e+i Network of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Synthesis Report

Webinar and e-discussion on the VSD Typology Tools

## 12th to 16th November 2018

Authors:

Annett Hilpert (INBAS GmbH) and Katharina Walker (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)
with inputs from Brigitte Colarte-Dürr (SDC) and Roman Troxler (KEK-CDC)

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1. Introduction and Background

In 2017, a group of subject matter experts from the SDC e+i Focal Point in cooperation with KEK-CDC and freelance consultants started a consultation process to design a Project Typology Tool that structures the landscape of VSD interventions in a two-dimensional co-ordinate system. The horizontal axis visualizes the policy orientation of an intervention, pursuing either more social or more economic objectives in the short run. The vertical axis reflects the intended impact of an intervention, whether they are designed to contribute primarily to the education system improvement or intend to generate employment and productivity impacts. By positioning project interventions in those quadrants, one can differentiate between the **four prototypes of VSD projects/programmes**: (1) Vocational Education & training (VET), (2) Access and Inclusion, (3) Industry Solutions and (4) Labour Market Integration:
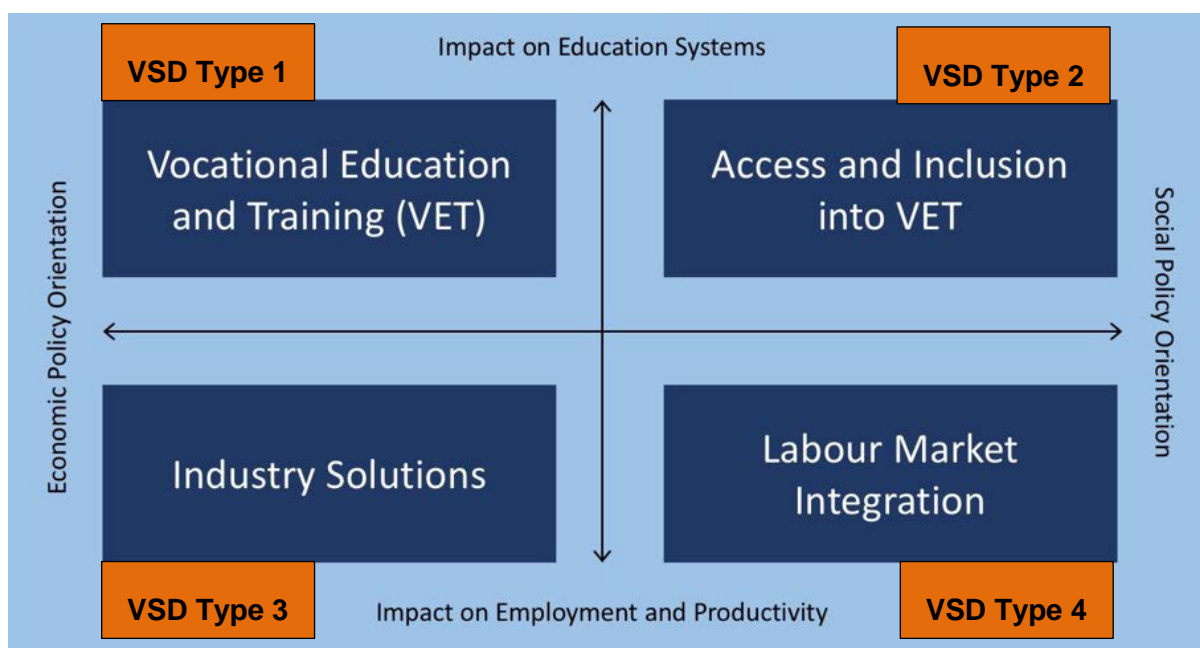
The first draft of this tool was introduced to the e+i Focal Point in 2017 to verify the interest and demand in such an instrument with the country offices. This early exercise confirmed the demand for instruments to improve the results of SDC's VSD investments. The developer team continued to shape and further elaborate the instrument which resulted in a **set of 3 tools** - a **Basic Tool** to position the VSD interventions and **2 supplementary add-ons** focusing on the key factors of quality service provision in VSD: **good governance and private sector involvement in VSD**.

In 2018, the SDC e+i Focal Point decided to present the Typology Toolset to a broader professional audience for validation and brainstorming of its practical application. Potential users of these instruments are the project/programme management and coordination staff of SDC head office, the project staff and implementing partners onsite and the consultants' community involved in VSD projects of SDC and other donor initiatives.

A webinar with a subsequent online discussion was considered the most suitable way of combining an introductory session on the tools with a lively exchange of ideas and opinions as regards their practical application in various project and programme contexts. The introduction of the draft tools to the user community will enable SDC to include their feedback, suggestions and comments in the final review process to generate a user-friendly and effective tool for project planning, management and evaluation. The **webinar took place on 12th November 2018 followed by a four-day**

e-discussion (13th -16th November 2018). The event was jointly organized and implemented by SDC, KEK-CDC Consultants, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and INBAS International, Germany. All presented materials (Power Point Presentations and Introduction Video) as well as a brief summary of the webinar and the daily summaries of the e-discussion are uploaded in the SDC Shareweb.

This report summarizes and consolidates the results of this validation exercise and provides input, orientation and thought-provoking impulses that shall help the developer team to refine and finally publish the tools for dissemination and application in the projects.

2. The VSD Typology Tool Set at a Glance

BASIC TOOL 1/3: "Impact Areas of VSD"
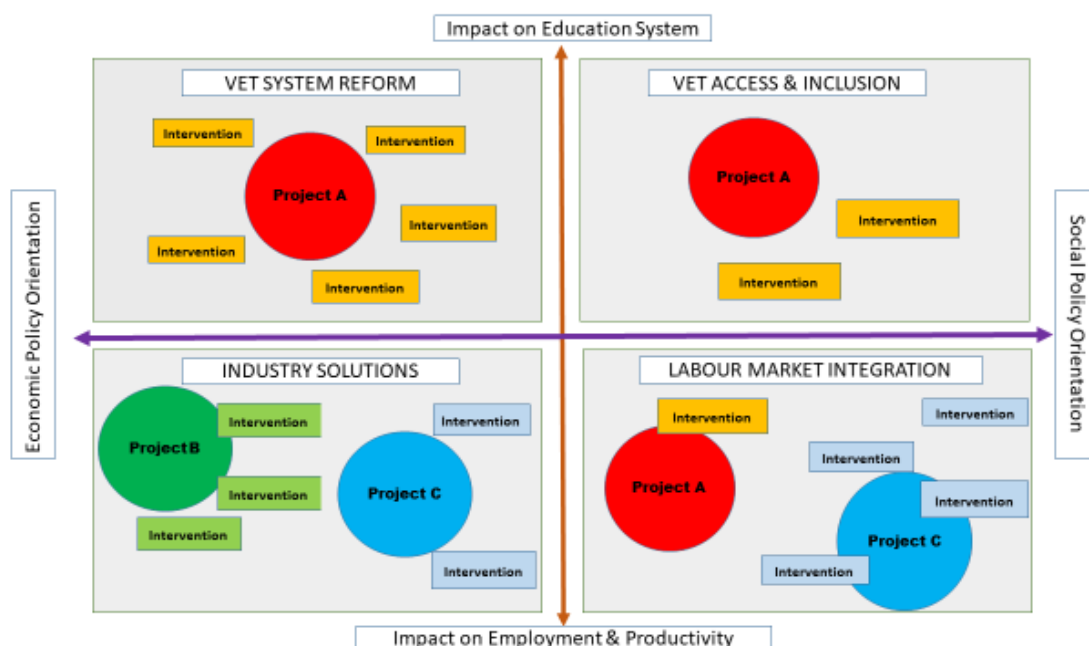
Structure:
- o Coordinate system with 2 axes and 4 quadrants representing the 4 types of VSD interventions as determined by their impact and policy orientation.
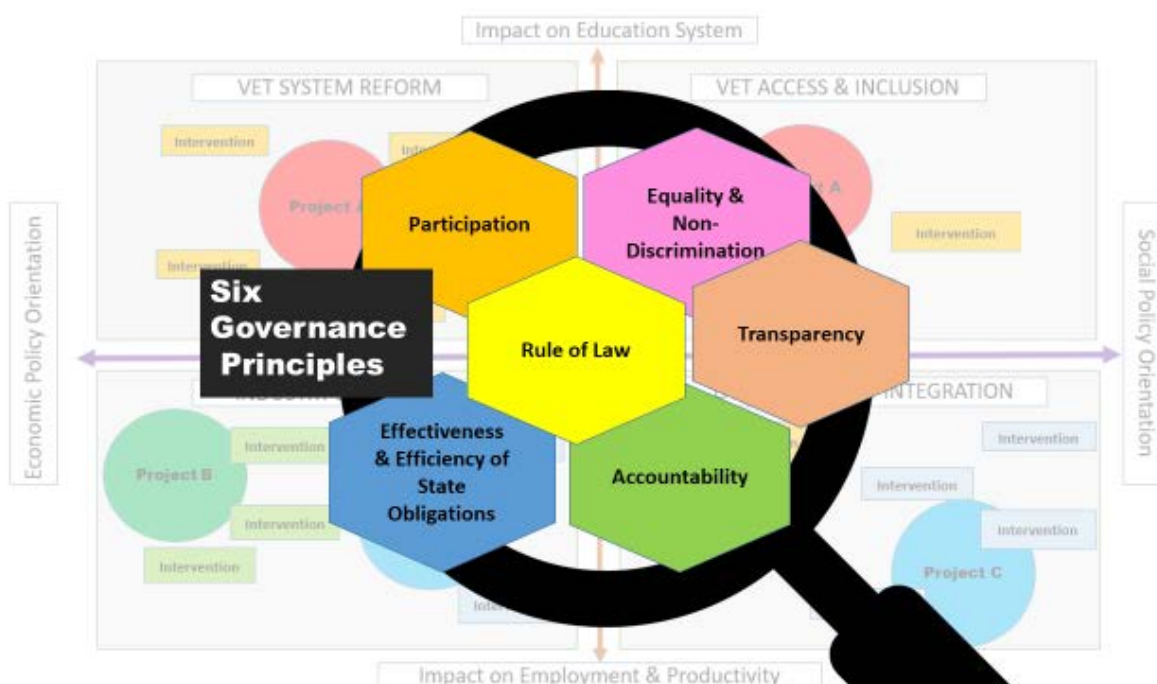
Rational:
- o The basic typology tool is a two-dimensional coordinate system to position a VSD programme or project in one or more of the four quadrants of the matrix according to the intended impact (*sustainable national educational capacities and inclusive VET system or promotion of employment and economic development*) and policy orientation (*economic or social focus*) of the planned interventions.

Range of Applications:
- o In project planning/design, implementation and evaluation: To visualize the donor landscape in VSD and employment promotion and reflect the intervention portfolio against the national goals and strategies for employment and skills development.
- o To clarify the approach and orientation of VSD interventions: determine the target groups, define the goals and corresponding outcomes, identify partners and select appropriate instruments.
- o To identify networking opportunities, foster synergies and avoid overlaps.

ADD-ON TOOL 2/3: "Governance in VSD"

Structure:

- o The tool matrix of this add-on has the same coordinates and structure as the Basic Tool but has a specific focus on the application of the basic principles of good governance in VSD programmes and projects.

Rational:

- o The add-on tool 2/3 is a complementary check for projects to verify if their interventions are aligned to the **6 Principles of Good Governance** which were introduced as a mandatory transversal theme across all sectors in SDC programmes and projects as a response to Switzerland's Dispatch on International Cooperation 2017-2010.[1]

Range of Applications:

- o To support the process of stakeholder mapping, the assignment of roles and responsibilities and the definition of reporting lines and networking structures.
- o To provide an analytical entry point to reflect on the *education-related aspects* of good governance, e.g. regulatory and structural framework to overcome fragmentation and foster equal inclusion for the diverse target groups in VSD.
- o To provide an analytical entry point to reflect on the *labour market-related aspects* of good governance in VSD systems such as public private partnerships for industry solutions, conducive frameworks and balanced portfolios of passive aid and active employment promotion measures.
- o To foster transparency in decision making related to the utilization and distribution of resources.

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[1] SDC's Approach to Governance, Schweizer Eidgenossenschaft, SDC and SDC Network Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance, ddlgn, 2017

ADD-ON TOOL 3/3: "Involving the Private Sector in VSD"
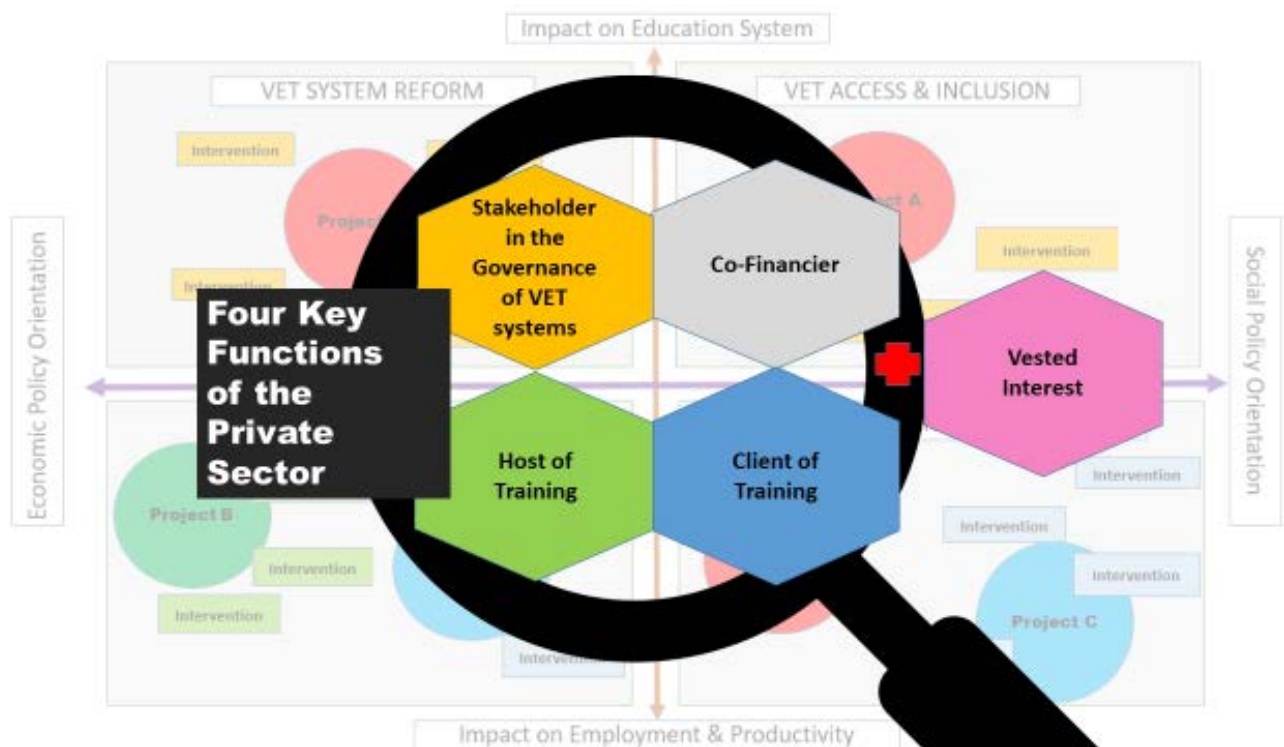
Structure:

o The tool matrix of this add-on has the same coordinates and structure as the Basic Tool but has a specific focus on the **role of the private sector in VSD** with supplementary explanations on SDC's Engaging with the Private Sector (EPS) modalities and the concept of dual Vocational Education and Training (dual VET) in VSD programmes and projects.

Rational:

o Private sector involvement in VSD is a key for successful education and skills training that generates employment and income effects for sustainable economic development of a country. The add-on tool 3/3 is a complementary check for programmes and projects to verify if their interventions are based on systemic interactions with the private sector to ensure that the VSD system generates a skill base that meets the expectations of the local and regional industry.

Range of Applications:

o To recognize the *vested interest and motivating factors* for private sector entities to engage in various types of VSD interventions and access points for systemic involvement in VET design, implementation and financing.

o To provide an analytical entry point to reflect on the *different dimensions of private sector involvement* in VET based on its 4 key functions (stakeholder in the governance of VET systems, co-financer, host of training, client of training).

o To provide inspiration on how to *adapt the dual VET concept to the various project realities* in the partner countries by considering the three dimensions of dual VET (organizational/institutional, pedagogical and societal).

3.   Summary of the Webinar

The intention of this webinar was to present the structure and logic of the Typology Tool Set to VSD project staff and subject matter experts for validation. The 3 presented Typology Tools are in different stages of development: while the Basic Tool (1/3) was presented in its final layout, the add-on tools on Governance and Private Sector Involvement were still in a premature design stage. This webinar and the subsequent e-discussion are expressions of the participatory approach of SDC decision makers in designing handy instruments for the project cycle management for their staff at site.

Webinar Content, Organizers and Participants at a Glance

Date: 12th Nov 2018

Time: 11:00 –12:00 (CET)

Language: English

Moderators:

Katharina Walker (HELVETAS)

Annett Hilpert (INBAS)

Presenters:

Brigitte Colarte-Dürr (SDC),
Roman Troxler (KEK CDC),
Sonila Limaj (SD4E Albania)

Participants: 35 Persons (Project Staff, Consultants, VSD Subject Matter Experts)

69% from Europe / Eastern Europe: Switzerland, Germany, Albania, Kosovo, Moldova, Georgia

15% from Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Mongolia, the Kyrgyz Republic

12% from Africa: Uganda, Zimbabwe

4% from Latin / South America: Haiti

Programme:

- ❖ Welcome by e+i focal point
- ❖ Introduction Video on the VSD Typology Basic Tool (1/3)
- ❖ Case Study Albania to demonstrate the application of the tool
- ❖ Brief overview on the 2 add-on tools (2/3 Governance & 3/3 Private Sector Involvement)
- ❖ Q & A Session
- ❖ Collection of topics for subsequent e-discussion

First Impressions on the Typology Tool

During this webinar 2 polls were launched and the results show that the presented tool generates a positive response in the user community. Here are the responses:

Poll 1: How understandable and applicable is the VSD Typology Tool for you?

Total responses: 23

• I understand the structure and application of this tool	14
• The tool structure is clear to me but not yet the application in my project context	8
• I don't really understand the purpose and features of this tool	1
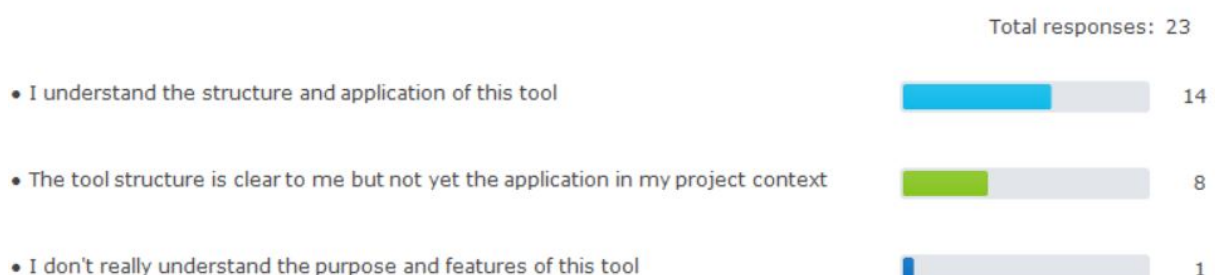
Poll 2: Do you think that the VSD Typology Tool is applicable in your work/project context?

Total responses: 25

- Yes   19
- No   0
- Somehow   6

Clustered Key Points and Thematic Topics for the e-Discussion

There was an active contribution of the webinar participants in the chat. The following key points were clustered into **thematic topics** to be raised in the subsequent online discussion:

No	Thematic Topics in Focus
1	Applicability of the Basic Tool (1/3) in multifaceted Project Contexts
2	Governance in VSD (Typology Tool 2/3)
3	Collaborating with the Private Sector in VSD (Typology Tool 3/3)
4	Operationalization of the VSD Tool Set

Input Papers and Presentations for download:

The following input papers and presentations were delivered during the webinar and can be downloaded from the SDC share web: www.shareweb.ch:

- Input papers: VSD Typology Tool 1/3 "Impact Areas of VSD" (Basic Tool), Add-on Tool 2/3 "Governance in VSD" (draft version) and Add-on Tool 3/3 "Collaborating with the Private Sector in VSD" (draft version)
- Matthias Jäger: Introduction to the VSD Typology Tool (Basic Tool 1/3) – mp4 video file
- Sonila Limaj and Annett Hilpert: Case Study Albania - an exercise on the practical application of the VSD Typology Tool 1/3 in the country context of Albania (embedded in the webinar PPT)
- Webinar Power Point Presentation

4. Summary and Results of the e-Discussion

Every thematic topic identified during the webinar was introduced and discussed through a number of guiding questions that were inserted by the facilitators in the e-discussion to the dgroups community. In total 25 contributions were submitted during the e-discussion containing valuable recommendations for refinement of the draft tools and application in the project cycle.

Here comes a synthesis of all contributions clustered by thematic topics and supported by guiding questions:

Thematic Topic 1: Applicability of the Basic Tool (1/3) in multifaceted Project Contexts

Nowadays VSD programmes and projects are often large with sustainable budgets and challenging goals and outcomes. An efficient management and allocation of resources into the best possible use is key for delivering the agreed outputs and contributing most effectively to the intended outcomes and overall impacts. VSD is a broad field of development cooperation which is characterized by a vast diversity of interventions of the international donor community often combined with different objectives and strategies. The VSD Typology Tool was developed to bring some light in the jumble of VSD interventions, to assist SDC projects to position themselves in the donor community, and finally to initiate dialogue and networking among all contributors to support the partner countries in achieving their national strategies for skills development and employment promotion.

> **Guiding Questions:**
>
> - How applicable is the VSD typology tool in the different project realities?
> - How can the VSD typology tool help projects to validate if their portfolio of interventions is appropriate to address the needs in VET/VSD and Employment Promotion in the partner country?
> - In which parts of the Project Cycle would you recommend the application of the VSD typology tool?
> - What is your recommended method to ensure a participatory process with all involved stakeholders?

Supportive Features of the Tool	Recommendations for Refinement
• Clear structure of the tool (4 VSD Types) allows the generation of a transparent picture of the VSD landscape and to develop intervention logics with well-defined focus and objectives. • The flexibility of the tool to position a programme/project in more than one quadrant reflects the complexity of today's development cooperation and emphasizes the contributions of single interventions towards overall goals. • Visualizing the contributions of all VSD initiatives in a country "at a glance" helps to identify gaps and overlaps in the overall intervention portfolio, triggers donor dialogue, allows for joint monitoring of goal achievements and alignment to national strategies. • Definition of clear roles and responsibilities reveals potential access points for networking and cooperation. • Application of the tool especially in early or critical stages of programme planning and (re)design supports participatory decision making processes.	• The level of abstraction in the tool is quite high. Especially newcomers welcome some guidance in terms of how to apply the tool and position the project's interventions in each of the quadrant, e.g. a guiding procedure, indicators, and best practices. However, a strict compulsory method stipulating when and with whom to apply this instrument was considered counter-productive. Instead case studies on the application of the tool in various project contexts (like the Albanian case presented in the webinar) provide food for thought and deliver valuable ideas for integrating this instrument in one's own day-to day project work. • Behavioural change and attitudes towards VET are crucial factors for effective and sustainable service provision. Exchange of good practices and a broader reflection of this topic in the typology tool would be an added value. • The tool should also take into consideration that many projects apply a Market System Approach, where VSD is one of many other components. This should be stronger reflected in the analytical categories mentioned in the four quadrants of this instrument.

Thematic Topic 2: Governance in VSD (Typology Tool Add-on 2/3)

Good governance is a key for sustainability in any field of development cooperation, including VSD since qualified and matching manpower is the platform for economic development and wellbeing of a nation. Good governance refers to effective economies led by governmental bodies that respond to the needs of the entire population of a society. Recognizing this crucial importance of governance, SDC has made it a cross-cutting theme in all its activities. The e+i focal point incorporated the principle of good governance in the VSD domain by promoting participation, transparency

> **Guiding Questions:**
>
> - Are the governance principles helpful in planning and managing your VSD interventions?
> - Where do you see opportunities and/or challenges with regard to your project context?
> - Do you have any suggestions to improve the draft version of the add-on tool 2/3 "Governance in VSD" (content-wise or related to its structure)?

and accountability, equal treatment and non-discrimination in all its projects and programmes. The add-on tool No 2/3 shall serve as a checklist for VSD programmes to ensure that the principles of good governance are well addressed in the project design and intervention strategy to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of its own activities and those of its partners.

Supportive Features of the Tool	Recommendations for Refinement
- The 6 governance principles are a good framework to verify if a project has taken up actions and precautions to address the governance aspect within the scope/limit of their services. - The analytical categories applied in the matrix: - Structural and regulatory framework - Actors/Stakeholders interest, power and capacities - Core Governance Processes and Principles help to put attention on the governance aspect in project planning and design as well as to steer the policy dialogue between donors and the government in the partner country to establish performing, responsive, inclusive, transparent and sustainable national VSD systems.	- Despite consensus on the relevance of the internationally agreed criteria for good governance, they are found a bit too abstract to address VSD-specific aspects, such as: - how to best steer and develop a VET and Labour Market Integration (LMI) system, to what end and how to control it - functions and roles of actors in governing (and financing) VET (e.g. something closer to a functional analysis) - how the actors would best cooperate for governing a VET and/or LMI systems - good legislative frameworks including the issue of decentralisation and/or actors autonomy - financial governance - Quadrant 3 / Industry solutions: reference to private VSD system is missing. Governance is not only about meso or macro level, but governance can be a private sector issue, too. Hence, it is proposed to add "business dialogue" beside "policy dialogue". - The governance principle "accountability" may be also relevant for the 4th quadrant (Labour Market Integration). In this case it can be related with the formalization of continuous monitoring and measurement of the impact of approaches or financing instruments used.

Thematic Topic 3: Collaborating with the Private Sector in VSD (Typology Tool Add-on 3/3)

A successful VET system is measured in its outcome, i.e. competent people that possess technical and soft skills in line with the requirements of the recruiting companies. In order to do so, VET actors (Ministries, Agencies, VET providers) need to know the demand of the private sector. How to get these information? A functioning Labour Market Information System (LMIS) that delivers reliable labour market statistics in a frequent manner is one component. Moreover, the private sector has to get actively involved in the design, organization and provision of training. What is the vested interest for private companies to invest their resources (i.e. manpower and financial contribution) into VET? This is one of the core question that the add-on Tool 3/3 tries to answer by analyzing private sector involvement in the four VSD project types based on its key functions: stakeholder in the governance of VET, co-financier, host and client of training.

> **Guiding Questions:**
>
> - How would you apply the add-on tool 3/3 "Collaborating with the Private Sector" in your project cycle?
> - Do you have any suggestions to improve the draft version of the add-on tool 3/3 (content-wise or related to its structure)?
> - Could you share with us some good practices and innovative approaches of cooperation with the private sector in your project context *(referring to: roles of the private sector, modalities for co-operation in steering and implementing, cost-sharing, etc...).* Please also explain for which quadrant/project prototype this is of particular importance.

Supportive Features of the Tool	Recommendations for Refinement
• The tool set supports a combined application of the basic tool and its add-ons in form of a sequenced approach: First to set the focus / define priorities by positioning the project in the quadrant(s) of the basic tool including a verification of its compliance with the principles of good governance (add-on tool 2/3) and second to define the roles and responsibilities of the private sector actors (add-on tool No 3/3) to finally define the business model of an intervention (e.g. decide for a dual VET approach). • The add-on tools could be seen as strategic and analytical frameworks providing much food for thought when designing a project and monitoring its implementation.	• It was requested to define more clearly the term "Private Sector" as it is applied in this tool. • The role of the private sector as a training provider should be elaborated in more detail. • Public VET providers often face a sustainability challenge. Business models with revenue generating mechanism shall be considered in the light of VSD (e.g. social business models, inclusive VSD business models, collective business strategies). This is especially important since in most of the poor economies, SME play an important economic role in terms of employment and income generation for the majority of the people. How to empower them to play a strategic role in the system (i.e. clustering SMEs, mutualizing training costs) should be a key aspect. • Collective actions could also be an approach for strengthening the sector associations (refers to Quadrant 3 / Industry Solutions) • There is a need to define the underpinning concept of sustainability. What is meant here: sustainability in systems or in people, i.e. who is the main client of vocational training? In Quadrant 1 the tool refers to the private sector (employers) as the main client in VET but there are arguments that the trainees / graduates

Supportive Features of the Tool	Recommendations for Refinement
	themselves are the ones that should benefit most from the training (through enhanced employment opportunities, easier access to the labour market and better income). • The aspect of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the role of the private sector as a stakeholder in the governance of VET could be taken up in Quadrant 2. • Quadrant 4: When defining Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP), a stronger involvement of the privat sector could improve the impact of such measures. Therefore, integrative measures of VET and employment promotion should be given more attention in the tool. • The EPS (SDC's Engaging with the Private Sector Modalities) could be more highlighted in terms of the EPS tools and there applicability to each quadrant (e.g. pooled funding, challenge funds for VET system, loans/guarantees for industry solutions) • The presentation of dual VET (in the separate matrix) is reduced too much to the concept of Work-Based Learning (WBL). The term "shared ownership" implies more: e.g. governance responsibility at operational/institutional level, inputs in curriculum, sector skills councils etc. That should be stronger reflected in the tool.

Thematic Topic 4: Operationalization of the VSD Tool Set

Participants of the e-discussion stated the importance to first analyse where and when to use the tools in their respective project context and then to pilot/practice the tools' application and collect lessons learnt that can contribute for further adaptation of the tools.

Guiding Question:
• What kind of further support is needed to make it fully operational?

Nevertheless, a few recommendations on how to make the Tool Set easy applicable and user-friendly for the various project realities were already stated in the discussion:

Recommendations for Operationalization
• Provide some guidance on how to fill in the four quadrants. • Define the key terms used in the tools: e.g. private sector, sustainability. • Elaborate VSD/VET-specific governance dimensions. • Compile and share good practices and innovation approaches for privat sector involvement in VSD from various project contexts. • Revise the SDC guidelines on the Common Outcome Indicators (COI) in the light of the VSD Typology Tools. • Discuss important side issues that often determine project realities such as "project driven parallel VSD system".

5.   Outlook – next steps

The e+i focal point and the developer team of the VSD Typology Tool Set will take up the recommendations from the e-discussion and will examine their feasibility for further tool refinement. The revision shall be finalised until April 2019 to present and disseminate the final version of the tool set at the Global SDC Face-to-Face (F2F) event of the e+i network and the Competence Centre on the Engagement with the Private Sector (CEP) taking place from 6-9 May 2019 in Solothurn, Switzerland.

Annex: List of Contributors (in alphabetic order)

Dr. Rudolf Batliner, ETH Zürich – NADEL

Bernard Conilh de Beyssac, Burkina Faso, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Brigitte Colarte-Duerr, Switzerland, SDC

Sidita Dibra, Albania, Swisscontact

Fation Dragoshi, Albania, Swisscontact

Zayasaikhan Dugeree, Mongolia, SDC

Besa Fuga, Albania, UNDP

Silvana Haxhiaj, Albania, UNDP

Annett Hilpert, Germany, INBAS GmbH

Matthias Jäger, Switzerland, Consultant

Franz Kehl, Switzerland, KEK-CDC Consultants

Sonila Limaj, Albania, UNDP

Edlira Muedini, Albania, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Eno Ngjela, Albania, UNDP

Katrin Ochsenbein, Kosovo, SDC

Majlinda Rizvanolli Bajraktari, Kosovo, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Hugo Sager, Switzerland, Consultant

Ermira Shyti, Albania, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Roman Troxler, Switzerland, KEK-CDC Consultants

Katharina Walker, Switzerland, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation