Departments, Heads of Service, and project managers/experts are actively engaged in planning, reporting, monitoring, and risk assessment processes. This involvement ensures alignment with strategic objectives, fosters a shared understanding, and secures commitment to the annual work programme.

To support decision-making, planning and monitoring tools are in place for ABB, procurement, events, and publications. Additionally, a comprehensive set of procedures and guidelines has been developed for the Internal Control Framework, with all major processes documented and digitized. Backup roles are designated to ensure business continuity, as outlined in staff job descriptions. Furthermore, ongoing skills development training is provided to facilitate the effective execution of the annual work programme and maintain robust controls ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Regular department and project team meetings, along with briefings by Heads of Departments and Services, keep staff informed of key issues and developments. Since late 2023, summaries of the weekly Directorate/Heads of Departments meetings are shared with all staff on the Intranet.

The Executive Director, as the authorising officer, and the authorising officers by delegation in their areas of responsibility rely on direct management supervision to issue assurance declarations. Additionally, statements of assurance from the Deputy Director/Internal Control Coordinator (ICC), Heads of Department, and Heads of Service provide an additional layer of internal control and assurance.

Following the assessment of the Internal Control system no significant weakness has been identified.

In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Executive Director, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation signed the Declaration of Assurance.

IV.2 Reservations

N/A

⁽⁴⁹⁾ e.g. trainings and knowledge sharing on e.g. contract management, ABAC, data protection, team development, finance, procurement and contract management, risk management, data protection, internal control framework, etc.

PART V. DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

RB2025-403717053-18



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I, Jürgen Siebel, Executive Director of Cedefop,

In my capacity as Authorising Officer,

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post and ex-ante controls, the ex-ante evaluation and other sources of assurance as steered by the Internal Control Coordinator, the observations of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the report of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

I confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of Cedefop.

Thessaloniki, 21/05/2025

Digitally signed by:

JÜRGEN SIEBEL

Reason: I am the author of this document.

Date: 2025-05-21 14:28:40 UTC

Jürgen Siebel
Executive Director

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ANNEXES

Annex I: Core business statistics

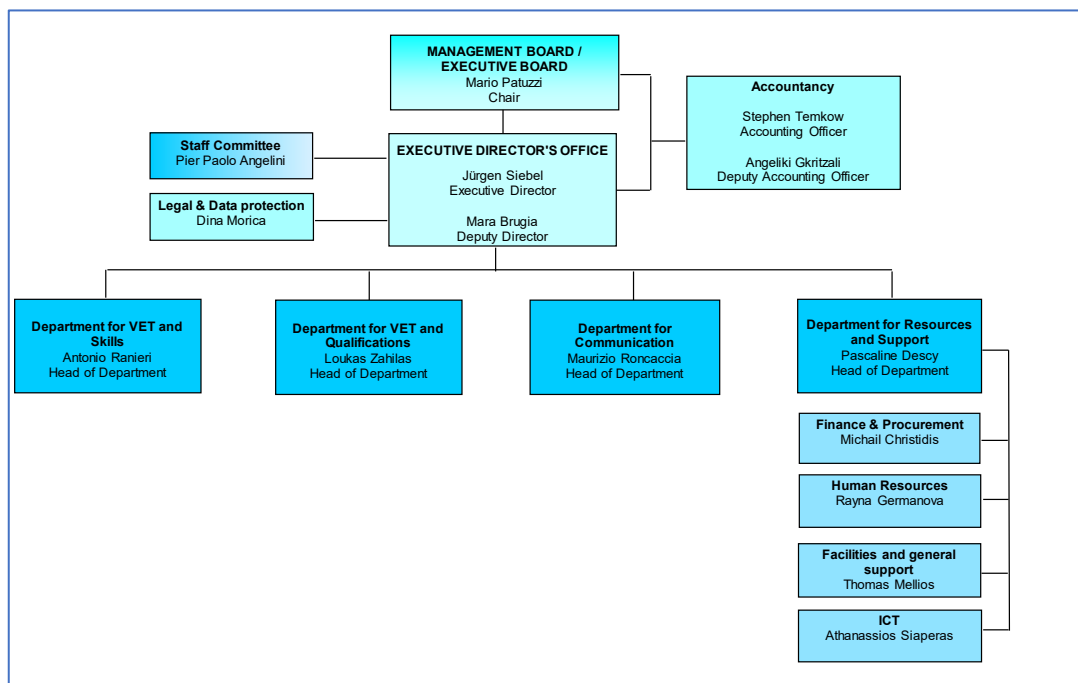
Publications	413 667 downloads
Social media followers	Facebook: 18 040 (+ 2%)
	LinkedIn: 15 325 (+ 37%)
	X (Twitter): 13 650 (+ 0.5%)
Website traffic	Visits + 36%
Quality of Cedefop events	96.5% satisfaction rate
Take up (citations) of Cedefop's work in:	215 EU policy documents
	113 international organisations' papers
	978 academic articles in 2023-24
Contribution to meetings that inform policies	83 virtual
	90 physical
2024 Cedefop events	53 events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 29 hybrid/physical events - 24 virtual events (5 Virtual Get Togethers) 3 400 external attendees (+ 25%)
Budget	100% budget implementation rate
	99% payment appropriations
Staff	96% occupation rate of establishment plan
Environmental indicators	Electricity consumption from the grid: -29%
	Electricity from renewable sources: +77%

Annex II: Statistics on financial Management

Budget outturn	N-4 (2021)	N-3 (2022)	N-2 (2023)	N-1 (2024)
Revenue actually received (+)	18 538 589	18 468 380	20 152 134	21 462 568
Payments made (-)	-17 580 672	-17 102 388	-19 040 129	-20 199 777
Carry-over of appropriations (-)	-879 615	-1 172 755	-790 538	-1 083 358
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	77 236	67 297	39 292	54 691
Adjustment for carry-over of assigned revenue appropriations from previous year (+)	39 277	45 708	43 368	11 524
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	-858	-297	63	89
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year (-)	0	0	0	0
Total	193 956	305 945	404 190	245 737

The budget outturn 2024 is EUR 245 737. Detailed information on budget execution is presented in Part II.3.

Annex III: Organisational chart



Annex IV: Establishment plan and additional information on Human Resources management

Key functions	Type of contract (official, TA or CA)	Function group, grade of recruitment	Indication whether the function is dedicated to administrative support or operations
Executive Director	TA	AD 14	Operations
Deputy Director	TA	AD 12	Operations
Head of Department	TA	AD 10	Operations/ Administrative
Head of Service	TA	AD 8	Administrative/ Neutral
Administrator/Expert	TA	AD 5-7	Operations/ Administrative/ Neutral
Expert	CA	FG IV	Operations/ Administrative/ Neutral
Senior Assistant	TA	AST 10	Operations/ Administrative/ Neutral
Assistant	TA	AST 1-4	Operations/ Administrative/ Neutral
Assistant	CA	FG II-III	Operations/ Administrative/ Neutral

Job screening/benchmarking against previous year results

Job Type (subcategory)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)
Administrative support and Coordination	20.5%	19.8%
Administrative support	18.3%	17.6%
Coordination	2.2%	2.2%
Operational	72.8%	72.8%
Top level Operational Coordination	4.5%	4.5%
Programme management and implementation	66.1%	66.1%
Evaluation & impact assessment	0.0%	0.0%
General operational	2.2%	2.2%
Neutral	6.7%	7.4%
Finance/Control	6.7%	7.4%
Linguistics	0.0%	0.0%

List of HR implementing rules adopted in 2024

Cedefop/DGE/46/2024 – Concerning the probationary period, management trial period and the annual appraisal of the Executive Director of Cedefop
Cedefop/DGE/48/2024 – General implementing rules for Articles 11 and 12 of Annex VIII to the Staff Regulations on the transfer of pension rights

Gender representation - Data on 31/12/Year N-1 (2024) / statutory staff (only officials, AT and AC)

		Official		Temporary		Contract Agents		Grand Total	
		Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%	Staff	%
Female	Administrator level	0	0%	18	42.9%	3	23.1%	21	35.6%
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)	4	100%	24	57.1%	10	76.9%	38	64.4%
	Total	4	100%	42	100%	13	100%	59	100%
Male	Administrator level	0	0%	30	81.1%	4	44.4%	34	70.8%
	Assistant level (AST & AST/SC)	2	100%	7	18.9%	5	55.6%	14	29.2%
	Total	2	100%	37	100%	9	100%	48	100%
Grand Total		6		79		22		107	

Data regarding gender evolution over 5 years of Middle and Senior management

	N-5 (2020)		N-1 (2024)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Female Managers	2	33.3%	2	33.3%
Male Managers	4	66.7%	4	66.7%

Geographical balance: Explanatory figures to highlight nationalities of staff (split per Administrator/CA FG IV and Assistant /CA FG I, II, III)

Table on 31/12/year N-1 (2024) - statutory staff only (officials, AT and AC)

Nationality	AD + CA FG IV		AST/SC-AST + CA FGI/CA FGII/CA FGIII		TOTAL	
	Number	% of Total Staff members in AD and FG IV categories	Number	% of Total Staff members in AST SC/AST and FG I, II and III categories	Number	% of total staff
AT	1	1.8%	1	1.9%	2	1.9%
BE	1	1.8%	4	7.7%	5	4.7%
BG	1	1.8%			1	0.9%
CY	1	1.8%			1	0.9%
CZ	1	1.8%			1	0.9%
DE	2	3.6%	4	7.7%	6	5.6%
DK			2	3.8%	2	1.9%
EL	24	43.6%	31	59.6%	55	51.4%
ES	4	7.3%	1	1.9%	5	4.7%
FR			5	9.6%	5	4.7%
IT	11	20.0%	2	3.8%	13	12.1%
LT	1	1.8%			1	0.9%

Nationality	AD + CA FG IV		AST/SC-AST + CA FGI/CA FGII/CA FGIII		TOTAL	
	Number	% of Total Staff members in AD and FG IV categories	Number	% of Total Staff members in AST SC/AST and FG I, II and III categories	Number	% of total staff
LV	3	5.5%			3	2.8%
NL	1	1.8%			1	0.9%
PL	2	3.6%			2	1.9%
RO	1	1.8%	1	1.9%	2	1.9%
SE			1	1.9%	1	0.9%
SK	1	1.8%			1	0.9%
TOTAL	55		52		107	

Evolution over 5 years of the most represented nationality in the Agency

Most represented nationality	N-5 (2020)		N-1 (2024)	
	Number	%	Number	%
EL	49	45.7%	55	51.4%

Annex V: Human and financial resources by activity

Activity Based Budget (ABB) per activity - 2024

Currency: euros

ABB 2024													
Activity Name	Dept	Direct budget cost per activity		FTE cost per activity							Overhead cost per activity	Total budget per activity	
		Direct final budget per activity (1)	% of Total Oper B	Direct FTEs (a)	% of FTEs (key)	Direct FTEs salary cost (2)	Indirect FTEs (b)	Indirect FTEs salary cost (3)	Total FTEs (c)=(a)+(b)	Total FTE salary cost (4)=(2)+(3)	Overheads (5)	Total cost (6)=(1)+(4)+(5)	% per activity
Shaping VET & qualifications	DVQ	1,652,830	36%	22.56	32%	2,545,590	12.96	1,461,917	35.52	4,007,507	1,049,215	6,709,552	33%
Valuing VET & skills	DVS-LE	1,645,879	36%	15.50	22%	1,748,965	8.90	1,004,420	24.40	2,753,385	720,870	5,120,134	25%
Informing VET & skills policies	DVS-SL	691,832	15%	15.58	22%	1,757,992	8.95	1,009,604	24.53	2,767,596	724,591	4,184,019	20%
Communication	DCM	561,981	12%	17.16	24%	1,936,274	9.85	1,111,990	27.01	3,048,263	798,073	4,408,317	22%
Totals		4,552,522	100%	70.80	100%	7,988,821	40.66	4,587,930	111.46	12,576,751	3,292,749	20,422,022	100%

SPD 2024-26			
Annex II Resource allocation 2024			
Total FTEs	% of total FTEs (key)	Total Budget (initial)	% per activity
42.90	36%	6,468,697	32%
30.60	26%	5,862,257	29%
29.90	25%	5,862,257	29%
16.60	14%	2,021,468	10%
120.00	100%	20,214,679	100%

Core activities
70.80 FTE,
or 63.5%

(55.8% in 2021)

Resources & support
activities
40.66 FTE, or
36.5%

(1): Budget allocated to Core operational activities at year end

(a): FTEs allocated to Core operational activities (organigramme, ratio reporting to different Depts, & months in service accounted for)

(2): Direct FTEs (a) multiplied by average staff salary cost

(b): FTEs of DRS & DIR redistributed to Core operational activities according to '% of FTEs (key)'

(3): Indirect FTEs (b) multiplied by average staff salary cost

(c): Total FTEs, direct (a) plus indirect (b) allocated to activities

(4): Salary cost of total FTEs (c) per activity

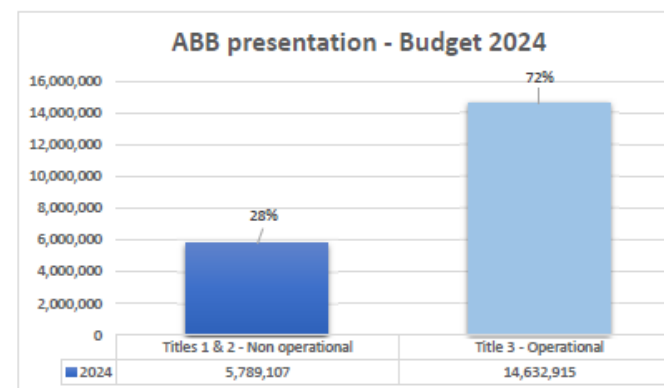
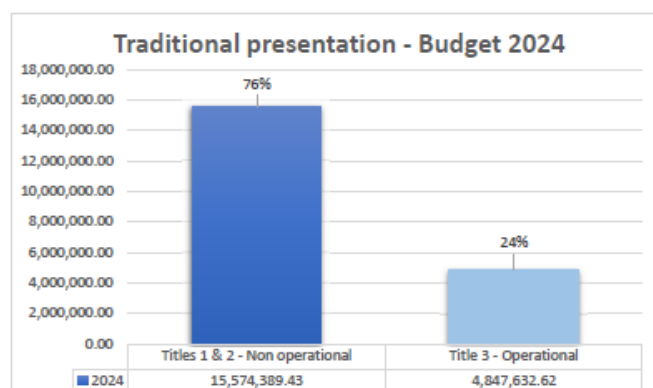
(5): Overhead costs for distribution. Budget allocated to Resources and Support activities = T1 (excl salaries) + T2 (Infrastructure & Operating costs) + Chapter 30 (MB meetings and transversal activities)

(6): Total budget allocated per activity: Direct final budget (1) + Total FTE cost (4) + Overhead cost (5)

Allocation of Full Time Equivalents (FTE) to core activities increased from 55.8% in 2021 to 63.5% in 2024.

In 2024, Cedefop committed 20.4 million EUR. Based on the traditional budget presentation, overhead costs, reported in Titles 1 (Staff costs) and 2 (Infrastructure and operating costs), represent 15.6 million EUR, or 76 % of the Budget, while Title 3 (Operational expenditure) represents 4.8 million EUR or 24% of the Budget.

The Activity Based Budget (ABB) presentation, however, shows that 72% of the Budget of the Agency was invested in Operational projects, while overheads represent 28% only.



Annex VI: Environmental management

1. Context of the Agency and its environmental management strategy

As part of its core business, Cedefop support the European Green Deal and the implementation of the policy objectives linked to the green transition. To do so, the Agency maps developments in the area of 'Skills for green jobs'. This includes the development of scenario analysis and foresight exercises on the impact of the greening of the economy and relevant policy on the labour market, as well as targeted analysis in specific sectors and/or occupations.

Working at the interface of VET and the labour market, Cedefop's work contributes directly to the UN's Sustainable Developments Goals 4 (quality education) and 8 (decent work and economic growth).

Moreover, Cedefop has pledged to become climate neutral by 2030 and devised a climate neutrality strategy and roadmap towards 2030.

2. Overview of the Agency's environmental management system

The Agency is committed to prevent pollution, comply with all environmental legislation and EU directives relating to environmental aspects, and continuously improve its environmental performance.

To drive and monitor its environmental performance, Cedefop decided to implement an environmental management system complying with the requirements of Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) Regulation. Cedefop's environmental management system focuses on:

- reducing carbon emissions to air
- reducing energy, fossil fuel and water consumption
- encouraging responsible use of resources
- reducing the amount of waste generated
- promoting sustainable, local food and reducing food waste
- greening events
- promoting sustainable behaviours among employees and visitors
- applying green procurement procedures
- supporting biodiversity protection

Environmental aspects, indicators and targets

Under EMAS, Cedefop monitors the following environmental aspects:

- Use of water
- Energy consumption - consumption of electricity.
- Emissions to air
- Waste generation
- Use of resources
- Biodiversity

Detailed information on the Agency's environmental performance, indicators and targets can be found in Cedefop's annual EMAS environmental statement.

Actions to improve and communicate environmental performance

Cedefop's EMAS Environmental Action plan 2024-2026 and Climate neutrality roadmap set out objectives, actions and targets to be implemented during this period. These include:

- Monitoring emissions in all scopes
- Monitoring water use for building and irrigation purposes
- Further insulation of the building
- Guidance and internal policies for staff to reduce the carbon footprint of travels
- Guidance and internal policies for greening events
- Promoting carpooling for staff commuting
- Implementing food waste reduction measures
- Implementing sustainable procurement policy and procedures
- Extending IT equipment lifespan from 5 to 6 years

Detailed action plans to improve and communicate the agency's environmental performance are included in Cedefop's annual EMAS environmental statement and climate neutrality strategy and roadmap.

Annex VII: Sustainability Reporting

Since 2024, Cedefop publishes its [sustainability report](#) following the Global Reporting Initiative standard and based on a structure agreed at EUAN level. It comprises social, economic and environmental topics which are material for the Agency. Cedefop's sustainability reporting is appended and linked to the Consolidated Annual Activity Report.

Annex VIII: Draft/Final Annual Accounts

Annual accounts are published on Cedefop web portal at the following URL:

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/finance-and-budget/annual-accounts>