Annex I

Specifications for the 2020 ReferNet work plan

(Belgium, Czechia, Greece, Ireland and the Netherlands)

REFERNET WORK PLAN 2020

ReferNet's annual work plan for 2020 ([1]) will be the object of a specific grant agreement based on the framework partnership agreement concluded between Cedefop and the partner.

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

Deliverable type 1:	**Reporting on VET and VET-related policy**
Deliverable type 2:	**Reporting on national VET systems**
Deliverable type 3:	**Ad-hoc thematic and other support**
Deliverable type 4:	**Visibility actions**

([1]) Start date of the annual work plan: 13 March 2020 – end date: December 2020.

1. POLICY BACKGROUND

In spite of uncertainties related to global factors, the latest economic indicators continue to point to an ongoing expansion of the European economy. Unemployment has declined to the levels before the 2008 economic crisis and employment has increased substantially suggesting that the 2020 target of 75 % ([2]) may be reachable. However, the employment rate of low-skilled workers is still below pre-crisis levels. Despite recent progress, tackling youth and long-term unemployment remains high on the policy agenda. Disparities persist, growth varies across countries and the refugee crisis continues to pose considerable challenges. The exceptionally extended period of crisis has left long-lasting consequences on many European economies, making it essential to strengthen Europe's resilience.

The European Commission's annual growth survey 2019 stresses that investments raising innovation and productivity are crucial to ensure future growth prospects and job creation and environmental sustainability. It stresses in particular, the need to invest in education and training to increase both productivity and employment. 'Education, training and lifelong learning' is the first of 20 key principles of the European pillar of social rights proclaimed by the Council of the EU, the European Parliament and the European Commission in 2017: *Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market* ([3]).

Vocational education and training (VET) in particular, plays a crucial role for creating the necessary conditions for employment, innovation and growth and its response to the world of employment can help put more learners into jobs. VET's excellence and inclusion goals remain important building blocks in the EU policy agenda and the joint work to progress towards the Europe 2020 goals. VET will need to help ensure that innovative and skilled jobs of good quality can actually lead to higher productivity and growth.

The European Commission's *New Skills Agenda* launched in 2016 ([4]) works 'towards a common vision about the strategic importance of skills for sustaining jobs, growth and competitiveness'. It stresses that all members of the workforce, of all skills levels, need to be continuously updating their skills. It advocates adequate pathways for Europe's over 60 million adults with a low level of education to improve their employability and aims to ensure all young people and adults have the strong key competence ([5]) base needed in the 21st century across all sectors and occupations. To embrace the digital transformation skills, the European Commission has invited Member States to develop national skills strategies and monitors progress ([6]).

([2]) European Commission (2010), A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF

([3]) Interinstitutional Proclamation on the European pillar of social rights http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13129-2017-INIT/en/pdf

([4]) Council of the European Union (2016). Council resolution on a new skills agenda for an inclusive and competitive Europe. *Official Journal of the European Union* C 467, 15.12.16, pp. 1-2 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016G1215(01)&from=EN

([5]) The Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning is part of the *New skills agenda* *https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2018.189.01.0001.01.ENG*

([6]) This initiative is part of the *New skills agenda*, see *Digital skills and jobs coalition* https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-skills-jobs-coalition

VET plays a central role in the *Skills agenda*. While many European countries have strong initial VET systems that have a high standing among citizens and in the labour market, in still too many others initial vocational education and training (IVET) has a poor reputation and is considered a second choice for young people. The European Vocational Skills Weeks, organised by the European Commission since 2016, are considered a valuable contribution to raise VET's image. In addition, the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships ([7]) aims to improve their attractiveness and reputation with positive impact on the image of initial VET.

Moreover, the need for serious efforts from government and social partners to develop every workplace as a place of continuous learning is increasingly emphasised. Workers and those hit hard by the crisis need stronger support through a mix of learning and activation policies, which include customised VET provisions and work-based learning. This also implies (re-)organising work so as to promote opportunities for learning as well as using tools and methods to ensure valuing, recognition and transferability of their skills and competences. The European tools for transparency and recognition of qualifications provide a systematic infrastructure that supports permeability between VET and other forms of education and training enabling individualised and flexible learning pathways. Building on these tools, the Council recommended Member States to 'put in place, by 2025, the steps necessary to make substantial progress towards automatic mutual recognition for the purpose of further learning' of upper secondary education and training qualifications giving access to higher education and outcomes from up to one-year learning periods abroad and to achieve automatic mutual recognition of qualifications at the same level and mobility outcomes in higher education ([8]).

How to modernise and strengthen VET at all qualifications levels in different national contexts, remains a key challenge. The Bruges Communiqué has set the vision for EU VET policy agenda up to 2020 reinforcing European cooperation in VET on five streamlined priorities agreed in the 2015 Riga conclusions. Reaching at the end of this period the need to rethink and broaden the concept of VET beyond 2020 is increasingly important. To guide future policy in VET the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) has set a vision on excellent, inclusive and lifelong VET for 2030 and proposals for future cooperation ([9]). This vision promotes VET at all levels, including at higher levels, which integrates initial and continuing training and caters for young and adult learners. The goal is to: offer attractive, responsive, innovative, diversified and quality-assured VET accessible for all that is valued; help everyone develop their full potential in a lifelong learning continuum by acquiring the skills, competences and qualifications that ensure they are employable, can adapt to change, grow personally and become active citizens who adhere to European values.

Reliable evidence, thorough analysis and policy learning opportunities support European cooperation in VET. The governance of Europe's 2020 strategy and the Bruges

---

([7]) Council of the EU (2018), Recommendation of the Council of 15 March 2018 on a European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships. *Official Journal of the European Union* C153, 2.5.2018, pp. 1-6 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=EN

([8]) Council of the European Union (2018). .Recommendation of the Council of 26 November 2018 on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/eycs/2018/11/26-27/

([9]) Opinion on the Future of Vocational Education and Training Post-2020 by the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (2018) https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1146&newsId=9263& furtherNews=yes

Communiqué required regular monitoring of VET progress. Cedefop has been entrusted with this task. Cedefop's reports ([10]) – to which ReferNet contributed substantially – show how the objectives of European cooperation in VET have been implemented and discuss potential areas to focus on in the future. Cedefop's findings informed discussions on the post-2020 VET priorities and the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training on the future of VET. The above policy processes not only require regular monitoring and thematic stock-taking but increasingly also systematic country-specific information and analysis. Such analysis informs the Commission's work on the European semester ([11]), several policy documents (e.g. the Commission's Education and training monitor) and provides input to high-level policy relevant meetings of senior stakeholders such as Directors General (DGVT), the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) and the European Commission working groups.

2. PURPOSE OF THE 2020 ACTION

VET varies considerably between Member States. Analysis and understanding of policy developments and achievements within and across countries requires thorough information on how VET and labour market work. This requires timely and accurate information on VET's role, purpose, outcomes, governance and structure. Considered in its specific socio-economic and labour market context and tradition, this information helps understand countries' starting points and the progress they have made.

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

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

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

National ReferNet partners' online presence, through national ReferNet websites and a professional presence on social media, can help improving visibility and dissemination. ReferNet websites also support exchanges of information with Cedefop and other national ReferNet websites.

Therefore, Cedefop will require national ReferNet partners to:

([10]) These reports are available at http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/reporting-european-training-policy

([11]) European Commission (2014), European semester: a new architecture for the new EU economic governance – Q&A http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/14

(a) report on VET policy and the way VET-related objectives of Europe's 2020 and post-2020 strategy and other European VET and related policy priorities are being addressed in their countries;

(b) provide up-to-date information on VET systems and the way VET is developing in their country;

(c) deliver thematic and other support to complement the information on VET systems and/or address topical information needs; and

(d) carry out visibility activities, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet site.

3. DELIVERABLES

Deliverable type 1: Reporting on VET and VET-related policy	
Deliverable 1a	VET policy reporting
Deliverable 1b	National news on VET
Deliverable type 2: Reporting on national VET systems	
Deliverable 2a	*Spotlight on VET – 2020 Compilation*
Deliverable 2b	*VET in [Presidency country] – Short description* (hard-copy publication based on the VET in Europe country report)
Deliverable 2c	*Spotlight on VET in [Presidency country]*
Deliverable type 3: Ad-hoc thematic and other support	
Deliverable 3a	Article on the European Skills Index [Thematic perspective series]
Deliverable 3b	Ad hoc thematic support – Article or other request
Deliverable 3c	Ad hoc thematic support – Article or other request
Deliverable type 4: Visibility actions	
Deliverable 4a	Visibility actions including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website, social media activities and participation in events

All deliverables type 1-3 shall be checked and validated by the National Representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

All deliverables shall be provided in English. They shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at EU level before submission.

Peer review among ReferNet partners is strongly encouraged and, when indicated in the Work plan, shall be mandatory for certain deliverables.

Deliverable type 1: Reporting on VET and VET-related policy

Deliverable 1a VET policy reporting

Background/Aim

In 2020, ReferNet will be asked to provide updated information on progress towards the five medium-term deliverables (MTDs) set out in the Riga Conclusions. ReferNet will provide factual data on national policy measures and actions taken in the period March 2019 to February 2020.

This input will inform country fiches and overviews of trends by deliverable and/or focus areas. Findings will be used to inform the European Commission Education and Training Monitor, discussions of Directors General (DGVT) and the Advisory Committee for VET (ACVT) at their biennial meetings. Where relevant, they will also be used for other Cedefop work.

Methods

Cedefop will provide ReferNet partners with the tool(s) and guidelines to

- report on all five Riga MTDs, and
- provide more elaborate information on MTDs and focus areas that their countries are prioritising.

Building on the experience gained from the last four information collection rounds since 2016, Cedefop's analysis of the inputs received and the ReferNet partners suggestions during the 2019 partnership forums the approach will be adjusted as necessary.

To understand VET policy developments requires collecting data in a structured way as well as information in response to 'open' questions that allow explaining comprehensive strategies which address more than one deliverable.

These key points are to ensure that the information provided clearly indicates

- some background information and the main objectives of the policy action;
- the type and stage of development of the policy action;
- key stakeholders involved;
- in what way the new measure changes arrangements (previously) in place;
- results that have been identified.

Reporting should draw on a wide range of sources, including policy papers, legislation, evaluation reports, research and policy analysis as well as case studies. This also requires broad cooperation with various national stakeholders, to mobilise their expertise to prepare and validate the responses. Customised Skype and web conferences may also be organised between Cedefop and ReferNet partners to get a better understanding of latest national developments in a variety of VET policy areas.

Information shall be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Information shall be provided in English. It shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at the EU level before submission.

Cedefop may also seek feedback on its own analysis of progress at country level and ask ReferNet as well as DGVT/ACVT to validate the information.

Steps/Deadlines

The process will be deployed from January 2020 on with a deadline to deliver the requested information by early April 2020. These timing arrangements are needed to enable discussion on initial findings with ACVTs and DGVTs and to support the Commission's work related to VET.

Cedefop will provide assistance and feedback throughout the process and ask for clarification/complementary information when analysing the input during the period April to June.

Deliverable 1b National news on VET

ReferNet partners provide short news items to inform non-national readers on recent VET and VET-related developments in their countries. These include issues that are clearly linked to VET, e.g. labour market developments influencing VET provision, employment policies linked to training, guidance and counselling, validation.

News items should focus on topics that relate to the European VET policy agenda, particularly the priorities of European cooperation in VET, the European skills agenda, EU Presidency priorities as well as country-specific recommendations in relevant areas. Cedefop will provide ReferNet with guiding themes.

National news on VET will be disseminated via Cedefop's newsletter and website and/or magazine. They will also inform other Cedefop work where relevant, e.g. country fiches/chapters, thematic studies, discussions at DGVT and ACVT meetings or other events; they may also inspire proposals for country examples to be presented at EU-level events.

Methods

ReferNet partners submit news items electronically, as Word documents. These should not exceed 500 words and consider the characteristics of effective online content and style. Complementary information may be added as attachment or through links to related websites. Visual material (graphs, logos, photos, etc.) is welcome, provided it is in editable format and does not violate copyright.

It is ReferNet's responsibility to ensure that the information presented is original, recent, relevant, reliable and complete. Information shall be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

News items shall be provided in English. They shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at the EU level before submission.

Cedefop reserves the right to publish the news items on Cedefop website or not based on a set of basic criteria agreed with ReferNet and described in the relevant Guidelines/Circular. News items that do not comply with the basic criteria, will not be accepted by Cedefop and can be corrected and resubmitted once.

Cedefop may request clarification and/or further information or revision. Cedefop may also seek feedback after editing or on information it has prepared based on news items.

Steps/Deadlines

ReferNet partners should submit news items as soon as national/regional developments in VET policies or systems take place and not less than three news items per year. Guidelines will be provided by Cedefop in February.

Deadlines: April, June and October 2020

Deliverable type 2: Reporting on national VET systems

Understanding national VET systems, their characteristics, developments and priorities is a key element at different levels of the VET coordination and development process; it is a prerequisite for comparative work and analysis. Short descriptions of national VET systems based on ReferNet input are a comprehensive information source also used for or referred to in policy documents and reports by EU and international institutions as Cedefop's performance measurement system demonstrates. In addition, Spotlights on VET in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, summarise key features of the national systems.

In 2020, ReferNet partners will be asked to:

- update the content of ***Spotlight on VET – 2018 compilation***,
- (for Germany and Portugal only) prepare, in cooperation with Cedefop,
  - ***VET in [Presidency country] − Short description***, and
  - ***Spotlight on VET***.

Close cooperation will be needed between Cedefop and ReferNet partners to discuss and finalise type 2 deliverables. Site visits in the countries may be organised between Cedefop representatives and national VET stakeholders to get an in-depth understanding of latest national developments and VET system characteristics. Customised Skype and web conferences may also be organised on request from either sides, to discuss and clarify issues for the finalisation of the deliverables.

Deliverable 2a *Spotlight on VET – 2020 Compilation*

Spotlight on VET summarises key features ([12]) of the national VET systems. They include a chart which depicts how VET relates to other education and training sectors. The main aim of *Spotlight* is to present a country's VET system in a 'nutshell', i.e. within a few pages and in clear and simple language. It addresses readers who need a brief, easy-to-read introduction to VET in a specific country, and the broader public.

Ensuring that all Spotlights are up-to-date and bringing them together would add visibility to this product. In 2020, Cedefop therefore intends to produce a booklet similar to the 2018 Compilation which has proved a valuable reference point. It includes the systems information and charts for all countries.

Methods

Updating the section 'VET in [country X]' and system chart of the 2018 Compilation Spotlight. In case the chart used in the 2019 VET in Europe on-line presentation tool is the most recent version, this one will be the starting point.

ReferNet national partners shall submit their Spotlights electronically, in Word format and using 'track changes'. Cedefop will make the most recent versions of Spotlights available in Word format together with the guidelines.

([12]) Key features include accession channels and progression routes for different VET programmes types, types of qualifications and levels they lead to, duration, delivery modes, work-based learning ratio etc.

As in the past, the charts should be in line with the unified approach developed by Cedefop in cooperation with ReferNet.

Updated information shall be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Spotlights shall be provided in English. They shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at EU level before submission.

Based on lessons learnt from previous exercises, Cedefop will update the Spotlight guidelines that refer to the system's description and chart.

Cedefop will provide feedback to ReferNet partners. Both parties will cooperate closely to ensure the information presented is concise and clear.

Steps/Deadlines

Guidelines will be made available in May 2020.

The planned publication requires one submission date for all countries (apart from Germany, see below): by 11 September 2020.

Deliverable 2b ***VET in [Presidency country] − Short description*** **(hard-copy publication based on *VET in [country X]*)**

Background/Aim

To raise VET visibility in the countries holding the EU Presidency, Cedefop and ReferNet partners cooperate to publish hard copies based on their updated most recent VET in Europe reports. The reports will be published in English and, if Cedefop and the partner wish so, in the official language(s) of the Presidency.

As this publication should be available for the Presidency, it is prepared during the preceding semester. In 2020, work will focus on:

1. VET in Germany, in the first semester
2. VET in Portugal, in the second semester

These hard-copy publications will be distributed together with Spotlights (see Deliverable 2c) during Presidency conferences and events, for instance meetings of Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVT).

Methods

Cedefop and ReferNet partners of the future Presidency country will discuss the structure of the Short Description. ReferNet will prepare updated information based on the most recent VET in Europe report and the online VET in Europe presentation tool to present the information within around 50 pages. ReferNet will prepare updated information for the report in consultation with Cedefop.

Cedefop will review and edit the document, add other parts (foreword, abstract) and be in charge of the publication process. Cedefop may organise translation of the hard-copy publication into the official language of the Presidency country. Printing will be done on demand.

Preparing the Short Description entails close cooperation between the ReferNet partner and Cedefop. This may include joint working sessions at the ReferNet partner's seat or at Cedefop.

Making the Short Description an informative and attractive publication for international stakeholders will improve the visibility of the country's VET system and inform the Presidency conferences and events.

Steps/Deadlines

Detailed work plan and submission date to be agreed bilaterally with Cedefop experts.

Deliverable 2c ***Spotlight on VET in [Presidency country]***

Background/Aim

Spotlight on VET summarises key features, challenges and developments within the national VET systems. They include a chart which depicts how VET relates to other education and training sectors. The main aim of *Spotlight on VET* is to present a country's VET system in a 'nutshell', i.e. within a few pages and in clear and simple language. It addresses readers who need a brief, easy-to-read introduction to VET in a specific country, and the broader public.

In 2020, Cedefop will publish *Spotlight on VET* in presidency countries only: Germany and Portugal. They will be published in hard copy and disseminated during Presidency events.

Methods

The work will consist of updating the *Spotlight* of 2016 and the system chart in the VET in Europe online presentation tool.

The ReferNet national partner will ensure that *Spotlight* highlights key features, developments, challenges and policy responses of the national VET system. The partner will work in close cooperation with Cedefop and shall submit *Spotlight* electronically, in Word format and using 'track changes'.

Updated information should be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Cedefop will provide feedback to the ReferNet partner to ensure that information is presented in a concise and clear manner.

Cedefop will take care of the publication process for the hard-copy versions. Cedefop may organise the translation of the hard-copy publication into the official language(s) of the Presidency country. Printing will be done on demand.

Steps/Deadlines

Detailed work plan and submission date should be agreed with the Cedefop expert in charge. The publication needs to be prepared in the preceding semester and should be ready for the start of the Presidency.

Deliverable type 3: Ad-hoc thematic and other support

Deliverable 3a Article on the European Skills Index [Thematic perspective series]

Background

Skill systems are crucial for countries' competitiveness and growth, as well as for individuals' development and wellbeing. Important EU initiatives, such as the European Pillar of Social Rights and the New Skills Agenda, set out the improvement of skill systems as a key priority. But to date, no single instrument existed for assessing and comparing how well EU skills systems perform. To fill this gap, Cedefop has developed the European Skills Index (previously known as Making Skills Work Index), a composite indicator aiming at measuring, and monitoring through time, the effectiveness of Member States' skills systems. Following five years of development and a successful independent statistical audit by the Joint Research Centre, the European Skills Index (ESI) has been launched at the end of 2018!

Traditionally, skills systems are thought of as the means of delivering skills. However, the role of a skills system is also to ensure a smooth transition from education to work and an appropriate skills match at the workplace. For instance, it is not only important to consider questions such as 'How many graduates did a system produce?' but also 'How fast do graduates find a job?' and 'Do the skills obtained match those required at work?' At the same time, it is important to know how better other countries perform so as to build knowledge stemming from best practices available. The European Skills Index has been built so as to, for the first time, provide insights to these questions.

The European Skills Index is built on three pillars, each of which captures a different component of a skills system: *skills development*, *skills activation* and *skills matching*. These pillars are used to organise and aggregate 15 individual indicators into a single summary measure. The indicators chosen are policy-relevant and linked to policy issues. Within the ESI framework, a higher performance can primarily be achieved through accomplishing a well-balanced skills system. In other words, there is a need to achieve a degree of balance across development, activation and matching. Concentrating on one area over another may improve certain aspects but may penalise the overall performance of a skills system.

Purpose

The ESI has been designed as a tool for capturing member states skills system performance. The ESI itself is not constructed to provide the answers. It is meant to act as a starting point for understanding the complexity of skills systems. Delving into such complexity is necessary in the quest for answers. Therefore, the purpose of this exercise is to utilise country knowledge in helping to understand what lies beneath ESI country scores and possibly recommend policies that would be helpful in improving a country's skills system (i.e. policies influencing country scores in specific indicators).

Methods

ReferNet members will be sent general guidelines on how to read ESI scores, along with a country fiche presenting the results for their own country. Experts will use their deep

knowledge of their country to contextualise the results and provide commentary along with recommendations on how their country's skills systems may improve and in which areas the focus should be on.

ReferNet will conduct the activity in accordance with guidelines provided by Cedefop. Whenever possible, Cedefop will involve ReferNet in defining them.

Information shall be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Information shall be provided in English. It shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at the EU level before submission.

Steps/Deadlines

Cedefop plans to share guidelines and structure of the article in February 2020.

Deadline for submission of the articles will be May 2020.

Deliverable 3b **Ad-hoc thematic support**
Article or other request

To respond to topical information needs, this activity aims to address VET-specific issues of European relevance nationally or at EU level. The activity may not be the same for all partners. Requests will be driven by Cedefop's work on VET and related issues in the countries for the collection, analysis or presentation of information either in hard copy or electronic format.

Background/Aim

The activity could take the form of ([13]):

- articles,
- verification of information,
- surveys,
- organising meetings,
- mobilising stakeholders, or
- any other format having comparative or analytical aims. The activity will tackle a specific issue selected for its actuality and European policy relevance, for instance the Presidencies' semester themes to support the Copenhagen process or ad-hoc requests on thematic information on issues that are high on the EU agenda. It may also focus on in-depth reviews involving one or more countries.

This activity is planned to feed into:

- Cedefop's contribution to the discussions of the Directors General for VET and the Advisory Committee for VET,

([13]) All activities will imply approximately the same workload.

- other policy forums, as needed,

- Cedefop's own research work and its contribution to the work of the European Commission and its thematic working groups or similar activities.

Methods

ReferNet will conduct the activity in accordance with guidelines provided by Cedefop. Whenever possible, Cedefop will involve ReferNet in defining them. However, type and degree of involvement will depend on the given parameters.

In case the activity involves delivering an article or a survey, information should be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivering it to Cedefop.

All information shall be provided in English. It shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at EU level before submission

Steps/deadlines

ReferNet will be informed about the theme and the format of the activity as soon as they have been defined.

Deliverable 3c **Ad-hoc thematic support**
Article or other request

To respond to topical information needs, this activity aims to address VET-specific issues of European relevance nationally or at EU level. The activity may not be the same for all partners. Requests will be driven by Cedefop's work on VET and related issues in the countries for the collection, analysis or presentation of information either in hard copy or electronic format.

Background/Aim

The activity could take the form of ([14]):

- articles,
- verification of information
- surveys,
- organising meetings,
- mobilising stakeholders, or
- any other format having comparative or analytical aims. The activity will tackle a specific issue selected for its actuality and European policy relevance, for instance the Presidencies' semester themes to support the Copenhagen process or ad-hoc requests on thematic information on issues that are high on the EU agenda. It may also focus on in-depth reviews involving one or more countries.

This activity is planned to feed into:

([14]) All activities will imply approximately the same workload.

- Cedefop's contribution to the discussions of the Directors General for VET and the Advisory Committee for VET,
- other policy forums, as needed,
- Cedefop's own research work and its contribution to the work of the European Commission and its thematic working groups or similar activities.

Methods

ReferNet will conduct the activity in accordance with guidelines provided by Cedefop. Whenever possible, Cedefop will involve ReferNet in defining them. However, type and degree of involvement will depend on the given parameters.

In case the activity involves delivering an article or a survey, information should be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivering it to Cedefop.

All information shall be provided in English. It shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at EU level before submission

Steps/deadlines

ReferNet will be informed about the theme and the format of the activity as soon as they have been defined.

Deliverable type 4: Visibility actions

Deliverable 4a Visibility actions, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website, social media activities and participation in events

Background/Aim

Partners will act as multipliers and dissemination channels for VET-related information and the cooperation between Cedefop and ReferNet at the national level, targeting various audiences.

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

The visibility strategy, currently based on recommendations developed in 2012 by the ReferNet working group on visibility and agreed by Cedefop and ReferNet partners, also includes recommendations for ReferNet national websites following the ReferNet workshop on visibility (February 2017). New strategic aspects will also be explored among ReferNet partners as a follow-up of the recommendations of the ex-post evaluation of the ReferNet FPA 2012-2015.

National ReferNet partners will be ready to adapt visibility and dissemination activities to Cedefop's strategy and annual objectives, and include in their annual work plans other deliverables, such as translations of Cedefop products into national language, organisation of meetings with VET stakeholders on Cedefop activities, cooperation with other European or global networks, etc to raise the visibility of Cedefop, its products and more generally VET issues at national level. Translations into national languages are strongly encouraged as an efficient dissemination and visibility tool.

Methods

A **national ReferNet website** in the national language plus English, if the national ReferNet partner wishes to do so, will be regularly maintained and updated to raise visibility of VET and Cedefop's activities in the member states. The national ReferNet website can be autonomously hosted on its own domain or a dedicated section in the ReferNet national partner's website. It is considered an essential tool allowing for a broad national audience to become aware of and use Cedefop publications through the creation of links to Cedefop webportal.

In 2017, Cedefop has provided technical SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) audit reports with recommendations for national websites on search visibility, domain authority, keyword rank, desktop and mobile page speed, mobile usability and external links to optimise their visibility online. Partners are expected to implement the recommendations gradually. Reporting of the web statistics will allow Cedefop and the partners to evaluate the impact of the various efforts.

National ReferNet websites can be accessed from
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/refernet/3314.aspx

To reach a wider audience at the national level, ReferNet partners are encouraged to translate and disseminate Cedefop publications in their national language(s). Cedefop may also ask partners to carry out the **language adaptation** of a specific Cedefop publication or audiovisual content.

It is also recommended to use the full potential of other types of online presence, for example professional participation in **social media**, tagging Cedefop events, blogging online, discussions in VET forums, to reach a wider audience. National ReferNet social media accounts are encouraged to follow/like Cedefop's social media accounts, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and retweet/share/view Cedefop's posts to enhance visibility, including by translating them in the national language. ReferNet partners should use Hashtag #refernet to connect with users and engage conversations with partners. Cross-promotion of all partners' activities will also be encouraged.

Visibility actions will also include the dissemination and/or production of papers, flyers, newsletters, web banners, videos, etc. and the organisation of – and participation in – **public events** involving relevant stakeholders.

Steps/Deadlines

Continuous activity.

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

A survey on all visibility actions carried out at the national level, including details on the audience targeted, the channels used, possibly the outcomes of the action, will be filled in by the ReferNet partner at the end of the 2020 action.

BUDGET AVAILABLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFERNET 2020 WORK PLAN

The total available budget for ReferNet work plan 2020 in all eligible countries ([15]) is approximately EUR 980.000.

The total available budget for ReferNet work plan 2020 is distributed as follows ([16]):

Country groups	Maximum grant amount
Country group 1: Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia and Iceland	**EUR 23 615**
Country group 2: Austria, Belgium*, Bulgaria, Czechia*, Denmark, Finland, Greece*, Hungary, Ireland*, Netherlands*, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and Norway	**EUR 33 625** ***EUR 33 258**
Country group 3: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom	**EUR 43 620**

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

([15]) EU-28, Iceland and Norway

([16]) The allocated amount may not under any circumstances exceed the amounts indicated in the table.

2017 DRAFT TIMETABLE

Start date of the annual work plan: 13 March 2020

End date of the annual work plan: December 2020

Duration of the annual work plan: 10 months

Activity	**Deadline/Frequency**
1. Reporting on VET and VET-related policy	
1a. VET policy reporting	Early April 2020
1b. National news on VET	April, June and October, or more frequently on own initiative
2. Reporting on VET systems	
2a. *Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation*	11 September 2020
2b. *VET in [Presidency country]* (hard-copy publication based on the VET in Europe country report)	To be agreed with Cedefop experts (Germany and Portugal)
2c. *Spotlight on VET* in [Presidency country]	To be agreed with Cedefop experts (Germany and Portugal)
3. Ad-hoc thematic and other support	
3a. Article on the European Skills Index	May 2020
3b. Ad hoc thematic support – Article or other request	Theme still open
3c. Ad hoc thematic support – Article or other request	Theme still open
4. Visibility actions	
4a. Visibility actions, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website, social media activities and participation in events	Continuous