

**Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG
EMPLOYMENT: EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF and EU-OSHA**

Annex 3. Cedefop evaluation report

Request for services in the framework of the multiple framework contracts for the provision of services related to evaluation, evaluative studies, analysis and research work, including support for impact assessment activities (VC/2013/0082)



2 March 2018

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Framework contract for the provision of services related to evaluation, evaluative studies, analysis and research work, including support for impact assessment activities (VC/2013/0082)

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Final Report, 2 March 2018

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List of Abbreviations

CEA	Cost-effectiveness analysis
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CoR	Committee of Regions
DG COMM	Directorate-General for Communication
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DG EAC	Directorate General for Education and Culture
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG ESTAT	Statistical office of the European Union
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG SANTE	Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EaSI	European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation
EC	European Commission
ECS	European Company Survey
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EQ	Evaluation Question
EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
EWCS	European Working Conditions Survey
ERM	European Restructuring Monitor
FRA	European Agency for Fundamental Rights
HR	Human resources
IASs	Internal Audit Services
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	The International Labour Organization
ISG	Interservice Steering Group
JRC	Joint Research Centre
MS	Member State
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OPC	Online public consultation
PPMI	Public Policy and Management Institute
QMS	Quality Management System
TIC	Testing, Inspection and Certification
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET	Vocational education and training

INTRODUCTION

In this agency-specific draft final report of Cedefop, we present insights on the evaluation questions of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, EU added value, and the implementation of recommendations from recent external evaluations and audits. These insights are based on the evidence collected through the interview programme, surveys (of stakeholders, including members of Governing Board and Agency’s staff), desk research, case studies and the open public consultation (OPC); each data collection method is presented below. We provide evidence for each of the evaluation questions separately, outlining the main trends observed in the data based on our judgement criteria. We also present points for improvement for each of the evaluation questions. Drawing on our analysis, we also provide conclusions at the end of the report.

Interviews

We have completed six high level and 21 in-depth interviews, including stakeholders of the agency and its staff. The table below presents the number of interviewees according to the type of stakeholders.

Table 1. Interviews completed

	Type	Number
High-level	European Commission	2
High-level	Bureau (social partners and government representatives)	3
High-level	Staff of the Agency	1
In-depth	European Commission	2
In-depth	Bureau (social partners and government representatives)	3
In-depth	Governing Board (social partners and government representatives)	9
In-depth	Staff of the Agency	7

Source: Compiled by authors

Surveys

We have completed the surveys of Cedefop’s stakeholders (including Governing Board members), and of the Agency’s staff. The invitations to the Governing Board survey were sent out by PPMI, using the SurveyGizmo tool. We also sent out several reminders in order to increase the response rate. The link to the stakeholder survey was disseminated by the Agency itself to its internal stakeholder database. This method of delivery was selected due to Cedefop’s personal data protection policy, which does not allow the Agency to disclose the data of its contact database to third parties. We coordinated the process of sending out reminders with the Agency, to boost the response rate of the survey. The staff survey was managed by Ecorys, who disseminated the survey using their tool CheckMarket and also sent out reminders to ensure a

high response rate. In total, 42 responses were received from the Governing Board Members, 312 responses from the stakeholders' survey¹ and 46 from the staff survey (see table below).

Table 2. Responses to the surveys

Survey	Number of responses received (of them complete)
Stakeholders	312 (160 complete)
Governing Board	42 (38 complete)
Staff	46

Source: Compiled by authors

The table below provides details about the types of stakeholders who responded to the stakeholder survey.

Table 3. Respondents to the stakeholder survey by type

	Percent	Count
European Commission	7.5%	17
Council of the European Union	0.4%	1
European Parliament	0.4%	1
Decentralised EU agency	6.1%	14
Executive EU agency	2.2%	5
Another EU institution (CoR, EESC, etc.)	2.6%	6
International non-EU organisation (OECD, ILO, UNESCO, etc.)	0.4%	1
EU Member State governmental institution or agency	30.3%	69
EU Candidate Country governmental institution or agency	1.3%	3
EEA/EFTA Country governmental institution or agency	2.6%	6
Business organisation / private company	3.5%	8
NGO	8.3%	19
Employer organisation	5.3%	12
Trade union	2.2%	5
Research or consultancy organisation	17.1%	39
Other (please specify)	20.2%	46

Source: Compiled by authors

Desk research

For this draft report, we have reviewed publicly available relevant documents as well as the internal documents we received from the Agency. These included more detailed information on the Agency's Performance Measurement System (PMS) indicators, information on staff, organisational structure, the renewed Agency's Communication strategy, Governing Board attendance data and other relevant documentation and data.

Case studies

We completed five agency-specific case studies on:

- VET policy monitoring
- Apprenticeship country reviews

¹ This includes respondents who answered at least one question.

- Work on European tools – EQF and Europass
- Forecasting skills demand and supply
- VET for labour market integration, social inclusion and adult learning

Evidence for the case studies was collected via additional desk research and interviews with stakeholders. Results of the case studies informed judgment concerning different evaluation questions, in particular those related to the impacts of the Agency.

Open public consultation

In total, the OPC generated 159 responses. Out of all respondents, 34% had a detailed knowledge of the objectives/activities of Cedefop, 30% had a general knowledge only, and 36% had no knowledge.

1. EVALUATION QUESTION 1 – AGENCIES’ PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF RELEVANCE, EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, IMPACT AND EU ADDED VALUE

EQ1: How have the four Agencies performed as regards relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and EU added value in the period 2008-2016?

This evaluation question addresses four specific criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and EU added value. In line with the approach suggested in the Better Regulation Guidelines, we will cover impacts under the evaluation criteria of effectiveness.

1.1. Effectiveness

This evaluation criterion describes the extent to which the Agencies have been successful in achieving their objectives. The Tender Specifications outline five specific questions operationalising the effectiveness criterion. Each question evaluating the effectiveness of Cedefop is outlined in the sections below.

1.1.1. How successful is the Agency in reaching the expected objectives, results and making impacts?

This question aims to analyse the achievement of Cedefop’s general and specific objectives by exploring the Agency’s results and impacts during the evaluation period. Cedefop’s intervention logic (Appendix 1) provides a framework around which the assessment of effectiveness of Cedefop is organised. This section presents an analysis which is focused on the Agency’s general objective and three specific objectives detailed in the intervention logic. The data used here includes relevant documentary evidence from the Agency’s Performance Measurement System (PMS) and other relevant sources (such as the European Parliament’s Discharge reports), primary data collected through interviews, as well as results from the survey of stakeholders, the survey of Agency’s staff, and the open public consultation (OPC).

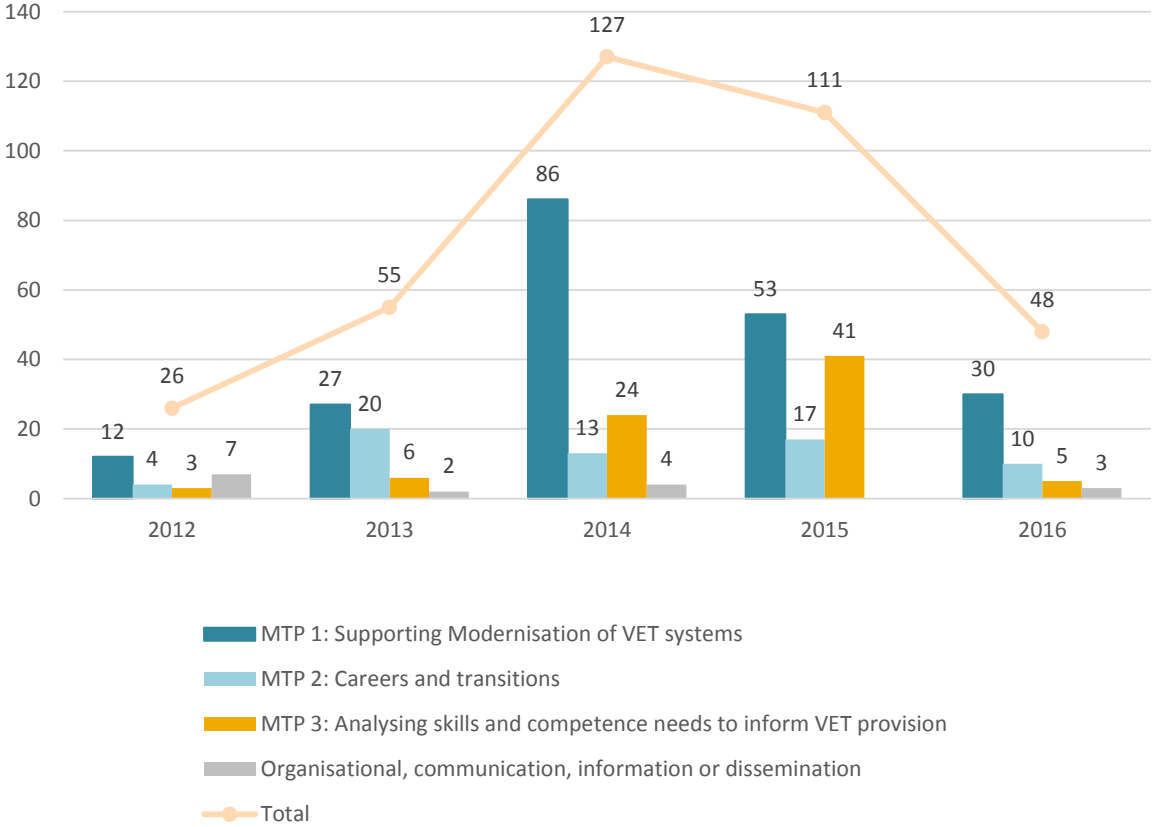
Cedefop’s PMS, the results of which are presented in the Agency’s Annual Reports, aims at measuring a number of output indicators that contribute to the evaluation of the Agency’s effectiveness, results and impact at the EU level. These include the number of ‘EU policy documents’² citing Cedefop’s work, the number of EU policy documents to which Cedefop contributed, and the number of Presidency events and meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy implementation to which the Agency contributed.

² It is noteworthy that the PMS Indicator ‘EU policy documents citing Cedefop’s work’ (Indicator 1) includes policy documents produced by EU-level civil society organisations, professional associations and social partners, including BusinessEurope, UEAPME, ETUC, ETUCE, CEEP, Solidar, EUCIS-LLL, European University Institute, Migration Policy Group, etc.

The number of citations of Cedefop’s work in EU policy documents, academic literature and by international institutions is described in detail in section 2.1.1.3., which looks at the extent to which the agency’s services are used by its stakeholders.

The agency contributed to 367 ‘EU policy documents’³ in 2012-2016 (see figure below). These contributions constituted one of the ways through which the Agency aimed to reach its objectives, obtain results and make impact at EU policy level. The Agency’s PMS classifies these contributions according to the Agency’s medium-term priorities (MTPs)⁴, as well as organisational, communication, information or dissemination-related types of contributions. Since 2012, Cedefop has contributed to a majority of EU policy documents in the area of its first MTP (Supporting Modernisation of VET systems), and to a lesser extent of its second MTP – Careers and transitions (see details below).

Figure 1. Number of EU policy documents to which Cedefop has contributed, 2012-2016



Source: Compiled by authors based on Cedefop’s PMS data.

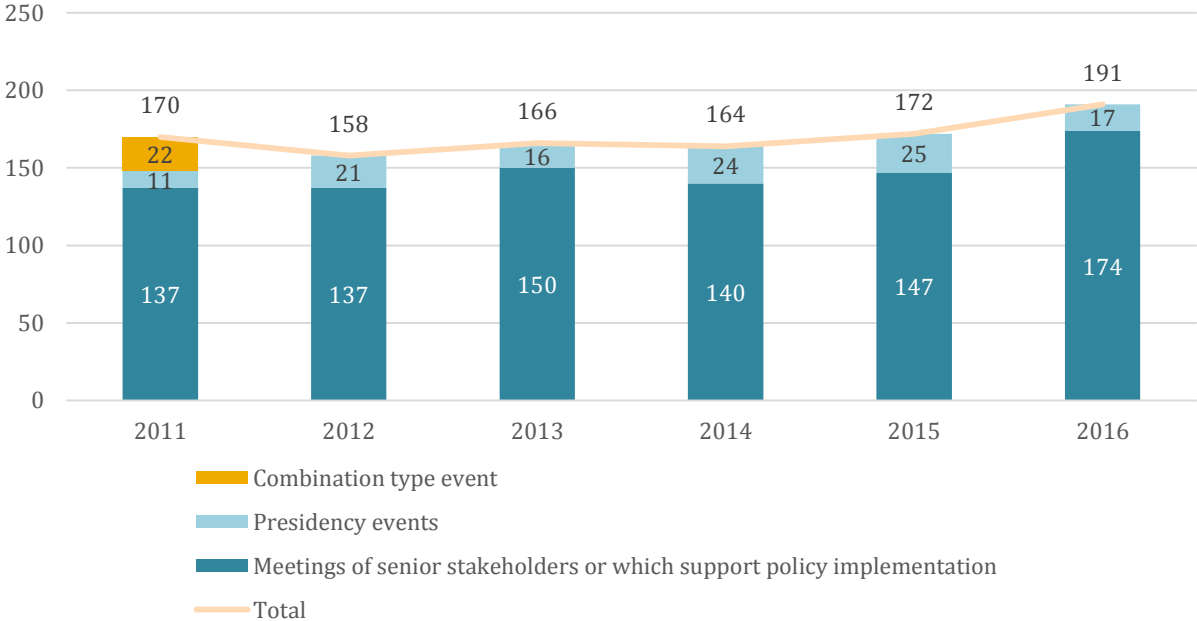
³ It is also noteworthy that the PMS Indicator ‘EU policy documents to the preparation of which Cedefop has participated’ (Indicator 3) does not provide details regarding the nature of the documents to which Cedefop has participated, neither the institution which has published them.

⁴ Cedefop’s current Programming document 2017-2020 already refers to ‘Multiannual objectives’ instead of MTPs, but MTPs were the core of Cedefop’s programming during the whole evaluation period ending in 2016. In fact, Cedefop’s MTPs for 2012-2014 were extended twice by the Governing Board to cover 2015 and 2016, so the Agency had the same priorities for virtually the whole evaluation period.

The Agency also makes an impact at EU policy level by participating in meetings and events of senior stakeholders or meetings which support policy implementation, as well as Council Presidency events. In these meetings, Cedefop representatives are invited to make presentations, chair or animate discussions, and/or act as rapporteurs. These meetings cover diverse types of meetings and events organised by EU-level stakeholders in diverse contexts, including Commission’s cluster, working or expert groups, DGVT, ACVT, EMCO, ETCG, or LLP/Erasmus+ Committee meetings⁵, meetings organised by other EU institutions such as the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR), events organised by the rotating Council Presidency, as well as meetings organised by representative organisations of social partners at EU level such as BusinessEurope and ETUC.

The Agency’s PMS monitors two main types of events under the same indicator: ‘Presidency events’, and ‘Meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy implementation’. This does not contribute to clear presentation of the Agency’s actual role in these meetings and events, nor their nature and diversity. The figure below shows that in 2011-2016, 87% of these meetings consisted of meetings of senior stakeholders or meetings which support policy implementation, while Presidency events only represented 11% of the total number of meetings (according to the Agency’s Annual Reports from 2011 to 2016).

Figure 2. Meetings to which Cedefop has participated in 2011-2016



Source: Compiled by authors based on Cedefop’s PMS data.

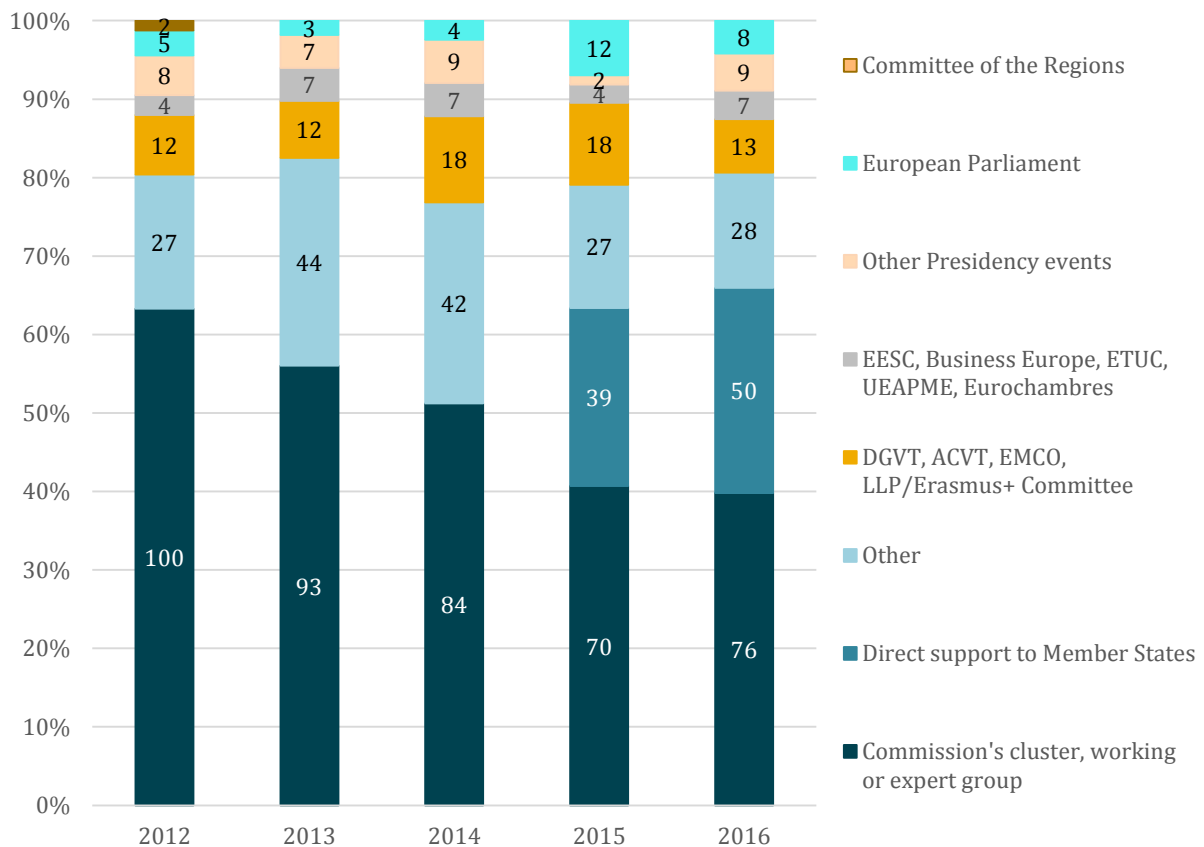
Most policy-oriented meetings or Presidency events reported in Cedefop PMS and Annual Reports in 2011-2016 principally referred to Commission’s cluster, working or expert groups

⁵ This formulation is used in Cedefop’s PMS. However, it should be noted that Cedefop does not actually take place in Erasmus+ Committee meetings and has a rather limited participation in EMCO meetings.

(such as ET 2020 Working Groups) (50% of all meetings), or DGVT, ACVT, EMCO and LLP/Erasmus+ Committee meetings (9% of all meetings), to which Cedefop's presence is usually required (see figure below).

Moreover, it is noticeable that meetings dedicated to providing direct support to Member States started to represent a large proportion of all meetings to which the Agency is participating in 2015 and 2016 (23% and 26% of all meetings in these two years, respectively), which confirms a trend showing the increased support provided by the agency to Member States.

Figure 3. Details of 'Meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy implementation and Presidency events' in 2012-2016



Source: Compiled by authors based on Cedefop's PMS data.

In the following sub-sections, we provide a detailed overview of Cedefop's three specific objectives (medium-term priorities), and of the degree to which the Agency has achieved them in terms of deliverables, results and impact on EU policy-making in 2011-2016.

Specific objective 1: Supporting the modernisation of VET systems

The first specific objective of the agency (MTP 1) during the evaluation period was to 'support the modernisation of VET systems'. Under this objective, the main activities carried out by Cedefop included:

- monitoring and reporting on progress of European VET cooperation (Copenhagen Process), including by providing policy analysis and reporting, country-specific information and progress towards short-term deliverables agreed in the Bruges Communiqué, country fiches, and country ‘Spotlights’
- further developing and supporting implementation of common European tools and principles (EQF/NQFs, ECVET, ECTS, EQAVET, Europass, ESCO, etc.) in close cooperation with the Commission, Member States and social partners, including by providing policy advice, expertise, and coordination support to working groups, committees, and networks (e.g. EQF Advisory Group, ECVET Users’ Group, EQAVET Steering Committee, ESCO Board), producing reports, and organising conferences

Cedefop’s work under its first specific objective had an impact at policy level. This is noticeable through the number of references to Cedefop’s work and contributions of the Agency to EU policy documents, as well as through the number of meetings of senior stakeholders or meetings which support policy implementation and Presidency events to which the Agency contributed.

According to Cedefop’s PMS, under its first specific objective, Cedefop’s work was quoted in 495 EU policy documents from 2012 to 2016⁶, which represented 30% of all such references in this period. Prominent examples of EU policy documents in the area of the modernisation of VET systems making use of Cedefop’s findings included:

- European Commission Staff Working Document ‘Vocational education and training for better skills, growth and jobs’ (2012)⁷
- Impact Assessment which accompanied the proposal for the Council recommendation on validating non-formal and informal learning (2012)⁸
- European Commission Education and Training Monitor 2013⁹
- European Parliament resolution on youth employment (2014)¹⁰
- Commission’s report on ‘Monitoring the evolution of education and training systems: a guide to the joint assessment framework’ (2014)¹¹
- Riga conclusions (2015)¹²

⁶ PMS data for 2011 do not provide the detailed number of citations of Cedefop’s work by specific objective (or MTP) or Activity-Based Budget (ABB).

⁷ Commission Staff Working Document, Vocational education and training for better skills, growth and jobs Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes. SWD/2012/0375 final.

⁸ Commission Staff Working Document, Executive Summary of the Impact Assessment Accompanying the document Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the Validation of non-formal and informal learning. SWD/2012/0253 final.

⁹ European Commission (2013), Education and Training Monitor 2013.

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/publications/monitor13_en.pdf.

¹⁰ European Parliament resolution of 17 July 2014 on Youth Employment (2014/2713(RSP)).

¹¹ Flisi, S., Goglio, V., Meroni, E. (2014). ‘Monitoring the Evolution of Education and Training Systems: A Guide to the Joint Assessment Framework’, European Commission Joint Research Centre.

¹² Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union; Ministry of Education and Science Republic of Latvia; European Commission. *Riga conclusions 2015*. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/2015-riga-conclusions_en.pdf

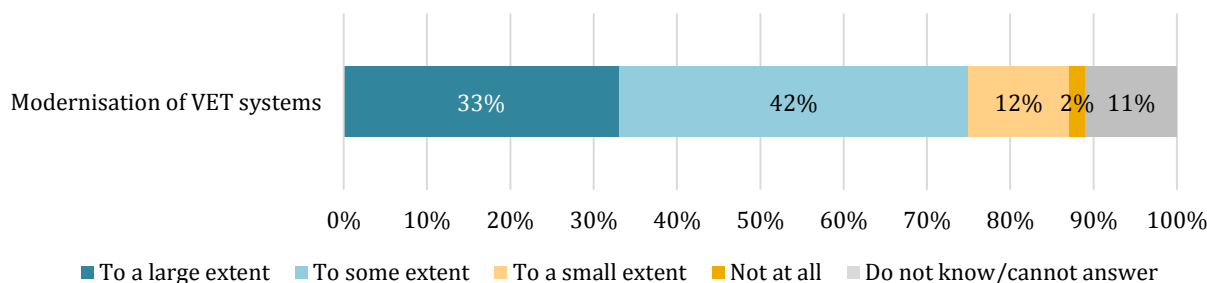
- Joint report of the Council and the Commission on implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) (2015)¹³
- Commission’s Study on higher vocational education and training in the EU (2016)¹⁴

According to Cedefop’s PMS, in 2012-2016, the Agency also contributed to 208 EU policy documents under its first MTP, which represented 59% of the Agency’s total contributions for all three MTPs (351). These contributions included a written contribution to the national VET strategy of Slovenia in 2015, or the legal texts and the corresponding Commission’s staff working documents on the proposed revisions of the European Qualifications Framework and of Europass under the New Skills Agenda for Europe, and Eurostat’s 2016 edition of its ‘Statistical approaches to the measurement of skills’ working paper.

Under its first MTP, the agency participated in 470 ‘Presidency events and Meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy implementation’ from 2012 to 2016¹⁵. This represented 55% of all such meetings to which Cedefop participated in 2012-2016 (out of 851 in total in this period).

Results from the Governing Board survey indicate that a large majority of its members considered that Cedefop contributed to most recent EU policy developments to a large or to some extent, and that the Agency’s work under its first specific objective had met their needs (see figure below).

Figure 4. To what extent, if at all, did Cedefop’s outputs in the following fields meet your needs in the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=212.

Results from the surveys of stakeholders and the Governing Board indicate that respondents recognised Cedefop’s contribution to selected key EU policy developments in the area of the modernisation of VET systems in 2011-2016. In particular, a majority of respondents to Cedefop’s stakeholder survey and Governing Board survey agreed that the Agency contributed

¹³ 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) — New priorities for European cooperation in education and training.

¹⁴ European Commission (2016), Study on higher Vocational Education and Training in the EU, Written by Ulicna, D., Luomi Messerer, K, Auzinger, M. for DG EMPL. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the EU.

¹⁵ Cedefop’s PMS Data for 2011 do not provide the detailed number of Presidency events and meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy implementation to which Cedefop participated by specific objective (or MTP) or Activity-Based Budget (ABB).

to some or to a large extent to European transparency and recognition tools (82%), the Copenhagen process (65%), and the European Semester (52%). Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, these rates were respectively of 92%, 93%, and 82%. However, it should be noted that Cedefop's contribution to key EU policy initiatives in this area remained unknown to many stakeholder survey respondents, in particular regarding the Agency's contribution to the European Semester (35% of 'Do not know/cannot answer' responses), and the Copenhagen Process (31% of such responses).

Results from the survey of Cedefop's staff showed that most staff members considered that Cedefop contributed to the EU's transparency and recognition tools (92%), the Copenhagen process (especially the priorities of the Bruges Communiqué) (86%), and the European Semester (58%)¹⁶ to a large or to some extent.

According to final results from the OPC, 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its first specific objective to assist the Commission to support the modernisation of VET systems in Europe. However, it is important that 38% of respondents chose the answer option 'Do not know/cannot answer'. Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, 82% agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its specific objective in that area.

The majority of interviewed stakeholders recognised that Cedefop achieved its objective to support the modernisation of VET systems in Europe. Most interviewed Governing Board members generally appreciated Cedefop's work and recognised its impact on the EU policy process in the area of VET. They acknowledged Cedefop's role in supporting the Commission's activities in the context of key EU policy developments such as European transparency and recognition tools (in particular EQF and Europass) and the European Semester (in analysing the latest developments in VET policy and Adult learning at Member States level, information which is used as a basis for the country analysis in the European Semester cycle).

Box 1. Cedefop's role in implementation of European tools – EQF and Europass

Cedefop is widely regarded by the Commission and the national stakeholders alike as a major expertise centre on qualifications frameworks. Cedefop was heavily supporting the process of implementation of EQF and the development of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) by:

- supporting the referencing process of NQFs and the EQF, by providing technical opinions, questions and comments on national referencing reports;
- monitoring the implementation of EQF at the national level, collecting best practice examples, and maintaining the up-to-date inventory of NQFs, thus providing comparative information on national developments and the overall status of EQF's implementation;
- supporting the work of EQF Advisory Group (AG) by drafting (mostly in cooperation with the Commission) the background notes for its meetings (5 per year), contributing to agenda points, preparing relevant reports (e.g. annual reviews on development of qualifications frameworks across Europe) and materials;

¹⁶ However, it must be noted that 42% of respondents to Cedefop staff survey chose the 'do not know/ cannot answer' option regarding the agency's contribution to the European Semester.

- being involved in organisation and delivery of peer-learning activities involving the members of EQF's Advisory Group, Member States, social partners and other stakeholders;
- contributing directly to major policy documents, e.g. supporting the revision of the EQF Recommendation by contributions, the text related to EQF in the New Skills Agenda for Europe and the relevant Staff Working Documents.

On Europass, Cedefop's role has been significantly less conceptual and more practical. Cedefop has managed and developed the main Europass portal since 2004, templates of the documents (including the highly successful Europass CV) and enabled the practical tools supporting the Europass documents, such as the online CV editor, launched in 2012. Cedefop has been directly responsible for all work concerning the portal, including not only development and technical updates, but also collection of user feedback and testing.

Source: case study: Cedefop's work on European tools – EQF and Europass

Case study evidence also shows that Cedefop's policy monitoring information has been included into policy making specifically through the ACVT and DGVT meetings, where the Agency regularly presents the progress of VET policy monitoring (see Box 2 below). The policy monitoring activity of Cedefop also contributes to the Commission's work on the European Semester as it provides a basis for preparation of the country reports and country-specific recommendations (CSRs).

Box 2. Cedefop's role in VET policy monitoring.

The policy monitoring information collected by Cedefop was included into policy making at least to some extent, specifically through the ACVT meetings. During the evaluation period, Cedefop presented progress of VET monitoring in 19 ACVT meetings, including meetings of bureau and enlarged bureau. According to an interview with a European Commission representative responsible for overseeing DGVT meetings, Cedefop also regularly presents the progress of VET policy monitoring at these meetings. This indicates that both government representatives and the national social partners should be familiar with their progress and also progress of other countries in achieving the Copenhagen Process deliverables.

National level stakeholders also seemed to use Cedefop's data to inform the policy making process. According to one government representative interviewed, in general, Cedefop's work in the thematic areas related to the Bruges short-term or Riga medium-term is useful in implementing reforms. Peer learning was also mentioned as an important source for the improvement of VET policies at national level.

The evidence collected also suggests that information provided by Cedefop within the framework of VET policy reporting fed into outputs of the European Semester, namely the country reports. Despite the lack of direct references to policy reporting outputs, one interviewee representing the European Commission claimed that Cedefop's data informed the preparation of the country reports to a large extent. Cedefop's monitoring report was also quoted in the 2014 Education and Training Monitor. Cedefop's data also possibly informed national policy developments, yet this contribution is not direct, thus difficult to judge. Nevertheless, EU Member States achieved progress in achieving Bruges and Riga deliverables as well as in implementing CSRs, pointing to overall improvements of VET systems in Europe. Based on the evidence collected, Cedefop played a role in facilitating the Copenhagen process (including Bruges and Riga deliverables) and to some extent informed the formulation of the CSRs.

Source: case study: Cedefop's VET policy monitoring.

In its 2014 Discharge, the European Parliament “[took] note with satisfaction” that Cedefop’s information from the detailed country fiches on VET policies was reflected in the 2014 CSRs¹⁷. National level stakeholders also used Cedefop’s data to inform the policy making process in the evaluation period. Case study evidence indicates that Cedefop’s work in the thematic areas related to the Bruges short-term or Riga medium-term deliverables was useful in implementing relevant national reforms.

Specific objective 2: Careers and transitions: continuing VET, adult and work-based learning

During the evaluation period, Cedefop’s second specific objective (MTP 2) focused on support to policies that help people pursue adult and work-based learning assisting their career transitions and enterprises and sectors facing change and increased competition.

Under this objective, the main activities carried out by Cedefop focused on:

- adult learning and transitions, including by producing research and policy advice on adult learning in the workplace
- integration of young people in the labour market
- thematic country reviews on apprenticeships
- validation of non-formal and informal learning, professional development of trainers in VET
- participation in CVET
- providing strategic and expert input to the ET2020 working group on VET
- providing guidance for the labour market integration of migrants.

Under its second MTP, Cedefop’s PMS data indicate that the Agency’s work was quoted in 332 EU policy documents from 2012 to 2016, which represents 20% of such references in this period. Prominent examples of policy documents at EU level in the area of ‘careers and transitions’ making use of Cedefop’s findings included:

- European Commission Study on Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the EU (2012)¹⁸
- European Commission/ IOM report on ‘Recognition of qualifications and competences of migrants’ (2013)¹⁹
- Commission staff working documents assessing the progress of EU countries in addressing country-specific recommendations (2015)²⁰
- EESC Opinion on the Integration of refugees in the EU (2016)²¹

¹⁷ European Parliament (2016), Discharge 2014: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P8_TA(2016)0163). Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0163+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

¹⁸ European Commission (2012), Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union, Prepared by Ikei for the Commission’s DG EMPL. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the EU. Available at: ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7717&langId=en.

¹⁹ International Organization for Migration (2013), Recognition of qualifications and competences of migrants, Funded by DG EMPL. Brussels: IOM. Available at: ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9933&langId=en.

²⁰ See: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/2015/index_en.htm.

- European Commission’s Study on Obstacles to Recognition of Skills and Qualifications (2016)²².

In 2011-2016, Cedefop also directly contributed to the preparation and the implementation of several key policy initiatives under its second MTP, such as the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the New Skills Agenda for Europe, and the Council Recommendation on ‘Upskilling Pathways’²³.

Moreover, according to Cedefop’s PMS data, the Agency contributed to 64 EU policy documents in the area of careers and transitions (CVET, adult and work-based learning) in 2012-2016, representing 18% of the Agency’s contributions for all three MTPs in this period. These included preparing for the Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning²⁴ in 2012, or the EU Working Group on school policy 2015 report on policy messages to tackling early school leaving²⁵.

Cedefop also participated in 201 ‘Presidency events and Meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy implementation’ under its second MTP in 2012-2016. This represented 24% of all such meetings to which Cedefop participated in 2012-2016.

Evidence from case studies indicates that the quality of Cedefop’s work and research outputs produced in the area of its second MTP was received positively by relevant stakeholders. In particular, evidence suggests that policy makers included Cedefop’s evidence into policy discussions and the policy-making process in the areas of adult learning and early leaving from education and training (see Box 3 below). Evidence also indicates that Cedefop provided continuous support to the policy-making process, and that the information that it delivered contributed to several policy outcomes at EU level.

Box 3. Cedefop’s role in the area of EU adult learning and early school leaving policy.

The evidence suggests that policy makers included Cedefop’s evidence into the policy-making process in the two areas of adult learning and early leaving from education and training in the period 2011-2016. The participation of Cedefop in the ET 2020 Working Group (WG) on Adult learning in 2011-2016, in the WG on Early School Leaving in 2011-2013, and the WG on Schools in 2014-2016 in diverse roles (providing evidence, participating and intervening in meetings, and supporting policy makers in policy implementation) demonstrates the agency’s contribution in these policy areas. Moreover, the publication of multiple research outputs in the areas of adult learning and early leaving supported the implementation

²¹ European Economic and Social Committee (2016), Integration of refugees in the EU, Exploratory Opinion, SOC/532 EESC-2016-00262-00-00-ac-tra. Available at: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.soc-opinions.37880>.

²² European Commission (2016), Study on Obstacles to Recognition of Skills and Qualifications. Prepared by Ecorys for the European Commission’s DG EMPL. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the EU. Available at: ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16623&langId=en.

²³ Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (2016/C 484/01).

²⁴ Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, OJ 2012/C 398/01.

²⁵ European Commission (2015), *A whole school approach to tackling early school leaving. Policy messages*, Brussels: DG EAC.

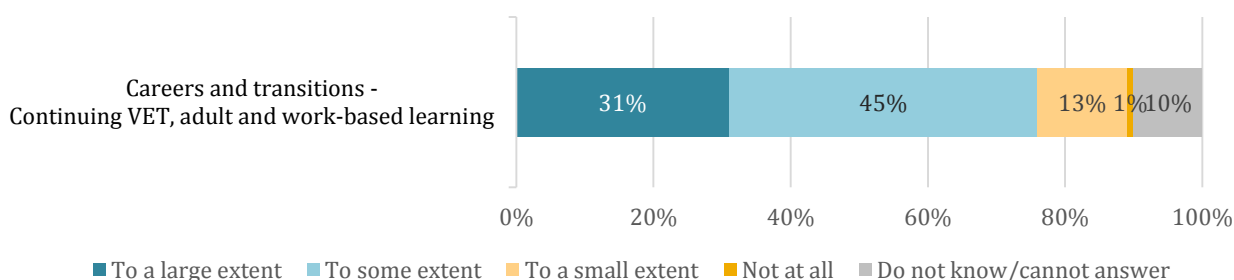
of the European Agenda on Adult Learning, the 2011 Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving and the 2015 Council Conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school. Cedefop also supported the Commission in preparing several key EU policy initiatives such as the Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning, and supported its implementation. Cedefop also provided input to the New Skills Agenda, in particular to the preparation of the 2016 Council Recommendation on ‘Upskilling Pathways’ and related staff working documents.

Evidence also suggests that Cedefop provided additional support to policy makers and stakeholders in these areas. According to Cedefop representatives, the agency has for example followed up on the implementation and use of the VET Toolkit for tackling early leaving with policy makers at Member State level and with other relevant stakeholders, notably through its participation in high-level events to improve the impact of the project.

Source: case study: VET for labour market integration, social inclusion and adult learning.

According to the surveys of stakeholders and Governing Board members, Cedefop’s outputs largely met their needs in the area of careers and transitions (see figure below).

Figure 5. To what extent, if at all, did Cedefop’s outputs in the following fields meet your needs in the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=213.

Results from the surveys of stakeholders and Governing Board members showed that a majority of respondents believed that the agency contributed to the New Skills Agenda for Europe (73%), the EAfA (63%), the YEI (55%), and the Council Recommendation on ‘Upskilling Pathways’ (53%) to some or to a large extent. Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, these rates were 87%, 92%, 78%, and 85%, respectively. However, it should be noted that Cedefop’s contribution remained unknown to a large number of respondents to the stakeholder and Governing Board surveys, in particular regarding the Agency’s contribution to the Council Recommendation on ‘Upskilling Pathways’ (38% of ‘Do not know/ cannot answer’ responses), the EAfA (32% of such answers), the YEI (30% of such answers), and to a smaller extent to the New Skills Agenda (only 15% of such answers).

In this area, a large majority of staff declared that Cedefop contributed to the New Skills Agenda (92%), the EAfA (88%), and the YEI (67%)²⁶ to some or to a large extent. On the other hand, only 55% of staff survey respondents believed that Cedefop contributed to the Council

²⁶ However, it must be noted that 28% of respondents to Cedefop staff survey chose the ‘do not know/ cannot answer’ option regarding the agency’s contribution to the YEI.

Recommendation on ‘Upskilling Pathways’ to a large or to some extent, while 42% of them did not give their opinion on this question.

Moreover, more than 51% of OPC respondents declared that Cedefop achieved its second specific objective to assist the Commission in the area of careers and transitions – continuing VET, adult and work-based learning. However, it should be noted that 39% of respondents chose the answer option ‘Do not know/cannot answer’. Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, 84% agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its specific objective in that area.

A majority of interviewees noted that Cedefop’s work in the area of careers and transitions (continuing VET, adult and work-based learning) was conducted successfully. Interviewed representatives from the Member States in the Governing Board underlined that Cedefop was helpful in the context of the EAfA, where the agency provided a key platform for interaction among Member States. In its 2014 Discharge report, the European Parliament also commended Cedefop’s work “focusing on developing apprenticeships”²⁷.

Specific objective 3: Analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision

Cedefop has focused on analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision under its third specific objective (MTP 3) in 2011-2016. During the evaluation period, Cedefop’s activities under this objective focused on:

- skills analysis and forecast, including the Agency’s contribution to the EU Skills Panorama
- the production of research on skill demand and supply forecast
- contribution to the European employer survey on skill needs and the pan-European Skill Mismatch Survey
- research on skills mismatches and shortages.

According to the Cedefop’s PMS data, the Agency’s work on skills analysis has been quoted in 670 policy documents at EU level from 2012 to 2016. This represented 40% of such references in this period, the highest proportion of references among the agency’s three MTPs. The European Commission’s and the European Parliament’s policy documents have been consistently on the top of the list of citations in EU policy documents since 2012. Such trends indicate that Cedefop’s skills analysis effectively contributed to informing the EU policy making process.

Prominent examples of EU policy documents in the area of skills analysis making use of Cedefop’s findings included:

- European Commission Staff Working Document ‘Assessment of Key Competences in initial education and training: policy guidance’ (2012)²⁸;

²⁷ European Parliament (2016), Discharge 2014: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P8_TA(2016)0163). Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0163+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

²⁸ Commission Staff Working Document Assessment of Key Competences in initial education and training: Policy Guidance Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission Rethinking Education: Investing in skills

- Council conclusions on improving social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training (2013)²⁹;
- Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council (2015)³⁰;
- Council Presidency discussion paper on ‘Connecting education, the labour market and society – Towards a new skills agenda for Europe’ (2016)³¹
- European Commission Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal for a Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly skilled employment and repealing directive 2009/50/EC³² (2016).

The Agency has also directly contributed to several key EU initiatives in this field, such as the EU Skills Panorama.

Moreover, according to Cedefop’s PMS data, the Agency contributed to 79 EU policy documents in the area of its second MTP, representing 23% of the Agency’s contributions for all three MTPs. These included numerous contributions to analytical highlights on the EU Skills Panorama website³³ providing information on occupations, sectors and skills to non-expert readers in 2014³⁴, contributions to two chapters of the European Commission report *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2015*³⁵, or the 2016 Communication of the European Commission³⁶ and related staff working documents on working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness under the New skills agenda for Europe initiative.

In 2012-2016, the Agency also participated in 112 ‘Presidency events and Meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy implementation’ under this MTP. This represented 13% of all such meetings to which Cedefop participated in this period.

for better socio-economic outcomes (SWD/2012/0371 final). Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52012SC0371>.

²⁹ Council conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting, Brussels, 25 - 26 November 2013.

³⁰ Draft Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council accompanying the Communication from the Commission on the Annual Growth Survey 2015.

³¹ Council of the European Union (2016), Connecting education, the labour market and society – Towards a new skills agenda for Europe, 6166/16. Available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6166-2016-INIT/en/pdf>.

³² Commission Staff Working Document, Impact Assessment, Accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly skilled employment and repealing Directive 2009/50/EC. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/directive_conditions_entry_residence_third-country_nationals_highly_skilled_employment_impact_assessment_part_1_en.pdf.

³³ See: <http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/>.

³⁴ Cedefop (2015), *Annual Report 2014*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

³⁵ European Commission (2016), *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2015*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

³⁶ Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions A New Skills Agenda For Europe Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness, COM(2016) 381 final.

Evidence from case studies also tends to show that Cedefop's work in the area of skills analysis and forecasting had a positive impact on the EU policy making process in this area (see Box 4 below).

Box 4. Cedefop's work on forecasting skills demand and supply.

A study conducted in 2013 found that Cedefop's work on skill supply and demand forecasts for Europe was recognised across different EU institutions and EU-level stakeholders and its results cited in several EU strategic documents³⁷. Cedefop's work constituted a primary source of evidence for developing and supporting a number of EU education and training, employment, industrial, immigration and qualification recognition policies³⁸.

Another indication of the performance of Cedefop in making forecasting data available to the public is the success of the Skills Panorama portal. Even though the development and maintenance of the Skills Panorama portal is done under other Cedefop's project, it is directly related to skills forecasting as this project provides most of the data. This portal has been designed for policy makers, policy experts, and intermediaries advising citizens on labour market policy.

Portals like the Skills Panorama enable Cedefop's department for Skills and Labour Market to better disseminate their research results by providing an attractive user interface. Cedefop's stakeholders interviewed pointed out that interactive data presentation and visualisation such as included in the Skills Panorama is a highly effective way to make skills intelligence data more accessible and more useful for every-day work purposes. The interviewees working on the Skills Panorama in Cedefop noted that in the future, the portal should be made even more accessible by representing available complex datasets and adapting specific terminology not only to the professionals, but also to the general public.

The Skills Panorama relaunch exemplified how research results may be used to inform both policy-makers and practitioners. It demonstrated how labour market intelligence could be made available and accessible to inform decisions and advice related to education and training policy.

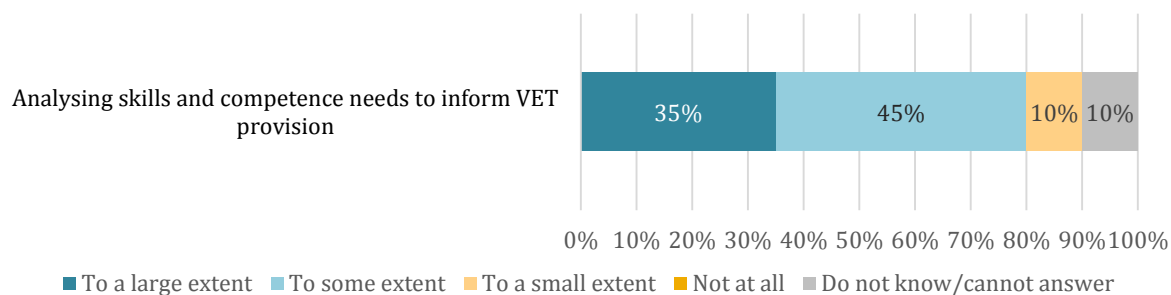
Source: case study 3: Forecasting skills demand and supply.

The surveys of Governing Board members and stakeholders showed that a large majority of respondents considered that Cedefop's outputs met their needs in the field of 'analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision' (see figure below).

³⁷ Cedefop (2013). Mid-term skills supply and demand forecast. Policy implications of the skills forecasts. Prepared by Dumcius, R., Sanciauskas, V., Saduikis, K. and Gineikyte, V. (in response to open invitation to tender Cedefop No.: AO/RPA/AZU-VKVET/skill-forecast/003/12).

³⁸ Ibid.

Figure 6. To what extent, if at all, did Cedefop’s outputs in the following fields meet your needs in the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=215.

A majority of survey respondents agreed that the Agency contributed to the EU Skills Panorama (72%) to some or to a large extent. Moreover, among respondents who gave an informed opinion, these rates were of 90%.

In this area, a large majority of staff declared that Cedefop contributed to a number of key EU initiatives such as the EU Skills Panorama (94%) as well as the European guidelines and strategy for validation of non-formal and informal learning (89%) to some or to a large extent.

According to results from the OPC, more than 62% of respondents declared that Cedefop achieved its third specific objective to assist the Commission in analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision. However, it should be noted that 37% of respondents chose the answer option 'Do not know/cannot answer'. Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, 81% agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its specific objective in this area.

A large majority of interviewees from all stakeholder groups emphasised Cedefop’s work on skills analysis and competence needs to inform VET provision. In particular, Cedefop’s work on skills development and forecasting was considered to be very useful and actually used for developing national policies in this area.

Finally, in its 2015 Discharge, the European Parliament welcomed Cedefop’s “focus on competences and skills which among other objectives helps to better match vocational training to labour market demands and particularly welcome[d] the first European Skills and Jobs Survey as well as the launch of the new Skills Panorama”³⁹.

Summary

The evidence gathered indicates that Cedefop successfully supported the development of EU VET and skills policies and contributed to their implementation. Evidence also indicates that Cedefop has made impact at EU policy level during the evaluation period, in particular by directly contributing to key EU policy developments in the area of VET and skills policies

³⁹ European Parliament (2017), Discharge 2015: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P8_TA-PROV(2017)0159). Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2017/0159/P8_TA-PROV\(2017\)0159_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2017/0159/P8_TA-PROV(2017)0159_EN.pdf).

through multiple references in and contributions to EU policy documents in line with its three MTPs and through its participation to meetings of senior stakeholders which supported policy implementation and Presidency events. However, it should be noted that most policy-oriented meetings or Presidency events reported in Cedefop PMS and Annual Reports in 2011-2016 principally referred to Commission's cluster, working or expert groups or DGVT, ACVT, EMCO and LLP/Erasmus+ Committee meetings, to which Cedefop's presence is usually required. It is also noticeable that meetings dedicated to providing direct support to Member States started to represent a larger proportion of all meetings to which the agency is participating in 2015 and 2016.

The agency has been successful in achieving its three specific objectives (medium-term priorities) during the evaluation period: supporting the modernisation of VET systems; careers and transitions: continuing VET, adult and work-based learning; and analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision. In particular, Cedefop's outputs in these three main policy fields during 2011-2016 were largely appreciated by its stakeholders.

1.1.2. To what extent are the current activities carried out by the Agency appropriate for achieving their objectives?

In this question, we are assessing whether the activities that Cedefop was pursuing at operational level were suitable to achieve its objectives. According to the intervention logic, the Agency's operational objectives during the evaluation period were the following:

- 1) Providing evidence and policy analysis in the area of VET
- 2) Monitoring (a) skills and competence needs, and (b) the development of VET and lifelong learning policies, reforms and systems
- 3) Supporting the European Commission, Member States and social partners in developing and adopting policy and tools in the area of VET and lifelong learning
- 4) Communicating knowledge and organising debates and exchanges with and among stakeholders in the area of VET and lifelong learning

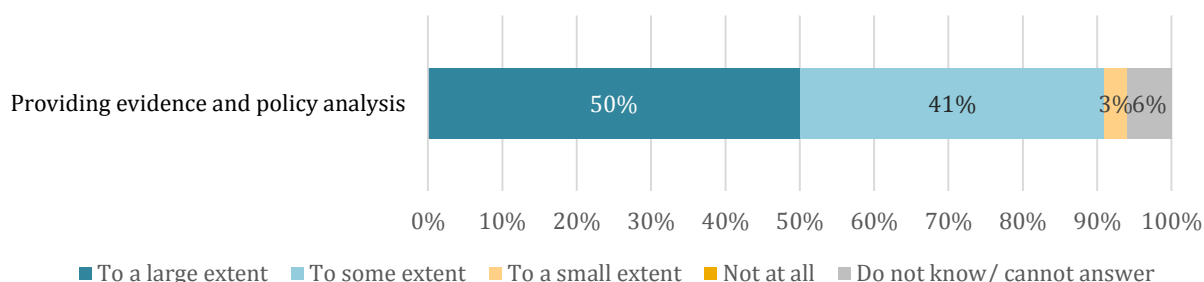
The sections below explore whether Cedefop's activities were appropriate for reaching its operational objectives in terms of monitoring, research, support and communications during the evaluation period.

Research activities (providing evidence and policy analysis in the area of VET)

Activities aimed at providing evidence and analysis on VET and lifelong learning constituted one of the key activities of Cedefop. During the evaluation period, research activities included EU-wide studies, country case studies, thematic reports, policy mapping, and gathering of national-level information via networks.

A large majority of respondents to the survey of Governing Board members and to the survey of stakeholders considered that the agency was to some or to a large extent successful in achieving its operational objectives related to research activities (see figure below).

Figure 7. In your view, to what extent (if at all) was Cedefop successful in achieving the following operational objectives in the areas of VET and lifelong learning during the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=206.

Moreover, according to staff survey results, 92% of respondents believed that Cedefop was successful to some or to a large extent in achieving its objectives to provide evidence and policy analysis.

Finally, results from the OPC indicate that 52% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its operational objective to provide evidence and policy analysis in the area of VET. However, it should be noted that 38% of respondents chose the answer option 'Do not know/cannot answer'. Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, 84% agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its operational objective in this area.

Interviews and case study analysis indicate that stakeholders generally appreciated the quality, relevance, and added value of Cedefop's research outputs, some of which were extensively used by researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. The rigour and complexity of comparative and country-specific research projects produced by the Agency were often quoted as helpful to most interviewed stakeholders, in particular representing employees, employers and Member States. Moreover, most Governing Board members noted that the Agency's research and policy analysis activities have been useful to the policy-making process at EU level.

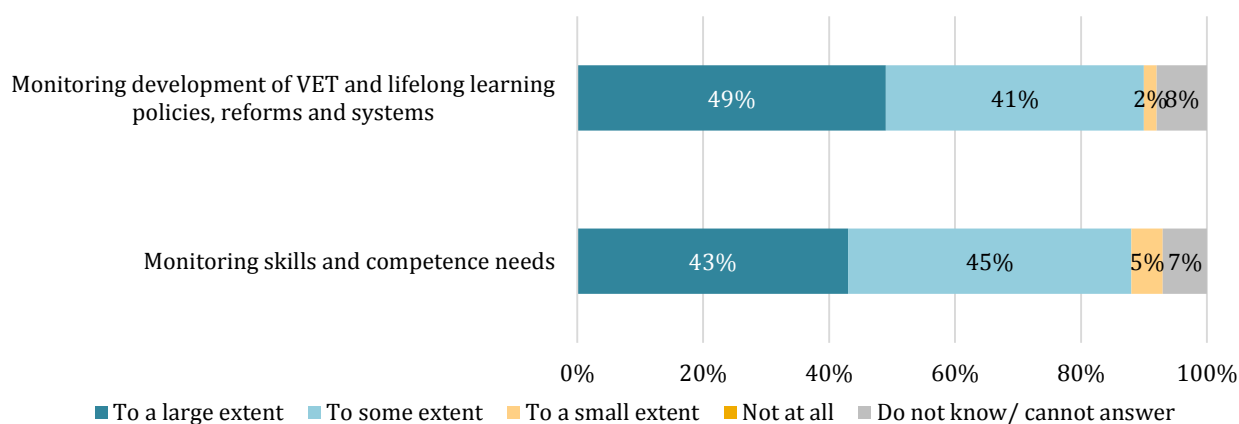
Monitoring activities

In 2011-2016, monitoring activities conducted by Cedefop included: developing and maintaining databases; monitoring (and supporting) the implementation of European tools (EQF, Europass, ECVET, etc.); monitoring policy developments and national-level actions in the EU28⁴⁰; analysing datasets provided by Eurostat and other organisations; and coordination of the SkillsNet and ReferNet networks.

A large majority of respondents to the Governing Board survey and the stakeholders' survey considered that the Agency was successful to some or to a large extent in achieving its operational objectives related to monitoring (see figure below).

⁴⁰ EU Member States plus Iceland and Norway.

Figure 8. In your view, to what extent (if at all) was Cedefop successful in achieving the following operational objectives in the areas of VET and lifelong learning during the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=206.

Moreover, staff survey results indicate that a large majority of staff agreed that Cedefop achieved its monitoring objectives: 89% of staff believed that the Agency was successful in achieving its objectives related to monitoring skills and competence needs to some or to a large extent, and 95% believed that Cedefop was successfully monitoring development of VET and lifelong learning policies, reforms and systems to some or to a large extent.

According to OPC results, 53% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its operational objective related to monitoring skills and competence needs, as well as monitoring the development of VET and lifelong learning policies, reforms and systems. However, it should be noted that 36% of respondents chose the answer option 'Do not know/cannot answer'. Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, 83% agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its operational objective in this area.

Interviewed stakeholders were generally satisfied with the quality of Cedefop's monitoring activities. The majority of interviewees underlined the importance of monitoring policy developments at national level and of reporting on VET policies, reforms, and systems. Cedefop's monitoring activities in the area of skills and competence needs analysis to inform VET provision were also acknowledged by various stakeholders as an important contribution to VET policy for the EU and its Member States. Most interviewed Governing Board members noted that the agency has been acting as a frontrunner in the field of skills analysis and monitoring.

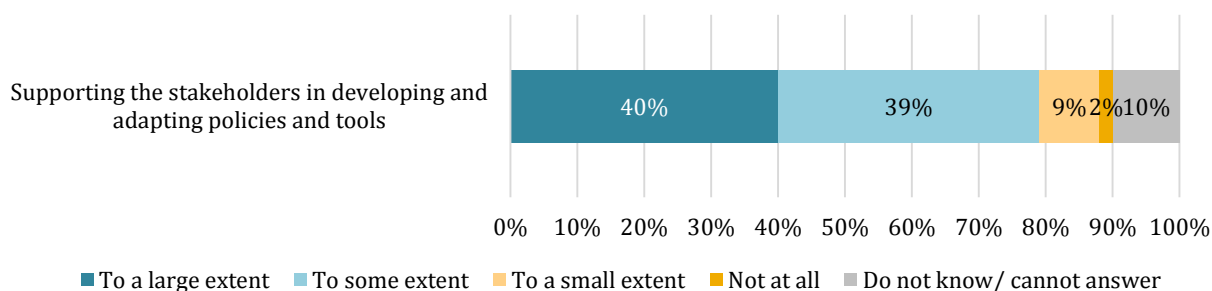
Support activities

Cedefop's support activities during the evaluation period included: providing evidence to assist the Commission and Member States in devising policies; responding to ad hoc requests for policy-relevant information and advice; organising peer-learning activities (PLAs) such as policy

learning forums; intervening in high-level policy events; participating in expert working groups (at EU and national level); and providing inputs to EU communications and guidelines⁴¹.

A large majority of respondents to the survey of Governing Board members and of the stakeholder survey considered that the Agency was to some or to a large extent successful in achieving its operational objectives related to support activities (see figure below).

Figure 9. In your view, to what extent (if at all) was Cedefop successful in achieving the following operational objectives in the areas of VET and lifelong learning during the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=207.

According to staff survey results, 78% of respondents believed that Cedefop was to a large extent successful in achieving its objectives to support stakeholders in developing and adapting policies and tools, while 11% believed the Agency was successful in that regard to some extent, and 6% to a small extent only.

Moreover, results from the OPC indicate that 47% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its operational objective to support stakeholders in developing and adopting policy and tools in the area of VET and lifelong learning. However, it should be noted that 40% of respondents chose the answer option 'Do not know/cannot answer'. Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, 78% agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its operational objective in this area.

A majority of interviewees underlined the quality of Cedefop’s support activities for a wide range of stakeholders. Policy learning forums and peer-learning activities (PLAs) were considered very helpful by interviewed stakeholders from the Governing Board. Similarly, in its 2015 Discharge, the European Parliament “welcome[d] the fact that the Centre provided more country-specific information and analysis and expanded its support to individual Member States through expertise provided in connection with policy implementation”⁴².

⁴¹ Cedefop Work Programmes from 2011 to 2016, Annual Reports from 2011 to 2015, Medium Term Priorities 2012-2014 (extended to 2016).

⁴² European Parliament (2017), Discharge 2015: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P8_TA-PROV(2017)0159). Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2017/0159/P8_TA-PROV\(2017\)0159_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2017/0159/P8_TA-PROV(2017)0159_EN.pdf).

Case studies show that Cedefop's support activities were positively received by stakeholders, for example in the context of the thematic country reviews on apprenticeships⁴³ (see Box 5 below).

Box 5. Cedefop's apprenticeship reviews.

Evidence collected in the context of the case study on Cedefop's apprenticeship reviews shows that the agency's input and support provided to Malta helped the country reform its apprenticeship system and was used as a basis for new legislation. Case study evidence shows that the review process led by Cedefop usefully revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the Maltese system, identified possible actions and facilitated stakeholder dialogue and awareness. Interviews with Maltese stakeholders showed that evidence-based recommendations from the review were highly significant while implementing changes. However, even though cooperation with stakeholders was achieved, the project created some burden throughout its implementation. Stakeholders in Malta emphasised that the review and reform process was long, complicated and resource-intensive⁴⁴.

In contrast, Lithuanian interviewees noted that no unreasonable burden was created, with strong overall coordination efforts from Cedefop experts contributing to that. They also stated that the project encouraged cooperation between different stakeholders at national level.

However, interviews with Commission staff revealed that the results of the work carried out by Cedefop at national level could be better integrated into the EU policy making and discussions, in particular from countries in which apprenticeship reviews have been conducted.

Source: case study 2: Apprenticeship reviews.

Communication and dissemination activities

Cedefop's communication and dissemination activities during the evaluation period can be divided into three main types of activities:

- External communication: outreach activities towards EU and national-level stakeholders through events and networking (notably through Cedefop's Brussels Liaison Office); organisation of and participation in conferences and workshops
- Documentation and information: physical library (restructured and downsized in 2014), Research Support Centre (since 2014)
- Publications and content management: publication of research results and dissemination through Cedefop's website, online platforms and social media; production of audio-visual material, interactive tools and infographics; production of news series, newsletters, online tools/materials, press releases and other information for the general public

The evidence collected suggests that Cedefop's communication and dissemination activities have been generally successful during 2011-2016. Cedefop's communication and dissemination activities undertook major changes during the evaluation period. Following the recommendation of the 2013 external evaluation that the Agency's interactivity (proactive communication and exchange) with stakeholders could be improved, Cedefop re-designed its communication strategy to make it more interactive and engaging. These developments

⁴³ Cedefop (2015). Apprenticeship review: Malta. In pursuit of quality and relevance: revitalising apprenticeship. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Thematic country reviews.

⁴⁴ European Commission (2017), European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Assessment of progress and planning the future. Malta case study, p. 25.

demonstrated the Agency's proactivity and capacity to adapt to a changing communications and multimedia context.

Since 2014, Cedefop implemented a new communication strategy following principles of corporate communication, using the concept of 'key account management'. This approach aimed to proactively understand customers' needs and provide materials tailored accordingly, notably through the use of centralised and customised databases of customers. The objective of the Agency's communications activities was to develop long-term relationships with strategic key accounts, by:

- Identifying and prioritising key accounts
- Developing a deep understanding of the key accounts
- Proactively developing key-account-focused strategies
- Managing key relationships appropriately⁴⁵

A list of key accounts representing specific target groups were identified among Cedefop's stakeholders (see table below). These key groups were addressed with information formats targeted to their needs, for example, opting for briefing notes for policy-makers, and audio-visual materials for the general public.

⁴⁵ Cedefop (2017). Communications Strategy, Revision 2017.

Table 4. Cedefop's Key Accounts

Content-related key accounts	
European Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion • Head of Cabinet • Member of Cabinet – Communication Advisor • Member of Cabinet – Responsible for Cedefop • Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth • Head of Cabinet
DG EMPL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General • Deputy Director-General • Director of Directorate A (Employment and social governance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heads of Unit (related to Cedefop's work) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A1 Employment and social aspects of European Semester ▪ A3 Country reform ▪ A4 Thematic analysis • Director of Directorate E (Skills) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heads of Unit (related to Cedefop's work) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E1 Job creation ▪ E2 Skills and qualifications ▪ E3 VET, apprenticeships & adult learning
DG EAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General • Deputy Director-General
European Parliament, Standing Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the European Parliament • Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee – EMPL • Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Culture and Education Committee – CULT • Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Budgets Committee – BUDG • Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Budgetary Control Committee – CONT
European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EESC President • Secretary-General • President of the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship – SOC • President of the Labour Market Observatory – LMO
Committee of the Regions (CoR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Head of Cabinet • Secretary-General
DGVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directors General of Vocational Education and Training of the Member States
ACVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, representing the interests of the national governments, trade unions and employers' organisations
National Institutes for VET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidents/Directors • Heads of Unit (responsible for cooperation with Cedefop)
Cedefop Governing Board	Representatives of national governments and national social partners, employers' and employees' associations at European level, representatives of the Commission
ReferNet	Representatives of national ReferNet partners
Administrative	
DG BUDGET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General • Deputy Director-General in charge of Directorate C • Heads of Unit (dealing with Cedefop)
DG HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General • Heads of Unit (dealing with Cedefop)
IAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General • Director of Directorate A - Horizontal Affairs and Audit in EU Agencies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Unit A.2 - Regulatory Agencies • Team leader (conducting audit at Cedefop)
European Court of Auditors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Dean of the Court responsible for Cedefop • Director of the Court responsible for Cedefop

Source: Cedefop (2017). *Communication Strategy, Revision 2017*

This new approach also contributed to implementing a ‘paperless policy’ for publications, by gradually opting for digital resources instead of print materials. Cedefop’s website was also revamped, aiming to present core information on Cedefop’s outputs and strategic objectives in all languages of the EU, helping to reach wider audience. The new website helped to present more hands-on information for policy makers, researchers as well as the wider public. Increasingly relying on audio-visual materials, data visualisation, and social media content, Cedefop’s website engaged directly with the agency’s target groups and adapted to their needs. This new approach also led to the publication of a new hard copy magazine (*Skillset and match*, since May 2014), only disseminated to Cedefop’s key accounts. The agency also collaborated more systematically with DG EMPL on communication, such as by agreeing on a common communication approach in 2016 and joining forces on communication activities, most notably on the Vocational Skills Week and the New Skills Agenda.

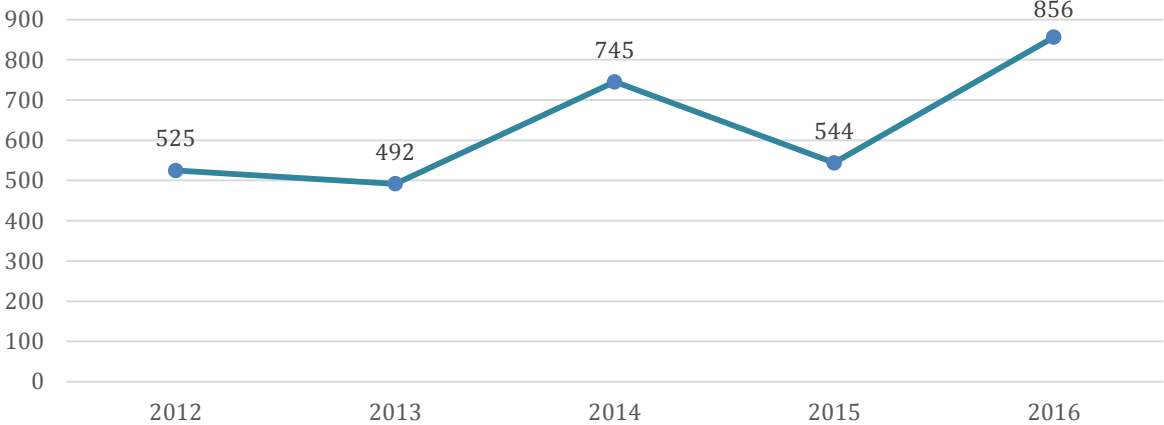
Finally, the appointment of an additional officer to the Brussels liaison office in September 2015 has allowed to intensify Cedefop’s presence and communications towards its key stakeholders at EU level. The impacts of the Brussels liaison office include a reported stronger and better relationship with the Commission, and better visibility to the European Parliament, as well as social partner organisations based in Brussels. While the reinforcement of the agency’s permanent Brussels liaison office has been evaluated positively by the stakeholders, the liaison officer has been also entrusted with collecting data for three monitoring indicators (roughly for 0.4 FTE). Given this situation, the human resources used for liaison were only 0.6 FTE, compared to, for example, 2 FTE in Eurofound’s Brussels liaison office.

In its 2014 Discharge, the European Parliament underlined Cedefop’s work “on increasing the visibility of vocational education and training in the Union and of its own role through its website, social media, organisation of different events in the host Member State as well as through collaboration with the Commission in several publications and press work”⁴⁶.

Cedefop’s coverage in the media has steadily increased in the evaluation period, from 525 articles mentioning the agency published in 2012, to 856 in 2016 (see figure below).

⁴⁶ European Parliament (2016), Discharge 2014: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P8_TA(2016)0163). Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0163+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

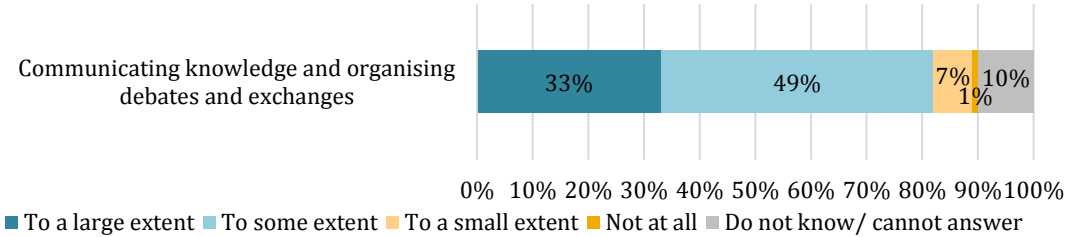
Figure 10. Media coverage (number of articles), 2012-2016



Source: Cedefop PMS data.

A large majority of respondents to the surveys of Governing Board members and of stakeholders considered that the Agency was successful in achieving its operational objectives in terms of communication activities to some or to a large extent (see figure below).

Figure 11. In your view, to what extent (if at all) was Cedefop successful in achieving the following operational objectives in the areas of VET and lifelong learning during the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=207.

According to staff survey results, 61% of respondents believed that the Agency was largely successful in achieving its objectives to communicate knowledge and organising debates and exchanges, while 33% believed that it was successful to some extent, and 3% to a small extent.

Final results from the OPC indicate that 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its operational objective to communicate knowledge and organise debates and exchanges with and among stakeholders in the area of VET and lifelong learning. However, it should be noted that 39% of respondents chose the answer option ‘Do not know/cannot answer’. Among respondents who gave an informed opinion, 75% agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop achieved its operational objective in this area.

Moreover, most interviewees who commented on the Agency’s activities in this area emphasised that it improved its communication and outreach activities during the evaluation period, noting that it had become more focused and user-friendly, reaching a wider audience. This new approach notably included better coordination of the Agency’s communication activities with the Commission’s policy and communication officers. The interviewed users of Cedefop’s

outputs underlined that the Agency was particularly innovative in publication and presentation of its research results in a modern, user-friendly, and accessible manner.

Summary

Cedefop carries out four types of operational activities to achieve its objectives: research, monitoring, support and communication. The evidence collected suggests that the agency implemented these activities effectively during the evaluation period. In particular, Cedefop's monitoring was useful to EU and Member State stakeholders at policy level in providing information and guidance, including CSRs under European Semester; research was useful by bringing relevant and evidence-based information for policy making; support was especially useful to Member States in the context of reforms, in the form of thematic country reviews and peer-learning activities.

Cedefop's move towards increasing support to Member States was evident during the evaluation period. There was also some evidence that Cedefop's work was used to support national policy developments. Interviews with Commission staff revealed that the results of the work carried out by Cedefop at national level in the context of apprenticeship reviews could be better integrated into the EU policy making and discussions, in particular from countries in which reviews have been conducted.

Among Cedefop's four operational objectives and types of activities, communication activities were the least positively assessed by stakeholders in surveys, interviews and the OPC. Nevertheless, Cedefop's communication activities have been widely restructured during the evaluation period, to better adapt the Agency to emerging communications challenges and to better reflect the needs and interests of the Agency's key stakeholders. Cedefop re-designed its communication strategy to make it more interactive and engaging. This new approach also contributed to implementing a 'paperless policy' for publications. Cedefop's website was also revamped, aiming to present core information on Cedefop's outputs and strategic objectives in all languages of the EU, and to present more hands-on information for policy makers, researchers and the wider public. The agency also collaborated more systematically with DG EMPL on communication, such as by agreeing on a common communication approach in 2016 and joining forces on communication activities. Finally, the strengthened Brussels liaison office since 2015 has allowed to intensify Cedefop's visibility and communications towards its key stakeholders at EU level. Cedefop's liaison office nevertheless had less dedicated human resources than the one of Eurofound.

1.1.3. To what extent are the services that the Agency provides actually used by their stakeholders, by EU Institutions and by international bodies and organisations? How well does it respond to their needs?

As presented in Cedefop's intervention logic for the evaluation period (see Appendix 1. Intervention logic of Cedefop), Cedefop's services to its stakeholders include:

- outputs falling under the Agency’s thematic priorities (for the evaluation period: Modernisation of VET systems; Careers and transitions - continuing VET, adult and work-based learning; Analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision)
- outputs related to monitoring, research, support or communication and dissemination activities

Desk research and interviews with different stakeholders revealed that all main stakeholder groups of Cedefop used its outputs at least to some extent. During the evaluation period, references to work of the Agency could be found in documents of the European institutions (e.g. the European Commission, European Parliament and Council), social partners (e.g. ETUC and Business Europe), international organisations and research community. As the citations by different organisations at the EU and international level are monitored, it is possible to distinguish actors that used Cedefop’s outputs the most. For example, at the EU level, in 2016 the two institutions citing Cedefop’s work the most were the European Commission and the European Parliament (69 % of all citations in EU policy documents). At the international level, OECD was the primary user of Cedefop’s outputs, representing 74% of total citations in 2016 by international organisations.

The table below illustrates what organisations quoted Cedefop’s work in EU policy documents during 2011-2016, measured by number of documents.

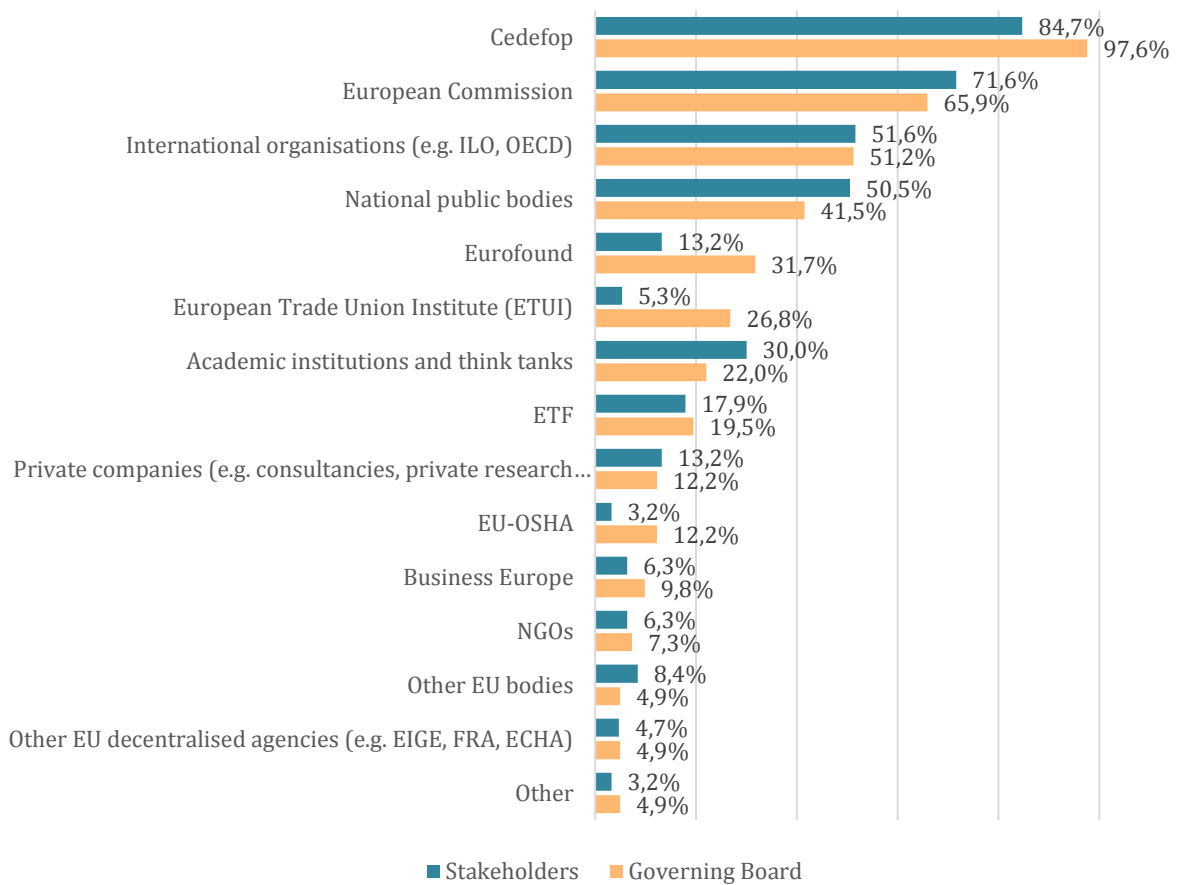
Table 5. EU and international policy documents citing Cedefop’s work

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
International organisations	88	56	31	43	68	5
NGOs	3	1	1	11	3	
Council of the European Union	7	3	2	2	2	4
EU agencies	14	21	12	8	12	8
Social Partners	9	1	5	9	18	11
Committee of the Regions	3	4	1		1	
EESC	10	5	4	7	7	12
European Parliament	25	27	8	20	19	15
European Commission	94	43	64	116	107	50

Source: compiled by authors based on the agency’s PMS data. Note: European Commission citations include citations by Eurostat (which are provided separately in the agency’s PMS); EU agencies citations include citations by ETF, Eurofound, EIGE, EACEA, Eurydice; social partner citations include citations by BusinessEurope, UEAPME, ETUC, ETUCE, CEEP, ETUI, Eurochambers; NGO citations include citations by Solidar, EUCIS-LLL, OBESSU.

The results of the stakeholder and the Governing Board survey further show that Cedefop’s information was used by its stakeholders. As illustrated by the figure below, Cedefop was one of the main sources of information for majority of the stakeholders and Governing Board members from 2011 to 2016.

Figure 12. Which of the following types of organisations did you most often use as a source of information during the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder (base size: N=190) and Governing Board (base size: N=41) survey 2017.
 Note: respondents were able to choose up to 5 options.

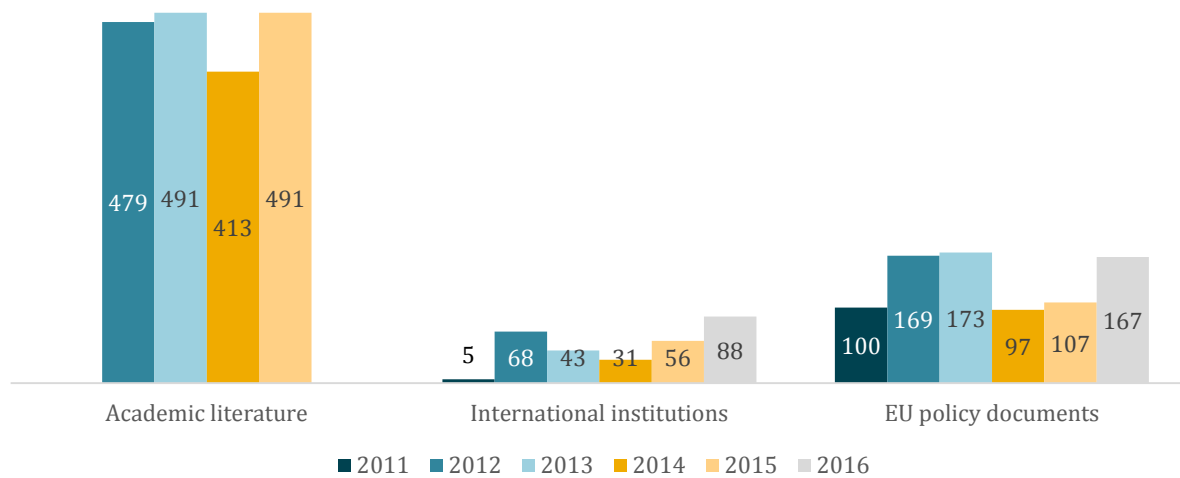
Purposes of use

Cedefop’s information was mainly used for the four following purposes:

- Preparation of EU policy documents and EU policy development
- Preparation of documents by international institutions
- Scientific research
- National level policy development

The PMS data reflected the extent to which the Agency’s outputs were cited in EU policy documents, documents by international institutions and academic literature. The number of citations in EU policy documents, academic literature and by international institutions was relatively stable in 2011-2016, with only a slight decrease in the value of the three indicators observed in 2014.

Figure 13. Citations of Cedefop's outputs



Source: Cedefop Performance Measurement System data.

Note: the citations in academic literature are based on the data from Annual activity report 2015 and 2014. The data available for 2011 and 2016 only is monitored on two calendar years, and is not comparable. Data for academic literature provides number of references, whereas data for international institutions and EU policy documents refers to number of documents.

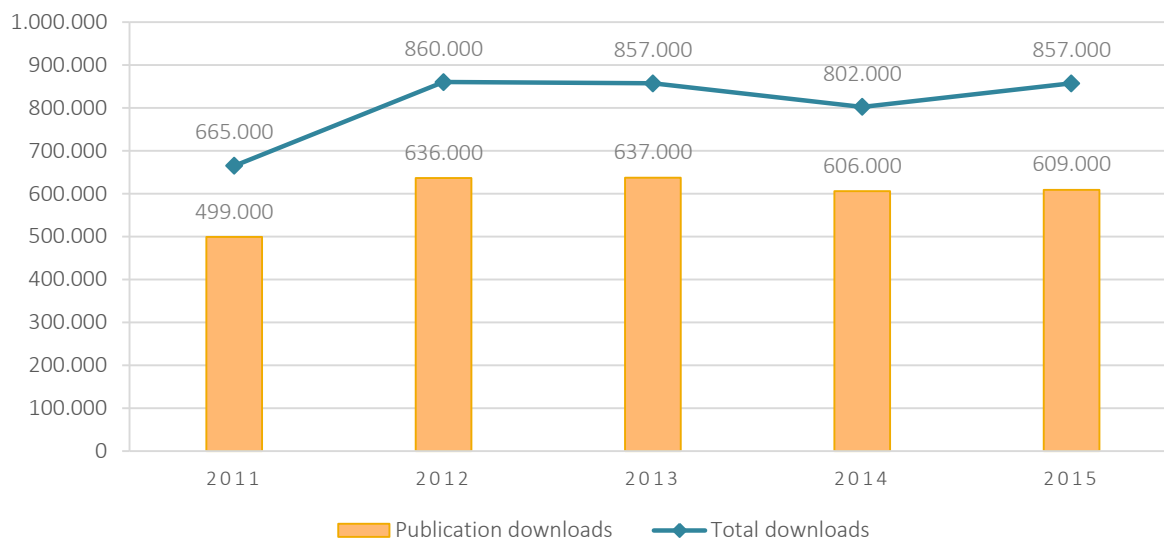
Cedefop's performance measurement system does not monitor citations of the Agency's outputs at national level, yet interviews with stakeholders indicate that these outputs were used to inform national policy developments at least to some extent. Interviewees from different stakeholder groups (government and social partner representatives) claimed to have used Cedefop's information in their work when needed. Some national actors used a possibility to contact Cedefop directly to ask for information, and the agency was responsive in sending relevant information (although in some cases with delay). Nevertheless, a number of the interviewed social partners had the perception that Cedefop's outputs were more often used at EU level rather than at national level.

Besides informing preparation of policy documents, Cedefop's work also concerns participation in different cooperation forums aimed at encouraging policy development both at EU and national level. As evidenced by the case study on VET for labour market integration, social inclusion and adult learning, Cedefop's representatives were members of ET 2020 Working Groups related to adult education and contributed to the results of these groups, that later supported the policy making process in this field. The case study on VET Policy reporting also revealed that Cedefop's representatives consistently participated in the ACVT meetings, presenting the latest progress within the Copenhagen process. Finally, the case study on European tools shows highly relevant support provided by Cedefop to the EQF Advisory Group.

Scope of use

The number of downloads of Cedefop's publications shows a relatively stable volume of use of the Agency's outputs (see figure below).

Figure 14. Downloads of Cedefop's outputs⁴⁷



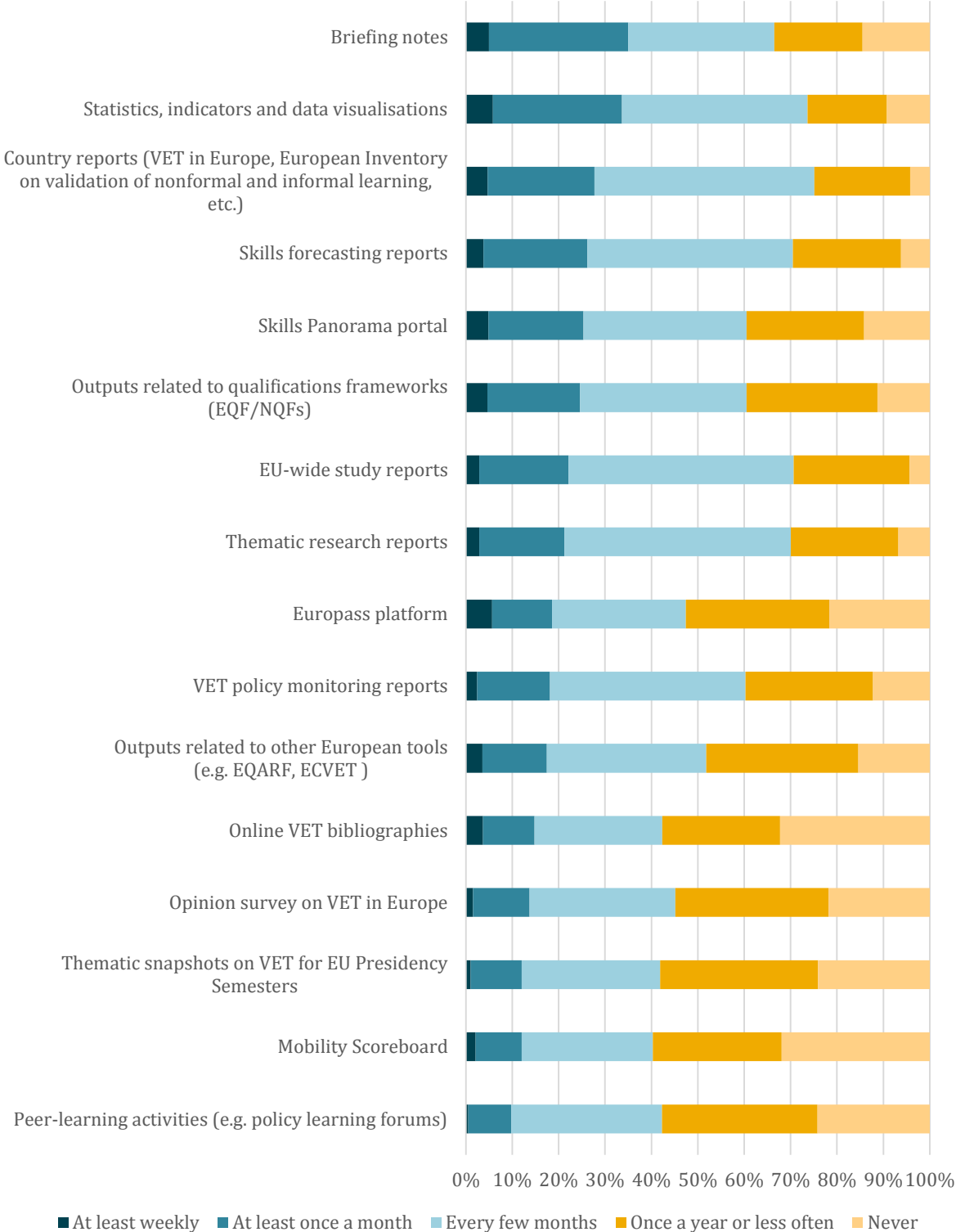
Source: Annual activity reports 2011-2015.

Note: as of 2015 a new measurement tool was introduced, thus no comparable data is available for 2016 (for 2015 there are both types of data).

Regarding the regularity of use of the Agency's services, survey results suggest that the majority of Cedefop's outputs were used by its stakeholders occasionally (every few months). Stakeholders used *briefing notes* and *statistics, indicators and data visualisations* the most often with 35% and 34% of stakeholders using these outputs at least once a month and weekly respectively during the evaluation period. Meanwhile, *peer-learning activities*, *thematic snapshots on VET for EU Presidency Semesters* and *the Mobility Scoreboard* were among the less often used outputs, with only 10%, 12% and 12% of respondents respectively using these outputs at least once a month or weekly. The figure below presents the volume of use of different outputs of the Agency.

⁴⁷ No comparable data is available for 2016 as a new measurement tool was introduced in 2015.

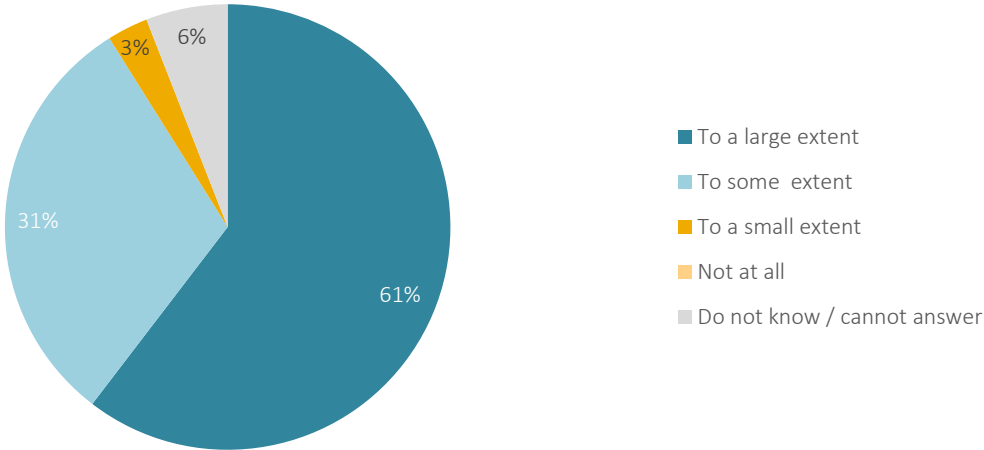
Figure 15. How often, if ever, did you use the following Cedefop's outputs in your work during the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017. N=208, N=213, N=207, N=191, N=204, N=197, N=194, N=195, N=194, N=195, N=210, N=205, N=191, N=200, N=205, N=189.

The Agency’s staff also rather positively evaluated the extent to which stakeholders managed to take advantage of the Agency’s services, with none of the respondents to the staff survey believing that stakeholders take no advantage of the Agency’s services. However, a third of respondents (34%) believed that Cedefop’s stakeholders take full advantage of the agency’s activities only to some or small extent (see figure below), which may indicate possibilities to further improve the Agency’s ability to reach stakeholders.

Figure 16. In your opinion, to what extent, if at all, do the stakeholders take full advantages of the information, resources and services provided by Cedefop?



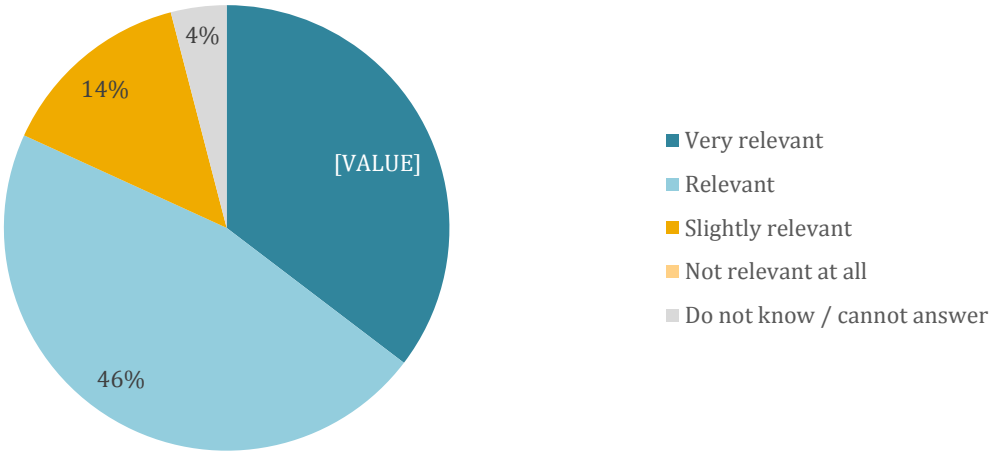
Source: Cedefop staff survey 2017, N=36.

Correspondence to the stakeholders’ needs

We used data from the stakeholder survey and the OPC to collect quantitative data on how stakeholders evaluate the usefulness, relevance and quality of Cedefop’s outputs.

The results of the stakeholder survey suggest that the Agency’s stakeholders perceived the activities of Cedefop as relevant. Approximately 80% of respondents to the survey indicated that overall, the activities of Cedefop in the period 2011-2016 were relevant to their work (see figure below). Also, the majority of stakeholder survey respondents stated that the services of Cedefop had met their needs to some or to large extent across the three thematic priorities of the agency.

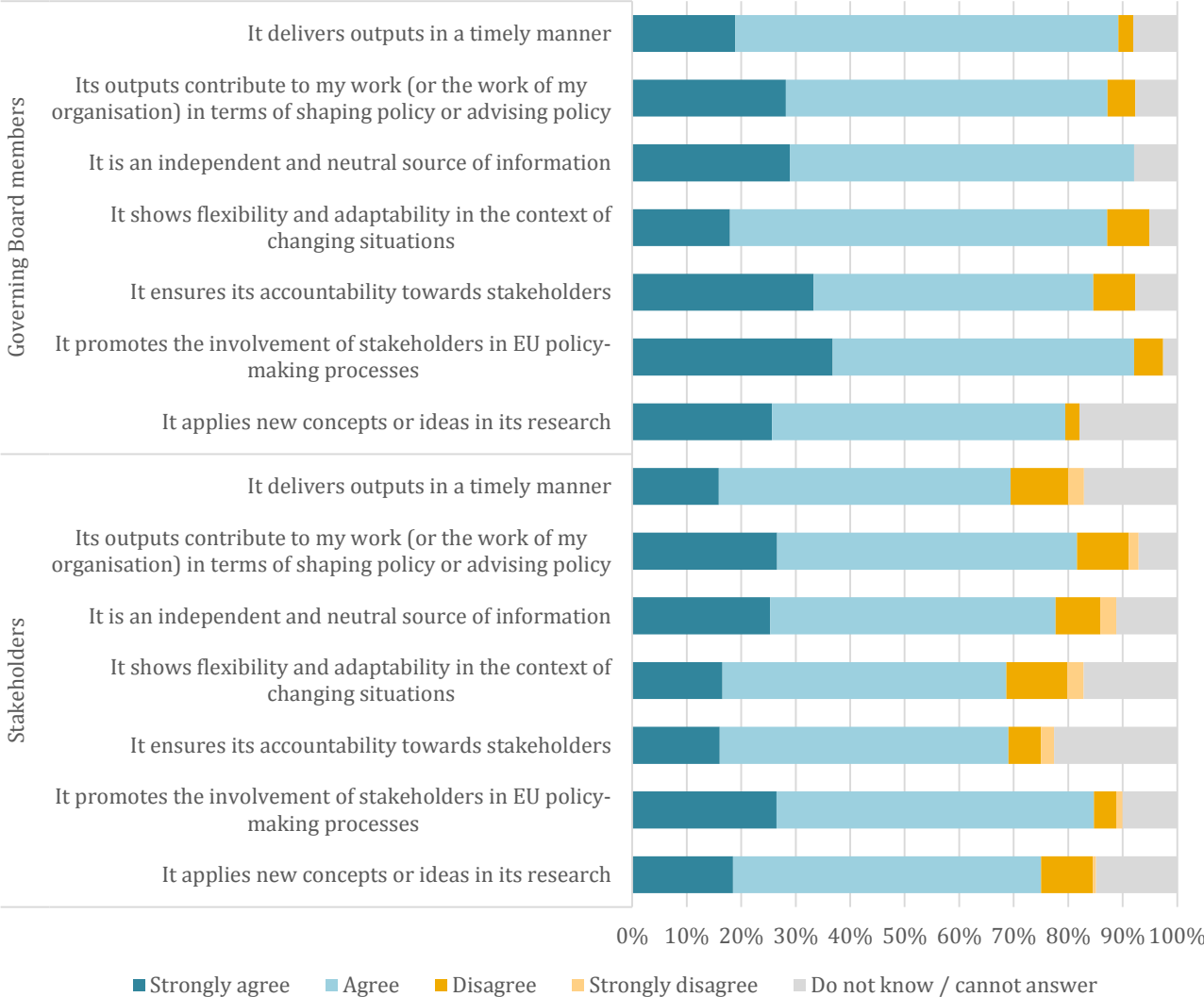
Figure 17. How relevant, if at all, were Cedefop's overall activities and outputs to your work in the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=249.

The figure below also illustrates that stakeholders also rather positively evaluated Cedefop’s ability to deliver outputs on time, its independence, flexibility, accountability and the Agency’s ability to apply new concepts or ideas in its research. They also appreciated the Agency’s ability to promote stakeholder involvement in the EU policy making process and claimed that Cedefop’s outputs have contributed to their work related to shaping or advising policy.

Figure 18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements about Cedefop below?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017.

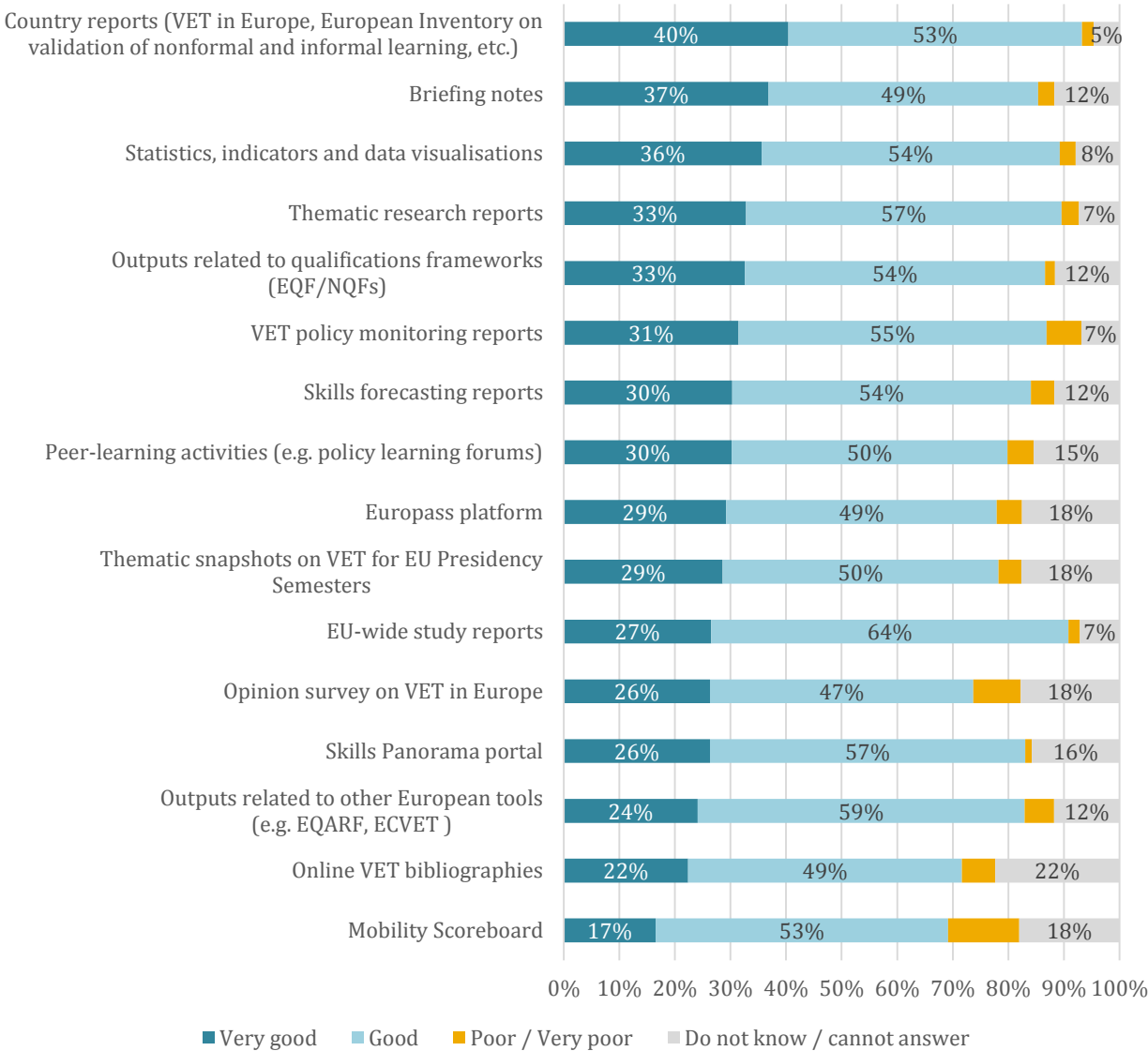
Analysis of Cedefop’s activities from the perspective of its different stakeholders also suggests a positive perception of the quality of the activities the Agency carries out. As noted in the European Parliament’s Discharge 2015:

“The European Parliament <...> [a]ppreciates the good quality of the Centre’s research, analyses and technical advice through which it supports the development of European lifelong learning and VET policies and contributes to their implementation in order to enable workers to acquire good skills and to contribute to achieving the goals set in the Europe 2020 strategy.”

The results of the stakeholder survey demonstrate a rather positive evaluation of Cedefop’s activities, with the majority of the respondents perceiving the Agency’s outputs as being of very good or good quality (see figure below). *Country reports* (40%), *briefing notes* (37%) and *statistics, indicators and data visualisations* (36%) received the most positive feedback (i.e. being

evaluated as being of very good quality). Out of all outputs, only *Mobility Scoreboard* received more than 10% of negative evaluations, with 13% of stakeholders saying that this output was of poor or very poor quality, which nevertheless indicates a positive perception of this output⁴⁸. This may be to some extent explained by the fact that at the time of consulting the stakeholders, *Mobility Scoreboard* developed by Cedefop in cooperation with European Commission and Eurydice was only in design and development stage. The results of the *opinion survey on VET in Europe* were also published only in autumn 2017, thus at the time of evaluation this output was also not finalised.

Figure 19. How would you rate the quality of Cedefop's outputs produced in the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017. N=196, N=193, N=192, N=147, N=175, N=152, N=149, N=172, N=154, N=170, N=188, N=171, N=133, N=171, N=177, N=134.

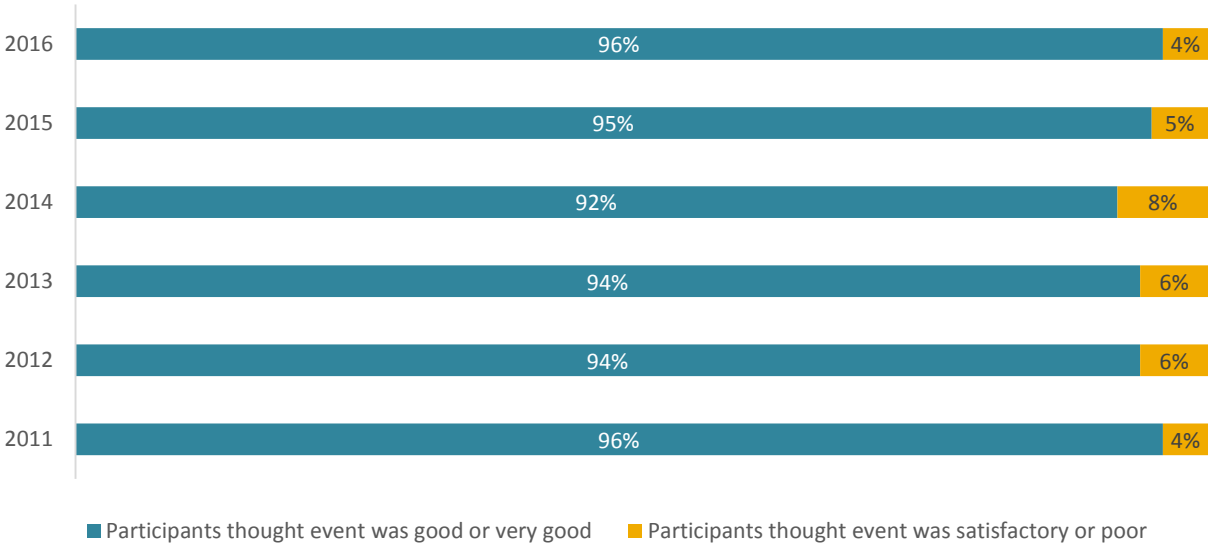
⁴⁸ 17% of stakeholders evaluated the output as being of very good quality, while another 53% - as of good quality.

Note: To increase readability of the figure, we have combined answers poor / very poor as only a very small proportion of respondents selected these two options. For full breakdown of responses, please refer to Annex 2 and Annex 3.

With regard to drawbacks of the Agency’s services, faster delivery of certain outputs was named as a potential area for improvement by the stakeholders. A number of stakeholder survey respondents named long period between collecting and publishing information as one of the drawbacks of the outputs produced by the Agency. The same perception was also echoed by several interviewees. In particular, the case studies revealed that the long-term research efforts (i.e. longer than 18 months) may lose a significant part of their policy relevance by the time their results are published, as the European policy agenda changes much more rapidly.

Besides different publications, Cedefop also organises events for its stakeholders. Agency’s PMS monitors the satisfaction of the participants with these events. The trend of this indicator during the evaluation period also indicates a positive image of Cedefop’s services in the eyes of stakeholders, as more than 90% of respondents considered events attended as of good or very quality (see the figure below).

Figure 20. Satisfaction of participants with meetings and events organised by Cedefop



Source: Annual activity reports 2011-2015, PMS data trends. Annual report 2016 final.

Summary

Evidence revealed several important points with regard to the usage of the agency’s service by its stakeholders. First, the main user of Cedefop’s services at the EU level during the evaluation period was the European Commission, followed by the European Parliament, while at international level, the OECD used Cedefop’s information the most often. Second, stakeholders who responded to our survey also named Cedefop as one of their main information sources as compared to other organisations. Third, Cedefop’s documents were consistently used for EU policy documents preparation, as well as preparation of documents by international organisations and scientific articles throughout the evaluation period. There is also evidence

that Cedefop's work was used to support national policy developments. Fourth, the agency's outputs were used to a varying extent by the stakeholders, yet many of the outputs were used at least once a month by the majority of stakeholders who responded to the survey. Fifth, the stakeholders also positively evaluated the quality of Cedefop's outputs. Therefore, the agency's services corresponded to the needs of its stakeholders in terms of their usefulness, relevance and quality.

However, in some cases the outputs were published too late to have the maximum policy relevance, due to the shifting European policy agenda. Also, some of the outputs, such as the Mobility Scoreboard and opinion survey on VET in Europe, while still being evaluated positively, had a sizeable minority of stakeholders concerned about their quality. Yet, evaluation of these outputs should be seen in context of the fact that these two outputs were only in development stages at the time of stakeholder consultation.

1.1.4. How is the Agency adapting to the changes in the EU policy and in the political and socio-economic situation in the EU?

This question measures the extent to which Cedefop evolved during the evaluation period to adapt to changes in EU policy and to the broader political and socio-economic context. We are assessing the extent to which the overall EU policy objectives have been reflected in the Agency's programming documents, and exploring the perceptions of the main stakeholders on whether the Agency was responsive to the pressing political and socio-economic challenges in the EU.

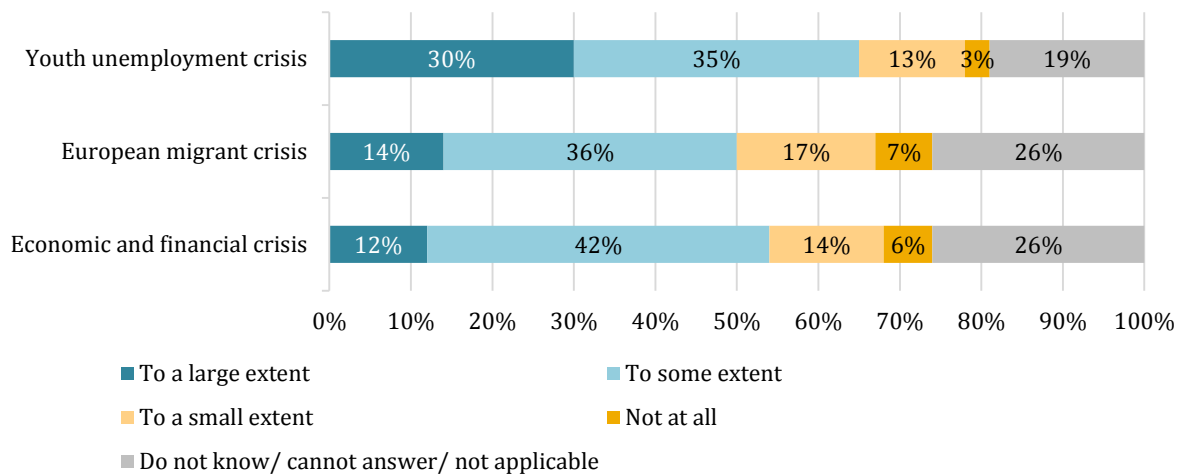
Challenges

During the evaluation period, VET and lifelong learning policy grew in importance at EU and national level, notably due to their perceived effectiveness in fighting long-term and youth unemployment in the context (and aftermath) of the financial and socio-economic crisis. Moreover, in the evaluation period, Cedefop was more closely involved in strategic policy initiatives driven by the Commission, such as the EU 2020 strategy, the European Semester and the New Skills Agenda.

Adaptation

Results from the stakeholder and Governing Board surveys show that a majority of respondents agreed that the Agency showed flexibility in the context of the recent crises that faced Europe, and in particular to the youth unemployment crisis (see figure below). The Agency's responsiveness to the economic and financial crisis and to the European migrant crisis was also evaluated positively by respondents, although somewhat lower.

Figure 21. In your view, to what extent (if at all) was Cedefop responsive to pressures arising from these events?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017, N=200.

In its 2012 Discharge report, the European Parliament emphasised Cedefop’s contribution in exploring VET’s potential to support economic development, “particularly in the context of economic recession”⁴⁹. In 2014 Discharge, the Parliament “appreciate[d] that the Centre focuse[d] its activity on contributing to and supporting policies addressing youth unemployment”⁵⁰.

Moreover, in some cases Cedefop effectively responded to the changing context by taking initiatives on relevant political and socio-economic issues. For instance, Cedefop initiated a peer-learning activity in April 2016 on ‘How to make visible and value skills and competence of refugees’⁵¹ under the Dutch presidency of the Council, in the context of the refugee crisis.

Other interviewees noted that Cedefop’s involvement in emerging policy priorities at EU level exerted pressure on its work. In particular, due to its work on EU-level policy initiatives such as the New Skills Agenda, the Skills Panorama, the EAfA or the Council Recommendation on ‘Upskilling Pathways’ the agency postponed other initiatives (of lower priority) on its Work Programme. However, out of 134 planned principal outputs, only 6 were postponed due to the additional requests from stakeholders. Most interviewees raising this issue emphasised that Cedefop generally managed these priorities quickly and effectively.

⁴⁹ European Parliament (2014), 2012 discharge: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (P7_TA(2014)0303). Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-0303+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

⁵⁰ European Parliament (2016), Discharge 2014: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P8_TA(2016)0163). Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0163+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

⁵¹ See: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/events/how-make-visible-and-value-skills-and-competence-refugees-exchanging>.

Summary

Evidence shows that overall, Cedefop successfully managed to adapt to changes in EU policy and in the general political and socio-economic situation in Europe from 2011 to 2016. According to evidence collected in the context of interviews and case studies, Cedefop was generally able to respond positively to the changing socio-economic and political context by working on the policy responses formulated at EU level in the area of VET, skills and adult learning policy, including in its programming documents. Most interviewees considered that the agency's Work Programme was flexible enough to respond to ad hoc requests, and to adapt Cedefop's work to emerging policy-related issues at EU and national level.

Cedefop has achieved this taking into account its mandate to assist the Commission in encouraging the promotion and development of VET and of in-service training at EU level, as well as taking into account the role of Member States in setting priorities at EU level according to their needs in this policy area. Evidence demonstrates that stakeholders positively assessed the agency's work in a changing political and socio-economic context marked by multiple crises. Stakeholders notably emphasised the importance of Cedefop's increasing relevance and support to Member States, and that the agency's flexibility to adapt to emerging policy issues at EU level resulted in some additional workload and limited reprioritisation of its operational activities.

1.1.5. To what extent do the governance model (and tripartite nature), internal structures, mandates, objectives and activities of the Agency, achieve the objectives of the Common Approach on Decentralised Agencies on coherency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency?

In this section we discuss the progress of Cedefop towards implementation of the Common Approach. We start by first looking at the status quo of the Agency at the time when the Common Approach was adopted and then mapping the steps that have been taken during the evaluation period that are consistent with the requirements of the Common Approach. We also look at the relation of the steps taken to the accountability, transparency, performance assessment, effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency.

The Common Approach on Decentralised Agencies was adopted by the Parliament, the Council, and the Commission in July 2012. In relation to the agencies, it outlined 66 action points regarding their role and position, structure and governance, operation, programming of activities and resources, accountability, controls and transparency, and relations with stakeholders.

When the Joint Statement was adopted, Cedefop already was compliant with a number of provisions of the Common Approach. The Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB) system in Cedefop had been in development since 2007-2008, and measured performance indicators had been in place since 2005, including the full system since 2009. The multi-annual work programming was also *de facto* in place, in the format of medium-term priorities. In terms of synergies among agencies, Cedefop already had established strong collaboration with Eurofound and ETF, as evidenced by their collaboration agreements and joint discussions of senior management on work programmes. The Agency had a headquarters agreement with Greece, although the

clauses of this agreement had been criticised over the years and the need for renegotiation of the agreement was stressed often by Cedefop's staff and stakeholders. The communication activities of Cedefop were based on a comprehensive communication strategy. The information presented in 2001 external evaluation of Cedefop also indicates that at that time the Agency was already following up external evaluations with Action Plans and involving its Governing Board in the process of follow-up. Finally, Cedefop already had an executive board (Bureau), assisting the Governing Board and making its own operational decisions.

During the evaluation period, Cedefop has made progress in the area of accountability, transparency, and appropriate assessment of performance, to better comply with the Common Approach:

- Cedefop has contributed to the work of the EU Agencies Performance Development Network (PDN), which develops templates, guidelines, and toolkits as a follow up to the Commission's Roadmap on the follow-up of the Common Approach. The contribution in particular included participation in the working group on 'Activity based budgeting, costing and management', cooperating with other EU agencies to collect good practices and developing a toolkit for Activity Based Management in EU agencies. The participation in this group brought immediate impact to the Agency, as Cedefop used this experience for the development of the Programming Document 2017-2020 and the key performance indicators⁵²
- Cedefop was one of the few agencies⁵³ which by 2015 had adopted an Anti-Fraud Strategy, following the workshops and agency-specific assistance organised by OLAF in 2014⁵⁴
- The first multi-annual work programme in the new format was adopted for the years 2017-2020. It replaced the previous tool, the medium-term priorities

Based on the information gathered via the interview programme and the surveys, Cedefop had no major issues related to accountability and transparency. The evidence gathered points to adequate and effective mechanisms to ensure accountability, transparency, and appropriate assessment of performance in the agency. In fact, the accountability and transparency mechanisms and the requirements to implement them were extensive, and a number of stakeholders and staff members identified that the Agency was investing too many human resources in such mechanisms.

Cedefop also made effort to improve its effectiveness and efficiency in line with the Common Approach:

- Cedefop has been exploring the opportunities for shared services with the other EU agencies. This collaboration takes place e.g. via NAPO (Network of Procurement Officers), ECTAC (ICT network), and the network of heads of administration. Cedefop took part in an interagency call for tenders for cloud services, led by EFSA. Cedefop's

⁵² 2015 Consolidated Annual Activity Report.

⁵³ EFCA, CEDEFOP, EASA, EIGE, EIOPA, ESMA, OHIM, EBA.

⁵⁴ 2015 Progress Report on implementation of Common Approach.

administrative staff and senior management are committed to further increasing the shared services potential and continue to see this as one of the most feasible and important scenarios for the future of the EU agencies

- The communications activities of the agency have evolved significantly during the last few years. The new communications strategy was adopted and focused on strategic key accounts. A 'paperless' dissemination policy was adopted, which helped save significant printing resources. Cedefop's website was also improved to present the core information on Cedefop's outputs and strategic objectives in all languages of the EU, and the number of returning users increased significantly. Importantly, the improved communication also included the strengthening of a Brussels liaison office, which contributed to visibility of the Agency at the European Parliament and among the Brussels-based European associations of social partners and other stakeholders

The analysis of coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in this evaluation also does not identify any significant drawbacks of the Agency. The number of Cedefop's staff has been reduced by almost 10 percent since the start of the current MFF. The activities of the Agency were streamlined to adapt to these changes and while the strain on human resources has been reported, so far, the Agency has been able to keep a similar level of impact and added value.

The main major non-conformity of Cedefop with the Common Approach is the size and composition of its Governing (in the future - Management) Board. At 87 members, it is one of the largest among all EU agencies, and includes a very wide representation of stakeholders (as opposed to limited representation stated in the CA), three representatives per Member State (one in CA), and three Commission representatives (two in CA). Cedefop, together with Eurofound and EU-OSHA, is one of only three agencies with tripartite representation in its board, making it quite an unusual arrangement.

The tripartite nature is however one of the most valued features of the Agency and its Governing Board by the stakeholders. Tripartite governance stands at the heart of VET policy making at all levels, from school boards to national bodies. Tripartite governance is reportedly particularly valued in Member States which are the recognised frontrunners in VET policy, such as Germany or Austria – countries where strong VET has been linked with lower incidence of youth unemployment and better labour market situation following the economic and financial crisis. Tripartite governance of VET is also heavily promoted as the best practice of the EU by ETF to its partner countries.

The size of the Governing Board has also been reported to only have minor implications to the effectiveness of governance and the costs related to its functioning. The executive Bureau was able to sufficiently deal with operational matters and ensure that the decisions taken in the Board are well-informed. The costs of operation were limited to travel, accommodation, catering and printing/presentation costs related to one meeting per year with approximately 50-60 participants (due to lack of alternate members in any given Governing Board meeting the representation was not full).

Summary

The findings show that the agency performed successfully in terms of accountability, transparency, performance assessment, effectiveness and efficiency during the evaluation period, and in fact carried out a number of practices suggested by the Common Approach already by the time it was adopted. However, the agency continued the step-by-step implementation of various further elements of the Common Approach. The main remaining discrepancy was the size of Cedefop’s Governing Board. However, it was also one of the most valued features of the agency by its stakeholders.

1.1.6. Points for improvement of effectiveness

Table 6. Points for improvement of effectiveness

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>Some of the outputs, such as the Mobility Scoreboard and the opinion survey on VET in Europe (projects that were still at a development stage during the evaluation period), while being evaluated positively, had a sizeable minority of stakeholders concerned about their quality.</p>	<p>Cedefop staff responsible for projects, activities and outputs which have a sizeable minority of stakeholders unsatisfied with their quality should explore the main causes for concern among stakeholders and actions which could be taken to alleviate such concerns. These concerns should be discussed with the Governing Board and the Commission, and actions to be taken should be decided. As regards the Mobility Scoreboard and opinion survey on VET, projects which were still at development stage during the evaluation, the agency should monitor the quality of these outputs once they are finalised by consulting stakeholders.</p>
<p>Among Cedefop’s four operational objectives and types of activities, communication activities were less positively assessed by stakeholders in surveys, interviews and the OPC. Nevertheless, Cedefop’s communication activities have been widely restructured during the evaluation period to better adapt the agency to emerging communications challenges and better reflect the needs and interests of the agency’s key stakeholders. Cedefop re-designed its communication strategy to make it more interactive and engaging, and implemented a ‘paperless policy’ for publications. Cedefop’s website was revamped, aiming to present core information on Cedefop’s outputs and strategic objectives in all EU languages, and to present more hands-on information for policy makers, researchers and the wider public. The agency also collaborated more systematically with DG EMPL</p>	<p>A translation strategy for Cedefop’s products could improve the Agency’s visibility. In particular, a demand-driven approach to translations could be considered. Case study findings show that national government bodies or other stakeholders could be willing to translate Cedefop’s outputs to national languages themselves where a very high relevance to the country in question is perceived. The translations could therefore in some cases be negotiated with the national actors.</p> <p>To further improve its communication activities, the agency should continue exploring and applying innovative communication channels such as webinars, communities of practice, interactive videos and live streaming of Cedefop’s events.</p> <p>Cedefop should also continue to increase its social</p>

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>on communication, e.g. by agreeing on a common communication approach in 2016 and joining forces on communication activities. Finally, the reinforcement of the liaison office in Brussels since 2015 has allowed to intensify Cedefop's visibility and communications towards its key stakeholders at EU level.</p>	<p>media presence as it is a cost-effective way of increasing accessibility and visibility and reaching diverse groups of stakeholders. In addition, increased collaboration with other EU institutions, Council Presidencies and national actors in communication activities is encouraged.</p>
<p>The agency became more visible to the Commission's policy officers and a wider array of stakeholders (e.g. the European Parliament and Council Presidencies), especially since the allocation of additional human resources to the liaison office in Brussels. However, human resources used for the liaison office represented 0.6 FTE, compared to, for example, 2 FTE for Eurofound's Brussels liaison office.</p>	<p>The Brussels liaison office should be further strengthened to ensure better communication between the Agency and Brussels-based stakeholders, including the Commission, Parliament, Council, European social partners, NGOs and any other relevant parties. Larger resources dedicated to this matter could increase the visibility of the Agency, the policy relevance of its work and its reactivity to changing policy landscape.</p>
<p>Cedefop's move towards increasing support to Member States was evident in the evaluation period. There was also some evidence that Cedefop's work was used to support national policy developments. However, evidence from interviews with Commission staff reveal that the results of the work carried out by Cedefop at national level in the context of apprenticeship reviews could be better integrated into the EU policy making and discussions, in particular from countries in which apprenticeship reviews have been conducted..</p>	<p>The country-specific support provided by Cedefop (e.g. country thematic reviews) should continue to stay aligned with the agency's strategy and capacity, demand from Member States in the context of national reforms, and the needs of the Commission, notably in the context of the European Semester (CSRs), for maximum policy impact at national and EU level. Cedefop should seek to better communicate cross-country findings from these projects to increase their potential impact at EU level.</p>
<p>The main remaining discrepancy of Cedefop with the Common Approach was the size and structure of the Governing Board. However, it was also one of the most valued features of the agency by its stakeholders.</p>	<p>The structure and composition of the Agency's Governing Board should be reorganised, and its size significantly reduced as per the requirements of the Common Approach. Similar to the other tripartite agencies, however, concrete measures should be taken to minimise the possible impact of restructured governance to the usage and acceptance of Cedefop's work, as well as representation of social partners.</p>

1.2. Efficiency

This criterion is assessed as the extent to which the Agency has conducted its activities and achieved its objectives at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources, as well as

administrative arrangements. We have looked both at the ‘production efficiency’ (i.e. the relationship between inputs and outputs) and the ‘allocation efficiency’ (i.e. the relationship between inputs and higher-level outcomes, such as the results and impacts).

The Tender Specifications put forward six specific questions operationalising the efficiency criterion. Each question, evaluating efficiency of the Agency is outlined below.

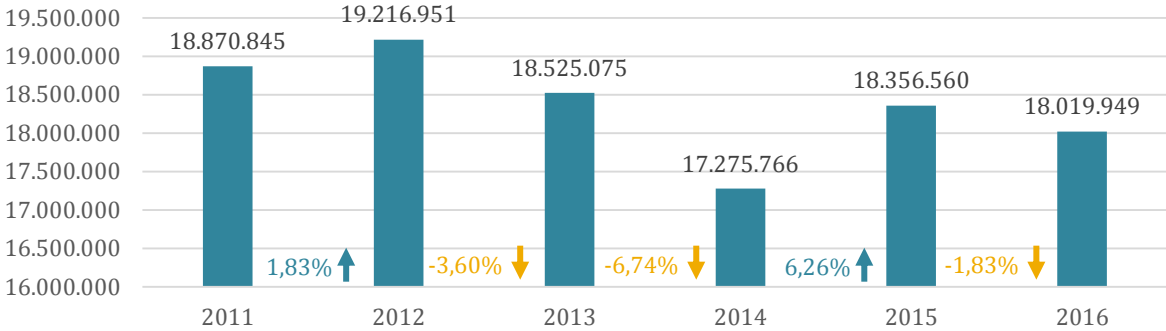
1.2.1.To what extent is the Agency cost-effective? How well are administrative and operational budgets balanced?

To evaluate the extent to which Cedefop is cost-effective, we look at the available administrative and monitoring data relating to the budget and expenditure of the agencies and support these sources with findings from interviews. We look at whether Cedefop’s outputs and achievement of objectives have been appropriate within the given budget. We also analyse whether the Agency has been able to respond to *ad hoc* requests, the ratio of its administrative and operational expenditures, and whether any measures for efficiency gains have been established.

Setting the scene

Cedefop’s budget varied over the evaluation period, fluctuating from 17.2 million (2014) to 19.2 million (2012)⁵⁵. The largest drop (6,74%) between 2013 and 2014, while the biggest increase (6,26%) occurred between 2014 and 2015. Cedefop’s 18-19 million budget was slightly lower than average 20 million budget compared with other agencies in the cluster of Competitiveness and Growth.⁵⁶

Figure 22. Cedefop’s budget 2011-2016



The Agency’s budget is divided into three categories:

- Title 1: Staff. This includes salaries and related costs such as staff training
- Title 2: Infrastructure and operating expenditure. This includes maintenance of buildings, equipment, furniture, software, etc.

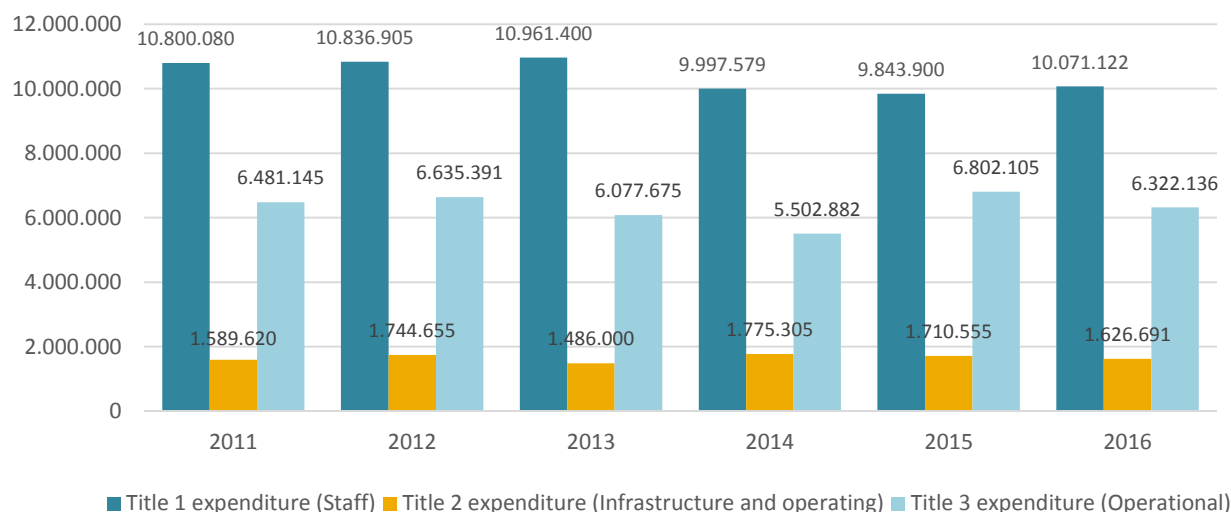
⁵⁵ Final commitment appropriations for the financial year, including Norway and Iceland funds.

⁵⁶ Draft General Budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, Budget implementation 2014: Decentralised agencies of heading 1a – Competitiveness for growth and jobs.

- Title 3: Operational expenditure. This includes expenses relating to the performance of the key activities of the agency, including missions, meetings and interpretation, pilot studies and projects, and communication

The figure below presents data on annual expenditure, divided into these main categories.

Figure 23. Staff, administrative, and operational expenditure (EUR)



Source: compiled by authors, from Cedefop’s Annual Activity Reports 2011-2016.

The Agency demonstrated high operational efficiency by realising nearly 100 per cent of its annual budget for each year during the evaluation period, achieving a rate of 99.99% rate in 2016 (see table below).

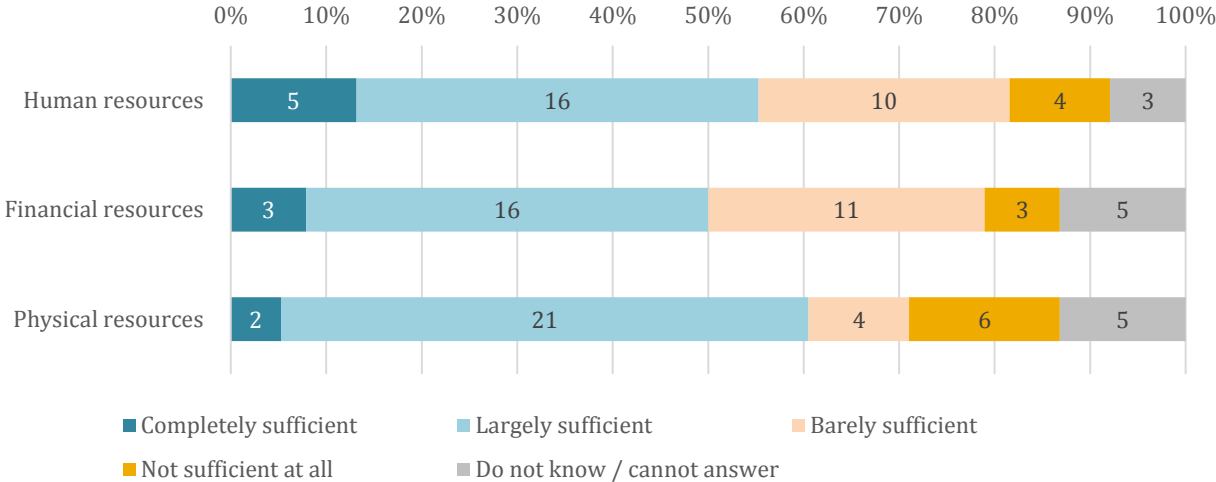
Table 7. Annual budget implementation (%)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Budget implementation	97.1%	99.76%	99.77%	98.93%	99.64%	99.99%

Source: Cedefop’s annual activity reports.

We also asked the members of Cedefop’s Governing Board, whose responsibilities include supervision of the Agency’s budgetary management, for their views on whether the resources allocated were sufficient to achieve the Agency’s objectives. While over 60% of the respondents believed that the Agency’s physical resources were sufficient, rather views were mixed over financial and human resources (see figure below).

Figure 24. In your view, how sufficient (if at all) are the resources allocated to achieve the agency's objectives? (No. of respondents)

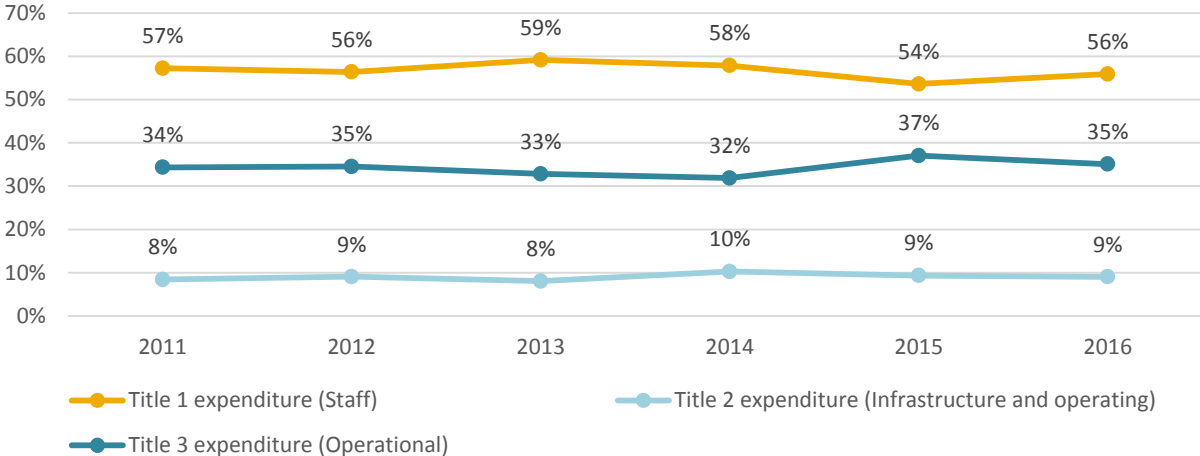


Source: Stakeholder survey, responses from Governing Board members, N = 38.

Administrative vs operational budget

Cedefop’s budget trends from 2011 to 2016 showed that the proportion of operational, administrative, and staff expenses remained stable over the evaluation period, except for a 5% increase in operation expenditure and 4% decrease in staff expenditure in 2015 (see figure below).

Figure 25. Staff, administrative and operational expenditure (% of budget)

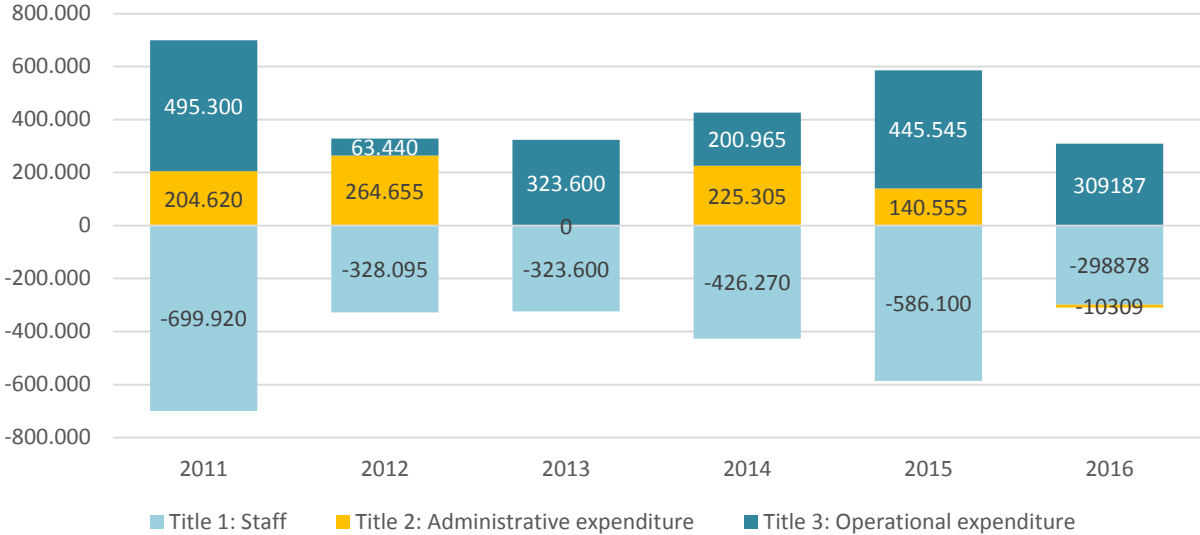


Source: Compiled by authors, based on data from Cedefop’s annual activity reports.

Cedefop’s budgetary transfer trends reflect the budget structure discussed above and indicate that the Agency had been able to transfer a significant share of staff budget (title 1) towards operational and administrative expenditure (see figure below). For instance, in 2015 Cedefop successfully transferred and committed significant savings in personnel costs due to a

downward adjustment in salary weighting factor⁵⁷. In 2016, the Agency managed to transfer resources from both staff and administrative expenditure to operational activities. Most of the interviewees agreed, however, that the Agency should look for ways to reallocate even more resources from administration to its core operations.

Figure 26. Cedefop’s budget transfers, EUR.



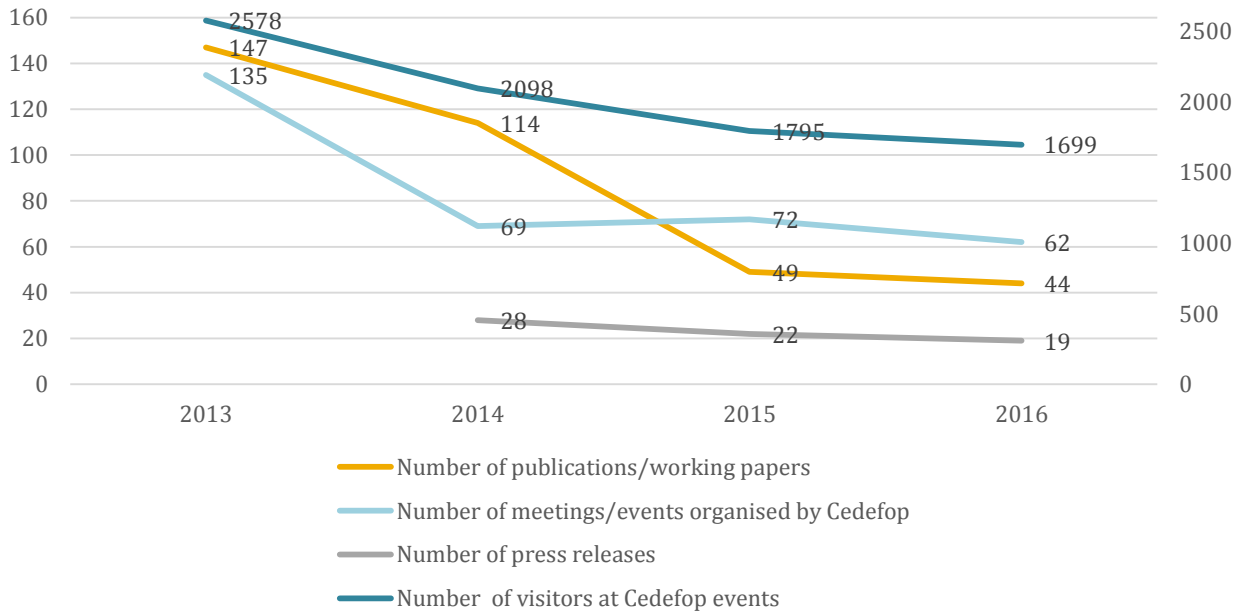
Source: Cedefop’s annual activity reports.

Increasing cost-effectiveness

Cedefop’s output indicators signalled that since 2013 the nominal number of Agency’s outputs had been gradually decreasing (see figure below).

⁵⁷ Annual Activity Report 2015.

Figure 27. Cedefop's outputs, 2013-2016.



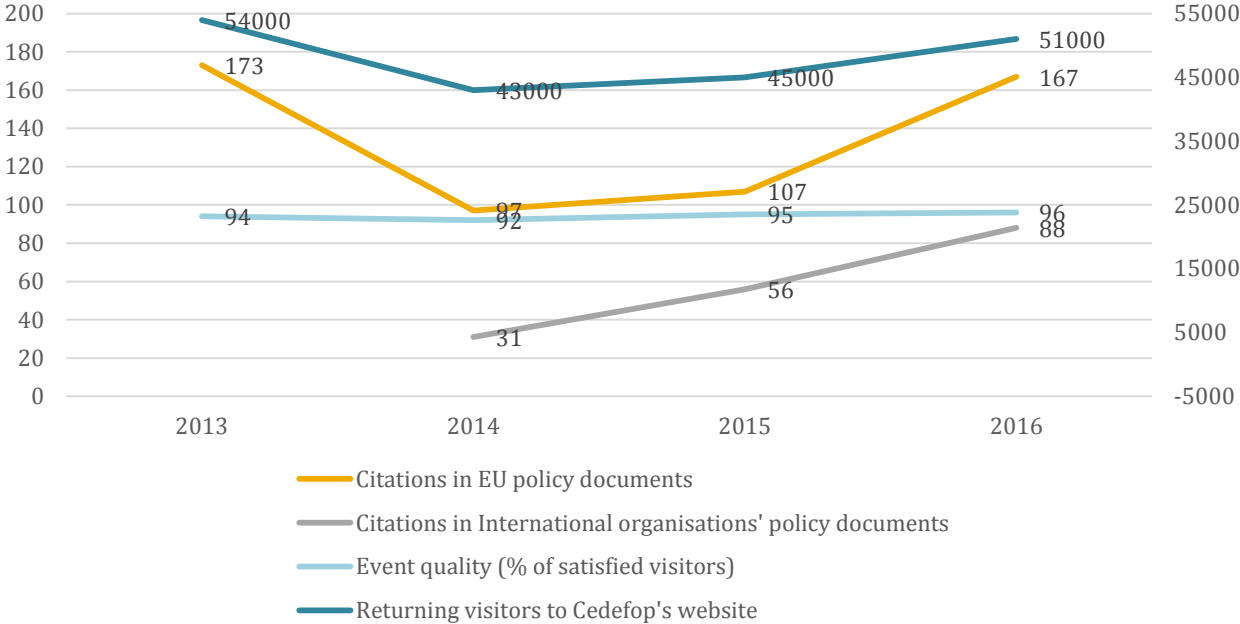
Source: Cedefop's PMS indicators.

However, this does not reflect the effect the Agency had on policies and stakeholders. Cedefop's outcome indicators⁵⁸ showed that even though the Agency produced significantly fewer outputs, since 2014 it managed to increase the number of citations in EU policy documents, increase event quality, and regain a positive trend in Cedefop's website visits ⁵⁹ (see figure below). Such findings imply that the agency managed to gradually increase its cost-effectiveness and produce the same outcomes with less outputs.

⁵⁸ Evidence to inform policies and their implementation; new knowledge and insights generated; raised awareness among stakeholders, source: Cedefop's PMS data.

⁵⁹ Cedefop's PMS data; no comparable data for downloads of publications for the period 2013-2016.

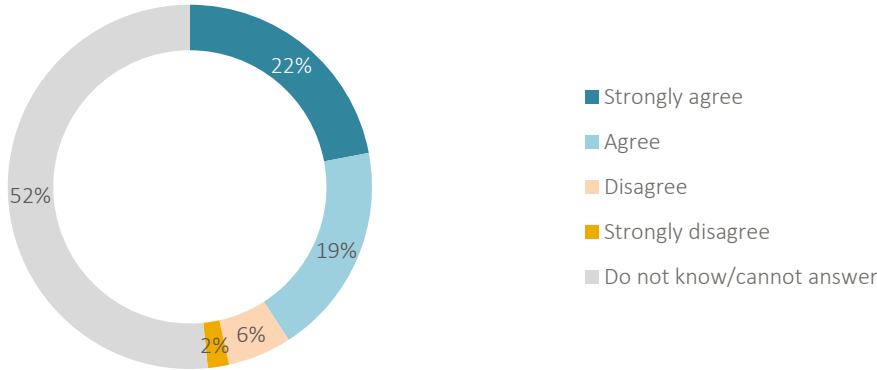
Figure 28. Selected Cedefop's outcome indicators



Source: Cedefop's PMS indicators.

The interviewed stakeholders and staff members observed that Cedefop was able to achieve its objectives and take on challenging additional tasks within available resources. The open public consultation also indicated the strong consensus of public at large on high efficiency of the Agency⁶⁰ (see figure below). The open public consultation showed that the majority of respondents who had an opinion considered the Agency's work to be efficient: 41% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that Cedefop's outputs and results were commensurate with resources used and only 8% of respondents thought that the Agency has not been efficient during the evaluation period.

Figure 29. Do you agree that the Agency's work is efficient (outputs and results are commensurate with the resources used)?



⁶⁰ Results from an open public consultation for the evaluation of Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA.

Source: OPC, N = 159.

However, the Governing Board interviewees were concerned that ambitious work programmes and shrinking resources may eventually compromise the quality of Cedefop's outputs.

Ad hoc requests

One of the potential straining factors for Cedefop's budget was ad hoc requests (activities not foreseen in the work programmes) from the stakeholders, mainly the Commission. This concern was raised numerous times by the staff members of the Agency as well as its Governing Board members. The budgetary authority also flagged the risk of additional activities: "[The European Parliament] understands that the Centre's management identified one generic risk above the benchmark concerning the issue of unforeseen (external) demands from stakeholders; notes that such demands from stakeholders, including the Union's institutions, may be difficult to meet with the Centre's available resources".⁶¹

In 2016 one of the major recent European policy developments that required significant Cedefop's input was the New Skills Agenda for Europe. Cedefop gave a major contribution for the Commission to come up with the package of the New Skills Agenda by being involved in drafting the Staff Working Document supporting the revision of the EQF, the proposal for a Council Recommendation on establishing a Skills Guarantee, the Blueprint for Sectoral Collaboration on Skills, and giving comments on the drafts of the planned Europass decision and the related Staff Working Document. Cedefop's Governing Board acknowledged the fact that Cedefop's work was well aligned with the Commission's Communication on a New Skills Agenda for Europe and the Agency's expertise was used to underpin this important development⁶².

As stated in the 2016 Cedefop's Progress report on the Work Programme 2016, "some adaptations in several projects were necessary as the Agency had to carry out additional activities which were not envisaged in the planning phase, in particular to support the preparation of the Skills Agenda". Out of 134 planned principal outputs, 6 were postponed due to the additional requests from stakeholders.⁶³ The Centre managed to accommodate the new activities by postponing two workshops, two publications, and two policy learning fora. Even though 4% of planned outputs were postponed, by the end of the year Cedefop managed to reach 99,99% budget implementation⁶⁴ indicating high agency's cost-effectiveness and ability to adapt to changing requirements. While Cedefop's contribution to the major policy documents resulted in additional workload and reprioritisation of operational activities, it also increased the policy relevance of the agency.

⁶¹ Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the financial year 2015, (2016/2161(DEC))

⁶² Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2016.

⁶³ Total planned outputs for 2016 (134); Completed/ongoing (114; 85%); Delayed/cancelled (20; 15%) of which due to additional requests (6; 4%). Source: compiled by authors using data from Cedefop's progress report on the Work Programme 2016.

⁶⁴ Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2016.

One of the ways to better accommodate ad hoc requests was adoption of so-called ‘negative priorities’⁶⁵ – planning which activities or outputs could be postponed or cancelled to free up resources necessary for implementation of ad hoc activities. Interviewed staff members agreed that setting ‘negative priorities’ for operational activities was a challenging task, especially considering the tripartite nature of the agency. Different stakeholder groups represented in the Governing Board argued for retaining of activities most relevant to their interests.

Measures for more efficiency gains

To bring about more efficiency gains the Agency has set up an internal working group on administrative procedures and resources. The group has been focusing on deploying electronic tools and e-workflows, simplifying internal rules and procedures (e.g. procurement thresholds, rules for expert reimbursement). Cedefop’s staff members believed that it was possible to redistribute some of the administrative resources by simplifying superfluous internal procedures, and making more use of already existing electronic tools and workflows. Following one of the IAS audits, the Agency gradually switched from mostly paper towards mostly electronic documents. The recently adopted paperless policy was recognised by staff as one of the main administrative efficiency gains example. For instance, electronic signatures having the same legal status and the analogue ones introduced significant cost savings in terms of time, effort, and physical resources.

The Agency’s representatives also believed that it was crucially important to exchange best administrative practices among decentralised agencies. Cedefop’s staff elaborated that inter-agency networks for procurement officers (NAPO) or ICT professionals, and a catalogue of shared services were extremely useful in improving internal Agency’s procedures. Moreover, they saw a need for more structured cooperation in exchanging best practices. Systematic development of the catalogue of shared services and more structured inter-agency cooperation in sharing of practices, procedures, and tools could be further reinforced.

Many of the interviewed Commission’s and Cedefop’s representatives elaborated on the possibility of shared administrative services among the EU decentralised agencies for more efficiency gains. For instance, one of the criteria for shared services could be geographical proximity. Agencies operating near each other could potentially share some of the physical IT centres or business continuity structures, as well as part of legal services for the agencies located in similar legal environments (e.g. in the same host country). The most commonly mentioned shared service was common tendering and procurement procedures for various horizontal goods and services such as ICT and audio-visual equipment, cloud services, press/social media monitoring reports, catering, external evaluation, data protection, etc.

On the other hand, interviewees from the same group noted that it was rather problematic to share some administrative services due to uncertainty in liability and accountability. For instance, legal services or procurement procedures were seen as sensitive areas, since it would be important to decide which agency would be liable if there were any mistakes in the shared

⁶⁵ Whereas it could be argued that a term such as ‘lower priority activities/outputs’ would reflect the nature of this programming practice better, this was the term used by the majority of interviewees.

procedures. The interviewed Cedefop's representatives were also not optimistic about shared HR services, especially for the operational staff, as they believed every agency had a very distinct expertise profile. This perception was supported by the recent experience of Cedefop, where the effort to implement a common pool of candidates for employment together with ETF (recommended by 2013 external evaluation of Cedefop) did not bring significant efficiency gains.

Summary

The findings show that the agency has been efficient. Cedefop achieved 99.99% budget implementation in 2016 and had a stable operational/administrative expenditure ratio. Cedefop managed to achieve its objectives, take on additional tasks, and maintain its outcome indicators despite of reducing resources. Even though the agency produced significantly fewer outputs, since 2014 it managed to increase the number of citations in EU policy documents again, increase event quality, and reintroduce a positive trend in Cedefop's website visits. This was done in part by managing to transfer staff and administrative savings towards operational budget titles. The recently adopted paperless policy was recognised by staff as one of the main administrative efficiency gains.

Cedefop also successfully reprioritised some of its activities to accommodate ad hoc requests from the stakeholders, mainly the Commission. While the requests implied additional workload, they also significantly contributed to the agency's relevance.

The agency demonstrated active efforts to review its internal administrative procedures and reallocate efficiency gains to core operations. Additional potential for efficiency gains was seen in sharing horizontal services such as common tendering and procurement procedures for ICT and audio-visual equipment, cloud services, press/social media monitoring reports, catering, external evaluation, and data protection with other agencies.

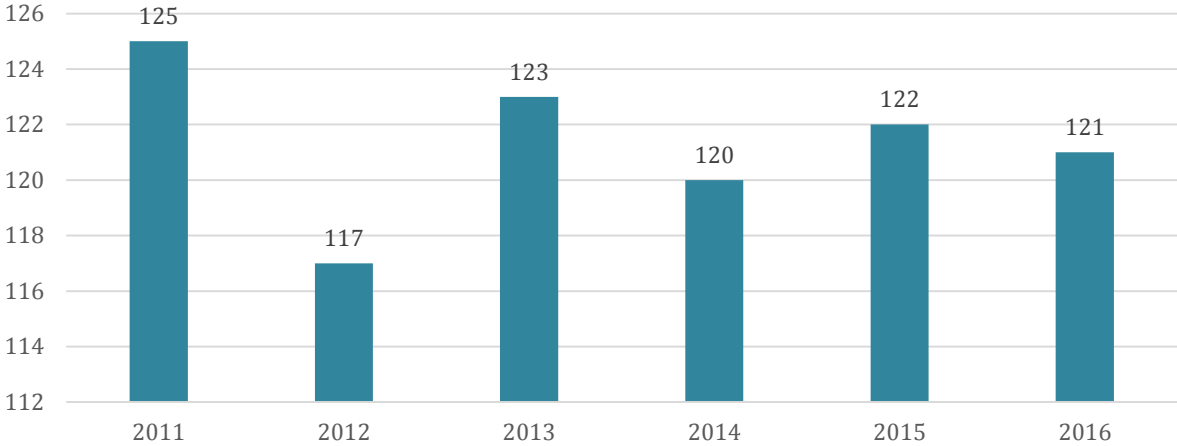
1.2.2. To what extent are staff resources and workload appropriate to fulfil efficiently and effectively the Agency's objectives and activities?

To determine the extent to which staff resources and workload were appropriate to efficiently and effectively fulfil Cedefop's objectives, we discuss the balance between operational and administrative staff of the Agency, the staff reductions that have been taking place during the evaluation period, and survey findings about the extent to which staff perceive their workload as appropriate.

Setting the scene

The figure below presents the number of Cedefop's total staff – establishment plan, seconded national experts, and contract agents.

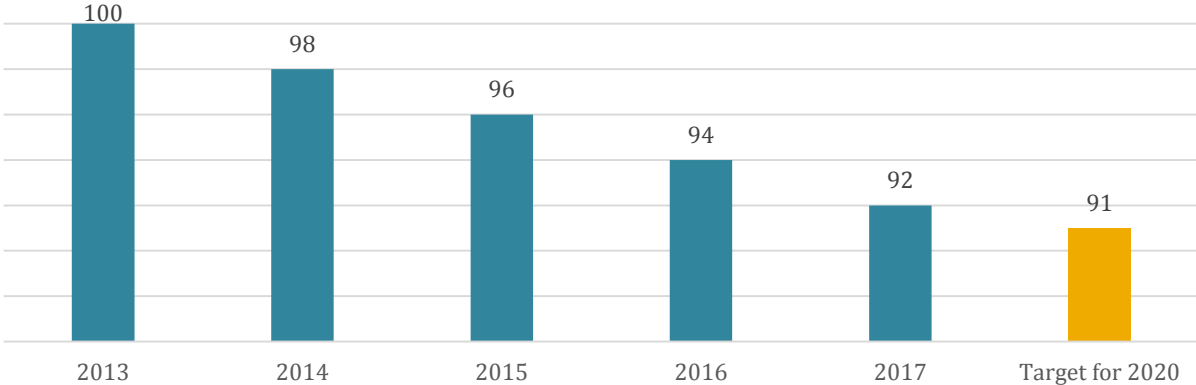
Figure 30. Total number of staff at Cedefop in 2011-2016



Source: Adapted from Cedefop’s Annual activity reports

In the context of a 2013 Commission’s Communication setting out a proposal to impose a 10% staff reduction on the established decentralised agencies over the 2014-2020 period, Cedefop is expected to reduce the number of posts in its establishment plan from 100 in 2013 to 91 by 2020. ⁶⁶ Cedefop has been following this recommendation and since 2013 reduced the establishment plan by two posts every year (see figure below).

Figure 31. Number of posts in Cedefop’s establishment plan



Source: Draft General Budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, Working Document Part III, Bodies set up by the EU and having legal personality and Public-Private Partnership.

Cedefop has been committed to implementing staff cuts, as far as possible without impact on its level of activity. Increasing efficiency, redeployments and reorganisation of operational departments helped the agency to address a growing number of tasks with shrinking resources. The Staff Working Document on Draft General Budget of the European Union noted that “longer-term needs can only sustainably be addressed through additional posts on the

⁶⁶ COM(2013) 519 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Programming of human and financial resources for decentralised agencies 2014-2020

establishment plan or alternatively through cuts in activities endangering the capability of the Agency to fulfil its mission.”⁶⁷

Since the Commission’s recommendation to reduce staff members in the establishment plan, Cedefop kept 98% of the establishment plan filled in 2013, 2015, and 2016, and 97% in 2014.

Figure 32. % of Cedefop’s establishment plan filled (staff capacity)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
% of establishment plan filled	96%	97%	98%	97%	98%	98%

Source: Adapted from Cedefop’s Annual activity reports

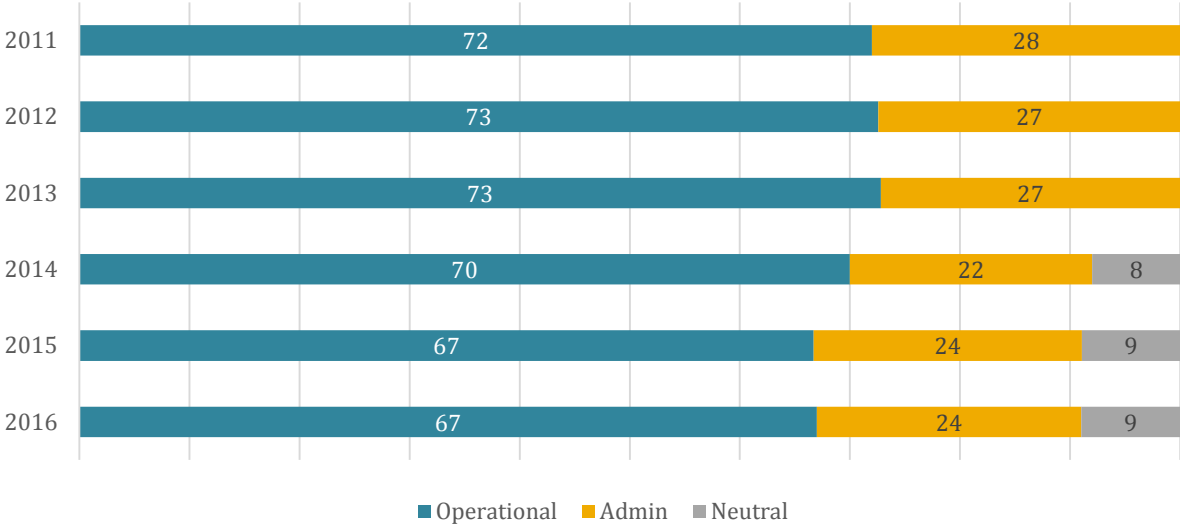
Balance between operational and administrative staff

From 2011 to 2013 Cedefop’s operational and administrative staff ratio was rather stable at approximately 70%/30%. In 2014, Cedefop applied a new methodology for the job screening exercise required by the Financial Regulation. The methodology provided by the Commission introduced the following staff categories:

- **Operational**, carrying out frontline activities
- **Administrative** support and coordination, enabling core business activities
- **Neutral**, indicating intermediate mixed staff category

After the introduction of the new job screening methodology, Cedefop’s operational staff resources remained on the favourable balance towards operational activities (see figure below).

Figure 33. Ratio of operational and administrative staff (%)



Source: European Court of Auditors, Reports on the annual accounts of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the financial year 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016.

⁶⁷ Draft General Budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, Working Document Part III, Bodies set up by the EU and having legal personality and Public-Private Partnership.

Cedefop's stakeholders saw the need for the Agency to improve its administrative and operational staff ratio towards the operational side. Their arguments went in line with the need to generally increase operational resources of the Agency. However, the interviews showed that there was an inflated narrative about the ratio of Cedefop's HR categories among stakeholders, likely remaining from the time when the previous methodology was used. A number of interviewees from the Commission and the Governing Board alike thought that Cedefop had around 60% of administrative staff and found this ratio highly unacceptable. Cedefop's staff members saw such high misconception as a result of lack of mutual communication. However, Cedefop's staff members also agreed that there was still a need to allocate more human resources towards operational activities. Nevertheless, being a small agency, Cedefop still had to comply with minimum administrative requirements applied for all agencies, thus it was possible to reduce administration only up to a certain amount. Cedefop's staff saw simplification of administrative procedures and introduction of more efficient workflows as a way to further adjust the HR ratio. As discussed elsewhere, sharing horizontal administrative services such as monitoring or evaluation with the other agencies or with the Commission could also be explored to reduce administrative staff needs of the Agency.

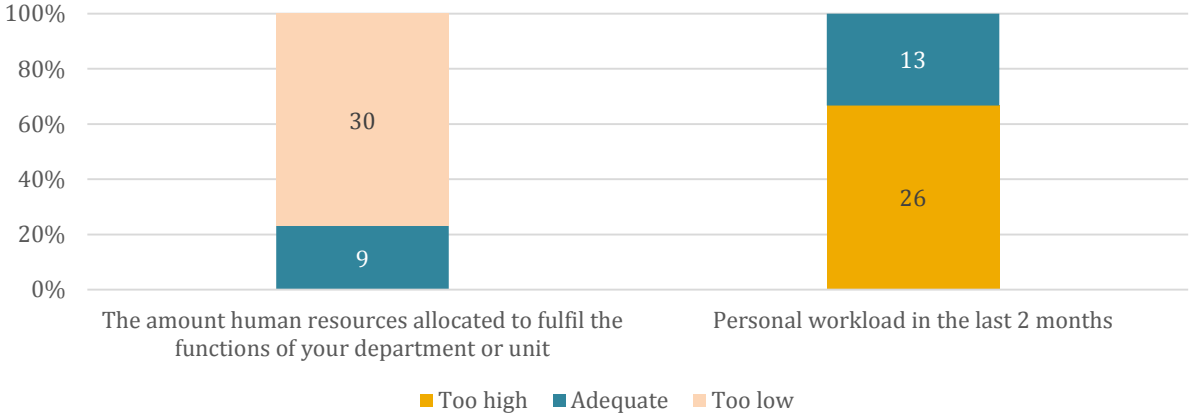
Workload

While Cedefop's stakeholders and staff members unanimously agreed that overall the workload within the agency had been gradually increasing, findings indicated that the reasons for perceived heavy workload changed over time. Internal Cedefop's staff survey carried out in 2013 indicated administrative procedures, simultaneous involvement in various projects, frequent ad hoc external demands and the effects of turnover as the main drivers for high work pressure and heavy workload⁶⁸. The interview programme carried out for this evaluation (2017) identified that in addition to the internal factors, increasing scope of the agency's operational activities (e.g. policy support at national level) and reducing resources (budget and HR cuts) contributed to increasing workload within the agency. The 2017 staff survey results⁶⁹ supported this trend, with two thirds of employees identifying their personal workload as too high, and 77% of the employees perceiving the amount human resources allocated to fulfil the functions of their department or unit as too low (see figure below).

⁶⁸ Internal Cedefop Staff Survey, 2013.

⁶⁹ Cedefop staff survey carried out for the four agency evaluation, 2017.

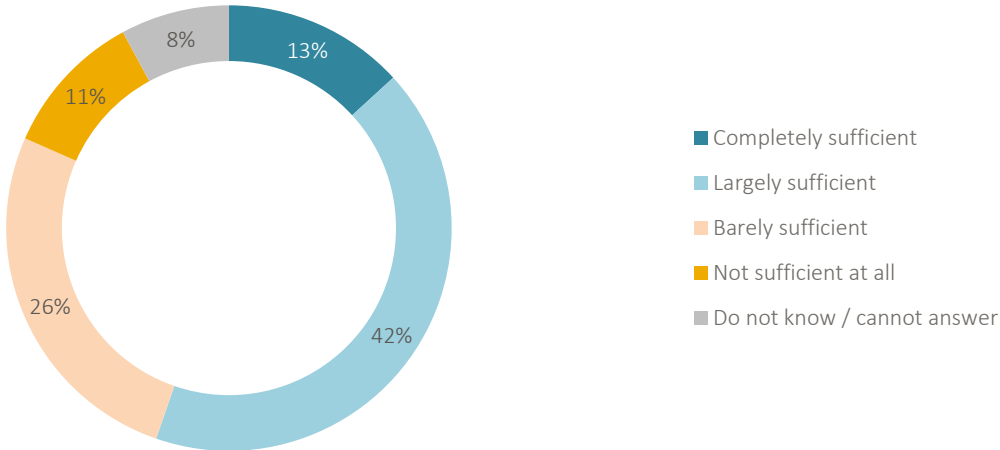
Figure 34. Cedefop’s human resources and workload as evaluated by staff



Source: Cedefop staff survey 2017, N=39.

Despite staff’s consensus on the lack of human resources, surveyed Cedefop’s Governing Board members leaned toward thinking that human resources to allocated to achieve the Agency’s objectives were completely or largely sufficient (55%) (see figure below).

Figure 35. Cedefop’s human resources as evaluated by GB members



Source: Cedefop Governing Board survey 2017, N=38.

Summary

External audit reports indicated that Cedefop had a balanced mix of human resources, with a ratio of approximately 70%/30% between operational to administrative and neutral staff. Cedefop's stakeholders and staff members unanimously agreed that the workload within the agency has been gradually increasing due to staff cuts and the increasing scope of activities. The majority of the agency’s staff surveyed also felt that the amount of human resources to fulfil their tasks was too low, and that their workload was too high. While Cedefop was successfully

implementing planned 10% staff cuts, the EU budget document ⁷⁰ noted that the agency may have to cut some of its activities in case of further staff reductions.

1.2.3. To what extent are the internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the Agency's adequate for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of the overall performance of the agencies while minimising the administrative burden of the Agencies and its stakeholders?

To evaluate the agency's internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating we use the data from the agency's PMS, Governing Board and staff surveys, and insights generated from the interview programme. We assess whether these mechanisms are adequate for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of the agency's performance. The main basis for this assessment is their implementation against the provisions on these mechanisms as described in the Common Approach. We then complement this assessment with the analysis of the perceptions of stakeholders and staff about these mechanisms, including the related administrative burden.

Setting the scene

Cedefop has a number of mechanisms aimed at ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of the overall performance of the Agency:

- Publicly available annual and multiannual work programmes
- Monitoring of a set of key performance indicators
- Publicly available Annual Reports and Annual Activity Reports, that include information on the implementation of the annual work programmes, budget and staff policy plans, management of the agency, and other relevant information
- Internal and external audits and evaluations of Cedefop's performance
- A multilingual website, including relevant information on governance, procurement, work programmes, staff, stakeholders and other aspects of the Agency's works

Adherence to the criteria of the Common Approach

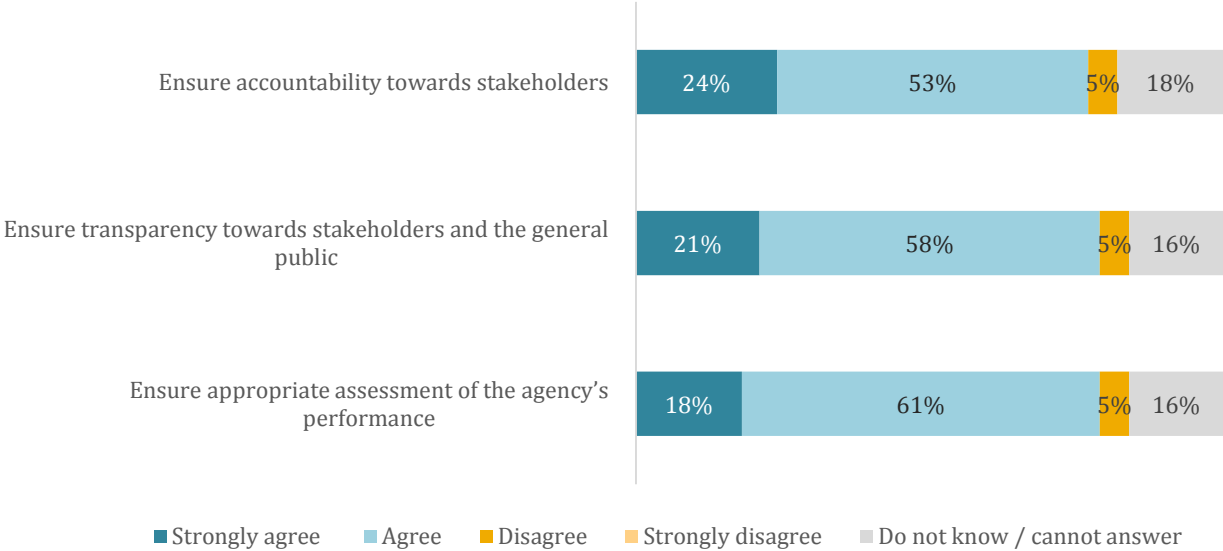
Several criteria of the Common Approach are relevant for the assessment of the adequacy of Cedefop's internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of the Agency's activities. In particular, provisions in sections IV (Programming of activities and resources) and V (Accountability, controls, and transparency and relations with stakeholders) of the CA are important for the assessment. Cedefop was compliant with all provisions of the CA in relation to accountability and appropriate assessment of the overall performance of the agency. The list of these provisions is also provided above (Setting the scene).

⁷⁰ Draft General Budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, Working Document Part III, Bodies set up by the EU and having legal personality and Public-Private Partnership.

Perceptions of stakeholders and staff

The Governing Board members who responded to the stakeholder survey also found these mechanisms to be adequate (see Figure 36 below), the same perception was also put forward by the interviewed Governing Board members.

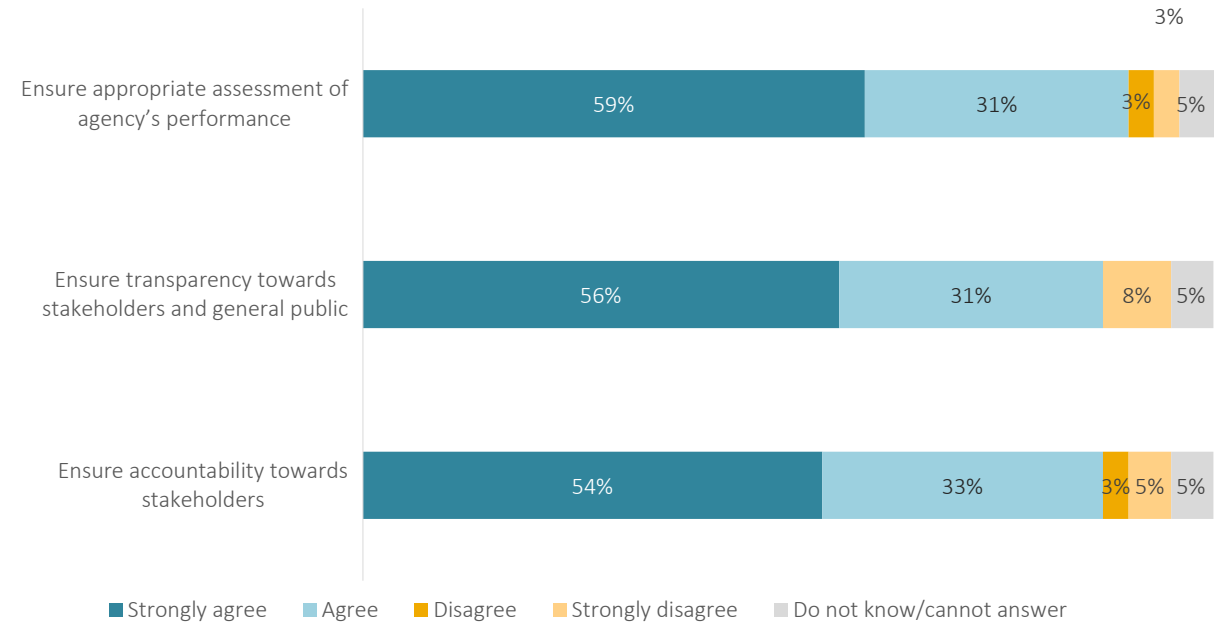
Figure 36. Please, indicate to what extent you do agree or disagree that Cedefop has adequate mechanisms in place to:



Source: Cedefop stakeholder and Governing Board survey 2017 (answers of the Governing Board members), N=38.

The Agency's staff also considered these mechanisms to be adequate according to the results of the staff survey where majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the same statements (see figure below). The interviewees representing the agency's staff also believed that the present mechanisms are solid and manage to ensure transparency. Overall, the perceptions of the staff about the adequacy these mechanisms were even more positive than those of the Governing Board members.

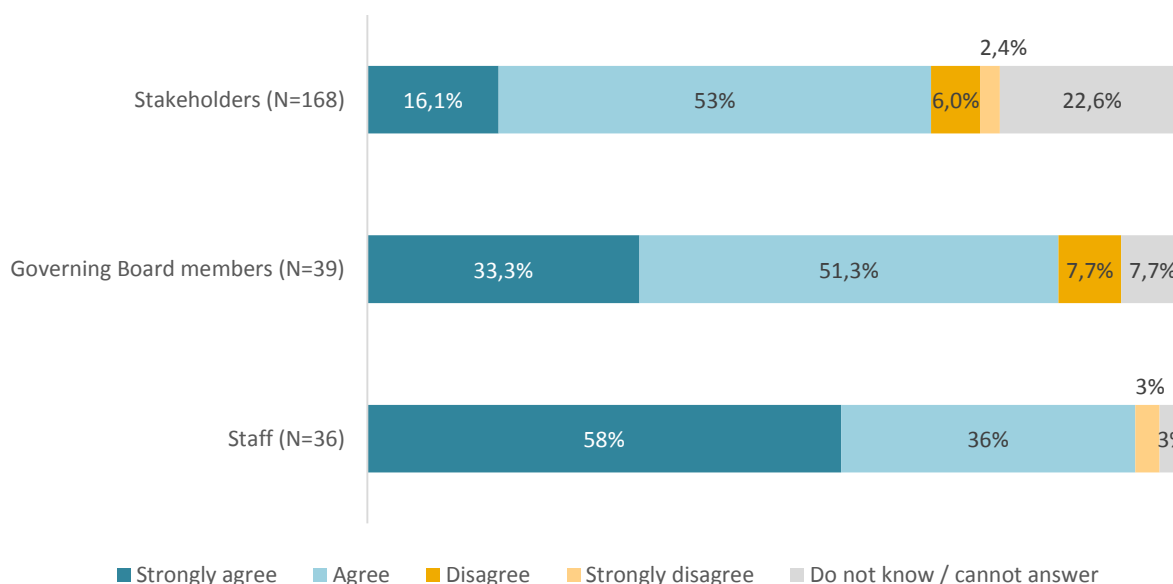
Figure 37. Please, indicate to what extent you do agree or disagree that Cedefop has adequate mechanisms in place to:



Source: Cedefop staff survey 2017, N=39.

Besides believing that adequate mechanisms are in place, the agency’s stakeholders, Governing Board members and staff, also had a rather positive perception about Cedefop’s ability to ensure accountability towards stakeholders as indicated in the figure below.

Figure 38. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Cedefop ensures its accountability towards stakeholders?

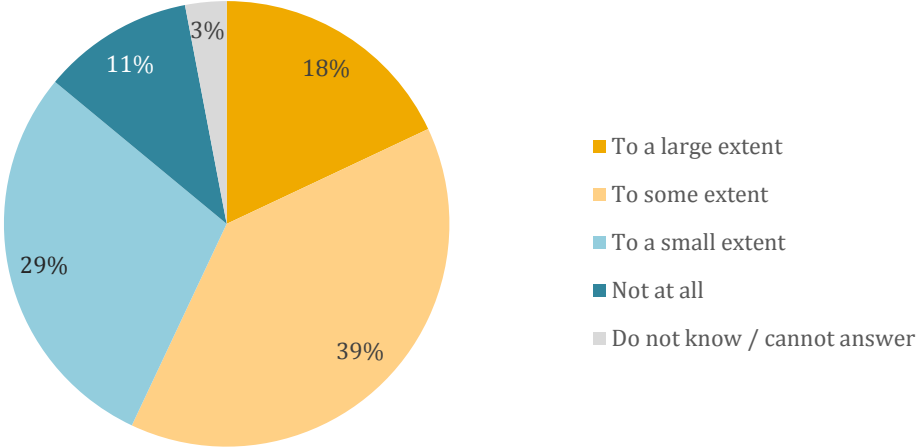


Administrative burden

Divergent opinions, however, emerged during interviews with stakeholders about the complexity of these mechanisms. The Agency staff agreed that some processes could be simplified, especially focusing on reporting the impacts of the Agency’s projects. According to interviewees from the Governing Board, however, reporting is important for them to understand how Cedefop is administered and in their view, it does not create an unnecessary administrative burden.

The indicators used in the Performance Measurement System (PMS) are very extensive, and require quite significant staff resources to monitor. For example, while the strengthening of a permanent Brussels liaison office has been evaluated very positively by Cedefop’s staff (including senior management), the Commission and social partner organisations, the liaison officer is entrusted also with collecting data for three monitoring indicators (roughly for 0.4 FTE). Given this situation, the human resources used for liaison are only 0.6 FTE, compared to, for example, 2 FTE in Eurofound’s Brussels liaison office. Results of the staff survey also show, that tasks related to programming, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation hinder the implementation of staff’s primary tasks. Majority of staff (57%) who responded to the survey stated that these tasks hinder their primary work at least to some extent (see figure below).

Figure 39. To what extent the administrative tasks related to the following activities (programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluation) hinder the implementation of your primary tasks?



Source: Cedefop staff survey 2017, N=38.

Comparative analysis of the Performance Measurement systems of Cedefop, Eurofound and ETF showed that the three agencies have been reporting a set of similar performance indicators, however, there have also been significant differences in monitoring and reporting outcomes.

Cedefop and Eurofound had similar indicators for monitoring contribution to policy development, while EU-OSHA did not monitor this information. Cedefop and Eurofound monitored and reported citations in policy documents and participation in stakeholder events. Cedefop’s annual reports, however, presented some indicators in a very aggregate manner. For instance, the indicator ‘Policy documents citing Cedefop work’ includes an aggregate number of documents of varying political relevance and legal status (e.g. staff working document, leaflet, resolution, fact sheet, minutes, etc.). The indicator ‘Participation in Presidency events and meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy’ also presents aggregate number of events of varying policy relevance, such as Presidency events, Commission’s working and expert groups, ACVT, DGVT, EESC, Business Europe, UEAPME, ETUC, or Eurochambres events. Lack of detail in presenting PMS indicators may lead to different interpretations of the agency’s impact.

Cedefop, Eurofound and EU-OSHA had similar indicators for monitoring dissemination and uptake of their outputs, such as publication downloads, website traffic, or event participants. However, quality monitoring of outputs was only partially present in the performance measurement systems. While Cedefop only measured quality of its events in its PMS (questionnaires disseminated to event participants), the other two agencies organised separate stakeholder satisfaction surveys for collecting and reporting on quality of their outputs.

All the three agencies reported staff capacity (% of establishment plan filled) and budget execution, however, only Eurofound and EU-OSHA had a quantitative indicator on work programme delivery rate. Cedefop tended to report delivery of the planned outputs on the project basis, providing high level of detail, but omitting the overall number of

delivered/cancelled/postponed outputs. Even though the agencies have different remits, objectives, and activities, there is scope for better aligning process indicators not related to policy impact or outcomes.

Summary

Cedefop is compliant with the Common Approach with regard of implementing necessary internal mechanisms for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of overall performance of the agency. Cedefop's Governing Board members and staff also believed that the agency had adequate mechanisms to ensure accountability towards stakeholders, transparency towards stakeholders and the general public, and appropriate assessment of the agency's performance. In terms of managing to ensure accountability towards stakeholders, both the stakeholders (including Governing Board members) and staff agreed that Cedefop succeeded in doing that.

Cedefop's staff acknowledged that activities relating to programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating are important for ensuring the accountability and appropriate assessment of the agency's activities. These activities, however, lead to additional administrative burden. 57% of surveyed Cedefop's staff argued that this administrative burden hinders implementation of their primary tasks.

Analysis of Cedefop's PMS system indicated that Cedefop's annual reports presented some PMS indicators in a very aggregate manner. The indicators 'Policy documents citing Cedefop work' and 'Participation in Presidency events and meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy' combined events of various political importance or citations in documents of different legal status, leading to potential misperceptions of the agency's true impact. The evaluation also found some divergence in PMS monitoring between the other agencies under the remit of DG EMPL. While Cedefop, Eurofound and EU-OSHA had similar indicators for monitoring dissemination and uptake of their outputs, staff capacity, and budget execution, there have been differences in monitoring policy outcomes or work programme implementation.

1.2.4. To what extent do the Agency's internal organisational structures contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations?

To evaluate the extent to which Cedefop's internal structures contributed to the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations, we discuss mainly the recent internal reorganisation of the Agency and the impact it has brought. Based on the interview and survey data, we also look at how the members of Cedefop's Governing Board and the staff perceive the appropriateness of the current Agency's organisational structure.

In 2015, Cedefop's Director initiated an internal reorganisation of the Agency and established three operational departments instead of two areas for Enhanced Cooperation on VET and LLL (ECVL), and Research and Policy Analysis (RPA). The new departments were named as follows:

- Department for VET Systems and Institutions (DSI)
- Department for Learning and Employability (DLE)
- Department for Skills and Labour Market (DSL)

The Director identified the need to adapt Cedefop’s work to changing character and role of VET and consequently the changing nature of Cedefop’s activities, for instance, to further strengthen Cedefop’s VET policy implementation in Member States. The reorganisation was also meant to streamline Cedefop’s activities and use available human resources more efficiently⁷¹. The new structure introduced a more thematic approach instead of having one area for research, and one for cooperation on VET⁷².

The new thematic structure of the operational departments strengthened the Agency’s strategic alignment by reflecting its programming and strategic documents. The table below outlines how medium-term priorities of the agency (2012-2016) and future strategic areas of cooperation foreseen for the period 2017-2020 correspond with the new thematic departments.

Table 8. Cedefop’s operational departments, medium-term priorities and strategic areas of cooperation.

Departments	Medium-term priorities 2012-2016	Strategic areas of operation 2017-2020
<p>Department for VET Systems and Institutions (DSI): Addresses the conditions to make VET more attractive, accessible and relevant, including by reducing institutional barriers and strengthening the visibility of skills through qualifications.</p>	<p>Supporting modernisation of VET systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring and reporting on progress of European VET cooperation; - further developing and supporting implementation of common European tools and principles. 	<p>Strategic area of operation 1: shaping VET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring VET policy developments and their impact; - developing and supporting the implementation of European tools and principles for transparency and recognition of qualifications; - deepening understanding of how the nature and role of European VET is changing; - contributing to horizontal comparisons of content and profile of qualifications in the context of the European qualifications framework.
<p>Department for Learning and Employability (DLE): Addresses VET policies from the perspective of targeted groups among learners and workers, focusing on how to promote their participation in high quality learning, including at the workplace.</p>	<p>Careers and transitions – continuing VET, adult and work-based learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysing how adult and work-based learning can help people better to manage careers and multiple working-life transitions, thus improving employability and easing social and labour market integration; - examining how adult and work-based learning can help enterprises to face technological change and increase competitiveness. 	<p>Strategic area of operation 2: valuing VET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - horizontal comparisons of content and profile of qualifications in the context of the European qualifications framework; - supporting the development of effective VET policies and programmes that provide high-quality skills and qualifications relevant to employability of individuals, entrepreneurs, and labour market needs. - supporting the inclusive role of VET in aiding (re)integration into education and training and the labour market of specific groups of low-skilled adults.

⁷¹ Director’s Decision on the reorganisation of Cedefop’s two operational areas into three departments.

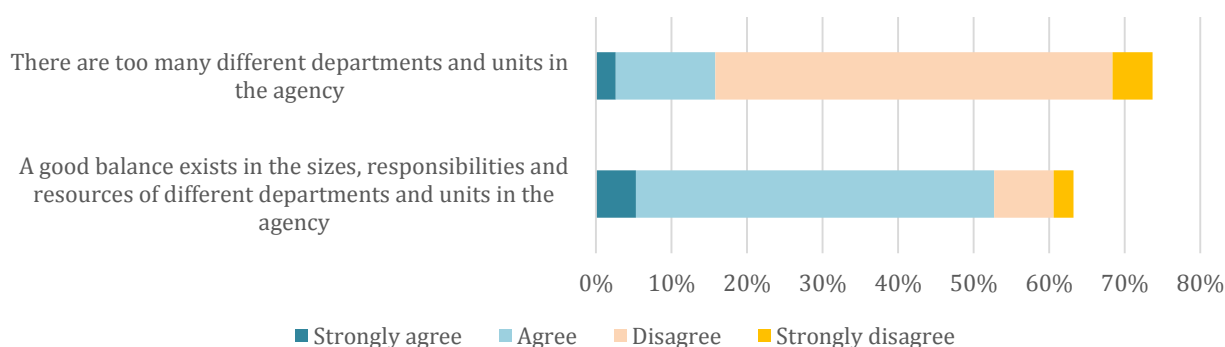
⁷² Interview programme, senior staff.

<p>Department for Skills and Labour Market:</p> <p>Provides labour market intelligence, including changes in skill needs, to support VET policy making.</p>	<p>Analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continue to build and improve its capability to anticipate comprehensively skill, competence and qualification needs in Europe and analyse the implications for VET. 	<p>Strategic area of operation 3: informing VET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - providing high-quality evidence on trends in the labour market and skill needs; - identifying policies and practices that encourage stakeholders (including social partners), institutions and VET providers to work in partnerships to address skill mismatch; - supporting policy learning and help building capacity of skills intelligence in Europe.
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Sources: *Medium term priorities 2012-2014 (transferred to 2016); Programming document 2017-2020.*

Cedefop’s stakeholders confirmed that the new internal operational structure better reflected the Agency’s activities. For instance, after the reorganisation the activities of the departments were more visible, and it was easier to “match with the Commission’s ‘mirror units’”. The findings from the Governing Board survey also indicated a good balance in sizes, responsibilities and resources of the departments and units in the agency. The GB survey respondents also thought that the Agency had an adequate number of departments and units (see figure below).

Figure 40. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about Cedefop



Source: *Cedefop Governing Board survey 2017, N=38.*

The interviewed Cedefop’s staff members unanimously agreed that the reorganisation of departments brought more coherence and sorted out some overlaps or similar tasks observed within the previous structure. Despite the agreement of the interviewees, there was no consensus among surveyed Cedefop’s staff members on this issue, as nearly equal number of respondents agreed (18) and disagreed (16) with the statement that there was a good balance in sizes, responsibilities and resources of different departments and units.

The interviewees also elaborated that the new structure enabled Cedefop’s experts to specialise in particular thematic issues, but at the same time pointed out the need for more horizontal cooperation.

Cedefop's permanent Director was appointed in 2013, after almost five years of leadership by an Acting Director. The interviewed stakeholders observed that the new Director brought about major changes in the Agency's approach towards internal communication and outreach. The interviewees from the Commission and the Governing Board noted that the Agency became more visible to the Commission's policy officers and a wider array of stakeholders (e.g. the European Parliament and Council Presidencies), especially since the strengthening of the liaison office in Brussels. Interviewed Cedefop's staff members were highly satisfied with the Director's 'open-door policy' that was encouraging more open internal communication and better social dialogue within the organisation. The interviewees elaborated that the new leadership was very approachable for discussing internal coordination and management issues without major delays or overly formalised procedures.

Summary

The reorganisation of Cedefop's departments strengthened the agency's strategic alignment by reflecting the programming and strategic documents such as medium-term priorities and strategic areas of cooperation. The new structure also brought about more internal coherence and sorted out overlapping or similar tasks observed within the previous arrangement. The new Director was recognised by staff and stakeholders as a driver for better internal communication and outreach.

1.2.5. To what extent do the size and composition of the Governing Board affect the work of the Agency?

In this section we focus on the size and composition of the Cedefop's Governing Board, drawing mainly on the evidence collected throughout the interview programme and surveys and supporting it with available findings from the desk research. First, we discuss the size of the Governing Board and whether it creates concerns in terms of effectiveness and efficiency of governance. Then, we analyse the composition of the Board and present the advantages and disadvantages of its tripartite structure. Finally, we look at potential membership overlaps between Cedefop's Governing Board and other boards and settings.

Cedefop's Governing Board comprises 87 members and a number of observers/other participants, who fall into the following categories:

- Representatives of the governments (one per MS)
- Representatives of trade unions (one per MS)
- Representatives of employer organisations (one per MS)
- European Commission (3 members + 2 additional participants)
- Two coordinators appointed as representatives of employees' and employers' organisations; they are representatives of their respective organisation at European level (ETUC for employees and Business Europe for employers) and attend the Management Board's meetings without voting rights
- Observers (Iceland and Norway – currently 4 persons)

Cedefop's Governing Board, same as Eurofound's and EU-OSHA's, is one of the largest among all EU agencies. The Boards of these three agencies have been particularly inflated by the enlargement of the EU from 15 to 28 Member States. Such size of the Board contradicts the principles of the Common Approach, which state that it should include a single representative of each Member State, and only a limited number of other stakeholders where necessary.

The discussion of the size of an agency's Governing Board has two central issues:

- Whether the size creates significant financial implications, e.g. by increasing the cost of governance
- Whether the size (be it too large or too small) allows effective decision making while ensuring the representation of all parties concerned

The participation in the Governing Board of Cedefop is not compensated. Therefore, the cost of maintaining a large Governing Board is limited to compensation of travel and accommodation arrangements of its members, as well as catering and presentation of materials in either printed version or on USB sticks. The meetings of the Board take place in Cedefop's own premises and there is no additional cost related to renting a meeting space for the large group of participants. Moreover, the full Board meets once a year, as the reduction from the previous biannual meetings was carried out already following the 2004 EU enlargement.

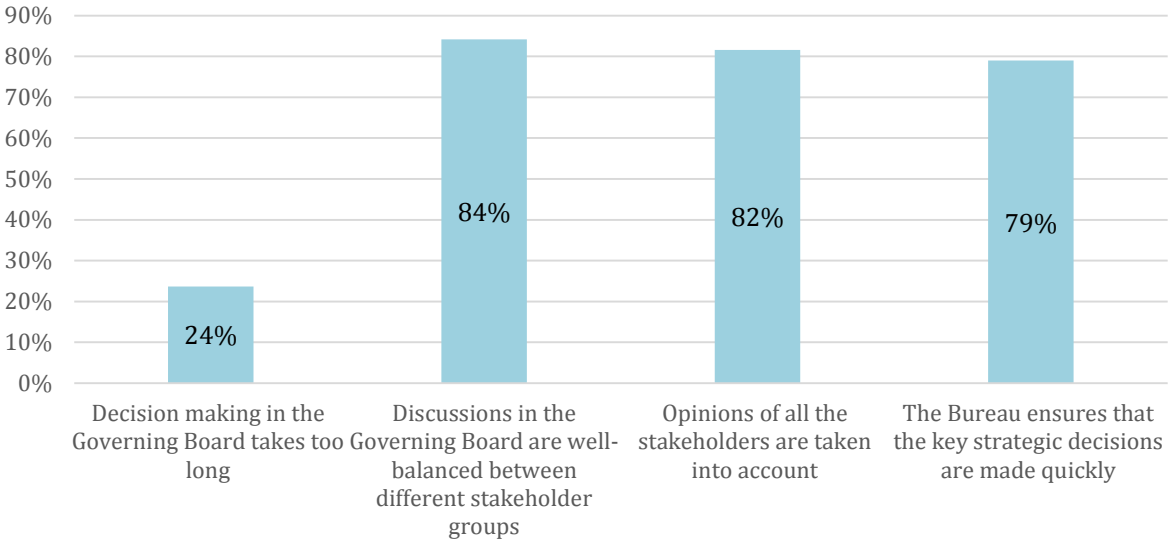
Cedefop spends around EUR 106 000 annually⁷³ on the Governing Board meetings (comprising approx. 1,7% of annual operational expenditure), and the agency's budget foresees a combined amount of approximately EUR 260 000 annually⁷⁴ for the Governing Board and Bureau meetings, including Cedefop staff participation. In comparison, Eurofound spends approximately EUR 145 000 annually, comprising around 1,87% of annual operational expenditure. The interviewed Commission representatives and Cedefop's stakeholders believed that the costs of maintaining the Governing Board have been comparable to those of other agencies. However, it should also be noted that in Cedefop's case, the expenditure corresponds to 50-60 participants in the Board meeting (actual attendance rate).

In terms of effectiveness of governance, less than a quarter of surveyed Governing Board members (24%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the decision making in the Governing Board takes too long. They also were of the opinion that the discussions in the Board have been well-balanced among different stakeholder groups (84%) and that all relevant stakeholder opinions are considered (82%) (see figure below)

⁷³ Cedefop's annual activity reports 2014, 2015, 2016; commitment appropriations.

⁷⁴ Cedefop's annual management plan 2016

Figure 18. The extent to which Cedefop’s Governing Board members agree or strongly agree with the following statements about the functioning of the GB (%)



Source: Governing Board survey, N=38.

Regarding effective decision making, the engagement and level of knowledge is likely to vary across members in such a large governing body. As mentioned above, according to the estimations of the Governing Board members and the administrative data, the average attendance of the Governing Board meetings in the agency has been approximately 50-60 persons. Moreover, the interview programme indicated some issues with the engagement of the Governing Board members. For instance, Cedefop’s interviewees reported cases where members of the Governing Board contributed quite little to the work, while a few opinion leaders dominated the discussion.

To tackle the engagement issue, Cedefop conducted a self-assessment exercise of how Governing Board members perform their supervisory responsibilities to stimulate learning and discussion on the governing model, as was recommended in the previous evaluation.

Despite varying engagement levels, the Commission, stakeholders and Cedefop’s management agreed that the Board has been usually able to reach consensus on all questions considered. The executive Bureau responsible for operational supervision and preparation for the Governing Board meetings has been instrumental in this respect.

Cedefop is one of the first EU agencies to have established an executive Bureau to tackle the issue of effective decision making and to seek more operational management. The existence of this smaller body, meeting 2-4 times per year, significantly eases the Governing Board’s work, in particular, by preparing decisions to be taken by the full Board, and by itself taking some of the decisions entrusted to it. In general, its contribution has been evaluated very positively by the stakeholders and recognised as the actual driving force behind the decisions made in the Board. The members of the Bureau have been very familiar with the agency and able to deal with not only thematic, but also operational matters. According to the interviewed Governing

Board members, there was also still some additional scope to delegate administrative decisions to be adopted by the Board to the Bureau.

The surveyed Governing Board members were very positive about the ability of the Bureau to ensure that the key strategic decisions are made quickly – 24% strongly agreed and 55% agreed with this statement (see figure above).

However, some issues regarding Bureau's functioning have been noted:

- While the stable membership of the Bureau has led to effectiveness of work and institutional memory, it has also been limiting the opportunity for other members of the Governing Board to grow and become more involved with the Agency's matters
- The employees' and employers' organisations have been represented by European level umbrella organisations, but the Governments' Group has been represented by representatives of national governments. This has raised issues whether the opinions of the 28 government representatives are properly coordinated and relayed to the Bureau
- Although the Bureau has been doing well in pre-coordinating the positions of different stakeholder groups before the full Board meeting, there was very little scope of these positions changing during the course of the meeting and the full Board meetings became a mere formality

The composition of the Governing Board has been evaluated very positively by Cedefop's stakeholders. One of the arguments emerging during the interview programme was that the tripartite Cedefop's governance structure reflects the structure of VET systems across Europe and beyond noting that the tripartite structure is present at all levels, e.g. school boards, regional or sectoral VET systems, and national systems. There was also an understanding among interviewees that social partner representatives could act as a vehicle to promote Cedefop's work at the national level, give it more prominence, and use it in national policy debates. Finally, a number of stakeholders noted that the tripartite governance structure was vital to maintaining the Agency's independence, scientific rigour, and relevance to social partners. The surveyed Governing Board members saw the tripartite governance as the most valuable characteristic of Cedefop's work (64% agreed), followed by quality of data produced (57%), and specific thematic knowledge (52%).

Some reservations about the engagement of social partners with the issues discussed have been expressed by the representatives of the Commission and the national governments indicating that the Governing Board may be subject to multiple principles of responsibility. The interests of national stakeholders expressed during the meetings may not be entirely in line with the EU policy agreed by the Member States at a higher political level. There were reports of Board members not understanding the purpose of the meeting and the procedures to be followed, or questioning the well-established EU policy directions. Meanwhile, the representatives of the social partners perceived this situation as leaving little space for discussion and negotiation. The interviewees welcomed the idea of the induction training for the new Governing Board members, although there was not yet any evidence on effectiveness of such efforts.

The idea to include additional members and observers in the Board has been raised during the interview programme. In particular, the representation of the European Parliament, which participates in some other Boards of the agencies, has been noted as potentially beneficial.

The data collected shows that overall the size and composition of the Governing Board has not been a significant concern for the Agency itself or for the Board members. The members of the Governing Board themselves and the staff of the Agency positively evaluated both the composition (supported by 82% and 84% of respondents respectively) and the size (71% in both groups) of the Governing Board. This is supported by the members of the public who provided answers to the open public consultation – of those who could answer the question about Cedefop’s governance, 82% agreed that the current governance arrangements were suitable for the Agency to fulfil its objectives effectively and efficiently. However, the members of the public also agreed that streamlining the structure and composition of Cedefop’s Governing Board with the Boards of other three agencies under the remit of DG EMPL would be desirable (59% of those familiar with Cedefop agreed with this statement).

The Governing Board membership mapping exercise did not show any significant overlaps.. The largest overlap observed was with the ETF, where nine permanent members were the same. However, having in mind a similar overlap with the membership of DGVT, some of these members were the Directors-General for VET, which shows a high-level representation of countries. Only four permanent members and five alternates were overlapping with Eurofound, and three members were the same with EU-OSHA.

Much more significant overlaps were present with the composition of the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT). Slightly less than a half of members of the two bodies were the same; however, when the institutional affiliation is considered, the same organisations were represented in 2/3 of the cases.

Table 9. Overlap of members of agency Governing Boards and other structures

Institution/structure	Government	Employees	Employers	Total
Eurofound	1 (A)	1 (M); 1 (A)	3 (M); 3 (A)	9
EU-OSHA	1 (M)	0	2 (M)	3
ETF	9	n/a	n/a	9
ACVT (members)	14	18	6	38
ACVT (organisations)	24	21	16	61
DGVT	7	n/a	n/a	7

Note: A (alternate); M (member)

Source: compiled by authors using publicly available information about membership of these bodies.

The Commission representatives as well as members of the Governing Board themselves noted that these overlaps were quite significantly contributing to the quality of Board’s work – the policy discussions from ACVT meetings were often continued in Cedefop’s Governing Board and the members were unable to distinguish the two contexts properly.

Summary

The evidence collected suggests that the tripartite structure of its Board is a key strength of the agency, and that benefits of a large Governing Board are higher than its costs. In particular, the

tripartite structure brings strong representativeness to the Board and potential for dissemination of Cedefop's work at the national level. However, in terms of effectiveness of governance, while the Board usually is able to reach consensus on all questions considered, the size of the Board is too large to have a fruitful discussion. The contribution of different members of Governing Board is uneven, with some of them dominating the discussion and the others contributing little. Furthermore, the Bureau was pre-coordinating the positions of different stakeholder groups before the full Board meeting, and there was very little scope of these positions changing during the course of the meeting, with the full Board meetings becoming a mere formality. It is important to note that the Bureau is essential to Cedefop's governance structure as it allows timely decision making for strategically important decisions as well as facilitates work in the Governing Board. Whereas there were only small and justifiable overlaps between the Board of Cedefop and those of the other EU agencies, a much more significant overlap was noticeable with the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training. However, the two settings were completely different in purpose.

1.2.6. How effective was the host Members State in fulfilling its obligations as defined in the Headquarters Agreements between the Agency and Member State where the seat is located? To what extent were actions undertaken by the host Member State appropriate to ensure multilingual, European-oriented schooling and appropriate transport connections? Are there any areas for improvement?

In this section, we discuss how successful the Greek government was in fulfilling its obligations as a host country by analysing data from stakeholder and staff surveys, interviews, the OPC, and desk research. We first discuss the issues about the Agency's building, which required repairs during the evaluation period. Then, we evaluate the perception of stakeholders about the convenience of location of the Agency, as well as appropriateness of schooling and transport connections.

Setting the scene

The Common Approach states that all agencies must have a signed Headquarters agreement with the host country. According to the CA, the host State must ensure accessibility of the agency, all necessary conditions for its operation, which may include existence of adequate education facilities for the children of staff members and appropriate access to the labour market, social security and medical care for both children and spouses⁷⁵.

Cedefop signed the Headquarter Agreement with the Greek State in 1995, 17 years before it was required with the implementation of the Common Approach. In the interviews, representatives of the Agency's management noted that a new agreement between Greece and Cedefop should be negotiated. Such an agreement could potentially include a direct VAT exclusion if accepted by Greece (from which ENISA, based in Athens and Heraklion, is benefiting), could help to attract new staff and reduce the administrative burden. Currently, Cedefop has a VAT exemption on intra-Community purchases of goods and services subject to limits set by Greece⁷⁶.

Issues with the building

During the evaluation period, the main issue with the fulfilment of the Headquarters Agreement was related to required repairs for the Agency's building. In its 2015 Discharge report, the European Parliament raised a possibility of Cedefop's relocation to a new building, citing various safety issues as a cause for concern⁷⁷. Interview respondents from the European Commission and the Governing Board of the Agency also expressed concerns with Greece's ability to provide support to Cedefop in terms of hosting the Agency, in particular with regards to the condition of the Agency's building. Initially, the Greek government did not provide financial support needed to repair the building. Subsequently, for a period of time Cedefop had to organise meetings in external venues that raised the costs of these events. However, according to the European Parliament's Discharge report for 2015, as well as interviews with the Agency's staff and social partners, there was significant progress in the implementation of Greece's obligations with regard to the building. The Greek government provided the most urgent necessary repairs to the building and the Agency regained the use of its meeting rooms, but additional (less urgent, but still safety-related) repairs were carried out from Cedefop's own budget and there was no clear indication whether Greece would compensate these expenses.

Perceptions of the staff and the general public

Fulfilment of the Headquarters agreement to a large extent concerns the Agency's staff, and also to a lesser extent the stakeholders who might need to travel to the agency for different events. Therefore, in this section we mostly relied on the data from the staff survey and the OPC.

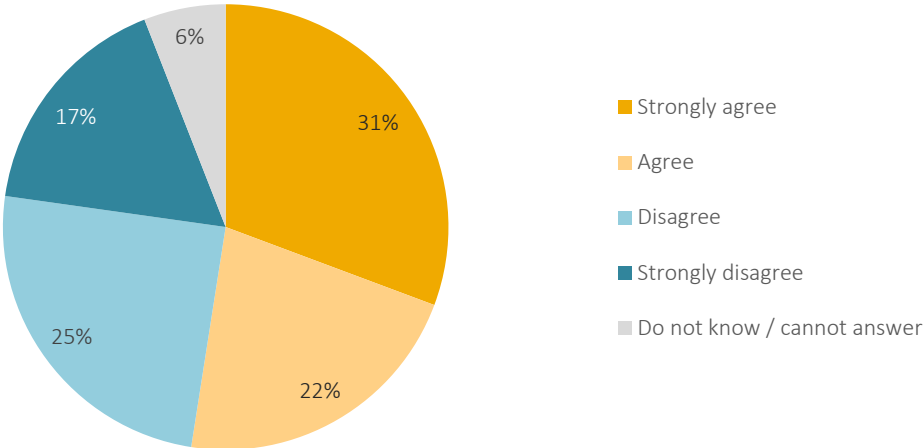
75 Common approach

76 Headquarters agreement

77 European Parliament decision of 27 April 2017 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the financial year 2015 (2016/2161(DEC)). See: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P8-TA-2017-0159&format=XML&language=EN>

The opinions of the respondents to the OPC were divided on the convenience of Thessaloniki as a place to reach, with 22%⁷⁸ of respondents considering Thessaloniki an inconvenient place in terms of logistics and another 29%⁷⁹ agreeing that it is convenient⁸⁰. According to the results of the staff survey, more than half of Cedefop’s employees found the location of the agency convenient, yet 42% of them disagreed with the statement about Thessaloniki’s convenience (see figure below).

Figure 41. Do you agree that the location of Cedefop is convenient for you from a logistics point of view?



Source: Cedefop staff survey 2017, N=36.

Staff of the Agency also rather negatively perceived the availability of transport connections as well as multilingual and European-oriented schooling. 53% and 45% of staff who responded to the survey were dissatisfied with the fulfilment of these obligations respectively (see figure below). There is a private international American school⁸¹ and a private French school⁸² in Thessaloniki, nevertheless, the open answers in the staff survey pointed out the lack of an EU oriented education and difficulties in keeping up with [children’s] native language as significant problems.

The figure below presents more detailed findings of the Cedefop staff survey on the issues related to the Headquarters Agreement.

⁷⁸ Respondents who disagreed (N=18) and strongly disagreed (N=2) to the question: Do you agree that the location of the Agency is convenient for you from a logistics point of view (connection with public transports, etc)?.

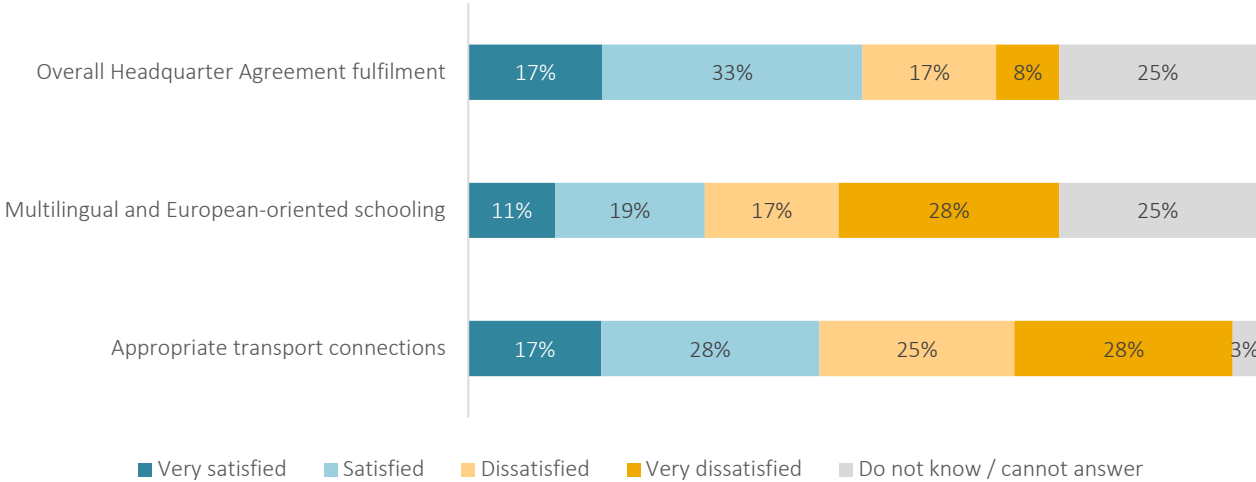
⁷⁹ Respondents who agreed (N=21) and strongly agreed (N=5) to the question: Do you agree that the location of the Agency is convenient for you from a logistics point of view (connection with public transports, etc)?.

⁸⁰ Final results of online public consultation. The remaining 49% (N=45) selected the option do not know / cannot answer.

⁸¹ See <http://www.pinewood.gr/en>.

⁸² See <http://www.efth.gr/fr/>.

Figure 42. To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the host country's (Greece's) fulfilment of the following obligations?



Source: Cedefop staff survey 2017, N=36.

Summary

Greece faced some difficulties in fulfilling the Headquarters Agreement during the evaluation period, yet the Greek government made significant advances in resolving the issue of repairs required for the agency’s building. The opinions of the respondents to the surveys and the OPC were split on the question about convenience of Thessaloniki from a logistics perspective. The agency’s staff was not satisfied with the available multilingual and European-oriented schooling options and transport connections. Finally, the current agreement does not foresee a direct VAT exclusion, creating additional administrative burden for Cedefop.

1.2.7.Points for improvement of efficiency

Table 10. Points for improvement of efficiency

Conclusion	Recommendation
Cedefop managed to achieve its objectives, take on additional tasks, and maintain its outcome indicators despite of reducing resources. Even though the agency produced significantly fewer outputs, since 2014 it managed to increase the number of citations in EU policy documents again, increase event quality, and reintroduce a positive trend in Cedefop’s website visits. This was done in part by managing to transfer staff and administrative savings towards operational budget titles. The recently adopted paperless policy was recognised by staff as one of the main administrative efficiency gains.	The Agency should look for ways to reallocate even more resources from the administration to its core operations.

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>The evaluation noted that annual Cedefop's reports presented some indicators in a very aggregate manner. For instance, the indicator 'Policy documents citing Cedefop work' presents an aggregate number of documents of varying political relevance and legal status (e.g. staff working document, leaflet, resolution, fact sheet, minutes, etc.). The indicator 'Participation in Presidency events and meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy' also presents aggregate numbers of event of varying policy relevance, such as for instance, Presidency events, Commission's working and expert groups, ACVT, DGVT, EESC, Business Europe, UEAPME, ETUC, or Eurochambres events.</p>	<p>The agency may provide more details while presenting the indicators related to evidence to inform policies and their implementation. In particular, the indicators 'Policy documents citing Cedefop work' and 'Participation in Presidency events and meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy' should not present aggregate numbers related to items of very different nature, which may lead to different interpretations of the agency's impact.</p>
<p>The comparative analysis of the performance measurement systems of Cedefop, Eurofound and EU-OSHA showed that the three agencies have been reporting a set of similar performance indicators. However, there have also been significant differences in monitoring and reporting outcomes. While Cedefop, Eurofound and EU-OSHA had similar indicators for monitoring dissemination and uptake of their outputs, staff capacity, and budget execution, there have been differences in monitoring policy outcomes or work programme implementation.</p>	<p>Cedefop, Eurofound, and EU-OSHA should align the methodologies of process performance indicators not related to policy outcomes such as budget execution, work programme delivery, staff capacity etc.</p>
<p>The evaluation identified significant overlaps in the composition of Cedefop's Governing Board and the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT). Slightly less than a half of members of the two bodies were the same; however, when the institutional affiliation is considered, the same organisations were represented in 2/3 of the cases.</p>	<p>As the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) and Cedefop's Governing Board share a significant proportion of their membership, it is vital to strictly moderate the meetings of these groups in a way which ensures that the discussions in them do not overlap and that the meetings serve their immediate purpose.</p> <p>In case the structure and size of the Cedefop's Governing Board is revised in the future, and its tripartite representation is reorganised, it is important that ACVT is used as a forum to continue the tripartite consultation on the matters</p>

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>In terms of effectiveness of governance, while the Board usually is able to reach consensus on all questions considered, the size of the Board is too large for a fruitful discussion. The contribution of different members of Governing Board is uneven, with some of them dominating the discussion and the others contributing little. Furthermore, the Bureau was pre-coordinating the positions of different stakeholder groups before the full Board meeting, and there was very little scope of these positions changing during the course of the meeting, with the full Board meetings becoming a mere formality.</p> <p>The tripartite composition of the Governing Board has been evaluated positively by the agency's tripartite stakeholders (interviewees, survey respondents), arguing that this adds credibility to their research in the eyes of both employers and employees. The social partners also act as a vehicle to promote Cedefop's work at the national level and use it in national policy debates. The tripartite governance structure reflects the structure of most VET systems across Europe and beyond. It is a recognised multi-level governance model, also promoted by the ETF in its partner countries. The tripartite structure is present at all levels, such as school boards, regional or sectoral VET systems, and national systems.</p>	<p>of the agency and to ensure acceptance of its work by the social partners.</p> <p>As tripartite representation in the Governing Board is seen as particularly important feature of the agency by its stakeholders, intermediary solutions to make the size of the meetings more manageable should be explored. These could include: (a) a rotational system of only the social partner representatives (the experience of EIGE shows that the rotation of government representatives creates significant issues, such as when the Council Presidency countries are not represented in the Board); (b) organising the work of the Board in smaller thematic groups.</p> <p>Electronic decision making (e.g. written procedures) and, where appropriate, virtual meetings should be further explored as a solution for making the Governing Board's work more efficient and immediate. Such options could provide more opportunity for engagement of the Governing Board on a short notice, as issues arise – as opposed to meeting only annually.</p>
<p>Cedefop signed the Headquarters Agreement with the Greek State in 1995, 17 years before it was required with the implementation of the Common Approach. The current agreement does not foresee a direct VAT exclusion, creating additional administrative burden for Cedefop. During the evaluation period, one of the main issues with the fulfilment of the Headquarters Agreement was related to required repairs for the agency's building. Moreover, the agency's staff was not fully satisfied with available multilingual and European-oriented schooling and transport connections.</p>	<p>Cedefop should ensure that a new Headquarters Agreement with Greece is signed. An effort should be made to negotiate a direct VAT exclusion (ENISA's Headquarters Agreement could be taken as an example), include more detailed provisions on the responsibilities of the Greek government with regard to the agency's building, as well as (to the extent it is feasible) improvements on schooling and transportation conditions.</p>
<p>Cedefop has been actively involved in inter-</p>	<p>The agency should continue to participate in inter-</p>

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>agency cooperation (both individually and through the Network of EU Agencies, EUAN), by sharing best administrative practices and exploring common tendering procedures for horizontal goods and services.</p>	<p>agency cooperation in sharing best administrative practices, procedures and tools, and seek for more systematic and structured exchange. Moreover, the agency should continue its efforts towards efficiency gains by further exploring common tendering procedures for horizontal goods and services such as ICT and audio-visual equipment, cloud services, catering, evaluation, or data protection.</p>
<p>Cedefop's contribution to major EU policy documents resulted in additional workload and reprioritisation of some of its operational activities, but it also increased the policy relevance of the agency.</p> <p>Cedefop gave a major contribution supporting the Commission's work on the New Skills Agenda. As stated in Cedefop's 2016 Progress report on the Work Programme 2016, to accommodate the ad hoc requests related to the New Skills agenda, some adaptations in several projects were necessary as the agency had to carry out additional activities which were not envisaged in the planning phase. One of the ways to better accommodate ad hoc requests was the adoption of 'negative priorities' (distinguishing lower-priority tasks which can be postponed or cancelled to accommodate the ad hoc requests).</p>	<p>Cedefop should continue to give its full support to ad hoc requests having high policy relevance. 'Negative priorities' (process of distinguishing lower-priority tasks) should continue to be one of the main tools for addressing ad-hoc requests from the stakeholders. The agency may consider introducing a more structured reprioritisation mechanism, which could function as a flexibility margin for accommodating unforeseen activities of high policy relevance.</p>

1.3. Relevance

In essence, the relevance criterion analyses whether the objectives of an EU intervention still match the current needs and problems. Each question, evaluating the relevance of the Agency is outlined below.

1.3.1. To what extent do the original objectives still correspond to the needs within the EU?

This question looks at whether Cedefop's mandate and objectives as formulated in its Founding Regulation still contribute to the implementation of EU policies and strategies currently in force. It first looks at the correspondence between the Agency's mandate, strategic objectives and EU political priorities reflected in key strategic documents such as the Europe 2020 Strategy,

European Commission President Juncker’s Political Guidelines⁸³, the Commission’s Guidelines for Employment Policies⁸⁴, Annual Growth Surveys from 2011-2016 and the 2016-2020 DG EMPL Strategic Plan. It also analyses the extent to which the Agency has been able to respond to the changing political, societal and economic challenges at EU level. Finally, this question provides an analysis of the continuing relevance of Cedefop’s work to the activities of its stakeholders.

Our answer to this evaluation question is based on detailed desk research supplemented where appropriate with evidence from surveys, the OPC, interviews, and case studies.

Top-down assessment: Cedefop’s relevance to EU policy needs

According to its Founding Regulation (Art. 2), Cedefop’s general objective is “to assist the Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational training and of in-service training”⁸⁵. In line with this main aim, the Agency should “contribute, through its scientific and technical activities, to the implementation of a common vocational training policy”. The Agency’s mandate did not change during the evaluation period, although a revision of Cedefop’s Founding Regulation is currently in discussion based on a 2016 proposal from the Commission⁸⁶.

Cedefop’s specific objectives and activities in the evaluation period were generally adequately adapted to the current EU political priorities (see table below).

Table 11. Correspondence between EU policy priorities and Cedefop’s mission

EU policy priorities			Cedefop’s mission <i>“The aim of the Centre shall be to assist the Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational training and of in-service training.”</i>
Europe 2020 Strategy	Pillars	Smart growth	
		Areas of action	
		Innovation	✓
	Sustainable growth	Education, training and life-long learning	✓
		Digital society	✗
		Competitiveness	✓
Clean and efficient energy	Climate change	✗	
		✗	

⁸³ European Commission (2014), *A New Start for Europe: My Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change*. Political Guidelines for the next European Commission. Retrieved on 17 January 2017 from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/juncker-political-guidelines-speech_en_0.pdf

⁸⁴ European Commission (2010), *Europe 2020: Integrated guidelines for the economic and employment policies of the Member States*. Retrieved on 27 July 2017 from <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/Brochure%20Integrated%20Guidelines.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of the Council of 10 February 1975 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Art. 2.

⁸⁶ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 337/75, 2016/0257 (COD).

	Inclusive growth	Employment	✓
		Skills	✓
		Fighting poverty	✓
Juncker Commission Political Guidelines	Priorities		
	Jobs, growth and investment		✓
	Digital Single Market		×
	Energy union and climate change		×
	Internal market		✓
	Economic and Monetary Union		×
	Free trade agreement with the U.S.		×
	Justice and fundamental rights		×
	New policy on migration		✓
	A stronger global actor		×
Union of democratic change		×	
Guidelines for Employment Policies	Guidelines		
	Increasing labour market participation and reducing structural unemployment		✓
	Developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs, promoting job quality and lifelong learning		✓
	Improving the performance of education and training systems at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary education		✓
Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty		✓	
AGS 2011	Priorities		
	The need for rigorous fiscal consolidation for enhancing macroeconomic stability		×
	Labour market reforms for higher employment		✓
		Growth enhancing measures	×
AGS 2012/ 2013/ 2014 (identical priorities)	Priorities		
	Pursuing differentiated growth-friendly fiscal consolidation		×
	Restoring normal lending to the economy		×
	Promoting growth and competitiveness for today and tomorrow		×
	Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis		✓
		Modernising public administration	×
AGS 2015/2016 (identical priorities)	Priorities		
	RE-launching investment		×
	Restoring normal lending to the economy		×
	Promoting growth and competitiveness for today and tomorrow		×
	Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis		✓
		Modernising public administration	×
AGS 2015/2016 (identical priorities)	Priorities		
	Re-launching investment		×
	Restoring normal lending to the economy		×
	Promoting growth and competitiveness for today and tomorrow		×
	Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis		✓
		Modernising public administration	×
2016-2020 DG EMPL Strategic Plan	General objectives		Specific objectives
	A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment	Effective support to Member States in their structural reforms in the context of the European Semester	✓
		Stronger social dialogue	✓

		Better functioning labour markets	✓
		Decent and safe working conditions for all	✓
		A skilled and more entrepreneurial workforce	✓
		Greater social inclusion and effective social protection	✓
	A Deeper and Fairer Internal Market with a Strengthened Industrial Base	Improved conditions for geographic and professional mobility whilst tackling risks of distortions and abuses	✓
A deeper and fairer Economic and Monetary Union	Strengthened social dimension of the EMU	✗	

Source: compiled by PPMI based on desk research. Complementary source: Deloitte (2016), *How do EU agencies and other bodies contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy and to the Juncker Commission Agenda?*

The table above shows that Cedefop’s activities contributed to all three key objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and more specifically supported six out of nine areas of action. In 2011-2016, Cedefop’s objectives especially focused on the following six areas of action: innovation; education, training and lifelong learning; digital society; competitiveness; employment and skills; and fighting poverty.

Moreover, Cedefop’s objectives corresponded to three out of ten priorities of President Juncker’s Political Guidelines: jobs, growth and investment; internal market; and migration. Regarding Annual Growth Surveys, Cedefop’s work was relevant to the implementation of priorities concerning labour market reforms, tackling unemployment and social consequences of the crisis and structural reforms. Finally, Cedefop’s work was relevant to seven out of eight specific objectives set in the 2016-2020 DG EMPL Strategic Plan.

In 2011-2016, Cedefop’s mission remained in line with its Founding Regulation, to support the development of European VET policies and contribute to their implementation. However, the Agency’s strategic priority was adapted in light of the emerging policy challenges at EU level, notably by focusing on implementing “policies for an attractive VET” that promotes both “excellence and social inclusion”. Cedefop also responded to the policy needs in the EU by designing the medium-term priorities (MTPs) in view of the key policy developments in the area of VET and skills policy in the EU. As presented in the table below, in 2009-2011 Cedefop identified four priorities⁸⁷. In the next programming period (from 2012 to 2014, extended to 2016), the agency maintained some of its previous priorities but reduced their number to three general ones (see table below).

Table 12. Cedefop’s medium-term priorities (2009-2016)

2009-2011	2012-2016
Strategic priority/objective	
Contribute to excellence in VET and strengthen European cooperation in developing, implementing and evaluating European VET policy	Strengthen European cooperation and support to the European Commission, Member States and social partners in designing and implementing policies for an attractive VET that promotes excellence and social inclusion
Medium-Term Priorities	
Informing European VET policies	Supporting modernisation of VET systems

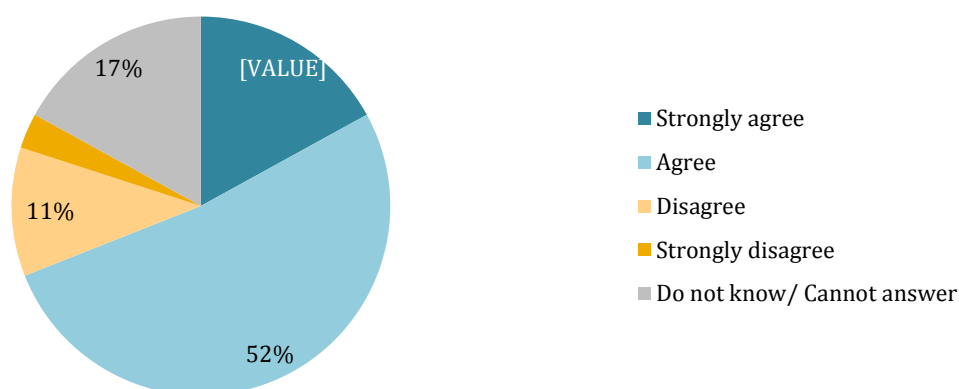
⁸⁷ Cedefop (2008), *Cedefop’s Medium-Term Priorities 2009-11*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Interpreting European trends in and challenges for skills, competences and learning	Careers and transitions – Continuing VET, adult and work-based learning
Assessing VET’s benefits	Analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision
Raising the profile of VET	

Source: Cedefop’s medium-term priorities for 2009-2011 and 2012-2014 (extended to 2016).

Generally, 69% of Cedefop’s stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that the Agency showed flexibility and adaptability in the context of changing situations (see figure below).

Figure 43. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about Cedefop? It shows flexibility and adaptability in the context of changing situations.



Source: Cedefop stakeholder survey 2017, N=169.

Bottom-up assessment: Cedefop’s relevance to stakeholders

To assess the relevance of Cedefop to its stakeholders, we carried out a bottom-up analysis drawing on desk research, case study analysis as well as stakeholders’ views gathered in the context of interviews, surveys and the OPC.

According to its Founding Regulation, the main target group of Cedefop is the Commission, which it should assist “in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational training and of in-service training” (Art. 2). In the 2012-2016 medium-term priorities, the core target group of the Agency included the European Commission, Member States and social partners. In this section, we analyse three groups of direct stakeholders of the Agency: a) EU institutions and agencies; b) social partners represented in the Governing Board; and c) other stakeholders who have a direct interest in Agency’s data. In the next section we respond to the question on the Agency’s relevance to EU citizens.

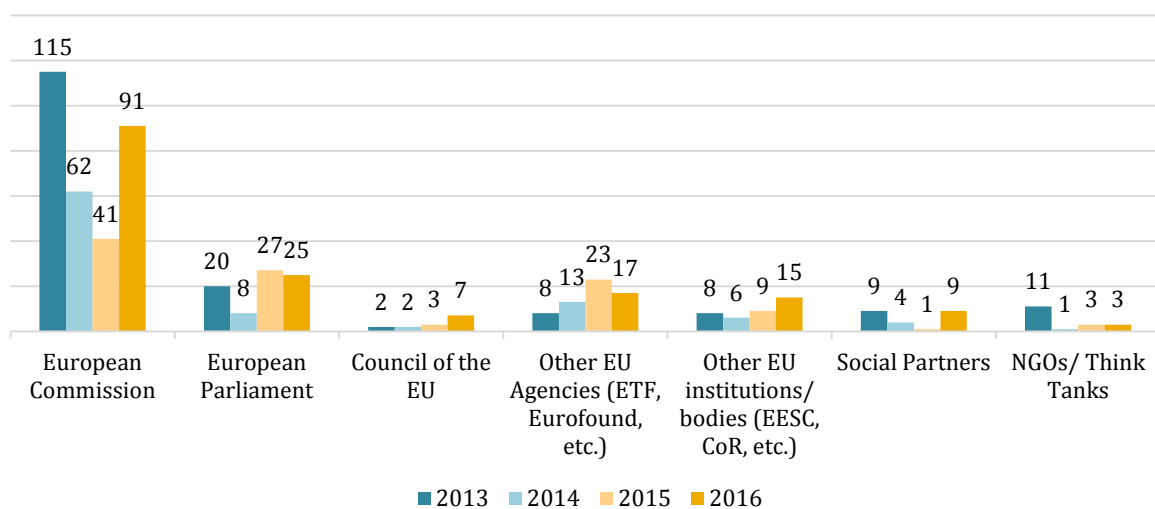
EU institutions and agencies

According to Cedefop’s Founding Regulation (Art. 8), the Governing Board adopts the medium-term priorities and the annual work programme in agreement with the Commission services, and should take into account “the priority needs indicated by the Community institutions”. Moreover, the European Parliament has a role in the adoption of Cedefop’s annual budget, as it

should give a discharge to the Agency’s Director in respect for the implementation of the budget on a recommendation from the Council acting by a qualified majority (Art. 12a).

Cedefop’s work at EU policy level was increasingly used by EU institutions during the evaluation period, which demonstrates the agency’s growing relevance at EU level. The number of EU policy documents quoting Cedefop increased from 105 in 2011 to 167 in 2016. The figure below illustrates the evolution of the number of EU policy documents quoting Cedefop by organisation type during the evaluation period. It shows that the number of references to Cedefop’s work in EU policy documents over the evaluation period has been rather stable, and that Cedefop was the most extensively quoted by the European Commission, the European Parliament, other EU agencies and institutions/bodies.

Figure 44. Number of EU policy documents quoting Cedefop (by organisation type)



Source: Cedefop PMS Data.

Case study evidence also emphasises the extent to which Cedefop’s work and priorities were considered relevant by stakeholders in the evaluation period, aligned with the EU policy changes, and adapted to the socio-economic situation in the EU.

The European Parliament has repeatedly emphasised the Agency’s relevance to EU’s current political priorities in the area of VET and skills in its Discharge reports. In 2012, the Parliament acknowledged “the essential role of the Centre in the promotion of [VET] in the Union at a time when new methods of training are needed”, and stressed “the relevance of its contribution to policies aimed at exploring VET’s potential to support economic development and facilitate the transition from learning to employment, particularly in the context of economic recession”⁸⁸. In its 2013 Discharge report, it emphasised the Agency’s “highly relevant” work to the EU’s VET

⁸⁸ European Parliament (2014), 2012 discharge: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P7_TA(2014)0303). Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-0303+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

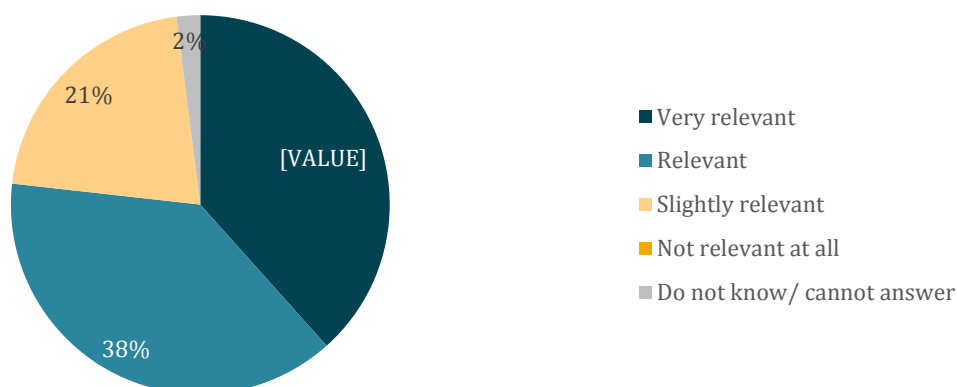
and skills policy agenda⁸⁹, while in the 2014 Discharge, it “appreciate[d] that the Centre focused its activity on contributing to and supporting policies addressing youth unemployment”⁹⁰.

Governing Board

Cedefop’s medium-term priorities and annual work programmes are adopted by the Governing Board in agreement with the Commission services, on the basis of a draft submitted by the Director. Considering the tripartite nature of the Governing Board, the needs of its stakeholders are reflected in these programmes. Evidence gathered indicates that representatives of the Governing Board generally do not feel that their interests or needs were disregarded or that they were outvoted during the evaluation period, as the work of the Bureau usually helps to adopt decisions by consensus.

Responses from the Governing Board survey show that respondents considered Cedefop’s activities and outputs relevant or very relevant to their work according to 86% of respondents (see figure below).

Figure 45. How relevant, if at all, were Cedefop's overall activities and outputs to your work in the period 2011-2016?



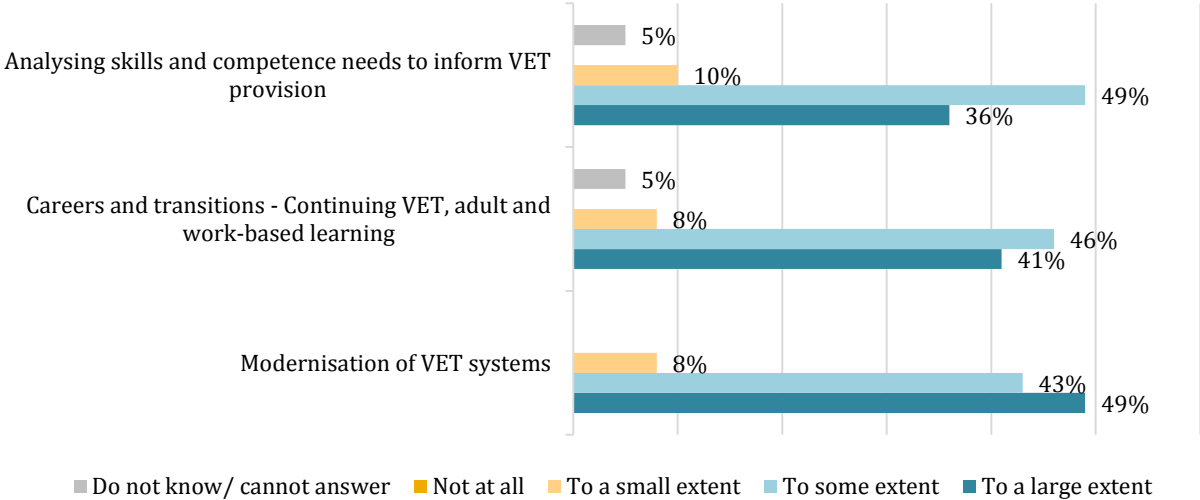
Source: Cedefop Governing Board survey 2017, N=42.

The majority of respondents to the Governing Board survey also agreed that Cedefop’s outputs in its three main thematic fields met their needs to a large or to some extent. Governing Board survey respondents tended to highlight Cedefop’s outputs in the area of the modernisation of VET systems (see figure below).

⁸⁹ European Parliament (2015), Discharge 2013: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P8_TA(2015)0134). Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2015-0134+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

⁹⁰ European Parliament (2016), Discharge 2014: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (P8_TA(2016)0163). Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0163+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

Figure 46. To what extent, if at all, did Cedefop’s outputs in the following fields meet your needs in the period 2011-2016? (Governing Board survey respondents)



Source: Cedefop Governing Board survey 2017, N=39.

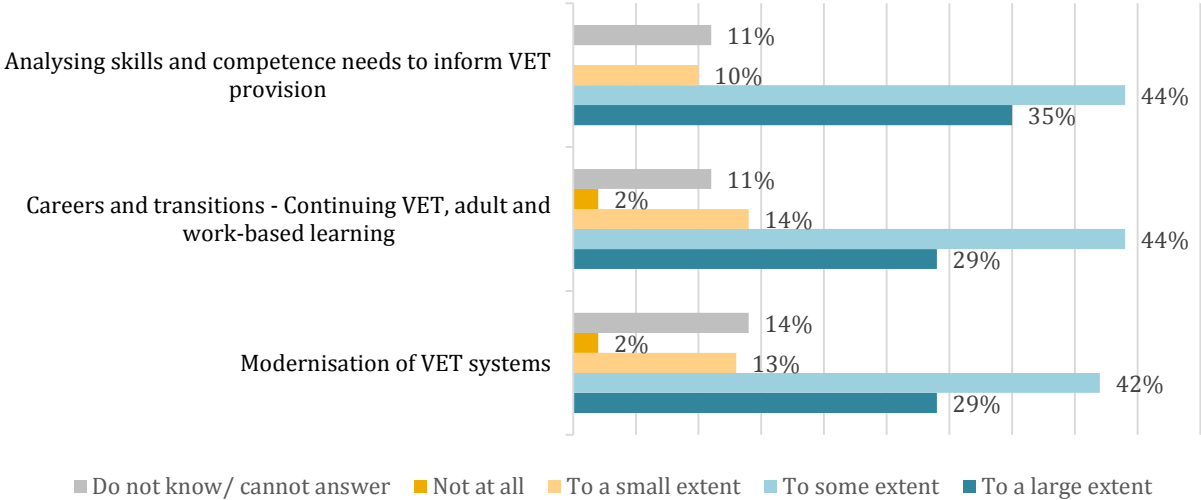
The majority of interviewees noted that the Agency’s work gained a growing relevance in the context of the socio-economic crisis in the EU, notably due to its work on the added value of VET for quick labour market integration, aimed at fighting long-term and youth unemployment. In particular, most interviewees representing employees and Member States in the Governing Board emphasised that Cedefop’s work in the area of apprenticeships and skills forecasting was very close to their strategic needs. Most of them underlined that the work done by Cedefop on skills analysis and forecasting was important for related policy at EU and national level.

Other stakeholders

We also assessed the needs of other stakeholders of the Agency, such as other EU institutions, agencies and bodies, international organisations, EU Member State governmental institutions or agencies, business organisations, higher education institutions, research or consultancy organisations, schools and VET providers, think tanks and NGOs. This heterogeneous group notably has interest in Cedefop’s research, tools and activities, but is not directly involved in the preparation of its work programmes.

A majority of respondents to the stakeholder survey considered that Cedefop’s outputs in all of the Agency’s fields of work largely met their needs, in particular for the area of skills analysis and competence needs to inform VET provision (see figure below).

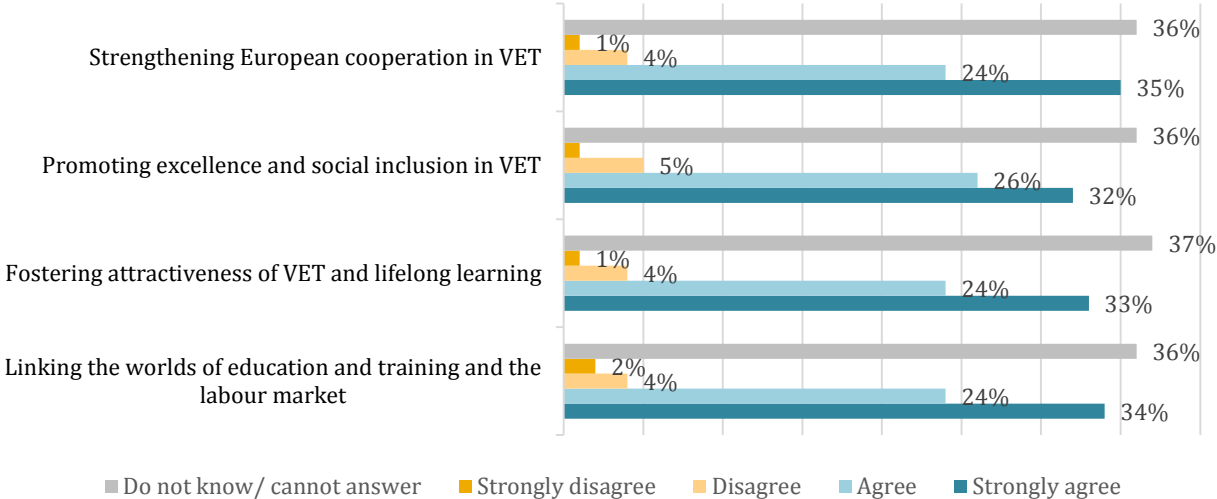
Figure 47. To what extent, if at all, did Cedefop’s outputs in the following fields meet your needs in the period 2011-2016? (Stakeholder survey respondents)



Source: Cedefop stakeholder survey 2017, N=174 (average).

Finally, results from the OPC indicated that a majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop had a role to play in addressing needs in the EU in the area of VET and lifelong learning policy (see figure below).

Figure 48. OPC: “Do you agree that Cedefop has a role to play in addressing the following needs in Europe?”



Source: OPC results, N=145 (average).

Summary

According to evidence collected from desk research, survey, interview data and case studies, Cedefop’s mandate and objectives appear to largely correspond to the EU’s current political priorities. Cedefop’s activities contributed to all three objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, to three out of ten priorities of the Commission President Juncker’s Political Guidelines and to

seven out of eight specific objectives set in the 2016-2020 DG EMPL Strategic Plan. Evidence shows that the agency was generally able to react to most pressing crises and challenges at EU level. In particular, stakeholders emphasised the relevance of the agency's work in contribution to the EU's response to the youth unemployment crisis, in light of the relevance of VET in labour market integration and social inclusion. Moreover, evidence collected from desk research, interviews, surveys, case studies and the OPC indicates that Cedefop's activities were relevant for many of its stakeholders, a wide range of which regularly used Cedefop's work during the evaluation period.

1.3.2. How relevant is the Agency to EU citizens?

Cedefop's Founding Regulation states that: "The aim of the Centre shall be to assist the Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational training and of in-service training." In order to carry out its tasks, Cedefop also should "establish appropriate contacts, particularly with specialised bodies, whether public or private, national or international, with public authorities and educational institutions and with workers' and employers' organisations."⁹¹ The Agency's Founding Regulation therefore establishes no direct link between Cedefop and the European citizens, making the Agency's relevance to the general public indirect.

We assess this indirect relevance of Cedefop to EU citizens through analysis of four main areas. First, we examine to what extent Cedefop's outputs reached the EU citizens, mainly through the Agency's communication channels. Second, we assess the Agency's contribution to the scientific debate, which is related to issues also relevant to the broader society. Third, we consider Cedefop's contribution to EU policy initiatives and national policy developments in terms of relevance to citizens. And finally, we provide the perceptions of the OPC respondents about how well Cedefop managed to address certain needs in Europe.

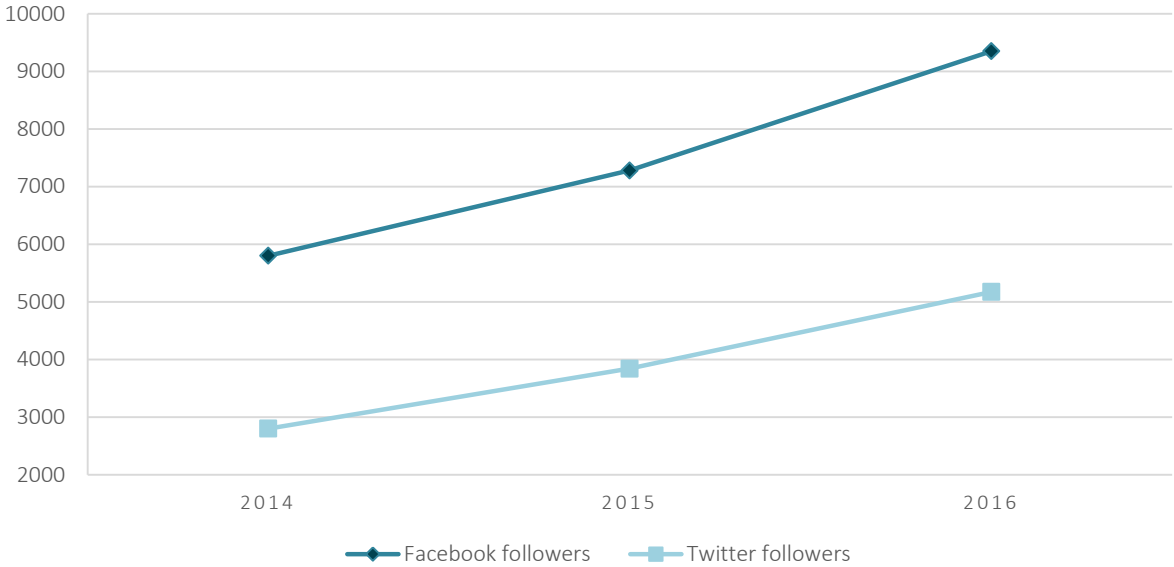
Exposure to Cedefop's outputs

Cedefop's Communication strategy identifies as its main target groups the policy makers and key stakeholders, researchers and academic organisations, practitioners and VET providers, while citizens can be targeted through a good relationship with the media⁹². Yet communication of Agency's activities is a tool that can help make Cedefop more visible to the citizens of the EU, with the Agency's management also agreeing that Cedefop could do even more to become more visible to the citizens. During the evaluation period, Cedefop used its website and social media to inform the citizens and the general public about its activities, this was also achieved through mentions of Cedefop in the media. The number of followers of the agency on Facebook and Twitter has been steadily growing since this indicator was started being monitored in 2014 (see figure below).

⁹¹ REGULATION (EEC) No 337/75 OF THE COUNCIL of 10 February 1975 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (OJ L 39, 13.2.1975, p. 1).

⁹² Cedefop (2017), Communication strategy, revision 2017. DCM/GOBA/RB (2017)00607, Thessaloniki, 28 March 2017.

Figure 49. Social media reach

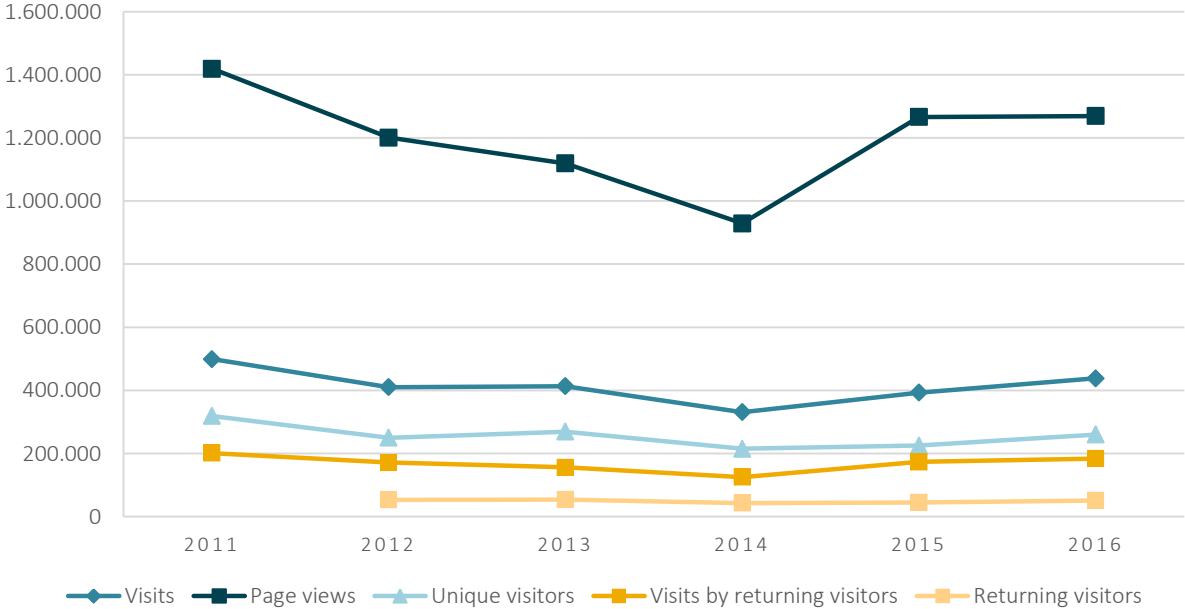


Source: PMS data trends. Annual report 2016 final.

Note: numbers indicate cumulative followers.

The website traffic is another key performance indicator which also demonstrated a relatively stable and wide reach of persons (see the figure below). However, the indicators monitoring social media reach and website traffic do not allow to distinguish between the stakeholders of the Agency and the citizens, but help to determine the overall visibility of the agency and the potential it has to reach the citizens.

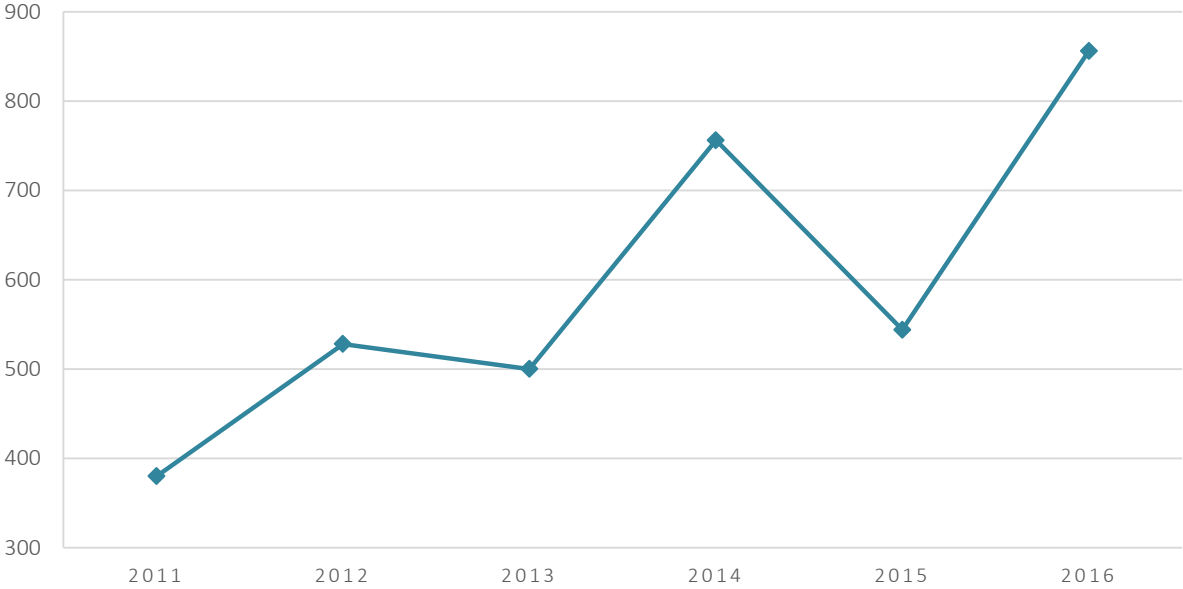
Figure 50. Website traffic



Source: Annual activity reports 2011-2015, PMS data trends. Annual report 2016 final.

This visibility of the Agency is also enhanced through media coverage of Cedefop. The related indicator value also reached its peak in 2016, with 380 number of articles, compared to 856 in 2011 (see the figure below). According to one of the interviewees from the agency's staff, this increase could have been related to the development of the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

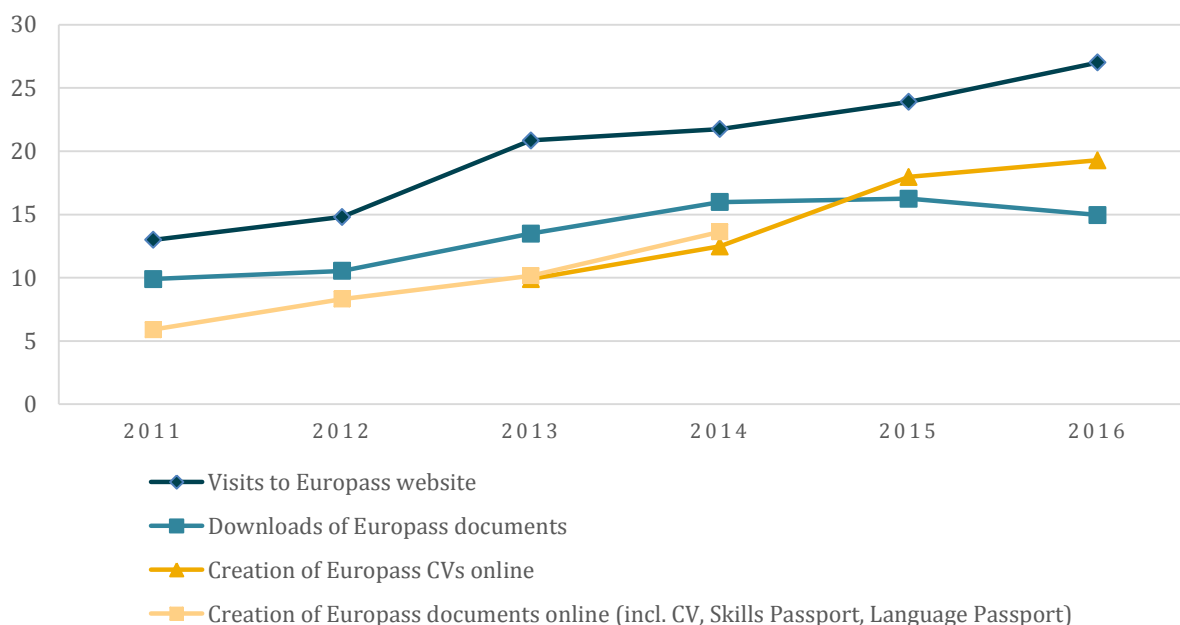
Figure 51. Media coverage, take-up of articles and press releases



Source: Annual activity reports 2011-2015, PMS data trends. Annual report 2016 final.

Of all services Cedefop provided during 2011-2016, Europass was an exception in a sense that it did target the general public directly. According to the Agency's PMS, the use of Europass documents has been steadily increasing, with only a slight drop in downloads observed in 2016 (see figure below).

Figure 52. Europass outcomes (in millions)



Source: Annual activity reports 2011-2015, PMS data trends. Annual report 2016 final.

Note: numbers presented in this figure are annual, not cumulative.

Scientific debate

It is clear that Cedefop's work was cited by the academic community during 2011-2016. In terms of what it means for the relevance to general public, several observations can be made. First, as Cedefop's work is cited in recognised peer-reviewed academic journals⁹³, it strengthens the reputational aspect of Cedefop's work, notably regarding the quality of its research. Second, some of the journals citing Cedefop's publications are released in national languages⁹⁴, meaning that it is possible that the Agency's work is also relevant also at national level. Both these aspects may indirectly be relevant for the general public by increasing the probability of Cedefop's work being used in solving different national or EU level problems (which are pressing for citizens) through extended reach of the Agency's work.

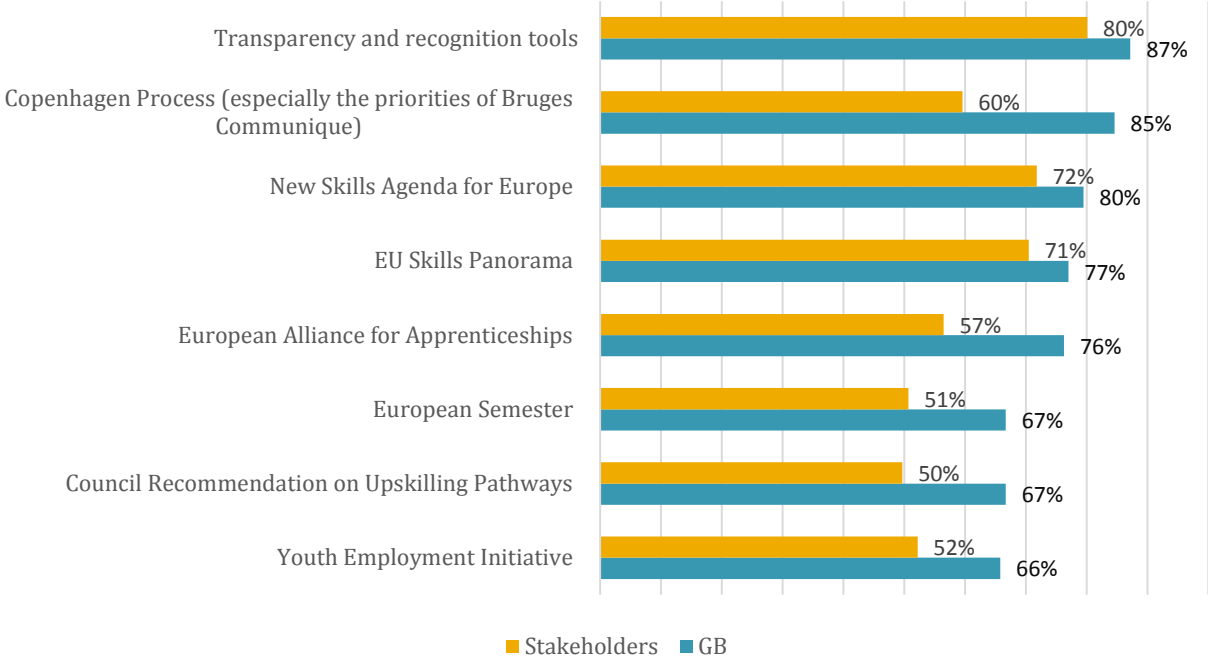
EU and national policy development

In addition, data from Cedefop's Governing Board and stakeholder surveys indicate that the Agency may have been relevant for the general public through contribution to EU level policy initiatives (see figure below).

⁹³ For example, European Journal of Education, International Review of Education, International Journal of Training Research, Journal of Education and Work, Economic Systems Research, Computers in Human Behavior, International Journal of Innovation and Learning, Research in Comparative and International Education.

⁹⁴ For example, British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, Revue Francaise de Pedagogie, Revista Espanola de Sociologia.

Figure 53. In your view, to what extent (if at all) has Cedefop contributed to the following EU policy developments during the period 2011-2016?



Source: Cedefop stakeholder (n=163) and Governing Board survey (n=39).

Note: the difference between stakeholder and Governing Board members could be determined by the fact that a significant part of stakeholder respondents marked 'do not know/cannot answer', while GB member were significantly more knowledgeable about the subject.

More than half of the respondents acknowledged that Cedefop contributed to EU policy developments, transparency and recognition tools, Copenhagen process, New Skills Agenda, and EU Skills Panorama. Contribution to these and other EU level initiatives is also documented in Cedefop performance measurement system. During the evaluation period of 2011-2016 Cedefop also worked with Member States holding the EU presidency, ensuring relatively frequent contacts with Member States representatives. Another important activity, which was appreciated by interviewees representing different stakeholder groups, were the peer-learning forums organised by Cedefop with an aim to facilitate knowledge exchange between stakeholders.

Case study evidence also underlined Cedefop's contribution to national level policy developments (see Box 6 below).

Box 6. Case study evidence of Cedefop's contribution to national level policy developments

Case study on apprenticeship reviews

The apprenticeship review project of the agency helped to improve the apprenticeship systems in Malta and Lithuania, particularly regarding reforms of the legal environment. As countries approached Cedefop expressing their willingness to participate in the thematic review, this created a facilitating condition for cooperation. The case study found that in Lithuania the stakeholders included the apprenticeship review results into the policy dialogue during the discussions on the new Labour Code and the ongoing discussions on a new law on vocational education, which will also include provisions about apprenticeships. Moreover, the case study found that in Lithuania not only the results of the review itself helped to inform the policy dialogue, but also the peer learning activities and exchange of good practices among the countries within the apprenticeship review project. The results of the apprenticeship system review in Malta were also included into the policy dialogue, notably within a broader initiative to review the apprenticeship system in the country. Recommendations from the review inspired changes at system and provider level.

Case study on skills forecasting

The case study on skills forecasting found that Cedefop's sub project "The Governance of skills anticipation and matching"⁹⁵ has created an international platform for discussion and exchange of good practices in skills forecasting. The main aim of this exercise has been to improve methodological labour market intelligence instruments and to reinforce effective dissemination and use of the forecasting results in collaboration with key national stakeholders. The interviewees reflected that the workshop discussions created the basis for setting up the national skills forecasting mechanisms (In Malta and Iceland). While the project has not yet resulted in direct policy developments, it set the scene for setting up necessary data collection activities, building inter-institutional collaboration structures between the national authorities, and tailoring available information to better fit for future forecasting purposes. It basically reinforced the ongoing national discussions and gave a plethora of tools to work with.

Case study on common transparency tools (European Qualifications Framework)

The case study on common transparency tools found that Cedefop's input was particularly valuable to national stakeholders in the context of development of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and their referencing with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The national policy makers developing the NQFs relied heavily on Cedefop's technical and conceptual understanding. Cedefop, as expertise centre on qualifications frameworks, was also providing written comments on the national referencing reports prior to their approval. Finally, by maintaining an inventory of NQFs, Cedefop also provided valuable comparative information to policy makers involved in their development. The development of NQFs has not only been a valuable national level achievement by itself, but also has influenced wider policy discussions about qualification systems and heavier and more sustainable involvement of labour market stakeholders in such discussions.

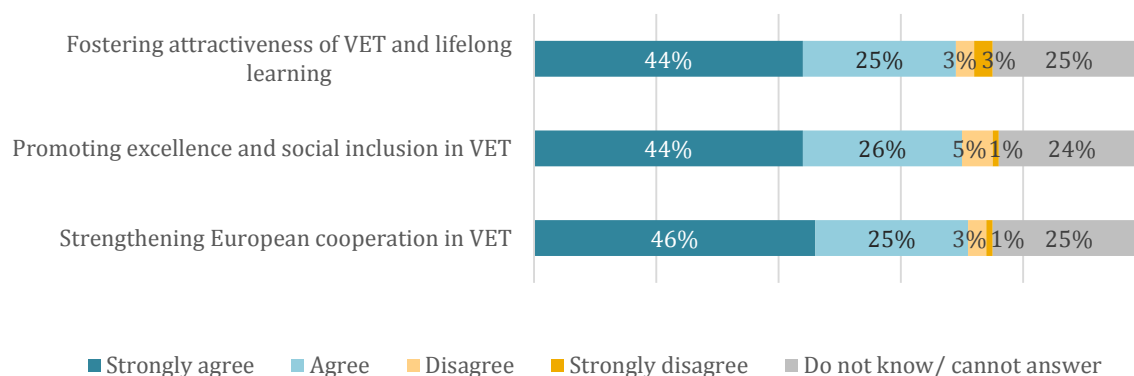
Source: case studies.

⁹⁵ In the context of this project, Cedefop already provided support for Malta and Iceland in 2016

Perceptions of stakeholders

Finally, results from the OPC indicated that a majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cedefop had a role to play in addressing needs in the EU in the area of VET and lifelong learning policy (see figure below).

Figure 54. Cedefop's role to address the following needs in Europe, according to OPC respondents



Source: Results from the open public consultation, N=62.

Summary

Cedefop does not directly target EU citizens through its activities (with the exception of Europass), making the agency only indirectly relevant for the general public. There were several ways through which Cedefop was relevant for EU citizens during the evaluation period. First, the general public was exposed to Cedefop’s activities and information through the agency’s communication channels. Second, Cedefop contributed to EU policy and some national policy developments. Third, information produced by Cedefop also was used in different scientific articles, increasing the reach and potential of the agency’s work to be used in policy making. Lastly, based on the perceptions of the OPC respondents, Cedefop managed to address the needs in the area of VET in Europe.

1.3.3. Points for improvement of relevance

Table 13. Points for improvement of relevance

Conclusion	Recommendation
Cedefop does not directly target EU citizens through its activities (with the exception of Europass), making the agency only indirectly relevant for the general public. There were several ways through which Cedefop was relevant for the EU citizens during the evaluation period. First, the general public was exposed to Cedefop’s activities and information through the agency’s communication channels. Second, Cedefop contributed to EU policy and to some national policy developments. Third, the information	Whereas the revised Europass could contribute significantly to further increasing the relevance of the agency to citizens, the activities considered are ambitious and it is important to dedicate sufficient human and financial resources to their implementation. Moreover, communication efforts aimed at citizens which increase the visibility of the agency should be continued. These include social media presence, further efforts to increase the user-

Conclusion	Recommendation
produced by Cedefop also was used in different scientific articles, increasing the reach and potential of the agency's work to be used in policy making. Lastly, Cedefop managed to address the needs in the area of VET in Europe.	friendliness of the website, as well as a translation strategy targeted at the most relevant outputs for each country and involving national actors where possible.

1.4. EU added value

In our evaluation, we define the criterion of EU added value as the extent to which the Agencies have been more effective and efficient in achieving their results and impacts compared to other existing/ possible national level and EU level arrangements⁹⁶. According to the Better Regulation Guidelines, added value could be understood as changes which reasonably can be thought to have occurred because of the intervention analysed rather than any other factors. Each question evaluating EU added value of the Agency is outlined below.

1.4.1. What is the EU added value of the Agency, in particular as regards process and role effects?

How unique is the contribution of Cedefop?

According to its Founding Regulation, Cedefop is a research centre that shall contribute to the implementation of a common vocational training policy through its scientific and technical activities⁹⁷. It has been tasked with providing high-quality, timely and policy-relevant knowledge (see the intervention logic of the agency presented in Appendix 1) thus the added value should be primarily analysed in terms of the uniqueness of data and knowledge that it generates, as compared to other potential data sources and providers.

We will discuss the most important thematic Cedefop's outputs and map other EU and international level institutions and organisations that have been contributing to the same or similar issues. This analysis will form the basis for judging potential substitution effects in the following sub-section.

As presented in the intervention logic, Cedefop produces the following thematic outputs:

Supporting the modernisation of VET systems: reports on Copenhagen Process, esp. Bruges short-term priorities; thematic snapshots on VET for EU Presidency semesters

The VET policy reporting case study concluded that VET policy reporting has been one of the main activities at Cedefop as it also forms an essential part of the agency's mandate.⁹⁸ For the purposes of monitoring VET developments in EU, EEA, and EFTA countries Cedefop collects

⁹⁶ If possible to assess, how much more effective and efficient have they been.

⁹⁷ Regulation (EC) No 2051/2004 of 25 October 2004 amending Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

⁹⁸ Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of the Council of 10 February 1975 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocation Training.

information mainly through surveys of ReferNet network and presents it in cross-country monitoring reports. The European Training Foundation (ETF) has been also contributing to the monitoring process, providing insights on the EU Candidate Countries in the context of Copenhagen Process, and Partner Countries in the context of Torino process. Cedefop's annual reports indicate Cedefop's and ETF's cooperation in VET policy reporting, for instance, following the decision on new 'deliverables' in Riga in June 2015, Cedefop, in cooperation with the ETF, worked on a revised monitoring approach presented to the ACVT and DGVTs.⁹⁹

The Bologna Process, a similar process in higher education, is being monitored by a dedicated Working Group, working under a mandate of the Bologna Follow-Up Group, an executive structure supporting the Bologna Process in-between the Ministerial Conferences in 48 EHEA countries.¹⁰⁰ Even though the Bologna Process represents alternative monitoring arrangements, it is important to keep in mind that the governance structure of higher education policy is also not analogous to VET. It exceeds the mandate of the EU and the European Commission, including the Council of Europe, and international organisations such as UNESCO and OECD into the governing arrangements, requiring for more complex inter-institutional solutions.

Deliverables related to common European tools and principles: e.g. EQF/NQFs, ECVET, EQAVET, ESCO, and Europass.

Cedefop has had a conceptual development, technical support and monitoring roles in the context of common European tools and principles. It has been providing direct support to the European Commission who has been steering the implementation of the aforementioned tools. EQF/NQFs, ECVET, EQAVET and ESCO have separate support structures established by the Commission such as ECVET User's Group, ECVET Team, EQF Advisory Group, ESCO Maintenance Committee and similar smaller structures contributing to the development, maintenance and dissemination of the common European tools.

ECVET and EQAVET

Even though the separate governance and support structures of ECVET (ECVET Team, ECVET User's Group) had roles similar to those of Cedefop, the ECVET evaluation found that they either were either primarily supported by Cedefop, or relied on Cedefop's inputs. For instance, the evaluation concluded that most of the ECVET monitoring support to the Commission came from Cedefop, which focused on the ECVET implementation at policy level and published the annual monitoring reports. Cedefop also provided support and technical advice to the Users' Group by producing relevant studies and publications, as well as contributed their expertise in the different events.¹⁰¹

Cedefop has had a similar role in quality assurance in VET, by providing advice and expertise to the EQARF steering committee, analysis of national and sectoral approaches to quality, and

⁹⁹ Cedefop's Annual Report 2015.

¹⁰⁰ "BFUG - European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process. <http://www.ehea.info/cid101754/bologna-process.html>"

¹⁰¹ Implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), PPMI, 2014.

supporting European cooperation between experts and stakeholders on quality in VET. EQAVET is a community of practice bringing together Member States, Social Partners and the European Commission to promote European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET by using the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework. While the participating experts and other representatives bring a pool of national expertise, Cedefop acts as an institutional facilitator, providing a platform for discussion, and bringing a European dimension to the quality assurance community.

EQF/NQFs and ESCO

Cedefop has been involved in conceptual development, monitoring and technical support of the European and national qualifications frameworks, and has been providing expertise in the ESCO development process. Cedefop has been an important actor in conceptual development and technical support of the EQF, and provided support to the EQF Advisory Group.

Neither the EQF recommendation, nor Cedefop's Founding Regulation explicitly mentions EQF and/or ESCO as part of Cedefop's mandate, instead, EQF and ESCO-related activities are carried out on the basis of annual work programmes. The ETF is involved under a similar basis, supporting and transferring EQF knowledge to its Partner Countries. DG EMPL has been responsible for work on international qualifications frameworks, preparatory work on establishing links with third country frameworks with EQF, and development of ESCO.¹⁰²

A feasibility study on EQF institutional arrangements carried out in 2016 noted that other bodies with potential interest in EQF such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) were not likely to take up EQF activities due to a lack of expertise or incompatible mission and purpose.¹⁰³

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) has been engaged in the allocation of financial resources, project management and monitoring of EQF related activities, however not invested in the content development as much as Cedefop.

Careers and transitions: continuing VET, adult and work-based learning (publications of studies carried out by Cedefop in the field); outputs related to work on teachers and trainers and CVET, and apprenticeships reviews.

The case study on VET for labour market integration, social inclusion and adult learning found that during the period of 2011-2016, Cedefop directly supported the implementation of the renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning, notably by providing advice to the European Commission and its different ET 2020 Working Groups on Adult Learning, and by carrying out relevant research activities. In addition to ET 2020 WGs, the Agency provided support to the Commission in preparing several key EU policy initiatives in the area of CVET and adult learning

¹⁰² Study on the feasibility of setting institutional arrangements at European level to ensure management and quality assurance of issues related to an extended scope of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), PPMI, 2016.

¹⁰³ Study on the feasibility of setting institutional arrangements at European level to ensure management and quality assurance of issues related to an extended scope of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), PPMI, 2016.

in 2011-2016. The Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways also makes a direct reference to the role of Cedefop in providing support to EU institutions and Member States among other EU bodies such as Eurostat and the EACEA.¹⁰⁴ The case study concluded that the quality of Cedefop's work and research outputs produced in the of adult learning policy was assessed positively by stakeholders who claimed that the quality of the research outputs and tools produced by Cedefop lie on its rootedness in first-hand evidence and on its relevance to practitioners and policy-makers.

The OECD has also launched an adult learning and skills study that is exploring key skills challenges (low adult literacy and numeracy) emerging from the Survey of Adult Skills.

One of the unique features of Cedefop's work emerging during the evaluation period was its support for the Member States. The need for Cedefop to take a more active role in supporting Member States was one of the recommendations from the 2013 external evaluation of the Agency. Under the topic of careers and transitions Cedefop carried out thematic country reviews on apprenticeships in the context of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Cedefop developed a methodology for the thematic reviews, also including cooperation with national level stakeholders to provide evidence-based tailored recommendations for the improvement of national apprenticeship schemes.¹⁰⁵

The OECD has also been analysing work-based learning in vocational education and training, however, it has been focusing on more general level of analysis, and not providing specific country support.

Analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision: Skills forecasting reports; Skills Panorama website; European skills and jobs survey (methods, approach, results); contributions to European Company Survey; Skills index; Profiles of EU national skills anticipation systems.

Cedefop was given a mandate by the Council of the European Union to update the forecasts of skills supply and demand every two years¹⁰⁶. Cedefop not only produces EU-level skills forecasts, but released country-specific skills forecasting reports for every EU Member state until 2025 in 2015. Other activities related to skills forecasting includes building and further developing econometric models, providing regular updates of the detailed labour market projections, carrying out further in-depth analysis of the projection results, developing quantitative macroeconomic policy scenarios, and developing measures and aides for interpretation of skills imbalance and mismatches.¹⁰⁷

While most of the EU Member States have their own skills forecasting mechanisms, Cedefop has been unique in using harmonised data and a single methodology to make results comparable across countries. These results can be aggregated to provide an overall picture of labour market

¹⁰⁴ Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults (OJ 2016/C 484/01).

¹⁰⁵ Case study on Apprenticeship reviews.

¹⁰⁶ Council of the European Union (2010), Council conclusions on "New Skills for New Jobs: the way forward", 3019th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting; Brussels, 7 June 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Case study on Skills Forecasting

trends and skill development in the EU. One of the most important Cedefop's outputs in skills forecasting has been the methodology. Cedefop has also been pooling expertise with the ETF and the ILO to prepare a series of guides on methods to anticipate skill needs in the labour market.

Cedefop has also been managing the Skills Panorama portal presenting labour market data. To prepare the datasets Cedefop has been using data from sources such as OECD and Eurostat. It also indicates that Cedefop is not the only player which collects the labour intelligence data, however, it is the key actor in processing, harmonising and making the EU level data available to the public.

Cedefop also provides country support in terms of skills forecasting. It has been organising workshops for countries that do not have their own forecasting mechanisms or tools for gathering relevant data, and facilitates practical discussions and policy learning in the workshop format. The Skills Forecasting case study found that Cedefop not only developed comprehensive skills forecasting methodologies, but also put effort into sharing them at the national level and providing a platform for mutual policy learning.¹⁰⁸

To what extent the Agency's activities could be substituted by other agencies or institutions

In this subsection we discuss specific elements of Cedefop's added value and explore the extent to which each element could be substituted by such other institutions and agencies.

To determine the elements of EU added value of Cedefop, we analysed evidence from the stakeholder and Governing Board surveys, interviews, the open public consultation, previous evaluations and other desk research sources.

The evidence collected suggested the following unique added value features of the agency:

- Tripartite governance
- European coverage
- Quality of data
- Quality of methodologies
- Specific thematic knowledge (not available elsewhere)
- Support to Member States

A summary overview of potential substitution for Cedefop's added value is presented in the table below, which is then explained in the follow-up text.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Table 14. Potential substitution for Cedefop's added value

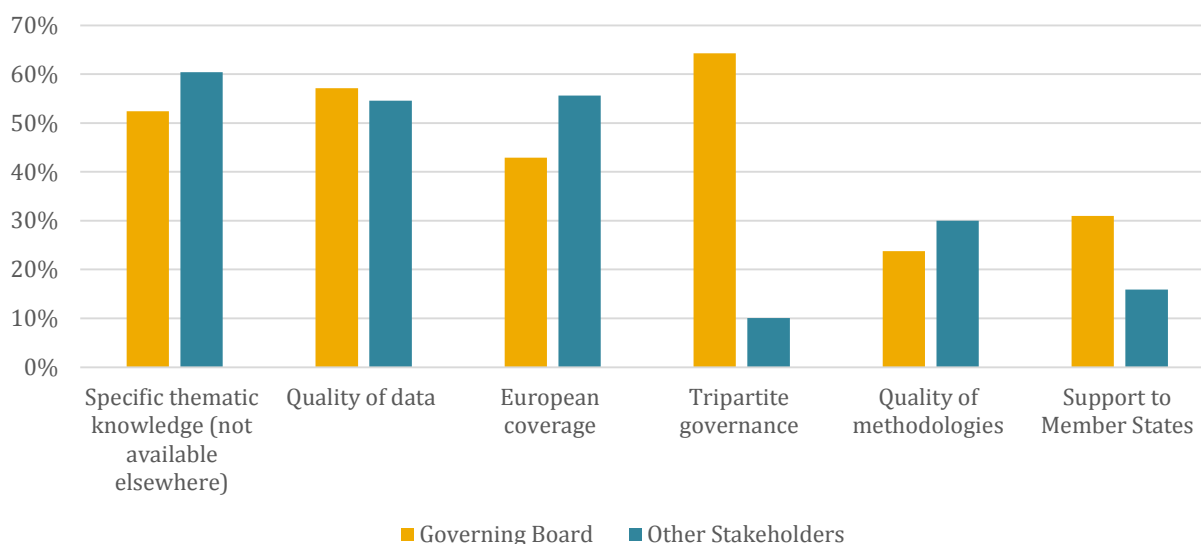
	International organisations: ILO and OECD	Eurostat/ Eurobarometer	EU institutions and agencies	Universities, institutes, think tanks
1) Specific thematic knowledge, quality of data and methodologies	+	+	+	+
2) European coverage	+	++	++	+
3) Tripartite representation and platform for discussion	-	-	++	-
4) Support to Member States	+	-	+	+

+ the element Cedefop's added value can be partly substituted by these organisations

++ the element of Cedefop's added value can be substituted by these organisations

The surveyed stakeholders attributed varying level of importance to aforementioned features of added value (see figure below).

Figure 55. Which characteristics of Cedefop's work in the period 2011-2016 do you think were the most valuable?



Source: Cedefop Governing Board (n=42) and Stakeholder (n=210) survey 2017.

Both Governing Board members and other stakeholders agreed that the most valuable characteristics of Cedefop's work were specific thematic knowledge and quality of gathered data. The mapping exercise presented in the previous sub-chapter also showed that Cedefop's studies, technical support and methodologies were usually the primary sources of knowledge for the Commission's initiatives related to VET policy. Cedefop's inputs were less unique when specific initiatives exceeded either the European Union dimension, or the area of VET. For instance, ESCO classification or EQF initiatives had strong national or pan-European experts in skills and higher education policy providing most of the conceptual development support. OECD had a strong role in skills forecasting, however, when it came to building EU-wide forecasting models, Cedefop had unique methodologies for analysing EU and national level data, and producing EU-wide reports.

The interviewed stakeholders appreciated Cedefop for being a centre of knowledge in VET and lifelong learning. Even though there may be other strong research institutes or consultancies doing research in VET (such as BiBB in Germany, or the OECD at international level), Cedefop played a leading role in being the reference point providing EU institutions and Member States with knowledge, evidence and expertise on VET policy. The interviewed stakeholders also complimented the quality and level of detail available in Cedefop's gathered data and analysis.

One of the most notable examples of Cedefop's unique EU-wide coverage has been the skills forecasting reports, providing detailed data on both national and EU level skills needs. While some of Cedefop's monitoring activities could potentially be substituted by other agencies (such as the ETF or EACEA), thematic reports requiring in-depth expertise could hardly be substituted by other agencies or international organisations in short term, primarily due to the lack of expertise, and non-overlapping scope of activities. For instance, the OECD could substitute part of Cedefop's expertise and thematic knowledge, but it would lack specific EU focus due to its diversified portfolio and different geographical scope (which is both wider in that countries outside the EU are covered, but also narrower in that not all EU Member States are also members of the OECD). Opinions of surveyed stakeholders differed regarding the tripartite governance structure of the agency.

The tripartite representation was Cedefop's most important characteristic for the Governing Board members but was not the most popular choice among stakeholders (see figure above). The interviewed Governing Board members also gave high value to the agency's tripartite representation, drawing analogies that it very well reflected the real structure of VET. The Governing Board members argued that one of the main Cedefop's strengths was its ability to bring together the worlds of education and labour market. Other stakeholders added that Cedefop was acting as a much-needed interface for stakeholder communication and knowledge exchange via its conferences and peer learning activities. Tripartite representation could only be potentially substituted by an EU agency such as Eurofound because of a similar governance structure. ETF, on the other hand, would not be in a position to represent Member States and other national level stakeholders due to its geographical coverage oriented at partner countries. Cedefop's Governing Board was however not the only venue for tripartite representation in European VET policy – 2/3 of organisations in which Governing Board members worked were also sending representatives (often the same persons) to the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT).

In the interviews, one of the most commonly mentioned dimensions of Cedefop's added value was its support to the Member States. Being a rather new Cedefop's work orientation, 'knowledge brokerage' at the national level was very well received by the stakeholders. Cedefop had a unique method to support national level capacity building without imposing a top-down approach. For instance, Cedefop's apprenticeship reviews were seen as a tool to share best practices and develop this field in close cooperation with national level stakeholders and policy-makers. Another capacity building example was Cedefop's support to Member States who did not have a skills forecasting mechanism. Cedefop also provided significant technical assistance to countries referencing their national qualifications frameworks with the EQF. Such function could most likely be substituted by research institutes or thinktanks at national level, provided

they have sufficient thematic knowledge. However, as discussed previously, Cedefop tends to provide support for the Member States that inquire such support and do not have enough internal capacity to build quality VET policy.

Findings of the Governing Board and stakeholder surveys also indicated that less than a third of informants believed that national or international level organisations could at least to some extent substitute the Cedefop’s activities. Slightly more than a third of respondents believed that EU-level organisations could substitute Cedefop’s activities. When asked whether other organisations could substitute the activities carried out by Cedefop in terms of their level of expertise and organisational capacity, surveyed stakeholders and Governing Board members did not have a clear consensus except that both groups did not believe that national level organisations could substitute Cedefop’s activities (see figure below). When asked to name the potential substitutes, stakeholders and GB members mentioned the OECD, Eurydice, and ETF as the most likely candidates.

Figure 56. To what extent, if at all, could other organisations substitute the activities carried out by the Agency in terms of their level of expertise and organisational capacity? (Stakeholders)

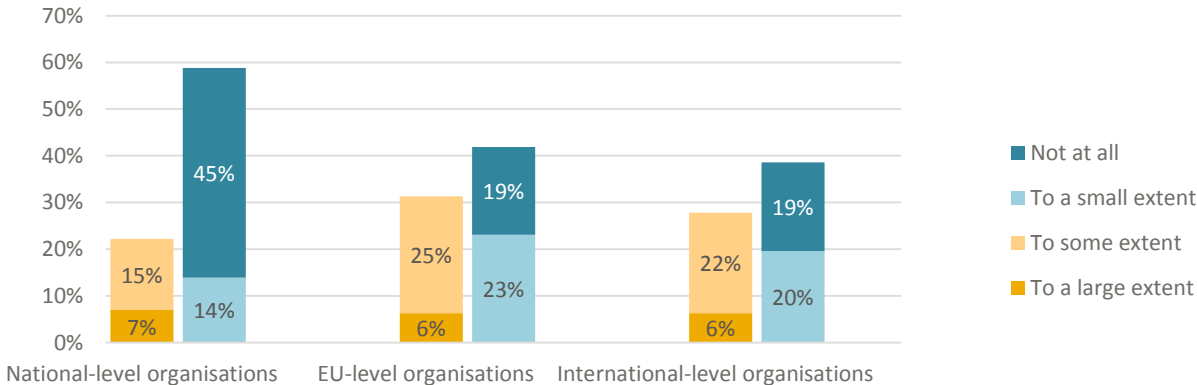
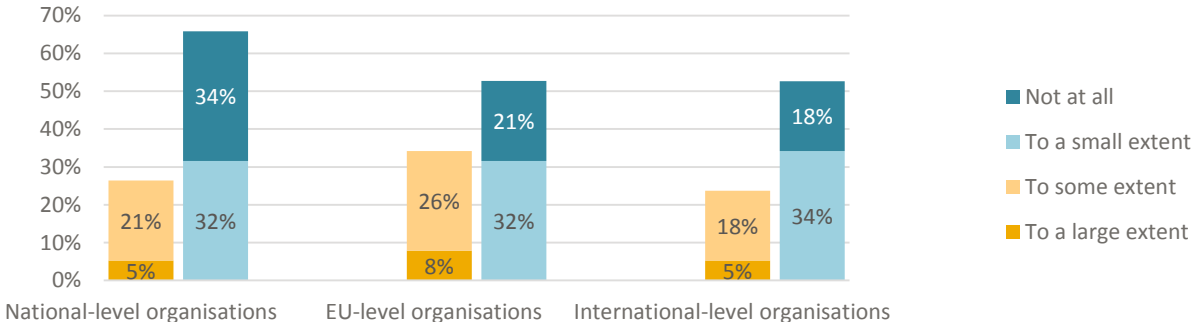


Figure 57. To what extent, if at all, could other organisations substitute the activities carried out by the Agency in terms of their level of expertise and organisational capacity? (GB members)



Source: Cedefop Stakeholder survey (n=160) and Governing Board survey (n=38).

However, most of interviewed stakeholders believed that it would hardly be possible to substitute Cedefop's activities, especially at the national level. The interviewees pointed to aforementioned elements of added value claiming that no other institution had such a rich mix of specific knowledge, methodologies, and connections in the field of VET policy.

Open public consultation respondents also agreed that the Agency had unique added value compared to other bodies or initiatives operating in the area of VET and lifelong learning. Majority of the open public consultation respondents endorsed Cedefop's added value compared to organisations at all levels of governance¹⁰⁹.

Summary

The analysis of Cedefop's thematic outputs indicated that the agency had few overlaps with other international or national institutions. While there have been other actors contributing to similar topics, Cedefop tended to create added value in providing a European dimension and high level of expertise and methodologies. One of Cedefop's most unique outputs has been its support to the Member States. Under the topic of 'careers and transitions', Cedefop carried out thematic country reviews on apprenticeships; under the topic of 'skills forecasting', it organised workshops for developing national level skills forecasting methodologies; under EQF implementation, it supported the national referencing processes. Cedefop also provided unique contributions to developing European Level Skills forecasts and methodologies for harmonising forecasting data, as well as transparency tools such as ECVET and EQAVET. Other activities related to common European tools and principles such as EQF/NQFs, ESCO, and Europass have been supported by Cedefop's expertise and management, however, they also had additional support structures established by the Commission. VET policy monitoring has been a routine activity done in cooperation with the ETF.

The evidence collected suggested that Cedefop's European coverage, the quality of its data and methodologies, unique scientific thematic knowledge, tripartite governance, and support to Member States have been the main added value elements provided by the agency. While the evaluation identified a few areas that could be potentially substituted by other EU institutions, agencies or settings (e.g. European coverage or tripartite representation), the stakeholders consulted agreed that Cedefop's thematic knowledge and unique support to Member States could hardly be substituted in short or medium-term.

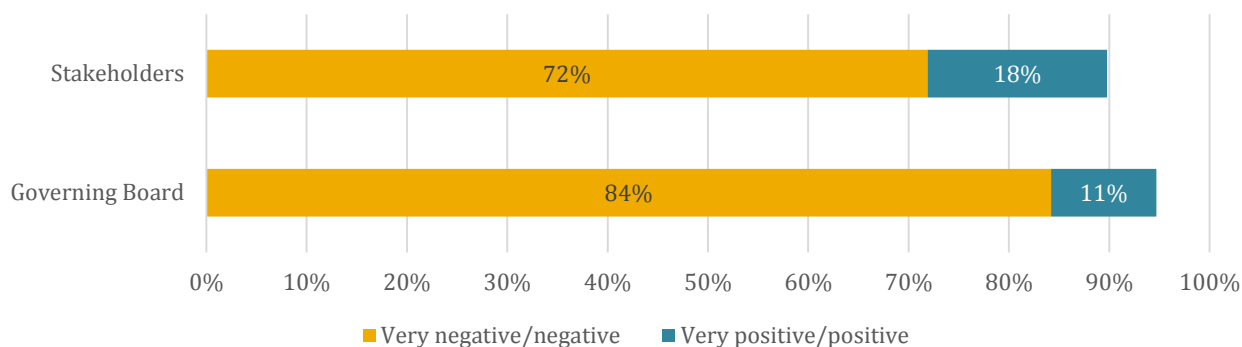
1.4.2. What would be the most likely consequences of the termination of the Agency?

In this section, we explore the hypothetical scenario of termination of Cedefop's activities and the potential impact of such a scenario. For this, we use data from the surveys, interviews and the open public consultation.

Surveyed and interviewed Cedefop's stakeholders nearly unanimously agreed that termination of the activities of Cedefop would have a negative impact on EU policy in the area of VET and lifelong learning (see figure below).

¹⁰⁹ Open Public Consultation.

Figure 58. In your opinion, what would be the potential impact of the termination of the activities of CEDEFOP on EU policy in the area of VET and lifelong learning?



Source: Cedefop Governing Board (n=38) and Stakeholder survey (n=157) 2017.

The interviewed stakeholders believed that termination of the agency could put VET policy identity and cooperation at risk, and diminish the overall availability of independent data on VET.

The interviewees from DG EMPL elaborated that the termination of Cedefop would likely mean that the Commission would have to take up part of Cedefop’s activities itself. It would imply that the Commission would have to contract out a high number of studies with no guarantee of quality, and uncertain capacity to carry out significantly increased quality assurance. The interviewees also observed that even if Cedefop’s staff would be reallocated to the Commission, they may end up in different positions and different DGs, which would consequently pose a long-term risk of losing EU-level expertise in VET policy. From the interviewed Commission’s officials’ point of view, termination scenario would likely drive VET policy to eventually lose its identity, since there would be no single organisation dedicating its resources and expertise to gathering the evidence base and supporting cooperation in this specific policy field.

Interviewed Governing Board members also observed that termination of Cedefop would have a significant negative impact on policy cooperation in VET. The interviewees pointed out that Cedefop had been recently acting as a policy cooperation forum with its European research dimension and increasingly relevant national level orientation. For the social partners and Member State representatives, termination would constitute the loss of an important forum to meet and discuss VET policy developments (including policy learning), and could lead to ‘re-nationalisation’ of VET policy.

Interviewed stakeholders also agreed that the termination of Cedefop’s activities would lead to an overall decrease in independent research and advice related to VET. In their view, even if Cedefop’s activities were taken up by other bodies it would hinder the independence of research.

Finally, the interviewed stakeholders noted that the timing of termination of the Agency would be unsuitable, as VET policy is gaining importance at the European level as a way to tackle such pressing issues in the European societies as long-term and youth unemployment as well as the best use of the skills of migrants.

Summary

The majority of Cedefop's stakeholders agreed that the termination of the agency would have a negative impact on EU policy in the area of VET and lifelong learning. Cedefop's termination would likely diminish the amount and quality of available research on VET, and drive EU VET policy to eventually losing its identity. The termination of the agency would also have negative impact on policy cooperation in VET, since Cedefop has established itself as a policy cooperation forum with its European research dimension and increasingly relevant national level orientation. The timing of such a decision would be unfavourable, having in mind the growing importance of VET and skills in EU policy, following the lessons learnt after the economic and financial crisis.

1.4.3. Points for improvement of EU added value

Table 15. Points for improvement of EU added value

Conclusion	Recommendation
One of Cedefop's most unique outputs has been its support to EU Member States. Cedefop also provided unique contributions to developing European Level Skills forecasts and methodologies for harmonising skills anticipation data.	Cedefop should continue to focus on the provision of unique support to Member States – however, it should do so in closer coordination with the Commission, to avoid information asymmetry. Cedefop should also continue its work on skills forecasting, where it is considered to be one of the pioneers not only at European, but also at international level.
The evidence collected suggested that Cedefop's European coverage, the quality of its data and methodologies, unique scientific thematic knowledge, tripartite governance, and support to Member States have been the main added value elements provided by the agency. While the evaluation identified a few areas that could be potentially substituted by other EU institutions, agencies or settings (e.g. European coverage or tripartite representation), the stakeholders consulted agreed that Cedefop's thematic knowledge and unique support to Member States could hardly be substituted in short or medium-term.	In case some of the activities of Cedefop are transferred to another organisation, precautions should be taken to ensure that the significant thematic knowledge, track record and experience held by the agency's staff is not lost in the process. In case tripartite representation is abandoned in Cedefop's Governing Board following the full implementation of the Common Approach, it is important to ensure the continuity of tripartite consultation on the agency's matters. The potential role of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) in this regard should be explored.

2. EVALUATION QUESTION 3 – IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM RECENT EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS AND AUDITS

EQ3: To what extent have the recommendations made by the latest external evaluations and those stemming from recent audits been put into practice?

This evaluation question addresses the extent to which the recommendations made by the latest external evaluation have been put in practice. The judgement is made based on the factual information collected via desk research and the interview programme. In the Final report, we will also look into the implementation of recommendations from audits.

The latest external evaluation of Cedefop¹¹⁰, finalised in 2013, provided a set of 23 recommendations, some of them within the remit of the agency and others addressed at other actors. An action plan to follow-up the evaluation was approved by the European Commission and presented to Cedefop’s Bureau on 8-9 December 2014. The Governing Board was periodically updated about the progress. In the Governing Board meeting on 5-6 October 2017, the last outstanding recommendation to introduce self-assessment of the Governing Board members was closed. The action plan is therefore considered closed and all the recommendations sufficiently addressed by the Agency and the Commission.

Cedefop’s ability to implement the recommendations from the previous external evaluation was also confirmed by all questioned interviewees, including Cedefop’s staff, the Commission, and stakeholders. The interviewees informed that the senior management of the agency has taken the recommendations into their agenda very strongly. There is already evidence that the implemented recommendations have led to some significant changes in the agency. This in turn indicates that overall the implementation of recommendations has happened in a timely manner.

Below we present a table linking (i) the recommendations of the previous evaluation, and (ii) the actions taken by the Agency with evaluator’s assessment on the implementation of the recommendations.

Table 16. Implementation of the recommendations of 2013 external evaluation

No.	Recommendation	Actions taken by the Agency
1.1	The support towards policy learning about EU initiatives at national level should be further strengthened in the light of European Semesters and advancing implementation of common EU policies, principles and tools. This should be done in close coordination with the Commission services, and the interventions should be coherent and	The recommendation to provide country-specific support has been taken into account particularly strongly by Cedefop and was one of the major changes following the 2013 external evaluation. The importance of this recommendation repeatedly came up in the interviews with the stakeholders, the Commission, and the agency’s staff.

¹¹⁰ PPMI, External Evaluation of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 2013.

No.	Recommendation	Actions taken by the Agency
	mutually supportive. A new balance and rearrangement of resources between supporting the EU policy developments in individual countries and continuing the work on cross-country issues needs to be found.	<p>Cedefop has been successful in providing country-specific information and helping the Commission to develop country-specific recommendations in the context of European Semesters. This was facilitated by the high place of VET and skills on the EU policy agenda during this period, following the lessons learnt after the economic and financial crisis and resulting long-term and youth unemployment.</p> <p>The flagship activity in this regard were the Cedefop's thematic Apprenticeship reviews. Other specific activities included the development of country-specific indicators, as well as VET systems descriptions and Spotlights, carried out in collaboration with ReferNet partners.</p>
1.2	As supporting all Member States separately by Cedefop would be costly, there should be a focus on identifying areas of concern where the risk of failure of a certain initiative is the highest. Particular focus at the national level should be paid to activities related to policy reporting and common European tools and initiatives. To further decrease costs, Cedefop's support could also be channelled through joint activities with the Commission, e.g. through OMC working group or in the context of ACVT.	<p>Cedefop took this recommendation into account when considering how it should develop the country-specific support approach. The thematic country reviews are produced in cases where there is a particular need and willingness of policy makers for such reviews. This approach also allows the assistance to be carried out without imposing any directive approach toward the country. In some cases, there was already evidence of the thematic country reviews leading to new developments (e.g. legislation) in subject countries.</p> <p>Cedefop also participated in and supported ET2020 working groups (OMC working groups).</p>
1.3	More organised policy learning should be organised between clusters of countries.	<p>The implementation of this recommendation partly followed directly from the recommendation to provide more country-specific support. The thematic reviews carried out by Cedefop are used to support policy learning in countries. Cedefop is particularly seeking to identify knowledge that can be shared among countries.</p> <p>A working group to design Policy Learning Fora (PLF) was set up in June 2014, involving all actors concerned. 2-3 PLFs per year were organised in the years since.</p>
1.4	Given the movement of Cedefop towards provision of support to the implementation of European tools and principles at national level, caution should be strengthened to avoid duplication with national actors.	No duplications with the national actors have been identified in this regard.
2.1	The Founding Regulation should be amended to include the Agency's work on skills as one of its tasks and to integrate more clearly the	The proposal for amendment of the Founding Regulation includes the elements suggested.

No.	Recommendation	Actions taken by the Agency
	work on policy reporting and common European tools and initiatives.	
3.1	The balance between open source and policy support poles needs to be maintained, therefore the open source function should focus more on the activities which have proven to be the most impactful towards EU policy, particularly those related to medium-term priority 'Modernisation of VET systems'.	<p>The growing EU policy relevance of the agency's activities was another trend noticed strongly by the stakeholders. In fact, this trend was so strong that a number of stakeholders feared that the open source function is being 'lost' with the increasing focus on policy support.</p> <p>Cedefop's Work programmes for 2013 and 2014 reflected this strategy in distribution of resources towards the priorities 'Modernisation of VET systems' and 'Skills'. This trend was maintained in the later work programmes as well.</p>
3.2	The activities under the priority 'Careers and transitions' should be reviewed to identify areas which have been exploited and which would not require a significant update in the next period so that they could be discontinued in line with the new medium-term priorities. The resources could then be directed to the emerging issues on the EU policy agenda related to adult learning and skill gaps or to strengthen the work on policy reporting and common European tools and initiatives. None of the current Cedefop activities should be discontinued or significantly modified prior to adoption of the new medium-term priorities.	<p>The activities in this area have been streamlined and now focus on access to and attractiveness of VET, effectiveness of VET policies and programmes, and VET for labour market integration and social inclusion.</p> <p>Adult learning is reflected in strategic areas for operation in Cedefop's Programming Document 2017-2020. A stocktaking exercise concerning CVET was also carried out in 2015.</p>
4.1	The interactivity with the wider community of experts could be further improved, e.g. via website or social media – interactive approach, questions inviting discussion, small surveys, which would provide an additional way of drawing on their expertise, where relevant.	<p>The recommendation has led to a new Communication strategy, adopted in 2014. The concept of 'key account management' was introduced. Cedefop identified several hundred key accounts of its stakeholders, and continued to develop tailored approaches to reach those key accounts.</p> <p>The Cedefop website was relaunched, to include information on agency's outputs and objectives in all EU languages, and increasingly rely on audio-visual material, data visualisation, and social media content.</p> <p>Downsizing of library services was carried out in 2014, by closing services such as European training thesaurus, online bibliographies and VET alert newsletter. The reference service 'Ask a VET expert' was reorganised.</p>
4.2	Cedefop should further continue its networking activities.	The networking activities were continued and in fact successfully expanded with the strengthening of Brussels liaison office.
4.3	The indicators related to social media reach should be included in the PMS, e.g. in the case of Facebook the number of comments, likes,	The indicators related to social media reach have been included in the PMS and monitored.

No.	Recommendation	Actions taken by the Agency
	shares, in the case of Twitter – number of responses, re-tweets and a systematic approach should be applied in regularly following up the relations with stakeholders.	
5.1	<i>[In relation to collaboration with ETF and Eurofound]</i> More general principles and repeating joint activities should be agreed in the collaboration frameworks, while year-specific activities – in joint work programmes. The same programme should be included in the annual WPs of both collaborating agencies.	The annual work programmes now detail yearly activities to be carried out in collaboration with the other agencies.
5.2	It would not be advisable to further intensify the collaboration activities of the agencies. Instead, the current level of collaboration should be kept, and the forthcoming review of the founding regulations of the agencies should be taken as an opportunity to fine-tune the boundaries of their remits and scope for collaboration on the topics which have proven to create potential for overlap or synergies.	The collaboration of the agencies has been kept at a similar level as before and the overlaps have been avoided. Where the collaboration was expanded (e.g. with Eurofound on European Company Survey), it was beneficial for both agencies and recommended by the previous evaluation.
5.3	Cedefop and ETF should establish a common pool of potential staff members, who would have the qualifications relevant for the work in both of the agencies.	Cedefop attempted to implement this recommendation by adopting rules on the procedure governing the engagement and use of temporary staff. These rules foresee a possibility of joint selection procedures by two or more agencies with similar areas of interest, particularly for specialist profiles. In practice there were however no indications of efficiency gains from such procedures. The labour markets of Torino and Thessaloniki were too divergent for establishment of a single pool of candidates, the timing of recruitment was different, and procedures were lengthy and complicated.
5.4	Cedefop should rely on the wide survey of employers organised by Eurofound to gather its data from companies on skills.	The collaboration between Cedefop and Eurofound in this area was implemented and was mentioned as one of the best practice examples of agency collaboration by the staff and stakeholders of both agencies.
5.5	The joint events of the four agencies should continue to be organised periodically.	The joint events continued to be organised, as evidenced by the Annual Reports of the agencies.
6.1	Conducting a self-assessment of how Governing Board members perform their supervisory responsibilities to stimulate learning and discussion on the governing model is recommended.	The questionnaire for self-assessment of the GB members was developed and the exercise was carried out in 2017. In the GB meeting on 5-6 October 2017, the findings and recommendations were discussed.
6.2	Cedefop should work on strengthening performance management systems – most notably through further improvement of PMS and better implementation of ABB.	Recommendation closely related to recommendations 7.1 and 7.2, therefore no specific action necessary after addressing these recommendations.
6.3	A follow-up is recommended on the recent Cedefop staff survey, which provides insights on cooperation and coordination issues	The action plan to follow-up the staff survey was prepared and closed in April 2016.

No.	Recommendation	Actions taken by the Agency
	within the organisation. The results of the survey should be used as momentum for ongoing organisational development and employee involvement.	The new iteration of the survey was carried out in 2017. The questions differed from the first survey and the survey was supported by external HR expertise. It remains to be seen whether the new version of the survey will be instrumental in bringing forward the organisational development and employee involvement in the Agency.
6.4	Internal evaluations should also be used as a tool of employee involvement, by including them in evaluation expert groups (see below).	Internal evaluations are used as a tool for employee involvement, as the members of their working groups are selected on the basis of not only expertise, but also representation. One of the goals of the internal evaluations is to promote an evaluation culture among employees.
7.1	Developing closer connections between medium-term priorities, activities, projects and performance indicators would be useful in strategic planning and evaluating Cedefop's performance. Setting targets for outcome indicators is also recommended. It would allow assessing more clearly whether achieved results could be evaluated as poor, average or good.	A working group was set up to review the performance measurement system (PMS). The review used an internal survey (in 2015) to gather evidence and streamlined the PMS, aligning it to the new multiannual objectives and strategic areas of operation.
7.2	Further gradual implementation of ABB is recommended. Initially ABB could be introduced in its full extent only in some activities (e.g. more standardised services). It is important to link activities and specific performance indicators/targets.	The review of the PMS was targeted at strengthening the link with ABB activities.
7.3	The Commission should enhance further its internal coordination before sending the ad hoc requests to Cedefop. For multiple new requests priorities for Cedefop should be clearly identified so that it is able to address the priorities with sufficient resources.	This recommendation was targeted at the Commission rather than the Agency. Cedefop was able to comply with the ad hoc requests in a timely manner. Ad hoc requests still forced the Agency to delay some of the planned activities (set in the work programmes). However, the activities delayed had minor policy importance in comparison to ad hoc issues. The Agency's Governing Board set up 'negative priorities' for Cedefop's work beforehand.
7.4	It is recommended to use evaluation expert groups composed of competent staff, which could also provide support to wider performance management tasks. Evaluations should be linked to further development of PMS and ABB.	Such expert groups are used. The effort was made to express more clearly the evaluation objectives in the mandates of working groups. Cedefop's Annual Management Plans outline follow-up action related to recommendations from previous evaluations. Where appropriate this includes links to development of PMS and ABB.

Source: compiled by the authors based on interview data and the Action plan to follow up Cedefop's external evaluation, as discussed in the Governing Board meeting on 5-6 October 2017.

Summary

The evidence shows that the management of Cedefop has been the driving force behind putting the recommendations of the previous external evaluation into practice. All 23 recommendations were implemented and closed by the Agency's Governing Board in accordance with the Commission by the time of writing. The recommendations have already brought some significant changes in the Agency and led to some positive impacts – these include a better focus on the country-specific support, stronger policy orientation, and better interactivity with the stakeholders.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Table 17. Conclusions

Question in the Tender Specifications	Summary evaluation judgment
Q1. Effectiveness	
<p>1. How successful are the four Agencies in reaching the expected objectives, results and making impacts?</p>	<p>The evidence gathered indicates that Cedefop successfully supported the development of EU VET and skills policies and contributed to their implementation. Evidence also indicates that Cedefop has made impact at EU policy level during the evaluation period, in particular by directly contributing to key EU policy developments in the area of VET and skills policies through multiple references in and contributions to EU policy documents in line with its three MTPs and through its participation to meetings of senior stakeholders which supported policy implementation and Presidency events. However, it should be noted that most policy-oriented meetings or Presidency events reported in Cedefop PMS and Annual Reports in 2011-2016 principally referred to Commission's cluster, working or expert groups or DGVT, ACVT, EMCO and LLP/Erasmus+ Committee meetings, to which Cedefop's presence is usually required. It is also noticeable that meetings dedicated to providing direct support to Member States started to represent a larger proportion of all meetings to which the agency is participating in 2015 and 2016.</p> <p>The agency has been successful in achieving its three specific objectives (medium-term priorities) during the evaluation period: supporting the modernisation of VET systems; careers and transitions: continuing VET, adult and work-based learning; and analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision. Cedefop's outputs in these three main policy fields during 2011-2016 were largely appreciated by its stakeholders.</p>
<p>2. To what extent are the current activities carried out by the four Agencies appropriate for achieving their objectives?</p>	<p>Cedefop carries out four types of operational activities to achieve its objectives: research, monitoring, support and communication. The evidence collected suggests that the agency implemented these activities effectively during the evaluation period. In particular, Cedefop's monitoring was useful to EU and Member State stakeholders at policy level in providing information and guidance, including CSRs under the European Semester; research was useful by bringing relevant and evidence-based information for policy making; support was</p>

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	<p>especially useful to Member States in the context of reforms, in the form of thematic country reviews and peer-learning activities.</p> <p>Cedefop's move towards increasing support to Member States was evident during the evaluation period. There was also some evidence that Cedefop's work was used to support national policy developments. However, evidence from interviews revealed that the results of the work carried out by Cedefop at national level in the context of apprenticeship reviews could be better integrated into the EU policy making and discussions, in particular from countries in which apprenticeship reviews have been conducted.</p> <p>Among Cedefop's four operational objectives and types of activities, communication activities were the least positively assessed by stakeholders in surveys, interviews and the OPC. Nevertheless, Cedefop's communication activities have been widely restructured during the evaluation period, to better adapt the Agency to emerging communications challenges and to better reflect the needs and interests of the Agency's key stakeholders. Cedefop re-designed its communication strategy to make it more interactive and engaging, and implemented a 'paperless policy' for publications. Cedefop's website was also revamped, aiming to present core information on Cedefop's outputs and strategic objectives in all languages of the EU, and to present more hands-on information for policy makers, researchers and the wider public. The agency also collaborated more systematically with DG EMPL on communication, e.g. by agreeing on a common communication approach in 2016 and joining forces on specific communication activities. Finally, the reinforcement of the liaison office in Brussels since 2015 has allowed to intensify Cedefop's visibility and communications towards its key stakeholders at EU level.</p>
<p>3. To what extent are the services that the four Agencies provide actually used by their stakeholders, by EU Institutions and by international bodies and organisations, and how well they respond to their needs?</p>	<p>Evidence revealed several important points with regard to the usage of the agency's service by its stakeholders. First, the main user of Cedefop's services at the EU level during the evaluation period was the European Commission, followed by the European Parliament, while at international level, the OECD used Cedefop's information the most often. Second, stakeholders who responded to our survey also named Cedefop as one of their main information sources as compared to other organisations. Third, Cedefop's documents were consistently used for EU policy documents preparation, as well as preparation of documents by international organisations and scientific articles throughout the evaluation period. There is also evidence that Cedefop's work was used to support national policy developments. Fourth, the agency's outputs were used to a varying extent by the stakeholders, yet many of the outputs were used at least once a month by the majority of stakeholders who responded to the survey. Fifth, the stakeholders also positively evaluated the quality of Cedefop's outputs. Therefore, the agency's services corresponded to the needs of its stakeholders in terms of their usefulness, relevance and quality.</p>

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<p>4. How are the four Agencies adapting to the changes in the EU policy and in the political and the socio-economic situation in the EU?</p>	<p>Evidence shows that overall, Cedefop successfully managed to adapt to changes in EU policy and in the general political and socio-economic situation in Europe from 2011 to 2016. According to evidence collected in the context of interviews and case studies, Cedefop was generally able to respond positively to the changing socio-economic and political context by working on policy responses formulated at EU level in the area of VET, skills and adult learning policy, including in its programming documents. Most interviewees considered that the agency's Work Programme was flexible enough to respond to ad hoc requests, and to adapt Cedefop's work to emerging policy-related issues at EU and national level.</p> <p>Cedefop has achieved this taking into account its mandate to assist the Commission in encouraging the promotion and development of VET and of in-service training at EU level, as well as taking into account the role of Member States in setting priorities at EU level according to their needs in this policy area. Evidence demonstrates that stakeholders positively assessed the agency's work in a changing political and socio-economic context marked by multiple crises. Stakeholders notably emphasised the importance of Cedefop's increasing relevance and support to Member States, and that the agency's flexibility to adapt to emerging policy issues at EU level resulted in some additional workload and limited reprioritisation of its operational activities.</p>
<p>5. To what extent do the governance model (and tripartite nature), internal structures, mandates, objectives and activities of the four Agencies, achieve the objectives of the Common Approach on Decentralised Agencies (CA) on coherency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency?</p>	<p>The findings show that the agency performed successfully in terms of accountability, transparency, performance assessment, effectiveness and efficiency during the evaluation period, and in fact carried out a number of practices suggested by the Common Approach already by the time it was adopted. However, the agency continued the step-by-step implementation of various further elements of the Common Approach. The main remaining discrepancy was the size of Cedefop's Governing Board. However, it was also one of the most valued features of the agency by its stakeholders.</p>
Q1. Efficiency	
<p>6. To what extent are the four Agencies cost-effective and how well administrative and operational budgets are balanced?</p>	<p>The findings show that the agency has been efficient. Cedefop achieved 99.99% budget implementation in 2016, and had a stable operational/administrative expenditure ratio. Cedefop managed to achieve its objectives, take on additional tasks, and maintain its outcome indicators despite of reducing resources. Even though the agency produced significantly fewer outputs, since 2014 it managed to regain the number of citations in EU policy documents, increase event quality, and reintroduce a positive trend in Cedefop's website visits. This was done in part by managing to transfer staff and administrative savings towards operational budget titles. The recently adopted paperless policy was recognised by staff as one of the main administrative efficiency gains.</p>

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	<p>Cedefop also successfully reprioritised some of its activities to accommodate <i>ad hoc</i> requests from the stakeholders, mainly the Commission. While the requests implied additional workload, they also significantly contributed to the agency's relevance.</p> <p>The agency demonstrated active efforts to review its internal administrative procedures and reallocate efficiency gains to core operations. Additional potential for efficiency gains was seen in sharing horizontal services such as common tendering and procurement procedures for ICT and audio-visual equipment, cloud services, press/social media monitoring reports, catering, external evaluation, and data protection with other agencies.</p>
<p>7. To what extent are staff resources and workload appropriate to fulfil efficiently and effectively the Agencies' objectives and activities?</p>	<p>External audit reports indicated that Cedefop had a balanced mix of human resources, with a ratio of approximately 70%/30% between operational to administrative and neutral staff. Cedefop's stakeholders and staff members unanimously agreed that the workload within the agency has been gradually increasing due to staff cuts and the increasing scope of activities. The majority of the agency's staff surveyed also felt that the amount of human resources to fulfil their tasks was too low, and that their workload was too high. While Cedefop was successfully implementing planned 10% staff cuts, the EU budget document noted that the agency may have to cut some of its activities in case of further staff reductions.</p>
<p>8. To what extent are the internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the agencies adequate for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of the overall performance of the Agencies while minimising the administrative burden of the Agencies and its stakeholders?</p>	<p>Cedefop is compliant with the Common Approach with regard of implementing necessary internal mechanisms for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of overall performance of the agency. Cedefop's Governing Board members and staff also believed that the agency had adequate mechanisms to ensure accountability towards stakeholders, transparency towards stakeholders and the general public, and appropriate assessment of the agency's performance. In terms of managing to ensure accountability towards stakeholders, both the stakeholders (including Governing Board members) and staff agreed that Cedefop succeeded in doing that.</p> <p>Cedefop's staff acknowledged that activities relating to programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating are important for ensuring the accountability and appropriate assessment of the agency's activities. These activities, however, lead to additional administrative burden. 57% of surveyed Cedefop's staff argued that this administrative burden hinders implementation of their primary tasks.</p> <p>Analysis of Cedefop's PMS system indicated that Cedefop's annual reports presented some PMS indicators in a very aggregate manner. The indicators 'Policy documents citing Cedefop work' and 'Participation in Presidency events and meetings of senior stakeholders or which support policy' combined events of various political importance or citations in documents of different legal status, leading to potential misperceptions of the agency's true impact. The evaluation also found some divergence in PMS monitoring between the other agencies under the remit of DG EMPL. While Cedefop, Eurofound and</p>

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	EU-OSHA had similar indicators for monitoring dissemination and uptake of their outputs, staff capacity, and budget execution, there have been differences in monitoring policy outcomes or work programme implementation.
9. To what extent do the four Agencies' internal organisational structures contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations?	The reorganisation of Cedefop's departments strengthened the agency's strategic alignment by reflecting the programming and strategic documents such as medium-term priorities and strategic areas of cooperation. The new structure also brought about more internal coherence and sorted out overlapping or similar tasks observed within the previous arrangement. The new Director was recognised by staff and stakeholders as a driver for better internal communication and outreach.
10. To what extent the size and composition of the Governing Boards affects the work of the agencies?	The evidence collected suggests that the tripartite structure of its Board is a key strength of the agency, and that benefits of a large Governing Board are higher than its costs. In particular, the tripartite structure brings strong representativeness to the Board and potential for dissemination of Cedefop's work at the national level. However, in terms of effectiveness of governance, while the Board usually is able to reach consensus on all questions considered, the size of the Board is too large to have a fruitful discussion. The contribution of different members of Governing Board is uneven, with some of them dominating the discussion and the others contributing little. Furthermore, the Bureau was pre-coordinating the positions of different stakeholder groups before the full Board meeting, and there was very little scope of these positions changing during the course of the meeting, with the full Board meetings becoming a mere formality. It is important to note that the Bureau is essential to Cedefop's governance structure as it allows timely decision making for strategically important decisions as well as facilitates work in the Governing Board. Whereas there were only small and justifiable overlaps between the Board of Cedefop and those of the other EU agencies, a much more significant overlap was noticeable with the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training. However, the two settings were completely different in purpose.
11. How effective were the host Member States in fulfilling their obligations as defined in the Headquarters Agreements between the Agency and Member State where the seat is located. In particular, to what extent actions undertaken by the host Member States were appropriate to ensure multilingual, European-	Greece faced some difficulties in fulfilling the Headquarters Agreement during the evaluation period, yet the Greek government made significant advances in resolving the issue of repairs required for the agency's building. The opinions of the respondents to the surveys and the OPC were split on the question about convenience of Thessaloniki from a logistics perspective. The agency's staff was not satisfied with the available multilingual and European-oriented schooling options and transport connections. Finally, the current agreement does not foresee a direct VAT exclusion, creating additional administrative burden for Cedefop.

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oriented schooling and appropriate transport connections? Are there any areas for improvement?	
Q1. Relevance	
12. To what extent do the original objectives of the Agencies still correspond to the needs within the EU?	According to evidence collected from desk research, survey, interview data and case studies, Cedefop's mandate and objectives appear to largely correspond to the EU's current political priorities. Cedefop's activities contributed to all three objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, to three out of ten priorities of the Commission President Juncker's Political Guidelines and to seven out of eight specific objectives set in the 2016-2020 DG EMPL Strategic Plan. Evidence shows that the agency was generally able to react to most pressing crises and challenges at EU level. In particular, stakeholders emphasised the relevance of the agency's work in contribution to the EU's response to the youth unemployment crisis, in light of the relevance of VET in labour market integration and social inclusion. Moreover, evidence collected from desk research, interviews, surveys, case studies and the OPC indicates that Cedefop's activities were relevant for many of its stakeholders, a wide range of which regularly used Cedefop's work during the evaluation period.
13. How relevant are Agencies to the EU citizens?	Cedefop does not directly target EU citizens through its activities (with the exception of Europass), making the agency only indirectly relevant for the general public. There were several ways through which Cedefop was relevant for EU citizens during the evaluation period. First, the general public was exposed to Cedefop's activities and information through the agency's communication channels. Second, Cedefop contributed to EU policy and some national policy developments. Third, information produced by Cedefop also was used in different scientific articles, increasing the reach and potential of the agency's work to be used in policy making. Lastly, based on the perceptions of the OPC respondents, Cedefop managed to address the needs in the area of VET in Europe.
Q1. EU added value	
14. What is the EU added value of the four Agencies, in particular as regards process and role effects?	The analysis of Cedefop's thematic outputs indicated that the agency had few overlaps with other international or national institutions. Despite the fact that there have been other actors contributing to similar topics, Cedefop tended to create added value in providing a European dimension and high level of expertise and methodologies. One of Cedefop's most unique outputs has been its support to the Member States. Under the topic of 'careers and transitions', Cedefop carried out thematic country reviews on apprenticeships; under the topic of 'skills forecasting', it organised workshops for developing national level skills forecasting methodologies; under EQF implementation, it supported the national referencing processes. Cedefop also provided unique contributions to developing European

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	<p>Level Skills forecasts and methodologies for harmonising forecasting data, as well as transparency tools such as ECVET and EQAVET. Other activities related to common European tools and principles such as EQF/NQFs, ESCO, and Europass have been supported by Cedefop's expertise and management, however, they also had additional support structures established by the Commission. VET policy monitoring has been a routine activity done in cooperation with the ETF.</p> <p>The evidence collected suggested that Cedefop's European coverage, the quality of its data and methodologies, unique scientific thematic knowledge, tripartite governance, and support to Member States have been the main added value elements provided by the agency. While the evaluation identified a few areas that could be potentially substituted by other EU institutions, agencies or settings (e.g. European coverage or tripartite representation), the stakeholders consulted agreed that Cedefop's thematic knowledge and unique support to Member States could hardly be substituted in short or medium-term.</p> <p>Collected evidence suggested that European coverage, quality of data and methodologies, unique scientific thematic knowledge, tripartite governance, and support to Member States have been the main added value elements provided by Cedefop. While the evaluation identified a few areas that could be potentially substituted by other EU institutions, agencies or settings (e.g. European coverage or tripartite representation), the consulted stakeholders agreed that Cedefop's thematic knowledge and unique support to Member States could hardly be substituted in short or medium-term.</p>
<p>15. What would be the most likely consequences of the termination of the Agencies?</p>	<p>The majority of Cedefop's stakeholders agreed that the termination of the agency would have a negative impact on EU policy in the area of VET and lifelong learning. Cedefop's termination would likely diminish the amount and quality of available research on VET, and drive EU VET policy to eventually losing its identity. The termination of the agency would also have negative impact on policy cooperation in VET, since Cedefop has established itself as a policy cooperation forum with its European research dimension and increasingly relevant national level orientation. The timing of such a decision would be unfavourable, having in mind the growing importance of VET and skills in EU policy, following the lessons learnt after the economic and financial crisis.</p>
Q3. Implementation of recommendations	
<p>1. To what extent have the recommendations made by the latest external evaluations and those stemming from recent audits been put into practice?</p>	<p>The evidence shows that the management of Cedefop has been the driving force behind putting the recommendations of the previous external evaluation into practice. All 23 recommendations were implemented and closed by the agency's Governing Board in accordance with the Commission by the time of writing. The recommendations have already brought some significant changes in the agency and led to some positive impacts – these include a better focus on the country-specific support, stronger policy orientation, and</p>

Question in the Tender Specifications	Summary evaluation judgment
	better interactivity with the stakeholders.

APPENDIX 1. INTERVENTION LOGIC OF CEDEFOP

The intervention logic of Cedefop is presented in Figure 59. We compiled the intervention logic by reviewing the key strategic documents of the agency and the last external evaluation report. In particular, we examined Cedefop's:

- Founding Regulation¹¹¹
- Medium-term priorities 2012-2014 (extended by Governing Board Decisions of 25 April 2014 and 25 February 2015 to cover respectively 2015 and 2016)¹¹² and 2009-2011¹¹³
- Annual work programmes from 2011 to 2016¹¹⁴
- Annual reports and Consolidated Annual Activity reports from 2011 to 2015¹¹⁵
- External evaluation (2013), Final report¹¹⁶

The intervention logic starts with the needs, that refer to key socio-economic and policy challenges that Cedefop aimed to address during the evaluation period (e.g. strong European cooperation in VET, excellence and social inclusion in VET). We identified needs from the Cedefop's Medium-term priorities for 2012-2014 (extended to cover 2015 and 2016), Work programmes from 2011 to 2016, and Annual reports from 2011 to 2015.

The intervention logic follows with three levels of inter-related objectives. The general objective reflects the agency's mission statement declared in the Founding Regulation (i.e. to support the development of European VET policies and contribute to their implementation). The specific objectives refer to the high-level strategic objective discussed in the agency's Medium-term priorities. They also represent the three thematic policy fields in which Cedefop was operating in the evaluation period (i.e. modernisation of VET systems, careers and transitions, and skills and competences). The operational objectives refer to key functions that the agency draws on to support Member States and the European Commission in the development of EU VET policies (in essence, providing evidence and policy analysis, monitoring in the areas of skills needs and policy development, supporting the Commission, Member States and social partners, and communicating in the area of VET).

Operational objectives are followed by activities that describe concrete actions implemented by Cedefop (e.g. carrying out EU-wide research activities, or supporting the development, implementation and adoption of skills tools). Activities are grouped into the categories that

¹¹¹ Regulation (EC) No 2051/2004 of 25 October 2004 amending Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

¹¹² Cedefop (2011), Medium-term priorities 2012-2014. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

¹¹³ Cedefop (2008), Cedefop's medium-term priorities 2009-11. Enhancing European cooperation in vocational education through evidence and expertise: continuity, focus and flexibility. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

¹¹⁴ Cedefop's annual work programme for 2016 can be found here <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/what-we-do/work-programme>.

¹¹⁵ At the time of the Inception report writing, Cedefop's annual report for 2016 was not available yet. Cedefop's annual reports for 2012-2015 can be found here: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/what-we-do/annual-reports>.

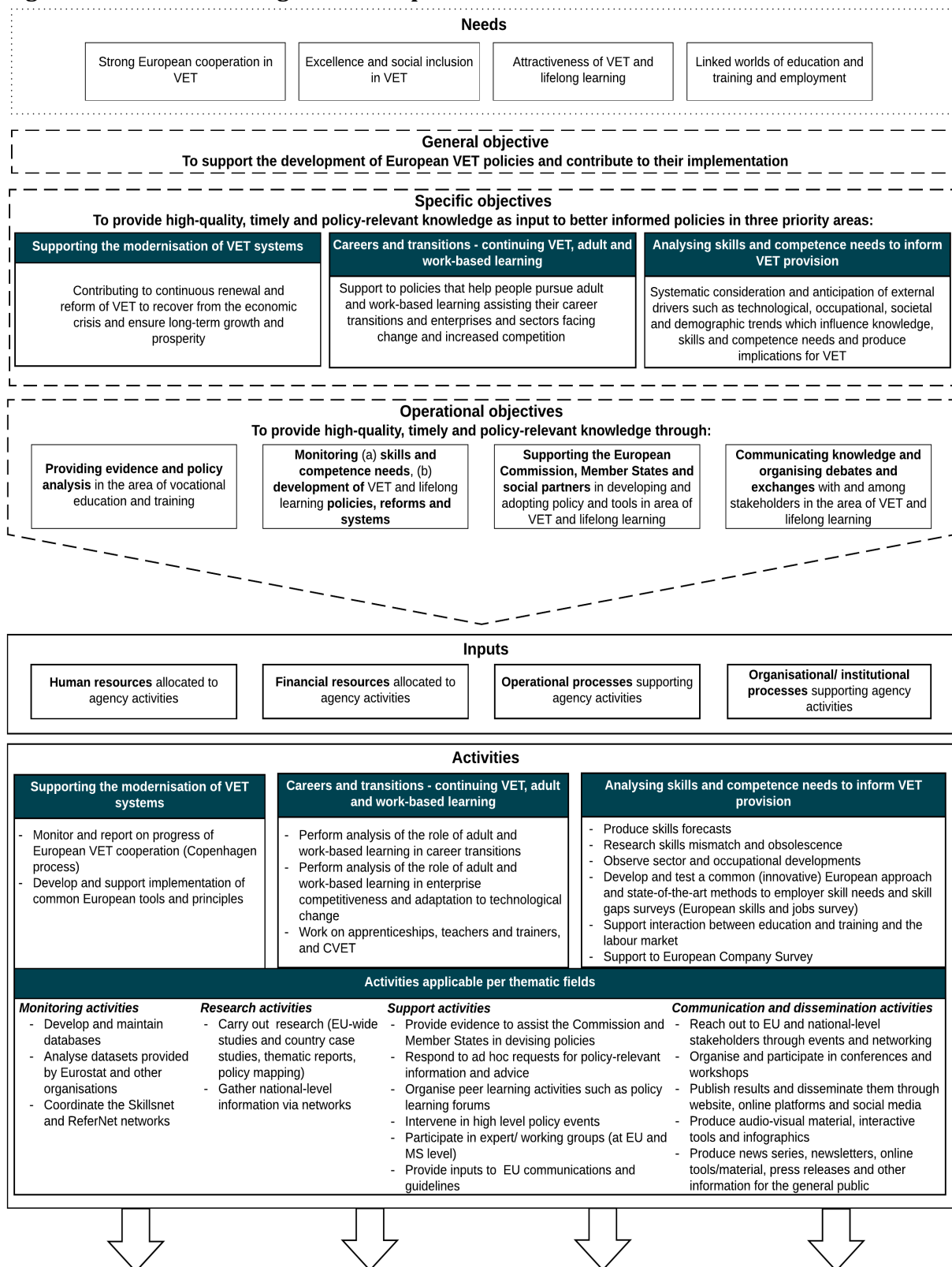
¹¹⁶ European Commission (2013), External Evaluation of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), Final Report. Prepared by PPMI for the European Commission.

directly relate to the agency's specific and operational objectives. At the inputs level, we identified four categories of institutional resources: human and financial resources, operational processes and organisational/ institutional processes.

We clearly linked specific and operational objectives with outputs and results. Notably, output and result indicators are grouped according to the same categories as the objectives. The intervention logic only provides some examples of specific and measurable indicators for outputs and results.

At the impacts level, we have identified a number of major EU policy initiatives and processes from 2011 to 2016 in the area of VET and lifelong learning (e.g. European Alliance for Apprenticeships, Youth Employment Initiative, EU Skills Panorama). During the evaluation, we will analyse whether, how and to what extent Cedefop has contributed to a number of selected initiatives and processes. When feasible, we will also look at the broader social, economic and environmental impact of the EU-level policy initiatives and processes that Cedefop has contributed to.

Figure 59. Intervention logic of Cedefop



Outputs

Supporting the modernisation of VET systems	Careers and transitions - continuing VET, adult and work-based learning	Analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports on Copenhagen Process, esp. Bruges short-term priorities - Thematic snapshots on VET for EU Presidency semesters - Deliverables related to common European tools and principles (e.g. Europass, EQF/NQFs, ECVET, EQAVET, ESCO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publications of studies carried out by Cedefop in the field - Apprenticeships review and outputs related to work on teachers and trainers and CVET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills forecasting reports - Skills Panorama website - European skills and jobs survey (methods, approach, results) - Contributions to European Company Survey - Skills index - Profiles of EU national skills anticipation systems 	
Outputs applicable per thematic fields			
<p>Monitoring outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated databases - Outputs produced by networks 	<p>Research outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Published comparative analyses/ reports - Published case studies - Published national policy reports, reviews and analysis - Published info sheets 	<p>Support outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributions provided to policy development at EU and MS level - Inputs to EU communications and guidelines - Deliverables produced in response to ad hoc requests - Peer learning activities organised - Interventions produced in policy events or expert/working groups - Policy briefings 	<p>Communication and dissemination outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publications prepared - Events organised (conferences/ seminars) - Visited events (including working groups) - Web portal/ online tools - Social media activities - Audiovisual production - Press releases and other information for the general public

Results

Supporting the modernisation of VET systems	Careers and transitions - continuing VET, adult and work-based learning	Analysing skills and competence needs to inform VET provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of Copenhagen process reports - Use of the thematic snapshots by the Council Presidency - Use of deliverables related to common European tools and principles - Use of Cedefop's work in developing EU and national VET and lifelong learning policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of Cedefop's publications in the field - Use of the apprenticeships review and outputs related to work on teachers and trainers and CVET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of forecasting reports - Number of visits to Skills Panorama website - Use of the results of the European skills and jobs survey - Use of skills index and profiles of EU national skills anticipation systems
Result indicators applicable per thematic fields		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - References to Cedefop in EU and Member States' policy documents - Written contributions to policy documents of EU and international organisations; Number of on-request contributions at meetings of named organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of the scientific quality of Agencies' research (No. of references in academic journals) - Participation at Cedefop's events/ conferences - Number of reports downloaded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of followers on social media - Requests for copyrights usage - Traffic to websites (including visits/ page views) - Number of RSS feed subscriptions - Number of readers exposed to Cedefop's knowledge through the media

Impacts

